



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

NEWSLETTER 16

Summer 2007

Message from the Chairman

Many improvements have been made to the Meadows and Links since the Friends were founded, but we need to preserve the Meadows and Links for future generations to enjoy. It therefore came as a shock to learn at a recent Meeting of the Council that there were possible plans by the Council to submit an amendment to the legislation that protects the Meadows from any development in the form of new buildings. This was part of the proposal to rebuild the Ross Bandstand on Princes Street Gardens, and apparently the same legislation protects Princes St Gardens, Calton Hill and the Meadows.

It came as an even bigger shock to read in the Evening News that the Meadows was once again a possible site for a Skateboard Park. However, we were pleased to subsequently receive reassurances by the Council that there were definitely no plans for the Skateboard Park to be sited on the Meadows. Unfortunately it is not clear if the proposed legislation that the Council intends to submit includes the Meadows or is only limited to Princes St Gardens, but we are trying to clarify this issue. If it turns out that the legislation being submitted definitely affects the Meadows, then members will be consulted as to our response to this major change.

The next meeting of the Friends will be on 18 June 2007 at 7.30 p.m., in the South Side Community Education Centre, 117 Nicholson Street: there will be an illustrated talk by Dr Max Coleman of the Royal Botanic Garden on 'The trees of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links'. The meeting will include the AGM: the Treasurer's Accounts are enclosed with this Newsletter, and it is proposed to make two minor amendments to the Constitution (see enclosed). The November meeting will be on Monday 12th November at 7.30 pm in the Meadows Croquet Club. **Peng Lee Yap**

The heart-warming article below is reproduced by kind permission of the *Scotsman* and the author. [Ed.]

My little piece of Scotland

For fun, sport and wildlife
the Meadows in Edinburgh
is the place to beat



MY FAVOURITE place in Scotland is the Meadows, in Edinburgh. There are lots of reasons why it is my favourite place - here are some of them.

The Meadows is a wide open place filled with grass, and since it's in the centre of Edinburgh it is like an oasis away from the busy city centre. You can just calm down, relax and sit on a bench.

The thing that I like best about the Meadows is the wildlife. You can find lots of small birds there, and if you are lucky you



might see bigger ones too. I once saw a buzzard sitting in a tree when it was raining, but I was just lucky because it had been blown off course by strong winds. You can also see rare trees, fungi and lots of grey squirrels running up and down the trees, chasing each other and looking very cute.

As well as being a good place to relax and see wildlife, the Meadows is also good for activities. There are tennis courts and lots of space for running, playing, walking your dog and cycling. And if you're a football fan, the Meadows is a perfect place for you - there's so much space that you can have a good game without being cramped.

If you like to run, a lap of the Meadows is just under a mile and a half. My mum and dad and two of my uncles run around the Meadows. There is also a cricket club and lots of people who play Frisbee.

I have been to many other places in Scotland, but for me nowhere else could live up to the Meadows. Not just because of the wildlife, but because I have been going there my whole life - and having such a great time there means that nothing could ever beat the Meadows.

**Lucy Remedios Mowat Ayton, 11
Bruntsfield Primary School, Edinburgh**

TREE TALK

by Keith Logie (Strategic Projects Manager – Parks)

"The measure of any great civilization is its cities; and a measure of a city's greatness is to be found in the quality of its public spaces, its parks and squares." *John Ruskin*



We have adopted a policy of diversifying the range of tree species in the Meadows (and elsewhere), partly because of climate change, partly to reduce the threat from disease. At the same time we want to use trees of similar form to those currently on the Meadows, which in the main are forest trees of upright stature. It is worth pointing out that there is nationwide concern over trees being lost to gales, not just from the landscape and amenity point of view but also in terms of public safety.

In terms of wind-firmness, oak is usually thought of as being most resistant to being blown down as it has a tap root. We have been planting more oaks than in the past, using several species - pedunculate (English) oak, Turkey oak, red oak, Hungarian oak and pin oak. There is a downside to this - the disease Sudden Oak Death arrived in the country several years ago and there is a risk that it may spread to affect oaks here, so we couldn't risk using them wholesale. We are also using two species of ash, beech, horse chestnut, two species of lime, southern beech, a disease-immune elm cultivar, Norway maple, sycamore and tulip tree. The odd willow has also been planted.

Good ground-maintenance practices can reduce the risk of decay getting established in the roots and base of trees and hence making them more likely to be brought down in gales. Keeping the base clear of grass so that mowers are not tempted to risk damaging bark by cutting close to the roots is important, as mechanical wounds are one of the ways that decay fungi may gain a foothold. You may notice that this is now done routinely in the Meadows by spraying round the base of the tree with herbicide.

MEADOWS SECURITY AND RELATED MATTERS

The following letter from Gordon Greenhill, Head of Community Safety, City of Edinburgh Council, dated 22 March 2007, was received by Councillor Wigglesworth, who has kindly given permission to publish it here.

Thank you for your enquiry concerning the impact of dispersal from pubs in the Cowgate and Grassmarket on the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links. I note there have been dispersal problems at 1am and 3am, with the subsequent vandalism and violence.

Recent steps to deal with these issues, along with problems of litter and cleanliness, have included a pilot project by the Council's Environmental Wardens involving night-time patrols. The Environmental Wardens have carried out 38 high visibility patrols of the Meadows between 11pm and 3am over the last five weeks. The patrols have been carried out with the use of their minibus equipped with flashing lights. The Wardens would report any ongoing incidents to the Police, but this has not been necessary to date.

Our discussions with Lothian and Borders Police indicate that the area is currently given an appropriate level of policing in relation to the number of incidents in the area. To complement the existing Police attention, improved lighting poles are to be installed in the Meadows, particularly in the area of the new play park. These can be used for portable CCTV cameras, to gain evidence when hotspots of antisocial behaviour or crime become apparent, and will enable better policing of the area.

I hope this information is useful to you, however, should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Tree trouble

Many of our members, and members of the public, were upset and angry over the removal of trees from Middle Meadow Walk by the Quartermile development: Councillor Cairns has kindly given permission to reprint the letter below addressed to him, dated 15 March 2007, from Andrea McHugh, Head of Service, Environment, City of Edinburgh Council, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, EH8 8BG.

REMOVAL OF TREES AT MIDDLE MEADOW WALK

I refer to your letter dated 6 December 2006 in which you raised a number of concerns brought to your attention in relation to the removal of trees from Middle Meadow Walk, as part of the Quartermile development.

I understand completely that the removal of trees is a contentious issue and since I received your enquiry I have instructed that a full investigation be carried out by senior staff from this Department into this particular situation in order that any necessary lessons can be learned for the future.

I am in no doubt that staff from our Parks section did not wish to see any trees removed nor the wall taken down from Middle Meadow Walk. However, the original Planning Consent agreed to the removal of the trees and the walls, albeit subject to negotiation between the Quartermile Developers and staff from Parks as to the precise nature of the tree replacement programme and appropriate community consultation. Unfortunately, the community consultation did not take place; staff from Parks had provided Quartermile with information on community groups, tree wardens etc and had assumed that Quartermile would carry out the consultation. As we now know, this consultation did not take place, resulting in many dissatisfied local people. In all future major tree removal programmes, whether or not these are being carried out by the Council or a developer, staff from the Council will ensure that the community consultation takes place.

Work at Quartermile continues at a pace. Already 168 new trees have been planted on the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links which I am sure you will agree is to be welcomed. I have asked staff from Parks to ensure that regular updates on the works associated with the Quartermile Development are given to Friends of the Meadows and other interested groups.

I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for the breakdown in communication which occurred between the Council, Quartermile and the public and I will be working to ensure that this does not happen again. If you wish to discuss this with me, please contact me on 0131 529 7132.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO (and more) *from a letter to the Scotsman, 7 July 1900*

SIR: I am very loath indeed, but am forced attention to the state of these public parks. From a recreative point of view it is the wish of every member of the Town Council that the most should be made of these central open spaces. What do we find? On the West Meadows, where cricket is indulged in, Italian rye grass is growing in all its luxuriance to a length of 18 inches (I enclose a sample). [*shock, horror! Ed.*]

THE PAVILION CAFÉ in the Meadows

This delightful venue is now open again after the winter break, seven days a week, early till late. The Café serves fresh hot and cold vegetarian food, teas, coffee, smoothies, and a selection of tasty cakes: 10% discount for FOMBL members.

THE MAGNET PLAY PARK

This park has now been completed, and was formally opened on Friday 16 March. The previous play area at East Meadows has been restored to park-land. It is designed for children up to 10 years.

It is now time to renew your membership – and to invite others to join FOMBL. Please see and use the enclosed forms.



Bruce's Bit

Our Community Policeman, PC 3484-A Bruce Burt, now works at St Leonard's Police Station (Tel. 0131 662 5795). If you need advice or help, or would like to pass on information, please contact him. To receive his regular newsletter, email bruce.burt@lbp.pnn.police.uk. To report a minor crime (e.g. theft, graffiti), ring 0131 311 3131, or email <http://www.online.police.uk/english/default.asp>. Obviously when there is a danger to life and limb, 999 is appropriate. Any lighting faults on lamp-posts should be reported to Clarence (0800 23 23 23; or email clarence@edinburgh.gov.uk): please quote the serial number of the faulty lamp post.

Of particular concern in Bruce's recent newsletters has been the following: At 13.45 hrs [*nb in broad daylight*] on Wednesday 14th March near to Middle Meadow Walk a youth was assaulted by other youths. The first suspect is described as male, white, 16-18 years of age, 5'10", thin build, short hair side and back and spiked on the top, grey, white band horizontal top and jeans. Suspect number 2 is described as only male, 16-18 years.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE MEADOWS

May 5-6 BUPA FUN RUN (Junior run 5th May, Senior 6th May)

In aid of various charities, mainly medical.

May 13 MEADOWS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA concert at the Queen's Hall: 7.45 p.m.

in association with Marie Curie Cancer Care <http://www.meadowsorchestra.org.uk>; <http://www.mariecurie.org.uk>
Mendelssohn: Hebrides Overture; John McLeod: Clarinet Concerto; Beethoven Eroica Symphony
PETER EVANS conductor; JEAN JOHNSON clarinet. Tickets from the Queen's Hall Box Office (668 2019) or Heather Goodare (0131 228 6998): £9.00 (concessions £7.00, students £3.50, children £1.00).

May 30-June 3 KEITH TAYLOR FUN FAIR

June 7-10 TASTE OF EDINBURGH

A Taste Festival sponsored by Channel Four, described as the Chelsea Flower Show for Food: 'stunning food prepared by famous chefs, super drink and outstanding entertainment'. Featuring a Whisky Connoisseurs Lounge and a local Producers' Market. Entry £12 (premium £25, VIP £40). Visit [channel4.com/taste of Edinburgh](http://channel4.com/tasteofEdinburgh).

June 16 MOONWALK <http://walkthewalk.org/events/mw-edinburgh/moonwalk-edinburgh.html>

At this event 10,000 women clad in decorative bras are expected to join a 26-mile overnight procession through Edinburgh, raising money for breast cancer charities. The marathon starts and finishes in a giant pink tent in the Meadows. As well as raising money, the event is also aimed at helping women to adopt healthier life-styles.

July 21 CUT THE CARBON

A march organized by Christian Aid, ending in the Meadows near the Tennis Courts with a small stage-based event.

August 2, 6-10 BRUNTSFIELD SHORT HOLE GOLF CLUB championship

Inches Trophy – Short Hole Open Golf Championship (2 and 6-10 August from 6.00 p.m. each evening: entry fee £3.00) Entries and enquiries for Club membership to the Secretary, Fraser Gordon (tel. 0131 445 2705): 27 Buckstone Dell, Edinburgh EH10 6PG. **New members very welcome.**

August 5 - September 2 THE LADY BOYS OF BANGKOK and CIRCUS

August 11 & 12 POETRY TENT

A poetry tent set up beside a bus from Colchester Arts Centre. Poets will perform between 12 noon and 12 midnight.

Committee members (please address all correspondence to the Secretary)

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

Secretary and Acting Treasurer: Hamish McKenzie, 7 Bruntsfield Terrace, EH10 4EX

Tel. 229 6055. Email: Hamish@bruntsfield7.freeserve.co.uk

Membership Secretary: Josephine Scott, 31/8 Salisbury Road, EH16 5AA Tel. 667 3386. Email: jo.scott@ukonline.co.uk

Committee: Dennis Gallagher, Norma Burnett, Tim Puntis, Antonia Dickson, Neil Roger, Ann Wigglesworth, Hilary McDowell

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

Newsletter Editor: Heather Goodare, 3 Glengyle Terrace, EH3 9LL Tel. 228 6998. hm.goodare@virgin.net

Webmaster: Eric Oakes, email: erico@miscorp.ed.ac.uk. *Website:* <http://www.fombi.com>