

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

**December
2008**

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SOLDIERS GO AWOL IN SNEAK THEFT

Toy soldiers worth over £6,000 have been stolen from the Earl Haig Poppy Factory on Warriston Rd. They were lifted from an unlocked display cabinet around 31 October/1 November, a busy period when more than 100 customers passed through the building.

Police collected forensic evidence at the scene and are actively investigating the case. They believe the thief may have acted opportunistically, but probably understood what they were taking.

The 30 metal models were made by Britains in the 1930s, are 'brown-based', measure 3-4" in height, and depict musicians from Scottish regiments. They were part of a bequest of national importance made by a former employee in 1990.

Major Charlie Pelling (Manager, *right*), said the military veterans who work at the Factory were 'angry, saddened and bewildered, especially given the time of year when most people's thoughts were focused on remembrance'. Improved security measures are now in place.



CHILDREN NO SAFER

Confusion remains over the Council's response to road safety on McDonald Rd (*Issues 163-4*). At fault: ill-informed and self-contradictory officials, bureaucratic molasses, calls and email messages ignored or avoided by public appointees, no sense of urgency anywhere. *Spurtle* supports the Council system when it's effective, but the lack of timely progress on this issue suggests systemic incompetence at many levels. City Chambers, Market St and the North Team must wake up, recognise lives are at stake, and act promptly.

CHWAŁA ŻOŁNIERZOM POLSKIM (1939-45)



Our immense debt to veterans of the Second World War, and the thousands of Scottish-based Polish personnel in particular, was commemorated at Redbraes on Remembrance Sunday.

FOUND IN TRANSLATION

In Issue 164 we challenged readers to guess the total number of languages spoken at home by pupils of Broughton PS and Drummond CHS. (The prizewinner will be announced next month.) The answer is 28 and here, in alphabetical order, are their names: Arabic, Bengali, Brazilian Portuguese, Cantonese, English, Farsi, French, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Mandarin, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Serbo-Croat, Setswana, Sign Language, Somali, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Urdu and Yoruba.

The existence in our midst of 187 bilingual young people, between them speaking languages from every continent, is a cause for celebration. It's also an astonishingly powerful resource. What should we do with it? Send us your practical suggestions.

The bilingual ceremony on 9 November was attended by the Polish Consul General Aleksander Dietkow, Church representatives, Mark Lazarowicz MP, and Deputy Chief Constable Tom Helpin, as well as by many members of the public.

A new memorial, instigated by Community PC Simon Daley, was unveiled. It consists of simple stones with plaques in Polish and English set in a pebbled garden. On the day, a charming sculpture of a soldier and Voytek the famous mascot bear guarded the memorials. At the end of the official ceremony, young and old placed tributes of teddy-bears all around Voytek.

Peace ribbons were also attached to a newly planted silver birch tree. This reflected a widespread desire to mark the unity of Scottish and Polish communities, bound by common ties since the 17th century and jointly shocked by the attack on Patryk Mních at Pilrig Heights in February 2007. [Photo by Graham Butler]

'PM' visits Drummond

TV's Jonathan Dimbleby and Angellica Bell have joined 'Reid the Heid' and S3 pupils at Drummond CHS to film Episode 9 of *Election* – a BBC reality show.

'It's a bit like a mini-version of *The Apprentice*, designed to find the Prime Minister of the future from among 8–14-year olds,' says Jon Reid. 'In Edinburgh, contestants had to teach a Science lesson to our pupils, who then rated them on camera and voted for the one they thought performed best.'

'It was terrific and the whole episode was filmed in Drummond CHS in August. Jonathan Dimbleby was very impressed by both the school and our pupils. Producers picked us because we were recommended to them, and also because they liked the look and feel of our website.'

The Drummond episode of *Election* airs on CBBC at 4.35pm on Thursday, 11 December.



Differing views on Glenogle

Contrary to speculation in a local newspaper, the refurbishment of Glenogle Baths is not threatened by any £20m shortfall in the Council's capital fund (*Evening News*, 30 October).

Glenogle supporters have been assured by Culture & Sport that 'prudential borrowing' (*Issue 156*) will pay for the work, so alleged problems with the City's capital programme are irrelevant. A contractor has been appointed and the work continues on budget and to schedule. The pool should be ready by April 2010.

Meanwhile a minor stushie continues over the Council's proposed replacement of three-quarter-length doors on the men's cubicles. Some people feel they should be kept. However, the cubicles may be unisex when the pool reopens, and if left as they are then observers on the balcony opposite would be able to see a lot more of ladies in future than ever they did of gentlemen in the past. *Plus elles changent, plus ce n'est pas la même chose.*

BARA needs backing

The first meeting of the Bellevue Area Residents Association (BARA) on 28 October sorted out a constitution and aims, but was poorly attended despite wide publicity.

The new group is well funded and staffed by keen volunteers. It has the potential to influence politicians and funding bodies on behalf of locals, if only locals will commit a few hours per year to attending.

Active neighbourhoods don't get sat upon and do attract positive attention. So, whether you want to preserve or change this part of Broughton, a residents association is one proven way of doing so. For more information contact Ann Mortimer (Secretary): [ann.mortimer@blueyonder.co.uk].

Life in the Broughton slow lane – just fine

A campaign has been launched in favour of an 'express lane' for fleet-footed pedestrians on Princes St (*Evening News*, 11 November). Apparently 77% of those surveyed wish they could complete their shopping more quickly. Allowing them to do so by separating swift people from slow ones would, it is claimed, improve the retail experience and reduce pavement rage.

This is a bad idea which panders to those who would do everything faster rather than well. Surely even Broughton would benefit from people walking more slowly, taking time to admire the goods on offer and to savour the atmosphere. Surely our pavements would be safer, pleasanter places without perspiring power-walkers, children gliding downhill in Heel-

ies, and wild-eyed cyclists on expensive go-anywhere dual-suspension mountain bikes whose bottoms are too sensitive for Edinburgh setts.

Here is a radical proposal: a compulsory pedestrian speed limit of 1 mph, sleeping policemen at 3-yard intervals on all pavements, and a comprehensive system of CCTV cameras to deter the hasty. Perhaps Council-funded 'roller-meanies' could enforce the new slow regime and hand out spot fines to rule-breakers.

More radical still, but less expensive: we could take a collective deep breath and try exercising a little patience. We at *Spurtle* wish our readers a very merry Christmas, a jolly holiday, and a sedately paced New Year.

What's in a name?

Work on converting the former Canonmills School (*left*) into luxury flats goes on apace. Edinburgh developers S1 have been marketing the project as 'Primary 1': a neat term and a nod to history, but only provisional. What permanent name would the Council come up with for posterity?

'Dr Neill's Garden' was one reader's suggestion, referring to the 19th-century botanist, historian and local resident. 'Rummlin House' offered another, recalling the school's often lively atmosphere.

City Development are not so easily pleased and, after careful consideration, have settled on the imaginative solution of new street numbers for Rodney St and Cornwallis Place.



Partnerships made plain: Part 2

In the second of three articles, John Dickie describes his own experience of Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs), and suggests how to make the most of them.

I attended City Centre NP's quarterly meeting in September 2008. Board members included the 3 City Centre councillors, representatives of 3 community councils, a policeman, and reps from NHS Lothian, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council, and Heriot Watt Student Association.

Most of the 90 mins were taken up with progress reports by officials or councillors. Members of the public (30+) could question or comment on those reports; folk from Hillside were sharp enough to raise a local question about something the police reported.

Last on the agenda was Public Question Time. You fill in a form raising your issue before the meeting starts. On this occasion 3 questions were discussed. But the convener said 'Normally we don't have time for those'; in which case you get a written answer in due course. Cllr Chapman (who sits on Leith NP) says different NPs vary in how they see the role of the public. 'As they are formal committees with financial responsibility, meetings will tend to be fairly formal.'

Ways to use NPs: If it's just information you're after, or you're ready to apply for a grant, officials of the appropriate Neighbourhood Team can help. A Neighbourhood Partnership meeting might sometimes be useful, if you're looking to air an issue more widely. But usually it will make more sense to contact local councillors; or your community council – particularly if you want to explain an issue, and gather support to lobby or campaign. It's worth knowing that Neighbourhood Team staff are available for a while before the meetings begin to answer questions from individuals.

A shadowed city temple revealed

Secluded behind 4 Forth St stands a 3-storey building with steep rubblestone walls and unusual arched windows on the first level. Reached via Hart St Lane, it is screened from the street by 2 ash trees and 3 walled gardens. To the untutored eye, it has a severe, monastic appearance, and the appellation of 'Monastery' has been popularly attached to it for many years. This, however, is misleading.

The main building is occupied by the Gaia Group – specialists in ecological architecture, design and environmental techniques – who recently commissioned an independent report on the site's history.* The subsequent in-depth account, by S.M. Millar, indicates a Calvinist rather than Catholic identity and concludes that '... all the evidence points to a building on this site dating from the mid-18th Century or earlier'. Research continues, but the likely date of the oldest section is at latest 1759. More significant is the strong probability that it was built as a Huguenot temple in the era of Picardy Village (c.1730–76), and is thus 'the only remaining Huguenot chapel in Scotland'. If confirmed, this would make the building of major historical significance. In Proustian terms, after long sleep, it has awaited its moment to be awakened.

Amazingly, the building is not listed. Worse, City Planners have granted permission for the architect Richard Murphy to build a controversial dwelling in one of the adjoining gardens. Many feel this sets a dreadful precedent for development of protected areas, and compromises Edinburgh's World Heritage status; concerns shared by **Spurtle**. *JRM*

*Available in due course from Central Library's Edinburgh Room. [Photo by Derek Smith]



Briefly

Current account? Spotted at HBOS in **Greenside Place**, a recruitment poster featuring a happy face. The caption: 'For me, it's about pride in working for a successful company.'

Drummond Tennis Club is holding a table-tennis party on 6 Dec. (11am–3pm, £3 each) in their base off East Scotland St Lane. Mulled wine, mince pies, and ping-pong balls will be served, and there'll be **Christmas goodies** for sale – cards, knits and jewellery – in aid of Marie Curie.

Spurtle friend and postbox **Narcissus Florists** of Broughton St seeks a small additional storage/work space locally. Telephone Sharon Nugent: 478 7447 or [email: info@narcissusflowers.co.uk].

Broughton History Society's Christmas party, for members only, is from 7–9pm on 8 Dec. at Drummond CHS. Pay on the door £2: quiz, games, Santa, and refreshments.

The 'plastic-looking' exterior sign at **57 Albany St (Issue 163)**, has been removed. Discussions continue between Hardies and Council Enforcement about extracting the fixings.

Joseph Pearce's on Elm Row will host an **art auction** at 6pm on 10 Dec. in aid of children's summer holidays with **Barnardo's Raft Project**. 30+ works are on view now. Sealed bids welcome. A raffle on the night offers prizes from local shops Eero & Riley, James at Tattie Shaws, and Cornelius Wines. Also 2 dresses, 5 Swedish lessons, and a cycling session with a Guinness World Record holder. Hold that thought.

Events at **St Mary's Parish Church**. Broughton PS's **carol concert** and **nativity play** will be at 10am on 19 Dec. Eye-watering renditions guaranteed. All parents, carers, and friends of the school are invited. **Christmas Eve**, 6.30pm. *News! Glorious News!* – a musical extravaganza to get everyone in the mood; 11.30pm **Watchnight Service**, with mince pies and carol singing from 11pm. **Christmas Day Worship**, 10.30am with Family Communion – bring along a present to show.

A **blue plaque** marking the Corries's 1975 composition and first recording of '**Flower of Scotland**' has risen now at 4 Forth St (*Issue 164*). Iceland's national anthem '**Lofsöngur**' was written and composed at 15 London St (*Issue 152*).

Thursday refuse collections for 25 Dec. and 1 Jan. will move to 27 Dec. and 3 Jan. **Ex-Xmas trees** may be disposed of in brown bins, or at the Seafeld Recycling Centre for those **green people** with **gas-guzzlers** big enough to carry them. Schedules for street tree-uplifts will be announced 'nearer the time', whenever that is.

Belle's View



Hi fans

Oooh, feeling all tinselly? No need to wait until Christmas – there's Crimbo capers galore to be had in Broughton!

Saints alive! **Saint Lucia** night is a favourite Swedish Christmas tradition, when Swedes dress up in angelic white nighties and sing traditional songs, led by **Saint Lucia** with her crown of candles. This year the celebration at **Joseph Pearce's** includes the barman as the **Lucia Starboy**, so get along for some yummy mulled wine and gingersnaps, and see **Lucia** and her entourage at 8.30pm on Saturday 13 December – nighties optional!

Something more angelic? If the thought of tramping around Christmas shopping makes you come over all faint, why not fortify yourself first with a plate of organic porridge with heather honey at **Urban Angel on Forth Street**? Serving all-day brunch from 8am–10pm, it uses local, organic and fairly traded ingredients, including meat-free veggie sausages from **Crombie's** – angel food indeed! [www.urban-angel.co.uk]

And to really get you in the Christmas mood, why not visit our very own angels on 14 Dec. (1pm–4pm) at the **Mansfield Traquair Centre**? Support the restoration of **Phoebe Traquair's** incredible mural by sponsoring your very own angel (with trumpet). Prices range from £20–100. The ideal gift for someone with everything – they can visit it all year round on open days, and it doesn't need feeding! [www.mansfieldtraquair.org.uk]

So, my gorgeous Readers – I would like to wish each and every one of you a very happy holiday season, and see you in 2009 for more Broughton adventures!

Till next time!

Persephone Bane



Glenogle

New Town/Broughton Community Council Vacancies for 5 Community Councillors

The Community Council represents the views of local residents to Edinburgh City Council.

Next meeting
1 December at 7.30pm
at Drummond CHS

For details please contact:

Chris Richardson 07952 755 854
chris_richardson1001@hotmail.com

Malcolm Chisholm MSP Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:

5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT

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Fax: 0131 557 6781

Saturday surgeries:

9am Leith Library

10.30am Royston/Wardieburn

Community Centre

12pm Stockbridge Library

Mark Lazarowicz

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Friday advice sessions:

4.00pm Stockbridge Library,

42 Hamilton Place

5.00pm 92 Pilton Drive

6.00pm Constituency Office

Spurtle Team: Maria Hart, George Hosey, Alan McIntosh, John Ross Maclean, Fiona Watt.

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