

Spurttle



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**October
2019**

No 289

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER

Free

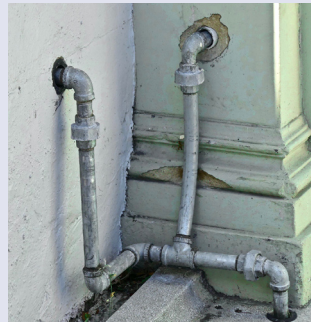
PEACE BREAKS OUT AFTER FORTH STREET FURORE

This summer, Scottish Gas Networks (SGN) began laying a new gas main in Forth Street, and when connecting it to the first three properties caused internal and external damage to Category A-listed structures (Issue 286).

Picardy Residents' Association (PRA) asked the Council if this work conformed to guidelines, and also contacted SGN's Chief Executive. Work was promptly suspended until September, but in fact may not restart until early 2020.

SGN and PRA have now agreed that contractors should speak individually to residents explaining what work is to be done when, and how it will meet regulatory standards. All uplifted setts and pavement slabs will be replaced properly. SGN will provide a dedicated phone number for residents' queries.

SGN will also undertake remedial work on those properties damaged or otherwise disfigured back in June, and Council officials are likely to review the whole project on completion.—*Peter Williamson (PRA Chair)*.



ONWARD AND DOWNWARD



When three little birds pitched up on this local's doorstep one dawn last month, singing sweet songs of melodies pure and true, they got more than they'd bargained for. Disgruntled of Broughton Place has limited confidence in the future. Whether the cause of such pessimism is window frames, gasworks, roadworks, tramworks, the Edinburgh St James, Picardy Place, bin collections, the fortunes of Scottish football and rugby teams, a looming election, the Middle East in meltdown, Donald Trump, climate crisis, and/or Brexit, we don't know. Happily, there are only 86 days till Christmas.

CASH-STRAPPED COMMUNITY COUNCILS

So exasperated is Leith Central Community Council at not being able to use McDonald Rd Library for monthly meetings that frustration has recently become a regular item in the minutes.

Since July, Council staff at the Library have been unwilling or unable to work past 8pm, and bosses don't want to pay for an extra hour's security to lock up. They fear setting an expensive precedent. Not even Council Leader Adam McVey has succeeded in making them budge.

Instead, LCCC has been bearing the cost of meeting in the canteen at Leith Community Education Centre – a stuffy, too small, and awkwardly shaped space where members struggle to make themselves heard over an outspoken refrigerator. The result is 'suboptimal' and 'ludicrous', particularly given that community councils are much vaunted by politicians as the first rung of democracy. Cllr Munn will seek a solution.

Meanwhile, the New Town & Broughton CC is struggling to afford its own regular venue at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church. It can ill afford the letting fee, but has yet to find a viable alternative.

Both community councils receive modest annual grants of just over £1k, determined by resident numbers. Both seek additional Council funding to meet costs, so far without success.

STRICTER PARKING ON THE WAY

The Transport & Environment Cmte voted on 12 September to phase in new Controlled Parking Zones across parts of Edinburgh. The first of these will include the Abbeyhill colonies, Pilrig, Leith Walk, Leith, and North Leith [bit.ly/2IVdO3D].

Further consultation will take place this month, before detailed plans return to the T&E for approval in Q1 of 2020. Legal manoeuvres will then take another 6–7 months before implementation in mid-2021.

Fortunately, this timing means the CPZ should be in place by the time trams to Newhaven are operational, saving the area from becoming one huge, free park-&-ride for commuters. But Bonnington won't be CPZ-ed until Phase 2, so may well face congestion.

The change will have long-term effects (some of them possibly unforeseen) on how (and how much) motor traffic uses Edinburgh in future. Planners of new developments (particularly residential ones) will also likely respond in terms of where such projects are located and how much parking will be included on-site.

Leith Central Community Council can claim credit for the CPZ, having organised with Abbeyhill Residents a local petition in 2018 which seems to have galvanised the T&E into action (Issue 271). A backlash from surprised locals who like free parking outside their homes will surely follow.

TRANSFORMATION GETS COUNCIL GO-AHEAD

Edinburgh Council approved the £314M City Centre Transformation plan on 19 September. Implementation (with regular reviews) will start early in 2020 and continue until 2029.

In summary, it aims to provide: a more pedestrian-friendly city with some car-free areas; high-quality streets and public spaces; safer cycling and walking routes; better integrated public transport; improved accessibility for those with mobility issues; and reduced on-street parking [bit.ly/2kxWQIg].

It's a radical but necessary response to climate, health, demographic, and economic challenges which can't be ducked, even though some may consider the results inconvenient.

There may be bumps in the road ahead (and not just speed-humps), but we expect politicians of all stripes to continue



showing the long-term cross-party resolve required to make this vision a reality.

Briefly



The Apple Pharmacy on **Broughton St** has established a free local library on empty shelves at the front of the shop. The idea is to encourage **customer communication** of all kinds [bit.ly/2m4odtW]. See also p. 4.

The Reporters' reports on the future of the **old Royal High School** have been delayed. Rather than being delivered in Aug, they are now expected 'in the Autumn'.

Broughton History Society meets next on 7 Oct at 7pm in **Drummond CHS**. Rosemary Goring, late of this parish, will talk about 'Scotland Her Story: the Nation's History by the Women Who Lived It'. For the full 2019–20 session listing, and how to join, see [bit.ly/2AeYaH5].

LCCC has opposed an application to Licensing for extended late-night trading at an **Elm Row** kebab shop. Such hours are not meant to be granted **beyond the city centre**, and the premises here are within an otherwise **residential tenement**.

Of **20 new trees** recently planted to replace 52 lopped prior to construction of disabled access to the National Gallery of Scotland in **E Princes St Gardens**, only 3 appear to thrive. Fresh planting may be required next year. **Most commentators agree on two things:** (1) This is relatively trivial short-term inconvenience in the course of achieving **long-term improvement**; (2) PR surrounding the work has been handled appallingly. Some go further, suggesting (**unprovably and implausibly**) that the whole access project was over-engineered to serve other agendas [bit.ly/305nlig].

Planning consent has been refused for a new, internally illuminated advertising hoarding (6.3m x 9.2m) at **10 Croall Place** (Ref. 19/03509/ADV). It was considered potentially detrimental to the visual amenity of the residential area.

On 4 Sept an ambulance was summoned via 999 to attend a collapsed cyclist on McDonald Rd. Onlookers were surprised it took over 25 mins to arrive. Later that day, *Spurtle* emailed the **Scottish Ambulance Service** to ask whether such a delay was normal, or had been occasioned by unusually heavy traffic, road closures, and diversions in **central Edinburgh**. They have yet to respond.

STOPPRESS: (1) The Broughton (formerly Phoenix) on **Broughton St** has opened. (2) A new restaurant/takeaway beside Clark's Bar on **Dundas St** will be offering street food and plates soon. How civilised.

Connectivity at what cost?

The Scottish Government is pushing ahead with plans to assist, and in some cases fund roll-out of, 5G mobile telecommunications across the country.

Telecommunications are reserved to the UK Government, but the Scottish Government is calling for greater relevant powers whilst using those it already has to enhance connectivity [bit.ly/2kWj72p].

The new technology promises faster Internet speeds, with social and economic benefits all round. 'Our aspiration is to position Scotland as a 5G leader and a forward-looking digital nation,' said First Minister Nicola Sturgeon this summer.

So far, so futuristic. But not everyone's comfortable. 5G requires more masts closer together than we have now, and sceptics say the effects of such a pervasive network on health are not understood. Others claim signals could interfere with satellite weather forecasting.

Still others fear a rash of new commercially driven apparatus – hastily erected after insufficient public consultation and with no guarantee of redress – could soon blight our streetscapes. See Issue 281 for the recent debacle beside Rosebank Cemetery.

These critics say current control regulations must not be diluted, and call on officials, elected members, and residents to stand strong in the coming wave of change. To *Spurtle*, it sounds a worthy if possibly Canute-like ambition.

Pleas to unsqueeze Broughton junction

Last month on Twitter, @jamiwallace usefully questioned how space is apportioned around the Mansfield Pl/E London St/Broughton St/London St junction [bit.ly/2kuqxdd].

Almost all the 0.7 acres here remain 'out of bounds' to pedestrians, who are hemmed in behind railings, delayed by pelican crossings, and unable to access the small park at the centre. Drivers face no such obstructions.

'How is this consistent,' he asked, 'with our current climate emergency, encouraging people out of cars, and making cities more liveable for those on foot?'

Others soon responded. Some pointed out that the railings also trap cyclists squeezed by motor traffic. @DavidHembrow said that Dutch planners have done away with such barriers and traffic lights by banishing most motor vehicles to the peripheries – something that required a citywide rather than junction-by-junction approach.

Spurtle has been documenting the traffic travails of Mansfield Place since at least 2008, but on looking at it again last week we realised pedestrians and cyclists are not alone in being corralled.

The former Catholic Apostolic Church – Robert Rowand Anderson's Category A-listed masterpiece – is hemmed in by no less than 11 lampposts, 2 signs and a bus stop. It is impossible to photograph from any angle without visual intrusion.

Surely something can be done to simplify, beautify, and humanise this distinctive area at the heart of Broughton?



Fresh news from the bins

With no particular fanfare, clearer, more accessible, and easier-to-use Waste and Cleansing related forms will appear on the Council's website from 9 October. They should simplify reporting spills, flytipping, and damaged bins; will make it possible to see ongoing issues flagged by other people; and offer the option of live email reports on how your case is progressing. (Similar forms will also appear for Roads and Streetlighting.)

Meanwhile, the complicated communal-bin review continues. Its aims include improving and integrating recycling, collection reliability, and general appearance. It will also align provision with Government policy (e.g. on bottle returns) and Council policy. New bin clusters and designs will be trialled from this month in Great Junction Street and Duncan Place. And attention will return to assessing gull-proof sacks and the infamously wind-ravaged red and blue boxes.

Following an audit of all bins' conditions and positions, a major rethink of bin-lorry routes will follow in early 2020. This should greatly improve frequency and reliability of collections, and will help clarify whether the fleet needs increased.

Finally, wave goodbye to pavement clutter. From 1 October, food and glass bins will no longer be allowed outside commercial premises on public property. Expect their disappearance within months. Look out for a progress report to the Transport & Environment Cmte on 5 December.



Edinburgh on high: Bygone Broughton Street

Many thanks to local resident Eric Robertson, who alerted *Spurtle* to this watercolour in his possession. It includes the only known depiction of the 'Broughton Boy' once present atop George Heriot's School at 32 Broughton Street (Issue 287).

The image is by William Gawin Herdman (1805–82), a self-taught and prolific artist renowned for painting his native Liverpool. He exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1834–61, and was a noted realist often at odds with pre-Raphaelite contemporaries.

In this work of 1862, Herdman strikingly catches St Mary's Free Church (bit.ly/2kvR21U). The *Post Office Directory* lists adjacent businesses as (working downhill): James Anderson, bookseller (No. 26); Alex Bayne, tailor (No. 28); John Parker, cabinetmaker (No. 30); and George Bayne, fruiterer (No. 32).

I particularly like the lady in a crimson cloak, possibly hurrying to worship with her reluctant child.—*JRM*. A longer version of this article, and larger image in colour, appear on our website on 1 October.



New page turns in Canonmills

Broughton has a new hub for readers, and it's not the one you're thinking of in Blenheim Place.

St Columba's Hospice Bookshop has moved from Goldenacre to 14–15 Brandon Terrace, and occupies surprisingly bright, airy, and voluminous premises formerly home to Phase 2 Hair and Beauty.

There are usually 3 or 4 volunteer staff present, managed by Andy Crosby, who brings 16 years' charity-bookselling experience to the job.

Sections include (particular strengths in italics): academic, arts/architecture/antiques, comics/graphic novels, *children's*, crafts/hobbies, crime, Edinburgh, fiction, firsts and signed, food and drink, *history*, instructional art, languages, literary classics, music, natural history, maps, *Penguins*, philosophy/psychology, plays, poetry, *Scottish arts*, sport, talking books, travel, and vintage pulps.

There are also albums and singles, cards, CDs and DVDs, and eggs. Yes, eggs. Fresh eggs. Edible fresh eggs for taking home and eating. Opening hours are 10am–4pm, Mon.–Sat.



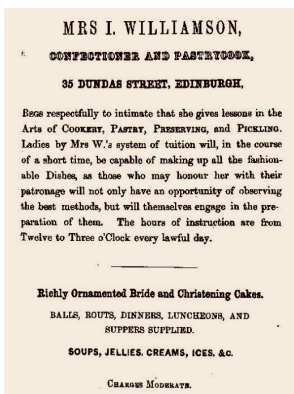
Dundas Street crumbs of comfort

The excellent Archipelago Artisan Bakery at 39 Dundas Street continues a splendid baking tradition in the street.

In 1854, Mrs Williamson opened her Pastry and Confectioners shop at No. 35 (today's Epitome) and, in that same year, published the first edition of her cookbook, *The Practice of Cookery and Pastry Adapted to The Business of Everyday Life*. (Previous non-adapted versions had appeared as early as 1820.) This cookbook can claim the historic distinction of containing one of the first-ever mentions of 'Shepherd's Pie'.

Mrs Williamson's cookbook ran to many editions – at least 23 in total – and the review in the Scotsman in 1883 stated: 'Williamson's *Practice of Cookery and Pastry* is plainly and simply done, and it contains not only recipes for cooking dinners, but bills of fare for different dinners throughout the year. Nothing could be better chosen than these dinners, and nothing could be better than the book as a whole. It fulfils the promise of its title page.'

For those wishing to try their hand at early New Town recipes, Mrs Williamson's cookbook can be read at [bit.ly/2knTF5D]. *Spurtle* will feature some of the less revolting ones online from 2 October.—*Barclay Price*



Developer attuned to local concerns

Developers last month presented very early and very vague plans for the redevelopment of the former RBS site between Dundas Street and King George V Park. So far the mood music has been orchestrated with charms to soothe the savage New Towner. There is talk of 'conversations' between old and new, formal and informal, with massing and scale sensitive to the historic built context. But no detail.

Locals are invited to picture a mix of affordable and market-priced housing, a hotel, concealed parking with all vehicle entry via Eyre Terrace, pleasant green blurring of park and residential areas, and preservation of a key view towards Fife. Accessible East–West and North–South pedestrian/cycle routes through the site are envisaged, as is a potential 'flexible' space somewhere in the middle.

Spurtle summarised the fantasia here [bit.ly/2lXVPJK]. Far more information will be presented at a second public exhibition in Broughton St Mary's on 17 October.

Briefly



A mixture of hope, reason, and vented steam, the **Cockburn Association's** latest Soapbox Session – this time on 'Our Heritage City' – successfully gathered public opinion last month in advance of Council consultations for the **City Plan 2030**. We summarised here [bit.ly/2m1PKfv].

In addition to the **25 animal-related local businesses** listed in Issue 287, readers have suggested Primate on **Eyre Pl**, and the newly named Dog of the Hare on **Broughton Rd**. Further suggestions welcome.

Just a friendly wave each morning helps to make a better day. Failing that, here is the **Council Enforcement** link to report neighbours running short-term lets without **change-of-use** Planning consent: [bit.ly/2m1qMBZ].

This intriguing nudge reaches us via reader Iain MacPhail. **Stockholm** is piloting a radar camera to monitor passing cars. Those **below the speed limit** enter a lottery to win up to £2,500 of speeders' fines. Average speeds have **dropped** by about 25%.

Sometimes a shush is not enough. City of Edinburgh Council seeks to replace the internal front doors of **McDonald Rd Library** (Ref. 19/03937/LBC) to prevent unauthorised access. This is **one of several recommendations** – including enhanced and repositioned CCTV – to address anti-social behaviour directed at staff.

It was in Jan 2018 that a police vehicle banged into and flattened a bus-stop shelter on the eastbound side of **London Rd** near Brunswick St. Local resident **Jon Hein** wants it back, and has used an FoI request to establish that the Council did not seek to recover the expense since doing so **would cost it more** than installing a replacement. However, officials were unwilling to put up something new until a **review of bus stop densities** was complete, and in any case argued that other shelters are available nearby. Mr Hein is not happy. In fact, in wet weather he is now simultaneously fuming and soaked. **Cllr Munn** has undertaken to investigate.

Word reaches us that scammers are tracking **regular window cleaners** around their routes in this area and then approaching **regular customers** at the door for additional payments. Don't pay anyone twice and **don't pay anyone anything** if you don't recognise them.

A new **4-socket recharging point** has appeared in the underground car park of Tesco on **Broughton Rd**. Can autonomous e-shopping trolleys be far behind?

Moreover ...



This colourful item recently appeared in the historic window display of the Apple Pharmacy on **Broughton Street**.

Staff there knew little of its provenance, other than that a customer had offered it to them free of charge. At first glance, it looks like a splendid example of questionable Victorian advertising. At second glance, it appears to satisfy every expectation of 19th-century commercial oddity. A third glance and one's kidneys begin to tingle. Isn't it just too perfect?

Research eventually revealed that Håkon & Heks' Egyptian Elixir of Life, offering instant relief from all diseases and providing 'great tone and vigor to the digestive organs', is a fake even by the standards of snake-oil sellers. It's one of a range of exotically labelled empty bottles distributed in limited numbers by Devon-based House of Marbles. Apparently, there is a market for such things among nostalgic hypochondriacs in general and Harry Potter fans in particular.

Now, if it's a *genuine* quack remedy you're after, *Spurtle* can offer the real thing in unmarked containers at £24.99 per drachm. All major credit cards accepted.

Recent highly visible work on the spire of **Broughton St Mary's Parish Church** has been to improve 2G, 3G, and 4G **network services** for those living, working, and travelling in the local area (Ref. 18/04223/LBC).

Cornerstone Property Development (Issue 288) has put **7-8 Baxter's Place** on the market at offers over £1.9M. Agents **Knight Frank** cheerfully describe the 6 flats as an excellent location for **private or student rentals**, continuing: 'There is potential to **reconfigure the building** and convert the basement into another apartment or communal space, subject to all necessary consents.'

Topping & Company Booksellers opened at **Blenheim Pl** on 29 Sept. The new shop offers views, coffee, **rolling ladders**, and hand-crafted bookcases with room for 70k titles. Large is also beautiful.

Spurtle Team: E. Dickie, J. Dickie, M. Forde, J. Hart, M. Hart, D. Hill, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, S. Michael, M. Orr, L. Rogers, C. Roussot, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith, D. Young.

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LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A forum for local people who want to engage with and work for their local community.

Participate in local democracy.

Make representations to City of Edinburgh Council, other public bodies and private agencies on everything that matters locally.

Next meeting: 7pm on Monday 21 October, Leith Community Education Centre (café).

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>



Leith Central Community Council



Deidre Brock MP
Edinburgh North & Leith

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DeidreBrockMP
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Surgeries

Every first Friday 1-2pm Constituency office 166 Great Junction St	Every third Friday 1-2pm Stockbridge Library
Every second Friday 3.30-4.30pm McDonald Road Library	Every last Friday 4-5pm Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre

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Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency



Constituency Surgeries

(no appointment necessary)

Every Monday:
5-6pm at
Leith Library
28-30 Ferry Road
Edinburgh
EH6 4AE

Every Friday:
4-5pm at
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre
Pilton Drive North
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NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Representing locals' views to City of Edinburgh Council.

You're very welcome to attend.

Come along and make a difference. The next meeting is **on Monday 14 October** at 7.30pm in

Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent

www.ntbcc.org.uk