



# **Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links**

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organization (SCIO) SC045955

## **NEWSLETTER 48**

**Spring 2018**

### **Editor's comment**

#### **Sad news**

In our last issue we told you about Jimmy Forrest's accident: unfortunately it looks as if he will not be returning to work any time soon. In the meantime, Peter Davidson, now sole Park Ranger for the Meadows, has had his hands full. Also before Christmas Mike Shields, Parks and Greenspace Officer for the South East, and a great supporter of FOMBL, had a serious operation, and has been out of action, but is now recovering well, and has just returned to work. Welcome back, Mike!

We have already circularised members with the very sad news of the death of Robin Morris, our Treasurer. His life was celebrated in a moving service of thanksgiving at Christ Church Morningside on 16 February: the church overflowed with people from all his various connections: golf, community council, FOMBL, church, and family. We send warm sympathy to all his family, and our heartfelt thanks for all he did for us.

#### **Looking forward**

We must however look forward with optimism, and we are very lucky to be able to appoint Jim Orr, who is an accountant, as our new Treasurer. Also, in a situation where the Council has limited manpower, we need to see how we can work together to make the best possible use of the resources that we have. So our Spring public meeting will focus on the Future of Park Management: see the notice below. The theme will be the endeavour to cut down on the use of herbicides on the Meadows (see photo p. 2), with the hope that old-fashioned manual weeding by community payback workers and our own volunteers can do a better and more environmentally friendly job. A poster about the meeting is included with this mailing: please print it out and put it up near you.

Finally, I must say a belated thank you to all of you for the really delightful picture I received at the EGM in December of *Golfers on Bruntsfield Links circa 1785*, by Francis Nicholson (1753-1844). This now hangs in an honoured place in our sitting room. As soon as someone can take over as Newsletter Editor I shall be able to retire properly! *Heather Goodare (Editor)*

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### **The Future of Park Management**

A panel discussion with

**Alan Bell**

Greenspace Manager, Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Service

**Valerie Lawrie**

Sector Manager, Criminal Justice City Wide Services

**Yusef Samari**

Volunteer Co-ordinator, Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

followed by questions from the audience, at the Pillar Hall, Barclay Viewforth Church

Monday 19 March 2018 @7.30-9.30 p.m., starting with refreshments.

*The photo below shows how herbicide (glyphosate) is used round the children's playgrounds*



### **General Maczek Memorial**

Some of you may remember the AGM in 2013 when Lord Fraser of Carmyllie addressed the group, and secured our support and enthusiasm for this project, to install a memorial bench on the Meadows to General Stanislaw Maczek, a Polish veteran of World War II. Maczek had a long and distinguished career in the Polish army. He fought in three campaigns, in Poland, France and North-West Europe. From 1942 to 1945 he commanded the First Polish Armoured Division. As part of the Allied Forces, the Division played a vital role in the Normandy fighting. It then advanced through France into Belgium and Holland, liberating many grateful citizens in these countries.

Maczek lived out his final years in Edinburgh, since he was unable to return to Communist Poland after the war. However, the UK government did not give him a pension, so he was obliged to work as a barman in Marchmont. My neighbour, who is a driving instructor, says he also remembers him teaching driving under the name 'White Eagle'.

### **The Order of the White Eagle**

The Order of the White Eagle was the name of Poland's highest award, with which he was finally decorated. Maczek used to walk his disabled daughter round the Meadows and Links in her wheelchair, and originally FOMBL were very happy to support the campaign for a memorial bench to him on the Links. All went well, and the fund was increasing, until last year a Council lawyer found objections to the proposed bench, saying that it was a 'building' and therefore contravened the Confirmation Act 1991, forbidding any such structures on the Meadows or Links. This was a great disappointment to us, and we still don't understand the reasoning.

However, the Trustees of the General Maczek Memorial Trust were not to be discouraged, and finally the Council have agreed that the memorial can go instead in the courtyard at the side of the Council's City Chambers in the High Street. While FOMBL is disappointed that there will be no

bench on the Links, at the same time we have to be happy that the alternative site is even more prestigious, and that the bench can now be erected before Maczek's friends and colleagues are no longer with us. Edinburgh's Lord Provost, Frank Ross, has said: 'We're delighted that this fitting tribute to General Stanislaw Maczek and his men is to be placed in such close proximity to the war memorial at the City Chambers. It will be located in a highly visible spot, right outside our recently refurbished Registrar's office, where many people will pass by and have the opportunity to reflect on the General's heroics and the many other war heroes who risked their lives during combat . . .'

FOMBL Trustees, while sad that the bench will no longer be on the Links, feel that some Meadows memorial is certainly indicated, and are now proposing a General Maczek Walk, which will adopt an unnamed path leading from Marchmont to the east end of Glengyle Terrace, a route which he would certainly have walked. We feel this will be a fitting tribute. (Ed.)

## **The naming of paths**

While we are thinking of new paths, we need to mention also our plan, together with the Council, in particular Melanie Main, Green Councillor, to name a path on Bruntsfield Links after **Muriel Spark**, in this the centenary year of her birth. The plan is to have a ceremony during the Meadows Festival, followed by a few drinks. Exact arrangements are yet to be made: we will circulate details nearer the time. We have already honoured Dame Muriel with a quotation from *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* in our Meadows Mural, but this is a further opportunity to mark her association with the Links, over which she must have walked many times when she lived in Bruntsfield and attended James Gillespie's School for Girls. A website Muriel Spark 100 (@MurielSpark100) has been set up: do visit it!

A further female path-finder was **Sophia Jex-Blake** (1840-1912), who led the campaign to secure women access to a University education when she and six other women, collectively known as the [Edinburgh Seven](#), began studying medicine at Edinburgh University in 1869. She was the first practising female doctor in Scotland; a leading campaigner for women's medical education, and was involved in founding two medical schools for women (at a time when no other medical schools were training women). Sophia lived and conducted her practice for 16 years in the house known as Bruntsfield Lodge on Whitehouse Loan. When she retired in 1889 the Edinburgh Hospital and Dispensary for Women and Children moved to this site, and became known as [Bruntsfield Hospital](#), where it continued to function on the site until 1989. She too surely deserves a path in her name on Bruntsfield Links. (Ed.)

## **The Jawbones**

*We are very pleased to be able to bring you an up-to-date report on this project*

The conservation of the Jawbones for return to outside condition has proved very challenging, not least because of the presence of historic repairs using harmful materials such as car-body filler and concrete. In January we arranged for Nigel Larkin, an expert on whalebones and their conservation, to inspect the bones and advise on their return to the Meadows. He has identified additional treatment required, and recommended enhanced structural support for the reinstalled arch. He has also suggested that once complete, the bones should be 3D scanned again so that we will have computer data to use should a replica be required at some time in the future when the bones inevitably decay beyond repair.

Further funds are going to be needed to complete the project, and Edinburgh World Heritage and the City of Edinburgh Council are seeking extra funding to allow completion and reinstallation of the Arch. *Fiona Rankin, World Heritage Site Project Manager*

## **Community Garden**

*The Community Garden project* has welcomed the Spring with a new growing programme (following our potato beds in 2017) devised by Emma, our horticulture advisor. We now have two cold-frames to bring on lettuces and other tender edibles, and a great variety of seeds will be sown in stages in the other beds and around the perimeter. A



splendid demonstration bench has been installed with Co-op Community Funding, which is already very popular. Sciennes Primary School children help us to garden, and their eco club plans to install an organic insect hotel next door; we will soon be enjoying the hum of insects in our meadow and orchard. *[As we go to press the Meadows are deep in snow, so we have shown you a picture of a snow-man guarding the plot instead of primroses. - Ed.]*.

The **Wildflower Plot** off Lonsdale Terrace is stirring into life as well. Spot the primroses! Donations of plants are appreciated – we currently meet at the Community Garden at 12 noon every Saturday, and everyone is welcome. There's always plenty to do.

You can follow us on:

Twitter:#LauristonGreen

Email [greeningourstreet@gmail.com](mailto:greeningourstreet@gmail.com) for more details.

*Sarah Tolley*

## **Project update: a report on progress**

by Neil Roger

### **Helen Acquroff Fountain Restoration and Information Board**

Last year, the fountain and surrounding paving were successfully restored by Erik Kirkwood. After many attempts at getting consensus on the content of the text, we managed to achieve the fixing of an information board to the railings. The final phase will be improving the surrounding paving edges, including laying setts under the information board. We now have a quote for this, which has been approved, and the work should be completed by the end of April.



HELEN ACQUROFF DRINKING FOUNTAIN INFORMATION BOARD FIXED DECEMBER 2017



### **Restoration of the Sundial Pillar in the west Meadows**

Last year the joints between the granite setts were cleaned out and mortared with a very durable mix and now look nice and smart. The cost of this was met by a private donation, and we are very grateful. The original 1886 cast iron railings were painted by Mark McCathie, and now look as good as new (almost!). The cost of this was met by funds provided by Underbelly receipts via the Council and FOMBL. The next phase is the installation of an information board, along with granite setts laid around the board support. This has been funded by a local community grant, with installation and sett laying by the Parks department, though due to bad weather the installation has been delayed until April.

## Painting of railings

The Council had no funds in their budget to paint the low metal railings that protect large areas of grass and trees. Without painting these now there would be a risk of metal rusting, and consequently much higher costs to deal with in the future. Mark McCathie has now painted 190 metres in high-quality black Hammerite, and we have asked for further funds to complete another 500 metres at Bruntsfield Links and near the Cricket Pavilion. Mark also clears out earth and weeds at the base of metal supports to enable painting as close to the ground as possible.



## Playground equipment

Following the success of installing toddlers' play equipment in the West Links playground, we were successful in bidding for funds to install new toddler equipment in the East Meadows play area, which has been neglected for many years. We hope to add more apparatus soon. This equipment has been ordered by James Galloway, the Council's playground supremo, and it is hoped that further improvements can be made in this much loved play area.

## Information boards

There are three information boards in the process of being designed, and it is hoped to erect these in early summer. They will describe the history of the Royal Infirmary and Quatermile; the Masons' Pillars at the West entrance to the Meadows, and the Nelson Pillars at the East entrance.

## Exercise equipment

Last year three items of equipment were installed at the East Meadows, Central Meadows and Bruntsfield Links. It was intended that these would form the basis of the exercise trail and would be augmented by additional equipment at each location. Three new items have now been ordered, and it is hoped that these will be installed in April/May.

*We owe a debt of gratitude to Neil for his careful and persistent work on this comprehensive scheme of projects, which will add greatly to the attraction of the Meadows and Links as a place for recreation, renewal, and the study of our history. It has not been easy, but we are delighted that we have such a well qualified and knowledgeable volunteer to see the scheme through to success.* (Ed.)



## Forthcoming Events

**FOMBL Spring public meeting. Pillar Hall**, Barclay Viewforth Church, 19 March 7.30-9.30 pm: 'The Future of Park Management', with Alan Bell, Valerie Lawrie, and Yusef Samari. See p. 1 for full details. All members of the public are very welcome.

**Meadows Chamber Orchestra:** concert 28 April: Steiner School, Spylaw Road, Edinburgh, 7.30 p.m. Conductor Peter Evans; Emma Scott piano, Anna Cooper soprano. Overture *La Clemenza di Tito* {Mozart}, movements from Mozart's *Vesperae solennes de confessore K339*, Greig Piano concerto, and Beethoven Symphony no. 7. Free entrance: paper collection.

**Gung Ho 2018:** 5K Giant inflatable obstacle course. The Meadows 12 May.

**Army Reserve in the Park:** annual event showcasing regular and army reserve units. No guns. 17-18 May.

**Meadows Festival Funfair:** Annual Funfair in the Meadows. 30 May-3 June. **Meadows Festival: 2-3 June.**

**Oxford Shakespeare Company.** Two free back-to-back performances by this non-profit company of *Macbeth*. 18 June (19 June if raining on 18 June).

**Fun Fair at the Fringe.** Annual Festival Fun Fair, 10-20 August. **Underbelly:** international circus, dates tbc.

**Woodland Tribe:** The Pavilion Café on the Meadows, in partnership with the Woodland Tribe, plan a unique event for children and families, to promote outdoor and natural play: parents welcome. 11-16 August.

**Learning Disabilities Week Festival.** Community Gala to celebrate the successes and contributions that individuals with learning disabilities make in Edinburgh. A gathering of various disability organizations with live music, non-alcoholic drinks, football and rugby, zumba, yoga, singing, and arts and crafts. 18 August.

**Kids Fest 2018.** Children's Festival to raise money for Radio Forth Cash for Kids. Inflatable games, bungee run, gladiator joust, magician's comedy acts, and local talent taking the spotlight. The Meadows 25 August.

**World Short Hole Golf Pairs Championship for the Lord Provost 2018:** Bruntsfield Links 7 September. 12 noon to 7.00 p.m.: charity event.

**Tone Edinburgh: 12 hours of Boxercise.** Charity group exercise class for adults (ages 15+) using boxing style movements and exercises. Donations to Cash for Kids. The Meadows 9 September.

**Helping Hands.** This event will bring children from across Edinburgh together to break down social, geographical and economic barriers. Football coaching by professionals and qualified coaches: 9 September.

**Edinburgh Freshers Fair.** A one-day fair to allow Edinburgh companies to showcase their goods (food, clothes etc.) for the benefit of students. 13 September.

## Useful Contacts

**Mike Shields** Parks and Greenspace Officer South East Tel. 0131 529 5126 or 0777 440 3523; email: mike.shields@edinburgh.gov.uk

**Police:** To report a crime: 101 (costing a flat rate of 15p per call); emergency 999; or (anonymously) to Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111.

**Police Service of Scotland website** is <http://www.scotland.police.uk>.

**Customer care (Council):** Tel. 0131 529 7050; or 0131 200 2000; or 0131 529 3030.

**Litter:** 0131 608 1100

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

**Forestry Service:** email forestry.service@edinburgh.gov.uk. Tel. 0131 311 7079

**Road repairs and development:** Alan Dunlop, Area Roads Manager: Tel. 0131 529 3719; email: alan.dunlop@edinburgh.gov.uk

**Complaints regarding Council vehicles driving on Links or Meadows:** Tel. 0131 529 3030

**Task Force Manager** (responsible for street cleaning and grounds maintenance) Rab Farquhar: Tel. 0131 664 8330 or 07786 110377; email: rab.farquhar@edinburgh.gov.uk

**Graffiti:** report to 0131 200 2000 or Police 101 if persistent

**Kathy Evans:** Local Community Safety Manager (tackling anti-social behaviour and joint working with the police) email: kathy.evans@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel. 0131 529 5106

**Environmental Warden team leader:** Mohamed Demnati Tel. 0131 529 5204

**People Against Litter (PAL):** please contact <http://www.peopleagainstlitter.org/>

### *FoMBL Trustees*

**Convener:** Andy Devenport. email: convener@fombl.org.uk

**Secretary:** Sarah Tolley. email: secretary@fombl.org.uk.

**Treasurer:** Jim Orr. email: fombltreas@fombl.org.uk

**Membership Secretary:** Alec Mann, email: membership@fombl.org.uk.

**Volunteer Co-ordinator** Yusef Samari. email: volunteer@fombl.org.uk

**Project Manager** Neil Roger

**Newsletter Editor** Heather Goodare. email: newsletter@fombl.org.uk

**Other Trustees:** Iain Black, Joan Carter, Kaaren Haughton, Alison Service

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