



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

NEWSLETTER 25 **Summer 2010**

Convener's Comment

The Meadows are not disposable

From a distance the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links look magnificent. They are a real asset to our beautiful Festival City. So it is sad that most of this newsletter has to be about current problems. But unless the Friends can encourage better management we are failing in our purpose and wasting everyone's time.

To barbecue, or not to barbecue? The argument has continued over the last few years between the traditionalists – 'we never did it' – and the trendies – 'young people enjoy it'. There has been uncertainty about the standing in law of parks management rules, and on the feasibility of enforcing any prohibition. But by now some things are obvious. Already this year you can see over 200 burnt patches - hundreds of square feet of turf. What is the point of time and money spent on trying to get a Green Flag, when what can be seen on the ground are black barbecue scars? Discreetly sited paving slabs, some of them within metres of signs prohibiting barbecues, have achieved no more than the advice on disposable barbecues to be careful. It will be a year before that grass has grown again.

The burnt areas have added to the bare earth patches caused by last August and September's events. In spite of the decision of the May 09 Council meeting, there has been no evaluation of the impact of those events. Now it looks as though the whole of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links are being treated as disposable. But where will the Council get another park?

Before it is too late, the lighting of disposable barbecues on the grass must be banned. They are not designed to be used on grass, as is made clear in the accompanying instructions (see page 3). Senior officials have to enforce a 'no burning of the grass' policy, before any more of it is ruined. Audrey Simon, a FOMBL member, has documented overleaf the serious problems that arise. The concrete slabs have to be clearly signposted immediately: this should have been done when they were put down. Other properly maintained barbecue areas have to be seriously considered. Please tell your Councillors that the Meadows are not disposable!

Chris Wigglesworth

The Summer Meeting of Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links will be held on Thursday 24 June at 7.30 p.m. in the Croquet Pavilion, Leven Terrace. The speaker will be David Rimer, Veterinary Surgeon and Chairman of the Meadows Chamber Orchestra, on the subject of 'Fauna in the Meadows'.

All are welcome.

An item in the Spring 2010 Outlook proposed "that BBQs could be an 'improvement' to Bruntsfield Links" I would like to provide evidence that such provision, whether on the grass or slab areas, would be detrimental to the Meadows and Bruntsfield Golf Links and cause distress to local residents.



On summer weekends and evenings the smoke from countless BBQs wafts across the grass and over Melville Drive. On one evening 54 separate BBQ burn clusters were counted.



Each group of BBQers spreads across the grassed area jostling for space with those playing golf, cricket and football or just enjoying the sun (through a smoked haze) with a picnic or in the play parks, all more traditional uses for what is primarily a recreational area.



How are a few slabs going to cope with the current level of demand? One golf green already has a burn cluster, so what will prevent overspill in to areas set aside for less polluting, damaging and anti social activities? Consideration must be given to the residents whose homes surround the areas. Have they to put up with smoke all summer long wafting through their windows or are they expected to keep them shut? And what of traffic having to drive through this hazard. These scenes on sunny days are repeated multiple times across the grass and represents a blight in this historic area, and has it been conveniently forgotten that Edinburgh is a smokeless zone. Providing a few BBQ slabs will not address the issues of damage, pollution as documented here.



Right top - three of these trays were still very hot and the bricks did not stop burn marks.



Right bottom - at least this hot BBQ tray is now in the bin which luckily did not catch fire



Left - slabs like these ones placed within the fenced children's play park area on Bruntsfield Links are being proposed for BBQs.

Management Rules No 3/11 for Public Parks states fires and BBQs are prohibited. Instead of encouraging BBQ use by introducing slabs, a concentrated effort by Council Environmental and Health & Safety Teams, Police and Fire Service personnel should engage with the BBQers to enforce this bye-law using a fire extinguisher or fire blanket and then new signs put up saying 'BBQs will be extinguished' which local residents could refer to — the message will soon get through when they are asked to remove their food and the BBQ is immediately extinguished that.... "yes people do have the right of access and to roam the park, but they do not have the right to damage, destroy and pollute".

Rudrey J Simon, April 2010

Caution

IMPORTANT - READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY AND IN FULL BEFORE LIGHTING

This product generates extreme heat. Great care must therefore be taken with using, handling and disposal.

Use in a well ventilated area.

Never use indoors, in confined spaces, or in prohibited areas.

Never use lighter fluid or other flammable liquids on the barbecue.

Never place on a surface which is liable to be damaged. Never handle the barbecue while in use - it soon becomes very hot.

Always keep children and pets away from the barbecue and the barbecue area.

Do not refill. This barbecue is for single use only.

Immediately after you have finished cooking, extinguish completely with water and allow to cool before handling or moving. Remember the area beneath and around your instant barbecue will become extremely hot and will remain so for some time after use. Remember to dispose of your instant barbecue carefully and responsibly.

Barbecues: the burning issue

How to use a barbecue safely

These instructions are given with a 'fairly traded instant barbecue with stand' available in a local supermarket.

Please note that the 'stand' merely elevates the hot tray a minimal distance from the ground: the barbecue still has to be put on a hard surface, and **not on grass.**

A research project

Louise English, a film student at Napier University, is working on a research project about the Meadows, and would like your answers to the following questions:

1. In terms of conservation of the Meadows, how much power does Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links hold?

2. How important do you think the Meadows is to the residents of Edinburgh?

3. Do you think the Meadows should be further developed to make it more appealing to tourists?

Replies please to Louise by email:

Louise.english@live.co.uk

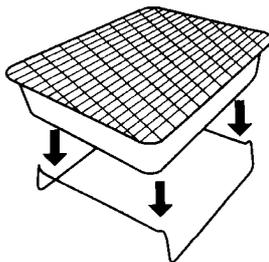
STOP PRESS

Our new 'big society' needs you!

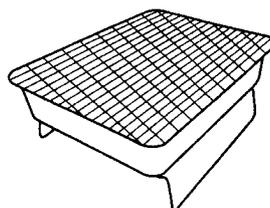
Some of our committee wish to retire, and we need new members to carry on this important work. Please volunteer at our AGM if you can.

Directions For Use

- Remove cardboard tray prior to use and dispose of this and other packaging carefully
- Do not remove starter paper from under the grill
- Always place your Instant Barbecue on the stand provided, and on a firm, non-flammable, heat resistant surface
- Do not use on picnic tables or directly on grass
- The Instant Barbecue has a specially impregnated starter which is positioned between the charcoal and the metal grill
- Drop a lighted match under one corner of the starter paper. Depending on the wind conditions it can take approximately 20 minutes for the flames to die down
- Do not start cooking until the charcoal has a coating of ash
- Occasionally during the cooking period, agitate the charcoal by tapping the grill tray with a cooking utensil to maintain heat
- Shelter from wind if necessary



- Place stand on an even non-flammable, heat resistant surface



- Place your barbecue on the stand and follow lighting instructions

Forthcoming events

The Red Bus Puppet Show 6-30 August

Urban Circus:

The Lady Boys of Bangkok 6-28 August

Fun Fair: Fringe Festival 11-29 August

Foodies at the Festival 28-30 August

Freshers' Festival 2010 23-24 September

The Meadows Chamber Orchestra

Conductor Robin Page

Violin Alexandra Wood

Queen's Hall, 10 October, 7.45 p.m.

Maxwell-Davies: Ojai Festival Overture

Sibelius: Violin Concerto

Nielsen: Symphony no. 1

Graffiti or artwork?

This pavement design appeared at the foot of Middle Meadow Walk. What do you think? Is it a tiresome defacement of a public space, or an interesting piece of art that should be respected and preserved? Do let us have your views.



Useful contacts

Mike Shields Community Parks Officer 0131 529 5126

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:** rapid response 0808 100 33 66

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

Environmental Manager: David Doig – david.doig@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel. 0131 529 5187

Complaints regarding Council vehicles driving on Links or Meadows:

Taskforce, Craigmillar Depot: 0131 664 8330

Graffiti: Adam Morton or Robert Davidson: email adam.morton2edinburgh.gov.uk or

Robert.davidson@edinburgh.gov.uk

FOMBL Committee members (NB new members needed!)

(please address all correspondence to the Secretary)

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