

INVERLEITH NEWS

INVERLEITH NEWS Issue 25
Autumn 2005

AGM NOTICE, 7 NOVEMBER 2005

REPORT ON THE YEAR

INVERLEITH SOCIETY CASES

TRAFFIC ISSUES

RBGE NEWS

INVERLEITH SOCIETY WEBSITE

INVERLEITH PARK, 1914

TANFIELD WORKS, 1938

INVERLEITH MEMORIES

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES



AGM NOTICE

**MONDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2005
AT 7.00PM
LECTURE THEATRE,
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN,
20A INVERLEITH ROW**

The 32nd AGM of the Inverleith Society will be held on Monday 7 November at 7.00pm (doors open 6.45pm). Copies of last year's minutes and accounts will be available before the meeting begins. After the AGM there will be a talk by

NEIL HYND

(FORMER REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR HISTORIC SCOTLAND)

on the Stirling Castle Tapestries

The committee would like to thank the Regius Keeper for allowing us to use the Lecture Theatre.

Report on the Year 2004 - 05

Rather than look back, the Committee feels it is important to look ahead this year, and outline two proposals that will have a major impact on the Inverleith area. Only sketchy details are available at present, but it is important to start thinking about the proposals, which can then be discussed further at the AGM.

New Voting System for next Council Elections

The system for electing councillors will change at the next Council elections, expected in 2007. Presently each of 58 wards of about 6000 electors votes for one councillor. The Inverleith Society area includes parts of two wards: Ward 17, Stockbridge, Councillor Dixon, and Ward 11, Trinity, Councillor Jackson.

The Executive in the Scottish Parliament has decided to introduce proportional representation for Local Councils and has chosen the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system. Much bigger areas of about 24,000 electors will elect four councillors to represent the whole area. The Inverleith area is proposed to be in one large ward bounded to the north by Ferry Road, stretching from Warriston in the east to Blackhall in the west. At the time of writing, the proposed ward configurations are apparently out for public consultation by the Boundary Commission, although the Society has not been consulted. We are indebted to Councillor Jackson for this information, though any errors or omissions are ours.

Community Council Representation

The ward changes tie in closely with the second concern. The Inverleith area is not part of an

existing Community Council - we fill a gap between Stockbridge Community Council to the south-west and Trinity Community Council to the north. The work of the Inverleith Society covers some of the responsibilities of a Community Council, with the major differences being the absence of formal electoral procedures and open meetings, and the Society not being a statutory consultee on City proposals. The Council would like the entire city to be covered by Community Councils, and has proposed that our area be split between Stockbridge and Trinity Community Councils, with Inverleith Row and Inverleith Place the boundaries. The Society's Committee does not think that this would benefit the Inverleith area.

It would seem we are left with three choices: to become our own Community Council; to join Stockbridge Community Council; or to join Trinity Community Council.

The issue of Community Council status has been raised at previous AGMs, but has never been greatly explored and never with urgency. The Society's Committee members individually prefer to constrain their roles to that of amenity society members. Given the low level of interest in undertaking the role of Community Councillor the first option - establishing an Inverleith Community Council - does not seem viable. Given the new ward boundaries, the least-worst option, the Committee feels, would be for the entire area to ask to join Stockbridge Community Council. However, this is a major development and the Committee feels it should be discussed at the AGM.

Pippa Leary

Inverleith Society Cases

Trinity Park House

One which has come to an unhappy conclusion is the Cala Homes scheme to replace the four-storey 1970s offices recently occupied by the NHS Common Services Agency. The proposals, by Richard Murphy Architects, were originally for over 290 flats in a high-rise development, in some areas ten storeys high. Apart from scale, a major issue was the removal of about 20 mature trees, including unusual specimens, in spite of their protected status. Many objected to the proposed red brick, not a common material in the area. The local community, led by the Trinity Park Residents Association, actively opposed the plans, and Planning Permission was refused at the end of 2004.

A modified application was made this year, reducing the number of flats to 256, and the maximum height to (a still overbearing) seven storeys, and agreeing to relocate the rare Madonna tree. While an improvement, it will still be a massive development replacing what is now a discreet if shabby building. Again the residents campaigned, the Council receiving over 100 objections, but it was passed at a meeting on 27 July 2005. This illustrates the priorities of the Planning Department, to increase housing density within the city to preserve greenfield sites.

Standard Life Offices

At the south end of our area further developments are planned at Tanfield. Built and opened only 15 years ago, the office has recently closed, allowing local residents to claim back some of their parking - there has been a detectable improvement in Eildon Street. So what



View of Trinity Park House at Goldenacre, soon to be developed with a seven-storey building.

will happen to this young white elephant? Attempts to sell the building for £25m early this year appear to have been abandoned due to disappointing offers, and it has been taken off the market. There is speculation that Standard Life may itself apply for a change of use to residential with existing buildings cleared to increase its value.

Inverleith Park Skateboard Park

The most contentious proposal in Inverleith has been that of the skateboard park/wheeled sports facility in Inverleith Park. The earlier proposal for the former pitch and putt site has been dropped in favour of the site near the pavilion on the right as you enter the park from the Botanic Garden. This has been used for many years by a children's football club and there was concern that this valuable recreational group would be left without a playing field or clubhouse, but the Council has now offered the club a suitable alternative.

A properly managed skatepark, with supervision and facilities such as toilets, would be supported by some local residents, although many others do

not have confidence in the Council's ability to supervise such a facility, particularly as there is no budget for maintenance or management. Of still more concern was the news that the proposed facility would be one of the largest in Europe and an international competition standard sports arena. Major sporting events need support facilities similar to Meadowbank, with parking, changing accommodation, catering, toilets, etc; these are not available at Inverleith, nor would we wish the character of the park to be completely changed to accommodate them.

On 16 February 2005 the Planning Committee requested a visit for Councillors to the park and a public hearing, held on 16 March. As a result the Committee asked for more information on noise levels, full details of what is proposed for the site, and details of the 'masterplan' for Inverleith Park. As we go to press in mid August no further reports have been submitted but it is unlikely that the project will go away. The Inverleith Society is included on the list of local bodies to be consulted.

Bangholm Terrace Flats

The Inverleith Society Committee has objected to the proposals by Heriot's to replace three groundsmen's houses with a development of 27 flats, and an additional new house for a groundsman and equipment storage. Bangholm Terrace is already congested with parked cars and a further 27 cars using the street to access their flats will cause more problems. The Committee sees no justification for the development, which appears to be geared towards generating capital; after all, if the objective were to replace the groundsmen's houses with updated accommodation this could easily be done without introducing the complication of the 27 flats.



Inverleith Row entrance to Standard Life Tanfield building, now closed. Its future is uncertain.

7 Inverleith Row

Also known as Arboretum House, this Category B listed, two and a half storey, detached house is on the south side of the East Gate of the Botanic. Its open position makes it prominent in the streetscape of Inverleith Row. Permission was granted to turn the single family house into five 'houses' for short-term rent.

Considerable internal alterations are required to meet the need for additional staircases, bathrooms and kitchens, but interestingly, permission has also been granted for external alterations. On the north-west façade, a second storey is permitted on the existing extension with modern blue glass windows, clearly visible from the street. Residents who have encountered difficulty in obtaining permission for any changes to their listed houses may like to be aware of this apparent change in approach of the Planning Committee. At the time of going to press, the works are on hold while a legal agreement covering developer contribution to the City Car Club is worked out.

Marian McIntyre

Traffic Issues in Inverleith

2005 has been another busy year for consideration of traffic, congestion and parking issues. These are considered in more detail below but in brief the state of play is that the congestion charge proposals have come and gone, major progress has been made on the extension of the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), with some consultation-related progress on the bus lane in Inverleith Row, and the Central Edinburgh Traffic Management (CETM) plans are in the process of being implemented.

Congestion Charge

Maybe this past year could be characterised as a 'win some, lose some' year. As you will remember, Edinburgh voters came down heavily, two to one, against the proposed £2 congestion charge. In the absence of a Plan B, that would seem to be the final decision on that issue, for the time being at least.



Controlled Parking Zone

Discussion of the regulation of parking in the Inverleith area has been an active topic for nearly ten years now but this year we may be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. With the issuing in August of the Report by the Reporter conducting the Public Hearing into the proposals for the extension of the CPZ, real progress is being made. The Hearing was held in April with specific times allocated for evidence from local people about local issues. Now four months later



Bus lane sign, as proposed for Goldenacre end of Inverleith Row.

the Reporter has produced his recommendations to the City. Unfortunately the production of the Report and the City's response thereto, and the publication of Inverleith News are running concurrently. So though I have information on the timetable of the Report's findings becoming public I do not have information on the Report's substance to pass on.

As I understand it, by the end of August the City officials will have considered the Report, briefed our elected representatives and prepared a response. The main points will be covered by the press on Friday 2 September with the report and response submitted to the Executive Council on 6 September. The documents are then likely to be referred to the nine-member Environmental Quality Scrutiny Panel, then to be returned to the full Council, or back to the Executive, for consideration on 28 September. Implementation remains likely to be in the spring of financial year 2006-07.



Inverleith Row looking north. Extension of the Controlled Parking Zone entails removal of parking on the west side.

Bus lane on Inverleith Row

Plans for the changes to the Goldenacre end of Inverleith Row are proceeding through the City Development Department. These include the introduction of short stay parking bays and a northbound bus lane on Inverleith Row and amendments to the waiting, loading and unloading restrictions. These proposed changes have caused considerable concern, particularly to the shopkeepers in Goldenacre, who face loss of free parking and considerable reduction in number of parking places. At the time of going to press a consultation meeting between the responsible city official and the shopkeepers was being arranged.



New Canonmills intersection, traffic lights replacing roundabout.

Central Edinburgh Traffic Management Plans

For Inverleith the manifestation of the CETM has been the change of the Canonmills roundabout into a traffic-light controlled intersection. It is early days yet but my observation based on walking down Inverleith Row and up Brandon Terrace on my way to work is that filtering through a traffic-light controlled intersection produces longer and more frequent queues of traffic than in the roundabout days. This limited evidence is independently confirmed by a Warriston Crescent resident relating that access is now much easier for them: drivers of stationary cars waiting for the lights to change are obliging in letting vehicles in and out.

Pippa Leary

RBGE News

When the plan for a Visitor Centre and Gateway at the west entrance to the Botanic Gardens was mooted three years ago it was understood that raising funds would take time. Thirteen million pounds would be needed to pay for the imaginative design produced by London-based architectural company, Edward Cullinan, who won the design competition to create the centre. In June 2005 the Scottish Executive announced that it would contribute £2 million, giving a welcome boost to fund-raising. The centre will play an important role in the Garden's continuing development for it is to be Scotland's National Biodiversity Centre, providing information and education on all aspects of biodiversity. When it becomes yearly more apparent that to survive we must find more sustainable ways of living, the pivotal role of biodiversity is obvious. The importance of plants in our lives is clear – they

provide food, fossil fuel, a breathable atmosphere and recycling services. In fact biodiversity could not exist without the food chain provided by plants.

There are still many regions of the world where the biodiversity present has not been charted. Scientists from all over the world, including teams from the Botanic Gardens here, are trying to fill the gaps. Without records of flora found worldwide our natural heritage cannot be presented fully. Protecting biodiversity is essential if we are to manage to find more sustainable ways of living and start to tackle climate change.

The Gateway Centre's main role will be to pull together information from experts worldwide and pass this on to the public. There is no doubt that there is generally great interest in,



The Gateway Centre from the north-west, Arboretum Place in the foreground.

and wish for knowledge of, the environment. By providing free admission to Scotland's National Centre for Biodiversity at an accessible venue, both understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity will be nurtured. There will be live interpretation, personal interaction and a range of communication media present in the centre. The building itself has been designed and will be built and run as a model of sustainability. It is intended that the inside exhibit will merge with the garden outside.

An informed public will be in a better position to bring relevant pressure on the political debate which is necessary to protect our planet's finite resources. This Centre will certainly be a large step forward.

Reopening of the Palm House

In March this year the spectacular Temperate Palm House (designed by Robert Matheson, 1858) was re-opened after a three year project. While the 150 year old façade remains the same, the interior has been opened up to allow visitors space to look around and see individual plants. Sandstone from Clashach quarry north of Elgin has been used on the floor, and iron benches and reclaimed wood give the interior a more modern feel. The Palm House is now the starting point for the gardens' new (paying) Windows on the World Experience.

Alison Gordon

Inverleith Society Website

The Inverleith Society has moved into the cyber age. Look at our website: www.inverleith-society.org.uk
Feedback welcome!

INVERLEITH SOCIETY

The Inverleith Society was founded in 1974 to encourage the preservation and improvement of the Inverleith district of Edinburgh. It is an amateur society, not a formal Community Council, but enjoys good links with local Council and Council officials. The boundaries are from the Ferry Road in the north to Lionheart's Bridge and the Water of Leith in the south, and from East Petrie Avenue/Inverleith Park on the west to The Waterloo Archway on the east (also East Inverleith).

The Inverleith Society is working on your behalf, monitoring planning applications, traffic proposals and general amenity issues. Our influence is enhanced by increasing the number of our members. If you live in this area, please consider joining the Society - the annual membership fee is only £3.00 per household (£2.00 for older citizens).

The Society produces an annual newsletter - *Inverleith News* - which is delivered by volunteers to all addresses in our area. Members receive the Annual Report and Audited Accounts at the AGM of the Society each autumn, and can also attend occasional social events organised by the Society.

The affairs of the Society are run by the Executive Committee of between 8 and 12 persons, elected at the AGM (Executive Members). If you wish to get in touch with the Society please contact any member of the Committee or email to info@inverleith-society.org.uk.

Inverleith Park, 1914

This description is from the City of Edinburgh Report on Public Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces, 1914, by John W M'Hattie, Superintendent of Parks and Gardens. At 61 acres it was the fourth largest in the city, after the Braids, Blackford Hill, Saughtonhall Park and the Meadows. The area had previously been farm lands belonging to Inverleith House (the House itself, with the Arboretum, was acquired by the Royal Botanic Garden in 1877).

'The ground, with Farm Buildings, was purchased from Mr Charles H. A. F. C. E. J. J. Rocheid of Inverleith at a cost of £33,500. Entry to the greater portion of the ground was at Whitsunday 1889. Entry to the remainder – being the farm buildings, field to the south thereof, and two roadways – was at Martinmas 1899. The works undertaken were mainly for Roadways, Ride, and Drains, planting and laying out Grounds, New Greenhouses, alterations of Farm Buildings, and construction of Pavilion, &c. The Expenses connected with the acquisition of the Property were £226 7s 7d, and £12,659 6s 11d has been spent on the works above specified.

'This Park has been kept in good condition ... The Hothouses and Nursery are in good order, producing large quantities of plants, trees, and shrubs, which are distributed and planted in the different Parks, Gardens and open spaces in the City. There are two gymnasia, one for boys and one for girls: two Bowling Greens, four Tennis Courts, and two Golf Courses; also a Ride for Horse Riding exercise. Football, Cricket, and Shinty are permitted, and there is a good Shelter

– Ladies' and Gentlemen's Cloakroom, and Pavilion for Football and Cricket ... A portion of the Pavilion is used as a Shelter by the old men frequenting the Park. Games, books and magazines are provided, and much appreciated.

'The Pond has been supplied with fresh water from the water main, so that the weeds, which were for a time a source of trouble and expense, have to a great extent been removed. There is now a fine sheet of clear water which is used for Model Yachting and water fowl.'

There follows a detailed set of accounts, including some revenue from bowling greens and tennis courts. Elsewhere there are further details. The gymnasium was used by 180 children per day, May to September, totalling 23,940 children in the year. Play was free on both the 18 and the 9 hole golf courses, each attracting over 30,000 people a year. There were 28 football pitches, with 80 home clubs, 784 matches and 17,248 players registered for the season. The cricket pitch had four clubs, and 29 matches. Rugby football, rounders and skating were also permitted. Music was provided on Friday evenings in June. At this date, just before the Great War, there were no 'garden allotments' at Inverleith, though a total of 186 are listed elsewhere in the city. There is also an entry for the Rocheid Path Ground, 1.75 acres, donated by the Governors of Fettes Trust in October 1894.

For further reference, there is a later undated report (c. 1937), Edinburgh's Open Spaces, by Alexander Bruce, City Transport Department, though it adds little for Inverleith. See also chapter 11 in Joyce M Wallace, Canonmills and Inverleith (Edinburgh 1994), for details of the gates and monuments in the park.

Tanfield works, 1938

At a time when the future of the Standard Life Tanfield buildings is again under discussion, it is interesting to be reminded of Tanfield's heyday as the premises of one of Edinburgh's great printing firms. The picture below (original in colour) is from an advertisement for Morrison & Gibb in the Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directory for 1938-39, which was in fact itself printed by that firm. The head office and works were at Tanfield, but there was also a London office at Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. The Tanfield office proudly boasted 'Telephone - 25184 – three lines'!

The accompanying text explains that it is 'an aerial view of our new works at Tanfield, Edinburgh, showing the large extension added to cope with our ever-expanding business' – the extension is shown in lighter colour at the rear of the older buildings. 'Covering almost two acres of manufacturing floor space, and laid out with a view to increased efficiency in all departments, these extensions have been equipped with special plant to meet the demands of Modern Publicity and mark the opening of our second century of Progressive Printing Practice. May we quote for your printing requirements?'

Andrew Fraser



Tanfield Works in 1938

Inverleith Memories

The following excerpts are taken from the long out of print *A Picture of Health* by Constance Hardy (Milngavie, 1987). The author (1911-2004), a doctor herself, was married to Dr Ekke Kuenssberg. She was born and brought up in Inverleith and lived and worked in the area most of her life.

‘We lived near the Botanic Garden, but at that time handbags and umbrellas had to be left at the gates in case rare horticultural specimens were smuggled out in them. For many years this ban extended to prams and go-carts, and what couldn’t one have smuggled out in a baby’s long clothes, worn for nearly six months? They were a woolly vest, a bodice, a barracoat made of flannel and decorated with feather stitching, a cotton petticoat, a dress, a jacket and an enormous shawl. No wonder these infants always appeared to grizzle: they must have lived in a permanent state of thirst and sweat rash ...

‘The house that we moved to in 1920 [19 Howard Place] stood on a street that passed a large cemetery, so that funerals were frequent. One heard the clapping of horses’ hooves, and rushed to the window. According to income or importance, either two or four magnificently plumed black horses with foam-flecked chests harnessed to splendid bowed necks by a bearing rein so that they could not rush it, drew a glass hearse, decorated with rich black carvings and two top-hatted gentlemen on a box. Inside, the flower-covered coffin lay like a jewel, sometimes covered in purple felt, sometimes made in oak with fine brass fittings. Not too rarely it was

small and white, and you knew this might be Ada or Gerty, and reality drew nearer ...’

‘By 1945 one lucky day in a quiet crescent, I found a house that had been used and misused as an Air Raid Warden’s Post [15 Warriston Crescent]. We were no longer threatened by bombing raids and it stood empty, the wardens now checking on blackouts from the streets alone instead of standing by for fire-fighting and emergency. We were still all feeling our way in the dark, possibly with dimmed torches, but had got quite good at it, as we passed another wraith or a solid lamp-post in the blackness. Inside, the house was piled high with dirty plaster dust from battered walls, mixed with soot that had slithered from the fireplaces. The wardens hadn’t bothered about housekeeping. Plumbing was *primaeval*, and partially blocked; the lighting, worn-out gas brackets that had long ceased to function. Over the door was a notice saying ‘Headquarters Harry’, and Harry’s men had worked by torchlight behind closed and not very adequate shutters which obviously they had never opened. There was even a non-functioning telephone on a long string: they had knocked a hole between two walls so that they could pass it through in case of incapacitation.

I went up to argue about licenses, and met the usual stone wall. However, medicals held a little clout in this, and after I had pointed out to an endless series of petty and pettier officials that a doctor could not practice from an unlit home with no source of hot water and blocked lavatories, they grudgingly gave a license for

£250. With help from the bank, the house was purchased as a non-functioning problem from the Civil Defence for a manageable sum. It seemed a monumental millstone at the time, but, in retrospect, was the snip of the century ...'

'History is about people, and you find yourself as a connecting thread. In one lifetime, the changes amaze!

In my childhood, as we walked the streets of the poorer quarters of Edinburgh, we saw conditions as normal that would pull up any passer-by nowadays. The old were bowed, shuffling along in splayed shoes, their smelling clothes often soaked through, their mumbling toothless jaws suddenly widening in a wild cackle. Yet they rarely lost their wit, though there was little to be witty about.

The middle-aged might show the bowed legs, the pigeon chests, the knobbed skulls of infantile rickets, the curved spines of tuberculosis, the dragging shrivelled limbs of poliomyelitis, sometimes shackled by enormous metal splints and an ugly raised boot to match one limb with another. The limbless rarely had any replacement at all, perhaps a peg leg replacing the amputation following accident or war injury, a hook replacing a hand.

The children might be pale and grizzling, wearing layers of adherent clothing, and often unshod. They had the yellow gum of eternal colds around their mouths and noses, and faced a row of ferocious infectious diseases yet to come, with their after-effects delaying their attack for later life. There were the eternal penalties of overcrowding: bugs, fleas, impetigo, scabies, erysipelas, recurrent diarrhoeas, and the inheritance of venereal disease from their progenitors. Little children might be seen on

crutches, like the last boy following the Pied Piper of Hamelin. When, in the city, did we last see a Long John Silver? ...'

'When our youngest son was a month old, in the drenching August of 1948, the river rose and flooded us all. Neighbours had kept a tame duck and had removed a stone in their garden wall to let it out for a swim, but it had always preferred land life. Forty-eight hours of constant rain swirled the river through the hole and the gardens of many of the neighbours, including that of the duck's owners, (who had eventually eaten it and were away on holiday), and we all had a backwash into our houses. Warned overnight by the police, we had lifted movables on to tables in the basement, and left candles to light if the electricity failed. In the morning we heard a gentle clanking and, descending the basement stairs, found an infant's potty like a gondola gently rocking on the dark grey surge. We rescued all our candles and some cold breakfast and paddled upstairs again for a picnic. We also collected some refugees who had been washed out of the basements where they lived along the road. When we came back it was to find a candlelit floor. It happened to be my birthday, and the children had considered this a specially arranged celebration.

It all caused a lot of smelly excitement, especially when they brought home lavish accounts of the debris floating in other people's areas. Ours still held the errant pot, which rotated slowly until one of the firemen who came to pump us out sank it with his giant boot. The house smelt dank for a long time ...'

Local Representatives



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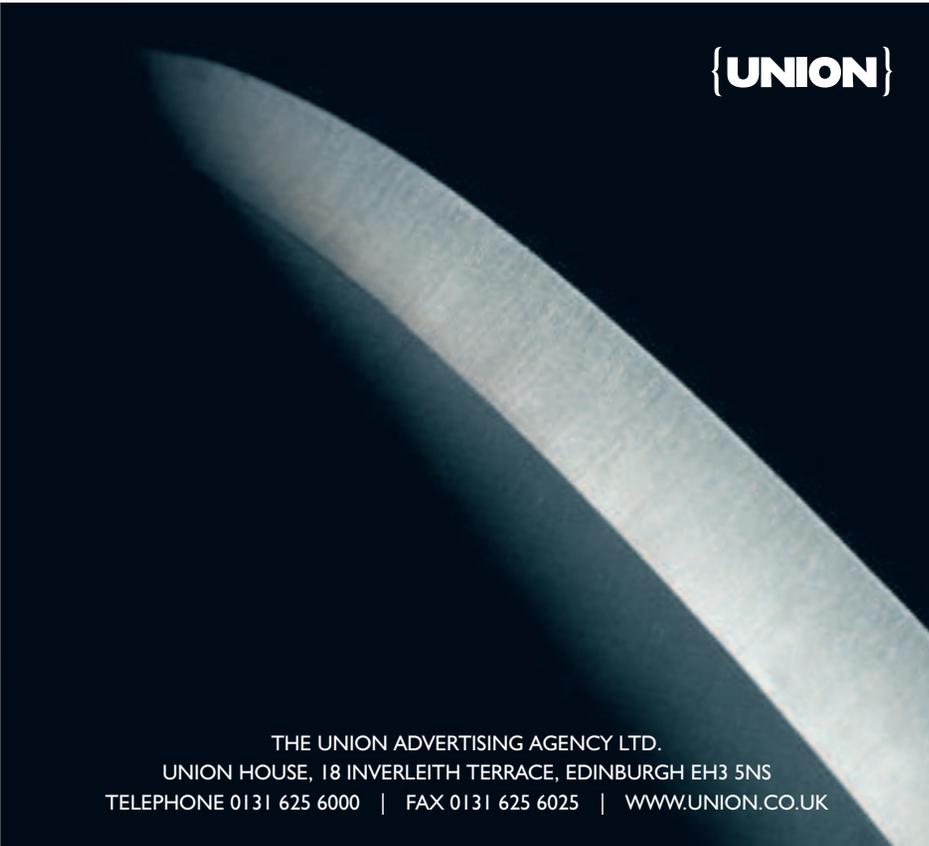
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THE INVERLEITH SOCIETY

AGM Notice

Monday 7 November 2005 at 7.00pm

Lecture Theatre, Royal Botanic Garden, Inverleith Row

The 32nd AGM of the Inverleith Society will be held on Monday 7 November at 7.00pm (doors open 6.45pm). Copies of last year's minutes and accounts will be available before the meeting begins. After the AGM there will be a talk by

NEIL HYND

(FORMER REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR HISTORIC SCOTLAND)

on the Stirling Castle Tapestries

Join us now!

The Inverleith Society is working on your behalf to preserve
the area in which we live and work

Please send or deliver your name and address plus £5.00 pa per household
subscription (£2.00 for single senior citizens) to:

Bernard Kuenssberg, 16 Inverleith Avenue South, Edinburgh EH3 5QA

Executive Committee 2004-05

Duncan Beaton	8/6 Bangholm Terrace
Graeme Cook	524 Ferry Road
Andrew Fraser (Editor)	21 Warriston Crescent
Bobbie Fraser (Hon Secretary)	21 Warriston Crescent
Alison Gordon	28 Inverleith Terrace
Michael Gregson	38 Inverleith Place
Bernard Kuenssberg (Hon Treasurer)	16 Inverleith Avenue South
Pippa Leary	28 Howard Place
Marian McIntyre	8 Eildon Street
Alan Small	7 Howard Place
Kat Turner	29 Inverleith Terrace

Contact The Inverleith Society by writing to Mrs Bobbie Fraser (Hon Sec) 21 Warriston Crescent EH3 5LB, or email info@inverleith-society.org.uk

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