

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

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TESCO: THE RECKONING

A year ago I was one of many locals who wrote to Edinburgh's Head of Planning objecting to Tesco plans for Picardy Place, writes local resident Fay Young.

On paper the plans look harmless: a new shop front in Picardy Place and 'plant louvres' at the back in Broughton Street Lane. My objection was based on evidence of what happens to an area once Tesco moves in – when local shops close, a sense of community often goes with them. A New Economics Foundation study, *The New Economics: a Bigger Picture*, recently found that supermarkets like Tesco – attracted to areas with thriving local businesses – take money out of the local economy, stifling diversity and destroying the relationships that bind communities together.

People are beginning to rebel. The Tescopoly website [www.tescopoly.org] lists campaigns across the UK (including many in Scotland) trying to restrict the spread of the supermarket chain.

In Broughton, despite strong local opposition, the planning committee could find no reason to block a Tesco Express. The new shopfront and plant louvres (heavy metal screens to conceal machinery, ventilation etc) were deemed to be no threat to the character and quality of a listed building. Planning regulations take no account of the possible impact on the local economy and community – time for new planning regulations?

The campaign may be over but Broughton is not giving up. Thanks to Tesco, local businesses have formed the first Broughton Street Traders Association and they are looking to the future. 'Tesco is off the agenda,' says Patrick Crawshaw of The Bakehouse. 'We are now concentrating on creating a website promoting all the shops in the street.'

Positive thinking is good but the future could be tough for many local shops. If any of them fail we must make sure the City's Planning Committee knows who, when and why.

- Tesco-sceptic readers may be interested in visiting [www.tescopoly.org]. It reports how Friends of the Earth are campaigning for changes to the law in England and Wales which would allow economic/social effects of supermarkets to be considered at the planning stage. It sounds equally relevant to Scotland.
- Tesco Expresses introducing self-service tills will have less need for checkout staff.
- Can readers suggest an independent organisation capable of auditing the effect on local businesses of the Picardy Place shop?

WORD ON THE STREET

Broughton traders have reacted with incredulity bordering on dismay to CEC granting planning permission for a Tesco Express in Picardy Place. Here is a sample of their views:

'They'll suck money out of the street like blotting paper.'

'They say they don't threaten small shops but "support" them – Where is the evidence of that anywhere?'

'"Every little helps!" Really? Yet another "little" Tesco will destroy Broughton's little shops, especially the great take-aways and grocers.'

'They may create employment in Picardy Place – well, wait for the boarded-up windows in Broughton Street.'

'I blame the Council. We should be told what it gains from this giant at the expense of local shops.'



SPIRIT OF THE WILD



A free outdoor exhibition of wildlife photographs by Steve Bloom appeared in St Andrew Square on 12 March. 'Spirit of the Wild' – comprising 60, 1.8m-wide, all-weather prints – aims to increase awareness of wild animals and environmental issues affecting them. It will remain on display until 17 May, part of the Edinburgh Science Festival (itself an endangered species). See [www.stevebloomphoto.com/portfolios/index.html] and 'Extras' online.

SPURTLE ELECTION HUSTINGS

The General Election is imminent, and in keeping with previous years *Spurtle* will organise a hustings for the Edinburgh North and Leith constituency. Members of the public will be able to pose the same question to each of the parliamentary candidates who attend, and compare their responses.

Plans are already well under way. A chairperson has been confirmed and a venue found. All we need now are a date and a definitive list of those candidates standing. All details will be confirmed and publicised online and elsewhere nearer the time. Readers wishing to help out on the night should contact [spurtle@hotmail.co.uk]. For a downloadable map of the Edinburgh North and Leith constituency, visit [<http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk>].

VIP VISITS BROUGHTON



Any readers puzzled by last month's p.4 cartoon of a distinguished-looking man with bodyguards and canyon should go to 'Breaking news' online (25.2.10). The Duke of Edinburgh recently braved Bellevue Crescent trip-hazards to inspect new facilities at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church.

Photo courtesy of Cassandra Page-Turner Photography

McDonald Road too boxy?

Pre-planning application proposals for 130 McDonald Rd were discussed publicly on 22 March. See drawings, artist's impressions, a summary and provisional observations at 'Breaking news' online (23.3.10).

Four issues concerned: (1) joining the development to an existing tenement would block some residents' windows; (2) new balconies would overlook existing homes on McDonald Place; (3) 'boxy' design lacks pitched roofs sympathetic to surroundings; (4) Council affordable-housing requirements seem to have been waived at the most local scale, homes instead decanted elsewhere in Leith.

Another meeting is scheduled for 12 April: see 'Events' online.

Heriothill too tall?

Pre-planning application proposals for a narrow strip of land between Broughton Rd and Heriothill were displayed on 1 March. Eight north-facing townhouses in 4 blocks are planned, each with 3 double-bedrooms, a kitchen/dining room, roof terrace, and ground-floor garage.

Locals worried about: (1) possible effects on local geology of excavating the site's steep, sandy bank; (2) overshadowing of nearby properties. The new buildings could rise to the comparative height of a one-storey structure looming over gardens in Claremont Bank/Grove. 'Wouldn't shorter, mews-style developments be more appropriate?'

Architects denied there would be land slippage, but otherwise confined themselves to cast-iron assurances over Heriothill Nursery's privacy. See 'Breaking news' online.

Toil and trouble spell success

The Times Spelling Bee Championship regional heats took place in Falkirk on 15 March and the Drummond CHS team was buzzing, writes staff member Diane Black. Students Evie Walters, Sulaiman Sarwar, Finlay Allan, and Nishat Mohammad came first, beating other Edinburgh high schools including Craigmount and Firhill.



Drummond finished with 54 points, 14 ahead of the 2nd-placed team. They did exceptionally well and we're all very proud of them. But there's no time for dozing in the warm sunshine – these 'worker' bees are now swotting up for the semi-finals in May.

Here are some of the words they spelt accurately: pluralism, inoculate, ministerial, ecosystem, desperate, graffiti.

Sulaiman was the 'last man standing' in the knock-out round. This meant that he spelt every word correctly until he was given 'portmanteau'.

For a chastening experience, test yourself at: [www.timesspellingbee.co.uk].

Brunswick Road proposals

A major development is planned for 10 Brunswick Rd, the 4.08 acre site of the late-lamented Post Office sorting centre.

Royal Mail Group seeks permission in principle to build 200 flats and townhouses, with associated Class 4 business space (e.g. office, industrial, research and development), car parking, landscaping and access.

A pre-planning application public exhibition, and a Leith Central Community Council consultation meeting, will follow soon – almost certainly in McDonald Rd Library. The earliest date on which a full planning application can be sought is 26 May. We'll bring you further details as we have them.

Spurtle readers, even at this early stage, point out that any development on such a scale will have potentially positive implications for Leith Walk Primary's roll, and a potentially negative road-safety impact for pupils walking to and from school.

Edinburgh World Heritage funds crumble

Schools are not the only ones suffering in the current economic climate. Edinburgh World Heritage – the charity charged with managing, protecting, enhancing and promoting the Old and New Towns – has just received a 25% cut in its administrative funds from CEC (a drop of £21.5K from £86K in 2009/10).

This follows a £20K cut in 2009–10, and will be followed by a further 25% cut in 2011–12. CEC funding will then stop.

Funding from EWH's other backer, Historic Scotland, is stable at present, but that body's intentions are unclear beyond 2011–12. The capital which EWH receives for repairing historic buildings is also being reduced, with an £80K cut this year to £320K, and further reductions a distinct possibility.

It seems likely, therefore, that EWH staff will spend more time chasing and accounting for alternative funds, and less time on looking after the world heritage site.

Broughton restaurants

Edinburgh restaurants featured prominently in the recently announced Scottish Restaurants of the Year awards. Out of 15 categories, the capital gained 5 outright winners and 10 runners-up. In our area, Loon Fung (Warriston Place) was runner-up in the Best Oriental category, while Bella Mbriana (E. London St) was runner-up in the hotly contested Best Italian section.

It should be noted that several notable restaurants decline to participate in the annual event. L'Escargot Bleu in Broughton St, for example, prefers a 'chacun à son goût' approach. However, our favourite blue snail *has* been lauded without courting attention, winning the *List's* Best Newcomer Award (2009–10). Its sister, L'Escargot Blanc on Queensferry St, recently received a glowing recommendation by that most exacting of food critics, the *Sunday Herald's* Joanna Blythman. *Bon appetit!*

Watchmaker calls time

Sadly, H.M. Temple – the long-established horological material dealers and watch and jewellery repair shop at 111 Broughton Street – is closing down, for technical rather than economic reasons. (Necessary but dust-creating property repairs make a move imperative.)

The business has been owned and run by Danny Smyth for 20 years. He joined the original, well-respected Temple company in 1976 when the shop was located at No. 93 (now Alphabet Video), supplying the clock and watchmakers trade including James Ritchie & Son (now in Dundas Street).

Mr Smyth retires in 3 years' time, but will relocate his business elsewhere until then. His gracious presence will be much missed in Broughton. We wish him well, and a serene retirement in 2013.

From flanker to fashionisto

When Scotland rugby cap Donnie Mcfadyen walked from the pitch for the last time in 2008, little did he imagine his future career lay along the catwalks of international fashion.

A genuinely world-class player and always 100% committed, Donnie has rechannelled that energy into his new life as co-founder and director of welovepumpkin.com: the latest clothing label to hit the streets. Pumpkin was the beloved pet cat and e-mail address of his wife Rosie, and a stream of curious questions about the name convinced Donnie it would make a highly original brand to complement his unique clothing.

A chance discussion with Cecile Paul of Broughton St's Threadbare, a spell working in a Barnardo's vintage clothing shop, and encouragement from school chum and co-director Colin Philip, gave Donnie the confidence to try vintage clothing design. He now enjoys letting clients make a unique statement about town, as every garment is a one-off.

Do rugby players take an interest in fashion? 'Yes, much more than before,' says Donnie. He has exported as far afield as New Zealand, and recently dispatched one of his trademark jackets with contrasting piping to Scotland rugby captain Jason White in France. However, his designs have nothing to do with rugby and everything to do with flair and commitment to originality and quality.

See his latest collection at Broughton St's Threadbare, on Facebook at welovepumpkin, online at www.welovepumpkin.com, and other outlets in Edinburgh. *Scott Richards*.

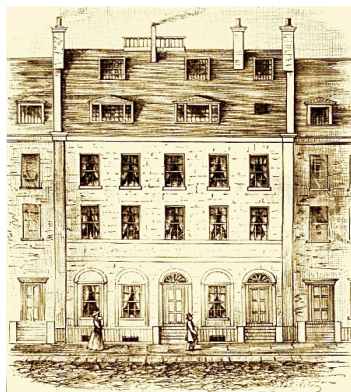


Photo © Scott Richards

A belvedere in York Place

A plaque at 47 York Place relates that Alexander Nasmyth (1758–1840) lived here. Generally regarded as Scotland's first and finest landscape painter, Nasmyth's works bear comparison with those of the great Dutch artists Ruysdael and Hobbema, and of the sublime French painter Claude Lorrain. Like many remarkable Scots of the Age of Enlightenment, he was a Renaissance man. As an architect, he designed Edinburgh's Dean Bridge and the St Bernard's Well building. He also helped with the first New Town's layout, and was a distinguished scientist, landscape designer, and highly successful painter of theatrical scenery. However, his art is his chief legacy, including the famous portrait of Robert Burns (whom he befriended) and those distinctive open landscapes which influenced generations of Scottish painters.

At No. 47, Nasmyth occupied the upper two floors with his wife Barbara (Foulis) and 11 children, of whom 3 died young. The remaining 8 he taught to paint, and they became very fine artists in their own rights. Currently, the National Gallery of Scotland displays two paintings by Nasmyth and one by his oldest son Patrick, known as the 'English Hobbema'; but many other superlative Nasmyths are held in the collections. He added a raised cupola (jokingly referred to by him as a 'belvedere') to the roof of No. 47 from which he viewed the Fife hills and those rolling cloud formations beloved of Dutch masters which he incorporated in many works. It is now gone. Curiously, his celebrated fellow-artist and neighbour Sir Henry Raeburn also maximised the light in his house at 32 York Place by enlarging studio windows (Issue 155). *JRM*



Briefly

New date and venue: New Town and Broughton Community Council will next meet at **7.15pm on Mon. 12 April in the Garden Room of Broughton St Mary's Parish Church**. Pre-planning application designs for 130 McDonald Rd will be presented.

Drummond students will run a **jewellery sale and Fairtrade café** in the evenings, 26–9 April (see 'Events' online). To **donate unloved jewellery**, contact Annie Scanlon (556 2651) or leave at school office. Funds to Kenyan partnership.

PC Dane Harrison is warning locals to **beware of forged £20 notes**, of which there's an abundance in Edinburgh at present. Chances are, if the note in your hand **feels wrong**, leaves an **inky smudge** on your fingers, or is being handed to you by one of your **offspring**, it's fake.

Lynne MacTaggart's efforts to retain **decking** at Salon LA on Broughton Rd (Issue 180) have failed. Her retrospective planning application was **refused and enforced** on 3 Mar. One neighbour wrote in support: 'The decking is great. **It makes the shop look good** [and] is in [keeping] with the building in my opinion ...' CEC officials, however, described it as '**incongruous**' and '**alien**'.

The new front-runner in our study of **late pavement presentation of dead Christmas trees** goes to a yellowing spruce, spotted on **1 March** in a wheelie bin at the junction of Bellevue Rd and Annandale St. Any more offers?

The **derelict garage** on Bellevue Rd (Issue 180) was scheduled for demolition by the end of March. **Broughton Primary School** hope to cultivate the land.

Quakers will meet at the **Glaside Meeting House** (33 Barony St) on the 4th Sunday of every month in 2010. **All welcome**. Entry via Albany Lane, Buzzer No. 7.

CEC Roads are testing **night-time 'Find and Fix'** so that street lights can be repaired when most are on, and identification of broken ones is more obvious than during the day. Brilliantly obvious. In the same vein, *Spurtle* suggests they respond to accident statistics and make permanent road safety improvements to **McDonald Rd** now not after someone has been killed.

A decent second-hand **Zender piano** is on offer **free to a good home**. Now in need of **retuning**, it's situated locally in a ground-floor flat. Contact [j.fairley@blueyonder.co.uk].

Broughton St Mary's Parish Church **Spring Fair** will bloom 11am–2pm on Sat. 24 Apr. Ideal event for those seeking gifts, jewellery, cake, tea, coffee and soup.

Two men were arrested and later remanded in custody on 2 March over an alleged **card skimming operation**. Alleged card skimming and cloning devices, laptops and £4.5K in cash were recovered from a **Broughton Rd** property.

Broughton Local History Society meets next at 7.30pm in Drummond CHS on Mon. 26 April. Frank Hey and Len Saunders will talk on 'The "Briggers" – the Men who Built the Forth Bridge'.

Briefly

Locally based author, educationist and broadcaster **Sue Palmer** addressed Broughton Primary School parents on 17 Mar. Her talk on **'Detoxing Childhood'** was well attended and seemed to strike chords with many present. See 'Extras' online.

Youths menaced staff with a blade before **seizing a computer and cash** from the till at Brandon Terrace's **Moo Café** on 7 Mar. Police later arrested and charged 2 teenagers, but money and goods had disappeared.

The late **Bill Smith** – admired Canonmills bookseller (Issue 180) – took his first driving lesson in Stornoway. In the process he **destroyed a car, a wall and two sheep**. He never drove again. At his recent funeral, Smith was fondly remembered as a lifelong **'menace to machinery'**.

Tesco at 7 Broughton Rd seeks planning permission to install a **glazed lobby** outside its front door (Ref. 10/00545/FUL). This would provide an ideal spot for **local independent traders** to ply their wares and share in **greater footfall** generated by supermarket expansion. **Tesco appears not to have thought of this.**

A **Bellevue Road** reader says neighbours have recently been plagued by ringing on doorbells in the early hours. More worryingly, she was wakened by sounds at the front door, went to investigate, and found the **Yale lock forced from the door jamb**. Her chain was still in place, but police say this would not have stopped a determined intruder. Their advice: **always turn the key in your mortice lock.**

John Knight, New Town and Broughton Community Council's Planning Convener, has raised concerns about **process transparency** with CEC officials (Issue 180, p.2). Apparently they recognise the problem, and have promised to address it.

Work on the overhaul of **Glenogle Baths** is on schedule, says a CEC spokesperson, with a **grand re-opening** expected in June after a month of snagging. Visit [www.saveglenoglebaths.com] for pictures, including one of the new ogle-proof cubicle doors (Issue 165).

Locals eagerly await



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Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre
6.00pm Constituency Office

Sputtle Team: John Dickie, Maria Hart, George Hosey, Alan McIntosh, John Ross Maclean, David Sterratt. Post: Sputtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ. Printed at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church

New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next meeting:

12 April at 7:15pm

in

The Garden Room
Broughton St Mary's Church
Bellevue Crescent

mowats@blueyonder.co.uk

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