

Spurtle



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No 305

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

SPACE TO ENJOY, BREATHE, AND SPEND IN

After 20 years' trial and consideration, regeneration of George Street's public realm has entered a new phase with the launch of a final Concept Design by consultants acting for the Council. Full plans are at [\[bit.ly/3byOTdx\]](http://bit.ly/3byOTdx).

Some 70% of the £32M budget will come from the Scottish Govt via Sustrans, with a hefty proportion of this assigned to cover unforeseen problems. If approved this month, work will begin in 2023 and end in 2025.

The whole scheme is predicated around other elements of Council policy, not least the City Mobility Plan and City Centre Transformation. It assumes a significant reduction in private motor traffic through central Edinburgh, and prioritises George St for pedestrians (walking and sitting), cyclists, wheelers, and additional Blue Badge parking.

Some fear relocation of parking and traffic throughout the New Town, delays to bus services, and how Edinburgh Council and Essential Edinburgh may try to over-use and commercialise outdoor events-spaces in future.

There are concerns, too, that street-level café culture may be no match for Edinburgh's cataracts and hurricanes. Will spacious pavements attract footfall or sap the spirit? Notwithstanding heritage purists' objections, would manageable small trees be preferable to shoulder-high shrubs?

There are complaints about the absence of public toilets, worries about the exposure of statues to vehicle damage at junctions, and doubts over whether Edinburgh Council can protect future amenity from careless utility companies.

For all that, there are many who welcome this bold and imaginative response to today's muddled streetscape and tatty decline. Read our detailed report at [\[bit.ly/3esoX54\]](http://bit.ly/3esoX54).

ANYONE FOR TENANTS?

Last month, *Spurtle* noted online the unusual hush of a George St Sabbath [\[bit.ly/3l1lDsJq\]](http://bit.ly/3l1lDsJq). It wasn't just a pious absence or the effect of Lockdown. By our calculation, over 171,404 sq.ft (15,923 sq.m) of floorspace lacked a commercial occupant – an area equivalent to 61 tennis courts. Since posting our article, we've learned that another 5 tennis courts' worth have been vacated at No. 112.

Some quibbled with our photography, one example was challenged (and corrected by us), but few disputed that Edinburgh's most prestigious street risks a crushing straight-sets defeat even before the new St James Quarter opens this summer. A substantial George St upgrade cannot come soon enough.



MUCH ADO ABOUT PIGEONS



Shona Kinloch's seven bronze pigeons – in storage since 2006 – are expected to return to Elm Row in June. The popular trip hazards – first installed to prevent people falling down steps here – will reappear repaired, repatinated, and in some cases completely recast by Powderhall Bronze of Granton. Another prominent local feature, the fine clock which until 2007 stood on London Rd roundabout, will follow in the fullness of time.

LOCALS DEMAND BETTER

Picardy Residents Association is threatening legal action over Edinburgh Council's long-standing failure to provide enough timely and reliable collections of recycling and food waste. Chair Peter Williamson says Broughton Pl and Hart, Forth, Union and Albany Sts are often strewn with waste spilled from recycling bins.

He says that despite formal and informal complaints going back years, with problems often being reported 3–4 times a week, no solution has been applied beyond occasional retrospective tidy-ups. Damaged bins and bins misplaced after emptying are other frustrations.

Despite polite communication between residents and Council staff, locals' patience has snapped. They say they're entitled to effective collections and want previous promises of action to be implemented *now*.

WasteCollectionService staff acknowledge shortcomings, but point to increased food and recycling waste generated during Covid lockdowns. They also say a citywide strategic review is already underway [\[bit.ly/3rObxnZ\]](http://bit.ly/3rObxnZ). A timetable for installing 'bin hubs' (starting



in Leith and Leith Walk) goes to the Transport & Environment Cmte this month. Designs for the Picardy area are being drafted, and relevant Traffic Regulation Orders will be applied for over the summer.

PRA won't wait any longer. 'Councillors and the Council's leadership need to reflect on an inability to deliver with some consistency a basic service and display any sense of accountability to local residents for the delivery of that service,' says Williamson. 'We will now have to explore legal means to achieve redress.'

MMARS-IAN INVASION

Some 50 objections met MMARS Dundas Ltd's plans to demolish properties at 108–14 and 116 Dundas St (20/05656/FUL) to create 44 flats and 3 commercial units. Few welcome extension of the building line here, or loss of trees, or increased height and massing. The Cockburn Association and Edinburgh World Heritage found little to like and more to deplore in the plans, prompting scorn from those locals irked by the organisations' recent support for proposals over the road. A determination is expected by mid-April. Revisions submitted in late March were dismissed by critical locals as irrelevant and cosmetic. See [\[bit.ly/3qV4dp4\]](http://bit.ly/3qV4dp4).



ELECTION HUSTINGS

Spurtle will hold a virtual hustings in advance of the 6 May Scottish Parliament elections. The event, on 20 April, will be for the Edinburgh Northern & Leith constituency. Details of how to 'attend' and submit questions will appear on our website soon. The deadline for nominations was 31 Mar, but as we went to press we knew of the following candidates in ENL: Katrina Faccenda (Lab), Rebecca Bell (LibDem), Callum Laidlaw (Con), Ben Macpherson (SNP), and Lorna Slater (Grn). In the event of a constituency candidate not being able to attend, a Lothian list candidate will be invited to replace them.

Candidates in Edinburgh Central: Scott Douglas (Con), Alison Johnstone (Grn), Maddy Kirkman (Lab), Angus Robertson (SNP), and Bruce Wilson (LibDem).

Briefly



Retrospective consent has been given for Shona Hardie's spray-paint mural on the wall of Casa Amiga in **Arthur St by Leith Walk**. It depicts local Arthur Williams, who for **almost 30 years** was homeless and slept rough in Leith. He is now in a comfortable care home. The mural promotes **Streetwork**: [bit.ly/3c2F9ab].

Dog dental sticks laced with pills were discovered in **Montgomery Park** at 8.30am on 2 Mar. The police have been informed, but dog owners are urged to exercise caution.

Offers are invited for the leasehold interest of the Barony Bar on **Broughton St**, with a guide price of £60k. 'All trade, fixtures and fittings therein are included, but exclude the landlord's inventory including specifically the famed "Mirrors".'

Planning consent was refused last month for Kerwick Ltd's proposed 25 flats at **5-6 Marshall's Ct** (20/00486/FUL). Councillors said there was too much of it in too little space with **not enough footway** to get past. One felt the roof was over the top. See [bit.ly/3lknwa8].

The new face of McDonald Rd Fire Station is gradually becoming clear. Its **cladding specifications** were amended in 2018 after a 'value engineering exercise to reduce the general costs'. What we now see are **Weinerberger** standard format stock brick (graphite black), **Argeton Terzo** vertical grooved and glazed terracotta panels (dark red), **Trespa Meteor** panels (carmine red), and **granite**. 'The amended design has retained the spirit of the original concept in a **more cost effective manner**'. The colour palette suggests a smouldering Milanese lipstick factory.

A secure single lock-up garage measuring 5.32m by 2.45m on **East Scotland St Lane** is on the market for offers over £55k. Let that soak in ... it is the equivalent of at least £41 per sq.cm.

A sister business to **Archipelago Bakery** has begun at **23c Dundas St**. Caroline Walsh's **Artisan Provisions** opens on Sundays (11am-4pm) offering carry-out coffee, **freshly baked croissants** and **organic bread**, salads, lunch, cakes, **charcuterie and cheese**, **smoked fish**, snacks, chocolate, soft drinks, frozen homemade meals to go, **tiramisú** and **rum chocolate mousse**. See [bit.ly/3bRCQHb].

End of Bonnington free-for-all?

The deadline has passed to comment on possible parking changes in Warriston Rd, Powderhall, Broughton Rd, and Redbraes as part of a wider review.

Edinburgh Council is considering whether to make the area a Controlled Parking Zone in which restrictions and charges (Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5.30pm) will help local residents and visitors find spaces, keep traffic moving, and improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users [bit.ly/3rX1tcj].

Leith Central Community Council notes scepticism among some residents about the need for such measures, although others say it's only a matter of time before uncontrolled streets adjacent to CPZs fill with displaced freeloaders.

LCCC has urged careful consideration of tighter 'Mews street designations' for a few narrow areas such as Connaught Pl and the Bonnyhaugh development. It identifies areas bordering Leith and Pilrig as experiencing the worst parking congestion, and suggests zoning these with a natural border at the Water of Leith. *Spurtle's* recent online article prompted extensive social-media comment [bit.ly/3tzOGwV].

The Transport & Environment Cmte will decide on 17 June what to do next.

Basic housekeeping neglected

When Leith Central Community Council first expressed guarded support for the Trams to Newhaven extension, it was on the specific condition that basic services be maintained in the area during construction. Members now express anger that assurances made to them about this are not being met and services are deteriorating.

At last month's LCCC meeting, 5 issues were noted which Edinburgh Council and tram contractors have blamed each other for and not resolved: (1) ungritted icy pavements on Leith Walk; (2) ponding on pedestrian routes; (3) street lighting failures; (4) insufficient enforcement of parking restrictions on Leith Walk; (5) incomplete bin collections at night.

Meanwhile, property owners' concerns about potential vibration and ground-borne noise (and consequent structural damage) from passing trams has prompted a new review for Edinburgh Council.

The Atkins review (published in March) supports the standards, methodology, and mitigation measures of Sacyr Farrans Neopol's existing design, although Atkins experts were not resourced to gather independent data. They refer to a range of standard, soft, and floating trackform solutions on different parts of the route, some of which are more expensive than others [bit.ly/3bSehuR].

Surprisingly, SFN set no specific ground-borne noise criterion in its original tender, but aims to limit noise within neighbouring properties to 40 decibels in accordance with industry best practice.

LCCC is probing deeper via a Freedom of Information request.

Pilrig locals see red over green to greener proposal

In August 2020, we reported Lothian Buses' sale of the former Tramways Bowling Club despite neighbours' keenness to take over the underused facility [bit.ly/3cxdOgK].

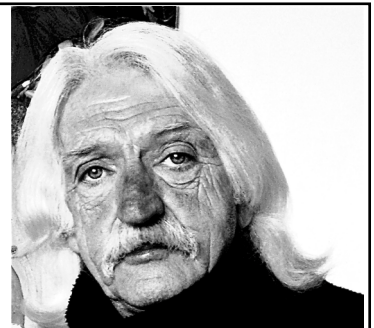
The clubhouse and greens at 54 Rosslyn Cres are now in private hands, with new owners applying for change of use from leisure to residential use. A determination is expected this month (21/00528/FUL). Their aim is to convert the former clubhouse into a 3-bedroom family home and office, and to rewild the chemical-laced green for the benefit of native flora and fauna, especially pollinators. In time, they hope to host educational events here.

The proposal has met with one note of support and 25 objections. Leith Central Community Council argues that the 0.44 acre site should retain its leisure classification in the interests of wider community access and amenity.



Painting his second forte

It was with sadness that we bade farewell last month to Dunedin St resident Dick Sneddon (1941-2021). A musician, self-taught artist, and free spirit, he threw himself into painting after retiring as drummer for heavy-metal band Bodkin in 2001. A 20-year outpouring of creativity followed. Dick's face suggested mirth and tragedy - a long life lived to the full. He had the most beautiful eyes [bit.ly/3eZDh58].

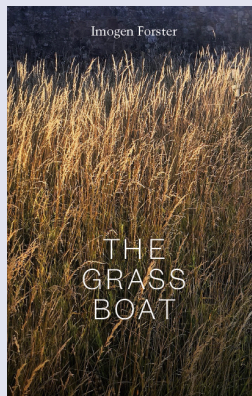


Review: *The Grass Boat*

Spartle readers will be familiar with Imogen Forster's work, which appeared in Issues 301–3. Now the locally based writer and translator's first volume of poetry has been published by Mariscat Press.

The Grass Boat features Forster's beloved birds—a kingfisher, grey wagtails, a heron, gannets—but is a richly wrought mosaic of observations in nature, childhood memories, gardens, and lives and landscapes encompassed by a vision which vivifies them with passion and curiosity. The effect is not unlike the lucent contemplations of the great Japanese poet Matsuo Basho.

Another local poet, the distinguished Stewart Conn, writes of the collection: 'In these poems with their innate musicality, versatile verse forms and meticulous eye for detail, Imogen Forster doesn't depict just the natural world and our place in it, but, captivatingly, through these, the complex pattern of premonitions and propitiations that govern our lives.' —*JRM* (ISBN: 9781916060968)



Briefly



Two yarn webs framing holes and views have appeared in **Warriston Cemetery** over recent weeks, their subtle shades of **green, blue, and purple** making them hard to find. At least one was installed to draw attention to the merits of natural wool over **sea-polluting polyester**. We don't know who has created them or whether more are planned.

Hundreds of placards demanding improved safety for women and different attitudes and behaviour towards them by men appeared in **Rodney St Tunnel** last month. They came in the wake of Sarah Everard's abduction and killing in London. Most welcomed this **thoughtful and articulate response**. Some confused it with idle graffiti. A very few were offended by unambiguous references to **sexual intimidation, rape, and murder**.

Edinburgh World Heritage seeks suggestions for historic buildings and neighbourhoods to regenerate in the World Heritage Site and **adjoining Conservation Areas**. Participating owners and tenants of selected properties will benefit under a **Conservation Funding Programme (2022–25)** backed by Historic Environment Scotland. *Spartle* knows of three suggestions from locals so far: the **Canonmills Clock** (now looking a bit green and dejected), **Meuse Lane** (grim, seedy and ill lit), and a delapidating property on **Broughton St**. See [bit.ly/3rAc0Kg].

Howe Street haberdashers and knit shop MacAree Brothers have cast off and put their website into **hibernation**. 'There is a possibility that we may relaunch once we have had a rest.' **Stay in touch at:** [bit.ly/3eXA1Y8]. In their place at No. 19 comes **The Eco Larder**, a plastic-free and planet-friendly **mini-market** for groceries, fruit, sweets, cleaning products and more. **Bring your own packaging:** [bit.ly/3lxj9J3].

Some 24 trees on **Dundas St** were felled on 4 Mar to facilitate development of the **New Town Quarter** (Issue 304). Across the whole site, 84 trees will go because they're in the way, they impact or might impact site infrastructure, and/or are defective. '**Compensatory planting**' of 71 new trees will mitigate the loss in part (albeit some in planters), with others retained under a 25-year management programme (21/00228/TCO).

A doctor denounces vaccination

From the Scotsman, 30 March 1901. A full version with historical notes appeared on our website on 30.3.21. Spartle does not share Dr Hadwen's views, but finds them an interesting antecedent to current rejection by some of best medical practice.

Dr W.R. Hadwen (M.D., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.) Gloucester, delivered a lecture upon vaccination under the auspices of the Scottish Anti-Vaccination League in the Oddfellows' Hall, Forrest Road, Edinburgh, last night.

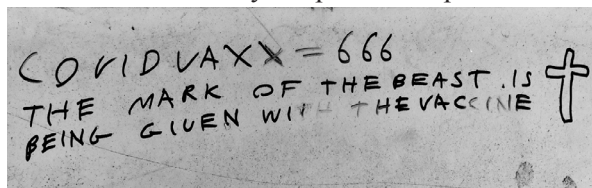
Dr Hadwen said that the anti-vaccination standpoint was a simple, plain, and commonsense one. They asked for liberty. (Applause.)

As a medical man he looked upon vaccination as an insult to commonsense. He viewed it as superstitious in its origin, as unscientific in its foundations, and cruel and dangerous in its character.

The true remedy of small-pox was not vaccination but sanitation—(applause)—which was not accompanied by any risks. Cow-pox was essentially a filthy disease. Jenner was not the discoverer of vaccination. He only adopted the superstitions of the Gloucestershire dairymaids for his own ends.

Why did the medical profession believe so implicitly in the cure? Because the age in which Jenner lived was a very ignorant one. It was the age in which live frogs were given to cure worms. (Laughter.) Jenner's cure was at once jumped at without consideration by the medical profession, it had never been thoroughly investigated since, and the cure was taken as a matter of course by the medical profession to-day.

In conclusion, Dr Hadwen said such an unscientific, such an abominable, such a miserable fetish as vaccination had no right to be incorporated in an Act of Parliament, and forced upon people against their conscience. (Applause.)—*AM*



Different routes to same end

In March, Edinburgh Council's Spaces for People sought public responses to proposed emergency measures between Broughton St and Canonmills. The aim is to improve safe travel for pedestrians and cyclists (in line with physical distancing requirements) by redesignating parts of the road network.

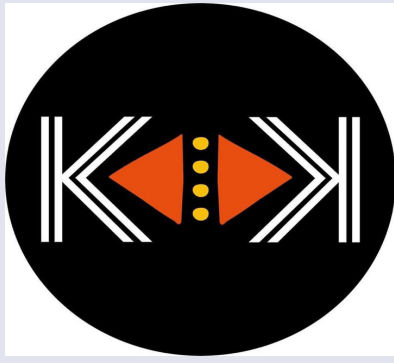
Initial plans included:

- segregated cycleway sections/footway extensions on Broughton and Rodney Sts, and in Bellevue and Canonmills
- removal of one lane approaching Mansfield Pl roundabout from N and E; removal of railings/extension of footways at NE, SE, and SW corners
- repositioning of some loading bays from Broughton and Rodney Sts to side streets
- some Broughton St parking for exclusive Blue Badge use
- additional parking restrictions
- removal of Canonmills railings (except central refuge and Warriston Rd corner).

New Town & Broughton Community Council said the proposals fell short of local aspirations expressed in the earlier Commonsense consultation, especially over improved pedestrian crossings and continuous segregated cycle lanes connecting to the established cycle infrastructure [bit.ly/3cVEDeL]. It also called for further removal of street clutter and repairs to footway and road surfaces.

Opinions differ between NTBCC and local campaigners Better Broughton. NTBCC favours a steep N–S cycle route via London and Dublin Sts [bit.ly/3atxRgk]. BB prefers a smoother, more direct, segregated uphill lane on Broughton St [bit.ly/3c8nwpE]. In personal capacities, adherents of both schemes have traded polite raspberries via social media. At stake are not just alternative solutions but competing claims to properly represent local opinion.

Moreover ...



Building on the success of a private catering business and pop-up stalls across Edinburgh, Broughton resident **Christine Longstaff** has opened a permanent carry-out at **166 Leith Walk**. Knight's Kitchen draws on Kenyan culinary influences, with many dishes **suitable for vegans**. *Karibu!* (which appears on the shop's window) means **Welcome!** in **Kiswahili**, not a North American reindeer.

No decision was reached last month on positioning a Council-promoted 8ft cylindrical 'Arts and Culture Advertising Structure' at the **Leith Walk and Brunswick St** junction (20/03658/ADV). Councillors wanted more information on how **locals congregate** here, whether the lump would affect an adjacent tree, and its relation to **tram infrastructure** and forthcoming bin clusters. Expect to see more of these **supposedly non-street-cluttering** additions soon.

With time up on the lease, Bon Papillon flitted **Howe St** at the end of Mar. The **pleasant peculiarity** of this café cum gallery cum studio cum framers will be missed. Husband and wife team **Stu and Ingrid** are making fresh plans, but printed works by the latter are already available to **view and buy** at [bit.ly/3qg5s24].

On the afternoon of Sun 21 Mar, a cyclist was injured on **Broughton St** (near **Forth St**) after colliding with a grey Volkswagen car. The driver stopped but **abandoned the vehicle** before police arrived. They seek witnesses. See [bit.ly/2PoyVtK].

Luxury Arctic-grade outdoor wear company **Canada Goose** aims to open a branch at **8-9 Multrees Walk** soon. The firm – whose 'new style' and 'relaxed' X-ray snow mantra parka retails at **£1,895** and is almost certain to leave you feeling **too hot anywhere/anytime** in the UK, especially as you try to squeeze it into something smaller than a bungalow – has promised to use only **recycled fur** in its products from 2022. Some welcome this change. Some struggle to understand why vintage dead coyote on a warm coat is any cooler than **freshly killed** coyote.

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Post: Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.
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Stopping the spread starts with all of us.



FACE COVERINGS



AVOID CROWDS



CLEAN HANDS



TWO METRES



SELF-ISOLATE



LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



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: 19 April on Microsoft Teams.
For local information visit the website at <https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>



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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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**NEW TOWN &
BROUGHTON
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Representing locals' views
to City of Edinburgh Council.

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and make a difference.

Next meeting:
Monday 12 April on Zoom.

Contact us at
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