



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

N E W S L E T T E R 19
Summer 2008

Chairman's Message: the ideal event on the Meadows

Over the years, there have been many events on the Meadows, and each year, the damage to the grass and soil in the Meadows seems to get worse and lasts for longer. As a result of the damage to some parts of the Meadows, e.g. east of Middle Meadow Walk at the south end, footballers and other players are using other parts of the Meadows more frequently, and these areas are now showing signs of persistent damage.

Recently FOMBL was among the organizations that objected to proposals for two major Festival shows (the Lady Boys of Bangkok cabaret show and the Chinese State Circus) on the Meadows in 2008. Regrettably, Edinburgh City Councillors gave the go-ahead despite dozens of objections from FOMBL and other campaigners, who claimed that the grass had barely recovered from last year's events. Following the many complaints about the excessive exploitation of the Meadows by various organizations, we understand that a Review is to be carried out by Edinburgh City Council into the number of events staged on the Meadows, to save it from further damage.

We have had many discussions as to why the Meadows are becoming so badly damaged, and climate change has been suggested as a cause, with wetter periods coinciding with heavier usage. However, the most likely cause of the damage is events using bigger tents, erected by bigger machinery and lasting for longer than a day or two. Another practical issue is the use by the Council of the bond placed by the event organizer. To our surprise, the Urban Circus bond was not used despite the obvious damage to the ground.

The ideal event

What type of events should we therefore be encouraging on the Meadows? We feel that events should ideally last only a day, with setting up of tents and marquees only the day before, and taking down the day after. Events like Fringe Sunday do no damage to the Meadows while giving a large number of people much pleasure.

and particularly . . .

Another type of event that we would like to encourage are events like the Meadows Marathon organized by the University Students, which raised nearly £50,000 for a number of local charities, e.g. Waverley Care, Four Square, Scottish Love in Action, Sick Kids Friends Foundation and Maggie's Cancer Care, and others such as the Meningitis Research Foundation, Barnardo's, Water Aid, Children's Holiday Venture, The Kalash Peoples Welfare Society, and Sports Relief. Not only was there no damage to the Meadows, but the organizers also planted a commemorative Oak Tree with the help of our Tree Warden.

We will need to remain vigilant about events on the Meadows, and hope that members will continue to protest to the Council if the damage to the Meadows continues.

P L Yap

NEXT MEETING OF FRIENDS OF THE MEADOWS & BRUNTSFIELD LINKS

Monday 16 June at 7.30 p.m. in Peter's Yard Bakery, Quartermile (near Middle Meadow Walk). This meeting will be our AGM. *Do you have a complaint about events on the Meadows? Do you have any views about cycling on the Meadows? Are you a golfer? If so, come along and let us have your views. All are welcome.* Your local Community Beat Officer, PC 5801 Lindsey Thomson, and Kathy Evans (Community Safety Manager), and will be present and will speak on 'security'. Further details from P L Yap (0131 229 0948, weekends or evenings). *A reminder: annual subscriptions are now due.*

Why all this aggro between cyclists and pedestrians?

I regularly visit a leisure resort in the borders with my extended family. It is located in an extensive 'woodland village' but, being a very environmentally friendly place, it does not permit the use of motor-driven vehicles within its grounds. After unloading at your cabin, you return your car to the secure parking area at Reception, and you can choose whether to walk back, or hire a bicycle, if you have not brought your own.

We have noted that pedestrians and cyclists seem to be much more considerate of each other there, where all routes are designated and signed as shared, with pedestrians having priority. It is also significant that all bicycles used on this site must have working lights fore and aft, plus a bell (not a whistle, hooter, siren nor yell!), and there are path-signs strategically placed and spaced along the ways, to remind both types of user of the presence of the other.

Ditches, low fences and other obstacles on either side of the paths, ensure that cyclists cannot make short-cuts, or encroach on to path verges to overtake pedestrians at speed; therefore they require the co-operation of the pedestrian 'to make way' at the courteous request of a tinkle on the bell, and a friendly 'Thank you!' as you pass them. Polite pedestrians also quickly learn to 'Walk on the Right' in order to leave a cyclist space to pass, more especially on up-hill stretches, where slowing to a stop on a hill can mean falling off for the less able cyclist. In turn cyclists learn to look out for pedestrians and animals, who can change direction and start or stop much quicker than they or any other vehicle can.

Benefits of mixed use

The major benefit of promoting mixed use is to remind us that all cyclists are pedestrians at some point, and most pedestrians are at least potential cyclists, so if most of them act reasonably and politely most of the time, there will be very little cause for mutually destructive aggression. Far from being a safety feature, we consider segregated routes are a hazard for pedestrians, particularly for those with defective sight and/or hearing, and especially so for young children and animals. The segregating 'White Lines' bestow a false sense of security on both cyclist and pedestrian, by suggesting to each that this is their 'Reserved Territory' on which the other must not encroach, therefore they are safe.

Consequently, cyclists race along straights and down slopes at breakneck speed entirely out of proportion to local circumstances (on Bruntsfield Links and the Meadows some benches, bins, and pathways can only be accessed by 'crossing the line'). Additionally 'No Cycling' signs are simply a challenge to the irresponsible cyclist, a justification of the aggressive pedestrian, and should be unnecessary for any polite and reasonable person from either side of 'the line'. Authorities involved with cyclists and walkers should make it very clear to all drivers of vehicles, that Pathways, Pavements, Public spaces, and Parks are designed primarily for use by pedestrians. However, reasonable pedestrians may be persuaded to share these areas - where necessary - with people who use self-propelled vehicles politely, carefully, and quietly.

John Simon, Edinburgh EH9 1ED

(pedestrian, passenger, cyclist, motor-cyclist and motorist - in that order of preference)



Readers may like to note that Edinburgh Council will shortly be removing the 'No Cycling' notices on the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links, which are no longer in step with the recent Land Reform Act. Please see the note of the recent meeting on Cycling on the Meadows, enclosed with this newsletter. (Ed.)

<left: a happy birthday on the Meadows, 25 May 2008

**BRUNTSFIELD
LINKS SHORT**

HOLE GOLF COURSE

This unique 36-hole Short Hole Golf Course is 118 years old and covers part of Bruntsfield Links, arguably the oldest golfing links in the world, where golf has been played continuously since the early 1400's. Prior to the 'short game', Bruntsfield Links was a 6-hole golf course until 1890 when, with the population increasing and the City expanding, the 'long game' moved south of the City to the new public golf course on Braid Hills.

Edinburgh's two premier golf clubs, Royal Burgess G.S. (1735) and Bruntsfield Links G.S. (1761) were first established on Bruntsfield Links before relocating to Musselburgh Links in the 1870s and then finally moving in the 1890s to their current locations in the north west of the City.

The Short Hole Course is maintained by the City of Edinburgh Council, whose part-time green-keeper is aided by one or two volunteer members of the Bruntsfield Short Hole Golf Club, who are keen to preserve this historic course in the best possible condition for the enjoyment of the local community and visitors to the City. The length of the holes varies from 45 to 90 yards over natural terrain, and prove an excellent test of golf for even the best golfer's short game. Par for 36 holes is 108.

Play on the course is FREE of any green fees! However, players need to bring their own golf clubs (short iron/wedge + putter) and ball. In return for the free golf, all golfers have a vital part to play in helping to maintain the course in the best possible condition by just complying with a few simple rules of play:

- 1) Play each hole from the marked tee areas
- 2) Do not strike balls over footpaths - *all footpaths are out of bounds*
- 3) Do not strike balls from on the greens
- 4) Replace all divots throughout the course including tee areas

Without doubt the Short Hole Golf Course on Bruntsfield Links is a true golfing 'gem', unique to world golf.

Bruntsfield Short Hole Golf Club (BSHGC) is now the sole remaining Club playing over the Links. While the earliest reference in the Club's records is to '1895', the first Minute Book, which was unfortunately lost some time in the distant past, would no doubt have dated the Club closer to 1890. BSHGC is somewhat artisan in nature, with no Clubhouse other than the green 'Starters Hut', from which regular weekly handicap competitions are held from April through until September, when the course switches over to the 9-hole Winter Course on an adjoining area of Bruntsfield Links.

BSHGC Membership, currently around 50, is open to all ladies and gentlemen, minimum age 14 years. With 21 Trophies dating as far back as 1901 to play for, the extensive Fixture List also includes an annual match with Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society, who regard BSHGC as the custodians of its origins and golfing heritage on Bruntsfield Links. New Members are always very welcome - **Support your local Golf Club!** [For BSHGC Membership information, including Associate (non-playing), please contact: Fraser Gordon (Secretary) Tel: 445 2705 or fraser.gordon@blueyonder.co.uk]

Jimmy Robertson

The photograph below taken on 5th May 2008 shows a group of golfers from Bristol on a 'Smurf' (non-alcoholic) stag party.



Forthcoming events in and around the Meadows

Meadows Festival: 6-9 June

The Edinburgh Arrow: 11 June

The Moonwalk: 14 June

Tollcross Front Garden competition:

22 June

Piano Playing: 1 August

Urban Circus: 2 August

**Festival and Fringe Sunday
and Funfair: 6 August**

**A REMINDER (to be sung to the tune
of 'Much Binding in the Marsh')**

There's no drinking on the Links

However much you think it might be jolly

There's no drinking on the Links

It spoils your stroke

and makes you look a wally.

What's more you'll have to answer

to the litter police and worse

There's no drinking on the Links!

After taking early retirement, I attended an interview for the role of litter warden at the local park.

'What training do I get?' I asked the council official interviewing me. 'None,' he shrugged. 'You just pick it up as you go along.' (From *The Reader's Digest*: sent in by John Simon)

Cautionary tale

The following appeared in Community Beat Officer (CBO) Neill Sinclair's recent newsletter *Community and Neighbourhood Watch News, Issue 45 (2), April 2008*:

What is going on with the kids who meet around the play parks in the Meadows? I am aware they have to meet somewhere, but their anti-social behaviour recently is a real cause for concern. We have had incidents of assault, threats and thefts, which seem to be related to the consumption of alcohol.

I would like to share something with you. One of my CBO colleagues a few days ago came across a very drunk girl. She was so aggressive towards him and much as he tried to assist her there came no option but to arrest her for her own safety. Whilst waiting for transport, the parents of the girl arrived, which in normal circumstances would have been appreciated, but both parents had been drinking and reacted in a similar manner to their daughter. Their aggression was such that the CBO had to produce his baton for *his* own safety. I heard my colleague talking on the radio and over his conversation I could hear this girl screaming at him. What chance does this girl or even the police have when she has such excellent role models!

Do you know what your child is up to?

Useful numbers

Mike Shields: Community Parks Officer 0131 672 1589

Community Beat Officer PC 5801 Lindsey Thomson 0131 662 5022 (to report a crime: 311 3131; emergency 999; or anonymously to Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111)

Litter: rapid response 0808 100 33 66

Defective lamp-post lighting: note number and report to Clarence – 0800 23 23 23

Environmental Manager: David Doig – david.doig@edinburgh.gov.uk

The Autumn Meeting of Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links will be held on Monday 3 November 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in the Library at St Thomas of Aquins High School, 220 Chalmers Street.

Committee members (please address all correspondence to the Secretary)

Chair: Peng Lee Yap, 5 Meadow Place, EH9 1JZ. Tel. 229 0948 Email: Ping.LeeYap@snbts.csa.scot.nhs.uk

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 Tel. 667 3386. Email: jo.scott@ukonline.co.uk

Committee: Geraldine Brown, Norma Burnett, Antonia Dickson, Dennis Gallagher, Hilary McDowell, Tim Puntis, Neil Roger, Chris Wigglesworth.

Tree Warden: Mike Walsh, 17 Tantallon Place, EH9 1NZ Tel. 667 1708. mcw@ecosse.net

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Send to: Mrs Josephine Scott (Membership Secretary), 8 Salisbury Heights,
31 Salisbury Road, EH16 5AA (enclosing cheque and sae)

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