



# Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

<http://www.fombl.com>

## February Meeting:

The Spring meeting of the Friends will be held on Monday, February 21st, 2005 at the Archers Hall at 7pm. (Note the earlier start due to need to finish by 8:45pm.)

A talk on the history of the Meadows, Bruntsfield Links and the surrounding area will be given by Mr Malcolm Cant, a well known local historian.

Archers Hall is the home of the Queen's bodyguard in Scotland and has many fine paintings including one by Raeburn. (See page 2)

## Summer Meeting:

A date for your diary - June Meeting (AGM). This will be held at George Heriots school in the Staff Room at 7 pm on 20 June.

The Meeting will be followed by a talk on the History of George Heriot's School and this will be followed by a tour of the School.

Please note the earlier start time due to the need to finish by 9 pm

## We Need New Members:

Do you know of anyone who is interested in the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links?

We need new members! Why not ask them along to our meetings on February 21st or June 20th?

Or can you tell them about our web site?

## Good News Column:

The City of Edinburgh District Council Central Local Development Committee have awarded the Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links £535 to place labels on the trees in the Meadows and Links so they can be identified by visitors and users.

Volunteers are needed in the Spring to place the labels on the trees - if you can help for a morning or two, please contact our Tree Warden Mike Walsh via email at [mcw@ecosse.net](mailto:mcw@ecosse.net)



**Portrait of Dr. Nathaniel Spens, a Favorite Member of the Royal Company of Archers, in the Uniform of a Scottish Archer .**

"Among notable shots of the period may be mentioned... Dr. Nathaniel Spens, probably one of the best and most enthusiastic archers who ever drew a bow. A noble portrait of him by Raeburn, representing him in the act of shooting, now hangs in Archers' Hall [in Edinburgh, Scotland]; he was admitted a member in 1749, became praeses of the council in 1809, and died in 1815."

(excerpt from The Badminton Library volume Archery )

## **A** RCHERS' HALL

Located on the west side of Buccleuch Street, Edinburgh, is Archers' Hall, built in 1777 by Alexander Laing (d.1823) for the Royal Company of Archers. The hall was extended to the south in 1900 by A.F. Balfour Paul, the partner of Sir R. Rowand Anderson and the south side of it's grounds overlooks the Meadows

The Royal Company of Archers were granted their charter by Queen Anne in 1704. Since King George IV visited Edinburgh in 1822, the Company has provided the bodyguard for the sovereign while in Scotland although, today, their role is entirely ceremonial. Its history can be traced back to 1676 to a private archers club. Notably, members have acted as the sovereign's 'Body Guard for Scotland' since George IV's visit to the Scottish capital in 1822. The Royal Company of Archers perform duties at state and ceremonial occasions wearing their distinctive uniform of tunic and Balmoral bonnet.

Today there are around 530 members, all of whom are of Scots origins or have good Scottish connections and comprise senior military officers, politicians and members of the nobility, including Baron Lang of Monkton, the Earl of Airlie, the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, the Earl of Dalkeith, the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, the Marquess of Lothian, the Duke of Montrose and Viscount Younger of Leckie.

Members of the Company practice on

the Meadows and each year compete for the 'Edinburgh Arrow'.

Inside Archers' Hall are paintings of notable members, including one of James, 5th Earl of Wemyss, Captain-General of the Company (1743-56).

Today, the Edinburgh Bowling Club maintain their greens at the rear of the hall.

## **T**he archaeology of the park landscape by Dennis Gallagher

The present layout of the Meadows is the result of several centuries of adaptation of the local environment. As is well known, the Meadows was a water-filled hollow which was only gradually drained and infilled. Recent excavations on the north side of the Meadows revealed what appears from a distant inspection to be fine white riverine silt under a later deposit of heavier clayey soils. With such overlay of dumped material covering the original ground surface, there is little evidence of any earlier occupation or land use. The draining of the Meadows began in the early eighteenth century and was soon followed by the creation of the primary element of what may be termed its designed landscape: Middle Meadow Walk. Created by Thomas Hope after 1722, this was essentially a raised causeway across the partially drained morass that was the remains of the former loch. This provided a path for the then fashionable exercise of strolling. This path was widened by the purchase of adjacent land from the George Heriot's Trust. In form it is outwardly a mere path, but it was conceived of as an improvement to the city, a route linking the urban center with the countryside in a controlled civilized manner that would be appreciated by eighteenth century sensibility. An undated letter of this period commented on how Mr. Hope had beautified the Meadows

wonderfully and made it into another St. James Park (NAS GD189/2/164). Avenues were an essential feature of the great gardens of this period, emulating the great gardens of Versailles. The walk was carefully laid out with the spire of St. Giles as a focal point at its northern end. It southern end, at least in the early nineteenth century, terminated at the Cage, a sort of summerhouse that acted as a place of refreshment. Middle Meadow Walk, therefore, was not just a path but was conceived of as a garden walk, a stretch of nature tamed and civilized. It is the tradition of great avenues with monumental foci, either existing or created for the purpose. Scottish examples include the gardens of Kinross House, focused on Loch Leven Castle, and Newliston with avenues aligned on historic structures including Alloa Tower. In the urban context Middle Meadow Walk can be compared with the great Parisian avenues that radiated out from the centre of the city, where walking was a fashionable activity. In London, The Mall, laid out in 1660, and St. James Park, once a water meadow like the Meadows, offered similar facilities. New Walk, York was laid out along the riverside in the 1730s for the fashionable recreation of the inhabitants.

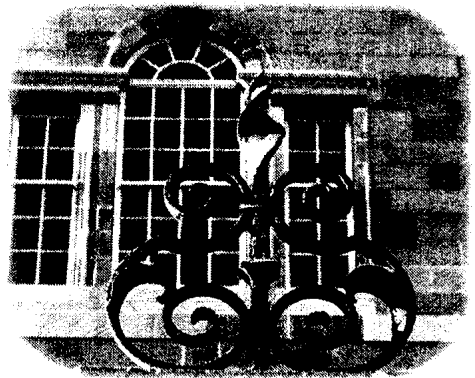
Middle Meadow Walk was laid out by Thomas Hope as a thirty foot wide walkway, enclosed on each side by a hedge and lime trees. The walk also was to be bordered by a narrow canal, nine feet wide. Ornamental canals were a feature of the great European gardens of the period. The remains of a double bank can still be seen flanking Middle Meadow Walk in its central section, especially in low light; this is probably the remains of the canal, a feature that still fills with water after heavy rain.

The depth of the Meadows before infilling can be seen on the OS 1:1056 town plan of Edinburgh of 1849-53. This shows a water pipe, now underground and recently

renewed, as passing over the Meadows raised on a covered conduit with a dry arch under its deepest park, in the centre of the Meadows.

The 1849-53 plan also marks a 'sheep ree' on the west side of Middle Meadow Walk about where the information board has been erected. A 'ree' was an enclosure for animals; and the sheep may have served the role of environment-friendly lawn mowers. The eastern end of the Meadows is covered with a large area of posts, over 100 in eight rows. These may have acted as a huge drying green, although a more industrial use such as bleaching is a possibility.

Dennis Gallagher



## Graffiti Boxes now in Use!

Graffiti boxes were issued to community groups mid-November 2004. The materials are suitable for removing graffiti from nonporous surfaces, for small poster removal, litter picking and there are sturdy snips for removing plastic ties. The volunteers from the community groups who were to remove the graffiti had to undergo an afternoon of training before we could be let loose

with the boxes. The training was given by a member of the firm which supplies the content of the boxes and left us well informed as to how to proceed. The materials which are provided are simple to use and safe if used according to the instructions given. We were advised to wear old clothing to carry out the removal of graffiti.

Since then I have been out on the Meadows and another couple have been out on Bruntsfield Links. The equipment worked well in removing graffiti and small posters apart from gloss paint, particularly silver gloss and silver spray paint which requires a considerable effort to remove.

If any members are interested we could arrange a 'clean up' morning or afternoon and a group could work their way across the Meadows and Links using a number of boxes. It would be essential to have some members of the group who had been trained who would be able to instruct others in the use of the materials available. Should you wish to volunteer to do this on some warm and dry day please get in touch with any office bearer and the committee will make arrangements.

Should anyone notice graffiti or small posters they feel require removing please inform any office bearer [contact numbers on back page] and we will arrange removal. The City of Edinburgh Council can be contacted for removal of graffiti from non porous surfaces such as stone and for anything else that cannot be removed with the materials contained in the box.

Jo Scott

## **A**pplication for a WREN Grant.

(Waste Recycling Environmental Grant)

The Friends are supporting a Project by Edinburgh City Council for the replacement of historic railings in our parks at Lonsdale and Leven Terraces and Marchmont Road. As you may know most of our railings were removed during the Second World War to provide metal to assist the war effort (fruitlessly as it turned out). Some of the railings have been replaced haphazardly since, often inappropriately, and it is our intention to replace the above- mentioned with the historically correct version, having undertaken the necessary research.

The costs are as follows:

Lonsdale/Leven Terraces: £20,037

Marchmont Road: £2,760

Stone Purchase for repairs and Plinths: £4,502

The Labour and Supervision costs involved in the manufacture of the railings, labour for their erection and the restoration of plinths will be provided by the Council, and this cost is estimated at £32000

making the total cost of the project £59299.

It is estimated that if the Grant Application was successful, the work would commence in May and be finished in August. The Friends have applied for a Grant for the Materials from WREN under their scheme which recycles funds from waste fees to appropriate sustainable environmental projects of which this is clearly, we believe, one, and also falls under the heading of conservation.

Hamish McKenzie

# **S**hort-Life Working Group for Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

14 September 2004 . Action Notes.

Minute of 17 February 2004	Approved as a correct record.
Provision of Football Pitches for Sciennes Primary School Pupils	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Working Group was not a forum where deputations would be received.</li> <li>2. That one pitch would be designated on a pilot basis, on the understanding that use could not be restricted solely to Sciennes PS pupils.</li> </ol>
Plastic Waste Bins	That the feasibility of increasing the number of bins, perhaps with a locking mechanism, would be investigated
Street Trader Licences – Middle Meadow Walk	To note that there had been an increase in street traders but that the MMW was not a designated public highway
Ladyboys of Bangkok	To note that the agreed reinstatement of the area occupied during the Festival was being addressed, with the bond paid by the organisers being held until the work was done
Damaged Saplings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note that the autumn programme of repair and removal was underway. It was anticipated that new trees would be planted by March 2005.</li> <li>2. To note that treatment of Dutch Elm Disease-affected trees would be funded with the first £10,000 of the Section 75 Agreement</li> </ol>
Fencing Round Cottages Opposite the Orthodox Church	To note that this would be investigated and a report submitted.
Jogging Path	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note the success of the jogging path</li> <li>2. To acknowledge that walkers were also using the path.</li> </ol>
Large Chess/Draught Board	To note that the feasibility of steam-cleaning the board would be investigated
Junction at Middle Meadow Walk – Planning Agreement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note that the Working Group would be consulted on the proposals, with an opportunity to scrutinise the detailed plans.</li> <li>2. To note that there was no detail on the proposals for Lauriston Place/Melville Drive available at the date of the meeting</li> </ol>

Play Area	To note that work had been completed and that a "No Dogs" sign would be displayed at the area.
"No Cycling" Signs	To note that the Departments of City Development and Culture and Leisure shared responsibility for the signs
Programme of Works	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve recommendations in the report by the Director of Culture and Leisure</li> <li>2. To note that some work would start at the end of September/beginning of October 2004.</li> <li>3. To note that a second survey on the presence of Dutch Elm Disease had shown 4 trees were affected.</li> <li>4. To note that work on the Magnet Play Area would be undertaken in financial year 2005/06 and that seating would be provided at that site.</li> <li>5. To note that grant aid would be sought from Penlee, the HBOS Foundation.</li> </ol>
Cricket Pavilion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note that the sum of £2000 was likely to be sufficient to allow the roof to be repaired.</li> <li>2. To note that Edinburgh Leisure had some input in the maintenance of the Pavilion.</li> <li>3. To note that the matter of graffiti and other repairs would be investigated.</li> </ol>
Wardens/Park Rangers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note that it was intended to operate a permanent warden/ranger service in the vicinity on a 4 days on/4 days off basis, starting at 11am.</li> <li>2. To note that regular reports would be generated by the Parks Patrol Manager.</li> <li>3. To note that, in terms of publicity, the Friends of the Meadows' newsletter would report on a regular basis.</li> </ol>
Interpretation Boards	To note the success of the boards.
Date of Next Meeting	To be confirmed

**C**ommittee Members: Listed below are names and contact details for committee members of the Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links.  
Please address all correspondence to the secretary

**Chair:** Peng Lee Yap, 5 Meadow Place, EH9 1JZ.  
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**Secretary: and acting Treasurer** Hamish McKenzie, 7 Bruntsfield Terrace, EH10 4EX.  
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**Membership Secretary:** Josephine Scott, 31/8 Salisbury Road, EH16 5AA  
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**Committee :** Collin Christison Dennis Gallagher Naomi Burnett  
 Tim Puntis

**Tree warden:** Mike Walsh, 17 Tantallon Place, EH9 1NZ  
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**Webmaster & Newsletter Editor** Derek Christie.  
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**PLEASE OBSERVE and SUPPORT the CODE**



Fouling



On Walkways



BBQs



On reserved sites & pitches

**P**ark Watch Partners:... Every 'Friend' is a partner in helping to protect our unique urban parkland, by acting as the Council's eyes and ears. They will appreciate your assistance, as they cannot be everywhere at all times. Just telephone one of the numbers below, if you see something that needs their attention, (you may give your name or not— as you prefer).

Dumped Items	0800 100 3366	Refuse, furniture, traffic signs, shopping trolleys, etc.
Litter Problems	0131 664 8330	Environmental Task Force Manager for Meadows & Tollcross
Park Wardens	0131 332 2368	Vandalism to trees, turf, seats, playgrounds, monuments
Pathway Lighting	0800 23 23 23	Non-functioning lamps - quote lamp post number or location.
Police/St Leonard's	0131 662 5000	Disturbances, fires, vehicles parked on grass, vandalism
Graffiti	0131 200 2000	Graffiti removal (Council)