

The flood



Powderhall, April 2000

Photo: Mark Lazarowicz

Jim Suddon, now of Woodburn Terrace, wrote in response to our story about the April flooding. He thinks we got it wrong when we said the flood was worse than in 1947; and he suggests various reasons why this 'once-in-a-lifetime' event happened again. Here's an extract focusing on our own area.

In 1947 Powderhall Greyhound Stadium was under several feet of water, and from the bridge to 'the dump' (St Mark's Park was in the course of creation) one could see men

in a rowing boat in the stadium. Sadly there were 19 greyhounds drowned in the kennels at Powderhall at that time.

The aftermath was that the river banks were excavated out by a big digger, both deepening the river and removing all rubbish. Trees were cut down from bankings, if judged to be a danger, and a tidy up along the length of the river took place.

The river bed has been allowed to silt up again. And they have planted trees at the other side of the broken wall, in the river bed at Puddicky.

Local history reprint

Peter Galinsky of Broughton Books tells us:

It was Alice Lauder of Broughton History Society who suggested reprinting a chapter from Grant's 'Old and New Edinburgh'. This is a large 3-volume set of books published around 1885, well illustrated, covering the history of Edinburgh and many of what were then still more or less separate villages.

It seemed a good idea, so I took my copy to the printers and can now offer the 6-page chapter on Broughton with its 4 charming engravings for £1.25. To be historically accurate, this is the second reprint: over 20 years ago the previous proprietor of the Broughton Bookshop printed an edition on his own printing press in the back room. He usually got as much ink on his face as on the paper, but it sold out pretty quickly.

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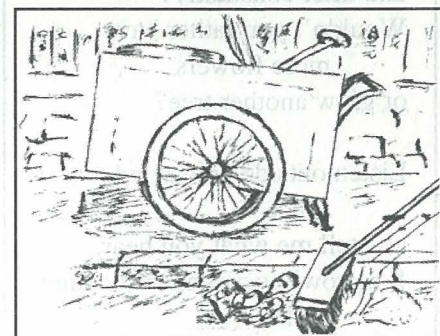
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A clean sweep in Broughton!



David Aitken of Bellevue Road was inspired by the recent visit of a real street cleaner. He would like to applaud the good job he did - and hopes he'll come back soon!

BROUGHTON Spurtle

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Broughton Spurtle is
free
 and completely
independent

GOOD RIDDANCE!

Section 28 is dead. At times both Scottish Government and Opposition had wobbled. But a hefty majority of Scots refused to have anything to do with Souter's 'referendum', in spite of months of misleading propaganda; and in the

end our new Parliament got it right. On 21st June **Spurtle** was in the public gallery to hear the final debate, and join in the spontaneous applause when the vote was announced. We invited Outright Scotland to give us their reaction:

Legally binding guidance enforced by the Bill will mean:

- Scottish children will now benefit from open, informative and affirmative education on matters of sexuality and their sexual, emotional and family life.
- Children from families not headed by a married couple will not be discriminated against in the law.
- The principle of non-discrimination must be upheld.
- Fewer children will suffer isolation and fear in school.

And Mr Souter has failed to "buy" the Parliament. Outright Scotland said he was wrong to think he could, and we have been proved correct.

Keith Cowan
 Secretary
 Outright Scotland



Saturday 24th June: Marchers celebrate the end of Section 28.

There was jubilation in Broughton Street last week, as the Scottish Parliament did the people of Scotland proud by passing the final stage of the Ethical Standards in Public Life Bill.

The Bill will not only deliver the much campaigned for repeal of the prejudiced Section 28. It also gives legally enforceable measures on preventing discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. The Tories, Brian Souter and Cardinal Winning have been seeking to confuse

matters by claiming a U-turn on principle by the Scottish Executive. Yet, in truth, Outright Scotland and others who have long campaigned for repeal have been granted more than they had ever dared to hope for.

In one fell swoop the Parliament ended months of bitter argument, consigned one of the Thatcher Government's most prejudiced pieces of legislation to the history books, and advanced Scottish education and equal opportunities to one of the most advanced positions in the world.

Our constituency MSP Malcolm Chisholm adds-

It was a great moment to get rid of a piece of offensive and discriminatory legislation on 21st June. The guidance on sex education is very inclusive and enlightened. The important issue is the context in which there is a reference to marriage and that context has been warmly welcomed by many of the leading campaigners for the repeal of Section 28 including Tim Hopkins of the Equality Network.

Hopetoun Crescent Garden

Local residents are worried by the state of the public garden in Hopetoun Crescent. It was looking so good, but recently grass-cutting has been poor - leading to questions about the whole idea of wild areas. Richard Barclay of the City Council has taken a special interest in the Garden: he agrees there's a problem, and is trying to get it sorted. Below he explains the thinking behind the way the Garden's been developed.

The standard of our urban spaces has a significant effect on the quality of city living. So when the opportunity arose to return an historic garden from dereliction to a green oasis, the Initiatives Team of the City of Edinburgh Council were keen to help.

Hopetoun Crescent Garden has an interesting history. It partially lies on the site of the former Botanic Garden - during the improvement works the foundations of the eighteenth century

Botanic Garden's wall were uncovered.

The new design displays a diverse range of trees, grasses and wildflowers in an informal manner, to encourage



The way it was

urban wildlife and provide a calm retreat for residents. The community were extensively involved throughout the process, with events such as the Bluebell planting day and the more recent wildflower planting day adding to the broad tapestry of plants in the garden.

The species noted on site include Meadow Crane's-bill, Selfheal, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Wild Strawberry, Wood Anemone, Bellflowers and Campions. Others are expected to be in flower next year, including Foxgloves and Ox-eye Daisies. The wildflower areas also contain grass species which, in order to promote a diverse mix of flowers, are allowed to grow to their full height and flower - also adding a valuable wildlife habitat.

The local schools, who were involved in the planting days, will be able to use the garden as an educational resource and participate in future events.

There are also plans to provide interpretation boards highlighting the rich history of the site, and illustrating some of the species of trees and flowers to be found in the garden.

Why not visit the Garden and discover some of the rich wildlife in the heart of your community?

Agenda for local action

Results of a consultation exercise produced at the beginning of June provide a useful - and sometimes surprising - overview of the priorities for those living and working in the area.

From a comprehensive questionnaire compiled by the Gayfield Association there appear to be quite a few positives. Top of the list - shopping, thought to be varied and convenient. There was also a general level of satisfaction with various of the basic services we can expect, such as public transport (the Greenways scheme was highly commended), the state of our streets (repair and lighting), and the provision of "green spaces". The recent extensive developments in the area were also acceptable - though a mix with more small business units needs encouraging.

But, as ever, it is the exceptions and contradictions within these broad

categories which come into focus. There is a clear need for traffic control measures in residential streets (still far from resolved are the knock-on effects on Broughton Street and roads east of there, from the expanding restrictions in the city-centre); and the proposed closures of Albany Street and London Street to through traffic are strongly criticised. The extension of controlled parking would be acceptable but with additional parking for new developments which sits uneasily with measures currently being adopted. Equally contentious is the rejection of on-street communal refuse bins which must be an option in view of the demand for enforcing litter and dog-fouling regulations and the high level of dissatisfaction with street cleaning (caused in large part by the dumping of domestic refuse). The need to improve the "greening of Broughton" and the spoiling of our

streets by garbage are both taken up elsewhere in this issue of SPURTLE.

It's good to know "the Gayfield" have identified action areas which will be followed up. The diversity of views they have highlighted is to be welcomed. How else would priorities be addressed or problems resolved?

WANTED

Musicians and entertainers
'Hopetoun's Party in the Park' takes place Saturday, 26th August. The organisers would welcome local musicians and entertainers who would like to join in.
Phone - 556 7727.

Would you like to bring your own stall to the 'Party in the Park'?

Free space
(sorry, no generators)
For details phone 557 1267.

A summer Sunday in Broughton

It took only half an hour in only two or three streets to spot these - and many other - examples of the spoiling of Broughton.

Only last month in our "Greening Broughton" feature we reported on efforts to get action on improving the environment - with pictures of local school kids doing their bit planting wildflowers in Hopetoun Crescent Gardens. A pity that they, and the rest of us, are being let down by their elders disfiguring our living space with garbage.

We all know it's getting worse and yet we all contribute to it by letting it happen. The cure is simple - rubbish for collection is put by the kerbside at a reasonably early hour each Tuesday and Friday and they actually come and take it away for us! - but it is unlikely to be taken up unless we all do something about it. Time was you'd be shamed out the stair if you were



responsible! But we're 'way past that now.

Deplorable but true, some of your neighbours just don't care and you probably don't want to tackle them. Still, it might be worth a try. Worth remembering, it's also an offence to create this sort of mess but we all know officialdom's reluctance to take that on. Let's assume, then, some people just don't think, don't know how offensive they are being, are unaware that unbagged household rejects just won't be taken away

(though special arrangements can be made for that too) and, even now, don't know how easy it is to do it properly.

Wouldn't Council effort and expense in clearing up after us be spared by a really effective stab at local information and re-education. And we mean an in-your-face, door-to-door, this-is-how-it's-done campaign.

Spurtle could suggest an ideal city-centre neighbourhood for a pilot scheme to be put in place. The Spoiling of Broughton really must stop.

Let there be light - please!

They'd been out for quite a time, a local resident tells us - both street lights on the "dark" side of Cochrane Terrace, that is. So, on 16 May, he phoned and was courteously received by Clarence who advised that a matter of days should see things right. By 5 June, they weren't. A reminder call that day also added a further black-out on the corner of East London Street outside the shops. By 16 June - still in the dark. On the basis of not bleating to your councillor when he has better things to do for all of us than go round changing light bulbs, another call to Clarence was made. Oh yes, and

meantime a heavy metal parking standard had been demolished for a couple of weeks, finally coming to rest on the public footpath. But not to worry, he had come to the right place for that too. 20 June, Action! - well, sort of. As we write, Cochrane Terrace is re-lit. But not the corner of East London Street - and the parking pole is still there.

If anyone feels like joining in, phone numbers are in **the Council's newly issued A-Z 2000**, "your guide to Council services and much, much more!" (And if you haven't been served with your copy of the A-Z, phone: 529 4295/4346.)

Broughton Green?

Look outside your window, folks, and tell me what you see.

Is there dog dirt on the pavement and litter constantly?

Wouldn't you rather have more flowers or grow another tree?

Listen outside your window, folks,

and tell me what you hear.

Is it growling cars and squealing brakes

and children's cries of fear?

Why don't we all slow down a bit

It willnae cost us dear.

Richard Love