



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

NEWSLETTER 40

Summer 2015

Convener's Comment

The health benefits of the Meadows

Get healthy! Come for a walk in the Meadows! We are delighted to publicize a new initiative, Ageing Well, by Edinburgh Leisure, funded by NHS Lothian. As they say, walking is one of the best ways to keep body and mind in good health. And if you walk in a group you meet new people and have a chance for a good 'blether'. This new scheme now runs **every Monday and Thursday morning**. Just come along to Summerhall (what used to be the 'Dick Vet' college beside the Meadows: meet at the front door) on any of those days for a **10.30 am start**. It's free, it's open to everyone over 50, and there will be qualified walk leaders to guide your every step. If you have any questions phone the Ageing Well team on 0131 458 2183. *See also 'How dirt makes you happy', p. 2.*

Events on the Meadows

We now know that the Ladyboys have given way to the Underbelly for prime position on the east Meadows during the Festival Fringe. At least a more reasonable rent is being charged, but we still have the problem of an event lasting a month rather than a fortnight, as in other Edinburgh parks. Underbelly will be making a presentation at the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership meeting at 6.00 p.m. on 8th June at the City Chambers: members of the public are welcome.

Urban bees

Biodiversity in the City is, as we all know, essential for the healthy survival of bees, which are so important for pollination. One thing we can do on the Meadows is to cultivate wild flowers, and Sarah Tolley of Greening our Street (www.greeningourstreet.btck.co.uk) has already done much to devise an interesting wild flower plot along North Meadow Walk alongside Lonsdale Terrace. Another member, Tim Duffy, has persuaded the Council to start a second plot alongside Leamington Walk. While Sarah has done a lot of turf lifting to release the soil, the Council has preferred to use herbicide to kill the grass in preparation for planting the second wild flower plot. Is this the best way to proceed? Could we not use the turf to repair bare patches? Sadly, this needs doing already this year, as a spell of exceptionally fine weather at Easter brought out the barbecue grass-burners in force even before the golfers had started playing on Bruntsfield Links. *Heather Goodare (Convener)*

The next meeting of FOMBL (AGM) will be on Friday 26 June at 7.30 p.m. at the Croquet Club, Leven Terrace, preceded at 6.30 pm by an introduction to croquet, for those who would like to try. Our speaker will be Fernando Andrade Miranda, who runs the Police Box at Middle Meadow Walk. He has a really interesting proposal for rejuvenating this corner of the Meadows, and will be outlining his plans, with a short video presentation.

The second half will be the usual AGM business, and an opportunity to raise any other issues. Refreshments start the meeting. *All are welcome: please spread the word.*

How dirt makes you happy

Everyone is welcome to join our team of volunteers, which meets on the last Saturday of each month to help tidy up in the Meadows, edging paths, 'feathering' trees, weeding under benches, seeding grass, and so on. Apparently soil microbes have been found to have antidepressant effects on the brain - without the side effects of antidepressants such as Prozac. True! Read all about it in <http://www.gardeningknowhow.com>, and contact Richard Ellis (rellis.consultancy@virgin.net) if you would like to be a volunteer. At the end of May we planted wild-flower seeds in hollow tree stumps: they should be flowering soon. Our plan for 27 June includes more of the same: do join us!

Mobility, Mood and Place

Researchers based at the University of Edinburgh and University of York are working on a project called 'Mobility, Mood and Place'. The aim of the project is to find out how older people's brain activity changes between urban environments, using a mobile EEG headset that records brain activity on the move. The researchers are looking for right-handed participants aged 65 and over who are able to walk without resting for about 15-20 minutes. This looks really interesting, and we have already had feedback from participants who found the experience enjoyable. If you'd like to take part, please contact Dr Sara Tilley 0131 651 5834 (email sara.tilley@ed.ac.uk).

Trees

What a gift -
to feel nothing at all today.
Not to be gripped in envy or resentment,
not to feel abandoned or betrayed.

Not even pride, or attachment, or fear
Just a quiet resignation
That everything is as it is
And the trees look beautiful today.

Jo McFarlane

One of the poems spoken by Jo at the recent mental health conference 'A Sense of Belonging'

Play-parks in the Meadows

The Magnet Play-park at the east end of the Meadows is hugely popular with people visiting it from many miles away and from local homes and schools. Among the attractive equipment there languishes an Archimedes Screw, installed in an unfortunate position. It is too near the sand. Small children work like ants filling it with the conveniently placed sand. The Archimedes Screw is a metal water feature, so sand is not its friend. The drain is bunged up with sand and when the council do switch the water on in the summer holidays the water drains off down the path - which many children then enjoy paddling in or damming.

It's not the only Archimedes Screw placed too close to sand, as there is one at Centre Parcs. Such a waste of money, when the set-up, which includes a raised metal channel, rubber dam and water wheel, could have been more of an educational example than it is. It could not be moved without great expense because it needs a water supply, and it is also firmly built into the play-park. Evidence that intelligent design may not exist! We hope that a tree will be planted in the empty decorative surround in the Magnet Play-park to match the other two blue surrounds that do have trees in them. The new Café at the Magnet Play-park still does not display a menu or opening times. We await developments.

Missing equipment

In the toddler play-park beside the tennis courts there two places for missing equipment, with rubber tiles already in place, but no equipment in it. It would be nice to have something on these spaces, perhaps a simple low balance beam for children to climb over or walk along in one and some tree-trunk stepping stones in the other. Would sponsorship be a good idea if there is no budget available?

Sometimes a young man is seen using the top of the swings for acrobatic exercise: one of many possible customers for adult gym equipment on the Meadows or Links, if we can ever get any. Meanwhile, the hedge around the tennis courts, which was cut hard back on its top and one side, is showing good signs of new leaf growth.

Linda Hendry

More about the toddlers' playground at the west end of the Meadows in our next newsletter. (Ed.)

Voluntary work

Meet our new FoMBL volunteer, diligently picking weeds from between the rubber pavers at the swings (*see article above*). Not a very systematic worker: he flies away when people want to use the swings. So work has also been started around the roundabout! Just as our human volunteers work for the reward of seeing a nicer park and a cup of coffee, the crow works for the reward of easier pickings - a diet of food found in the cracks.

Linda Hendry



General Maczek memorial project

After the sudden and very sad death of the Rt Hon Lord Fraser of Carmyllie QC, who came to talk about this idea at our AGM two years ago, there has obviously been a delay in implementing his plans, but they are now being driven forward again by his youngest daughter, Katie Fraser, together with Archie Mackay (former media adviser to Lord Fraser), and Roddy Harris (solicitor), who are also trustees of the General Stanislaw Maczek Memorial Trust.

Katie came to look round the Meadows with your Convener recently, and identified a suitable location for the proposed memorial bench. The plan is to depict General Maczek in a seated position, leaving space for the passing walker to sit beside him. The proposal is that the sculpture of Maczek should be designed by the Polish artist Bronislaw Krystof. The details need to be agreed with Council staff, but the Trust is now open for donations. Please circulate this information to your friends, and especially any of Polish origin. Donations can be made to the General Stanislaw Maczek Memorial Trust at RBS and other banks using the bank sort code 83-44-00 and account number 10810625. Or send a cheque to General Stanislaw Maczek Memorial Trust, c/o RHA, bto solicitors, 48 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5HS.

Advertisement drums

You will certainly have noticed three new structures in the Meadows, one near the west end of Melville Drive, the other two at the junction of Middle Meadow Walk and North Meadow Walk. In their own words, they are used 'to promote Edinburgh's theatre, arts and cultural events, **and to support local community issues**'. In fact, the sponsors, City Centre Posters, have not approached us to ask how they can support us, and as you know, there are five community noticeboards already in the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links.

The only comments we have had so far about these drums from members have been critical: people think they are out of place in the Meadows. What do you think? So far this is only a pilot project so your views count. Please let us know as soon as you can. Email convener@fombl.org.uk. This topic will be raised at the next meeting of the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership on 8th June at 6 pm at the City Chambers (members of the public are welcome, so do come along).

Forthcoming Events

Meadows Festival FOMBL will be having a stall at this well-loved festival, with funfair, on Sat/Sun 6-7 June. **Volunteers still needed** to man the stall: please contact Heather on 228 6998.

'Bare as you dare' bike ride in Edinburgh to protest against 'car culture'. The event, which last year attracted 30 scantily clad cyclists, takes off from Middle Meadow Walk at 2 pm on 13 June.

Archery competition: the Edinburgh Arrow This regular event will take place on Thursday 18th June, from 3 to 6 pm, on the Meadows.

Learning Disability Festival FOMBL will be taking a stall at this event, near the Pavilion, on Friday 19th June, 12.00 to 3pm.

Join In Sports Event organized by Edinburgh Leisure: Friday 26 June.

Golf in the Park 2015 on Bruntsfield Links: Saturday 4 July.

John Evans Fun Fair 6-16 August: on the east Meadows

Underbelly International Circus (east Meadows) 7-30 August

FOMBL voluntary work parties Saturday mornings 27 June, 25 July, 29 August, 26 September: meet at the Cricket Pavilion at 10.00 a.m. *All welcome.*

Meadows Chamber Orchestra The next concert of this orchestra will be on Saturday 13 October: for further details see their website: www.meadowsorchestra.org.uk.

Useful contacts

Mike Shields Community Parks Officer Tel.0131 529 5126; email: mike.shields@edinburgh.gov.uk

Community Policing Team: 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 www.scotland.police.uk.

Anti-social behaviour (24/7): 0131 529 7050; **Litter:** 0131 529 3030

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

David Doig South Neighbourhood Service Manager - Environment (with responsibility for roads, parks, green spaces, and street cleaning): email david.doig@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel. 0131 529 5187

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

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

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

Task Force Manager (responsible for street cleaning and maintenance): Rab Farquhar

Graffiti: report to 0131 200 2000 or email operationdivide@lbp.pnn.police.uk

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

Environmental Warden team leader: Paul Baxter Tel. 07786 174183

People Against Litter (PAL): *please contact* <http://www.peopleagainstlitter.org/>. *If you wish to help, you only need to commit to picking up one piece of litter a day.*

Greening our Street: www.greeningourstreet.btck.co.uk

FOMBL Committee

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