

Spurttle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

PASSENGER SERVICES MAY RESUME ON LOOP LINE

Some readers may remember the Meadowbank Station that opened, temporarily, for the 1986 Commonwealth Games, writes *Patrick Hutton*. Older readers may even recall the stations at Abbeyhill (London Road) and Piershill, both of which closed in 1964. These were all on the Abbeyhill Loop Line, which is now partly lifted.

Today, though, with the planned upgrading of the Edinburgh–Glasgow (E–G) main line, Network Rail intends reinstating part of the loop to allow trains to lay-over between services without occupying platforms at Waverley. These tracks would run through the site of Abbeyhill Station, and local transport campaigners CRAG (<http://www.capitalrail.org.uk/>) have been talking to Network Rail, First Scot-Rail and City of Edinburgh Council about possibly extending some services to run through Calton Tunnel to terminate at a re-opened Abbeyhill Station.

This could allow through-services from Edinburgh (Abbeyhill) to Helensburgh or Dunblane or Dundee, calling at Waverley, Haymarket, Edinburgh Park or South Gyle, etc.

Responses have been quite encouraging. The cost would be low, as the E–G project would provide most of the new track and signalling. We might even see the line extended to Easter Road and Leith Walk stations in due course.



Photo: www.edinphoto.org.uk

METAL THEFT – PUBLIC URGED TO BE VIGILANT

Theft of metals is proving a problem across Britain, and Edinburgh is no exception.

Another attempted removal of lead from Broughton St Mary's Church resulted in damage to the rear of the building (see photo), whilst police report similar crimes in the New Town, Picardy Place and 'Big Foot' Territory' at the top of Broughton Street.

Arrests for metal theft in the City Centre were made recently, with two people



confessing to nearly all such incidents in this part of the capital.

However, PC Neil Gilmour warns that it remains a popular, opportunist crime and urges the public to be vigilant. He says the authorities are working hard with scrap-metal dealers to identify dodgy suppliers, and are encouraging the use of invisibly marked metals which can be linked to any building from

which they have been illegally stripped.

UNBLUSHING VIRGIN SURPRISES NEW TOWN

In mid-May, Virgin Media began building the first of 2,000 junction boxes across the city without prior consent. The 1.5m grey cabinets appeared at sites including Drummond and Cornwallis Places, Fettes Row, Royal Crescent, Dundonald and Scotland Streets (see *Breaking news* 26.5.10)



Concerned locals – some of whom had lost daylight into basement property – raised the alarm, and on 25 May

the City of Edinburgh Council's Planning Department ordered Virgin to cease work. The firm must now apply through the standard process like any other developer.

John Knight – Planning Convener for the New Town and Broughton Community Council – told *Spurttle* of his concern at the incident: 'Until the World Heritage Site is better advertised, marketed, and clearly demarcated, organisations will continue to march in and do whatever they want.'

He regards clear signage – perhaps similar to that in the Old Town – as a first step in raising awareness, and so controlling the pace and nature of change.

A Planning official described it as an occasional rather than worsening problem, caused by distant managers underestimating conservation requirements for the city-centre and World Heritage Site.

Friends fête legendary Danny

Danny Kaye – a well-kent face and Scottish basketball legend – was fêted by friends and admirers at the Powderhall Arms, Broughton Road, on 27 May.

Kaye has been pivotal in the sport since its rejuvenation in Edinburgh after the war, and has served as a player, referee, coach and administrator ever since.



Career highlights have included establishment of the Amateur Basketball Association of Scotland, an onstage appearance in the US *Ed Sullivan Show* with Nancy Sinatra, and now the commissioning of his portrait by rising artist James Metcalfe.

Event organiser Stewart Wilson says, 'For years, Danny has been hugely influential, respected, and the undisputed "go-to" man in Scottish basketball. I'm delighted to have found a guy like James Metcalfe who can really do him justice'. For the full story and more images, see *Breaking news* 23.5.11.

Coop gets go-ahead for McDonald Road store

Planning permission has been granted for a change of use at McDonald Road from a public-house to a Coop supermarket.

Planning officials rejected a petition, over 20 letters of objection, representations from two community councils, two MSPs and one councillor.

The proposal, CEC argued, did not breach its development plan, nor would it lead to loss of amenity for nearby residents.

The decision has divided local opinion. One school of thought holds that planners correctly judged the new supermarket as a convenient addition to local shops, particularly for those reluctant to cross Leith Walk. Others are – to put it mildly – baffled that CEC can apparently ignore its own guidelines about defending local 'town centres'.

The McDonald Road decision accompanies two other contentious permissions of late for telephone masts atop Centrum House on Dundas Street, and a hot-food stall outside the St James Centre (*Breaking news* 30.3.11; 2.4.11).

Twentyfying the Terraces

The Terraces on the Hill have long been concerned with road safety. With wide open streets approached by hills at both ends, speeding is undoubtedly a problem, and one which the Regent, Royal and Carlton Terraces Association takes very seriously. So they are following closely the trial of the 20 mph speed limit being piloted in various parts of the city – particularly in the Grange.

Carol Nimmo has taken on the task of researching and promoting this project. She would be very interested to hear from those in the Broughton area where a 20 mph speed limit already applies – to know how it works in practice, how effective it is and any other general comments.

To get in touch, Tel. 557 5739 or email: carol_nimmo@hotmail.com.

Baxter's Place – plans still going forward

Spurtle has been told that plans to develop 1–5 Baxter's Place are still going forward, despite difficult economic times.

We contacted the Edinburgh-based Chris Stewart Group (CSG), which describes itself as a 'multi-sector real estate development and investment business, delivering hotel and leisure, residential, office and retail opportunities'. It specialises in redeveloping listed buildings.

A spokeswoman for the company insisted that – contrary to rumours circulating in Broughton – the Irish hotel group Paul Fitzpatrick remains the properties' owner and CSG has no stake in it whatsoever. In the past it had acted as a local adviser.

Responding to concerns about the alleged deterioration of the A-listed buildings, she said CSG boss Chris Stewart had previously 'spent a great deal of time in maintaining the property's appearance, safety and security'.

In very difficult economic conditions, she continued, Fitzpatrick remains committed to developing the property as soon as possible. A lot of work is going on behind the scenes, and 'it is hoped that a positive announcement will be made towards the end of this year'.

Previous CSG projects in and around Broughton have included: Travelodge (1–19 Waterloo Place), Apex Hotel (23–7 Waterloo Place), and planning for new mixed use/student accommodation on Logie Green Road.

Briefly

The **Broughton Primary School Fair** will take place on Sat. 4 June, 1–3pm. Expect: bouncing, stalls, munchies, fun and games, noise. **Term ends** on Fri. 1 July.

The Broughton St Mary's Parish Church **Summer Fair** is on Sat. 11 June, 10.30am–1.30pm. Expect stalls, munchies, fun and noise, but less bouncing.

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be the AGM and Members' Night on 13 June at 7pm in Drummond CHS.

The **first post-Tesco closures** on Broughton St have occurred. R.S. McColl shut on 29 March, staff claiming sales had immediately fallen c.50 per cent after the Express store opened on 20 Jan. **Urban Angel** closed their deli/juice bar at No. 47 Broughton St in the same week. Tesco meal-deals had not helped. However, UA eateries on Forth and Hanover Sts will remain.

Further churn: Bruntsfield confectioners **Coco Chocolate** are very strongly rumoured to be opening a second branch in the former Organic Pleasures premises on 1 June. **Gifted**, at No. 111, have closed after poorer-than-expected results in their first 6 months. They live to wrap another day in Raeburn Place.

The **New Town and Broughton Community Council** (NTBCC) reconfirmed Ian Mowat as Chair at its AGM on 9 May. He urged locals to get involved. Jonathan Finn replaced Bill Dunlop as Treasurer, who became Deputy Chair.

A 14-year-old Drummond CHS pupil **impaled his knee** on railings outside the school on 17 May. Firefighters took an hour to cut through the metal before boy and protruding spike were taken to hospital.

NTBCC objects to an application for 'unprecedented' illuminated signage (**indigo-coloured**) for Hotel Indigo (formerly the Osbourne Hotel) on an A-listed building at 51-9 York Place (Ref. 11/01262/LBC). See: [<http://bit.ly/ld9LjT>].

An alleged **serious sexual assault** took place on Broughton St at around 6.30am on Fri. 6 May. A 46-year-old man was later charged and detained. He appeared in Edinburgh Sheriff's Court 3 days later. Police appealed for witnesses: Tel. 311 3131.

A woman was pushed to the ground in an **unsuccessful bag-snatch** on the corner of **Drummond Place** and **London St** at 6am on 22 May. The assailant – about 17, white, short brown hair, light blue T-shirt – fled empty-handed with 2 others. Later, at 7pm on the corner of **Greenside Row**, a different woman had her bag stolen by 2 men. One, aged about 24, was white with short blond hair and wore baggy navy-blue bottoms and a dark zipped top. The other was also white, and wore dark Adidas bottoms with 3 white stripes. Police appealed for information.

Villeneuve Wines has as much to celebrate in its bon mots as it does with its superlative wines. Its **May A-board** asked: *What did the grape say when it was run over?* — Answer: *Nothing. It just gave out a little wine.*

Galleries round-up

Broughton's **Art Amatoria** will team up with new gallery Frame Creative for an exhibition of new landscapes by Helen Tabor (see *Shoreline Cottages*, right).

The 25 works depict Skye and Arisaig, and will show from 16 June–16 July at 1–3 South East Circus Place. Art Amatoria's Caroline Hay says of the new arrangement: 'I'm just trying out some other venues to see if we can work together to get more people through the door and to bring the artists' work to a wider audience. I really like the set-up at Frame Creative and they are a great bunch of people to work with so we will see what happens'.

At **Inverleith House** in the Botanic Garden, two free exhibitions run until 3 July. One features illustrations to the lectures of world-renowned 18th-century botanist Professor John Hope (see *Breaking news* 11.5.11); the other, sculptures by contemporary British artist Thomas Houseago.

Meanwhile, from 9 June to 4 July, the **Union Gallery**

will celebrate 2 years on Broughton St with – amongst other favourites – new works by Stewart Bremner and Drummond Mayo, and collages from Colin Brown.

Allan Goodwillie's book illustrations 'The Secret Lives of Owls' will show at **Axolotl** on Dundas St from 10 June–2 July. Also featured will be work by Clare Bassett, Olivia Irvine and Ewan Stirrat.



Swings and roundabouts: news from the Park

The Friends of King George V Park and Scotland Yard have mixed news to report in their latest Spring bulletin.

Causes for celebration are: the imminent arrival of lighting for the eastern section; new fencing for the Eyre Place/Logan Street boundary; relaying of setts around beds; reinstatement of gates; a (very gradually) expanding bluebell wood; maintenance work later in the summer by Bellevue Chapel volunteers; and the survival of 'a real trouper' – the Judas tree which, contrary to expectations (Issue 183) has survived everything an exceptional Scottish winter could throw at it.

Less satisfactory are: continued flooding of gulleys

along the cycle track (report to CLARENCE 0800 25 25 25 and ask for a job number); and – for the second year running – a CEC assessment of the park as Very Good. 'Once again we are perplexed,' say the Friends, 'as to how that can be. Certainly the park has improved markedly over the past six or seven years but it has a way to go.'

Meanwhile, work goes on behind the scenes to establish viable proposals for youth facilities in and around the Scotland Street tunnel. As part of that work, an interesting Conservation Statement has been drawn up which we republish, unedited and in full, at *Extras* (1.6.11).

Now wipe your feet ...



One of the pleasures of dandering in the New Town is chancing on details which echo the years when it literally became a new town. In certain streets, there are broad 'stepping-stones' adjoining the pavements. These assisted householders and visitors when transferring from horse-drawn transport to the pavement. In adverse weather conditions or – horror! – after stepping on some unmentionable, there were also metal shoe-scrapers to clean footwear prior to entering a residence.



Designs range from severe Doric to flamboyant Corinthian. Many in Drummond Place resemble London's Tower Bridge. They are located on lower front steps, at the side of a door, or between railings. Exceptionally, there are flanking pairs. There are also shards and vestiges of others which might well have caught the eye of

Edinburgh's own Edouardo Paolozzi. *JRM*

'When the sun has left the sky'

We had three interesting responses to our May photo competition.

The lamppost photographed is one of a surviving pair in Forth Street. Both were originally elegant gas-lights which were once common throughout 19th-century Edinburgh (cf. Robert Louis Stevenson's haunting 'The Lamplighter'). Superficially, the Forth Street survivors are in a wan and woeful condition.

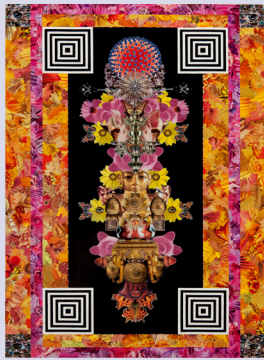
Restoration to their original state need not be prohibitive for our beloved City Council. We feel sure that interested individuals and organisations in the Broughton community would happily contribute to a collective restoration fund.

We would welcome readers' views on this, which we will convey to the Council.

A study of historic lighting in the Edinburgh World Heritage Site will be published soon and available online at [www.ewht.org.uk]. Many thanks to Krszystof Jan Chuchra, Stuart Gundry, and our winner from the shoggy hat, Jake King. Their illuminating letters appear on our website (1.6.11).



Moreover ...



'Psychedelic Collages' by Bellevue's **Ewan Taylor** (Issue 179) will feature alongside Leith-based Kirstie Hustler's 'Inner Landscapes' at a Leith Festival exhibition in **McNaughtan's Bookshop**: 3a-4a Haddington Place (Tues.-Sat.), 7-18 June [<http://www.ewantaylor.co.uk/>].

Amazon are to open a customer service centre in Waverley Gate (the former GPO building) on Waterloo Place this August. Some **900 jobs** (500 permanent, 400 temporary) will be created - a major boost to the East End (and Broughton shops/services) which may help accelerate development of the St James Quarter over the road. Cynics must desist from calling the customer service centre the **Complaints Department**.

While the **brighter street lighting** in **East Scotland St Lane** is welcome, it is questionable whether the expensive new paving and tarring of the road, currently in progress, should have been of high priority. In comparison, the southern quadrant of **Bellevue Crescent** surely merits more urgent attention.

Locally based **Whisky Kiss** are to play T in the Park next month: 5pm, Sun. 10 July. Band member **Iain MacPhail** will blog exclusively for the *Spurtle* online.

In Issue 194 we noted the end of civilisation as we know it: the trialled introduction of **wheelie bins, food recycling boxes, and bird-proof bags** across parts of the New Town. An unforeseen consequence has been ravenous gulls pecking putty out of West End windows. Are they, we wonder, trying to eat it or, more worryingly, reach food within?

Last month's **fatal collision** between a cyclist and bin lorry on East Claremont St raises important concerns for many readers. *Spurtle's* coverage in particular is constrained for legal reasons.

edinburgh4community is the Council's irritatingly named new online service for **finding grants** from Government, Lottery, charitable trust and other European, national / regional / local sources. It is suitable for individuals, charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations. See: [<http://yourlibrary.edinburgh.gov.uk/grants/>].

Spurtle laments the demise of Edinburgh's experimental website **GuardianLocal**. Its refreshing social conscience, collaborative approach, and accurate reportage of citywide news will be much missed. We wish Beatblogger **Mike Macleod** every success in the future.

Malcolm Chisholm MSP
Edinburgh North and Leith



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Saturday surgeries:
Leith Library, Ferry Road: 9am.
Royston Wardieburn Community
Centre, Pilton Drive North: 11 am.

Email: Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

New Town/Broughton Community Council

The Community Council
represents your views
to Edinburgh City Council

Next meetings:
Mon 6 Jun & 1 Aug, 7.30pm
Drummond Community
High School (Library).

All welcome!

secretary@ntbcc.org.uk

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Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm **Stockbridge Library**,
no appointment necessary;
5.00pm **5 Croall Place**;
other surgeries throughout the
constituency - phone for details

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