

# Spurtle



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No 211

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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## YORK PLACE – BRACE FOR YEAR-LONG DISRUPTION

York Place closed to general traffic between Queen and Elder Streets on 22 September in the latest phase of tramworks. It is scheduled to reopen in winter 2013.

A single lane is in place for contractors and emergency services. Pavements remain open for pedestrians.

The St Andrew Square bus station will continue to operate, with entry via Leith Street, Little King Street, St James Place and Elder Street. Buses will exit via Elder Street and a single lane along York Place.

Taxis and cars will access the bus station like buses, but must exit via James Craig Walk and the tunnel under the Thistle Hotel. Car parks for John Lewis and the St James Centre are unaffected.

Princes Street will open fully to buses, taxis and cycles at the end of November, it is hoped.

Edinburgh's Transport Convener, Councillor Lesley Hinds, has promised measures to help local businesses during this

'difficult time', including: regular access to senior Council officials and project staff, additional signage to drive footfall, and logistics help to facilitate deliveries.

Meanwhile, Broughton Street traders' plans are advancing with the establishment of a new logo, slogan and a programme of photography to illustrate their forthcoming website.



## SHRUB PLACE DUMP: LOCALS STILL IN THE DARK

In Issue 210 we highlighted Dryden Terrace residents' problems with lorries accessing the Shrub Place gap-site to dump tramworks waste.

They were being disturbed by passing lorries, were concerned at the state of the bridge, and disturbed again by the noise, dust and vibration caused by stone crushing plant on the site. Transport Convener Lesley Hinds promised an imminent response. Since then, despite residents' and *Spurtle's* repeated promptings, practically nothing seems to have happened.

Leith Walk's Councillor Gardiner has had most impact on the ground. He met locals in person, and got written assurances from Trams Coordination Team staff that:

- Council engineers' safety requirements regarding entry to the site are being met
- Dryden Bridge has a loading capacity of 40 Tonnes, and this limit is always adhered to
- Bridge surface deterioration is being investigated
- Alternative routes into the site are impossible for reasons of Health and Safety.

Cllr Gardiner recognises that this 'takes us no further forward in regard to distress caused to residents by the passage of lorries'. But other issues remain unresolved:

- Was planning permission ever necessary, sought or granted for the change of use in the west side of the privately owned Shrub Place site? (*Spurtle* finds no record of an application here after Fouin & Bell's failed effort to open a temporary car park in spring 2011; Ref. 11/0112/FUL).

• If the change of use has indeed been consented or is otherwise legal, what practical steps can be taken to ease the problems for locals?

Liz Ballantyne – who first raised the issue with us – continues to demand clarification: 'There hasn't been a bit of information or consideration for people living in the area through all this.'

## CELEBRATING TENNIS GOLD

Drummond Lawn Tennis Club – an oasis of sporting activity on East Scotland Street Lane – has unveiled its own tribute to Andy Murray's Olympic glory with a gold-topped court bench.

David Faithfull, one of the Club's members and artist, designed the celebratory logo, and a fantastic tribute it is to one of our Olympic heroes. The bench was on show on the club finals day in September, where 5 finals were played before an enthusiastic audience on what was a splendidly dry [meteorologically speaking] occasion. Pétanque, floodlit table tennis, dancing and ... bad dancing kept everyone going until the wee hours.

Drummond has enjoyed a great season despite the weather, and play will continue as usual till the first frost of winter. *Clare de Mowbray*



## WORK STARTS ON NEW GAELIC SCHOOL

Work will start soon on preparing the former Bonnington Primary School for its role as the city's new Gaelic Primary and Nursery School from August 2013.

Refurbishment will cost around £3.53 million, met in part by the Scottish Government's £1.83m capital grant; and the rest by 'prudential borrowing'. However, whether Edinburgh's already pinched Education budget should be spread even more thinly in future to cover this new facility is one of several unresolved local concerns (*Breaking news*, 28.10.11).

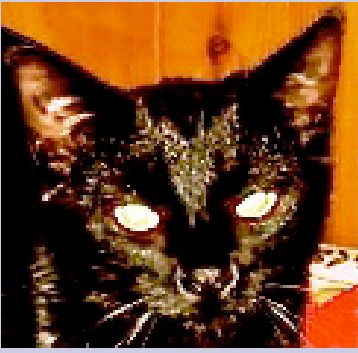
At a photo opportunity and clash of the job titles last month, the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages Dr Alasdair Allan, met the Deputy Lord Provost (Leith Walk Ward's Councillor Deidre Brock) and Vice Convener of Education Children and Families (Councillor David Key).

'I would encourage parents, whether or not they themselves speak Gaelic, to consider the great opportunity this now presents for their children,' Allan said.

In the meantime, work continues to appoint a Head Teacher before Christmas 2012, and decide on the new school's name.

For *Spurtle* coverage at key stages, see *Breaking news* (9.6.11; 28.2.11).

## Briefly



**Albert** is an Annandale St resident: **black, neutered**, originally wearing a **collar with coloured stones**, and possessed of a friendly disposition particularly towards those serving food. Understandably, perhaps, **Albert left home in disgust** last month when a **chihuahua moved in**. If you think you may have seen him, please call his worried family on: **Tel. 625 0368**.

**Broughton History Society** will reconvene at 7pm on 8 Oct in Drummond CHS for **Mitchell Manson's talk on 'R.L. Stevenson and the Gardens of Edinburgh'**.

Smoke signals and dark rumblings on **East Scotland Street Lane**, where neighbours are alarmed at a **seemingly unconsented garage conversion** and changes to **common-good land**. Wheels are in motion for a **change-of-use** proposal nearby at No. 8, see: [<http://tinyurl.com/9jmrlmd>].

Concern mounts at the deteriorating state of the former **Royal High School** on Regent Rd. Stonework has discoloured due to **unchecked damp and lichen**. Moves are now afoot to place the listed structure on the Scottish Buildings At Risk Register.

**Realfoods and Planning officials** are inching backwards and forwards towards a solution for signage at **37 Broughton St** (Refs 12/02739/ADV, 12/02740/LBC). Entertainingly, Realfoods's agent – **Sorrell Associates** – are based in St Bernard's Crescent at **The Green House**.

Residents of the **southern New Town** are perhaps growing resigned to the fact that tram-displaced traffic means their streets may never fully return to the same tranquillity they once enjoyed. However, one possible change may slightly ease difficulties for a few: **slantendicular (rather than end-on) parking** is being considered for **Albany St**. More when we have it.

At September's **New Town & Broughton Community Council** meeting, member and engineer **Alan Welsh** enquired of a trams expert whether changes to the route – in particular its increased **'wiggleness'** (e.g. from York Place to St Andrew Square) – would affect overall journey times and frequency. Mr Chris Highcock was unable to say, but promised to look into it. Perhaps Edinburgh should have opted for **bendy buses**.

## Look, no hands!

The Botanic Garden last month sought planning consent for a new pavilion to display securely its Aeolian Harp (Ref. 12/03218/FUL). A one-fifth scale model is shown here.

The wind-strummed instrument and its enclosure – designed by Scotland's leading harp maker Mark Norris – are intended as permanent additions. If approved, they will sit high on the slope to the south-east of Inverleith House for the beguilement of visitors [<http://tiny.cc/w0hzkw>].

Norris's beautiful work was fashioned from a 200-year-old wych elm felled in the Garden in 2003; see: [<http://bit.ly/RQey3v>]. *In situ*, it should either hum, produce full chords, or murmur to itself.

*Spurtle* counsels caution. Some highly strung types find the Aeolian harp erotically charged. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for example, noted 'How by the desultory breeze caress'd,/Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,/It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must need/Tempt to repeat the wrong!'

We shall draw a veil over the subsequent sink and rise of Mr Coleridge's 'delicious surges' with 'pensive Sara'. Like roller-blading, they are not encouraged in the Botanic.



Photo © Mark Norris

## Yard miles better for 'Big Build'

The Yard Adventure Centre ('Scotland Yard') on Eyre Place Lane is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, and already has exciting news.

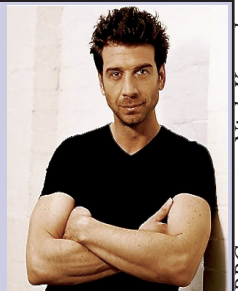
The Centre has been picked by BBC1's *DIY SOS* series for its annual 'Big Build Special'. Work on the major internal and external refurbishment began on 24 September with a 'big reveal' scheduled for families and friends on 5 October.

The hour-long programme will be screened across the UK in November.

Staff at the Yard have already thanked locals for helping to resource the build project, and the Council's Children and Families Department for finding them alternative accommodation whilst the work was in progress.

Each year, the Yard – a registered Scottish charity – welcomes around 1,600 children and young people with additional support needs. It aims to 'provide care, support, fun and friendship in equal measure whilst encouraging families to let go and promote challenge, personal growth and supported independence for their children'.

Find out more about the Yard at [[bit.ly/VxtLF9](http://bit.ly/VxtLF9)] and about *DIY SOS* at [<http://bbc.in/4AhoQh>].



BBC presenter Nick Knowles

## Once more unto the roof ...

An indefatigable local resident has returned to the Planning fray in an effort to flood more natural light into his top-floor flat and 'achieve better public and private separation' (Ref. 12/03250/LBC).

Previous planning applications for A-listed 4 Bellevue Terrace were unsuccessful (Ref. 11/00190/FUL; *Breaking news*, 26.9.11) despite repeated redrafts and an appeal to the Scottish Government.

The householder has since dispensed with Richard Murphy's blue-sky designs in favour of arguably more realistic ones by West Annandale Street-based Tim Bayman. In addition to juggling internal arrangements, these entail the existing balustrade 'running uninterrupted against a dark background of glass frame and cladding'.

Compared to last time, it will be fascinating to see how many and which disinterested – completely unconnected – architecture enthusiasts around the country now spontaneously write in to Council officials, using very similar arguments and turns of phrase, to lavish praise upon these plans.

## Finely perched perfection

Rob Dawkins admires this beautifully crafted chaffinch, one of a flock of small birds currently on show in Broughton Street's Union Gallery. Fashioned from recycled tin, they are the work of sculptress Barbara Franc, who has a fine feel for avian form and an exquisite eye for detail. Union's main exhibition this month features paintings by Derek McGuire, and runs from 12 Oct.–12 Nov. A review will appear later online.



## Deciphering Broughton Street's past

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Vestiges of Broughton Street's history are still discernible in a variety of forms, and provide a fascinating aperture on a past when the street was just as vibrant and bustling as it is today.

Above 105, 107, 109 Broughton Street, some ghostly signage is still visible. The surviving lettering includes '...TURING' and what looks like 'COAT'.

Leafing through the Post Office street directory, which lists retail outlets, we find that from 1900–50 the building was occupied by John T. Coats & Co., Manufacturing Retail Chemists.

From 1930–40, this was also leased to a subsidiary of Coats called Alexander Lees & Co, manufacturers since 1838 of 'goldsmiths' and silversmiths' Rouges, and Lees's celebrated plate power and whiting'.

Also at No. 109 in 1900 there was Smail & Co, ladies' outfitters, but there is no further mention of them – perhaps there was a takeover by Coats!

Happily, there is still a pharmacy at No. 105. Apple metamorphosed from Lyndsay & Gilmour here in 2006. The basement is still in active use. Was this where Coats & Co mixed their potions and filled those beautiful blue and green bottles (the former often marked 'NOT TO BE TAKEN'), and Lees & Co. perfected their rouges and whittings for the New Town's below-stairs staff to keep the above-stairs silverware shining?

Next month, look out for Joey D's interesting discoveries at No. 54. *JRM*

### Step lively this autumn

With autumn now upon us, many readers



will be experiencing an entirely reasonable urge to roll themselves up in a ball of straw and eat doughnuts till Christmas. There is an alternative.

Tracy Griffen is a Leith-based personal trainer well known to many across the border in Broughton. When

she moved to Scotland 14 years ago, she was surprised to say the least at encountering for the first time such a distinct seasonal cycle.

'It became apparent to me that we are all instinctively in tune with Nature,' she says. 'No matter that most of us live in concrete jungles rather than open green spaces, we all benefit from working with the ebb and flow of the world around us.'

The result is her *Healthy Living Yearbook* – self-published at £9.99 but to a high standard and available through respectable outlets such as Waterstone's or hand-delivered by jogger. It's an informative month-by-month 'seasonal guide' containing recipes, exercises, tips to get you moving, and tricks for sidestepping doughnuts.

This reviewer admired its brisk, Antipodean common sense and non-naggy approach to bad habits and less-than-steel-hard abdominals, and has firmly resolved to think about doing quite a lot better fairly soon when the time is right.

Copies can be ordered from [<http://bit.ly/UCSdW7>]. Or you can follow Tracy's daily 'fitness and foodie tips' for free at [[www.twitter.com/tracygriffen](http://www.twitter.com/tracygriffen)]. *AM*

### Wartime Canonmills recalled

Born in 1943, consultant neuropsychologist Alan Dodds's youth was spent in Howard Street. Remarkably, he recalls in detail (independently verified) incidents from as early as the age of 6 months, when he witnessed snow for the first time.

Other impressions are just as well remembered in his newly published account of growing up in Broughton: *Laughin' on the Ither Side o' ma Face*.

As an infant, Dodds was attuned to the fine gradations of class: from the slums and Baddies (rough bairns) of Canon Street through to the middling sort who lived, as he did, in flats near the Northern Bar (now the Orchard), up to the 'posh' and distant children at the further end of Warriston Crescent. Floods were a fact of life even then – Dodds witnessed the spate of 1947 which floated furniture from the basements thanks to a hole made in the wall by a lover of ducks.

Other fascinating glimpses come thick and fast: the air-raid siren on the Canonmills Bridge policebox; Nairn's the Baker where Loon Fung now stands; nocturnal sparks as the tramlines were repaired; 'the sound of the huge beam saw rasping back and forth over a block of granite' at McGlashen's monumental masons on the corner of Warriston Road.

Detailed, quirky, short (102 pp.), and expensive (£15), the book is available at Second Edition in the very tenement where Dodds lived. *AM*



## Briefly

Image: © Lyon & Turnbull.



At Lyon & Turnbull's auction of the **Taffner Collection** last month (Issue 210), **Sir John Lavery's** rather naff portrait of himself with Shirley Temple fetched £23K; **Frances MacDonald MacNair's** *Girl with Blue Butterflies*, £100K; and **Charles Rennie Mackintosh's** *Yellow Tulips*, £130K. An as yet undisclosed buyer forked out £34K for the latter's unusual '**Suite of Silver Cutlery, 1902**' (above).

Library times changed on 1 Oct. **McDonald Rd:** Mon–Wed, 10am–8pm; Thur–Sat, 10am–5pm. **Stockbridge:** Mon & Wed, 1–8pm, Tue, Thur–Sat, 10am–5pm.

From 1 Oct, **Superclub** at 11 Gayfield Square will have a **variety of studio spaces** available for rent (£50–£100 per month). Email [[ross@superclubstudios.com](mailto:ross@superclubstudios.com)] or Tel. 07834 907639.

**Dust off those facemasks, fishnets and feather boas!** You, too, ladies. An event at the Voodoo Rooms on 17 Nov is intended as a 'teaser and fundraiser' for an **Edinburgh Burlesque and Variety Festival** in 2013. Full details at: [<http://bit.ly/OfXGCr>].

Alternatively, try the **Wednesday Club** starting at 2pm on 3 Oct in **Broughton St Mary's Parish Church**, Bellevue Cres. (entrance by side lane): warm welcome, carpet bowls, Scrabble.

In Issue 210 we asked whether **uninvited swapping of plant pots** was a common problem in Broughton. **Unhappily**, the answer seems to be yes: usually late at night and at weekends. **Happily**, *Spurtle* has since restored one Bellevue Crescent planter to its rightful Scotland St origin. Order has been partially restored. **Civilisation may rest.**

As part of this year's Mental Health Arts and Film Festival, the **Gallery on the Corner** (34 Northumberland St) invited artists to explore mental-health themes using any **media on postcard-sized MDF**. On show until 3 Nov, the works (£15 each) are being sold to support the Gallery's work.

Reader **Jonathan Finn** is keen locals should know of a **covered bike rack behind Primark** (access from Rose St). 'It is very hidden away, and is not being used.' Provision of the facility was a condition of Primark's **planning permission**, but Finn fears they may turn it back into a car parking space if it is not exploited.

## Moreover ...



Three mature elms were felled in the grounds of **Drummond Community High School** last month. This followed the three taken down in 2008 and the one in 2010. All had suffered from the root-borne parasite known as 'Dutch Elm Disease'. Drummond's business manager Peter Luke says the **Edinburgh Schools Partnership** keenly regrets the loss, and means to restore foliage with a reasonably **quick-growing replacement** as soon as possible.

**Spurtle** likes **punctual contractors**. We therefore salute **Lagan's** confident assertion that closure of **Warriston Rd** which began on 20 June 2011 at 10am (due to floodworks) will cease on 8 December 2012 at 4pm. Set your stopwatches. However, **Scottish Gas Networks's** mains replacement works at the Rodney St end of **Broughton Rd** were due to end on 28 Sept, but with less than a week to go the completion date remained to be confirmed. Meanwhile, **Scottish Power** did their bit for smooth city-centre traffic flow by summarily closing **Broughton St Lane** from 17-28 Sept. They were **laying cable ducts** into the back of Tesco on Picardy Place.

**Moo Cafeteria's** restaurant lease on Brandon Terrace is up for sale. **Yakety Yak** French and Spanish conversation classes have relocated to the **Piano Café** on Howard Street.

### Picardy Place locals



welcome back an old friend

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Royston Wardieburn Community  
Centre, Pilton Drive North: 12 noon.

Email: [Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)

### Marco Biagi MSP Edinburgh Central



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Surgeries:  
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2nd Monday of the month:  
11am-12noon St Bride's Centre  
1pm-2pm Stockbridge Library

NB. No Surgeries on Public Holidays.

Email: [marco.biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:marco.biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)



### Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:Alison.Johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)

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5.00pm **5 Croall Place**;  
other surgeries throughout the  
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## New Town/Broughton Community Council

The Community Council  
represents the views  
of local residents to  
Edinburgh City Council

Next Meetings:

**Monday 1 Oct.**

**Monday 5 Nov.**

at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish  
Church, Bellevue Crescent

[secretary@ntbcc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ntbcc.org.uk)

## AM DECORATING

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