

# BROUGHTON Spurtle

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No 76

November 2000

## CLEAN-UP BROUGHTON

If you'd like to see a greener, cleaner Broughton here's a date for your diary: Wednesday, 22nd November, 7.15pm at Drummond Community High.

Diane Smith from the City Council's Environment Service will be there, waiting to hear what you feel are the most pressing problems – graffiti; dog dirt; trade waste; burst black bags; dropped litter? This will be a workshop, not a formal meeting: everybody present will have their

views noted; one problem will be agreed there and then, for urgent action in the immediate future. When a successful start has been made on that, we can come back and look at other problems on the list.

The idea is joint action – involving Council, local associations, schools, traders and residents.

**Community Workshop**  
**22nd November, 7.15pm**  
**Drummond Community High**



## Parking mad

Here's an extreme example of that too-familiar plague – thoughtless parking. The car in the picture has been parked next to a 'no parking' sign in Huntingdon Place for a year now – untaxed, and presumably abandoned. In May an official "move within 7 days or else" notice was stuck on it, but to no avail. We understand that since then an authorised removal vehicle has called two or three times, but couldn't do the job – because on each occasion other cars parked beside 'no parking' signs blocked the way.

Elsewhere in our area parking on pavements is a daily spectacle. Is the answer to provide more and more parking spaces? There's evidence that building new roads simply attracts more traffic, rather than relieving congestion: could the same apply to parking? Maybe the Council should concentrate on enforcing parking restrictions on the one hand, and cutting the flow of traffic into Edinburgh on the other – rather than digging up the city in a desperate attempt to satisfy an insatiable demand for parking spaces?

## Builders booked for library

The long-promised upgrading at McDonald Road Library is now booked to start. The first phase of essential structural repairs to external walls and roof will begin in January. It will mean some disruption to services over the first three months, to accommodate the builders – watch out for information at the Library. And from the end of this year the Nelson Hall will be closed for bookings.

The major internal refurbishment is due to begin in September of next year, once the premises have been made sound. Before then, there will be public consultation on the new-look premises and the services to be provided. Come spring/summer 2001, local people and groups – including the ethnic minority interests who make extensive use of the library – will have their say on this vital community facility. **Spurtle** will be keeping informed and reporting back on developments.

## December Spurtle

The deadline for December **Spurtle** is Saturday, 2nd December.

We welcome information or opinions on local affairs.

Drop a note in at Broughton Books, 2a Broughton Place, or phone 556 7727 or 556 0903.

# Colombia's loss, Broughton's gain.

Pedro Gonzalez (not his real name) was forced to flee his home in Colombia, Central America, nine months ago. Now he's living here in Broughton. **Spurtle** welcomed the opportunity to meet him and hear his story.

Pedro worked for a non-government agency, in a rural area on the Pacific coast. The population includes communities of ex-slaves, who fled into the forest there before slavery was abolished but have never had any legal right to the land they occupy. In 1991 the Colombian government opened up the possibility for them to establish that right – but only by working their way through a difficult procedure. Pedro was helping them to do just that.

But he worked against the background of violence which is a constant feature of life in Colombia. The government is at war with left-wing guerrillas. Right-wing paramilitary groups terrorise anyone they suspect of sympathising with the

guerrillas. Elements of the country's Army support the illegal activities of the paramilitaries. To complicate matters further, the United States interferes to bolster the economic interests some of its own nationals have in Colombia.

When Pedro started working with the black communities the guerrillas held sway in that area, and gave him their OK. But later things swung in favour of the paramilitaries, and they detained him for questioning. It was a case of 'if you're not for us, you must be against us'. At one point he thought they were going to kill him there and then but, "a miracle", they let him go. Unfortunately it didn't end there. Their suspicions remained, and even after he withdrew from the area back to his home town their threats followed him. When he shook them off by moving around, the threats were turned on his sister.

Pedro felt he had to leave, and ended up a refugee in Scotland – where he's now waiting to hear if he will be

granted asylum by the UK government. Fortunately he got here before the introduction of the infamous voucher system in place of cash assistance. He's not optimistic about going home in the foreseeable future: "any talk of human rights in Colombia is rhetorical," he says. As to life over here, he talks of "starting all over again from zero" – in Colombia he was a university graduate and a trained professional.

Welcome to Broughton, Pedro! If you can't get back to your own country for a while, we hope your skills and experience will soon be put to good use here.

*Protest against the voucher system, Saturday, 11th November, 12 noon, outside Sainsburys', corner of Rose Street and St Andrew's Square.*

*'Refugees Welcome Here' meets monthly in the CWU rooms, 15 Brunswick Street. Next meeting Tuesday, 21st November, 7.30pm.*

## Broughton Street



At the October meeting of the Community Council, it was suggested that pedestrianisation of Broughton Street would be a popular move. Back in February 1994, in the very first edition of **Spurtle**, we published this picture by local artist Miguel Vivanco captioned "Broughton Street pedestrianised? Maybe not – but something needs to be done".

Now we have constructive proposals for the street from the Council: but do they go far enough to make it really pedestrian-friendly? Make sure you see them, and get involved in the discussion: there will be more public meetings.

Meanwhile you can speak to the Council's Andy Conway on 469 3785.

BROUGHTON **Spurtle** aims to:

- provide a contact point for local people who want to get together and change things
- help local action groups publicise their work
- make connections between "the news" and people's own lives in Broughton
- and generally stir things up a bit!

**We'll support people** looking for a fair deal, but not protect privilege. We're not connected with any political group or party. And we don't get a grant from anyone.

**Spurtle team for this issue:** Norma McKendrick, Ken McKay, Gavin MacGregor, John Dickie, Jane Coville, Alan McIntosh, Tim Puntis, and David Aitken.

**Broughton Books** in Broughton Place are our "postbox". You can put a letter addressed to us through their letter box at any time. PHONE – 556 7727 / 556 0903 Or FAX – 556 7727 / 557 6752



# Drummond – the next 30 years!

The City Council's controversial Public Private Partnership for redevelopment of Edinburgh schools comes into local focus with plans for the refurbishment and maintenance of Drummond Community High by private contractors now imminent. At the Council's meeting on 19th October, bidders for the city-wide contract were narrowed down to two, with the final selection to be made by December. Depending on who is successful, work at the school will start in either May 2001 or 2002. Bids have already been the subject of consultation with the Head Teacher and School Board. Whatever the outcome, the contract will set the pattern for the next 30 years.

Drummond lies at the centre of the Broughton community. It is to be expected that local people will want to know what is to be provided and who they are dealing with. We need to ensure that facilities inside the building, their cost and the services provided accord with the community's needs, present and future. Outside, the open area around the school is a feature of local life in terms of both access and

enhancing the local environment.

Consultation with the community is promised for 'the spring of 2001'. Of course, the primary purpose of this long-term plan is to assure a first-class educational provision for our children, and the community will be wholeheartedly behind that aim. However, a Community School reaches out beyond this core purpose and it is to be hoped that the consultation, and the availability of information and reports on progress, will be meaningful and positive.

● **If work at the school may start in May next year, will consultation starting 'in spring' be realistic?**

● **When the new management system is in place, will community use of the school be at the mercy of a private company?**

**Spurtle** has raised questions through our local councillor, and we've just received some preliminary answers – which suggest further questions! We'll return to this subject next month.



Graffiti in Green Street. Elsewhere in Broughton graffiti on the Cochran Terrace corner was getting worse and worse. Then one Monday the whole wall was repainted – only to be defaced again by the following Sunday! Another current hotspot for graffiti is Annandale Street Lane – where garage doors and a nursery school are the victims. What can be done?

## BRIEFLY

Congratulations to local MSP Malcolm Chisholm on his appointment as Deputy Health Minister in the Scottish Government. We're sure he will continue to serve us well on local constituency matters. We hope his independence of mind on wider issues will survive the pressures of ministerial office.

*The BONZA BONFIRE BONANZA happens on Sunday, 5th November from 6 to 8pm at Scotland Yard Adventure Playground (Eyre Place, next to George V Park). Free bonfire, music and parade. Get along there for food, entertainment and a good time! (Please note: no fireworks are allowed.)*

Vandals hit the Stafford Centre one night in mid-October, smashing window-boxes made by Centre users. People dumping old mattresses, etc. at the front of the building, and dog dirt, are constant problems. Could neighbours keep a look out, and maybe phone PC Tony Knot on 620 5138 to report anything untoward?

*Council tenants in Redbraes Grove have central heating – at last! Now they're looking forward to new windows next year.*

Work has started on Mansfield Place Church. Main contractor Morrison Construction and Mansfield Traquair Trust have distributed helpful information to nearby residents, and plan to hold a public meeting soon. Site hours are 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Anyone with problems or complaints can contact Contracts Manager Bob Foster on site: phone 0378 221122.

*A benefit concert in aid of refugees will take place on 1st December at*

*St Bride's Centre, Orwell Terrace, 7.30pm 'til late. £6, £3 concessions – for further information phone 667 9125 or 0780 324 4739.*



# All change 2000?

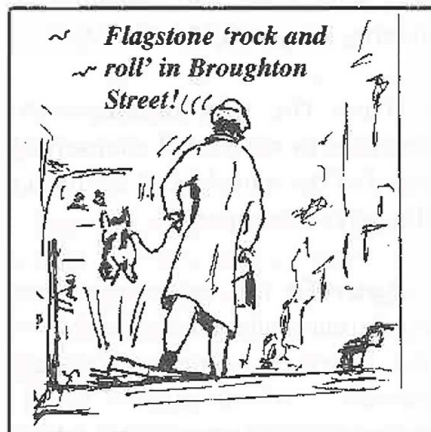
Back in February, **Spurtle** asked a number of people for "One change I'd like to see in Broughton this year". As the year nears its end we decided to check on local councillor Mark Lazarowicz's change: the start of a 'Safer Routes to School' campaign.

**Spurtle** spoke to Yvonne Pryor, a parent at St Mary's Primary who is enthusiastic about the idea and about to contact other parents there urging the formation of a group. Watch for her letter. A start has already been made with a Walk to School Day on 4th October – it could be the idea is about to catch on. Safety is high in the priorities of most schools. At Broughton Primary a similar Day was held, and they have just had a Safety Focus Week with all aspects of personal safety on the agenda. This included the appointment of two Junior Road Safety Officers from among the pupils.

While we were at it, we looked back at others' "choices for change". MP/MSP Malcolm Chisholm's was "the full refurbishment of Drummond Community High School... but we may have to wait a bit longer". See the

article on page 3. Other choices included "more greenery and seats", "no more dog dirt", and Drummond Head Teacher Frank McGrail wanted a "litter-free Broughton": see details of the 'Greening Workshop' on 22nd November. Many choices related to roads and traffic – an overall transport strategy, lower speed limits, controlling parking, encouraging pedestrians and cyclists: in August we reported on the City Council's Route Action Plan for our area, on which consultation continues.

So, if at times the wheels grind slow, at least they keep turning – and a little oil from the residents of Broughton may just help!



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 References available

## Contacts

**Bellevue and Claremont  
 Residents Association**  
 Yvonne Pryor 557 1752

**Broughton Place Residents  
 Association**  
 Judith Hallam 556 4595

**Gayfield Association**  
 William McNair 556 4493

**McDonald Area Amenity  
 Society**  
 Bob Stewart 557 1267

**Redbraes Residents  
 Association**  
 Tam Hay 553 2306

**Sovereign Court Residents  
 Association**  
 John Davies, 478 4463

**New Town Broughton and  
 Pilrig Community Council**  
 Annette O'Carroll 556 7586

**Broughton History Society**  
 David Watt 556 5271

**Cllr Mark Lazarowicz**  
 Broughton Ward  
 529 3283 fax 529 4764  
 e-mail –  
 mark.lazarowicz@edinburgh.gov.uk  
 Surgery: Drummond CHS  
 on Wednesdays from 6 to 7pm

**Cllr David Guest**  
 New Town Ward  
 558 8823 or 529 4268  
 Surgery at 67 Northumberland  
 Street on Mondays from  
 6 to 6.45pm

**Malcolm Chisholm MP and MSP**  
 555 3636  
 Surgery on Saturdays at  
 Drummond Community High  
 School at 1pm.

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