



Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links

Issue 02 : Spring 2002

Newsletter

The Park is a monumental disgrace;

trees are dying from neglect; grass is brown and bare; benches and buildings are vandalised; ruins are covered with graffiti, and the lakes are choked with weeds and mud.”

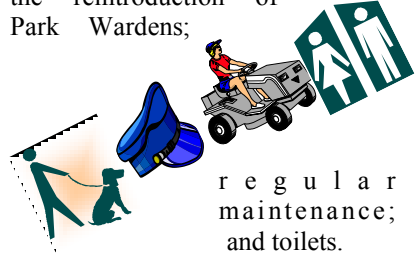
That is a quote from the 1978 Annual Report to the Community Trustees of one City-Centre Park, who now manage a budget of \$5,000,000 annually, so you will guess that it does not refer to the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links, or any other Park in the UK, but then again maybe it could.

We all recognise, that over the last few decades, many Parks throughout the UK have become rundown, neglected and vandalised. The implications are that there is no sense of community ownership, very little concern or interest, and even less initiative—but we are here to prove that is not so.

The major problem confronting our Parks since the 1980's is lack of funding for basic maintenance; for immediate repair of acts of vandalism; and for the force of Park Wardens who, with a fierce territorial imperative, protected and maintained the order and security of their Park as though it was their own garden.

This major problem remains with us in 2002. We now know that nothing promotes vandalism more than signs of neglect, and only if Parks are well maintained will people visit them. A recent survey asked people what would most improve their Parks, to encourage their use and enjoyment.

Four points stood out: the control of dogs and dog mess; the reintroduction of Park Wardens;



regular maintenance; and toilets.

Parks are part of our society's culture, and they reflect its values, as do our streets and our children, but politicians have given parks (not to mention streets and children) a very low priority for funding. The management of parks, until recently, has not been viewed as politically sexy as say health, housing, education, and employment, and yet it is a service to all of these.

Stop Press : Urgent

The Meadows & Bruntsfield Links
 next Meeting of 'Friends' will be the AGM at 7.30-pm on
Monday 17 June 2002
 at Sciennes Primary School
 Sciennes Road
 Edinburgh

Stop Press : Urgent

Archers' Hall Meeting ... At the Friends' meeting on 5 November 2001, Captain Younger, Secretary of the Royal Company of Archers, explained to us that the sport of archery has very early associations with the Meadows. The ancient Royal Company of Archers, or the King's Bodyguard, were, until late in the eighteenth century, without premises of their own. In 1776 they fued a piece of ground just north of the Boroughloch and there built the Archers' Hall on what is now Buccleuch Street. In order to raise money to pay for this hall, the archers for some years allowed it to be used on certain evenings as a tavern, but they eventually discontinued this arrangement, and now share only with a Bowling Club in the grounds behind Archers' Hall. The building was later restored and has a decorated façade with a large sculpted stone coat of arms above the entrance. It has housed a number of important and valuable paintings including the famous Raeburn Portrait of Doctor Nathaniel Spens in the Royal Company of Archers' uniform. The Company has long practised shooting at Leith Links and Holyrood Park as well as the East Meadows. A silver arrow presented to the Company in its early days by the Magistrates of Edinburgh, is still competed for annually at East Meadows, and the tradition of the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh presenting a 'riddle of claret' to the Archers was recently revived.

Peng Lee Yap

Office Bearers

Chair: Dr Peng Lee Yap, 5 Meadow Place, EH9 1JZ. Tel 229 0948
Secretary: Dr Chris Wigglesworth, 12 Leven Terrace, EH3 9LW. Tel 228 6335
Treasurer: Josephine Scott, 31/8 Salisbury Road, EH16 5AA. Tel 667 3386

Members—
Committee: Colin Christison, Rona Dunbar, David Rintoul, .
Newsletter: Audrey Rocco, John Simon.

Dedicating a Bench ...as a gift or memorial. The new black metal benches are now available from CEC Parks Department at £600 each, which includes delivery, installation, and a commemorative plaque. Contact Ken MacLeod 0131 529 7898 for more detail.

Dedicating a Tree ... as a gift or memorial. Dependent on girth, and species selected from a list, the cost would range from two to three inches at £44, up to seven to eight inches at £365. Contact Sheila Hogg 0131 529 7913 for more detail.

**Keep in touch - visit our Website on:
www.friendsofthemeadows.freeserve.co.uk**

The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh ... which dominates the north side of the Meadows, is moving away. No doubt, we will have to tolerate a long period of turmoil, while the clutter of the past 200 years of uncontrolled hospital development is transformed into an urban village of which Edinburgh can be proud.

We understand that much of the familiar outer structure of the older buildings will be preserved, with the exception of those monuments to reinforced concrete, built near the start of the last century, the Florence Nightingale Nurses Home and the Simpson's Memorial Maternity Pavilion, which sadly appear not to have withstood the tests of time.

Southside Capital Limited (a development consortium of Bank of Scotland, Kilmartin Property, and Taylor Woodrow), have presented proposals in outline to a group of 'Friends' invited to comment on their presentation at 40 George Street on March 28. We were reasonably impressed with their approach to the development but, as nothing had been committed to paper at the time, we found it difficult to comment constructively on details which melted away when observed too closely. However, Andrew Brooks (Development Director) assures us that they will publish a newsletter around mid May, to summarise their consultations with the communities involved thus far, and they look toward making a Planning Application very soon thereafter. Look out for a public presentation near you, (and look into **www.qmile.com** if you can).

The Meadows are obviously a considerable selling feature for this development, and 'Friends' are looking for some substantial and sustainable enhancement of that feature, as a planning gain from the impact of such a major development.

Park 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	0808 100 3366	Rubbish, 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, etc.
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

The Parks' Audit ... The Parks Department looks after Edinburgh's parks and green heritage. Recognising the importance that quality parks provide for citizens and visitors, the Department has embarked on an audit of all their one hundred and thirteen designated parks. This will form the basis of a strategy for the preservation of the City's green heritage and inform future decisions on upgrading, management and development of the parks network.

The Parks Strategy will incorporate existing strategies such as the Urban Forestry Strategy and the City's Biodiversity Action Plan. We will also be consulting principal partners such as Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Authority and Historic Scotland, as well as recognised interested groups within the city.

The Strategy will be designed to benefit the long-term sustainability and biodiversity of our parks and to promote:-

- Health and Therapeutic Benefits;
- Educational and Interpretive Benefits;
- Environmental and Economic Benefits;
- Social and Welfare Benefits.

The Parks Department is keen for local communities to develop a 'sense of ownership' of their parks and is therefore promoting a number of initiatives. The setting up of 'Parks Friends' groups provided a way for residents to play an active role in looking after their local green spaces, and to influence the Council's working strategy for Parks and Gardens.

Friends groups have, so far, been set up in eight areas including Cammo Park, Ravelston Park, Corstorphine Hill, Craiglockhart Woods and Nature Trail, Blackford Hill and the Hermitage, The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links, George V Park and Scotland Yard.

In order to help protect the biodiversity of Edinburgh's parks we need to find out a lot more about the wildlife that is making use of them. The Lothian Local Patch Project, run by the Lothian Wildlife Information Centre, provides an ideal way for you to help gather this information and we are working closely with the Centre to ensure that the results from the Local Patch Project are incorporated into the Parks' Audit.

Used by permission—Iain Park
Acting Parks Development Manager
City of Edinburgh Council

Our Friendly Tree ... a lime commemorating the founding of 'Friends of Parks', has been destroyed by vandals. The Parks Department have agreed to replace it in the Autumn, and to encase it in a protective metal cage.

Considered Croquet?... the contractors have now completed the major work of restoring the greens at Meadows West, and the club is now looking to build their membership.

Support in the Park

Golf

Rugby

Tennis

Frisbees

Cricket

Archery

Bowls

Jogging

Croquet

Football

Please respect the areas reserved for bowls, croquet, tennis, golf, cricket, and jogging. Do not abuse them by cycling, football, picnics BBQ's, etc. For Golfers the golden rule is play the game and replace the divots you dislodge, otherwise you are destroying the world's only free golf course.

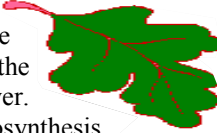
Health for Trees means Rhinoceroses and Giraffes ...

Trees for Health ... How can this be? It is a fact that trees have long been known for their health giving properties, and to enjoy this benefit we need to have plenty of healthy trees around. That is why they need Friends!

Trees aid recovery. Health studies indicate a rise in patient recovery rates where hospitals are located within woodland.

Trees reduce stress, not only from the aesthetic quality of the view, but indicators such as blood pressure, muscle tension, and electro activity of the brain, show marked reduction. Urban drivers also experience less stress when trees dominate their route.

Trees filter air. The leaf area of their canopy can be up to twelve times greater than the land surface they cover. Their leaves use photosynthesis to extract carbon dioxide from air, and in doing so they trap other pollutants harmful to our health, and release oxygenated air to our further benefit.



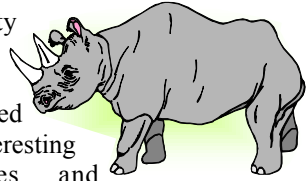
Trees provide shade from harmful UV rays. We should use sunscreen to fully protect ourselves against the risk of skin cancer, but one tree has a Sun Protection Factor of 6 to 10, and a dense wood of up to 100 trees may also reduce ozone depletion, which further defends us from UV rays.

David Rintoul

Meadows Festival ... its 22nd year dates are Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 June. Don't miss this massively popular event, and do visit our Friends of Meadows tent (kindly donated by our first commercial member, Keith Taylor of Taylor Amusements) and do bring your friends.

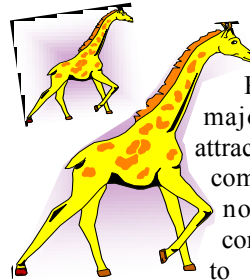
'Friends' started here last year with about ten members and we are now over one hundred and rising. The more members we have, the more we can achieve on their behalf.

Rhinoceroses and Giraffes ... Our 'Friends' meeting, at Barclay Church on 19th February 2002, was fortunate to be addressed by Stewart Tod, consultant architect and grandson of a builder engaged by F.T.Pilkington on the project of building this unique and impressive structure almost one hundred and fifty years previously.



Mr Tod used many interesting photo-slides and anecdotes to illustrate his engrossing lecture, and gave us a short conducted tour to point out some of the many fascinating features of the building.

It was interesting to note that architects having problems in sticking to budgets is not a new phenomenon in Edinburgh, the brief given was for £8000, but the bill received was considerably more than Mary Barclay's £10,000 legacy intended to cover the cost.



The Barclay Church was Pilkington's first major work and attracted a lot of comment at the time, not all of it complimentary it has to be said. One unkind critic described it as **"a collection of rhinoceroses and giraffes at a watering hole with their rumps backing onto the Links"**.

Poor old Pilkington never ventured anything as striking again, and I can never view it now, without thinking of that ridiculous description.

Update on Benches and Bins...

By the time this paper hits your doormat, there ought to be at least nine metal benches on the Links. Not as many as we hoped for—but the VAT man insisted on his cut of our grant. However, Parks Department has agreed to provide and install an additional six or seven for middle Meadow Walk, towards matching our investment.

About the same time, Environmental Services should be installing around twenty litter bins throughout the Meadows and Links, and we must do our best to see that they are used. Let's shame the slobs by our example – as you can now ease your back on a new bench.

So, what are we going to do now? Bring your ideas to the A.G.M.

PEOPLE NEED PARKS

Do you use the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links for recreation, dog walking, pram pushing, play, sport, or even just for lazing and relaxing?



AND PARKS NEED PEOPLE . . .

Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links is an association of Edinburgh citizens, with a particular interest in this area. We are especially keen to be involved, with the City of Edinburgh Recreation Department, in the planning for improvement of the landscape, facilities, and use of this unique and historic parkland.

To ensure all interests are fairly represented - **we need your ideas and input.**

PLEASE OBSERVE and SUPPORT



BBQs On Walkways Fouling On reserved sites & pitches



The 'Friends' Winter Meeting will be at St Thomas of Aquinas' School, Chalmers Street Edinburgh in November 2002
Date to be advised

Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links Membership

Forename:	Surname
Address	Postcode
Tel.	E/mail:
<p>I enclose Annual Subscription of £2 (individual) or £10 (organisation) £</p> <p>Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links'.</p> <p>Signature Date</p> <p>Please send completed form with SAE to: Mrs Jo Scott, 8 Salisbury Heights, 31 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh EH16 5AA</p>	