

INVERLEITH NEWS

INVERLEITH NEWS Issue 31
Spring 2012

AGM NOTICE, 16 APRIL 2012

REPORT ON THE YEAR

TREASURER'S REPORT

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

PLANNING ISSUES

FLOOD PREVENTION WORKS

SAVE INVERLEITH PARK CAMPAIGN

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Graeme Cook (Hon Treasurer)	c/o 21 Warriston Crescent
Adam Dudley	57 Warriston Crescent
Andrew Fraser (Editor)	21 Warriston Crescent
Bobbie Fraser (Hon Secretary)	21 Warriston Crescent
Alison Gordon	28 Inverleith Terrace
Michael Good	17 Eildon Street
Michael Gregson	38 Inverleith Place
Josie Inwood (Memb Secretary)	19 Howard Place
Marian McIntyre	8 Eildon Street
Alan Small	7 Howard Place

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

The Inverleith Society is very grateful for the assistance of Jim Gaffney of The Union Advertising Agency,
18 Inverleith Terrace EH3 5NS in production of this Newsletter.

Report on the Year

Annual General Meeting 4 April 2011

The meeting was attended by about 60 members, both regular attendees and new members. We are grateful to all who turned out on a cold night.

The main topics of the evening were the Canonmills Bridge development, and the 'Save Inverleith Park' campaign (see separate report by Alan Black).

Three members of the Committee were due to retire and were re-elected for a further three years – Andrew Fraser, Michael Gregson and Alan Small. We are grateful for the work done on our behalf. Michael Good, who had been co-opted onto the Committee, was then proposed and seconded to serve on the Committee.

Our guest speaker this year was Marion Williams, Director of the Cockburn Association. The Inverleith Society is a member of the Cockburn Association and supports it with an annual contribution of £40. The Cockburn has a valuable role in assessing proposals submitted for Planning Permission, and mounting a spirited defence when appropriate. Ms Williams was a fascinating speaker and her talk entitled 'The Best Ways of Spoiling the Beauty of Edinburgh' (an update on Lord Cockburn's influential pamphlet of the same title) was illustrated with slides.

During the evening the members and their guests were offered refreshments and were able to meet their neighbours. In addition they had the opportunity to hear about local issues during the business section of the meeting.

Inverleith Society Social Evenings

There had been many plaintive requests to have another opportunity to visit the splendid garden created by Anna Guest and Gus Schwartz around their house at Inverleith Terrace, the requests coming both from those who had missed the opening the previous year, and from those who, having visited last year, were keen to have another opportunity to see it again. Many thanks to them both for inviting us especially to their Open Day to raise funds for charity. We were all blessed with wonderful weather and it was a huge success.

Once again we are grateful to Bryan Wade for hosting the winter event in his splendid house, which was designed, appropriately enough, for entertaining.

Volunteers

The Inverleith News is delivered to some 1500 homes in the Inverleith area, acting as notice for the AGM of the Society and an invitation to join and support the Society. We are very grateful to Celia Curnow who maintains the list of volunteers and the details of the various distribution walks. The more volunteer deliverers we have the lighter the demands on the faithful few, many of whom have given service for many years. If you would be prepared to help with this, please get in touch with Bobbie Fraser, Secretary of the Inverleith Society, to discuss what is involved.

We also need volunteers to join the Committee of the Society and help in commenting on planning and amenity issues, organising social events, producing Inverleith News, etc. Again, please get in touch.

Report on the Year (continued)

Snow, Gales, Floods

The year 2011 has been a year in which the physical effects of global warming have been apparent. Extensive snow and ice, causing parts of Edinburgh to become inaccessible, became national news in January. The dramatic flood prevention works to the Water of Leith were started in the spring, and monsoon-style downpours caused the water to rise to inches below the current canal walls,

reminding us all of the need for the work to be done. Then at the year's end we have had record-breaking gales, and again Edinburgh made national news when it was reported that thirty-four trees had been blown down in the Botanic Gardens, and extensive damage had been caused to the glasshouses. The RBGE has set up an appeal for donations to help the repair works.

Marian McIntyre
Bobbie Fraser



Treasurer's Report

Our balance from 2010 brought a healthy financial start to this year and so we were able to contribute to two particularly worthy causes. The high-profile 'Save Inverleith Park' campaign required a concerted effort by all involved, in particular our member Alan Black, and we were delighted to reimburse the printing costs that, until we were able to offer support, Alan had paid from his own pocket. At our 2011 AGM, Marion Williams spoke about her work at the Cockburn Association. On top of our annual membership fee, we were able to make an additional donation to the Cockburn, in part to thank Marion for her excellent talk, and in part to help the continuing work of that hard-working and respected body. Those of you who pay subscription fees or sponsor this newsletter should give yourselves a pat on the back for providing much-needed help to two admirable movements that punch well above their weights. If you are not already

a member, or have not paid your fees this year, please use the accompanying slip to do so – your fees really do make a real difference.

Our other expenditure remained largely unchanged from previous years with this newsletter forming our greatest expense, followed by the moderate costs of our AGM. Our thanks go to the Royal Botanic Garden for accommodating us at discounted rates.

As alluded to above, our sources of income are the local businesses that sponsor our newsletter (details in the back pages) and the subscriptions from our members. The modest donations you make at our AGMs and Social Evenings cover the cost of refreshments and so leave membership fees and sponsorship reserved for worthy causes. Detailed information on our income and expenditure will be available at our 2012 AGM.

Graeme Cook

Membership Secretary

Invitations to join or renew membership to the Society go out with this issue of Inverleith News. The membership year runs from January to December and the aim is to have subscriptions in by the AGM in March/April each year. Once you decide to join the Society we would like to encourage you to remain with us. It will greatly help to reduce administration if you would set up a standing order instruction with your bank. This would ensure that your membership is paid without interruption and will certainly reduce the amount of work involved in maintaining the membership roll. Please consider changing to this method of payment. If you would like to join the Inverleith Society, or if you are

already a member and would like to renew your membership, please use the form included in this issue, sending it to Josie Inwood, 19 Howard Place, EH3 5JY. You can also renew membership at the AGM in April.

Why not also let us have your email address? That way we can keep you up to date with what's going on. This year we have been able to contact members by email to keep you up to date about developments in Inverleith Park, and tell you about forthcoming events such as the Winter and Summer Social Evenings. If you want to be included, please get in touch via our website: www.inverleith-society.org.uk.

Josie Inwood

Inverleith Planning Issues

Goldenacre site

The site of the former NHS office, Trinity Park House, has had previous applications for development, the last of which proposed high density housing in towers of seven, eight and nine storeys. The Inverleith Society objected to the proposals.

The latest application, submitted by CALA, is for low rise, terraced housing and while the Committee found the plans competent if rather pedestrian and unexciting, the Society did not object to the proposals. The site adjoins the border of the Society's area.

John Hope Gateway, Planthouse

The fabric canopies facing Inverleith Park were planned as an area to accommodate and protect plants for sale to the public, but were found to be unsuitable for this purpose. The area was acting as a wind tunnel, and the canopies let in insufficient light. New proposals to rebuild the area as an extension with a façade matching the existing larger timber-faced building have been approved and when this magazine goes to print, will be complete.

The project manager at the Botanic Gardens invited us to peruse the scheme before it was submitted for Planning Permission. We are pleased to engage in this type of early dialogue, and it is understood by all parties that we reserve the right to object to a scheme even if we have been consulted.

We were shown proposals and, while we regretted the loss of the canopies which added delight and interest to the elevation, we agreed that the revised extension was sufficiently co-ordinated with the main building to be acceptable.

Edinburgh Academy Junior School, Inverleith

Richard Murphy Associates, on behalf of the Edinburgh Academy Junior School, have submitted proposals for Planning Permission for the development of the school's teaching accommodation and site layout. We have examined the drawings and conclude this is a good scheme and the Inverleith Society did not object to the proposal.

Canonmills Bridge Development

Regular readers will remember that permission was granted for a controversial redevelopment on Canonmills Bridge, by a vote of seven to six Planning Committee members. No work has started on this project yet, but the vacant shops are to be occupied temporarily by Earthy, a specialist organic vegetable shop and restaurant, which we expect to be welcomed by our members.

Marian McIntyre

Water of Leith Flood Prevention Works

Extensive flood prevention works are under way on the Water of Leith between Stockbridge and Bonnington, some twelve years after the major floods that affected many properties along this section of the river. The Inverleith Society supports the views of the residents at different stretches of the work.

While regretting the loss of trees on the river bank behind Warriston Crescent, the residents here had to accept the engineers' arguments that a major piling scheme accessed from a new

'platform' across the ends of the private gardens was necessary. The gardens will be restored at the end of the project, the boundary wall will be rebuilt, its concrete core refaced in the original stone, and residents are involved in discussions about the replanting of trees in the gardens and along the river bank.

The proposed access to the Tanfield section, upstream from Canonmills Bridge, involved the loss of a line of mature willows on the river bank. A petition opposing the loss of these trees was signed by a substantial number of Edinburgh people. At the time of writing the

work here has been suspended while alternative technical arrangements are explored. The Society welcomes this reassessment, while keen to see the interests of the actual Tanfield residents and proprietors respected.

In the next section, the extensive work to protect the Stockbridge Colonies lies outside our area, but the Friends of the Rocheid Path are involved in discussions about the north bank of the river with the contractors Lagan Construction (see report by the Friends).

Andrew Fraser



Save Inverleith Park Campaign

At this time last year the campaign to 'Save Inverleith Park' from the City Development Department plans to sell off a three acre part of the Park for luxury housing was in full swing. The campaign was organised jointly by the Friends of Inverleith Park, the Stockbridge and Inverleith Community Council and the Inverleith Society. Eight thousand people, mainly from the Inverleith and Stockbridge areas, signed up to our petition objecting to the proposals, with another three thousand on Facebook.

However, in spite of this outpouring of local opinion neither the Director of City Development, nor the Director of Planning, were minded to change except perhaps to restrict the number of houses on the site and keep them low with flat roofs. The fact that the land had been bought in 1889 by the then Provost and Council for the benefit of the citizens of Edinburgh was ignored. The Planning Department had gone so far as to change the designation of the land in the approved Local Plan from Open Space to Urban Space, thus easing the path of development. Their excuse was that under guidelines known as PAN65 they were entitled to do so. PAN65 was set up to protect open space, not reduce it.

At the Inverleith Society AGM on 4 April 2011 when progress on the campaign was presented and discussed it was suggested by our Councillors Lesley Hinds and Iain Whyte that we should present our petition to the Lord Provost at a full Council meeting. They duly arranged that. Our Convenor, Tony Cook, made a skilful and informative presentation to the Council meeting on 28 April 2011. The extract from that meeting was: 'Council notes the deep concern of the local community regarding the proposed disposal of the depot site within Inverleith Park.

Council therefore instructs the Director of City Development to report to the Policy and Strategy Committee setting out the current position with regard to the proposal to dispose of the site, the planning status of the land, and details of any community consultation undertaken or planned on this proposal.'

The Director of City Development's report, which contained nothing new, was eventually made available for the Policy and Strategy meeting on 4 October 2011. Tony Cook made another excellent presentation to that meeting, which decided that 'the land should be retained for Council or Community uses and not be sold'. Officials should appraise the suitability of the site for provision of additional allotments and/or other community uses and there should be genuine community consultation on the future use of the site. The Planning Committee was invited to consider the potential of re-designation of the site back to 'Open Space' in the Local Development Plan.

This was great news for the campaign, for everyone who supported the campaign, for the many local businesses who displayed posters and encouraged people to sign our petition and for our local councillors who had helped so much.

However we cannot let up on our campaign until the site has been re-designated. At the Planning Committee meeting the Director of Planning confirmed that the site would be included in their 'Major Issues Report' (MIR) which deals with changes to the Local Plan and which is due for completion in 2014. Before then there will be presentations and consultation with the community. The MIR report notes 'the potential for additional green space on the

depot site', which strikes the campaign group as a grudging acceptance of the need for change. We do not understand why they could not simply have recommended re-designation of the site.

The campaign group will continue to monitor the progress of the Planning Department toward the new Local Plan and comment accordingly.

In the meantime, and looking forward to new uses, please let the Secretary of the Inverleith Society or Friends of the Park or the Stockbridge and Inverleith Community Council know how you think the site might be best used by the community.

Alan Black

Friends of the Rocheid Path

Anyone walking along the Rocheid path in recent months will be well aware of the work going on there as part of the flood prevention project. When the work is completed there will be an attempt to restore the river bank to its former state, work that will be carried out by the contractors, Lagan Construction, as part of the project.

The Friends of Rocheid Path has been formed to give users of the path an opportunity to have some input into that restoration and to the general maintenance of the path going forward. We hope to be involved in decisions affecting the path and are keen to represent the views of those who use

the path regularly. There is a small committee which meets as and when required. Various local amenity groups are represented on that committee, including the Inverleith Society, the Colonies Residents Association and the Friends of Inverleith Park. Anyone who would like to join us would be most welcome.

If you would like to know more about what is going on, or have your say in the future of the Rocheid Path, please add your name to our emailing list by emailing therocheidpath@gmail.com.

Josie Inwood

Stockbridge and Inverleith CC

Stockbridge and Inverleith Community Council (SandICC) meets for an hour every third Wednesday of the month at 7.00 pm in Stockbridge Library. The meetings are open to the public who are encouraged to attend, particularly if there are any issues they would like the council to discuss. The meetings are usually attended by members of the Community Council, the local city councillors, the community police officer and representatives from local organisations, such as the Inverleith Society and the Friends of Inverleith Park.

In the last year the Community Council has been involved in the campaign to Save Inverleith Park. They are keen to represent the views of the local community, lending the weight of their support to the objections to the proposed development of the depot site in Inverleith Park. They are watching closely the proposals for development

of the Raeburn House site on Portgower Place. They supported Septemberfest at Broughton High School, and have taken an active role in the Inverleith Conservation Area Management Plan.

The Community Council has continued to be part of the consultation process to examine the use of public spaces, in particular Inverleith Park, for a variety of sport and leisure activities, from Saturday morning football to large organised events like Treefest and Taste of Edinburgh. By monitoring planning applications and listening to the views of residents and other interested parties, they hope to represent the views of all parties, which can be difficult as there are almost as many points of view as there are people expressing them. The Community Council is keen to be involved in this process and if it is an area that interests you, please come along to the meetings and get involved.

Josie Inwood



It may have an uncertain future but it played its part in the history of monumental sculpture in Edinburgh's graveyards. The little row of shops on Canonmills Bridge was for long the home of a distinguished stonemason firm, strategically placed to catch passing trade on the approach to Warriston Cemetery (originally by a bridge from Warriston Road). 'Stewart McGlashen, sculptor, Canonmills Bridge', appears in the Edinburgh Directories in the 1840s, and S. McGlashen and Son Ltd were still listed in the last issue of the Directory in 1974. Their main business remained gravestones and memorials to the end – 'sculptors, Edinburgh granite, marble and stone carving, sawing and polishing works'. Long-standing residents will remember the defiant slogan on the gable end above the river, proudly declaring 'Granite Works'!

Royal Botanic Garden Memories

Bill Tait is a well known local figure, recently retired from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

How many residents can remember the Royal Botanic Garden forty-five years ago? I appeared on the scene then to work as a Botanical Foreman. In those days, there were four departments – Herbaceous and Alpine, Outdoor, Glass, and Propagation – each of which had an Assistant Curator in charge, answerable to the Curator, Mr Edward Kemp. The Propagation Department was very much a ‘behind the scenes’ area, as it was part of the Glass Department.

The curatorial staff, being salaried, were classified as ‘non industrial’. The gardening staff in each department, weekly paid ‘industrials’, consisted of several gardeners of varying grades and ‘student probationers’ or ‘horticultural students’ as they became known. From late September until the end of July, the students worked the same hours and had the same holidays as the garden staff, apart from having a day off each week to attend the Diploma in Horticulture Edinburgh (DHE) course. For the rest of the year, it was a normal five day week and occasional weekend duties. To obtain maximum experience, the majority of the students worked their first year in the Herbaceous and Alpine Department. They then moved on to the Outdoor Department for a year and the last year was divided between the Glass and Propagation Departments.

Practical demonstrations were given to the students and courses on Botany, Pests and Diseases, Landscape Design, Propagation, Meteorology and many others were attended. Each week, plant identification tests were held. Towards the end of the students’ course, a half

hour long lecture had to be delivered and a three thousand plus word essay/research project completed before the final written and practical examinations.

There were very few mechanical tools: the main ones were a Ferguson tractor, and a Ransomes triple unit grass cutter, which seemed to be ideally suited to the rotund operator, and other smaller lawn mowers. Chain saws were making an appearance after the cross cut saws and axes. The hedges, including the large beech hedge by the Herbaceous Borders, were cut using hand shears. Two large wooden trestles with planks slotted between the rungs were used to reach the higher levels – with no Health and Safety restrictions – but no-one fell off! The top was cut by someone standing at the top of an extending ladder.

For weeks on end, leaves were raked up manually and taken to the garden’s nursery where they were made into leaf mould. Grass cuttings, herbaceous trimmings and weeds were composted, along with spent hops obtained from Edinburgh breweries, to be returned to the garden and improve the poor sandy soil. Digging by hand was practised where the Annual Flower Borders were, adjacent to the hedges in the Demonstration Garden. Lawns were frequently edged with edging shears and all the trimmings removed. It was imperative that the garden looked immaculate for the weekend.

The other characters prominent in the garden were the Parkies – ‘characters’ seems an appropriate word. Headed by a sergeant, who was assisted by a corporal and then about ten other ranks. No misdemeanours were tolerated, such as ball games or people having picnics on the lawns or climbing trees. The Parkies

Royal Botanic Garden Memories (Cont)

would spend some time in their green boxes at the entrances or patrol round the garden. Two were designated to patrol in the Glasshouses. At weekends, a student would assist in the Glasshouses and two more were assigned to the Rock Garden.

Closing time of the garden was dictated by the time that the sun set with some unusual figures posted on the notice boards, such as 7.54 pm one week, then 8.03 pm the next, with 9.01 pm being the latest in June. Three Parkies would leave the West Gate fifteen minutes before the witching hour and call out that the gardens were closing. One, Jock Dunn, who had a voice like

a fog horn, could be heard in Warriston calling 'CLOS-ING-TIME'!

There were four houses in the garden occupied by staff. The corporal park keeper lived in the West Gate Lodge (recently replaced by the John Hope Gateway). Two assistant curators lived in houses close by the lodge, and a stable block had been used for the garden's horse in former years. At the East Gate House, the curator lived secluded by the high holly hedge. Now, visitors can see this house and enjoy refreshments there while they muse on the history of the garden.

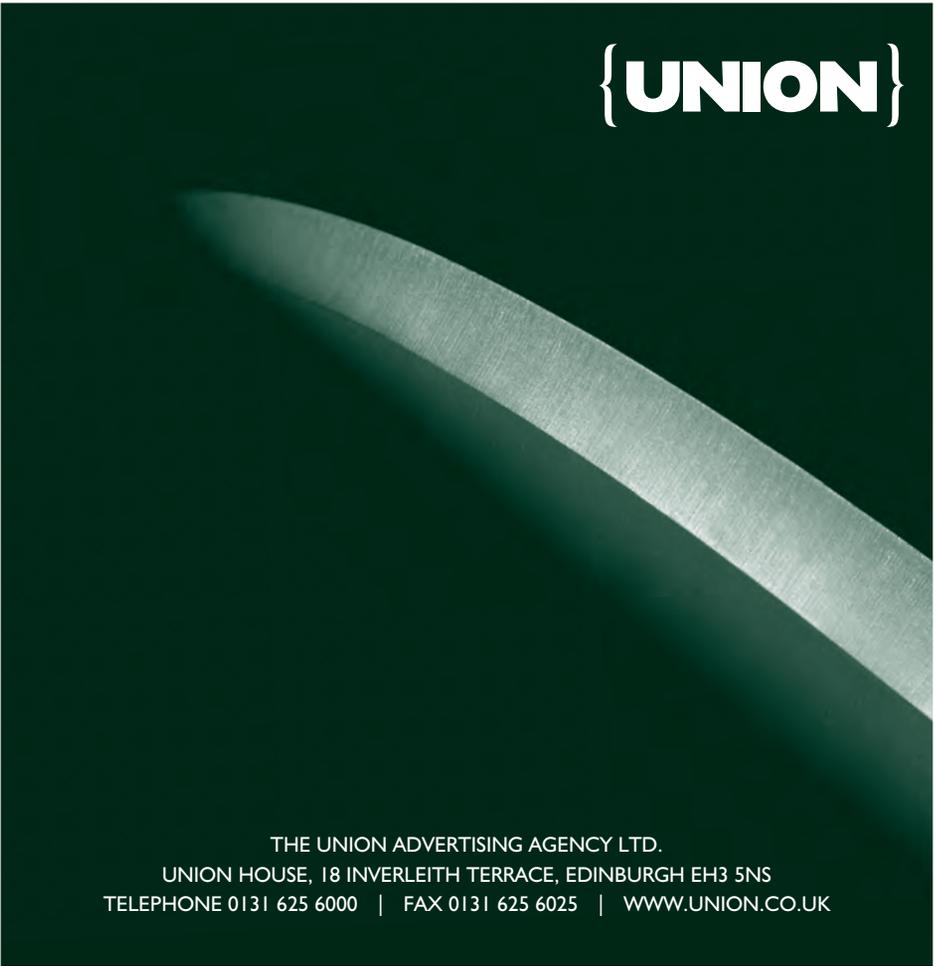
Bill Tait



The Caledonian Hall, until the 1960s home of the RBGE Herbarium.

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Once again the committee would like to thank the local businesses who have helped sponsor this edition of the newsletter. Without their financial support we could not produce this magazine.



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THE INVERLEITH SOCIETY

AGM NOTICE

MONDAY 16 APRIL 2012

AT 7.00PM

LECTURE THEATRE,
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The 38th AGM of the Inverleith Society will be held on Monday 16 April at 7.00pm (doors open 6.45pm). Copies of the accounts and the minutes of the previous AGM on 4 April 2011 will be available before the meeting begins. After the AGM there will be a talk by

TONY COOK

CONVENER OF FRIENDS OF INVERLEITH PARK

The Evolution of a Campaign:
Keeping Inverleith Park whole.

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