



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organization (SCIO) SC045955

NEWSLETTER 50

Autumn 2018

Editor's comment

Moving on

Since our AGM in June two of our Trustees have sadly had to step down: Andy Devenport has not been well, and has reluctantly resigned from the position of Convener. We all know that he has been carrying much responsibility, with various duties in the local community, particularly the Canal Society as well as FOMBL, and also the Meadows Festival, and even Tollcross Community Council. Somehow he manages to fit in a full-time job at the Lyceum Theatre on top of everything else. But the time has come for him to stand back for a while and take care of himself for a change. We thank him warmly for all he has done for the group. He will remain as a Trustee, and we know that he will continue to contribute as best he can. We are lucky indeed that Jim Orr, our Treasurer, has agreed to take on the additional duties of Convener: we are very grateful to him. I need hardly add that if anyone wishes to volunteer for Trustee duty Jim would be very glad to hear from him or her.

Yusef Samari has also decided that he can no longer continue with his PhD at Edinburgh University, and very sadly this means that his work as Volunteer Co-ordinator has also come to an end. We are really sorry about this, as he has been doing an excellent job over the past year. However, we do have other people who are able to carry on with the voluntary work, and though she does not wish to carry a title, Alison Carr is willing to co-ordinate the work on Saturday mornings monthly for the foreseeable future. Alison is a really keen worker and will inspire you all!

The Golf Tavern planning application

In our last newsletter we alerted members to the current application for a second starter's hut on the Links, thinking that it could not be granted since there were 68 objections to the proposal, and only 7 in favour. It also contravenes the 1991 Confirmation Act, forbidding any buildings on the Meadows or Links. However, the ways of the Planning Department are strange indeed, and the Council has actually decided in favour of the application, even though 'There is a minor infringement of policy Des4 [Development Design] on making a positive impact to its surroundings. However, this is a small scale development and the infringement is minor and does not justify refusal.' (Ann Lee, Planning and Transport Department). Apparently however a final decision has not yet been made. Also, there is certainly a problem with the proposed location of the hut which will severely damage the mature tree it will be sited under. The ways of the Council are indeed at times impenetrable.

Heather Goodare (Editor)

Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

The Autumn Public Meeting will be held on Friday 2nd November at 7.30 p.m.
preceded by refreshments
in Archers' Hall, Buccleuch Street.

The speaker will be Tommy Sheppard, MP for Edinburgh East. All are welcome.

Do come along to this beautiful hall and put questions to Tommy: he has done a good deal to involve the community in local issues, and we expect that he will give us a very interesting talk.



Puppy training on the Links (just one of the many activities to be found in this beautiful park)

The Jawbones

Sadly, our beloved Jawbones have still not been restored, and the site looks somewhat messy. The situation is that a couple of months ago EWH (Edinburgh World Heritage) secured additional funding to proceed with the restoration of the jawbones following the failure of the original bone specialist. The hold-up since then has been in getting the City of Edinburgh Council to appoint the whalebone specialist. He is the only one in the UK and therefore can't be procured through the normal competitive tender process. A special waiver report is required to be signed off at the highest level. Once this is done the bones will go to Shropshire for six months or so to be fully restored, and then will come back for reinstallation. The railings, which have partly gone missing, will be re-installed after the erection of the Jawbones, along with a new information board. Based on this information it is hoped that full reinstatement will be completed before the summer of 2019.

Neil Roger



The discovery of Old Wooden Water Pipes

In the summer of 2018, news came of the discovery of old wooden water pipes in George Square. They were unearthed during operations to lay a new system of pipes. This news was not hugely surprising, as such pipes had come to light in the 1980s on the west side of the Square, a couple of which were saved and stored in the City Museums' collections. The unexpected aspect of this latest find was that the pipes ran along the north side of the Square, at right angles to the path of the water supply from Comiston Springs, via the Meadows, to the reservoir on Castlehill.

The pile of pipes was spotted by Gordon Thomas of the University's Department of Archaeology, who mentioned it to a former colleague, Pat Storey. That was fortunate, because Pat recalled a lecture which I had given a few years back to the University Retired Staff Association, called 'Edinburgh's Social Conscience', which included the history of the city's water supply. I had shown an image that day of two such pipes which had been unearthed in the 19th century and which are yet displayed in Huntly House, which contains the local history Museum of Edinburgh. They formed part of my remit during my fifteen-year stint as Local Historian with the City Museums.

Upon learning of the discovery, I beetled across the Meadows next morning to the north-west corner of the Square to see the impressive pile for myself. The City Archaeologist was aware of the situation, and had instructed AOC Archaeology, a local company, to keep a



Photo © Pat Storey

lookout for anything unusual. Asking the contractors what was to become of the pipes, I was told that they were bound for landfill. This seemed a cruel fate, but there was no obvious alternative. They belonged to the City, but with the Museums Department already having several, both on display and in store, there were not the facilities to accommodate any more, and to see to their long-term conservation. I tried the National Museum of Scotland, but their Science and Technology Department also had an example, and made the same response. A couple were taken away by AOC for scientific analysis, but with no plans to retain them. On the historical side, the first water main to serve Edinburgh was laid in 1681, and the supply was finally turned on in 1720. The pipes were originally of lead, but that material was expensive and heavy to handle, so they were replaced with ones of wood during the period 1759-79, using whole tree-trunks hollowed through their entire length. Elm was selected because of its excellent damp-repellent qualities. These pipes were gradually replaced by ones of cast-iron of a wider diameter from 1790 onwards.

Somehow, it just did not seem right that a part of Edinburgh's heritage should quite literally be thrown out with the garbage. The trouble was, even if I could save them from destruction, what could be done with them? Then an idea occurred ~ just a couple of hundred yards up the inclined section of Middle Meadow Walk, at its junction with Teviot Place, there stands the old Police Box which for the past few years has been occupied by fellow FoMBL member Fernando Miranda, functioning as a takeaway for his tasty Brazilian snacks. He also rents the plot of land adjacent, in which he has created a children's garden, and a stage for public performances. The next little plot of empty land also comes within his domain.

Fernando was agreeable to giving the pipes a home there, at least temporarily. The contractors, Vital Energi, were also happy to co-operate. I prepared some text and illustrations, which Fernando mounted on an information board. Over the course of the summer, thousands of people stopped to look and read about the pipes, as Fernando could witness from his premises. To add further interest, he even got a circulation system

going whereby water once more flowed through the pipes! Further developments are planned.

To expand upon their history, I gave talks beside the pipes to a group of FoMBLers on 22nd September, which was repeated to members of the Old Edinburgh Club on the 26th. The future of these pipes remains uncertain, but even if it means watching them crumble away, that surely is preferable to have them suffer the undignified fate for which they were heading. In the meantime, many people from near and far have been able to enjoy a close-up view of this important aspect of Edinburgh's past.

Graeme Cruickshank

Richard Ellis Memorial Service

A service was held in Greyfriars Kirk on 14 September to celebrate the life of former Morningside resident Richard Ellis, who had died in Lincoln on 3 July, having moved down from Scotland only a short while before. Several hundred people were present, reflecting some of the many facets of Richard's busy life, and tributes were paid by representatives of the Ptarmigan Mountaineering Club, the English Speaking Board, NHS Education and, more informally, by his son Charlie. Richard had worked with numerous organizations, including Anti Slavery International, the National Trust for Scotland, the British Council, Edinburgh University's New College, the Scottish Exam Board, and Edinburgh South Liberal Democrats. Throughout the long years when he, along with his wife Grace and children Charlie and Victoria, lived in their quirky, rambling old house in Jordan Lane, Richard was a valued member of the Morningside Heritage Association, of Morningside Community Council and of course of FOMBL.

A few years ago he started our volunteer group, which went from strength to strength. We need to carry on this good work in Richard's memory, and to make sure that we continue to maintain the Meadows and Links in an acceptable manner.

Bridget Stevens

PROJECTS

FOMBL have long been directly involved in managing, obtaining funding for and coordinating projects to improve the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links.

The Council spent a significant sum last year on our behalf (around £15k). Some of this was spent on outdoor gym equipment such as lift up bars and exercise bikes. (covered below) as well as playground equipment.

The following list gives you an idea of the many projects that we are progressing to keep the Meadows and Links the treasured places that they are.

INFORMATION LECTERNS and BOARDS

With funding coming via the council from a share of Underbelly income made during the Festival in 2017, the Prince Albert Victor Sundial lectern was installed this year along with the Helen Acquiroff information board. Two more boards will be erected at the Masons' Pillars, in the West Meadows, and at the Nelson Pillars at the East entrance, using the same funding source. Furthermore, Edinburgh University have provided a grant of very nearly £1000 for a lectern to inform people about the old Royal Infirmary site (which is now Quartermile and Edinburgh University).

RAILINGS

We have also spent some of the above funds painting railings, but this has temporarily ceased due to the very sad death of the painter we contracted to do the work, Mark McCathie. We are now obtaining further quotes to carry on with this project.

THE GREEN HUT and direction plates

On the Links, the historic green hut, outside the Golf Tavern, was repaired and repainted earlier in the year by the same painter after FOMBL requested funding from CEC Parks and Green Space manager and then managed the project. New plates to mark the locations of the tees and direction of play on the short hole golf course have been delivered following the same process as above. These will be installed next spring.. These projects were requested by green keeper Jimmy Robertson and supported by FOMBL and CEC.

OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT

After a successful first-phase installation of three pieces of outdoor gym equipment another three items have been ordered and will be installed towards the end of the year. The long-term plan agreed with Parks manager Mike Shields is to establish a fitness trail with three groups of equipment, which would be linked by a running route as well as being placed to serve all areas of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links rather than grouping them all in one place. The present sites are at Bruntsfield South Links, West Meadows near the sundial and East Meadows near the tennis courts. It is hoped that a further three items of equipment can be installed next year subject to further funding.

PLAYGROUNDS

A significant achievement has been the installation of new play equipment for children under five. FOMBL instigated and helped to procure new play equipment at the West Links playground. We also worked with CEC parks to repaint all the existing equipment, provide a new bench and new soft surfacing.

This year, with funding requested by FOMBL, new play equipment was installed at the 'toddler' playground at East Meadows. This has proved to be a great success. FOMBL have also instigated the installation of replacement self-closing gates and new 'NO DOGS' notices. It is hoped that more funding will be forthcoming from the Council for further new equipment and playground improvements during 2019.

TREES AND WILDFLOWER MEADOWS

In the spring a new wildflower meadow was established at South Links. This will be managed by FOMBL volunteers and hopefully seeded again this autumn. Over 11 young trees at South Links were cleared of weeds at their bases and mulched to 90 cms from the trunks. It is hoped to continue this work next year along with a programme of watering during dry spells. The wildflower meadow at Leamington Walk will be extended with help and funding from the Central Scotland Green Network Trust, who plan to provide a pollinated trail alongside the John Muir Way. FOMBL have been asked to assist with plug planting.



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General Maczek Walk

Some of you will remember the enthusiasm for a memorial bench to be constructed on the Links in honour of General Stanislaw Maczek, who fought in three campaigns in the Second World War, commanding the First Polish Armoured Division. As part of the Allied Forces, the Division played a vital role in the Normandy fighting. It then advanced through France into Belgium and Holland, liberating many grateful citizens in these countries. You will recall that Lord Fraser initiated the campaign for a bench, but sadly died only a few days after he had addressed our AGM. For reasons we still find it difficult to follow, the Council's lawyers decided that it would not be appropriate to install a bench on the Links.

However, the same bench is now being installed in the Edinburgh City Chambers Quadrangle on 3 November, with speeches and a concert in the Main Council Chamber. Although we are of course very pleased that the bench now has such a prestigious position, we still feel that we should like some sort of memorial on the Links, which was where General Maczek used to walk his disabled daughter. At the same time we are trying to find names for some of the paths that don't at the moment have them. So having a General Maczek Walk makes a lot of sense. We have identified a path that goes from Leamington Walk to the Croquet Club, and the Polish Consul together with Sylwia Spooner from the Consulate came and looked at the path recently, confirming that they are happy about it. They also generously offered to buy tulip bulbs to plant in two tubs at the north end of the path: apparently there is a special Dutch bulb named after General Maczek. The Street Naming office of the Council has given permission for the path to be named, and will now put in hand the making of the signs, so we are planning a spring ceremony towards the end of April, when the bulbs will be flowering. A date will be given in the next newsletter.

Forthcoming events

Meadows Chamber Orchestra:

Saturday 29 September 2018 7.45pm in Inverleith St Serf's church,

with Gordon Bragg as guest conductor, and Fraser Kelman, oboe.

Schubert: Overture to *Rosamunde*; Op. 26 (D 644)

Strauss: Oboe Concerto in D major

Sibelius Symphony No. 3 in C major Op 52

Saturday 17th November 2018 7.45pm in Inverleith St Serf's Church

Peter Evans conductor

Dave Wilson horn Haydn: Symphony No. 88 in G major Hob. 1:88

Ben Gilmore violin Strauss: Horn Concerto No. 1 Op. 11

Philip Higham cello Brahms: Concerto for Violin and Cello, Op. 102

Useful Contacts

Mike Shields, Parks and Greenspace Officer South East Tel. 0131 529 5126; email:

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 (Edinburgh Council): Tel. 0131 529 7050; **Environmental services** 0131 200 2000;

South Office: 0131 529 5051 **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. Tel. 0131 311 7079

Road repairs and development: Alan Dunlop, Senior Transport Team Leader: Tel. 0131 529 3719; email: alan.dunlop@edinburgh.gov.uk

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

Tel. 0131 664 8330 or 07786 110377; email: rab.farquhar@edinburgh.gov.uk

Graffiti: report to 0131 200 2000 or Police 101 if persistent

Family and household support service manager: Kathy Evans (tackling anti-social behaviour and joint working with the police) email: kathy.evans@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel. 0131 529 5106

Environmental Warden team leader: Paul Baxter Tel. 0131 529 5204; or 608 1100

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

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