

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

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Tel: 556 4848

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

DOUBLE VISION: LEITH WALK ROUND 2

An independently organised (Council-free) 'Open Space' discussion of Leith Walk's future was held at Out of the Blue on 5 June. Blogger @EyeEdinburgh describes the top ideas to emerge from the 40-50-strong meeting of locals.

1. Top of the list – the Green Bridge: the most imaginative and attractive idea for a cyclist/pedestrian bridge linking Pilrig Park with Leith Links. A fantastic proposal that could be real.

2. Improving communication and governance. Between ideas about street-art and trees and using grey spaces and protecting Leith's flourish of small independent businesses, it was clear how much everyone there loves Leith Walk – and wants the Council to support it as a place and a community, not just as a thoroughfare.

3. Investing in improved lanes for cyclists, and walking and

sitting-out places on Leith Walk.

4. Decluttering the Walk. All the huge bins need to be considered – their siting, their condition, their appearance.

5. Equal fifth: (a) A public register of shop owners – and support and investment in street-art by local artists; (b) Buy back Shrubhill!

For more on this story, see Greener Leith's coverage at: [<http://bit.ly/NIXLSJ>] See also 'Guid news ...' (p.3).



TIME TO BE USEFUL

This month sees the start of the Leith Time Bank – a new scheme in which one person's useful skills, knowledge or experience can be exchanged for another's.

For every hour members 'deposit' in the time bank, perhaps by giving practical help and support to others, they are able to 'withdraw' equivalent support when they need it. Everyone's time is valued equally whatever is being offered.

Anne Munro, the initiative's administrator, says 'It's an important exercise in community building and combating social isolation.

'I particularly like the way it acknowledges and values older people's ability and experience, and establishes their relationships with younger folk on a more equal footing.'

The scheme is being set up by the Pilmeny Development Project, although eventually it will be run by its own steering group. Similar projects are in the pipeline for Craigmillar, Pilton and Portobello, and will join an Edinburgh Network which includes Inverleith.

Start-up funding came from the NHS Change Fund, City of Edinburgh Council, the Small Project Innovation Fund and the Leith Benevolent Association.

The Leith Time Bank will be officially launched at McDonald Rd Library on 18 July (time tbc). All are welcome to attend. To find out more, contact Anne Munro on Tel. 553 2559; at 19-21 Buchanan St, EH6 8SQ; or at [annemunro@btconnect.com].

ONE STEP AT A TIME FOR PARK IMPROVEMENTS



Significant improvements to King George V Park are in the offing.

The layout and design of new children's play equipment has been agreed between Council officials and the Youth Project Working Party.

Meanwhile CEC Bridges and Structures experts are poring over exciting plans for a terrace of graded steps to the west of the Scotland St Tunnel entrance.

Designed by Simon Laird Associates, these steps would encourage young scramblers near the bottom, and accommodate 15-16-year old scramblers at the top who have long expressed a desire for somewhere to sit and be social. In broad principle, they would resemble the area outside the Scottish Poetry Library in the Canongate (see above).

Proponents of the scheme have raised some of the money for it themselves, and secured a further sum from the Council. For the remainder, they are 'lobbying' Biffa ('a waste management firm with a record of helping to fund a number of city play parks') via the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust.

They argue that there is too little recreational open space for this age-group hereabouts. 'Our park matters to a lot of young people, and the popular open air youth club ... is bringing it within the orbit of an increasing number of youngsters.'

HELL AND TRAMNATION!



A combination of frustration and anxiety has greeted the sudden proliferation of disruptive roadworks around Broughton. Long tail-backs on and around local diversions have resulted at peak hours.

Businesses say the month-long tramwork-related closure of Broughton Street at York Place is already causing a drop-off in footfall, especially at the top of the hill (*Breaking news*, 13.6.12).

Calls by the New Town and Broughton Community Council for these works to be delayed until the school holidays and full reopening of Princes Street seem to have fallen on deaf ears. (Deafened, presumably, by the precipitant percussion of pneumatic drills.) See *Extras*, 26.6.12.

Further tramworks will follow with the closure of York Place (and the St Andrew Square bus station) from July until the autumn of 2013. Meanwhile, traffic problems have been exacerbated by the 6-week closures of Eyre Place and Canon Street during gas main renewal.

Broughton Street traders are mobilising to garner public support and possible practical help from their Town Centre Coordinator, and some canny drivers are already making the most of reduced parking restrictions in the area. However, local shops and services are clearly in for a difficult time. Use them or lose them!

Briefly



To no-one's surprise, the excellent Northumberland Place **Star Bar's** brave excursion into saltire-themed exterior decoration (Issue 207) crashed and burned. A Council enforcement order restored it to a less eye-squelching white.

Heritage buffs are equally pleased about problems facing the **Edinburgh Wheel** (*Breaking news*, 27.4.12). Fluffy, fun-loving, pre-election candidates may have been willing to approve this poorly disguised and more-or-less temporary land-grab (*Breaking news*, 20.4.12; 27.4.12), but historic West End cellars below Princes St Gardens are proving too weak. *Spurtle* applauds the cellars' **lack of backbone**.

A cyclist travelling downhill was **knocked from his bike** by a car going uphill and turning right into the Canonmills service station on 29 May. Unfortunately, this was just too late for us to report it in Issue 207. Despite travelling over the vehicle and **somersaulting 3 times** (police afterwards viewed the incident on CCTV from the garage), the cyclist escaped with 'only' **a cracked helmet, bruising, 2 broken fingers, 1 dislocated pinkie, 2 broken ribs and a torn buttock**. He left hospital – gingerly – later that day. The driver was charged with careless driving.

Friends of the Rocheid Path are preparing a proposal to extend the riverside route from the current western gate to the **Falshawe Bridge** opposite Reid Terrace. See *Extras* (13.6.12). Meanwhile, a replacement bridge has been successfully installed at **Bell Place** (*Breaking news*, 12.6.12).

St Mary's RC Primary School opened its **newly refurbished playground** on 26 June. Parents, pupils and staff met for a **celebratory evening BBQ** at which Scott Richards's Olympic torch featured in a **non-cooking capacity**.

The *Spurtle* sponsored a concert at **Letham Park Care Home** on Ferry Rd last month in an event organised by Forth St-based charity **Music in Hospitals**. Patricia Ball (piano) and Jennifer Logan (singing in her 1,200th such performance) played **Scottish, film and show songs** to residents, many of whom formerly lived in Broughton.

We have seen the future and ... it jingles

Word that the Council will axe its unloved and uncritical newspaper *Outlook* was met with ill suppressed glee by the *Edinburgh Evening News* on 11.6.12.

First sagely reminding City officials about the internet and social media's cost-effective potential for spreading information, the EEN then compassionately remembered the needs of those who are not online. 'The council must ... keep using traditional media in order to continue communicating effectively with the public,' it thundered.

Are we unduly cynical in wondering whether EEN's greatest interest in this story comes from the prospect of rehoming multiple, public-service advertisements?

Flame at last for local torchbearer

Hundreds lined the streets of Berwick-upon-Tweed on 14 June as the Olympic torch crossed from Scotland to England, concluding its journey through the Borders from Edinburgh.

Broughton Scout Leader Scott Richards (Issue 205; <http://12012.cm/MccxsZ>) ran with the flame through the town centre, waving vigorously to the crowd including the mayor, the town brass band and other worthies.



Family and friends were waiting for him in Golden Square with a collection of banners, including one which read 'Come on Scobsey Light My Fire'. His run also featured on *BBC Match of the Day* at half time in the Italy v Croatia Euro 2012 game.

Shortly after the event, Scott joined his Torch supporters in Berwick's Barrels Ale House, and speedily rehydrated.

Photo courtesy of Ross Wood.

Lots to celebrate



Photo: Christie's Images Ltd. 2012

This fulsome and sympathetic *Reclining Nude* caught the eye at a Highlights Exhibition held in the Mansfield-Traquair Centre on 20 June. We also liked the divan.

In advance of a Christie's auction in London on 11 July, the show featured works by the celebrated Dundonian Alberto Morrocco, RSA, RSW (1917–98). Lot 109, shown here, was expected to reach £7,000–10,000.

Morrocco's bold and decorative paintings – influenced by Bonnard, Giacometti and Picasso – reflect 'a personality that combined the best characteristics of his Italian ancestry and his Scottish upbringing'.

Others of his works are held by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and Edinburgh's City Art Centre.

Big secrets for sale

Broughton Street's Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses is up for sale.

Occupying the first floor, and accessed from a common stair at No. 95, the property is discreet to the point of invisibility. In fact it comprises a gross internal area of about 2,142 sq.ft and was once home to the 600-seat St James' Episcopal Chapel (see *Broughton History Society Newsletter*, Issue 28: <http://bit.ly/NYIFDh>).

Inside are: an entrance hall, small office, 2 conference rooms, 3 smaller stud-partitioned rooms, male and female toilets.

The property currently enjoys a Class 10 licence for uses including public worship, religious instruction, and social activities of a religious body. However, selling agent Rettie's are keen to point out its potential for conversion to residential purposes.

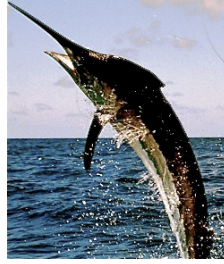
Meanwhile, on the other side of the road at No. 54, the deceptively spacious former Moviebank premises have also appeared on the market. What chance a return of the local sub-post office? Or a classic/world cinema DVD rental outlet? What realistic addition to the Broughton Street retail and services ecosystem would readers like to see? Send us your suggestions, please, for publication next month.

Should we stop stocking?

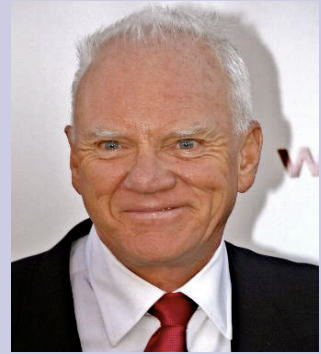
Local angler and blogger @thetroutfly has begun an interesting online debate about how fish populations are maintained in the Water of Leith [<http://bit.ly/NZVMUx>].

At present, the Council funds Honorary Water Bailiffs to stock the river, but this is a policy which @thetroutfly says only increases angling pressure: 1,200 permits on 12 miles of river.

'Stockies' pose a danger to wild fish, he argues, and the money this costs would be better spent on improving natural migration to the river. 'Of course stocking isn't the only problem on the Water of Leith,' he says, 'but it's the easiest to do something about!'



Briefly



Spotted in Broughton Street's **Olive Branch** at lunchtime on Saturday 7 June was veteran British actor **Malcolm McDowell**. He is believed to be in the city for imminent filming of *Monster Butler*: 'The true story of serial-killing con-man Roy Fontaine, who cut a bloody swath through England and Scotland.' Fellow stars in the Canadian-financed Dark House Films thriller include **Gary Oldman** and **Frances de la Tour**. See the *IMDB* entry at: [<http://imdb.to/soINtw>].

Hats off to **Bé** and **Thomas Bruno-Meiller** of the French Fancies who raised £177.73 for **Waverley Care** in a sponsored abseil last month.

Popular local institution the **Scottish National Portrait Gallery** lost out to the Victoria and Albert Memorial Museum in this year's Art Fund Prize on 19 June (Issue 207). Even so, judges described it as 'a moving and inspiring place ... of learning and real enjoyment'.

The string section of the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** was in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church in mid-June, rehearsing for a summer tour of the Highlands. The building's **sweet acoustics** have long been popular among professional musicians singing or playing without **electronic amplification**.

Reader **Ellie Maizels** has spotted the artfully disguised **Clydesdale Bank** branch at the corner of **McDonald Rd and Leith Walk** in a TV advert.

Bellevue residents are upset (sometimes literally) after contractors tore up paving to install new cables at the **corner of E. Claremont and Melgund Sts**. When the slabs were restored, cement was only partially applied and spirit levels were apparently left undisturbed in the van. **Virgin Media and BT vehicles** later parked on the site, causing further damage. The **consequent cluster of trip hazards** has been reported.

Notorious WCs on **Little King St** have been demolished. A tram-related **electricity substation** will rise in their lieu.

CEC Planners have consented installation of an **auxiliary generator behind 18 Forth St** despite 13 local objections (*Breaking news*, 17.5.12). Officials said the 'modest' scale of the plant would not unduly disturb or pollute them, or mar the New Town Conservation Area.

Guid news but nae doos?

A stand-in Council spokesman attending the New Town and Broughton Community Council meeting on Mon. 11 June causally let slip plans for Elm Row we had not heard before from official sources.

He asserted that, once work at York Place is completed, the much-loved clock which formerly stood within the roundabout at the west end of London Road (Issue 162) will be reinstated on the pavement at the south end of Elm Row. This is to forestall it being in the way if and when tramlines extend down towards Leith. He did not know what would become of the brass birds which formerly flocked here. Laing's *Sherlock Holmes* (Issue 167) would return to his customary gloomy ruminations on human frailty at Picardy Place.

Feathers were ruffled by all this, *Spurtle's* included. What, we wonder, was the precise logic of prioritising the clock over the birds, if that is what's happened? Who was consulted? Who responded? When did the Council plan to tell us?

In yet more tram-related news, planning permission has been granted for changes to listed boundary walls, copes and railings at 3 Dublin St and 2 York Buildings (Refs 12/01678; 12.01677/FUL). The underlying cause is a need to raise the adjacent road level so that trams can turn smoothly from York Place into North St Andrew St on a new 300mm camber. Historic Scotland among others had practical and aesthetic reservations about the plans, but did not object.



Bye-bye brownfields?

The Scottish Government is proposing a Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill which would extend communities' rights to buy underused or derelict public-sector land/property, and require councils to make more space available for allotments [<http://bit.ly/LpJAKq>].

A public consultation is open to views until 29 August. Details here: [<http://bit.ly/LOLDtR>].

'No-one knows more about what local communities need than those living there,' commented Edinburgh Central MSP Marco Biagi. 'It's important that residents, who have watched long neglected sites sit empty in their area, respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on the proposals detailing their thoughts on what could be achieved through community ownership.'

The vacant building and plots adjoining Broughton Primary School spring to mind.

Expert advice at Fringe show-and-tell

Mark Fisher – long-time Broughton resident, arts journalist and drama critic for the *Guardian*, *List*, *Scotland on Sunday* and many others – will cross the great divide in August when he appears *in front of* a Fringe audience for the first time in 29 years.

He's hosting the *Edinburgh Fringe Survival Guide* at the Pleasance's Cabaret Bar – a series of panel-discussions based around his recently published (and universally well received) book of the same name.

The idea is to tap the knowledge of experienced performers and producers in practical aspects of how to locate, manage, budget and market shows during the annual stargazey pie of performance mayhem. Guests confirmed so far include directors Guy Masterson and Toby Gough, and new artistic director at the Traverse Orla O'Loughlin.

Mark's top tip? *Identify your reasons for appearing on the Fringe, and stick to them.* 'It's fine,' he says, 'if you just want to have fun and get drunk. But don't then spend £2,000 on a publicist.' Mark's six hour-long shows will run on Thursday and Friday mornings in August. See [<http://bit.ly/LOWOlU>].



Moreover ...



Mysterious images which appeared in the Rodney St Tunnel last month were part of a collaborative art project. '**Micro Movement**' – aimed to create a series of 'artefacts' or imagined objects approximating the visual traditions of a 'displaced' culture. See *Breaking news* (9.6.12).

Wikipedia seek Edinburgh amateur photographers for **weekend workshops** to improve their theoretical and practical skills. Around 20 places will be available in each of 3 sessions on **20–2 and 27–9 July and 3–5 Aug**. The idea is to improve local coverage and encourage more donation of images to **Wikimedia** (Wikipedia's media repository): [edinburgh.photoworkshop@wikinewsie.org].

After a 3-year absence, the **One O'Clock Gun** – Edinburgh's free, self-proclaimed 'literary broadside' – has returned to city pubs and odd-spots. **OOG** boasts the **best folded format** in Edinburgh.

Correction: In Issue 206 we credited Marianne Smith with establishing the Howard St bookshop **Second Edition**. She was of course **Maureen Smith** and remains so.

The bustling success of Rodney St continues, with the arrival of 2 new businesses. Nicole Roberts's **The Marshmallow Lady** opens at No. 14 offering an astounding range of delicious flavours and textures; whilst **Loulabelle's Beauty** at No. 40 holds out the tempting prospect of candles, bubbles, massage, clay, clingfilm, steam and scented towels to cover up the result. Meanwhile, congratulations to **Saorsa**, artist Tom Fitchet's gallery at No. 5, celebrating 2 years in Broughton next month.

Tender and heroic is this example of **Campanula portenschlagiana** (Dalmatian bellflower) clinging vertiginously to the stone wall near the side entrance to Broughton St Mary's Parish Church. [Photo: *Derek Smith*.]



Malcolm Chisholm MSP Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:
5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 558 8358
Fax: 0131 557 6781

Saturday surgeries:
Leith Library, Ferry Road: 10am.
Royston Wardieburn Community
Centre, Pilton Drive North: 12 noon.

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

Marco Biagi MSP Edinburgh Central



Constituency Office:
77 Buccleuch Street, EH8 9LS
0131 668 3642
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Email: marco.biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk



Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month during term time I hold a surgery for Lothian residents at the Scottish Parliament between 11am and 1pm.

Please call to book a surgery appointment or to arrange another time and venue that is convenient for you.

Contact me on 0131 348 6421
Alison.Johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

Mark Lazarowicz MP for Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:
5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 557 0577
Fax: 0131 557 5759

mark@marklazarowicz.org.uk
www.marklazarowicz.org.uk

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Post: Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.