

# Spurtle

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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

**September  
2009**

**No 174**

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## CEC APPROVES PICARDY PLACE OUTLINES

CEC's Planning Subcommittee approved development principles for Picardy Place on 6 August after public consultation earlier this year (Issue 169). Some important concessions have been made.

New building is now envisaged only along Leith Walk and Leith St, not directly opposite Picardy Place itself.

A new high-quality open public space is proposed between Little King St and the tramstop near the Bank of Scotland. This should maintain an open outlook for St Mary's Cathedral and perhaps even improve its setting.

More emphasis has been given to cyclists' and pedestrians' needs. Lothian and Borders Police were particularly concerned about safety for large numbers of people leaving shows at the Omni or Playhouse, and recommended use of guardrails. Discussions continue with the Head of Transport about traffic flows and prioritising different users at various times of day.

CEC favours erecting some landmark building here to signal a city gateway, but promises to 'address the concerns of respondents,' particularly Cathedral representatives. HGI (owners of the St James Centre) will support a limited design competition, but sceptics still suspect a hotel may eventually screen the Cathedral.

All in all, it's a mixed bag. Imaginative and sensitive redevelopment could boost the area. But commercial pressure and the prospect of financial gains could push CEC into bad compromises along the way. Vigilance will be required.

See: [[http://cpol.edinburgh.gov.uk/getdoc\\_ext.asp?DocID=129008](http://cpol.edinburgh.gov.uk/getdoc_ext.asp?DocID=129008)].

## PASSION IN PILRIG



*Varied, vibrant, sometimes thought-provoking, the Mela returned in style to Pilrig Park on 7-9 August. Mixed weather did not deter the performers or large crowds, who seemed to appreciate the event's reappearance here after last year's far-flung wash-out at Ocean Terminal.*

## LEITH WALK TRADERS ALARMED

A Sainsbury Local – normally either 2,000ft<sup>2</sup> or 6,000ft<sup>2</sup> (190–560m<sup>2</sup>), offering 'top-up shop and grab-and-go offers' – is reputedly first in line for groundfloor commercial space in Rezidor's planned Park Inn development adjoining McDonald Rd Library (Ref. 09/01267/PAN). A Tesco Express already exists opposite and a Scotmid nearby at 370 Leith Walk.

New Town and Broughton Community Council took part in pre-application assessment of plans in July as a dummy run for new legislative arrangements (see p. 2). It made wise suggestions about the hotel's roofline, entrance, a nearby junction, and architectural articulation. But it appears not to have regarded the supermarket-friendly dimensions of the plan's commercial element as problematic, or considered that this novel pre-application stage was an opportunity to intervene. Even at NTBCC's later 3 Aug. meeting, mention of Sainsbury's interest provoked no comment.

So, for the second time in 6 months (see Issue 169) – and despite widely articulated disquiet – NTBCC has not addressed the likely effects of a national supermarket chain parachuting into Broughton. *Spurtle* estimates at least 16 local businesses could be affected between Elm Row and Pilrig Street. How will residents and traders react?

## TIE DIGGING DISTURBS OLD BROUGHTONIANS

TIE contractors working at the junction of London Rd and Leith Walk discovered ancient remains on 24 July.

So far 10 bodies have been found, including those of 2 infants, in 3 burials one on top of the other. City Archaeologist John Lawson is working on the assumption that they have found a graveyard, perhaps one associated with the Carmelite Friary established in 1520 at Greenside, 328ft (100m) away. Possible boundary walls and some pottery have also been found. The well-preserved remains may be those of lepers who spent their last years in a hospital established at the former friary by John Robertson, merchant, in 1591. (Grant notes that the hospital was equipped with a gallows to deter patients from wandering beyond the precincts.\*) Detailed forensic work and carbon dating, forming part of a wider project, will take years.

Broughton is potentially very rich in medieval archaeology, says Lawson, but little work has been done here because the area's listed architecture limits ground breaking. [\*Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh*, 1882: Vol III, p. 102; see also [http://download.edinburgh.gov.uk/calton/append\\_5.pdf](http://download.edinburgh.gov.uk/calton/append_5.pdf)]

## Briefly

An open evening showcasing **Drummond CHS's Adult Education Classes** will take place at the school on 8 Sep., 6–8pm.

**Broughton History Society** meets in Drummond CHS, 7.30pm on 14 Sep. Graeme Cruickshank will talk on 'Edinburgh's Other Burgh: the Story of the Canongate'. Yearly subscription £8, visitors £2 per meeting.

Activists promoting a **Scotland St Tunnel youth shelter** have hit a snag. Cast-iron CEC assurances that the tunnel was not listed were rusty. More complicated planning protocols will now delay progress till at least the autumn.

The controversial (Issues 147, 155, 168) fire-damaged townhouse at **51–3 East Claremont St** is for sale again: [www.murrayandcurrie.com].

Spotted at the **Barony Bar** in Aug., **Peter Blake** – the celebrated Pop artist – wearing a magnificent black-and-white chequered suit and panama hat. His exhibition at the Printmakers Workshop has been much admired: [www.edinburgh-printmakers.co.uk/artpages/peter\_blake/index.htm]

**Funny and unhelpful.** Just as CEC Parks guided Britain in Bloom judges around carefully selected capital beauty spots in a locked stretch-limousine on 3 Aug. (Issue 173), some wit added a sign to the Mansfield Place floral whisky still: **BEWARE OF THE TRIFFID!**

New Town residents are the latest victims of **Broughton's crime tsunami**. 8 brass kickplates on Drummond Place and Dundonald St front doors have been pinched recently. It is feared they've gone to feed the insatiable appetite for **Georgian architectural details** in China, where they are prized for their aphrodisiac qualities.

## Make a difference!

To become New Town and Broughton Community Councillors, groups or individuals should get a nomination form from Returning Officer Cllr Beckett: Tel. 529 3271 [david.beckett@edinburgh.gov.uk]. Available from 31 Aug., forms should be returned by 14 Sep. If the nominees exceed places (just 9 of 16 places are currently filled), an election will be held on 15 October.

Successful candidates will serve for 3 years. Tel. 469 3838 or visit [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/community.councils].

## Drummond girl a strong prospect

Drummond CHS pupil Kimberley Reed of Edinburgh Athletic Club won the Under-15s Hammer event at the English AAA Championships (15 Aug.). Kimberley, 14, who took up the event only 4 months ago, threw a distance of 150ft (45m 73cm). A week later she placed 1st in the Hammer and 2nd in the Discus at the Scottish Championships (under-15s). She is now among Scotland's top 10 throwers for her age at Shot Put, Discus, Javelin and Hammer.

Kimberley trains on wasteland at Turnhouse next to the airport, as well as at Meadowbank and elsewhere. Her recent medals include: Gold in the Javelin and Discus at the Edinburgh Schools Championships, and in the Hammer at the Scottish Schools Championships; and 1st in the Scottish Schools U-15 Inter Area Discus.



Photo courtesy of Scott Reed.

## New law affects Broughton

New legal measures, effective from 3 August, have changed how Scotland's public will be consulted on national and major planning applications.

As part of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act, developers must state how they will consult locals through meetings and community councils at least 12 weeks before making a planning application. Meetings must be advertised at least 7 days prior in the local press. In Edinburgh, Neighbourhood Partnerships must provide resources to help community councils in this process.

The law is intended to speed up the planning process and aid efficient economic development, but some experienced insiders say it may actually slow things down, especially if overstretched city-central community councils become procedural bottle-necks.

On the positive side, it places community councils under a statutory requirement to proactively seek public opinion. Remote, cliquey or complacent CCs will not survive. On the negative side, it may be expensive to run and there are still grey areas in, for example, what CEC considers 'major' proposals and 'material' grounds for objection. Here, the public wants clarity, but CEC wants to avoid offering too explicit definitions to corporate lawyers.

There remains one imponderable: how will the public respond? *Spurtle* hopes more people will get involved. Planning is too important to be left to the experts. See [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/modernisingplanning].

## Signed, sealed and not delivered

I missed a parcel delivery, writes *Fiona of Shaw's Terrace*, so used the new online service to get it delivered to my local post office (50p charge – not much, but wrong in principle as the delivery has already been paid for). I then went to Elm Row, who didn't have it. Apparently they've opted out of this arrangement, but no-one had told the online service. So a whole load of parcels were now in limbo, possibly en route back to the Siberia that is E. Telferton Industrial Estate. I phoned up E. Telferton, waited ages, then was told, 'We'll send it back to Elm Row – we told them that if they wanted to remain part of Royal Mail, they'd have to take parcels.' That's them told then. I'll return tomorrow, full of optimism. What was it about E. Telferton bringing 'improved' service? Am I missing something or, worse, becoming a postal bore? Either way, the situation's parical.

## Spurtle-leggit local strides out

John Dickie of Hopetoun Cres. has completed a 66-mile sponsored walk. Starting at 4.30am, he reached the Falkirk Wheel at 3.15pm, and got back 22 hours later. John said: 'The adrenalin drained away fast as soon as I reached the finishing point; I was really exhausted ... but no muscles or joints let me down, and any aches and pains have now gone.' Funds went to The Medical Foundation, helping survivors of torture with therapy, practical help, and advice. *FW*



## Canine capers' serious contribution

Following last year's success, writes *Stephanie Scott*, Doggie Fun Sunday returns on 20 Sep., 2-4pm, in Queen St Gdns East. Entrance (next to Aitken & Nairn, Abercromby Place) is by donation. Competitions include prettiest pooch, best 6 legs, catch the biscuit, waggiest tail, agility, and much more (£1 per dog per class). There will also be a raffle and other attractions.

The fund-raising's for Canine Partners, a charity providing trained assistance dogs (100+ tasks) for those with disabilities. CP now has 3 'partnerships' (a dog living/working with a disabled person); 5 more people will shortly get dogs taught to meet their specific needs. The physical and emotional difference they make helps disabled people live fuller, more independent lives. Tel. 557 2762 or [www.caninepartners.co.uk].



*New recruit Zula awaits instruction.*

## John Sheriff (c.1775–1844): eccentric

John Sheriff (JS) delighted and appalled Edinburgh in the 1840s. He unsettled a public used to formality, transgressing norms in ways difficult to police.

Born in Dumfriesshire, he worked in the capital's Cess Office until, following a romantic heartbreak, 'morbid misanthropy' overwhelmed him. Sympathetic St James Square neighbours and Silvermills friends offered support, funding his attendance at university lectures, church meetings and public demonstrations of all sorts (including the Disruption procession to Tanfield in 1843). He adopted old-fashioned, quasi-military costume: brightly polished Hessian boots, green glasses, low-crowned hat and occasional peacock feathers. Resemblance to a famous Rowlandson caricature (perhaps more for his misadventures than physical appearance) earned him the nickname 'Dr Syntax'.

JS became notorious for singing loudly and unmusically at services, occupying reserved pews, and distracting ministers during sermons

by sketching them or conspicuously taking notes. He was often ejected. Some claimed he was motivated by desire to confound his detractors; but for all his monomania, remarked Crombie (1883), '... there was a harmlessness and innocence about him which made him a general favourite'.

JS died at the Royal Infirmary from a lingering cold, refusing treatment because he believed doctors wanted to poison him. His Warriston Cemetery headstone (F:14) was erected by 'THOSE WHO MOURN THE LOSS OF SYNTAX'.  
AM



## Briefly

**Summer trials of pest-proof bin-bags** around Dundas and Great King Sts have been postponed until autumn, partly due to industrial action by CEC binmen. Meanwhile, Christopher Docker of Hart St notes: 'Gulls *can* be dissuaded from ransacking morning rubbish bags ... **a few drops of bleach** in a bag is all that's needed. Those sprays sold at the "everything for a pound" shop in the St James Centre are ideal.'

Comedian **Craig Hill** chose **Drummond Tennis Club** (E. Scotland St Lane) as the location for a recent publicity shot. The revealing image [www.artsguildtheatre.co.uk/whatson.asp] has set some members' heads aflutter, and it's said many matches have been lost to love this season. The **saucy boy**, who has just turned a vivacious 40, left a message to say he had '**snuck in when no-one was looking**'.

Brian Rafferty's success establishing the **Broughton St Bookshop** has been publicly recognised. The former W. Lothian College student has been awarded a commemorative certificate and £300 by Scotland's Colleges and the Federation of Small Businesses.

**Drummond CHS** is running a lunchtime **Ramadan Club** where students can relax, pray, and take part in games and projects. **Radio Ramadan Edinburgh** – a not-for-profit community-based, outfit – broadcasts in Arabic, Bengali, English, Punjabi and Urdu on **87.7 FM**, 21 Aug.–21 Sep. Schedule at: [www.radioramadanedinburgh.com].

Broughton History Society's plaque commemorating the **Barony St 'Soldier's Tree'** has been found. CEC sources say it's definitely in the Museum Collections Service at Broughton Market, or in a city-centre office. It will be remounted asap, thanks either to **Parks and Green Spaces** or the **Housing and Regeneration Department, not Plaques and Memorials** or the **North Network Partnership** as they'd previously stated.

**Logie Green Developments** want to make material alterations to the position and layout of parking at their site on **Beaverbank Place** (Issues 159/169). As luck would have it, 1 extra study bedroom and 3 more studios are now possible [Ref. 09/01969/FUL].

**Rodney St Tunnel** was officially opened on 30 July during a **Celebration of Cycling Day**. Cllr Mackenzie cut the tape and welcomed young Edinburgh cyclists who had pedalled over from Glasgow with a police escort. Observers were heartened by the **large number of CEC officials** able to attend and enjoy free food and refreshments.

# Belle's View



*Hi fans*

Well, that's the Festival over with again, and thank heavens, I'm like a wrung-out cloth! What's for fun in sunny September in Broughton?

When the nights draw in, it's great to be able to snuggle down with a really good book in front of a roaring ... um ... convector heater, but why not do that in the pub while meeting some new and interesting like-minded people? **Joseph Pearce's** bar is hosting a monthly book club, with the next meeting on 14 Sep., 7-9pm. Call Anna for details of the current rip-roaring read! (Tel. 556 4140; [www.bodabar.com](http://www.bodabar.com))

Or maybe you're in the mood for 'a tale as old as time'? One of the most popular and enchantingly romantic stories ever told is coming to the **Edinburgh Playhouse** in Disney's multi-award winning musical **Beauty & the Beast**. Feel the magic, sing the songs, and roar along with the Beast in this brilliant musical! (23 Sep.-3 Oct., 2.5 hrs, tix various prices; [www.edinburghplayhouse.org.uk](http://www.edinburghplayhouse.org.uk))

And if oncoming autumn is bringing on a fungi frenzy among you, get along to the **Fungi Surgery** at **Valvona and Crolla** on **Elm Row**, where **Professor Roy Watling MBE**, Consultant Mycologist, will give your wild mushrooms or fungi the once over to make sure you don't poison yourself! Please remember that wild fungi can kill and should only be eaten if absolutely sure of identification. Top advice! Free, 10am-12pm, Mondays 14/28 Sep. [<http://www.valvonacrolla.co.uk>].

Till next time!

*Persephone Rene*

Edinburghers blinded ...



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9am Leith Library  
10.30am Royston/Wardieburn  
Community Centre  
12pm Stockbridge Library

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[www.marklazarowicz.org.uk](http://www.marklazarowicz.org.uk)  
Friday advice sessions:  
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,  
42 Hamilton Place  
5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre  
6.00pm Constituency Office

## New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

**Next meeting on:**  
7 Sep. at 7.00pm  
Drummond Community  
High School  
(Meeting will include  
a TIE presentation on  
local tramworks issues)

[mowats@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mowats@blueyonder.co.uk)

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