



NEWSLETTER

Issue 11: May 2016

May has finally arrived and with it some delightful spring weather!! This edition of our newsletter is all about getting involved and having fun at Saughton Park. Read on to find out more.

LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FOWARD

Congratulations and welcome to the Edinburgh-based charity [The Living Memory Association \(Thelma\)](#) who were successful in their bid to deliver and support the project's heritage based activities.

Thelma aims to bring people together through reminiscence and oral history work. They encourage people to become actively involved in their community, share their memories, learn from one another, feel valued and respected, and give their knowledge of the past to younger generations.

We are delighted to be working with them and over the next few months they will train and work with volunteers to carry out research and record oral histories. The material collected will then be used to produce heritage interpretation, including art work and exhibition materials.

As a volunteer you will join Thelma staff in meeting and working with local people, and discovering more about the park's rich history – such as the spectacular 1908 Scottish National Exhibition, memorable performances at the Bandstand, and the creation of the Winter Garden – as well as the park's place in the community today.

They are recruiting volunteers right now. Full training will be given and equipment provided. They plan to run training sessions in June, July and August.

If you are interested, visit their staff at the Saughton Park Garden Party on May 21 to find out more, or email comhist@googlemail.com quoting 'Saughton Park volunteers' in the subject line.

They also want to hear from you if you are more interested in researching archives and records to learn more about the park's social history, or developing the park's interpretative material and opening heritage exhibition.



FoSP History Group Meeting with Thelma.

THEMLA

Find out more about Thelma and volunteering:

Visit their website www.livingmemory.org.uk

Email them on comhist@googlemail.com (with Saughton Park Volunteers in the subject line)

Call them on 07931374892



Amanda and Diageo staff getting a tour of the gardens by Alan the charge-hand gardener.

CONTACT THE FRIENDS

The Friends of Saughton Park welcomes new members.

Visit their website

www.friendsofslaughtonpark.org

Email

friendsofslaughtonpark@gmail.com

Join their Facebook page

www.facebook.com/groups/FofSP/



Cornerstone clients enjoying a visit to the park.

GETTING CREATIVE AT SAUGHTON

We also want to welcome Edinburgh based author, poet and comedy performer Amanda Baker on board. Between now and Christmas Amanda will be running an exciting creative writing course which is being funded by Diageo and is designed to enable Diageo staff to give something back to the community whilst challenging themselves by doing something entirely new.

In four contact sessions over a period of seven months Amanda will be working with staff from sponsors Diageo on developing creative writing skills and producing pieces inspired by the natural environment of the park, its history and its magic.

LET'S PARTY

Put this date in your diary now! The annual Saughton Park Garden Party will take place on Saturday 21 May between 12 and 4.

There will be children's craft activities and the famous Great Saughton Bear Hunt. Thelma will be there with a range of memorabilia goodies and you'll be able to talk to their team about joining as a heritage volunteer. There will be croquet on the Italian Garden lawn and traditional games and music outside the Conservatory, while a Pop Up Tea Room will offer the usual array of delicious home baked cakes, courtesy of the Friends of Saughton Park and their talented bakers!

BEING INCLUSIVE - BY DESIGN

Pete has recently been working with local care provider Cornerstone who provide a day service for older people and those with dementia. Cornerstone is a progressive organisation and are keen to use Saughton Park as a place where the health and well-being of their service users can be enhanced through regular visits and walks. Many of the folk who attend Cornerstone have vivid memories of the park in older times and we are working with them to gather these stories. One of the great things that has come out of this collaboration is that Cornerstone service users came along to the park recently and carried out an audit of just how dementia friendly or not the park and Winter Garden was. Through this we were able to learn a lot about the issues that dementia sufferers face, especially when visiting a new place. This will all inform the final design of some of the elements in the park.

BLOSSOMS, BEES AND BIODIVERSITY

Have you seen our Saughton Park Cherry Trees recently? They are in full blossom right now and providing a glorious display! So it's probably a good time to highlight what else we have planned for blossoms, bees and biodiversity at Saughton.

Biological diversity—or biodiversity as its better known—is simply the term given to the variety of life on Earth. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems' which provide us with a range of goods and services, such as food, water and pollination of crops, that support our economic and social wellbeing.

Our project aims to improve biodiversity at Saughton Park and some of the ways we are doing this is by the creation of more wildflower and species rich grassland areas, increased planting in the Walled Garden and better woodland management, all of which will increase habitats for wildlife.

In fact, some of this work has started already. For instance, in April around 70 children from Balgreen Primary School and St Cuthbert's Primary School planted two substantial wildflower meadows in the area next to the Water of Leith. They used a mix called 'Celebration', which is made up of flowers such as Cornflower and Poppy, which were once found in abundance in traditional cornfields, in the days before the widespread use of herbicides became commonplace. Look out for an amazing show of varied blooms there this summer.

Our plans include the introduction of Espalier Fruit Trees, a space saving way of training trees, along the south-facing walls in the Rose Garden and we have been working with the Urban Orchard Project and Helping Britain Blossom to see how we can work with them in the future to also create a community orchard in the park.

We also very excited that our plans for the park include the introduction of bee hives which will offer opportunities for learning about their management.

Bees are vital to our lives as they are among the primary pollinators of plants in the UK. Unfortunately, the British bee population has declined at an alarming rate over the last few years - by a third since 2007.

These initiatives will create and improve habitats for wildlife and insects, and provide essential nectar food for bees and other insects. It will provide opportunities to learn about food growing, ecology, botany and our wider environment and help to raise awareness of the need for conservation and protection of our natural environment.



Cherries looking glorious.



A Saughton Magnolia in bloom.

PARKS FOR PEOPLE

Find out more about the Heritage Lottery Fund '[Parks for People](#)' programme on their website www.hlf.org.uk.



Children from Tynecastle High School trimming the hedges.



Our Saughton otters!

CONTACT US

Interested in these or any other volunteering activities?

Find out more at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/saughtonpark

Email us at parks@edinburgh.gov.uk or call 0131 608 1100

CONSERVATION AWARDS

Monday 9 May saw around fifty local S3 school children from Tynecastle High School descend on Saughton Park who are all undertaking the John Muir Award with the Green Team. The pupils split up into groups and carried out a range of conservation tasks around the park such as litter picking, attending to encroaching edges, cutting back growth to improve views of the Water of Leith and improving the local biodiversity by creating habitat piles.

Later in May two classes of P6 pupils from Stenhouse Primary School will be undertaking conservation work in the park as part of the Junior Award Scheme Scotland (JASS).

GETTING WILD AT SAUGHTON PARK

Despite being situated in a very busy urban setting and close to one of the busiest roads in Edinburgh, Saughton is a haven for wildlife. We have mallard ducks, goosanders, blackcaps, blue tits, smooth newts and foxes as well as the occasional buzzard overhead. Sometimes you get an unexpected surprise too! A few weeks ago during a site meeting a group of us were privileged to see two otters just above the weir on the Water of Leith, and this was at 10.30 in the morning. You might spot one in the picture on the left, the otter is arrowed so you can't miss it! So, if you are around the river, do keep your eyes peeled, you never know what you might see.

That's all for this newsletter. Please remember to contact Thelma if you want to become a Heritage Volunteer and help tell the 'Story of Saughton Park' for today's and future generations to enjoy.

Enjoy the lovely spring flowers and hope to see you at the Garden Party on 21 May.

All the best
Linda and Pete