

Spurtle



Find us at: www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk



February
2023

No 325

Tel: 07455 770474

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER

Free

LEFT-TURN FLASHPOINT

A season of badwill between pedestrians and some drivers has been a notable and controversial feature of Edinburgh's midwinter. Tempers flared at the corner where drivers may no longer turn left out of Leith Walk into London Rd. Those many drivers ignoring the injunction risked hitting pedestrians and cyclists crossing London Rd on their own dedicated green phase of the lights.

Indignant pedestrians (among them Ward 12's Cllr Rae) videoed illegal manoeuvres and/or took direct action to obstruct 4-wheeled transgressors. Ill-tempered and sometimes dangerous to-ing and fro-ings ensued.

In response, there have been repeated calls for stricter police enforcement, and improved signage/ bollards/CCTV are promised. So far, nothing has deterred drivers determined to ignore the new arrangement.

Whose idea?

The left-turn ban followed public consultation in 2019 and approval by the Transport & Environment Cmte in 2021 despite 3 letters of objection. For background, see Appendix 1 at [bit.ly/noLTurn].

Official reasons for the change included:

- prevention of congestion and disruption of tram timetable (based on up-to-date traffic modelling)
- improved pedestrian and cyclist movements
- deterrence of drivers using Annandale St, McDonald Rd and Pilrig St rather than main arterial routes.

However, there are many voices (even among non-drivers) who suggest the traffic modelling here and at the Leith Walk junction with Brunswick St should be revisited.

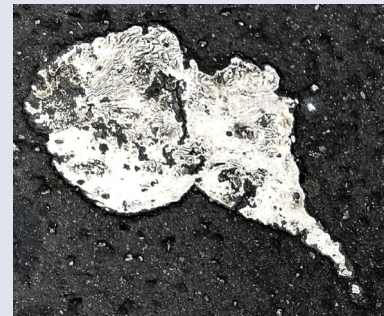
Back to basics

In response to the climate emergency, there is in Edinburgh a welcome, Council-led transition from excessive use of polluting private vehicles to active travel and public transport.

Of course, the necessary rapid change inconveniences and irritates some, but revised priorities are vital for everyone's benefit. Even if specific applications are baffling or mistaken, a car is never the right vehicle for expressing frustration with someone not in a car. Can we agree on these basics?



TEMPORARY PRESENCE MAKING A SPLASH



Pareidolia may look like a random collection of letters but is in fact a form of apophenia, which also looks like a random collection of letters. Both words refer to random visual data which appear 'meaningful' to some people who encounter them. In this case, *Spurtle* detects an elephant calf in the dried-up unplanned paint-spill on the east side of Melgund Ter. It undoubtedly channels the spirit of an Indian pachyderm housed in the neighbouring zoo between 1840 and 1857 [bit.ly/Belvzoo].

EAST LONDON STREET DIN FACTS AND FIGURES

An independent Noise Impact Assessment prepared for City of Edinburgh Council shows that E London St residents endure noise levels above World Health Organisation recommendations throughout the day and night.

Averaged out, explains local campaigner Ross MacCallum, the daytime and night-time decibel levels are significantly over the WHO guidelines of 53dB and 45dB respectively. Those living on the street are therefore at risk of noise-related, adverse health effects including cardiovascular disease and cognitive impairment.

Exasperated and sleep-deprived locals blame

Lothian Buses for the 5-year-old problem, saying its drivers use the street to avoid delays on Leith Walk when returning out-of-service vehicles to the Annandale St depot. They want councillors to demand a ban on such rat-runs in future.



The report was undertaken by RMP, a consulting division of Edinburgh Napier University. It measured acoustics 24/7 at representative locations outside Nos 4, 57 and 83 between 19 and 22 Dec last year. Instruments were sited 3m above the road surface and 3m from its centre. You can read the WHO guidelines and NIA here [bit.ly/ELSNIA].

SHANDIES, SHEDS AND A SING-ALONG SHAMBLES

On 7 Dec, councillors rejected Nuveen's latest effort to transform open spaces into outdoor drinking and entertainment venues (22/04715/FUL).

Nuveen had applied for 1 year's permission (2022/23) for 'erection of temporary structures and enclosures, including bar, and other associated works to facilitate use of St James Sq as an external events space'. Bar Hütte would return with sheds accommodating up to 200 booze-fuelled merry carollers.

Too loud, man, too loud

Seven out of 10 elected representatives rejected Planning officials' advice to grant consent with conditions restricting amplified music and karaoke. (Cllrs Jones, Cameron and McNeese-Mechan were in favour.) Instead, they found the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity. Environmental Protection officials had earlier stated that Nuveen's own Noise Impact Assessment showed noise from the site would exceed the current standard and even a higher one requested as a special concession. No effort had been made to sound-insulate the structures since last year.

Time to close loophole

Despite the refusal, Bar Hütte's howl-in-a-hut scheme continued to operate over the Festive period (14 Nov–2 Jan). It had been built before planning permission was determined, and its organisers profited from a 28-day grace period from 7 Dec before enforcement would start.

This unsatisfactory outcome is not unusual. It underlines the need to insist on earlier applications and/or to withhold alcohol licences for such pop-ups until planning permission is granted. The issue will be raised at Feb's New Town & Broughton Community Cncl meeting. See [bit.ly/3Wumucy].

Briefly



Heavy rain and localised floods scoured out sections of the Water of Leith Path between **Newhaven Rd** and **Anderson Pl** just before New Year. Until fixed, this part **needs extra** care in poor light, post-refreshment, when walking without common sense.

In Issue 320 we lamented the closure of Stockbridge ironmonger and retail time capsule **Corson Hardware**. Reader Charlie Ellis now directs us to a bitter-sweet coronach for the business and its eponymous owner in Nov 2022's **Scottish Review** [bit.ly/Corson].

Wearing a different hat in Dec, Charlie Ellis the academic researcher appealed to *Spurtle* readers for **Edinburgh memories** of eminent political theorist, essayist and biographer **Bernard Crick** (1929–2008). Crick lived in a book-reinforced basement at **8A Bellevue Ter** from 1984 until his death. See [bit.ly/BCrick] and [bit.ly/No167p3]. Contact us if you'd like to be connected.

The bijou 2-room retail premises at **30–2 W Annandale St** (formerly occupied by White House dental studio and, for a while from 1997, the **qualm-free 'health-and-fitness centre'** Scruples) are on sale for £120k or available to rent for £10k per year for 5+ years.

BBC *Winterwatch*'s **Gillian Burke** and **Iolo Williams** filmed in Edinburgh for 2 weeks last month at locations including **Warriston Cemetery** and the **Puddocky–St Mark's Park stretch** of the Water of Leith. Badgers, eels, otters, sparrowhawks, treecreepers, corvid brains, tawny owls, herons and **wee beasties** featured.

The new commercial space at **1–6 Canonmills Br**, which has been marketed since Dec 2019 and became available in May 2020, remains empty. Its **175m² ground floor** and **125m² basement** could be yours for £65k+ per year. Agents EYCO say it's suitable for **shops, financial & professional services, food & drink and business**. Not suitable enough, it seems.

Cllr Neil Ross, Convener of the Regulatory Committee, has written to **Ben Macpherson MSP** (Edinburgh Northern & Leith), Minister for Local Government in Scotland, highlighting the **'negative auditory impact'** of amplified sound from buskers and street entertainers in Edinburgh's public spaces. He requests **additional powers** to allow the Council to **control sound amplification in public spaces** under the Civic Govt (Scotland) Act 1982. We would add piped tunes from tartan-tat shops.

The controversial vivid pink front door at A-listed **9 Drummond Pl** (bit.ly/hhh-h) is to be repainted 'a dark muted red'. **The colour of neighbourly bad blood**.

Pragmatic response to unpleasant solution

Scottish Water seeks urgent listed building consent for changes to 5 B-listed properties at 10A–14B Inverleith Row (22/06197/LBC).

During recent instances of severe rainfall, residents here endured flooding from surcharged sewers via drainage traps outside and bathroom sanitary ware inside.

To fix this, SW proposes a combination of new uPVC flood doors (rendered to resemble the originals and more effective than wooden alternatives), non-return valves in the front basements, a sump pump, and water butts on existing rear roof downpipes to reduce run-off.

It argues that under Scottish Planning Policy (2020, paras 141–2) planning consent is not required because the changes are critical to protecting the buildings' long-term futures. It cites a similar Council determination for Blantyre Ter (22/02782/FUL) last year.

Heritage purists may deplore the use of uPVC here, but pragmatic compromises will likely become common as homeowners and utility companies struggle to preserve historic buildings during climate change.

Festivals over the top?

The deleterious effects of overtourism linked to year-round festivals in Edinburgh and Barcelona are the subject of an academic paper in the *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events* 14:3 [bit.ly/edinbar].

McGillivray et al. (2022) acknowledge festivals' economic importance to the capital and usefulness in spreading positive images of it worldwide. But they also air Hague's misgivings [bit.ly/overbig] at the commercialisation of public places and spaces. They point to growing public discontent about disruption, exclusion, and damage to Princes St Gdns.

The lack of a central guiding point within the Council, they claim, 'means that individual event applications are approved without reference to a wider set of principles that govern decision-making, taking cognisance of economic, cultural, social and environmental considerations.

'While staging festivals and events in public spaces can produce significant benefits, there is also a danger of "not encouraging the right things, in the right spaces, with the right quantity"' (former City Programmes Manager, Interview, March 2020), risking overuse, mono-use and even underuse of some spaces.' Economic values are often prioritised over social and cultural ones.

They suggest decentralisation may help re-establish festivals' relationship with neighbourhood, community and place, and recommend 'a form of urban governance that foregrounds rights and entitlements to the city and its public spaces, emphasising ideals beyond the market'.

Mulling over the issues on Twitter last month, several commentators criticised overweening senior officers who, they allege, ignore the public, elected members and official guidelines.



Room for a Croall Place community cluster?

Leith Walk Police Box has applied for planning permission to build 8 robust cabins and an accessible loo on the adjacent footway at Croall Pl (bit.ly/leithwalkpb).

Backers say the police-box lookalikes would complement existing businesses and not detract from residential uses. They argue that the structures would extend no further into the footway than the current box, with spaces for visitors to congregate between them. Vendors would be charged with keeping the area tidy, emptying general waste and recycling bins on a regular basis.

Sceptics counter that the footway would be narrowed for a longer stretch than at present, with customers and passers-by likely to stray into the cycle lane. Some also point to possible obstruction of access to and views from the proposed bus stop here.

Sceptics' unease about commercialisation of public space may be assuaged by the proposed affordable spaces for: display of local artists' work; entrepreneurs and local businesses; community initiatives/projects; sustainable organisations and charities. A Council decision is expected by 21 Feb.

Spurtle here declares an interest: Leith Walk Police Box has advertised with us many times in print and online since it first opened 7 years ago.



MMMARS tweaks plans for Dundas Street

MMMARS Dundas Ltd has submitted revised proposals to replace Centrum and BUPA Houses at Nos 108–14 and 116 Dundas St [bit.ly/BUPCEN].

The move follows Edinburgh Council's rejection of previous plans in Oct 2021 and the Scottish Govt's dismissal of an appeal in July 2022 (Issues 311, 320).

Responding to earlier criticisms, the developer now proposes 49 (not 50) residential units, 12 of which (25%) would be affordable housing. There would be 3 commercial units facing the street, and the building would include 32–4 parking spaces (22/05886/FUL).

The frontage next to No. 120 now drops back by 1.4m, better (but not entirely) 'respecting' that residential block's south-facing views and leaving space for tables and chairs on the footway outside some business premises.

Plans for a projecting cantilevered bay at the corner of Dundas St and Fettes Row have been scrapped. The new version is reduced by 1m to follow the line of adjacent properties.

The original scale, massing, detail and matching of the Victorian/Edwardian building line on Dundas St remain, as do plans to remove trees.

Pasta la vista

When the plans were presented to the New Town & Broughton Community Cncl in Dec, one member asked how many units would be double-aspect (windows on 2 sides). The answer was 43%; below the Council guideline of 50%. Another member described the lack of a string course at the Fettes Row corner as a 'higgledy-piggledy mess', like invisible spaghetti. Penthouse-dwelling neighbours at No. 120 deplored a proposed terrace reducing their privacy. They said planting vegetation there as a screen would not serve.

The Cockburn Association says the existing structure can be adapted to last, thus not releasing embodied carbon in line with Council policy. It damns the new design as inappropriate, mundane, bland and lacking merit. [bit.ly/cockblast].



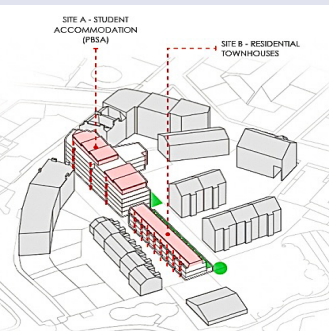
Hear, hear x 2

In 2023's first meeting of the Development Management Subcmt, elected members agreed to take forward 2 Spurtleshire planning applications to formal hearings.

The first was the proposal for student housing and adjacent dwellings at 72–4 Eyre Pl (pictured). We reported this in detail at [bit.ly/EyrePl]. The decision to have a hearing reflected the complexity of the case (nearly 400 objections were raised) and the depth/extent of concern from all relevant ward councillors, community council, MP and 416 local residents.

The second case was a revised plan to convert the former Tramways Bowling Club building and green into a private dwelling and garden at 54 Rosslyn Cres [bit.ly/RoslCr], last reported by us in June 2021 [bit.ly/No307p2].

Subcmt members wanted more detail on how much garden would be available for community use and what conditions would attach to access. Leith Central Community Cncl says the proposal contravenes National Planning Policy and the Edinburgh Local Development Plan. It wants a coordinated approach to retaining the city's bowling clubs as open spaces, especially when – as here – there are viable social alternatives for assembly and leisure.



Don't go breaking my heart

Extracted from the Scotsman, 14 February 1941.

It ought not to be necessary to point out to the more romantically inclined that this is St Valentine's Day. Not even the din and clamour of war or the much publicised invasion will rob the indulgent saint of his traditional honours.

It is not every day in the year that the lover can declare his affections under such benign auspices, and today's mails will be heavy with tender greetings.

The true Valentine should, of course, be composed in verse. The recipient, however, is anything but a severe critic, and pleasure is undisturbed by any petty metrical irregularities. On this day the most halting rhyme is cherished equally with the polished couplet.

The only drawback to the Valentine is that it does not necessarily imply sincerity. The unscrupulous and base can put it to fickle purposes. Hitler is perfectly capable of sending Valentines to the unwary. His mind, untutored in the service of verity, seizes the opportunity of protesting unswerving affection, when bent upon avaricious designs. Cupid in the dictator's grasp may be employed in the service of cupidity. [The full version of this article will appear on our website on 14.2.23.—AM.]



Briefly

Unite Group PLC proposes a 27-bdrm 6-floor extension to existing student accommodation at **7 Shrub PI** (22/05368/FUL).

As intimated in March 2022 [bit.ly/Is315p3], **Greenside Church** will be sold off, and its congregation merged with those of **Broughton St Mary's** and **St Andrew's & St George's**. Each will retain 1 full-time minister. The futures of **Inverleith St Serf's** and **Stockbridge** are in the balance. Church of Scotland rationalisation of its estate stems from a **shortage of ministers**. **Spurtle** has approached God for comment. In other news, Diane Chisholm stepped down in Jan as editor of the **Broughton Beacon** after 20 years at the helm.

Land behind **Dundas House** transferred from RBS to **IMPACT Scotland** last month. Work can now start on a new 1k-seat home for the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra**.



When Stuart Hay asked on Twitter what was wrong with this view of **Tesco Broughton Rd**, he received many replies [bit.ly/TescoBRD]. Suggestions included: sign blocking drivers' view of where pedestrians cross; failure to pave desire lines; inadequate provision of bike racks; failure to welcome pedestrians and wheelchair users, and lack of dropped kerbs for the latter; overemphasis on access for private cars. One respondent concluded, 'They're taking the pea, no?'

BT wants to remove phone kiosks outside **Snow Sport Services** on **Rodney St** and **Kavelle** on **Brandon Ter**. It hopes to replace the latter with an all-singing, all-dancing **Street Hub** [bit.ly/bigslab].

HRH Princess Anne reopened the refurbished **Poppy Factory** on **Logie Grn Rd** on 19 Jan. Staff at **Chequers** on **Broughton St** who saw her go past were relieved she didn't drop in as they had run out of **bacon and link sausages**.

NatWest Group is to replace ATM signage in **Waverley Station** after a recent Council fast-track decision. Elsewhere, it will shut its **George St** branch (reopened in Jan 2020) by Apr owing to much reduced counter transactions. Once other branches close soon in **Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow**, no NatWest-branded branches will remain in Scotland despite the bank HQ-ing in Edinburgh.

Since Issue 324 was published on 1 Dec, 3 applications to create new **short-term lets** in Spurtleshire have been withdrawn; 3 new ones have been refused; 7 retrospective ones have been refused; 11 retrospective ones (in wholly owned blocks in **York PI**) have been granted. Contrary to some partial sources, Council policy aims to **preserve or restore residential amenity**, not ruin the tourism sector.

Moreover ...



Let there be light. Trinova, owners of the old Stamp Office at **10-14 Waterloo PI**, now have permission to open up 24 dummy windows overlooking **Calton Rd** and install period-style sash-and-case ones.

Broughton History Society meets next on 6 Feb. James Hamilton will talk on *Writers to the Signet and Their Library* [bit.ly/bhistsoc]. See also [bit.ly/SamHalk].

In Dec, contractors planted **23 trees in King George V Park**. Aged 8-10 years, the new additions (including some 'interesting conifers' and variegated hollies) should survive all but the most determined vandalism. They replace specimens lost to disease, old age and redevelopment of the **former RBS site** adjacent.

Rings to ring-pulls. Whitebox Cocktails wants to change **77 Dundas St** from a white-frocks bridal boutique to an offsales grog shop with ancillary, on-sale, oot-o-can '**tastings/experiences**'.

Apex Property Services seeks retrospective permission for internal alterations and change of use from 6-bdrm dwelling to 9-bdrm guesthouse at B-listed **11 Pilrig St** [bit.ly/No324p3].

Environmental charity **Keep Scotland Beautiful's** annual Spring Clean runs from 17 Mar-17 Apr. It aims to tackle the country's '**litter emergency**'. Individuals and groups can muck in [bit.ly/rbbsh].

Roomzzz Aparthotels (already running in Chester, Leedzzz, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and York) will open soon on **Leith St**.

Bellevue Cres, Annandale St and Broughton Rd dwellers again complain of unwelcome vibrations at ungodly hours. They blame vehicles (mostly buses) thumping into **potholes** like Glaswegians drunk in a rotary door. Some also say **100-seat Enviro1004XLB megabuses**, introduced in 2019 (Issue 282), turn small fissures into lunar craters.

In Issue 324, we challenged readers to **identify 2 links** between 'Sing it aince for pleasure/Sing it twice for joy' and 'Drums in the Wallgate, pipes in the air/The wallopin' thistle is ill to bear'. To say we were **inundated with solutions** would overstate the case. The connections were: both extracts appear on **Makers' Court slabs**; and both poets spent time at Broughton Higher Grade School - **J.K. Annand** as pupil, Hugh MacDiarmid as teacher. The institution moved from **McDonald Rd** (next to the primary school) to **Carrington Rd** in 1972.

Spurtle Team: E. Dickie, J. Dickie, J. Hart, M. Hart, D. Hill, A. McIntosh, S. Michael, M. Orr, C. Roussot, E. Roussot, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith, D. Young.
Post: Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.
Printed by Minuteman Press, 63 Elm Row.

RODNEY STREET BARBERS

Julie 07989 441557, 42 Rodney Street
Tues-Fri, 11am-5pm; Sat, 10am-2pm



LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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



Leith Central Community Council

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, Mon. 20 February, Nelson Hall, McDonald Road Library.

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>



Deidre Brock MP
Edinburgh North and Leith

I'm here to represent you.

Email or call to arrange an appointment at one of my surgeries:

West Pilton Neighbourhood Centre
Second Friday of the month 2-3pm

Stockbridge Library
Last Friday of the month 1-2pm

deidre.brock.mp@parliament.uk

0131 555 7009

@deidrebrock DeidreBrockMP



Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency



"I am here to help and serve all constituents in Edinburgh Northern and Leith. If there is something I can assist you with, or if you would like to discuss any issues or ideas, please contact me or come and see me at one of my monthly Drop-in Help & Advice Surgeries."

Drop-in Help & Advice Surgeries first Friday of every month

9:30 to 10:30
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre, 11 Pilton Drive North, EH5 1NF

11:00 to 12:00
West Pilton Neighbourhood Centre, 19 West Pilton Grove, EH4 4BY

15:30 to 16:30
Leith Community Centre, 12A Newkirkgate, EH6 6AD

Email: ben.macpherson.msp@parliament.scot
Telephone: 0131 600 0134

@BenMacpherson BenMacSNP BenMac www.benmacpherson.scot

Lorna Slater MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian Region



Lorna.Slater.MSP
 @Parliament.scot

0131 348 6997

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

@LornaSlater

The costs of this publication have been met from parliamentary resources. The SPCC is not responsible for the content of external websites.

little white pig



Comfortable and friendly Bar & Kitchen set in the heart of the New Town.

Street food inspired pub grub. Seasonal cocktails. Open till late.

Open 7 days a week from 6 February, with new menu. Private hire available.

Visit us at 26B Dublin Street. Tel. 556 3036

<https://www.littlewhitepig.co.uk>
email: reservations@littlewhitepig.co.uk



Edinburgh Painting Specialists

All aspects of Painting & Decorating undertaken.

Tel. 0131 261 6850
Mob. 07514 665726

Find us on Facebook at:
[Facebook.com/EdinburghPaintingSpecialists](https://www.facebook.com/EdinburghPaintingSpecialists)