

Spurtle



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2020**

No 301

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER

Free

DANGEROUS ROADS NEAR BROUGHTON PRIMARY

Two young people were injured last month in separate traffic accidents.

The first occurred on 5 October when a 13-year old walking to school with her sibling (a Broughton Primary School pupil) was struck by a bike on Broughton Road. The girl was taken to hospital by ambulance, where she remained as this issue was going to press. Police Scotland confirm that a '22-year-old man was charged in connection with dangerous cycling'.



The second incident occurred on McDonald Road before school began on 16 October. The P7 pupil at Broughton PS was hit by a car but escaped with 'bumps and grazes'.

The accidents appear unconnected, but have both occurred as traffic levels in the area have increased due to tramwork-related diversions.

Headteacher Maria Gowans was due to meet the Trams team on 29 October, and Ward 12 Cllr Rob Munro has raised the issue within the Council, as have the parent representative on the Education Cmte and Deidre Brock MP.

These problems were not unforeseen. Efforts have been made since January to get extra pedestrian crossings around the school, and regular warden/police patrols. However, so far Broughton PS has not been considered a priority for such measures.

STUNNING OR STUNT?



A 14m blow-up monkey (not as beautiful as the real thing shown here) looks set to be attached to Inverleith House in the Botanics. Part of a 3-year art-project highlighting climate change [bit.ly/3kqbxXn], its admirers say it's an accessible and thought-provoking installation. Critics says it's an inflated stunt relying more on incongruity than content. Australian artist Lisa Roet has previously exhibited the piece outdoors in Beijing, Melbourne, and Hong Kong. [Image: [Giovani Mari, Wikimedia, Creative Commons.](#)]

TALES FROM THE RIVERBANK

Details of the new Canonmills properties collectively marketed as The Bridge are now appearing online.

They comprise six apartments (of 2 or 3 bedrooms and ranging from 802–1,090 sqft, £425k–£560k); and three 4-level townhouses (1,485 – 1,600 sqft) to the rear, each with 3 double-bedrooms, winter garden, and terrace overlooking the Water of Leith (no prices yet).

Fittings include bi-folding Roman Embrace Bath Screens – ideal, perhaps, for anyone who likes having their bottom pinched but not by Italians.

The ground-floor retail space of 1,884 sqft (with a 1,298 sqft basement) will be leased to a 'complementary business' at offers over £64,998 per year.

If *Spurtle* were buying a home here, we'd want cast-iron assurances about 'complementary', business hours, and delivery times.



BIN HUBS HEADING BROUGHTONWARDS

In order to improve recycling and waste services for flat dwellers, and to tidy the appearance of their neighbourhoods, City of Edinburgh Council will introduce communal bin hubs from early 2021. Leith and Leith Walk wards will be first.

For every 50–55 residents, 4 bins (non-recycling, mixed recycling, glass, food) will be sited on roadways, taking into account safety, walking distance (max. 50m), and reduction of street clutter. They will be held in place by a bin 'housing' and railings.

Living Streets Edinburgh has welcomed the initiative, but would prefer fixed bins to the wheeled ones, which tend to stray. It also wants further rationalisation of trade-waste and individual residential bins, and recommends CEC seek additional powers (including fines) to ensure effective enforcement of rules. Underground storage should be a requirement of new development.

Officials from the Council's Waste Department will make a presentation to the New Town & Broughton Community Council this month, at which fans of gull-proof bags are expected to be vocal if not airborne.



NEW HOTEL FOR PICARDY PLACE?

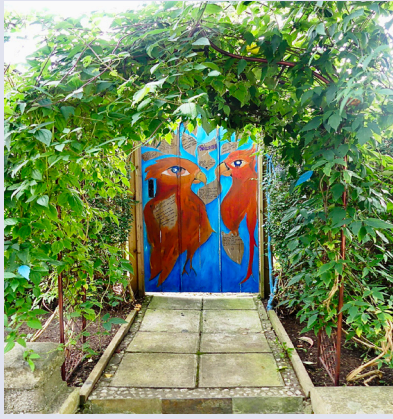
Silvermills Estates & Land will apply soon to develop a 67-bedroom hotel on Picardy Place (between Hertz and the Holiday Inn).

A 2-storey extension is envisaged behind No. 12, and a glazed roof over the current courtyard. Today's extension and mews behind No. 14 would be replaced with a new extension, rising sheer to the level of the eaves directly above Broughton Street Lane.

SEL says the consequent improved business model would allow an overdue upgrade of the Category B-listed buildings, and help to regenerate the area. Neighbours on Forth St will doubtless have concerns about increased noise on the lane and loss of daylight. Heritage watchdogs are on the alert.



Briefly



Richard Price recently drew our attention to this decorated gate in **Warriston**. As well as the two parrots, there is a quote of dubious propriety from a Polish film, and 10 extracts from **English, Spanish, and Scottish** nursery rhymes. One mentions a fart in the dark by **Skinny Malinky Long Legs Umbrella Feet**. Many thanks to Fergus Smith for help with translation.

Broughton History Society has been quiet of late, but is certainly not a thing of the past. Committee members are investigating how to run future **meetings/talks via Zoom**, and will launch a new programme as soon as practicable.

A seemingly permanent loch has formed in **Dalmeny St**, flanked by a number of lochans on neighbouring streets. They are, says one **disgruntled denizen**, the result of ‘an unholy alliance’ between Scottish Water (almost certainly a partially **collapsed main drain**), intermittent (at best) **gully clearing** by the Council, and possibly **tramworks** disturbing the underground ‘ecosystem’. Utterly frustrating, but no otters.

The Kirk Session at **Broughton St Mary’s Parish Church** is considering a fitting memorial to their late minister **Peter Macdonald**, who died in Feb. In consultation with Macdonald’s widow Lesley, their options include a **fund in his name** to support people in need, and an **artwork within the church**. Installation of any such artwork would follow **refurbishment** of the sanctuary and vestibules, now **provisionally rescheduled** to start in Jan 2021. Before the vacancy for a new minister here can be advertised, permission must be given by the **Presbytery of Edinburgh**. News about this is expected soon, possibly later this month.

Rapido on Broughton St is to reopen under new management. We are promised very fresh fish **pronto**.

White poles in the new **Forth Quarter Park** (in Granton) are not – as originally suspected – **venting methane** from contaminated land. In fact, they mark the **underground route of gas mains** so that, every 8 years or so, helicopter-borne LIDAR technology can be used to check for leaks.

Essential Therapy has closed its doors after 25 years on **Broughton St**. Individual therapists are currently working separately until new premises can be found. Follow ET’s **Facebook page** for updates.

The future of public space

Until 23 November, the Council is consulting on a new Public Space Management Plan [bit.ly/2IJnw4u].

Applying citywide guidelines and site-specific conditions, the PSMP will determine how Edinburgh’s outside civic spaces (including parks) are managed for events, filming, and festivals.

The PSMP will include a ‘clear, efficient, open and transparent’ application process for event organisers. Improved community engagement will keep locals informed about proposals, and establish ways for them to report back afterwards and refine area conditions.

Following discussion with a variety of well-informed sources, *Spurtle’s* observations appear below.

• A PSMP is long overdue (work on a City Centre Public Spaces Manifesto began in 2015 before stalling) and much needed. We require a better balance, more effectively struck, between preserving amenity for permanent residents/workers and facilitating events/tourism-related activities.

• At this stage, the envisaged involvement of locals looks more reactive than proactive, which would disadvantage efforts to exercise timely influence.

• Ongoing monitoring of how public spaces have been used, learning from experience, and revising best practice could all be useful. So long as such feedback is taken seriously and gets acted upon. No one wants a mere talking shop.

• If best practice is genuinely to evolve, as promised, then permissions granted on one occasion should be contractually capable of being refined or revoked on another without penalty to the Council.

• There will inevitably be tension between competing camps, and establishing a consistent process for managing that tension won’t be simple – particularly since judgement of appropriate and inappropriate uses may be subjective or politically expedient.

• Given that problem, carefully chosen, properly funded staff in post for the long term will be essential to build the necessary administrative experience/expertise and trust among locals and event organisers.

Between a rock and a hard place

In related news, the Council last month agreed to draft a new Strategy for Princes Street and the Waverley Valley. It aims to inform future development/management of the landscape, the role and use of buildings, and the quality and ‘offer’ of its public realm.

The ambition is a worthy one: bringing into one place all relevant Council policies and proposals for the use of land and development here. As with the PSMP, the difficulty will come in finding an acceptable compromise between competing, sometimes contradictory, pressures for preservation and adaptation.



Mixed views on hurried road changes

Not for the first time, there was strong criticism at last month’s New Town & Broughton Community Council of how the Council’s Spaces for People adjustments to street layouts are being handled.

It was agreed that responses to public suggestions were woefully incomplete and inadequate, although Cllr Kevin Laing (Ward 1) has secured a promise that this will be resolved by the end of this month.

The changes have been introduced in response to Covid-19. They aim to offer safe and efficient travel alternatives to motoring and public transport. But some at the NTBCC meeting felt the Council has been too influenced by a pro-cycling Sustrans agenda, with not enough weight given to pedestrians’ concerns. Others differed on this, but all thought better consultation would improve ‘public buy-in’.

Cllr Hal Osler (Ward 5) said a staggering number of complaints had greeted the city’s proliferating bollards. Cllr Joanna Mowat attributed this to badly designed projects being hurried through by people with no local or street-level understanding.

One voice counselled caution on the tone of complaints, and said poor handling by officials should not be mistaken for deliberate unfairness or bad intentions.

Alternative views are available. For example, cycling campaigner Spokes – which was not represented at the meeting – has expressed excitement at Spaces for People’s temporary active-travel projects. Its website praises them for ‘zooming into place around the city at remarkable speed, using cheap [...] designs on a “try-then-modify” basis’ [bit.ly/314SKcG].

Edinburgh street nuisances

SIR,—Too true it is that Edinburgh is both a difficult and a dangerous place to drive in, and, moreover, one where much time and temper is lost quite out of proportion to its size and traffic, thanks to the way in which the slow traffic is allowed to wander about all over the road. London is a backward place in most things, but they do at least understand the value of a good road surface and of good speed on it.

Things have been aggravated, if possible, by the slow moving large tramway cars, which stop ridiculously often, and by their congregation at the junctions. The time is within sight, however, when public opinion will demand a quick, safer, and more convenient form of cheap urban intercommunication, and when trams will be abolished.

But the need for regulation in the interests of safety and speed will always be with us, and hence, perhaps the Magistrates and police will turn their attentions to the carts, &c., which are the real nuisances, since a swift bicyclist is no obstruction and a very small danger, thanks to his extreme mobility and his small superficial area.

Edinburgh should be an ideal place for business or pleasure driving, thanks to its wide streets and small traffic, but it is the very opposite, thanks to primitive paving and the use of the go-as-you-please style.—I am, &c. M.

Extracted from a letter to the Scotsman, 14 August 1901.—AM.

Poet in profile

It is a great pleasure to welcome another poem by Imogen Forster to these pages. Imogen is a poet and translator who lives locally.

Born in England, she got to know and love Edinburgh from regular visits to her grandparents and an aunt in Morningside. One of her earliest memories is of feeding raisins to a hippo at a wintry Edinburgh zoo! As a teenager, she also visited friends who had a flat near the New Town address to which she moved five years ago.

After working for some years in university libraries in Britain and the USA, Imogen became a translator and was one of five translators for the monumental new complete edition of Van Gogh's letters, published in 2009.

In 2015, she embarked on an MA in writing poetry at Newcastle University. After graduating, she concentrated on writing poetry and her work has been published in a number of online and print magazines. She expects to have a pamphlet out next year.

She tweets as @ForsterImogen. [Image courtesy of: bit.ly/3meywFf].



Flight

Blackbird, a smudge in the prickly hedge, wings and tail all downward.

What does a bird see, stooped, fluffed up against the cold?
I want to touch this living thing hunched in a cage of bare twigs.

If I could feel his ashy back, hold his entire breathing form, what would they tell me, the soft bones, barbed primaries, mite-infested down?

The bird stirs, showing a bead, an eye, a bill ripening to yellow. Then a sudden thrust from the damp bush, a clear trajectory.

This was his first lesson, an enactment of his ease.

Imogen Forster

The future's bright



How are you enjoying the new bulbs gradually appearing across the city centre? Reactions we have heard suggest most New Town residents prefer their cool Enlightenment illumination to the warmer sodium fogs of recent years, although some complain they are occasionally too bright. As we reported in March [bit.ly/3mi8cKD], some 3,000 energy-efficient bulbs are being introduced, with projected savings of £54M over the next 20 years.

Lines drawn over New Town Quarter

The full planning application for the former RBS site between Dundas Street and King George V Park had attracted 150 comments (around 20 of them in favour, the rest against) by the deadline. It will now go before the Development Management Sub-cmte for a decision.

The New Town & Broughton Community Council has received what its planning convener describes as many well-argued and balanced objections from locals, but will nevertheless submit a mixed response of its own which acknowledges good and bad aspects of the proposals.

NTBCC understands the developer's need to balance profit and reasonable amenity for future residents/businesses, but has concerns about: the long-term management of trees; the need to alter the Dundas St building line, which will necessitate felling trees; the height of new buildings on the southern boundary (within rules but nonetheless changing the feel of the street); the questionable need to replace rather than recycle existing structures; encroachment (real and/or perceived) upon King George V Park.

Particular problems attend the development's relationship to neighbouring buildings on Eyre Place. Some 26 residents share ownership of a high partition wall between themselves and the development site, and will go to law to retain it rather than have new neighbours overlook their bedrooms from a distance of 18.6m.

Existing residents are pressing to retain the wall, or, if it *must* go, for the new flats to be set back to a distance of at least 23m. Their case appears in detail here [bit.ly/3dpHpbQ].

Ediston's Director of Development Ross McNulty says he has consulted frequently with those concerned, and that the spacing conforms to planning guidelines [bit.ly/3703htn]. Residents counter that so far he has conceded nothing, and that if their plans were adopted it would improve daylight and privacy for current and future locals alike. Watch this space.

Ediston report huge interest in the development, with over 4,000 visitors to their related website from around the world. They hope the application will be discussed at Council committee in December.



Briefly



Thanks go to local Peter Clark, who alerted us to this sign situated at the southern exit of **King George V Park**. It is unhelpfully positioned 10 feet up a lamppost where few will notice it. Nonetheless, it's an instruction which could usefully be repeated on footways the **length and breadth** of Spurtleshire. Cycling on footways is often intimidating and sometimes **downright dangerous** to pedestrians, especially children and those with impaired sight. It is also **categorically against the law**. If your posterior is too sensitive to be pedalled across Edinburgh setts and potholes, get off and push.

A visual tree survey in **Charlotte Sq** has established a clear connection between their ill-health and damage caused by the Book Festival [bit.ly/3dQ4mVQ]. Could greater protection of trunks, and platforms raised above soil level, mitigate the problems?

The Scottish National Portrait Gallery at **1 Queen St** reopens on 8 Nov, from Sundays to Tuesdays. Free admission by **pre-booking only**: [bit.ly/33Z0tLf].

The first section of the City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL) for bikes has opened between **Elder St** and **Picardy Pl**, along with a temporary cycle route around the Picardy Pl island connecting with **Leith Walk** and **Leith St**. Spokes offers a loud, dowie, and drouchit video-tour of the route here [bit.ly/30WNOGH]. Remember: patience is a virtue. These works were carried out at the behest of **Edinburgh St James** developer Nuveen. Council work on the rest of the route has been delayed by Covid-19, but should start in Jan 2021.

Keep Scotland Beautiful awarded Green Flag status to 34 parks in Edinburgh this autumn, including: Hopetoun Cres and Princes St Gdns, Inverleith, King George V & Scotland Yard, Starbank, and Victoria Parks. Notable by its absence was **St Mark's Park**.

The relevant plans are as hard to fathom as dark strangers in tea leaves, but proposed positions of the **Balfour St** and **McDonald Rd** tram stops have moved 200m south of those already consented. **New applications** have therefore been submitted. You are going on a long journey.

The full Place Brief coordinating planning principles for future development around **Halmyre St** and **Leith Walk** can now be downloaded here [bit.ly/341R9q1].

Moreover ...

NTBCC has welcomed the Scottish Gov't's latest proposals on **short-term lets**. Despite wanting more clarity on tenements and overcrowding, it found the approach to be '**generally admirable**'. However, the proof of any eventual pudding will be in the Council's **will and ability to enforce** tightened rules.

The **Biscuit Factory** proposes a partial change of use for the building at **4-6 Anderson Pl** (20/03841/FUL). Current tenants include a **gin distillery and artisan bakery**, with other areas used increasingly for **private and corporate events**. These anchor uses are intended to continue in future, alongside 'a multitude of **starter type** workshops of a craft/artisan nature'.



Following 27 objections registered in March (Issue 293), developers have submitted revised plans for flats at **5-6 Marshall's Ct** (20/00486/FUL). Little has changed regarding height, and the proposed roof terrace has been replaced by a more substantial floor. **A local observes**, 'The key point about the maximum number of storeys appears to have been completely overlooked; so have considerations around density, access, roads and pavements, refuse and recycling.' Deadline for comments: 6 Nov.

Pilrig locals are resisting an attempt to develop housing on **Spey St Ln** [bit.ly/34mnHe8]. They want to preserve **light-industrial uses** here which in theory enjoy protection under Council Planning policies.

After **protracted enforcement** action by Edinburgh Council, the rear facade of the former Howard Hotel at **32-36 Great King St** is now, once again, embellished with the sort of **low, cast-iron, decorative balconies** at first-floor level which were removed and destroyed by developer Square & Crescent.

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: to be confirmed. For local information, visit the website at

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>

Deidre Brock MP
 Edinburgh North & Leith

Surgeries

Every third Friday 1-2pm Constituency office 169 Great Junction St	Every third Friday 1-2pm Sturkieidge Library Every last Friday 1-2pm Boyeton/Wardieburn Community Centre
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 Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency

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 (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 Edinburgh EH5 1NF
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NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Representing locals' views to City of Edinburgh Council.

Tell us what you think and make a difference.
 Next meeting: to be confirmed.
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