



# **Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links**

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organization (SCIO) SC045955

## **NEWSLETTER 46 Summer 2017**

### **Convener's Comment**

#### **Events on the Meadows**

We were alarmed to discover that this year the Urban Circus (Underbelly) have managed to secure a three-year contract for a pitch on the Meadows during the Fringe lasting 33 days in all, in spite of the Council's consultations last year showing that 60% of local residents thought that the present length of events was 'too long' - this before it was actually extended to a period longer than ever before.

Although this particular show seems to be of high quality, this does not alter the fact that it contains large and heavy plant that would be better on a hard-standing surface. Members may care to inspect the site, which still shows signs of wear and tear from last year. Some of the furrows are due to the underlying drainage structures, but others show the impact of large vehicles. We continue to campaign for events on the Meadows to last only 15 days, as in other Edinburgh parks, which gives the grass a chance to regrow instead of having to be re-seeded. For comparison, have a look at the south part of the 'events site', which hosted a funfair for only a fortnight, and has recovered well.

#### **Toilets**

Yes, it does seem absurd, doesn't it, that in this day and age we should be lobbying for decent toilets on the Meadows! You may remember a year or two ago several public toilets in the city were closed, but although the few we still have were also threatened, we managed to save them, by persistent campaigning. However, all we did was to save those that existed, not build new ones. Yet this is the issue that keeps on coming up again and again, particularly with parents of young children, cricketers and footballers, all of whom have to share one small unisex toilet with the staff and customers of the Pavilion café. This is simply not good enough. The nearest toilet is at the north end of Middle Meadow Walk, and is down some steps, so is not accessible for disabled people. At the moment we are lobbying for a feasibility study to see if the existing drainage at the Pavilion will be able to cope with re-built toilets. Please support our campaign through our new councillors.

#### **Jawbones**

You have to laugh, don't you? There is no other way to respond to the delay in restoring these treasured items. Graeme Cruickshank has been collecting the satirical posters that have been appearing around the site, and has written them up for your delight (see page 3).

#### **Next public meeting: AGM**

Our next public meeting (our AGM) will be on Friday 23 June at 7.30 p.m. at the Croquet Pavilion, preceded by a chance to try your hand at croquet (come along any time after 6.00 p.m.) Refreshments start the meeting, and our speaker this year will be Tommy Sheppard, who at the time of writing is still campaigning to be re-elected as our local Westminster MP for the SNP. As a registered charity we are of course not involved with party politics, but we need to let our local politicians know about local issues where we may need their help. Do come along and put your questions to Tommy. Also, if you feel you would like to join the Committee, please get in touch *now*. We need new members.

*Heather Goodare*

## **A new community garden**

The wildflower plot alongside North Meadow Walk, near Lonsdale Terrace, was installed four years ago by a community group keen to promote biodiversity in the city. The next large project is currently under way: a small community garden and orchard, designed by Lynn Hill and supported by Edinburgh Parks and FoMBL. With intergenerational funding from the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership, we have commissioned raised beds, which are being built by the Grassmarket community workshop, who are also currently making a noticeboard for us.



## **Apples and potatoes**

Phase 1 involves clearing the ground: the cleared spaces have been planted with potatoes by children from Sciennes Primary School. We have also planted a little orchard, donated by Trees for Cities. The Co-Op will provide funds for trees at a later stage. Phase 2 will unfold in the autumn, when the children will harvest the potatoes and the workshop team will install the raised beds. We have made good progress with the surrounding flower beds, and are already planting them up with help from FoMBL volunteers.

The public has responded to this garden project with enthusiasm; we have 150 people on our mailing list, and Sciennes parents, other groups, and passers-by all pitch in to help. Many thanks, too, to Mike Shields and his team for approval to use the site, and a delivery

of compost. It will all be put to good use. If you would like to help install our garden, we would be delighted: contact [greeningourstreet@gmail.com](mailto:greeningourstreet@gmail.com) or check our Twitter site #LauristonGreen.

*Sarah Tolley*

## **Trip to Graham Bell's Garden: 13 May**

Sitting in the dappled shade with the sound of passing birds, it's easy to forget that you're in a domestic garden. That this garden also produces tons of food every year is even more surprising, especially given its size: one fifth of an acre. Behind this balance of wildlife and productivity is 'permaculture', a design process which focuses on reducing inputs and maximising benefit for humans and the wider ecosystem. The garden is run by Graham Bell and his wife Nancy, who kindly showed all forty of us around. Most of us were from FoMBL, as well as the Edinburgh Student Housing Co-op, Greening Our Street, the Permaculture Community Classroom, and Space to Grow.

### **Permaculture: what is it?**

Soon after arriving, we were sent on a mission to explore: observation is a key principle of permaculture. We then reconvened for a more thorough introduction from Graham, and a heavy shower, which sent us running for our waterproofs. As we struggled to hear over the rain, Graham explained his motivation and design processes. Suddenly, the weather slackened and we sat in glorious sunshine as the birds and bugs came back out. The garden flooded with rich smells and felt even more alive after some much-needed watering.

We broke for a lunch of produce from the garden prepared by Nancy and some wonderful volunteers. After re-fuelling with chilli, broth, salads, and even a kind of kimchi, we had a more formal tour. Graham and Nancy talked us through the specific plans, plants, and placements they used to create such an effective garden in terms of food production and biodiversity.

After the tour, they left us to find our own way round, looking at the plant nursery, solar panels, ponds, and other innovative features. Sitting in the sun in this magical forest garden I saw

how Graham and Nancy had built their dream, and hope to take the lessons from their example into my own garden, as well as our shared green spaces around the city.

This trip received funding from the Permaculture Association, Edinburgh Student Housing Co-op, Space to Grow, and FoMBL, meaning it was free on the day to our visitors. If you'd like to support further projects or have any ideas for trips please get in touch with us. *Joe Boyle*



## **Satire on the Meadows**

The months tick away, the years roll by, and still our beloved Jawbone Arch remains posted as 'missing'. The despondency felt by many at this sad situation received a little lightening of the gloom this past winter, in the form of a series of well-produced posters, which were fixed to the fencing adjacent to the Jawbones' former location. This had been erected to block Jawbone Walk from pedestrian use while work was in progress, thereby forcing those taking the eastern long-cut to negotiate an increasingly muddy trail.

The problem was exacerbated by the lack of progress being made towards the conservation and restoration of the Jawbones, which many found hugely frustrating. In response, some wit then produced a series of fake 'wanted' posters, neatly encased in plastic sheaths, which were used to adorn the said fencing. This is how they read:

**'Lost!** Four historically important jawbones donated in 1886 by [Shetland and] Fair Isle knitters. Disappeared sometime during 2014, and again in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Also lost ~ bunch of jolly Vikings, a knitting pattern book, and instructions on how to make a 10-yard stretch of path completely safe for pedestrian use. If found, please return to City of Edinburgh Council Department of Health, Sanity, and Magical Creatures. '

**'Lost!** Baby heron, disappeared during first flying lessons in Jawbone Project No Go Area. Answers to 'Sid'. If found, please return to Blackford Pond.'

**'Lost!** Short section of path. Disappeared in 2014, sighted briefly in 2015, but lost again since then. We believe it's still alive, somewhere. If found, please return to City of Edinburgh Council Procrastination Department. '

**'Lost!** Pair of cute but mischievous baby orang-utans. Disappeared while playing in the Jawbone Project No-Go Area. Answer to 'Trumpella' and 'Donaldo'. If found, please return to the Zoo.'

**'Lost!** Box of approx. 125 pet mice accidentally dropped while transiting Jawbone Safety-First No-Go Project Area in 2014. 23 recovered so far, remainder still at large. Most not yet named. If you find the mice, or the path, please devise suitable names and return to City of Edinburgh Council, Department of Short Path Minor Repairs and Slight Delays.'

These notices were illustrated with coloured photos of the cute participants (yes, even those cuddly Vikings). A sixth poster showed a diagram of the structure or organisation of 'The Plot', under five headings. The caption read:

**'Lost!** Apparently the Council have genuinely lost the plot here. Right at this spot. They had

plans. Great plans. In 2014, they dreamed a dream. Truly superb path idea, they had. A real walkable walkway, with ultra-safe modernised Jawbones and everything. '

All very jolly, but although the walkway opened in the Spring, there is still no sign of the Jawbones. When will we see them again? Rather worryingly, the low-level lighting cables have been removed. The anonymous satirist had one more question to pose: 'Anyone for a pint?' I guess I'll drink to that ... when the Jawbones return.

*Graeme Cruickshank*

## **Forthcoming Events**

**Meadows Chamber Orchestra:** next concert Saturday 3 June, 7.45 pm Queen's Hall. Two piano concertos (Mozart no. 23, K488, and Poulenc): soloists Peter Evans and Jack Westwell. Also 'The Rev. Norman McLeod's Dance' by Lyell Cresswell, and Ravel's Mother Goose Suite. Conductor Peter Evans.

**Meadows Festival:** Saturday and Sunday 3-4 June, from 10.00 a.m. Come along and bring your friends to see our stall and sample willow weaving. Huge fun to be had by all.

**World Naked Bike Ride 2017:** cycle ride (minimal clothing) starting and ending in the Meadows: 10 June.

**Edinburgh Frontrunners' Pride Run:** 17 June - 10 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. Associated Cake and Bake sale to raise money for charity.

**Brooks Run Signature Tour:** 24 June. Promotional product sampling for running shoes: 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.

**Underbelly Ltd Urban Circus:** 4-26 August. An event similar to last year's.

**John Evans Fun Fair:** 10-20 August. Open daily 1.00 p.m. - 10.00 p.m. No admission charge.

**Woodland Tribe:** A new venture at the back of the Pavilion Cafe involving constructive play for children: 11-16 August. See website [www://woodlandtribe.weebly.com](http://www://woodlandtribe.weebly.com). Parents welcome to join in.

**Learning Disabilities Week Festival:** 18 August. A community gala to celebrate successes and contributions made by those with a learning disability.

**Edinburgh Festival of Chariots 2017:** 21 August. 4.00-8.00 p.m. Singing, dancing and a picnic.

**World Short Hole golf pairs championship for Lord Provost:** 1 September, near the Golf Tavern: Charity golf event in aid of St Catharine's Homeless Project, Alzheimers Scotland, and Mindroom. Presentation of the Lord Provost Rosebowl. The event is open to all.

**Army Reserve in the Park:** 28 September. Annual Army stall in the Meadows.

**Next public meeting: AGM on Friday 23 June, 7.30 pm at the Croquet Club. Speaker Tommy Sheppard. Come along and ask questions, voice your concerns, and elect a new Board of Trustees. Anyone willing to serve as a Trustee please contact the Secretary, Sarah Tolley, by email ([secretary@fombl.org.uk](mailto:secretary@fombl.org.uk)).**

## **Useful Contacts**

**Mike Shields** Parks And Greenspace Officer South East Tel. 0131 529 5126; email: [mike.shields@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:mike.shields@edinburgh.gov.uk)

**Police:** 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** is <http://www.scotland.police.uk>.

**Anti-social behaviour (24/7):** Tel. 0131 529 7050; **Litter:** 0131 608 1100

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

**Forestry Service:** email [forestry.service@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:forestry.service@edinburgh.gov.uk). Tel. 0131 311 7079

**Road repairs and development:** Alan Dunlop, Area Roads Manager: Tel. 0131 529 3719; email [alan.dunlop@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:alan.dunlop@edinburgh.gov.uk)

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

**Task Force Manager** (responsible for street cleaning and grounds maintenance) Rab Farquhar: Tel. 07786110377; email [rab.farquhar@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:rab.farquhar@edinburgh.gov.uk)

**Graffiti:** report to 0131 200 2000 or email [operationdivide@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:operationdivide@lbp.pnn.police.uk)

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

**Environmental Warden team leader:** Paul Baxter Tel. 0131 529 2198

**People Against Litter (PAL):** please contact <http://www.peopleagainstlitter.org/>

### **FoMBL Trustees**

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