

THE GAY CENTRE

The fourth in our series profiling local organisations. We've previously featured Drummond Community High, Unemployed Workers Centre, and Bellevue and Claremont Residents Association.

The Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Centre at 60 Broughton Street is the Street's oldest secular community centre.

It opened nearly 20 years ago amid some controversy. Broughton was then a Tory ward and Councillor Sally Pringle tried to get the Centre closed. She opposed the brass plate (still there, now history) because the quarter inch high letters saying "homosexual men and women" would cause children to faint and adults to be corrupted! Do times get better? We are still trying to combat bigotry in 1994, witness the bitter struggle to equalise the age of consent for young men.

The Gay Centre (its shortened name) has been the source of many things we now take for granted in Edinburgh. The Gay switchboard began there before moving in 1980 to its present offices in Cumberland Street Lane. West and Wilde's origins are from the Centre - now a fine book shop on Dundas Street. And most well known is the Blue Moon Cafe, now in roomy premises at the corner of Barony and Broughton Streets. The clothing, cards and poppers shop, Drondale Ltd, is still in the Centre, as is the HQ of Gay Scotland Magazine, a monthly soon to be distributed by John Menzies.

Recent changes have been the "Edge Club-Cafe" just opened by Martin Walker, his first business venture. The Cafe, like the Blue Moon, welcomes everyone, children too. Your sexuality is irrelevant, so long as you're "gay positive". The Bisexual Resource Centre is a new development in the front basement. They're publishing a magazine, BIFROST, and welcome inquiries. Bisexuals meet on Thursday evenings. On Mondays, the basement is open to everyone 7.30 to 9 pm for tea, coffee and company.

The Lesbian Gay and Bisexual Centre is owned by members of Outright Scotland, the campaigning organisation. Outright held its 25th AGM in the Unemployed Workers Centre on 21st May: "Gay is Good" was our founding slogan in 1969.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

If you have dates for local events in July, please let us know as soon as possible.

Sunday 29th May Celebration of cycle path Granton Road to Victoria Park, completing 8 mile North Edinburgh cycle path network - Victoria Park, Craighall Road, 2-5 pm.

Sunday 29th May Appeal for Scotland Yard Adventure Centre by actor Richard Briars, explaining what SYAC is all about, on STV, 6.15 pm.

Monday 6th June New Town, Broughton and Pilrig Community Council meets in Drummond Community High School, 7.30 pm.

Thursday 9 June Spurtle meeting at the Bellevue pub in Broughton Street, 8 pm.

Saturday 25th June Mexican Meal to raise money for the Spurtle, at the Flat, 10 Broughton Street, 7.30 for 8 pm. Tickets £6.50 (£4 concessions), phone 556 1391.

Sunday 26th June 'The Big Wide World' Scotland Yard Summer Festival 12-5 pm.

Every Monday 'senior Eastenders Club' for over 50s at the Flat, 10 Broughton Street, 2-4 pm.

Every Monday Open Meeting at the Lesbian and Gay Centre, Broughton Street, downstairs, 7.30 pm.

Every Tuesday Users' meeting at the Centre, 103 Broughton Street, 4 PM. New people welcome.

Every Tuesday Youth Club, 14-16 years old, at the Flat, 10 Broughton Street, 7.30-9 PM.

Every Wednesday District Councillor Margaret McGregor's surgery, Drummond Community High, 6-7 pm.

Every Saturday Visitors welcome at Scotland Yard Adventure Centre, in the morning. (Phone 557 8199 for more information)

Local Phone Contacts:-

Cable TV questions	556 4389
Community Council	556 4389
Community Worker, Drummond	556 2651
Poll Tax problems	556 0903
VAT on Fuel	556 6203

BROUGHTON SPURTLE

Broughton • Gayfield

NEWS VIEWS
ACTION

Bellevue • Canonmills

FREE Issue number 5

June 1994

BROUGHTON'S NEW COUNCILLOR

Changes in Regional divisions mean we're now part of 'Calton/Broughton', and our new Regional Councillor is Jimmy Cook. He's been with the Region ever since it was set up, and was an Edinburgh Corporation councillor before that.

Councillor Cook has agreed to be interviewed by the Spurtle for our next issue. Meanwhile, he holds his weekly surgery at 17 London Road, Saturdays at 10.30 am. We'll be raising the question of a Broughton surgery when we meet him.

Our District Councillor, Margaret McGregor, has her surgery in Drummond Community High, Wednesday evenings, 6-7 pm.



Medieval madcaps - see page 3

CABLE CLIMBDOWN

United Artists have apologised for asking local residents to sign agreements for TV cables before going through the proper procedure of submitting drawings and consultation. They've promised not to do it again.

Their spokesman answered questions at the May meeting of the New Town, Broughton and Pilrig Community Council. The feeling was that 'members would be quite right to be suspicious of some of his answers.'

Our advice in last month's Spurtle was DON'T SIGN. If you have signed anything, contact them and say you're withdrawing your assent meanwhile - and ask for acknowledgement in writing. For further information or advice, phone 556 4389.

THE CENTRE'S FUTURE

The lease of the premises at 103 Broughton Street terminates on 14 June, but efforts continue to find some way of avoiding disruption of activities at the Unemployed Workers Centre.

Discussions initiated by the New Town, Broughton and Pilrig Community Council aim to reconcile the needs of the present users and the requirements of the building's owners, the Regional Council, and at the same time to ensure that the Centre becomes accessible and attractive

to a wider range of local users. The Community Council itself may be able to act as a bridge, until more local groups become involved and a new management structure can be developed.

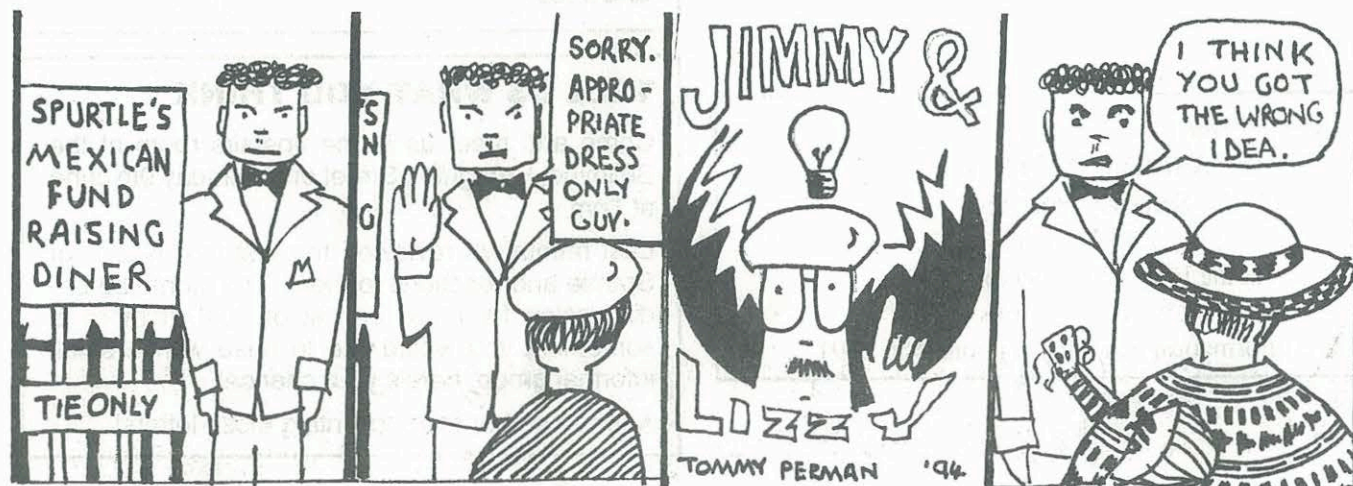
Let's hope the Centre will still be open and active when you read the next issue of the Spurtle - and with a clearer view of its long term future.

TRAFFIC JAM

The Regional Council elections have meant little progress on the traffic calming front this past month. Des Loughney has submitted his report, but the new committees won't be in place until the end of May; and it seems there is no guarantee that Broughton traffic will be on the agenda when the new Transport Committee first meets in June.

Meanwhile we can be sharpening up our arguments, and convincing doubters that action is required (see Gregory Smith's LETTER). We can welcome proposals drafted by the officials, but at the same time not be limited by them. For example, proposals for residential streets are well advanced; but people live in Broughton Street and Broughton Road as well!

And now that Scotland's got its first 20 mph limits approved, why should Broughton settle for anything less?



Dissenting voice on traffic

The Broughton Spurtle wants to 'generally stir things up a bit.' Here goes

I am a long term resident of Broughton and I hate the way that traffic calming measures, and even the pedestrianisation of Broughton Street, are accepted as good ideas, and go unchallenged in The Spurtle.

Traffic calming would certainly destroy the unique character of the bustling and busy historic thoroughfare of Broughton Street. Broughton Street manages in its noisy, ramshackle and loveable way to be unlike any other street in Edinburgh.

It manages to shake off much of the city's notorious stuffiness and to be cosmopolitan. Broughton Street is alive. The comings and goings of everyday business are its life blood.

Of course traffic is a nuisance and can be dangerous. Life is dangerous. I appeal for common sense, not over-reaction and panic-spreading, and respect for what we hold in common.

Most drivers are sensible. Most drivers are pedestrians too. Some pedestrians are dangerous fools. They don't hold the hands of children when walking on busy roads. They walk dogs without leads. And what about pedestrians who don't bother to wait for the little green man at the crossings. They step out because the road seems clear. Then they have to scamper nonchalantly for the other kerb, hoping to appear cool, or erupt in self-conscious giggles. Everybody does it. Stand at the top of Broughton Street and watch them. Young men and women, grannies and mothers with babies in pushchairs. They all do it. Pedestrians even cross the street where there is no crossing because it's more convenient. Or perhaps that is a cynical over-simplification. Please don't over-simplify this argument about traffic, there are many points of view.

Hold on to your children, keep them safe, and help the old ones across the street if they want help.

Whatever next! You'll be campaigning to close down the pubs in case people start wanting to get drunk.

Drive carefully.

Gregory Smith
East London Street

Did ye see me?*

Inspired by the splendid drawing by Miguel Vivanco of Broughton Place with a medieval street fair I decided to do my bit by dressing up for the occasion. I toyed briefly with the idea of a long dress and tall pointed hat with flowing drapes.....not enough time. This was the sunny morning of the actual day. Then I remembered my Nepalese jacket – the shoulders were definitely medieval. I would don tights and jacket. A hat was contrived by winding a floral scarf round my purple beret, with a long end flapping on one shoulder a la Medici.

My husband, wiser than I, refused to join in. He warned me I would be the only one dressed up. He did accompany me 'Come as you are' in anorak and bunnet. I walked rather self-consciously from Bellevue Crescent to Broughton Place amid the usual Saturday crowd of shoppers.

We were too early. (I hadn't checked the time.) Broughton Place looked much as usual. Just Junk had an interesting display of goods from yesteryear on the pavement. Broughton Books had decorated their window with bunting. Both sides of the street were lined with cars. At the far end of the street a few trestle tables were being unloaded. I chatted with two ladies setting up a stall to campaign against blood sports. The sun went in, it started to rain. I decided that discretion was the better part of valour and I went home to change.

On returning to the medieval street fair later in the afternoon my ears were assailed by loud music from a pop group, enjoyed by a small audience of local youth. "We have to put up with this!" a resident remarked to me as she walked home with a bag of shopping. "That's not the spirit", I replied. "Well, it would be alright if they had better music", she admitted.

I still think it was a great idea.

Best wishes to Broughton Spurtle,

Chandra Aitken
Bellevue Crescent

*apologies to Robert Garioch

THE BROUGHTON SPURTLE aims to:-

- provide a contact point for local people who want to get together and change things
- help local action groups publicise their work
- make connections between "the news" and people's own lives in Broughton
- and generally stir things up a bit!

We'll support people looking for a fair deal, but not protect privilege. We're not connected with any political group or party. And we don't get a grant from anyone.

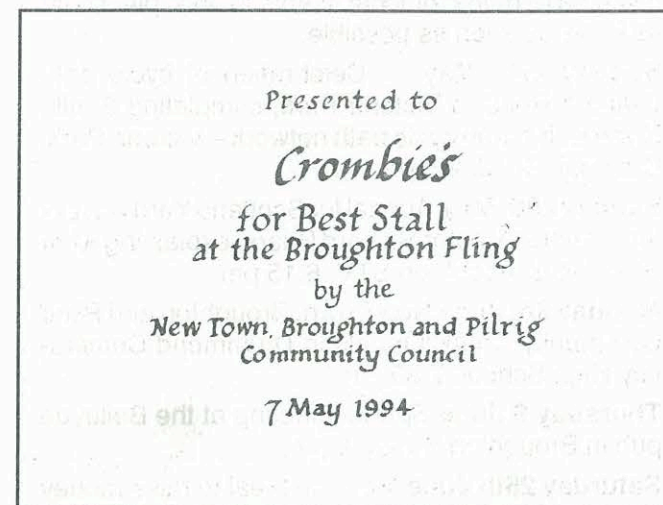
Contributors to this issue: Gill Flack, Ian Dunn, John Dickie, Tim Puntis and Tommy Perman.

If you'd like to help write, produce or distribute the BROUGHTON SPURTLE please contact us as soon as possible! We plan to publish about once a month.

BROUGHTON BOOKS in Broughton Place have kindly agreed to be our "post-box". It's very central and very accessible – you can put a letter addressed to us through their letter box at anytime.

OR PHONE – 556 7928 or 556 0903

FAIR COMMENT



Congratulations to Crombie's – their enthusiasm was much appreciated.

Overall, the medieval street fair didn't live up to expectations. Comments overheard on the day, and since, included: not much there; we didn't know who was in charge when we went to set up our stall; it was all poked away at the far end, no impact on Broughton Street; there should have been more colour – bunting, balloons; all those parked cars spoiled it; it was nice for the locals, children free to run in the street – then the police removed the traffic barriers without warning! But many people agreed with Chandra Aitken (see LETTERS) that it was a good idea. Worth trying again? With lessons learnt from this time round, firmer organisation, and more of the Crombie spirit it certainly could be. And more of us committing ourselves to help, well in advance of the event!

The display of patchwork and quilting at St. Mary's Church during Spring Fling week was much admired. A slimmed down version of the local history exhibition will be up in Drummond Community High by the time you read this – just inside the front door. And the 'Community Action in Broughton' exhibit will be at The Centre, 103 Broughton Street for another week or so.

Copies of the 'Broughton Memory Map' are available from Broughton Books (£1)

Our First Big Fund-raiser
A MEXICAN MEAL
Saturday 25th June
7.30 for 8 pm.
at the Flat, 10 Broughton Street
£6.50 – concessions £4
For information and tickets, phone 556 1391

MAKE A CRAZY CONTRIBUTION

The idea is to make a crazy patchwork quilt to celebrate and commemorate life in Broughton. There could be a square for a local group you belong to, or the place you work, or something you would like to commemorate.

You don't have to be able to sew. You can contribute to "The Broughton Patch" with an idea or the design for a square. Contact Jocelyn c/o The Flat, 10 Broughton Street. (556 6212)

SCOTLAND YARD FESTIVAL

A "Big Wide World" Festival is being organised for Sunday 26th June, down in Scotland Yard. From midday to 5 o'clock there will be a variety of music – jazz, ceilidh, samba and pop. And plenty for the kids – a treasure hunt, singing, storytelling, drum making and a bouncy castle.

The Scotland Yard Adventure Centre will be open, plus two marquees. If you want to have a stall phone 557 8199 (commercial £15, charitable £8)

BE A SPURTLE SUPPORTER

The Spurtle is distributed free – but we need to pay the printer. We depend entirely on donations and fund-raising events. You can help by becoming a Supporter. Send us a fiver now!

As a thank-you, we'll deliver the next 5 issues to you, plus other items we think might interest you – leaflets, press cuttings, news of campaigns.

Postal orders made out to John Dickie, please

P.S. Do you commute between Edinburgh and Glasgow? We could cut costs if someone volunteered to collect the Spurtle from the printer.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR READERS IN BELLEVUE STREET AND BELLEVUE GARDENS

This issue of the Broughton Spurtle is being delivered to your door but we can't afford to do that every time.

Look out for the July edition in local centres, shops and pubs.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Come and meet us in the upstairs room at the Bellevue, Broughton Street on Thursday 9th June at 8pm

Last month we reviewed the first four issues of Spurtle and reactions to them. The month before discussion focussed on VAT on fuel. If there is something you would like to raise with a small informal group, here's your chance!

And remember to keep writing those letters!