

INVERLEITH NEWS

**INVERLEITH NEWS ISSUE 33
SPRING 2014**

AGM NOTICE, 1 APRIL 2014

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A WINDOW ON 2014 AT RBGE

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Executive Committee 2013-14

Graeme Cook (Hon Treasurer)	c/o 21 Warriston Crescent
Isla Duncan	19 Inverleith Place Lane
Andrew Fraser (Editor)	21 Warriston Crescent
Bobbie Fraser (Hon Secretary)	21 Warriston Crescent
Alison Gordon	28 Inverleith Terrace
Jim Henderson	11 Inverleith Place
Ian Hooper	3 Inverleith Row
Marian McIntyre (Memb Secretary)	8 Eildon Street
Alexander McNeil	8 Kinnear Road
Yetta Rowland	17 Inverleith Place Lane
Gus Schwarz	20 Inverleith Terrace

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 8 April 2013

Our regular meeting room, the Lecture Theatre at the Royal Botanical Garden, was closed for refurbishment and the meeting was held in the adjoining Conference Room. Unfortunately it fell on a night of wild weather and we were very grateful to those who had wrapped up and made the effort to join us.

The meeting was chaired by Graeme Cook, our Treasurer, to whom we are grateful, and subsequently the Committee decided to reinstate the position of Chairman. We are very grateful to Ali Gordon for stepping into this role for a year until we can elect a new Chair from the Committee. Members will notice that we are operating co-option rather frequently; we are very grateful to those who give up their time to join us and if you, as you read this, feel you could assist us, please let us know.

The year 2013 has been a difficult one for the Committee, several of whom have been dealing with health problems, and towards the end of the year, there was the very sad loss of Adam Dudley, one of the younger Committee members, who died in December. His professional architectural expertise was invaluable, and we will miss his warmth and witty charm. We are grateful to him for his six years of effective contribution to our Society.

Following the AGM business our speaker was Andy Wightman, a local writer and land rights campaigner of national repute. His talk on land rights was fascinating and ranged over important issues such as land, power, government and money. His book, 'The Poor Had No Lawyers', is published by Berlinn.

Committee Members

Josie Inwood has retired due to other commitments and we thank her for her work in building up membership numbers, and her enthusiasm and drive on the Committee. Ian Hooper, Yetta Rolland and Gus Schwartz are proving to be active new members of the Committee. We have recently co-opted Isla Duncan and Jim Henderson onto the Committee, and trust they can be formally voted on at the AGM in April 2014. We look forward to their contributions to our discussions.

Future Directions and Changes

During the year the Committee has been working on a number of initiatives to make sure that the Society continues to be as effective as possible in protecting and improving the amenity of Inverleith. A major concern is how to attract new members and build a stronger organisation for the future. To this end we have launched a recruitment campaign with leaflets delivered to non-member households across the whole area.

Inverleith Conservation Area: Amendment to the Constitution

The Society came into existence forty years ago, before the Inverleith Conservation Area was designated. The Conservation Area now provides a logical geographic focus for the Society's interests and one of the items of business at the AGM will be to consider an amendment to the Constitution which would link the Society's area of operation to the Conservation Area boundaries.

Website and IT

We are determined to improve the use of IT

Report on the Year (continued)

within the organisation. We have updated the website and intend to make further improvements (www.inverleith-society.org.uk). We are very grateful to Alexander McNeil for his ongoing contribution here.

Social Evenings

Once again we were very grateful to be welcomed back to two favourite venues - the summer party, a glorious evening of warm sunshine at the home and garden of Anna Guest and Gus Schwarz in July, and a winter party in the grand surroundings of Bryan Wade's magnificent flat, literally built for entertaining by its first owner, Robert Alexander Douglas, owner of Grays of George Street, who hoped his opulent house would help him to be voted Lord Provost, and prove useful for receptions during his term of office. We very much appreciate the generosity of those who open their homes for us. The social evenings have a loyal following from our members and we have two new venues lined up for 2014.

Other News

The year has been notable for the completion of the flood protection scheme and those living close to the Water of Leith are greatly relieved that the noise, mess and uncertainty is finally over. Warriston Crescent members were particularly affected by both the flooding and the protection work, and it is particularly pleasing to everyone to see the old tennis courts in Warriston Playing Field, used as a contractor's compound during the works, returned to grass. However, the site is prone to drainage problems, presumably because the hardcore was not properly removed. We wait to see if this is a persistent problem which may need additional work to be done. There was heavy rainfall while the works were under way,

which threatened further flooding of houses adjacent to the Water of Leith, and unfortunately a few properties were badly affected.

The completion of the works has raised the possibility of new tennis courts, away from the site of the old courts, nearer the Bowling Club. Plans are afoot for two new courts, one adult, one smaller, though details may prove controversial. Contact Jeremy Norfolk, 27 Warriston Crescent, if you are interested in this new initiative.

The Royal Botanic Gardens applied for permission to build extensively in their land, changing the so-called 'Nursery' area north of Inverleith Avenue South into an industrial estate with extensive parking. Residents of the adjoining properties objected effectively and Ian Hooper reports on this on page 6.

Friends of Warriston Cemetery

While the Committee has occasionally cast an eye in the direction of the Cemetery, urging that something must be done, an energetic new group has sprung up to meet the challenge. Caroline Gerard and Canadian Robert Reinhardt have initiated the action and are assisted in the long term planning strategy by Jeff Sanders and Alastair Robertson, who have written more fully about these developments on page 8. We shall hear more of the details at the AGM, when Jeff will address the meeting.

Marian McIntyre
Bobbie Fraser

Treasurer's Report January 2014

As in 2013, our accounts had a relatively quiet year, although we have had a couple of relatively unusual expenses. After a surprisingly lengthy gestation, we now have a notice board at the Howard Place gates into Warriston Playing Fields. We contributed towards its installation. We also placed an article in the 'Stockbridge Spotlight' as part of a recruitment drive. With such minor expenses our accounts remain in good health, with thanks to our members and our sponsors (please do patronise the businesses listed toward the back of this publication).

Other costs remain largely unchanged including our administrative costs (mostly stationery and stamps), our corporate membership of the Cockburn Association and the costs of our AGM. Our largest expense remains the Inverleith

News. We run several social evenings each year but attendees make a donation, so that the costs are covered on the night and we avoid having to use membership fees to fund social occasions. Full details of income, expenditure and bank balance will be available in the accounts which I shall present at the 2014 AGM.

A closing request: a couple of years ago we invited members to pay their annual subscriptions by Standing Order. If you are able to pay in this way but have not yet done so, I would encourage you to do this as it reduces the burden on our Membership Secretary and makes it easier for us to keep our accounts up-to-date.

Graeme Cook
Hon Treasurer

Membership Secretary's Report

When I took over in March 2013 I was very grateful to my predecessor Josie Inwood for the work she had done to increase the number of members. In particular she and our Treasurer Graeme Cook had introduced a Standing Order, enabling renewal to be automatic and this has been taken up by about a third of our members. I have continued to remind those who have not renewed, and am pleased to report that as of January 2014 membership has increased by about 50%.

We also tried a leaflet drop with a special offer, but this produced only a modest number of new members. We have been delivering 1600 copies of Inverleith News and find it disappointing that less than one quarter of those households are members. We know that many people appreciate this publication and the question inevitably arises whether delivery to members and non-members

alike is a disincentive to joining the Society - why bother if you get the Inverleith News anyway? This year we will, for the first time, deliver mainly to households which are fully paid-up members, so, join us now if you haven't already done so. The argument for distributing the News universally is to ensure all residents feel part of the Inverleith Society's community, but maybe we need to reward those who have contributed, and particularly those who are paying by Standing Order. We will review this policy, so do let us know your views.

The best method of recruiting is to ask members each to bring along a newcomer to the AGM, and so, I urge you to gather up your neighbours and bring them on 1 April 2014.

Marian McIntyre

Planning and Environment Issues

Local Planning Policies

The Society submitted comments on the City Council's draft Local Development Plan with specific suggestions for improving planning policies for Conservation Areas. We proposed that when a building in the Conservation Area is undergoing alteration or development planning decisions should require replacement of significant lost or damaged elements of the historic design - for example reinstating roof lines, replacing window astragals, boundary walls and railings. We proposed the inclusion of policies to help address the negative impacts caused by the proliferation of signage and street works, interventions by public authorities and utility providers which are detrimental to local amenity and to the quality of our surroundings. The Society also supported the proposal that all applications for development in conservation areas should include a design statement. We strongly support the view that good design can make a major contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of the built environment. However, current experience is that only a small minority of applications include a design statement and most of those which are provided have little real substance. We believe that it should be made clear to applicants that failure to provide a properly reasoned design statement is likely to result in rejection of their application.

Planning Cases

The Society continues to review all planning applications submitted for the Inverleith Conservation Area, submitting comments whenever we consider that proposals will seriously compromise the character of the area. We also continue to make representations to the City Council seeking enforcement action where it appears that any work has been carried out

without the appropriate planning permission or consent.

In the course of the year there were significant decisions on development proposals for the Edinburgh Academicals' ground at Raeburn Place and for the Royal Botanic Garden Nursery site at Inverleith Avenue South. The Society submitted extensive comments on both schemes and gave evidence on the Nursery scheme at a public hearing held by the City Council Development Management Committee.

Approximately 70% of the area of the Conservation Area is owned by public bodies or by private schools. Developments on these land holdings have the potential to impact significantly on the character of the area and we therefore try to encourage early dialogue with all these organisations about their future plans before any detailed planning applications are submitted.

The City Council's decision to approve the scheme for re-developing the Edinburgh Academicals' sports ground at Raeburn Place did not appear to take any account of the specific concerns which the Society and other objectors had raised about the loss of open space and the overall scale of the development. It is not clear when work on the major elements of the scheme is likely to start.

On a more positive note the Society worked with local residents in Inverleith Gardens and Inverleith Avenue South in trying to secure improvements to the proposals submitted by the RBGE for the development of the Nursery site. The RBGE subsequently decided to withdraw from their planning application some of the elements of the scheme which had caused most concern – notably the large vehicle shed proposed to be built on the north west

of the site and the proposals for site lighting. After a public hearing at which the Society gave evidence along with Community Council representatives and some of the local residents, the City Council decided to give permission to the other elements of the scheme consisting of new glasshouses and a new staff building.

We welcome the recent indications from the RBGE that they will continue to look at ways of mitigating the impact of the new buildings on the surrounding property and we have encouraged them to provide better public information about their long-term strategy for the whole of the Edinburgh site.

Ian Hooper

Parking Issues

Arboretum/Kinnear Priority Parking Area

The Priority Parking Area in Arboretum and Kinnear Roads has now been operating for a year. On the whole, the introduction of priority parking has eased the parking situation for residents, particularly in the mornings, when controls are enforced. The Parking Attendants have been present most mornings and appear to have been generating a healthy income for the city. While all-day commuter parking has been reduced, there remain problems at certain

hours of the afternoon when school traffic is at its heaviest.

It will be important to monitor whether the provision of residents' spaces continues to meet demand, particularly when the former Academy Boarding Houses are redeveloped. The Society will be interested to hear from any residents of the Arboretum/Kinnear area who have continued concerns about parking on these streets.

Alexander McNeil



Friends of Warriston Cemetery

Warriston Cemetery will be familiar to readers of Inverleith News. The 14-acre site, opened in 1843, was Edinburgh's first garden cemetery. The two centuries (and counting) of Scottish history therein speak to the genealogy of an entire community, one that stretches across the globe. It is the final resting place of many Edinburgh luminaries, including Sir James Young Simpson, composer Feliks Janiewicz, founder of the newsagent chain John Menzies, artist John Smart, and sculptor John Rhind. The burials also include a significant representation of locally connected architects, including Sir Robert Rowand Anderson (the Medical School and McEwan Hall, St James Episcopal Church, Mansfield Traquair Centre) and Sir John James Burnet (Forsyth's and 80 George St, now Top Man and Hollister respectively).

Warriston is a category-A-listed historic site, a Local Biodiversity Site and a working cemetery with Commonwealth war graves. That combination of cultural and natural importance is essential to its long-term future. It has had a complex and troubled recent history, suffering from vandalism and challenges with maintenance and upkeep. Invasive species, including Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and excess amounts of ivy and brambles threaten biodiversity; in the most recent survey, the site did not score highly. Gravestones and other structures are deteriorating and many inscriptions are obscured or no longer readable. The historical heritage and the biodiversity within the site require management.

In July 2013, a public meeting was held, and the Friends of Warriston Cemetery (FOWC) was born. The driving force – Bob Reinhardt – had been visiting Warriston for 13 years, compiling a photographic record that formed the basis of an exhibition charting a story of

continuing deterioration. FOWC was created to reverse this trend, managing improvement in a proactive and positive way that harnesses the enthusiasm of the local community.

Much has happened since: FOWC has grown quickly, with our current membership of nearly 100. Our vision is that Warriston Cemetery will be a place to be proud of, where the heritage and environment are safeguarded and promoted for the enjoyment of all. FOWC aims to augment both the biodiversity and the cultural heritage found within Warriston Cemetery. While Warriston cannot (and should not) be returned to its Victorian manicured lawns, it can be better managed to maintain a sense of wildness and improve biodiversity, as well as showcasing Cousin's original design.

We are in close contact with both Bereavement Services and the Council Biodiversity Officer, and work parties focus on achieving our aims and vision. Ivy has been cleared from gravestones to improve access and the visibility of inscriptions. The work is rewarding, fun and fascinating, revealing many stories about the past. From February, the focus will shift to planting to avoid disruption during bird-nesting. FOWC recently received a small grant to plant native low-growing species, which will flower and fruit throughout the year, attracting insects and birds to improve biodiversity while retaining the access to, and visibility of, the gravestones.

Involvement in cultural events (Doors Open Day in September and Scotland's History Festival in November) has been important in promoting the project, attracting local and media attention and generating awareness. Other activities include photographic survey, archival research, and responding to family

requests from around the world. Our quarterly newsletter offers news and a range of articles on sculpture, the natural world, and mini-biographies of people interred in Warriston. In future, FOWC aims to promote the cemetery as a teaching resource for schools, groups and lifelong learners. We will also develop our digital presence, supplementing the photographs and maps with meeting Minutes, links to other cemetery groups, and additional resources. FOWC will assist with genealogical and historical research and promote the wildlife of the cemetery.

An expression of interest has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund to fund a professional Conservation Management Plan (CMP). The CMP will ensure that a balance

is achieved between various preservation and conservation requirements, and will guide future activity at Warriston. It will utilise the considerable amount of information already available and include a systematic consultation with local residents and other stakeholders regarding their aspirations for Warriston. The CMP will ensure the preservation, conservation and sympathetic restoration of Warriston Cemetery, while conserving and augmenting the native flora and fauna within this important urban wildlife environment. New members are very welcome and FOWC can be contacted at: friendsofwarristoncemetery@gmail.com.

Jeff Sanders
FOWC



*A 'Before and After' of
some of the work being done
at Warriston Cemetery*

© R. Reinhardt



A Window on 2014 at RBGE

The start to any new year provides an opportunity to reflect on where we are and what we want to achieve in the coming months. Large organisations are no different and, in many ways, the last 12 months have been pivotal in defining the ongoing development of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE).

Dating back nearly 350 years, RBGE has established a strong reputation at home and abroad for its work in - and communication of - science and horticulture. But, status is not enough. More than ever, organisations such as ours must stand back and look at how best we can contribute to the conservation of habitats around this fragile planet: how we can inspire others to engage positively with the environment.

Yet, the Garden is such a multifarious organisation that it is seen in many different lights. To many local people the 'Botanics' is a special place full of memories where children learned to walk, promises were made and peace of mind was found, for a little while at least. To others, it is an art gallery, an event venue, a Sunday walk in tranquil surroundings. But, behind the scenes, there's a wealth of exciting and interesting things going on.

In terms of science, horticulture, education, conservation and research, RBGE continues to expand its international programme and has projects in some 40 countries around the world. This has contributed to us earning our ranking as one of the Top 5 of the 2500 botanic gardens on Earth.

But, increasingly we have been maintaining our world-class work and reputation by stretching facilities and resources that are beyond their sell-by date. In some cases, these facilities cannot much longer meet the demands placed upon them, let alone be expected to cope with significant growth anticipated in RBGE's key operational areas. As

part of this, we need to recognise that there will be a tipping point where 'Band-Aid' projects no longer suffice. Major change is required to ensure that the organisation can move forward to accommodate properly the requirements of its stakeholders. Rigorous planning and frank discussions during the last year have clarified just how we approach change and what is required to future-proof the Edinburgh site.

It has been evident for a long time that changes must be made both in public areas of the Garden and behind the scenes. It is clear, for example, that we need to take action in both the public Glasshouses and those in our research block. Both are vulnerable to storm damage and the latter suffered particularly badly during the storms of January 2012. Yet, more can be done. By taking forward significant improvement initiatives we have the potential to both enhance the visitor experience and provide better facilities for education, research and conservation.

On a wider note, while the Edinburgh site remains a top flight visitor attraction and, as such, brings benefit to the wider community we are acutely aware that there is room for improvement in meeting some basic expectations ranging from better toilets to enhanced community facilities and additional education space, so enriching the wider visitor experience through direct engagement.

A pivotal part of our aspirations for improvement rests on the redevelopment of the North-East Corner of our site. Details of the multi-million pound project will be unveiled once they have been prepared and extensive community consultation will be part of the process. In the meantime, many readers will be aware that, to help prepare for the main North-East Corner project, planning permission was secured last autumn for some changes to the Nursery on Inverleith Avenue



Horticulturalists turned glaziers!

South. We continue to liaise with our neighbours to soften the impact of those elements that were given permission - in particular, the planned glasshouse, and at the time of writing, the journey is by no means over.

We appreciate that RBGE is close to the hearts of untold numbers of city residents who have grown up enjoying the safe and tranquil haven of the Botanics. It also plays a unique part in Scottish life. By the time of publication Simon Milne,

RBGE's newly-appointed Regius Keeper, will be in post. I am sure he will also look forward to working with you to ensure that the future of the Gardens is just as successful as the past.

Dr David Rae is Acting Regius Keeper, RBGE.

Shauna Hay
RBGE

Friends of the Rocheid Path

The Friends of Rocheid Path was formed to give users an opportunity to have some input into the restoration of the path following completion of the flood defence works and to the general maintenance of the path in future. We hope to be involved in decisions affecting the path and are keen to represent the views of those who use it regularly. A small committee meets as and when required. Various local amenity groups are represented, 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.

Over the past year we have had several volunteer days, tackling a variety of jobs, from shaping the hollies at the west gate to filling sacks with litter picked up along the path. Tree surgeons have been at work, felling diseased trees and clearing storm damaged boughs. The reinstatement of 'the triangle' following completion of the flood defence project has been a slow business. We are still hoping that our plans will be implemented but nothing happens quickly - more accurately, sometimes nothing seems to happen at all!

We have a website under construction and hope to use this to communicate with our many friends (www.therocheidpath.co.uk). Details of meetings and volunteer days will be posted there. If you would like to get involved and help restore the path to its former glory, please get in touch. To find out more about what's going on, and have your say on the future of the Rocheid Path, please add your name to our emailing list at therocheidpath@gmail.com.

Josie Inwood

Stockbridge and Inverleith Community Council

The Community Council (SandICC) provides a forum for discussion of a variety of issues of local concern. The Inverleith Society is represented on the Council. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7 pm in Stockbridge Library and are open to all. Other attendees include City Councillors representing the Inverleith Ward and the Community Police Officer.

Concerns about the developments proposed for the Edinburgh Academicals' ground at Raeburn Place (now approved by the City Council) have continued to occupy SandICC over the past year. In addition to significant planning cases, regular topics for Community Council discussion include local licensing applications, traffic management, environmental and policing issues.

SandICC can provide a valuable mechanism for highlighting issues of local concern and is consulted on a wide range of issues but it does not have any executive responsibilities. SandICC responded to the Scottish Government's recent consultation on 'community empowerment' with suggestions that some real decision responsibilities should be transferred to local community level. Doubtless this would take time to achieve but it seems to be worthwhile debating whether the balance of decision making has shifted too far towards the centre without taking enough account of local views.

Ian Hooper

Friends of Inverleith Park

No report this year, but the Friends can be contacted by phoning Pam Barnes, 0131 332

Patrick Neill

Forbes W. Robertson, Patrick Neill (1776-1851): Doyen of Scottish Horticulture (Whittles Publishing 2011), pp. 134, illus. Price £16.99, paperback, ISBN 978-184995-032-9.

Patrick Neill's prosperous family printing business gave him plenty of time to pursue his interests in natural history. Robertson's is the first extended account of this man who was active at the centre of Edinburgh's thriving scientific life during the first half of the nineteenth century. It is unclear whether Neill attended formal classes at the University, but he travelled widely in Scotland and soon became an expert on its flora. He lived at Canonmills House (in the middle of the ground at the centre of Eyre Crescent today), and developed his horticultural interests in the gardens there. In 1809 he was a founding member of the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society - affectionately 'the Caley' - and served as its Secretary and one of its guiding lights for over forty years. He was equally involved in the Wernerian Natural History Society, based in the University, where too he was a founding member and also the long-serving Secretary. The Wernerian did not long survive the death of its energetic if controversial President, Professor Robert Jameson, but the Caley still thrives and celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2009.

Neill was involved in acquiring land for the Caley's experimental garden in the 1820s. Inverleith Row was being developed by the Rocheids of Inverleith House at this stage and some of the ground behind the houses was bought by Government as the new home for the Royal Botanic Garden (RBGE). The Caley leased the neighbouring ground on the south, and the two institutions thrived in parallel. This was to prove



Photo, Caroline Gerrard

very far-sighted: when the Caley decided to give up their garden in the 1850s, it was eventually agreed to transfer it to the Botanic Garden, thus doubling its size and making it possible for the RBGE to expand and stay on its Inverleith site. Reminders of the original occupants of this part of the RBGE survive in the East Gate Lodge (originally the Caley's Gardener's House, designed by W. H. Playfair, 1826) and the Caledonian Hall (David Cousin, 1842).

Neill died in 1851 and was buried in Warriston Cemetery, where the Friends of the Cemetery are in the process of rescuing his memorial from an overwhelming canopy of ivy.

Andrew Fraser

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THE INVERLEITH SOCIETY

AGM NOTICE

TUESDAY 1 APRIL 2014

AT 7.00PM

LECTURE THEATRE,
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN,
20A INVERLEITH ROW

The 40th AGM of the Inverleith Society will be held on Tuesday 1 April at 7.00pm (doors open 6.45pm). Copies of the accounts and the minutes of the previous AGM on 8 April 2013 will be available before the meeting begins.

After the AGM there will be a talk by

JEFF SANDERS

CHAIR OF FRIENDS OF WARRISTON CEMETERY
Warriston Cemetery: Past, Present and Future

Non members are welcome to attend.

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