

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

**January
2010**

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SCHOOLS FACE SQUEEZE

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) will announce its budget on 12 February. Schools throughout the capital expect bad news.

CEC told headteachers to identify 2.5% cuts from their devolved budgets (textbooks, stationery, buildings upkeep, salaries) for 2010/13. At Broughton PS, the estimated reductions are £50K this year, £80K in 2011/12 and £112K in 2012/13. At secondaries, cuts will be proportionate but bigger. Given that schools already face ongoing 1.5% 'efficiency savings' each year, many feel there is nothing left to trim but staff. This headteachers have refused to do, citing likely effects on e.g. Curriculum for Excellence, number of subjects offered and learning support.

How dire matters have become was shown in November when Edinburgh Primary Schools Headteachers' Assoc. (EPSHA) recommended school closures. Each closed primary would save £300K pa, and each closed secondary £1m pa: enough for remaining schools (albeit with more pupils) to maintain standards. CEC endorsed their line, voting on 18 December to shut 4 primaries in summer 2010. By doing so it expects to save £5m in running costs over 5 years, and to raise £3.25m by selling sites.

'CEC was warned last year that further cuts would damage children's educations,' says Gordon Chrumka, Broughton PS's Parent Council Chair. 'They found money to limit the impact then, but now they're proposing massive cuts and imposing additional burdens that would certainly affect all Edinburgh schools.' See 'Extras' online for the full EPSHA response.

REID THE HEID HEADS WEST

Headteacher Jon Reid left Drummond CHS at the end of December for another headteacher job at his previous school: Larbert High in Falkirk.

Interviews for a permanent successor are scheduled for early January. The experienced Douglas Follan will serve as Acting Head in the interim.

Reid gave various reasons for leaving. Larbert, with 1,800 pupils, is certainly a professional step-up. But the clincher was personal: his wife teaches in W. Lothian where holiday times don't match Edinburgh's and so considerably complicate the couple's present child-care arrangements.

'It's with a really heavy heart that I'm leaving,' he told *Spurtle*. 'The school is in a good place and much has been achieved over the last 3 years. However, it's also in a good place – with a great team – to continue moving forward. The hardest thing will be leaving the young people.'

Reid has been a dynamic and popular leader who, in addition to building on existing strengths, strove to improve discipline, achievement, and teaching. His confidence and eye-catching innovations also rekindled optimism outwith the school gates. We wish him well. (See 'Extras' online.)



SHE SHOWS SEA CLOTHES



Drummond CHS Librarian Annie Scanlon will give a talk on her collection of swimsuits, swimming caps and beach accessories later this month. She's raising money for senior students to visit partner schools in Kenya.

Her collection features over 60 swimsuits and 80 hats from the early 1900s up to the present, and is still growing. Some items have been borrowed for exhibitions in museums and galleries elsewhere in Britain. They give an amusing insight into holidays and sport over the last century: everything from baggy bloomers to sparkling beauty queens. Audience members are welcome to handle and even try on the swimsuits, if brave enough.

The talk is at 7pm on 20 January, Drummond CHS. Tickets £4.00. See 'Events' online for full details.

PICARDY PLANS ON DISPLAY

Plans for Picardy Place will be exhibited in the St James Centre for one day only in February (date and venue to be confirmed – track 'Breaking news' online). Statutory consultees and members of the public will be invited.

Despite official reassurances (Issue 176), unease continues about the scale and siting of a new Thistle Hotel opposite the Omni Centre, and its effect on views of St Mary's Cathedral. There are also worries that, in the present economic climate, CEC will do almost anything to ensure developers continue the project.

The New Town/Broughton Community Council welcomes the exhibition, and will formally respond later. For now, the hotel plans remain proposals and are not set in stone.

Briefly

Sharp-eyed locals queried Issue 177 which was dated 'December 2010'. This simply reflected *Spurtle's* forward-thinking policy of reporting **tomorrow's news today**. We now wish all readers a happy 2011.

Pupils and staff at state schools return for the **Spring Term** on Wed. 6 Jan.

The ingenious plan to convert **11-13 York Lane** into an ancillary function room for the Ballantrae Hotel on Albany St (Issue 177) has, less ingeniously, been **withdrawn**.

Broughton Local History Society meets at 7.30pm in Drummond CHS on Mon. 11 Jan. David Wright will talk on '**Medicine and Medical Men in North Edinburgh**'.

Glad tidings! A splendid new **Tyrannosaurus Rex** lurks in the foliage outside **Real Foods**. His predecessor was spirited away by some **mean-minded rapscallion**. Beware of this one. He has Scottish blood. His motto is *Nemo me impune lacessit*.

Now that Listed Building Consent has been granted and sufficient funds are in place, work can start (perhaps as early as 11 Jan.) on Phase I of the **Scotland St Tunnel Project**. The brick infill will be demolished and a steel screen installed. Next, more funding will be sought to improve lighting, create a youth centre within the tunnel, and upgrade the run-down eastern end of King George V Park.

The number of **car windscreens smashed at night** in Broughton this year (Issue 177) has now risen to 70. It's suspected that someone is running across vehicles. Leith-based police are stepping up enquiries.

Insightful, funny, and informed – **Alison Auldjo's** account of life in Broughton St's **Union Gallery** makes fascinating reading. You can **follow the blog with the dancing dogs** at [www.uniongallery.co.uk].

Threadbare, Broughton St's vintage clothing emporium, launched a menswear section in mid-Dec. Look out for the **We Love Pumpkin** label for **unique sportswear, tweeds, kilts et al**. This is the brainchild of former Scottish rugby international **Donnie MacFadyen**, who will expand the collection in Jan. And who is Pumpkin? Why, a class **act!**

Straws in the wind: rumours suggest that as part of the proposed St James Quarter plans, **John Lewis may relocate**. Until now it was assumed JL would be the one constant. If you can provide more detail, we will gladly report the difference.

Following *Spurtle's* prompting, the 'Community Guide', issued free to **2nd-year Edinburgh University students** has gone online. With practical advice about **tenants' rights, responsibilities and justifiable expectations**, it's also useful for landlords and neighbours – especially those in tenements. See [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/accommodationfinder/howitworks].

Dublin St faces leftie invasion

Dublin St residents have been warned that a temporary 6-week reopening at Queen St may be necessary in the New Year. Traffic lights have already appeared in readiness for left-turns into Dublin St and left-turns out.

In August (Issue 173) we reported plans to divert traffic around tramworks via McDonald, Annandale, E. London, Broughton and Albany Sts, Abercromby Place and Dundas St. Now works at Picardy Place and the top of Broughton St (where a British Telecom chamber must be moved) require diversions from 9 January to at least the end of February. There will inevitably be repercussions for parking and amenity, and residents, traders and emergency services have raised issues.

But Dublin St's reopening really will be temporary. When trams run, a large hump at the top of Dublin St (by which the trams will change level) should effectively block motor vehicles for the foreseeable future.

Park events must benefit all

City community councils have commented on CEC's management strategy to become the UK's 'Events City'. CEC wants to spread Events across Edinburgh (not just Princes St Gardens and the Meadows), making more 'headroom' for major commercial concerns.

But legal and ethical problems arise when land given to the capital as a common good is – some say – hijacked by a few to turn a quick profit. (Restricted access to Inverleith Park during May's 'Taste of Edinburgh' infuriated many.) Problems also occur when events disturb neighbours (as at October's corporate Beefest on Calton Hill).

NTBCC's main recommendation is that commercial events be charged realistic, independently benchmarked rates to use Edinburgh parks. However, genuine, cash-strapped community events should be safeguarded.

Councillor Deirdre Brock commented: 'Addressing the concerns of residents is CEC's raison d'être in this matter. Certainly, many of the problems experienced at Calton Hill have already been dealt with.' For more information, see [www.scottishcommons.org].

Celebrating new community hub

The congregation of Broughton St Mary's Parish Church and guests will hold a Celebration Service and Opening Ceremony on 17 January.

The events mark completion (on schedule) of Phase I in the building's renovation (Issue 163). Extensive remodelling of the lower-level recesses has created new office, meeting and storage spaces, heating, toilets and washrooms, and disabled access. A beautifully light garden-room has been added to the rear.

'Our vision is to take our work and our identity out from the building where we worship into the communities within our parish,' says the Rev. Joanne Hood. 'The service will celebrate our new capability to realise this.'

Pilrig families are on the fiddle



Pilrig Fiddlers were founded in 2004 by Della Penny to promote Scottish traditional folk music classes for local children and families, *writes Harald Tobermann*. Like the *Spurtle*, it's run by volunteers and receives no subsidies. Unlike the *Spurtle*, contributors have included some of the best fiddle tutors in Scotland: Mike Vass, Eilidh Steel, Fiona Dalgetty, Amy Geddes, Sarah-Jane Summers, Rona Wilkie, Morag Brown and Gregor Borland.

A new Absolute Beginners Class starts on 15 January 2010 – continuing on term-time Friday afternoons at Pilrig Church Hall, just off Leith Walk. There's also a limited number of places in other classes – from Improving Beginners to Advanced. Adults welcome, too. Prospective students should contact fiddlesticks@PilrigFiddlers.org.uk or 554 7698 (eves).

Blenheim Placers fight block

Some vociferous Calton Hill residents oppose plans to block traffic turning right from London Rd onto Blenheim Place. They say CEC pretends to address traffic-speed concerns in their area, but cares more about speeding traffic on London Rd and trams on Leith Walk.

If applied, they argue, the change would hit many elderly users of Greenside Place Church who would have to taxi further. It would also force local drivers to negotiate traffic hazards at Abbeyhill. They tried to make officials review the proposal over Christmas.

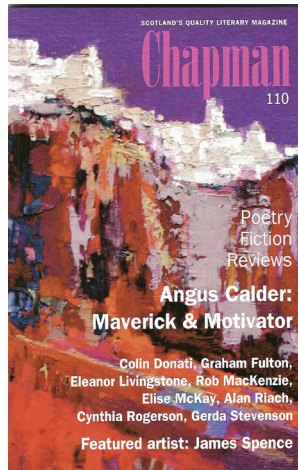
Some neutrals say more meandering and less mumping mightn't go amiss.

Chapman returns

Spurtle welcomes publication of Issue 110 of *Chapman*: Scotland's Quality Literary Magazine'.

It features a pungent salute to the late Angus Calder (historian, poet, political activist inter alia), who is widely admired particularly in these fairly desperate times.

There is, of course, much more in the 174 pages of 'bounty and variety' which *Chapman's* indefatigable editor, Dr Joy Hendry, and her team have assembled at 4 Broughton Place. Copies are widely available. For further information see: [www.chapman-pub.co.uk].

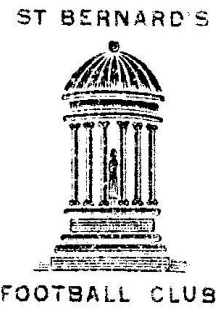


Former glories recalled

Spurtle reader George Park has written the definitive history of St Bernard's FC, a Stockbridge/Canonmills team once based adjacent to today's King George V Park.

In its pomp St Bernard's won the Scottish Cup (1895), but its fortunes changed and the club closed in 1942. Mr Park handles much of the book's distribution himself, and donates profits to CCLASP (Children with Cancer and Leukaemia, Advice and Support for Parents).

St Bernard's FC: or When the Well Ran Dry is available in shops or by post. See 'Extras' online.



From London St to Tate Britain

Opinion on winners of the Turner Prize ranges from the adulatory to the unprintable. Unusually, the work of this year's recipient, Glasgow-born Richard Wright, has received universal praise.

Wright is principally known for his wall paintings and frieze designs which transform indoor spaces into dreamlike images of evanescent beauty. They are also meditations on memory: his works last only as long as an exhibition and are painted over when the show ends. They literally become memory, slumbering under the blank patina of their effacement. *Spurtle* reviewed his mesmeric Garden Rooms 'constellation' created for 20 London St during the 2007 Festival (Issue 151). He also exhibited recently at the Ingleby Gallery in Calton Rd.

His current art-work at Tate Britain in London is a breathtaking design in gold leaf, worked in 'medieval fashion', which will be erased when the exhibition ends this month. Uniquely, however, Wright's next major project will be permanent: a wall painting/design for the great staircase of the Dean Gallery – surely one of the most thrilling additions to the Gallery in many years. *JRM*



Photo by Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd.

Broughton quiz of the year 2009

Jan: A pain in the neck. Which eminent Bellevue Terrace democrat passed away? *Feb*: Enormous great holes opening up are usually unwelcome. What was different about this Rodney St example? *Mar*: Fee-fi-fo-fum – which giant expressed an unwelcome interest in Broughton? *Apr*: 'Dress code: a lick of body paint for the foolhardy, and woolly winter coats for the less hardy!' What was Persephone Belle recommending? *May*: Which unassuming local landmark was temporarily lost but not forgotten? *Jun*: A Broughton St celebrity reappeared after 7 months' mysterious absence alleged to have involved a boozy love triangle? Who was she? *Jul*: 'It was a day when the meanings of community and Jock Tampson's bairns were truly defined and celebrated.' Where? *Aug*: What green man-eater still attracted attention but in a roundabout way? *Sept*: Who bucked political trends and backed compassion? *Oct*: 'The most important event in world publishing since 1994.' Over what development did a *Spurtle* team member lose all sense of proportion? *Nov*: Which Broughton institution reopened amid rockets and bangers? *Dec*: Which Broughton institution seemed doomed to be a haunted chamber? [Answers in 'Briefly', p.4.] *AM*

Japanese Cherry

Moving house, among our first aims was to dispose of a flowering cherry in the back garden we wanted to turn into a play-space for our young sons.

Rather than see it cut down, a neighbour took it in, since when it has kept pace with the one outside our window – so that faces pressed close to the glass,

in season we can glimpse its blossom, pale peach by comparison. At dusk, almost ethereal, it assumes a luminescence all its own, emblem of the soul's migration.

Stewart Conn

We are delighted to print this, the second of three poems offered to Spurtle by the author. It is drawn from his forthcoming collection The Breakfast Room (published by Bloodaxe Books).

Briefly

Theft of handbags in public places is an old problem, but Community PC Simon Daley's cracked it. His combination of **inexpensive elasticated string and a duffle peg** will allow women to attach pub furniture and shopping trolleys to their personal belongings, thus making them harder to carry off. Daley's sought help from Tesco among others, and envisages the devices being customised as **money-spinners for charities**.

John Davidson of E. Crosscauseway plans to convert the shabby A-listed building at **67 York Place** (next to the Conan Doyle) from vacant office space into 2 HMOs (Ref. 09/03023/FUL). Some locals worry about **loss of internal features** by insertion of a kitchen pod, others about multiple occupation.

Free basketball coaching for 11–20 year olds on Friday eves, 8–10pm at Meadowbank. Just turn up.

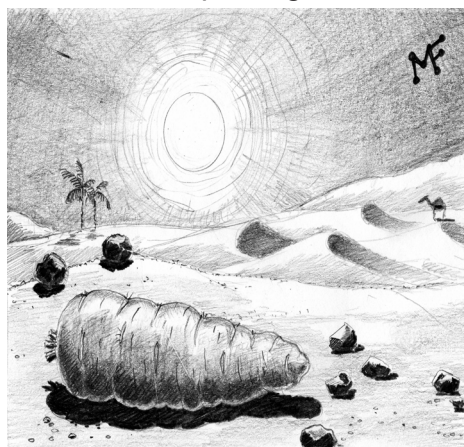
After a chequered history and recent tribulation, **Threshers** at 30 Broughton St closed on 14 Dec. CEC strictures on new **liquor licences** make a new wine-store here doubtful. Watch this space.

Edinburgh's 2nd **Festival of Sport** seeks **local sports clubs'** involvement in June 2010. They aim to highlight sporting activities and encourage more people to lead an active life. See [www.clubsportedinburgh.org] and 'Breaking news' online.

Coffee Angel are opening a 'coffee pod' in the new Tanfield office development opposite their **Brandon St** premises. Manager **Chris Lynch** reports a quiet start: 'about 150 staff in so far – but space for 2,500!' Surely this must make it the **largest coffee pod** in the world?

QUIZ ANSWERS: *Sir Bernard Crick; Rodney St Tunnel – a national cycle link; Tesco; Beltane Fire Festival; Botanic Cottage, Leith Walk; Pani Solinska sign; Barony Community Garden; a Triffid (or CEC floral installation), Mansfield Place; Malcolm Chisholm, MSP on Abdelbasset al-Megrahi; new Spurtle website; Crombie's; Chambers.*

Post-Copenhagen ...



Sceptic regrets inaction

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Lothians



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at the Scottish Parliament

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Friday advice sessions:

4.00pm Stockbridge Library,

42 Hamilton Place

5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre

6.00pm Constituency Office

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Spurtle on Spurtle

Spurtle's 9 Dec. AGM was held in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church. The management board now comprises John Ross Maclean (Chair), Maria Hart (Treasurer) and Alan McIntosh (Secretary). Rotating editors are Alan and Ross. Alan is website coordinator; Maria, layout supremo. Please join us. We welcome new authors and ideas for our reports and features, and are always glad to see new faces. Businesses and individuals: Did you know that you can advertise in the online **Spurtle** for as little as £12 per year? Contact us at spurtle@hotmail.co.uk or Tel. 558 8574.