

Spurtle



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No 332

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

FRESH START FOR OLD ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL

Plans to install St Mary's Music School in a refurbished and extended old Royal High School complex have been shelved. In an inflationary climate, projected costs had risen from £45m in 2017 to over £110m this year, requiring a major rethink.

In proposals seen by the *Spurtle*, the RHS Preservation Trust now envisages a National Centre for Music offering improved and simplified access, flexible performance and practice areas, education and conference spaces, a restaurant and café, offices for administration, accommodation for visiting musicians, public access to views from the colonnades and portico, and an overall complex facilitating artistic collaboration and fun.

Six temporary venues could operate outside the Hamilton building each summer. A substantial redesign – 'romantic and naturalistic' – will transform garden areas into an international draw in their own right.

Willie Gray Muir, chair of the RHSPT, says all this can be achieved at very close to the original budget. Executive and political elements within the Council are supportive, as are Edinburgh World Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland. A new planning application will follow in autumn 2023 and work on-site should follow next summer. The new NCM, working in creative synergy with the Dunard Centre in St Andrew Sq, should start in late 2026/early 2027. Its board is already being recruited. Further details will follow, as will news of a move for St Mary's Music School.



GOOD TO BE BACK



Removed to safe storage in 2006 as tramworks began, 8 bronze doos have now been restored to Elm Row. Five were repatinated and 3 damaged or stolen ones were recast using original moulds. How much Powderhall Bronze charged to do this is commercially sensitive and not available to the public, but it was paid for out of the Council's Trams to Newhaven budget. Other bronze works around the city are, we're told, repatinated once every 5 years or so 'as resources permit'.

RBS – BUILT TO LAST

In June (Issue 329), we reported that demolition of the former RBS building on Dundas St would be 'all but complete' by the end of July. In early Sept, it's still there.

Edison's Ross McNulty tells us, 'The building was very well constructed, and the cores had a mixture of both steel and concrete, which is quite unusual, and hence it has taken a bit longer to dismantle than anticipated.'

Demolition should be completed by mid-Sept. Once done, work will follow to finish the rock anchors and sheet piling on the Dundas St side of the retaining wall. The site's brilliant-green temporary lagoon was coloured by 'natural minerals', nothing else.

In related news, *Spurtle* learns that some residents in the 12 properties on E Fettes Row are considering legal redress after secondary structures (extensions/outhouses and entrance platts) cracked. One local told us an independent report supports their claim that adjacent demolition is responsible, and promises a 'battle royal' in the months to come.

McNulty, though, says the issue has been checked and with Council involvement. 'Our engineers concluded it was not a result of works carried out on-site. We have very accurate readings to record any movement along the boundary (to the millimetre) and we found no movement whatsoever.'

'That simply means it is physically impossible for our works to have caused damage on the other side of the road. We confirmed this to the residents and Council some time ago.'



RUMA NOT YET A REALITY IN GAYFIELD SQUARE

Occasional licences were not considered in time for alcohol to be served at 1 Gayfield Sq from 1 Aug to 11 Sept.

The new venue, called Ruma, had been trailed on social media. Run 'by two vastly experienced operators, it promised a range of top rums and spirits from around the world, as well as an epic cocktail menu.' Nothing like the original planning proposal we first reported in May 2021 to open a 'community poverty prevention and relief charity' [bit.ly/1GyfSq].

The applicant's proposal entailed 'Full bar service of spirits, wines, beers and cocktails for 40 covers between the times of 17:00–01:00 on Wed–Sun, excluding Saturday which will be between 12:00–01:00. Drinks tasting events for up to 20 guests with pre-poured samples of spirits and cocktails with tickets sold in advance or at the bar area. Pre-packaged bottled spirits to be sold after events up to 22:00. Pre-recorded music to be played over venue PA system.'

Ruma on Instagram anticipated being a 'laid-back, inviting spot where the rum does the talking.' One terse resident told us, 'It's certainly a rum business.' Others say they may go to law. Some of these issues were scheduled for consideration by the Licensing Board on 28 Aug, after we'd gone to press. We will report back.

Briefly



Vlntrs from **abrdn UK** helped the Water of Leith Conservation Trust regulars to maintain paths, paint rails and clear invasive species from **St Mark's Park** last month, some of them in surprising places. We applaud their hard work and sensible choice of things to hold onto in front of a camera.

Community Councils Together on Trams' assessment of the new extension notes: **suboptimal** public-realm design and bus-stop layout/location/interchange potential in many places; numerous construction **defects**; delays caused by **suboptimal** signalling; and **unreliable** real-time info on platforms. It welcomes retention of the Council's **core tram project team** over the 2-year remedial bourach-busting period which began on 1 Sept.

A reader alerts us to **The Moray Feu: A Living History in the Scottish Capital**. It's a composite publication produced in small numbers to celebrate the bicentenary of 'this unique collection of cobbled streets and leafy gardens' as the book puts it. Or 'that housing estate' as our informant prefers to term it. Among other things, the book celebrates the **sober black, white and soft sage green** front doors of the neighbourhood and recalls how the artist Francis Cadell (Issue 329) painted the entrance to his home on **Ainslie PI** a vivid blue 'to annoy the neighbours'. Why this reader thinks we might be interested in **so remote a part** of the city we don't know.

A petition by **E London St** and other residents calling for reduced heavy traffic use, especially buses, was accepted by the **Transport & Environment Cmte** last month [bit.ly/ELStpt]. A report outlining options will now go before the TEC in Oct.

In May, **Smile2Impress** sought retrospective consent for signage at their new orthodontic surgery in **Canonmills**. However, last month, the combination of red and blue internally lit letters proved a bridge too far for officials. The lights would not harmonise with the surrounding **Inverleith Conservation Area** and would be 'particularly obtrusive at night'. In short, **not invisible enough**. Application refused.

New Town & Broughton Community Council has submitted a Freedom of Information request seeking detailed design specifications for the **Picardy PI Fantasy Island** in order to check it's being built right. There are already doubts about the **width of the cycleway here and the position of a lamppost**. The oasis of calm was meant to be finished by the end of Aug but wasn't. As we went to press it remained noisy and incomplete.

Are you **strangely drawn to rubbish**? This link may float your boat [bit.ly/ubibins].

Problems in the park

Day-time users of King George V Park report unacceptable levels of litter left behind by evening and night-time users.

The mess is worst around park benches, where young people gather to do what young people do, and smoke, drink and eat chocolate. It seems not enough of them use the inconvenient bins at the bottom of Logan St, or plastic sacks left for them by other locals.

Summer mess and noise in the park are annoying but nothing new. Perhaps of more concern is an allegation that drugs are being dealt here to young people by an older individual who lives nearby. Similar issues in wooded areas bother Pilrig Park users, too, at the moment.

Drugs are also of concern to dog-owners, whose pets sometimes rummage in bushes and eat human faeces containing harmful substances. Edinburgh vets are aware of the problem across the city. In Issue 331 we reported the deaths of 3 dogs in Inverleith Park who had ingested a powdery substance scattered over grass clippings.



Photo: Peter Clarke

City hotel seeks double Ws

Nuveen Real Estate's application to plonk a large W on the west-facing elevation of the W Hotel has been refused.

Officials decided it would have an adverse impact on the New Town Conservation Area and The Edinburgh Old and New Towns World Heritage Site, and would not comply with the non-statutory Guidance for Business or regulation 4 (1) of the Town and Country (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984. NRE has appealed to the Scottish Govt. The Reporter aims to reach a decision by 14 Sept.

Meanwhile NRE can celebrate Council approval for a large ground-level W in St James Sq, illuminated by a digital screen/display. The hotel will open its doors this Nov. 'W Edinburgh does more than put you at the centre of Scotland's historic and culturally rich capital city,' said the operator Marriott in last month's *Herald*. Well, quite. It also immerses fortunate guests in exclusive spaces from which the exterior can't be seen.

Since June 2021, NRE has made 18 successful planning applications. There have been 4 refusals, 2 relating to proposed event spaces and 2 to signage.

An Edinburgh action for damages

From the Edinburgh Evening News, 8 Jan 1897.

Lord Stormonth Darling closed the record in the Court of Session to-day and ordered issues in an action by Adam Fraser, sen., Greenside Place, Edinburgh, and his seven children, against Cowan & Co., carting contractors, 5 Princes Street.

Pursuer seeks damages for himself and the various members of his family to the amount of £1900 incurred in respect of the death of the senior pursuer's wife, who was the mother of seven children.

On October 15th last, the deceased, Mrs Christina Scott or Fraser, was crossing from Lower Broughton Street to the south side of Picardy Place, and when midway across she was knocked down by a horse and lorry heavily laden. Her injuries were so serious that she died on 20th October.

The horse and lorry belonged to defenders, and pursuers say that the accident was due to the fault of the defenders' servant in neglecting to keep a proper look-out, and in not keeping his horse under due control. It is averred that the horse was being driven recklessly.

Defenders reply that proper look-out was kept, and that Mrs Fraser was repeatedly shouted to both by the driver and by passers-by. To these warnings she paid no attention until she came in contact with the shaft of the lorry. Mrs Fraser, they say, was herself materially to blame for the accident.

Defenders, although repudiating liability, tender a sum of £100, under reservation of their rights and pleas.

One week later, the pursuers accepted a payment of £140 in full settlement of their claims.—AM.



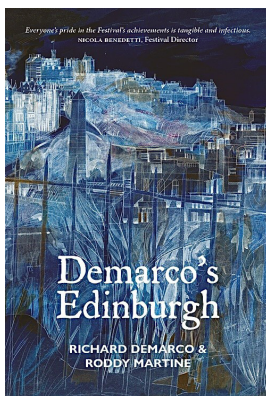
Festival heart and soul

Regular *Spurtle* contributor Charlie Ellis has written the introductory chapter of a new book published last month: *Demarco's Edinburgh* by Richard Demarco and Roddy Martine.

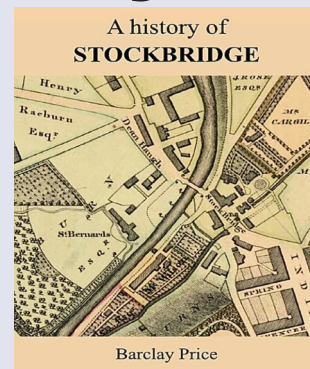
Demarco first attended the Edinburgh Festival in 1947 and – as a gallery owner, artist and teacher – has been passionately involved with it ever since. Local resident Martine cut his teeth as a journalist in 1963, when he interviewed Yehudi Menuhin and David Frost for a festival magazine he was editing aged 16.

Ellis' chapter examines some of Demarco's public pronouncements on culture and the Festival/Fringe, contextualising the abiding themes of the public intellectual and the hyperbolic showman. After his long and discursive talks earlier this year with Martine, Demarco and Edward Schneider, he draws from a deep well of reminiscence, anecdote and accumulated wisdom.

Considering the International Festival, Fringe, Tattoo, Art, Book, Jazz and TV Festivals – and their relationship with a city straining to contain them – the book is a timely contribution to the debate on how the greatest cultural show on earth should evolve to flourish in future. *Luath Press, pbk, £14.99, ISBN 9781804250952.*



Briefly



Barclay Price's *A History of Stockbridge* will be launched in **St Vincent's Chapel** on 4 Oct. Published to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Sir Henry Raeburn's death, the book recounts **Stockbridge's development** and provides biographical sketches of 50 fascinating residents. Tickets/details from **Golden Hare Books** [bit.ly/GHBks].

NTBCC seeks to appoint a **new chair and vice-chair by 9 Oct**. Interested parties living in the area, even if not current community councillors, are urged to get in touch.

Demolition of the Smithies bar building at **49–51 Eyre Pl** has been given the green light. Eleven flats and maisonettes will replace it. While the new communal garden will represent a **64% reduction of the existing open space** currently enjoyed by neighbours, those neighbours will at least be granted access to it.

Drummond Lawn Tennis Club's application to illuminate the playing surface at **1 E Scotland St Lane** using six 8m-high floodlights [bit.ly/No327p2] has been refused. Elected members on the **Development Management Subcmte** last month agreed with officials and objectors who said the proposed lights would negatively impact residential neighbours due to **intrusive glare**. As we all know, intrusive glares should be reserved for the umpire. In other news, recent redevelopment of courts in **Inverleith and Victoria Parks** was cofunded by the Lawn Tennis Association and Edinburgh Council.

An **Annandale St** resident writes with a definitive explanation for the Broughton Screech (Issue 331). The local Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel on **Haddington Pl** acknowledges defective plant on the roof which, when fixed on Tuesday 1 Aug, returned to its customary silence. Case closed.

Edward Tissiman (@edtiss) on Twitter has reported the ease with which thieves steal bikes from the **new cycle racks** along the tram extension route. They just unscrew the base from the footway. Cycles are often not covered by insurance unless '**securely locked to an unmoveable object**'. Will the Council offer compensation?

Putting the pee in premier parks, **Edinburgh Council** will spend over £1m on new or additional, permanent public conveniences in the Meadows, Leith Links and **Inverleith Park**. **Calton Hill** is also a premier park, and the Friends group there now expect similar attention.

Those unconnected parties hoping to convert the **Tramways Bowling Clubhouse** on **Rosslyn Cres** into a home [bit.ly/No327p1] and create a guesthouse with partition walls in B-listed **11 Pilrig St** (bit.ly/11PlrgSt) have appealed to the Scottish Govt against Council decisions they don't like.

The pipes, the pipes are calling

Refurbishment of the Yard's office frontage at 61–3 Broughton St last month revealed a pre-plastic ghost sign for J. Paterson & Son (Plumbers) Ltd.

John Paterson and his brother Alex established the family firm in 1850, and in 1880 it moved into 15 Picardy Pl (roughly opposite today's Tesco Express). Their descendants, brothers John and Alan, were still at that address when John's son Charles took over around the time of Picardy Pl's demolition.

In 1965, Charlie moved the business (which also specialised in gasfitting) down to Broughton St and into a shop occupied before by William C. Stewart, ironmonger. Here J. Paterson & Son (Plumbers) Ltd continued until 1972, when the firm moved first to the SE corner of Broughton Pl and Hart St (see bit.ly/ghstsgn) and then to the NE corner of Forth St and Union St. Walker's Discount House took its place on Broughton St.

Charlie's sons later moved the business to 28 East London St. Here, the Rolls Royce-inspired sign of Paterson Plumbers (est. 1850) remains today, long after the firm has ceased.

Spurtle pieced some of the story together using Post Office directories. The rest came from John Paterson (no relation), for many years boss at P&W Plumbing on E Claremont St. By coincidence, in a career spanning 30+ years, he worked at least once in all four of the other Paterson plumbers' post-Picardy Place premises.



Benvenuto nello Broughton

In what could be great news for Valvona & Crolla, the Consulate General of Italy and the Italian Institute in Edinburgh are moving in round the corner to Broughton.

They began advertising in December last year for architectural, landscape and building design and construction supervision services to convert former office premises in London House (built in 2001) at 20–22 East London St. The total value of the building works is estimated to be in the region of £1.37m (£812 per sqm, excluding VAT and 'contingencies'). An additional £150k will cover the cost of associated services. Following appointment of a contractor, the project should take around 14 months. We anticipate an opening date in late 2024. The revamped building will be called Italy House and replace the current premises on Melville St.

Spurtle requested further information but got *niente*. Staff seem reluctant to *far d'una mosca un topo* let alone *un elefante*. Cosmopolitan Greater Spurtleshire already hosts the consulates or honorary consulates of Brazil, Finland, Hungary, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States of America.



Moreover ...

Councillors have called time on Keasim Events' 'Pop-up Festival Village' on the roof of **Waverley Mall** (23/0215/FUL). They said its insufficiently high-quality design would detract from nearby listed buildings, conservation areas, and the **Outstanding Universal Value of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site**. Many will rue its passing. Many others will be glad to see the back of it and the front of the Old Town again.

The date by which anyone running a short-term let (STL) in Scotland needs to have their paperwork in order is **1 October 2023**. If they don't, they must stop marketing and taking bookings for the property and **stop welcoming guests**. However, there are strong indications that **further legal proceedings** are in the offing against planning elements of Edinburgh Council's arrangements. See **Caroline Roussot's article** on our website (1 Sept).

There's no sign of work starting on the Phase 2 mixed senior housing/nursery component of the Powderhall development on **Broughton Rd**, approved in Nov 2021. It was originally supposed to end by Feb 2023. Officials are tight-lipped, but a plausible account alleging cashflow problems reaches us from inside the project. Meanwhile, while work to refurbish **Powderhall Stables** as community spaces, offices and artists' studios has all but completed, a schedule for plugging the structure into **water and electricity supplies** (a new substation is needed) has not yet been agreed. Work here was meant to end in March 2022, but the property – due to be managed by **Out of the Blue** – remains empty.

Police in the Leith Central Community Council area have been targeting sales of vapes to **underage inhalers**. At one of 9 premises visited, 153 illegal vapes were seized along with a **mobile phone and bank card** taken from a customer as 'tick'. Enquiries continue. Police have also clamped down on **'proxy purchasing'** of alcohol for the drouthy but too young.

The owner of **18A Dublin St** intends to convert a 3-bdrm basement dwelling into an office. The whole property was formerly **office space** until its subdivision into 5 flats in 2016.

On 23 Aug, councillors on the Development Management Subcmtte voted 5:3 to approve revised plans for housing at **108, 114–16 Dundas St**. Some wholeheartedly supported the design and its adherence to new **NPF4 requirements**. Others, even among those who voted in favour of it, had doubts about the scheme's aesthetics, lack of family housing, loss of aspect for neighbours at No. 120, and the need to demolish rather than reuse the 'old' building. This hearing's decision superseded a **refusal in May**, which was annulled for some 'legal reason' which no Council source has yet explained in detail to the *Spurtle* despite repeated requests.

A Pilrig resident tells us he's pleased with double glazing recently installed at his home. **Unfortunately, so are local gulls**. Attracted by the smell of linseed oil in fresh putty, they peck it out and carry it away. Online sources suggest using **deterrent bleach** until the putty dries. We prefer the greener alternative of hiring **eagle owls**, which are attracted to the smell of gulls.

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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. 18 September, Nelson Hall, McDonald Road Library.

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 & Leith. If you need assistance, 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
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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

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Foysof Choudhury MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian Region



As your Lothian MSP I want to listen, take action and make a lasting difference.

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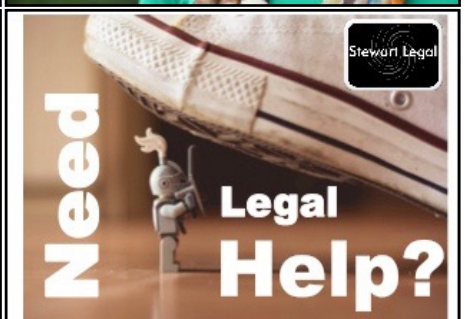
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A celebration of works by Suzanne Parry

Stockbridge Parish Church, Edinburgh
 Thursday 21st September 2023 at 7pm

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