



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

NEWSLETTER 28

Summer 2011

Convener's Concluding Comment

Looking across the Meadows as I write, I see the Meadows Festival Funfair setting up. Both the fair and the festival are good examples of events that a wide community appreciate, and for which the Meadows is well suited. You will be reading this after they have happened, hopefully with reasonable weather, and it will be good to reflect on their impact. They will probably remind us that good maintenance of the area, with a chance for the turf to rest, is essential for long-term sustainability. This has been my enduring concern, and I still think that the overall state of the area shows that the Council is failing in this responsibility. As Friends we can look back thankfully on occasional successes in encouraging and assisting this stewardship. It is the main purpose for which the Friends exist.

New blood needed

The Meadows Festival has been a great success over the years because it has managed, not without a struggle, to find a core team each year to do the organizing. They deserve congratulations for this. The Friends have also found it difficult to get people with time and talent to keep the group going. I would like to thank all those who have given time and energy for the meetings, and the lobbying, and for the organizing and publicizing of our work. **But unless the forthcoming AGM finds a new Convener and Secretary it will be impossible for the Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links to continue in its present form.** This will be a shame, because past years have shown that there is still a real need to fight for the future of this green space.

Somebody has to be vigilant

We shouldn't forget that the nineteenth century Act of Parliament that has kept the Meadows and the Links as wonderful as they are prevented building on the Meadows. But it only did so because some MPs over-rode members of the Council who wanted, for whatever reason, to build there. Again, in the 1960s, it was a local campaign that stopped the Council from erecting a raised dual carriageway along Melville Drive. Somebody has to be vigilant!

Over to you

I have enjoyed my involvement and the friendships it has fostered. Now over to you! (Please see overleaf for details of the Annual General Meeting on 23 June.)

Chris Wigglesworth
31 May 2011

The Summer Meeting of Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links (AGM) will be held on Thursday 23 June at 7.30 p.m. in the Croquet Club, Leven Terrace. The speaker will be Alison Johnstone MSP. Her subject will be 'Edinburgh's precious green spaces'. All are welcome.

The autumn meeting of FOMBL will be held on Monday 29 November, at 7.30 p.m.

Your committee at present has the following members:

Convener: Chris Wigglesworth
Secretary and Treasurer: Hamish McKenzie
Membership Secretary: Sabine Murdoch

Minutes Secretary: Elizabeth Jogee
Newsletter Editor: Heather Goodare
Other members: Andy Devenport
Neil Roger

All have signified their willingness to continue except for our Convener, Chris Wigglesworth. Hamish McKenzie is willing to continue as Treasurer but would like to stand down as Secretary. We therefore need at least two more willing volunteers to take on these roles. Please give careful consideration as to whether you can contribute to the continuation of FOMBL, which may otherwise not prove viable. We are particularly keen to involve younger members with a long-term interest in the future of the Meadows and Links.



Barbecue damage

Here is an example of the damage done by barbecues on Bruntsfield Links as early as April 2011. At this time the Council leaflet about the new pilot scheme for barbecues was not available: it only became so during the third week of May, and is enclosed with this newsletter.

Members are requested to use these leaflets to persuade members of the public, if they wish to light barbecues, to do so only on the designated sites. Further copies will be available at the AGM.

Back to our roots on Bruntsfield Links

The Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society Ltd is celebrating its 250th Anniversary (1761 – 2011) with various events, including a 'back to their roots' event at Bruntsfield. The Council Parks department are laying out a replica of the original 6-hole course, to be played over with hickory clubs and lower compression balls by members of the Society on Saturday 18th June (Meadows) and Sunday 19th (Musselburgh). A special scorecard has been produced for the occasion.

The traditions of the Society date back to 1761, when the members played over Bruntsfield Links, in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle, at the edge of the south side of the city boundary. The Society had a room in Wrights Houses as a clubhouse. However, by the mid 19th century conditions at Bruntsfield were becoming quite congested, and members started playing more golf at Musselburgh, where the Summer Meeting had been held since 1839. The course at Bruntsfield (Meadows) was shared with the Edinburgh Burgess Golf Society (Royal Burgess Golf Society) and other Societies in the 19th century, with the land being given over to grazing in the summer months.

A purpose-built clubhouse was erected in 1886 in a row overlooking the Musselburgh Course, which contained the clubhouse of the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers (HCEG) who had moved from Leith Links, Royal Musselburgh, and the Burgess. Inevitably with golf proving more popular and with four clubs sharing nine holes, coupled with threatened incursions from the racecourse, there were problems.

The Honourable Company moved to Muirfield in 1891, Burgess to Barnton in 1895, and Bruntsfield to the present site on Barnton Avenue, with spectacular views over the Firth of Forth, in 1898. All these moves were dependent on members getting to the new locations by rail. The Society is very proud of its roots and has an annual nostalgic match with the Bruntsfield Short Hole, whose members are to be thanked for their assistance in arranging our 'back to our roots' event.

David Sandford, Secretary

Memorial trees on the Meadows

From Alan Jamieson, Parks and Greenspace Manager, City of Edinburgh Council

'I can confirm that the Memorial Tree Scheme was suspended a couple of years ago, and remains suspended. This was because a large number of the trees were being damaged/killed by vandalism and/or poor ground maintenance practices - which inevitably upset the donors. We do plant a few celebration/memorial trees each year in locations where we can guarantee their continued health - such as Princes Street Gardens and other botanical gardens; and will consider re-introducing the programme once we are confident that we can adequately administer and manage it to the satisfaction of the donors and ourselves. Hopefully, the recent introduction of Landscape Quality Standards will help drive the necessary improvements in ground maintenance practices.'

This is disappointing for those who wish to plant trees, but at least we now know the position.

Storm damage to trees on the Meadows and Links



Just when you thought the gales had done their worst, they returned with renewed ferocity! This photo was taken on the evening of the Big Storm, 23 May 2011. It shows the damage caused by a fallen tree at the northern end of Whitehouse Loan, dividing the two parts of Bruntsfield Links. The driver of the car, struck by a lamppost, escaped unhurt.

As this newsletter goes to press, the clearing up of the debris left by the breaking of branches is still in progress. Perhaps there is a role for volunteers here.

North Meadow Walk upgrade

We have news of an upgrade to North Meadow Walk, which we welcome. This project aims to improve the quality of a heavily used walking and cycling route in central Edinburgh, which is part of National Cycle Routes 75 and 1. The path will be made more attractive to walkers and cyclists by addressing current deficiencies. The upgrade will improve the route to several key destinations, including a local secondary school on Chalmers Street.

The Jawbone arch

The jawbone arch is one of only a few monuments visible that remain from the Edinburgh International Exhibition in the West Meadows from May to October 1886. It was an inspiring celebration of science, industry and art in the Victorian era. Raising the money to conserve and restore the arch might just inspire us with some of the creative vibrancy that overflows from that period.

Plans are afoot and quotes are being obtained to conserve and repair the structure and, as the summer progresses, profile will be raised to encourage local people and businesses to contribute to this project. On 6th May a ceremony *in situ* marked the 125th anniversary of the opening of the event by Prince Albert Victor, Queen Victoria's grandson. The great Queen herself visited later in the year.

Leaflets will be available soon, as will a Just Giving web page, which enables tax-free giving via Edinburgh World Heritage, who have been particularly helpful. More details and events will be included on a dedicated *Meadows Jawbone Arch* Facebook page. In the meantime queries can be sent to cameron.rose@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Cameron Rose Councillor: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/councillors/56/cameron_rose
Local news blog: <http://cameronrose.blogspot.com>

Forthcoming events

Events on the Meadows and Links that have received approval are the following: **Bruntsfield Links 250th anniversary (17-25 June 2011); Taste of Edinburgh 2011 (1-3 July 2011); Urban Circus: Ladyboys of Bangkok (5-27 August 2011).**

Meadows Chamber Orchestra

The coming season marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of this well-loved local orchestra. Several special concerts are planned: the first two are on Saturday 1 October and Saturday 26 November 2011, both in Greyfriars Kirk, the first conducted by David Watkin and the second by Robin Page, with a double bass concerto by Koussevitsky in the first and Prokofiev's second violin concerto in the second. For more detailed information, please have a look at the website: www.meadowsorchestra.org.uk.

Useful contacts

Mike Shields Community Parks Officer 0131 529 5126; email: mike.shields@edinburgh.gov.uk

Police: Safer Neighbourhood Team. PC 4601 Yocksan Bell 0131 662 5022 or Sgt 4554 Peter Houston (same number). To report a crime: 0131 311 3131; emergency 999; or (anonymously) to Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111.

Anti-social behaviour (24/7): 0131 529 7050; **Litter:** 0131 529 3030

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

David Lovie Acting Local Environment Manager: email david.lovie@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel. 0131 529 3711

Complaints regarding Council vehicles driving on Links or Meadows:

Taskforce, Craigmillar Depot: 0131 664 8330

Graffiti Robert Davidson: email: robert.davidson@edinburgh.gov.uk

FOMBL Committee members

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