



Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links

Newsletter

Issue 03: Autumn 2002

Meadows & Bruntsfield Links Planning & Design Framework.....

providing recreational opportunities for an immediately contiguous population of more than 20,000, as well as serving a "Central Park" function for the entire City. The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links together comprise one of Edinburgh's premier parks. While this factor is recognised, the City Council, strongly supported by local community interest, raises the following issues:

- ① does this Premier Park serve its main functions effectively?
- ① are there any significant deficiencies, eg is the park an anachronism?
- ① is there scope for significant improvements - if so, what is the nature of the improvements needed?
- ① how can the park better fulfil its potential?

The above questions form the basis of the brief upon which Cairns Limited was appointed by the City of Edinburgh to undertake a survey and analysis of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links and prepare a planning and design framework.

From their rich historical background, and their dramatic setting with framed views of Arthur's Seat, the Castle, and Pentland Hills, The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links represents an asset of outstanding value to this City.

The following objectives are formulated as a result of consultations with Friends of The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links and others, as well as on the professional opinion of the Consultant .

- ① through a programme of enhancement and careful development of under used resource assets, elevate the park to Premier status
- ① through a programme of diversification, introduce new features and facilities, such that these may add to the interest and vitality of the park, and remove redundant structures
- ① through a programme of revenue generation secure a range of high quality franchised facilities such as restaurant, cafeteria, information centre, to be operated on a commercial basis, including changing/shower/restroom/ facilities
- ① establish highest quality design and maintenance standards for all park structures, facilities and landscape
- ① exploit the opportunities presented by the redevelopment of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary site by creating a new landscape setting for the park along the northern boundary, for more intensive use for passive activities by local residents.

Stop Press : Urgent

Next Meeting for 'Friends' will be at 6.00-pm on Wednesday 13 November 2002 at St Thomas of Aquin's School, Chalmers Street, Edinburgh

Urgent ; Stop Press

Quartermile: Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh Site:

Objections were submitted to the Planning Department of the City of Edinburgh Council on behalf of the Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links against the proposals for the re-development of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh site, pointing out that the proposed buildings were too high, too dense, and involved the demolition of too many historic buildings. Important views from the Meadows would undoubtedly be affected, and we disagreed with the Developers' conclusion that only one view would be adversely affected. There was no provision for increased transport and parking requirements, and they were even proposing a new path to cross the Meadows.

Fortunately, Historic Scotland, The Fine Arts Commissions, The Cockburn Association and other bodies, both private and public, had similar objections and Southside Capital Limited, (Developers of the Royal Infirmary site) withdrew their planning application for reconsideration. Your Commvenor and Secretary had a meeting with them on 18 October, and we will report on the outcome at our meeting on Wednesday 13 November 2002.

Peng Lee Yap

Skateboard Rink: You may by now have heard of the proposal to build a large purpose built concrete Skateboard Rink in the East Meadows area, as a 'wheels facility' for teenagers. This proposal, which has been rumoured for some time past, was officially presented as a report to a very poorly attended meeting of the Central Local Development Committee on Wednesday 23 October. Fortunately it was stalled by the very few councillors present, for further consideration and consultation. This presents an opportunity for Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links to formulate a response at our meeting on 13 November, when we will have Jim McKay (CEC Head of Leisure & Sport) to present recently formulated proposals for improvement and development of The Meadows & Links, and we particularly want to know what our members think of these proposed developments

Peng Lee Yap

["Speak now, or furever haud yer wheesht." editor]

Meadows Festival: held first week end in June as is customary, was very successful on at least four counts;

- (1) litter control was excellent, due to support of the local Task Force Team Manager, Ron Dymond
- (2) fairground vehicle access control was much improved by fencing and tracks supplied by the proprietor, Keith Taylor;
- (3) FMBL recruited at least 30 additional members, by just being there to inform and invite
- (4) the Organising Committee of The Meadows Festival managed to pull it off again

John Simon



A Word from Committee Member Colin Christison

Q) How did you first become involved in the Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links?

A) The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links lie in part of three Community Councils – Marchmont & Sciennes, Southside and Tollcross. I am a member of the Southside Community Council, and was pleased to be asked to contribute by my colleague Jo Scott, who is also the Treasurer and Membership Secretary of FoMBL.

Q) What are your earliest memories of the Meadows?

A) Walking through them every day when I was a student living in Marchmont in the early to mid 1970s. They have been important to me ever since, and I have been residing nearby again for about eleven years.

Q) What appeals most to you about the Meadows, and what is the role of the Friends?

A) I think the very diversity is what appeals, and its value to the city should not be underestimated or taken for granted.

When you think about it, there are so many matters concerning the Meadows which require thought and attention. Apart from the obvious trees, shrubs, and grass to preserve and replace, there are the monuments and pavilions, street furniture such as lamp posts, litter bins, and park benches to look after. The recreational use for walkers and joggers, and all the sporting activities (bowling, croquet, cricket, golf, putting, tennis, football) are important. Major work is required on the footpaths and drainage, and the play areas for children have to be improved. Tons of leaves have to be cleared every year. The impact of the planned redevelopment of the RIE site, with new flats and offices being proposed in an already densely populated area, as well as the problems caused by large scale events being staged on the Meadows, are topics of great concern and interest to all. The role of the Friends is to let local residents and businesses have their say in all these matters, and to liaise with the City Council and the Community Councils when required.

Q) What improvements would you like to see?

A) A bandstand in particular would enrich the Meadows enormously. There is great potential for all sorts of small music groups to entertain the public.

Generally, however, and this comment applies to every part of life – people should treat the Meadows with the respect which they deserve. There is too much thoughtlessness, negligence, and anti-social behaviour, which ultimately costs everyone, including the perpetrators. The Meadows are an important part of the city, one of its “lungs” if you like, and should be cherished.



A bandstand in particular
would enrich the Meadows
enormously.

Short Hole Golf Course: The Nine Hole Winter Course is now in use, and the Thirty Six Hole Summer course, which re-opens April 2003 is 'resting'.



A Date for your Diary...Christmas Lights 'switch on' by Marchmont and Sciennes Community Council

Date/Time: Saturday 14 Dec. 2002 at 4.00pm

Venue: Corner of Roseneath Street and Marchmont Crescent.

Followed by: Music and Carols in the German Church Chalmers Crescent .

Skateboard Provision....

Councillor Mike Pringle advises us that he has arranged for the report on 'Provision for Wheels Based Recreation in the City' to be re-presented at the Edinburgh South LDC Meeting on 18 November 2002 at 7.00 pm in Liberton High School.

This may be the last opportunity for Friends of The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links to consider this sensitive issue.

Reminder for Members...

The more members we have, the more influence we have.

If you have not already done so, please renew your membership now for 2002/2003

Open Meeting on Wednesday 13 November

6.00-pm— Tour and Talk on St Thomas' School
by Head Teacher— Marian Docherty

6.45-pm—Coffee

7.00-pm—Report on the Management Plans for
The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links
by City of Edinburgh Council Head of Leisure and Sport -
Jim McKay

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

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: Oliver Chapman; Colin Christison; Rona Dunbar;
 Dennis Gallagher; Hannah McKenzie
Newsletter: Audrey Rocca; John Simon.



**Keep in touch - visit our Website on:
www.friendsofthemedows.freereserve.co.uk**

Einburgh Festival Fringe:

passed without major damage to the Meadows, but this may have been due to a much reduced attendance because of the very wet weather. Conversely, the area occupied by the Chinese State Circus and the Ladyboys of Bangkok shows, was very badly damaged by their heavy lorries and the caravan village which appeared there, perhaps due to the very high cost of accommodation and difficulty in parking during the Festival period

We will be joining with the three local Community Councils around the Meadows in formally contacting relevant Councillors and Council Officials, to ask for strict conditions to be imposed on future use of the Meadows for large events. Restrictions might include a limitation of use to three weeks maximum, and a limitation on the number of caravans and other vehicles to be parked there. We would also require that more metal tracks should be laid down to reduce damage caused by both vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Do you have any further comments or suggestions to offer?

Peng Lee Yap

**FOR YOUR DIARY
The First 'Friends' Meeting of
2003 will be on Monday
3 March at 7.00-pm
in the Chapel of the
Old Royal Infirmary
Edinburgh**

Mobile Mast: In summer there was a second planning application for a mobile telephone mast, this time at the small triangle of land at the bottom of Marchmont Road. The Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links protested vigorously, as did the Marchmont and Sciennes Community Council and concerned local residents, and fortunately the mobile telephone company has withdrawn its proposal. However, members are asked to remain vigilant, and to call the attention of the Committee to any such Planning Applications that may come to their notice.

Peng Lee Yap

Accounts of FMBL for year to 31 March 2002

Income	£	Expenses	£
Subscriptions	256.00	Photocopying	
Donations	39.00	Laminating	
Grants (LDC)	5000.00	Display Board	
Bank Account Interest	6.29		
Total	£ 5301.29	Total	£ 19.11

Income Less Expenditure **£5282.18**: Bank Balance as at 31.03.2002 **£5282.18**

Josephine Scott—Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links Treasurer.

Declaration: *I find these accounts to be in order in terms of the materials presented to me*(Signed) *Brian Murdoch* 08.07.2002.

Déjà vu? How many noticed the obituaries of two famous men, who died earlier this year. Neither was a son of this city, but both had a contrasting impact here upon the Southside in the seventies..

Hamish Henderson (poet and folk singer) entertained from ‘Sandy Bell’s’ pub, and wrote songs to swell Southsiders’ hearts with joy. On the other hand, Prof. Sir Colin Buchanan (architect and town planner) from a chair in Imperial College, wrote a report which filled Southsiders’ hearts with despair.

Colin Buchanan is probably best remembered for his 1972 report on the traffic problems of Edinburgh. Had it been implemented The Pleasance would have been swept away by a link between the outer ring road (since built) and an inner one (for which the huge roundabout at the top of Leith Walk was intended). The inner ring would have swept through the Meadows to Tollcross on the line of the Melville Drive, but built on stilts above it, with access leading off to existing roads at Bruntsfield Links, and involved demolition of the Barclay Church!

To be fair, Buchanan confessed that he was not optimistic about its chances of being implemented, and thanks to sustained effort by local activists, his pessimism proved to be largely justified. Significantly however, it included an almost total ban on the admission of cars to the city centre, and special routes exclusively for buses and taxis - the latter has only been introduced fairly recently, and the former has now been resuscitated by means of a proposed road tax—so beware!

At this time The Meadows were seriously undervalued because they did not fit into the post-war Abercromby Plan, which had zoned areas for specific purposes e.g. George Square and its surroundings had been designated solely for ‘development’ by the University - not for recreation—and, as Georgian houses did not fit their needs, they pulled it down. Only when destruction threatened the Meadows, did a survey by local **Liberals** (an early exercise in community politics) demonstrate that they were the most intensively used of all Edinburgh’s parks, by people of all ages and for a wide variety of recreational purposes. The findings in fact only demonstrated what was obvious to anyone not blinded by Abercromby’s planning myopia.” - (The more things change, the more they remain the same).

You might assume that the recent conferring of Millenium Park status on the Meadows, The National Association as protect it from predation by don’t count on NPFA have no

*The law doth punish man or woman,
That steals the goose from off the common,
But lets the greater felon loose
That steals the common from the goose.
(Anti-enclosures rhymes 1700s)*

which appoints Playing Fields custodians, will all future planners, but it. Apparently,

objection to building a large concrete structure there, to accommodate a minority of young people who specialise in acrobatics on wheels, and they are content to sacrifice a few trees and some turf in that cause. After all, it won’t cost **them** anything!

John Simon

Volunteers **Welcome:**

engaged in attempts to we would like to do more and you feel that you would like to area of interest to you, please Members know. The same knowledge, or contacts, that willing to be consulted if the need



Although your Committee is constantly protect and improve the Meadows and Links, better, and might do so with more help. If be involved on some specific project or do not hesitate to let any of the Committee applies if you have some skill, or might be useful to us, and on which you are

Dr Peng Lee Yap,

Convenor Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links