

LORD MORAY'S FEU

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2018

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

This is my first contribution to the Newsletter since taking on Chairing the Committee at the AGM in June. I would like first to recognise the contributions of your Committee. I have been struck by how much time is given by them to looking after our wonderful gardens and in the wider interests of the Feu.

I am sad to report that our ex Head Gardener, Alex Watson, who was with us from 1986 until he retired in 2013, died at St Columba's Hospice after a long struggle with cancer. John Hughes had taken a constant interest in him during those years, visiting him at home and in hospital, took him to his favourite flower shows and was the only person Alex allowed to work in his garden. His funeral was attended by some of the feuars.

Fiona Young

GARDENS

Moray Place

One of the hollies has been removed from the Summer bed, that is, the flower bed in the East Quadrant of Moray Place, and we hope to plant a small ornamental cherry instead once the tree surgeon has been with his stump grinder. The cherry will have good autumn colouring as well as

spring flowers and is generally more suitable for the site than a large holly.

A *sorbus arranensis* has been planted in the space in the border opposite Gt Stuart St. This is another of the special sorbuses given to us by the Botanics and we hope that in this sunny site it will flourish and produce the red berries typical of the species. It is a medium sized tree and so should not block the sun from the lawn to any extent when mature.

The shrubs in the South Quadrant flower bed have bolted with the increased light from above after the purple prunuses had to be felled, and now needs an overhaul, but so far other jobs have taken priority.

Bank Gardens

Only one of the conifers has been planted so far as we are short of spaces where a tree will grow nicely rounded, with foliage near the ground. Planting without clearing a reasonably big space would produce only a tall thin trunk with a little canopy at the top. So, to enable another conifer to be planted we have cleared a large overgrown laurel out of one of the triangular sites near the bottom of the garden and the new tree will now get all round and overhead light to grow into a good shape. The new light will also allow the edge of the lawn nearby to grow grass again.

Unfortunately, we are going to lose two large ash trees. One is just outside the garden of 5 Ainslie Place. It has been a fine tree at one time, but has lost two large limbs in recent storms and the tree surgeon who was aloft to deal with them

could see that the other limbs were split. The other ash has suffered burn damage in past years from the bonfire, (which has now been moved away from it), but the bald area where the bark no longer grew is now soft and spongy indicating that the tree is weak near its base. Both trees will be felled as soon as the tree surgeon can fit us in.

Dog damage to new planting

There are some dogs which are not kept out of the flower beds and shrubberies in Moray Place, or out of the new planting in Bank Gardens. We have lost two of the new rhododendrons. Replacing these means a trip to Glendoick near Dundee. The gardeners erected fencing to deter dogs until the plants are fully established, and even these have been dented. In a few months young, tender spring flowers will be pushing up through the soil, generally at the edges of the beds, and these are very easily damaged. Perhaps owners with energetic dogs which are difficult to control could take them somewhere like Inverleith Park where they can let off steam without doing damage?

Pesticides

It was decided this year not to buy more weedkiller as we would really like to see our gardens pesticide free. Their use has been substantially less than in previous years, and lately the weedkiller was used only on the paths. We thought we would see how we got on hoeing the paths by hand and perhaps put up with a few weeds in Bank Gardens paths, and there have been no complaints. Hopefully, we

can continue like this. The glyphosate content of Roundup has recently been linked to death in bees, as has neonicotinoids. Even more importantly, we need to consider the health of our gardeners.

Fiona Jarvie
Gardens Convener

IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

If you haven't already, please consider providing an **email** address to Whitelaw Wells so we can reduce postal costs and help improve our environmental impact. Email addresses will only be used for communications about Lord Moray's Feu and will not be used for marketing or provided to other parties. You can continue to receive information by post if that is your preference.

If you are willing to receive communications by email, please contact sthomson@whitelawwells.co.uk

We have been looking at how we can improve our **website** to make it more user-friendly and informative. More information about this will follow.

We have two photographers, Ross Johnston and Ross Mamahon-Wilson, who have volunteered to take **photographs** of the gardens and architecture throughout the seasons so we can build a photo bank.

A closed **Facebook** group for Moray Feu and outside subscribers is planned to use as a notice board and to facilitate communication from the committee and amongst Feuars; another way of helping to develop a closer MF community. This would include updates on social events and what is happening in the gardens. Again, details to follow.

CLIMBING FRAME

During the Summer, the climbing frame was taken down after it was discovered that wood at the base was rotting and the frame was unsafe.

Options for a replacement have been explored which meets current safety standards, will provide enjoyment for children and is affordable. It is hoped to have the replacement up by the spring.

TRAFFIC

Great Stuart Street: "Main Road - Fast or heavy traffic may make cycling conditions uncomfortable" City of Edinburgh Council

Half of the Feu is now designated by our Council as a main road, and the only East-West route through the city centre available 24x7x365 to heavy vehicles. This is despite multiple promises over the last decade that traffic levels would not rise and that alternative routes for heavy vehicles would be signposted. The latest plans for 'City Centre Transformation' indicates increased traffic noise and air pollution for over 60% of Edinburgh's residents. The Council has implemented air quality management areas, noise management areas, and is currently planning low emission zones, but historically none of these have applied to the Feu and current plans leave the Feu as the only route accessible to all traffic.

Despite much apparent support for clean air and a liveable city centre, the Council has never been able to address our principal concern that you do not improve the health of residents when you move

traffic from non-residential to residential areas. That the Council achieved this with the Edinburgh Tram project was in part due to applying a bigger discount to pollution measured in residential streets, so that moving it from Princes Street to Great Stuart Street means that less pollution was reported. When we challenged this, the Council decided to withhold the data, noting that releasing it might affect the decision to proceed with the Edinburgh Tram. This was why we took action under the Aarhus Convention and got DEFRA to accept that such a discount was not justified. We are still involved with the Aarhus Compliance Committee and there is a case before them at present concerning the health impacts of noise in the Netherlands. This case has some resonance with our experience of data use by the City of Edinburgh Council, who still refuse to measure traffic noise levels in the Feu, arguing that any rise experienced since the Tram traffic diversions and reduced access to Charlotte Square are imperceptible!

In short, our council is prepared to expend large amounts of effort and funding to develop the city centre as a tourist destination, but has not yet dealt with the traffic it 'temporarily diverted' through the Feu in 2008. The Earth Justice representative at the UN, Yves Lador, captured the problem neatly: 'The City of Edinburgh Council has put the traffic barriers in the right place, but the traffic on the wrong side'. Any Feuars who would like to help communicate this argument to our latest set of decision-

makers are welcome to contact the Traffic Subcommittee: ashley@edinburgh.ac.uk

WASTE

The Feu has adapted admirably to the new waste and recyclables collection routine. But on windy days light recyclables such as paper, card and plastics from uncovered red boxes are blown around the Feu, creating a mess. Please be sure to windproof your red box with a blue cover, available free from Stockbridge Library. New recycling boxes can be ordered online at edinburgh.gov.uk

If you have any questions please call Fran van Dijk on 07986 236038

SOCIAL

Another year of getting to know other feuars, other garden groups and organisations.

In May, we joined in with Scotland's Garden Scheme and had a great many visitors. Thank you to Grace Durham, the organiser. The next Scotland's Garden Scheme open day will be on Sunday, 5th May 2019.

On May 19th, a Royal Wedding day, we had 'The Big Lunch'. Over 120 people arrived dressed in fancy clothes with glamorous hats, waistcoats and kilts. Our talented young piper, Angus MacGregor led a pretend wedding parade with some in Royal family masks. Over £150 was collected for the 'Heads

Together' charity started last year by Prince William & Prince Harry.

The AGM was held at the EIS offices in Moray Place, A good attendance at the meeting with some joining in with the 'After Party' that followed in Moray Place gardens.

In September, over 100 visitors were pleased to see our gardens as part of a special event, "Glorious Gardens of the New Town" arranged by Edinburgh World Heritage.

We were not so lucky with good weather at our planned Annual Festival Party. Almost washed away, postponing the event seemed the most sensible option. In October, we tried again and despite gusty winds it was a happy mixture of Halloween masks and comic hats.

Thanks to all those who have helped with social event arrangements this year especially, Paul Broda who has taken on the important role of wine maestro.

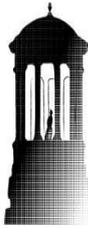
DIARY DATES

The Christmas Party is on 14TH December, 2018 kindly hosted again by Grace Durham.

Please RSVP to Whitelaw Wells, 9 Ainslie Place or by email to sthomson@whitelawwells.co.uk

The Burns Supper, is planned for 28th February, 2019. Details from Enid Holman-Arthur on 0131 225 7839.

DEAN VALLEY REGENERATION



Dean Valley Regeneration Limited is a charitable company set up in 2015 by a group of local residents seeking to breathe new life into one of Scotland's most important historic landscapes, the Dean Valley. The area lying between Stockbridge and the Dean Village includes the much-loved walkway, spectacular buildings, walls, bridges, railings and embankments, and planting which has been added to over time but is now mature and overgrown. The public area owned by City of Edinburgh Council and abandoned land is all in urgent need of renovation and care and your financial support would help the project.

Visit the DVRL website to find out more - www.deanvalley.org.uk We have already commissioned and published a Conservation Statement and a Biodiversity Study, and now seek the last part of funding for the second phase of a Feasibility Study. This completes our suite of documents which will enable us to work with the City of Edinburgh Council towards an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund and an extensive programme of rebuilding and renovation.

DVRL asks for your generous support to

their work to improve the Dean Valley.

How to donate to DVRL (SC 046270)

Via **Virgin Giving**: either direct or through our at www.deanvalley.org.uk

By cheque payable to: Dean Valley Regeneration Ltd. BACS payment to: Dean Valley Regeneration Ltd. Bank of Scotland, Treasurer's account Sort code: 80-22-60 Account number: 13871269

All correspondence to: The Treasurer, DVRL, 53 Bonaly Crescent, Edinburgh EH13 0EP