

# Spurtle



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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## GROUNDHOG DAY – E. SCOTLAND ST LANE ... AGAIN



The developer behind the controversial 'garage' on East Scotland Street Lane has again applied to change its use to a 'studio office' (Ref. 15/00147/FUL).

The plan entails restoring a glass frontage to the property, but this time set back behind the garage roller-door.

In support of the application, a design statement claims that the change would have no detrimental effect on the character or visual quality of the surrounding conservation area, would not impair neighbours' standard of living, and is no different to an existing consented office use further up the lane. It also points out the proximity of good public transport.

Local residents have opposed development here ever since it became clear that a like-for-like replacement of the original lock-up was not intended.

This latest application was wearily expected, although locals are nonetheless infuriated by it. *Spurtle* hears they will object strenuously again, and that they draw little comfort from a previous refusal of office use here (Ref. 14/01419/FUL) being upheld on appeal last August. The latest design statement specifically addresses the grounds for that appeal decision.

Such have been the extraordinary convolutions in this case that some locals involved now have little confidence in officials' competence, whilst others – regrettably – have even begun to question their probity.

*Spurtle* would not go that far, but we are certainly concerned at any public perception that 'development by stealth' is not only possible but increasingly the norm.

## LOCALS CONTINUE UPHILL STRUGGLE ON LEITH WALK

Leith Central Community Council is urging the Council to stop dragging its feet over repairs to Leith Walk between Pilrig Street and Picardy Place.

Of the £10m exclusively earmarked for Leith Walk repairs seven years ago, LCCC estimates that £4m may be left now that work is nearly complete from Pilrig Street down to the Foot of the Walk.

It wants this money spent now (focusing on tram-proofed sections), not indefinitely mothballed while CEC swithers over tramline extensions and Picardy Place development.

This aspiration – which *Spurtle* understands is shared and promoted by local councillors, often behind the scenes – is in addition to LCCC's demands for short-term patching of potholes along Leith Walk which pose a danger to cyclists. Officials have recently claimed there is no budget for such essential maintenance.

LCCC also seeks clarification on precisely which sections of Leith Walk have already been tram-proofed, with utilities diverted and the road reinforced where necessary. Officials are inexplicably

## YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER AIMS HIGH



This stunning image was captured by 17-year-old Drummond CHS sixth-former Gregg Howitt. It was part of a portfolio which saw him highly commended last month in the youth category of the Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year competition. An interview with him appeared on our website on 19.1.15. For more images see: [www.greighowittphotography.com](http://www.greighowittphotography.com)

## BROUGHTON'S GUINEA-PIGS RECYCLE MORE COLOURFULLY

A trial of new, simpler recycling arrangements for tenements will start in Bellevue this month and run for at least 6 months. Those affected – on Bellevue Gardens / Place / Road / Street / Terrace, Claremont Crescent, Melgund Terrace, E. Claremont and W. Annandale Streets should already have received a letter and explanatory leaflet. Red and blue box collections will stop.

Green-topped communal bins will be for: paper, cardboard, juice cartons plastic bottles, lids, pots, tubs, trays, tins, cans, aerosols and foil. (Everything you used to put in blue and red boxes, except glass.) Purple-topped communal bins will be for glass. Grey-topped communal bins will be for food waste (wrapped in newspaper or compostable bags). Black-topped bins are for non-recyclable waste, as before.

vague and unhelpful on such questions despite repeated requests for information.

### Criticism

Meanwhile, LCCC has reacted scathingly to a CEC review criticising its own Leith Programme. The report (to the Finance and Resources Subcommittee on 15 January) praised staff agility, strong stakeholder arrangements and involvement by elected representatives.

However, it gave an overall Amber/Red assessment and said the programme 'would benefit greatly through strengthened governance arrangements, and the clarification of responsibilities, decision making and escalation processes'.

Vice Chair Harald Tobermann noted that one of LCCC's stakeholders had resigned in frustration, and that agility in this context was an incomprehensible term. His preference was for a stable plan implemented sharply.

'I share the review's doubts regarding governance arrangements,' he told *Spurtle*. 'It's a shame that the report remains silent on how the governance concerns have been addressed.'

## Briefly



**Life Story** at 53 London St (effectively the foot of Broughton St) is **under new management**. Susan Doherty took over in Dec, branching out from earlier success at **Hula Juice Bar & Gallery** on the West Bow. New stock reflects her own taste, with an increased emphasis on **clothes, shoes and Scandinavian design**.

Welcome to new Scottish restaurant **The Riparian Rooms**, which opened at the Broughton/E. London St corner last month.

**‘Creativity Takes Courage’**: Edinburgh University students will exhibit **artworks** (whilst also raising funds and awareness for **Maggie’s Centres**) at 6 Dundas St from 7–9 Feb.

**Friends of the Rocheid Path** meet on Sun 8 Feb, 10am–2pm, to tackle brambles, saplings, laurel and rubbish along the peaceful **Canonmills to Inverleith** corridor. Peaceful, that is, except for the snap of secateurs, the clickety-click of litter-pickers, the crash of toppled foliage, and **unspeakably awful grunts** which disturb it on the second Sunday of each month.

Little realising the amusement it would cause in some circles, City of Edinburgh Council’s **Planning Dept** tweeted on 12 Jan that its **100 Years of Planning** exhibition had not made it to the Gyle Shopping Centre on time due to ‘unforeseen circumstances’.

**Central Edinburgh Book Group** meets on 10 Feb at 6.30pm in McDonald Rd Library to discuss Stefan Zweig’s *The Post Office Girl*. **All welcome**.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has appointed Edinburgh City Centre’s **Marco Biagi MSP** as Minister for **Local Government and Community Empowerment**. For revised surgery times, see page 4.

An independent study of **12 Edinburgh not-for-profit news sites** appeared in early Dec. Social-media analyst Ally Tibbitt looked at all URLs with 4+ shares across **Facebook, Twitter, G+, and LinkedIn** (253 in total) over the previous 12 months. He found that the greatest proportion (36%) originated at the *Spurtle*. Muirhouse Residents followed with 23% and Greener Leith with 20%. Social media platforms, Tibbitt says, are key to **spreading hyperlocals’ messages**. For chapter and verse visit: <http://goo.gl/YBg20Y>

## Favourite hotspot



**No prizes for guessing where this is**. It comes from a poster by Edinburgh artist **Tommy Perman**, and was commissioned by the **Red Door Gallery** as part of its **Famous Night** project in which designers are asked to commemorate a ‘dream gig’ of their own choosing. Perman resurrected the late-‘90s **Café Graffiti** nightclub in today’s **Mansfield-Traquair Centre**. His **longed-for line-up** included **Dabrye, King Creasote, Matthew Herbert’s Big, and tapes and dim sum**. For more see: <http://goo.gl/AE677i>

## Peers hail hammer thrower Reed



**Broughton’s hammer-throwing heroine Kimberley Reed** had a roller-coaster 2014.

She **missed the cut for the Commonwealth Games**, but then went on to compete well at the highest level for her age group in the final of the **World Junior Championships** in Eugene, Oregon (website, 27.7.14).

Late last month, a ‘shocked’ but ecstatic Reed was recognised as the **Scottish Under-20 Athlete of the Year** in Scottish Athletics’ annual awards ceremony in Glasgow.

She spoke afterwards of her hunger for future success, and the desire to emulate fellow award winner **Eilidh Child** (pictured with Kimberley above).

## Use of civic space in Council’s sights

Readers of *Spurtle’s* website will have noticed the considerable coverage we’ve given to George Street and St Andrew Square over recent months.

We’ve particularly criticised the extent and frequency of Essential Edinburgh’s events programme in the square, not because we’re snooty kill-joys but because we want its original purpose – as a tranquil green point of punctuation at the end of George St’s sentence – to be preserved more of the time. Peace and quiet have as much of a right to the city centre as marquees, bright lights and helter skelters.

Coincidentally, it emerged last month that CEC is moving towards a root-and-branch reassessment of how Edinburgh’s civic space is used, not least for commercial purposes. Parks are already covered in a separate document.

Work on this ‘Public Spaces Manifesto’, for the Corporate Policy and Strategy Subcommittee, is likely to begin in March and last two years.

*Spurtle* thinks this wide-arranging reappraisal is long overdue and very welcome. Read more about it in our online coverage (20.1.15). See also former Edinburgh Makar and local resident Stewart Conn’s poem about St Andrew Square here on p.3.

## Fresh start for Kail Kirk

The Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) moved in at the Glasite Meeting House on Barony Street in November, *writes staff member Victoria Scarth*.

SHBT is a charity which saves important historic buildings at risk through conserving and adapting them to new uses. We’ve been operating for over 35 years (with a few name changes) and have saved over 30 historic buildings in that time.

At the Glasite Meeting House, the challenge is a bit different. It is a remarkable survivor, built by the Glasite congregation in 1836 and continuing in their use until 1989. It’s been generally well cared for, but it is now little used and access and facilities for those in wheelchairs are very limited.

SHBT has already increased footfall with an exhibition, and there are plans for a pop-up cinema during the Science Festival at Easter. But we’re keen to know what the local community wants from the space.

Please come to our Open Evening, 5.30–8.00pm on Wed. 12 February (refreshments served), when we’ll describe the building’s history and look forward to hearing your ideas about its possible future.



## Big beastie, out of the Deep

No, not Ursula Andress, but Broughton's Kelvin Murray emerging from another polar plunge as part of a far from humdrum day's work at the top or bottom of the Frozen Planet's more liquid surroundings.

Murray is an Arctic and Antarctic adventurer, spending up to eight months a year leading expeditions, studying and lecturing on wildlife, and protecting visitors from themselves and the hungrier elements of the world's most inaccessible places.

*Spartle* interviewed him in-depth last month, and you can read about his views on the wilderness, his hair-raising encounter with a leopard seal, and the not-so-bleak-as-you-might-imagine future for polar bears on our website (6.2.15).



Photo by George Grassie.

## Local ladies boxing clever

Local resident Maidie Cahill (right) acquired the Drummond Place police box in the latest round of sales, and plans to use it as a place of refuge and glorified filing cabinet for Civic Association paperwork. It has light, heat, running water, and is home at the moment to numerous old Lothian & Borders Constabulary parking tickets.

Meanwhile, down the road, another local has plans for the police box at Canonmills. Moira Ross means to turn it into a flower stall on Saturdays and Sundays, with an exterior blackboard on which the public can chalk any wildlife sightings made during walks beside the Water of Leith. She hopes to open in late February.



## Wrong date by gate grates

*Spartle*'s Tim Smith is trying to find out who's responsible for a sign outside Rosebank Cemetery.

It helpfully alerts visitors and passers-by to the Gretna Memorial within, but does so with a careless disregard for the tragedy's true date: 1915.

Smith hopes a replacement sign can be found in time for commemorations of the Quintinshill rail disaster's 100th anniversary. See Bill Dunlop's article in *Issue 159*.



## St Andrew Square

At the mercy of the elements, does Henry Dundas aloof on his fluted column in St Andrew Square ponder having been the most powerful politician of his day, Scotland's voters in his pocket, or divorce from the young wife who brought title and fortune, later his impeachment and exclusion from high office?

Either way, unlikely he looks kindly on the skaters circling below, the screeches from the helter-skelter and festooned carousel; far less, as a break in the clouds reveals the view across the Forth, the American couple emerging from Harvey Nick's and her 'honey, I didn't realise France was so close'.

Stewart Conn

Over 27 dachshunds assembled last month for an informal afternoon get-together at Napier Bathrooms & Interiors in Canonmills. Managing director Johnny Bacigalupo realised low-slung chums like Alfie (right) needed a dry spot to meet mid-winter, and that his shop's floor to ceiling tiles would minimise any minor embarrassments during such an exciting event. See *website* (24.1.15).



## Briefly



Local activist **Alex Wilson** died in early Dec. At various times a Leith Walk Business Association chair, **Leith Central Community Councillor**, Leith Civic Trust chair, Scottish Democratic Alliance candidate for the Leith Walk ward and self-published thriller writer (*website*, 20.4.12), Wilson was an articulate, likeable, tenacious and sometimes exasperating champion of local causes. A **trained engineer**, he was no fan of the trams or the disruptive effect of preparing for them upon Leith Walk. LCCC's appreciation of him appears at: <http://goo.gl/ab7WCr>

**Forsyth's global finial** – formerly a Princes St landmark opposite the Scott Monument – has still not been restored or replaced by **Topshop owner** Sir Philip Green's Arcadia group. We urge you to sign **Lost Edinburgh's e-petition** demanding that the firm make good: [<http://goo.gl/k1bRr2>].

Tesco is to close **43 unprofitable shops** across the UK as part of cost-cutting measures, it announced last month. The vast majority will be **'local convenience stores'**, although which will not become clear for several months.

Welcome to the **Edinburgh Tile Studio** at 11 Howard Pl. Not only natural stones, porcelains, ceramics, mosaics and hand-painted designs, but also full design, service and even bespoke furniture.

**City Centre & Leith Neighbourhood** services have moved to new premises at 249 High St. Alternatively, you can reach them at Leith Library, 28–30 Ferry Rd.

A Green and pleasant but distracted **Leith councillor, Chas Booth**, tweeted from halfway through political proceedings last month: 'Surreal @EdinburghGreens meet at Broughton St Mary's, @Maggie4Scotland on Smith Commission while brass band play "Jerusalem" in next room'. **In response to comments** which followed from the world outside, Booth concluded: 'As Greens we prefer non-violence to spears and swords [...] I'm not sure a "Chariot of Fire" counts as sustainable transport either'.

The **11th Broughton St Mary's Scout Group** has pitched camp in a new website. Expect news and e-ging-gang-goolly-goolly-goolly-goolly-gotchaing at: <http://goo.gl/Q0EyoI>

**New pedestrian facilities** are coming, probably in 2015/16: (1) a signalised crossing on **London St** at Drummond Place (cost £40k); (2) a traffic refuge/build-out on **Pilrig St** at Cambridge Av (cost £15k).

# Moreover ...



The New Town Store – and ‘hidden’ coffee bar within – at 39 Dundas Street has closed. The owner had seen which way the wind was blowing as soon as **Tesco’s imminent presence** opposite became clear. Unable to renegotiate the lease, she cut her losses before they began. The shop – purveyor of newspapers, *Spurtles*, **all manner of domestic requisites**, home baking, organic sandwiches, vegetarian and gluten-free delights, homemade soup, hot rolls, paninis, wraps, **warm smiles and personal service** will be sorely missed.

*Spurtle* was delighted to chat to former Bellevue resident **Jim Suddon** recently. He recalled his outrage when **Mrs Cameron**, one half of the husband-and-wife team who ran a newsagent’s shop at **4 Melgund Terrace**, refused to sell him fireworks shortly after the war. ‘The law has changed,’ she admonished him. ‘**You have to be 7.**’

Local community councils meet on: 9 Feb (**New Town & Broughton**, Broughton St Mary’s, 7.30pm); 16 Feb (**Leith Central**, McDonald Rd Library, 7pm); 18 Feb (**Stockbridge & Inverleith**, Stockbridge Parish Church, Saxe Coburg St, 7pm).

**Broughton History Society** meets next on 9 February in Drummond CHS at 7pm. **Peter Stubbs** will talk on ‘Old Photographs and Recollections of Broughton’.

A new history of **St Mary’s Metropolitan Cathedral 1814–2014: Most Beloved Gate of Heaven** has just been published. Dr Darren Tierney’s work costs £10 and can be collected (without £2.50 p&p) from the blessed front door at 61 York Place by prior arrangement: Tel. 556 1798. **We’ll review it soon.**

On the **15th of each month** throughout **2015 Concrete Wardrobe** is offering a **15% discount** on spends of over **£15**. It’s all to celebrate their **15th anniversary**. James Donald and Fiona McIntosh began within Concrete Butterfly in 2000 on the Cowgate, and have sold quality, **Scottish-designed craft objects** at 50a Broughton St since 2007.

The **mysterious interior** behind the scruffy door at **134 Dundas St** will soon be revealed. The long thin corridor has been refurbished and will reopen as a **long thin e-cigarette and computer repair shop**. Short fat computers will also be fixed, although all but the slimmest owners should exhale before entering.

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## Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month during term time I hold a surgery for Lothian residents at the Scottish Parliament between 11am and 1pm.

Please call to book a surgery appointment or to arrange another time and venue that is convenient for you.

Contact me on 0131 348 6421  
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**Friday advice sessions:**  
4.00pm **Stockbridge Library**,  
no appointment necessary;  
5.00pm **5 Croall Place**;  
other surgeries throughout the  
constituency – phone for details

## New Town/Broughton Community Council

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
REPRESENTS THE VIEWS  
OF LOCAL RESIDENTS TO  
EDINBURGH CITY COUNCIL

Next Meeting:

9 February  
at 7.30pm

**Broughton St Mary’s Parish  
Church, Bellevue Crescent**

[www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/](http://www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/)

## AM DECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**  
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