

NETWORK RAIL CHANGING TRACK?



It is an occasional Strathbungo ritual that a letter drops through the door announcing “vegetation management” by Network Rail. This is met with disappointment at the recurrence and anger at the lack of consultation. A letter arrived a couple of months ago. The Strathbungo Society attended “information sessions” along with many residents. Network Rail wanted to cut any tree and kill all vegetation within 6 metres of the rail. Felling all the trees to the boundary became the likely outcome. Welcome electrification of the line was mentioned but “vegetation management” was required even without electrification. We contacted our MSP, MP and councillors.

The background is The Varley Report, commissioned by the Westminster government. It exposed the fact that Network Rail have never valued the trackside as an asset and routinely destroy the biodiversity that it supports. Changes to their licence requires them stop this destruction of biodiversity and eventually increase it.

There have been two positive meetings with Network Rail. The first chaired by our MSP Nicola Sturgeon. A second happened at the footbridge to discuss the effect on this section of the

line. Both have been productive, with senior Network Rail managers attending. A change in direction is underway, as a welcome promise was made to keep any healthy tree outside the 6 metre zone, to ensure a screen of trees for residents and commitment to replacement planting of hawthorn or holly in any gaps. The Strathbungo Society position is simple. The Varley Report requires Network Rail to act differently and safeguard biodiversity – their present plan still does not fully offer that.

The Strathbungo Society is still seeking clear answers to the following points:

- Is it necessary to poison everything within 6 metres of the rail?
- Will an arboriculturalist identify every tree on this part of the line that will be felled?
- Clarification is needed about what will happen to a tree identified in wildlife assessments as having, for example, a bat roost. Current plans say it is felled.
- When climate emergency has been declared should a public organisation be cutting down carbon-store trees?
- Finally, there is the issue of trust. Will Network Rail do the right thing?

FIRE IN THE SHIELDS

The recent Kenmure Street fire saw the collapse of the tenement at the corner of the street with Albert Drive after a fire began in the ground floor shop leading to the collapse of the entire building. Fortunately there were no fatalities or serious injuries.

The fire has had numerous consequences. Up to 35 families in adjacent buildings have been displaced and had to find temporary accommodation. Albert Drive has been closed off for a period. And after the initial issues of support for people affected there will be the logistical challenge of how to rebuild a Victorian building for architects and designers.

Such a tragedy also brings out the best of people seeing local people and many from further afield rallying round to offer support. In the immediate aftermath I Love Pollokshields ran community Ameen Mohammed, chair of Pollokshields Community Council, said: ‘After the terrible fire we were among many groups that took interest in supporting those displaced. We believe there are up to 35 families still displaced due to the fire – and this is a very diverse community with unique requirements. Some of these residents might bypass the regular first line services, so as a consequence of that we want to make sure people are getting

the right help.’ He continued that the aim of such activities was also ‘to bring back a bit of cheer and celebrate the goodwill of people during this terrible time’, emphasising that ‘there’s been a lot of bad news recently so we want to share some positivity within the community’



CHATTING WITH EMMA

Ahead of her sold out Christmas show at the Glad Café on 21st December, Strathbungo News caught up with Emma Pollock.

“I’ve lived in Strathbungo since September 2004 and, before that, we were in Balvicar Street.” Emma explained. “This has been my solo career home. The Delgados split up six months after we moved in, so it felt like a fresh start for us.”

“I’ve never lived anywhere as long as I’ve lived in our house. My son’s entire childhood has been in Strathbungo. He absolutely loves it. I’ve even written a couple of songs about it.” Emma tells me about a new song called Marchtown (original name of the areas now known as Strathbungo & Crossmyloof) which will be on her new album, due for release in the middle of next year. I asked her about festival dates and she told me she plans to play next summer, but doesn’t have anything in the diary yet. I’d strongly recommend you get along and see her. Watching her play at Indietracks while the sun set behind her a couple of years ago was absolutely sublime.

“The first song I wrote about this area was Paper and Glue, which appeared on my debut solo album. I wrote it in response to Network Rail wanting to cut the trees down next to the railway line. I think the Strathbungo Society did an amazing job putting the fence in along Moray Place. The

avenue of trees is such a beautiful thing and acts an acoustic barrier. Unfortunately, it’s an issue that’s not going away for Network Rail though.

I ask about her forthcoming show. She’s re-arranged her songs to be played with string instruments and will be joined by two musicians including a cello player.

“I’ll be re-visiting existing songs and there’ll be some new songs from the new album.. It’s lovely to play in Glasgow and where better than my local music venue?”

Emma will be heading into her studio at the beginning of the year to record her new album. Further live dates are likely to be announced in the Spring.



WILD GORSE POTTERY

Local resident, Jen Smith, has opened Wild Gorse Pottery, a shop and ceramics studio on Pollokshaws Road, next to Koel Shipyard.

Jen is an experienced and well-established potter. She offers a range of contemporary ceramic products and runs classes in her shop.

Wild Gorse Pottery is not only an ideal place to potter about in for anyone hunting for gifts, it also contains studio space and a kiln. Jen has classes that are suitable for complete beginners as well as those who are looking to build on their existing skills. She already knows a lot of people in the local artistic community and is looking to build up more connections. "It was another local artist who suggested that I look at this shop." Said Jen. "It's such a friendly area, it's great to be able to work here."

Jen can be contacted at jen@wildgorsepottery.com – you can also visit her in her shop and she'll tell you about her products and classes.



SCOTT OBZRUD

'4th December 1974 - 4th October 2019

Scott Obzrud would have been 45 at the start of December, but as many people in Strathbungo know, Scott's life was tragically ended in October by an aggressive brain cancer that he had been living with for 17 months.

Scott and his husband James Powsey moved into Strathbungo in 2015, appreciating its friendliness and community spirit, and found an immediate home in the Strathbungo Society. I first met Scott on a rainy Sunday morning picking up litter at a Brighter Bungo clean-up - and this was the start of his local involvement.

Scott contributed a lot to the Society, including as Vice-Chair – approaching the role with energy, creativity and humour. Scott was extremely likeable, and as Kevin Kane, the Society Chair who worked with Scott most closely, said:

Scott was a gentleman and the warmth of his relationships with Society members, and with James and his family, marked him out as the good and decent man he was.

Scott had a successful career as a nurse and in NHS management, eventually working for the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland (MDDUS). For those who attended Scott's funeral, it was obvious how much family, friends and workmates appreciated and loved Scott. As his colleague Helen Ormiston wrote on the MDDUS website:

The office is a much quieter place. Scott had a sharp wit and a real sense of fun (mischief!) and his laughter could be heard across the corridors. He was also very caring, looking out for his colleagues and for members. He was always ready to listen to members' concerns and do all that he could to assist them.

RIP Scott – we remember and salute you.



NITHSDALE MISSION HALL REFURBISHMENT

The former Mission Hall of the Queen's Park United Presbyterian Church on Nithsdale Drive has long been one of the iconic and historic buildings in the area. Sadly since a fire in 2005 it has been nothing but a shell after most of the inside was destroyed.

It was built in 1887-88 by Alexander Skirving who worked under Alexander 'Greek' Thompson in the 1860s, with the building's outsides carrying the obvious influences of this with its 'Greek' touches – with gated piers, original railings and steps leading up to its classical frontage – all of which have been retained.

Fifteen years later and after many false starts and promises the Mission Hall – B listed – was bought from Glasgow City Council by Daniel Farren, plans submitted for dividing it into four flats and work begun. This has now completed the repairs of the external fabric making it wind and water tight, with work commencing on inserting the new interior – with



the building already taken off of Scotland's Buildings at Risk Register. When this is finished this striking building will have been returned to being used – by people as homes to live in.

Niall Murphy, of Glasgow City Heritage Trust commented on the development: 'This refurbishment has been a long labour of love with much work and effort put in by the grantee and stonemasons into rescuing this important building and restoring it into the thing of beauty that it undoubtedly is.'

LITTLE HOI AN

A very friendly Vietnamese street food establishment called Little Hoi An has opened up on Allison Street.

Food on offer includes pho, rice dishes, fried rice noodle dishes and lemongrass and coconut curries. There is a BYOB arrangement and both vegan and vegetarian dishes are available.

As part of the refurbishment, the proprietors have uncovered the original tiles that line the walls, which are very much in keeping with the clean and cosy feel of the restaurant. Little Hoi An previously existed as a pop up in a coffee shop in Battlefield and was so popular, that the owners decided to find a permanent home on the Southside.

Opening times are Tuesday – Saturday 5 pm until 10 pm. There are no bookings and payment is by cash only. Strathbungo News correspondents found a warm welcome, a cosy environment and delicious food. Our tip is to get there early.



NEWS IN BRIEF

A round up of all things Strathbungo: this quarter's bite-sized Bungo business!

GLAD EDITIONS

A group of internationally respected artists have created a series of limited edition prints to support the Glad Café.

Contributing artists include previous Turner Prize nominees Monster Chetwynd and Cathy Wilkes as well as works by acclaimed musicians such as Kathryn Joseph and Tommy Grace (Django Django). The artists all have a strong relationship to the Southside of Glasgow; Rabiya Choudhry grew up there and many live and work in the area, including 93 year-old Norman Gilbert.

Exhibition continues throughout December and prints are available to purchase both in Glad Cafe and online: thegladcafe.co.uk/shop



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, ALFIE?

One of the area's most loved and most diligent residents can usually be found sitting outside Sainsbury's. Alfie takes great pride in providing a greeting and guarding service for the store and has an excellent attendance record.

Alfie does have a home nearby and his family have asked people not to buy him cat food and treats. He is given regular meals at his own home. He is also not lost, he just likes hanging around outside the shop.

When asked for a comment to include in the article, Alfie turned to look nonchalantly at the shop's interior, indicating that the interview was over even before it had begun!



POTBELLY

It's fair to say that a huge proportion of Strathbungo residents did a little happy dance when they saw that Potbelly was opening in the former Potluck café - and that better still, it is almost the same as the previous establishment. Beautiful, highly instagrammable brunches bursting with delicious flavours are available.

Anyone who passes by at the weekend, will know that you have to up early to be in with a chance of securing a table at the weekend.

Those of us hosting out of town visitors are still queuing in the street, converting sceptical Londoners, Mancunians and Edinburgers to enthusiastic evangelists over plates of pancakes with seasonal fruits, spun sugar and edible florals or plates of zinging vegan greens. Long may it continue. Bring a book read while you wait it could be a while, but it's worth it!



BUNGO IN THE BACK LANES TOMBOLA

The support of local businesses is vital to the success of Strathbungo Society events. The Society would particularly like to thank those who donated so generously this year to the Bungo in the Back Lanes Tombola: Allison Arms, Apercu, Bam, Bungo, Buongiorno, Cameron's, Floral Haven, Fyne Shellfish, Gnom, Gusto & Relish, Heraghty's, Libby Walker, McMillan's, Marchtown, Marie Brown, Merry Go Round, Moyra Jane's, New Regent, Niven's, Ollie's, Pot Belly, Ranjit's, Rumshack, Some Great Reward, Stag & Thistle, Sweeneys, Wee Beer Shop.

TOUR OF BRITAIN - PASSING THROUGH BUNGO

On the gloriously sunny 07th of September, we saw the first of eight stages of professional cycling's 1250km Tour of Britain hurtle down from their Grand Depart in George Square onto Pollokshaws Road at speeds of over 40kph on their way to Dumfries. Blink and you'd miss it but plenty of Strathbungo residents were out in force to see the 100+ riders at the start of their 250km ride. Great to see such high profile sport coming through our local streets.



STRATHBUNGO WINDOW WANDERLAND IS BACK...

Get the date in your diary and your thinking cap on!

Peter Ross, in *The Guardian*, described last year's event as 'a glorious psychedelic playground... A retina-shredding explosion of pop culture.'

On Saturday 29 February 2020, Strathbungo Window Wanderland, now in its 4th year, will once again transform the streets of Strathbungo into a spectacular outdoor gallery for all to enjoy.

The success of our events is down to the incredible efforts of the Strathbungo residents and their wonderful window displays... over the years we've had everything from performances in front rooms to amazing projections onto buildings; mischievous monkeys, polka dot parties, terrifying zombies, disco balls, bubble baths, mythical creatures, a human jukebox, pop up bingo hall, the Bungo Beach Bar, hair salon and tattoo parlour, fantastical faraway lands and music filling the streets.... We can't wait to see what 2020's event brings... a leap year special!

Simply create a window display in the front windows of your flat, house, business or shop. Please don't feel intimidated! A 'display' could be as simple as a candle, book, fairy lights or image in a window. Or you could go all out and stage a performance in your front room! Simple or spectacular... it's completely up to you.



LOCAL LISTINGS

17 - 23 DEC

Shawlands Ice Rink

31 DEC

Bungo at the Bells

21 JAN

Strathbungo Society Meeting

12 FEB

Window Wanderland Open Studio @ Tramway - come along and get some inspiration, materials and space to create your display for Window Wanderland.

29 FEB

Window Wanderland

STRATHBUNGO NEWS

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Distribution Imelda Devlin

Contributors James Spooner, Sarah Reid

Send letters and brief articles of general interest to: news@strathbungo.co.uk