



## LORD MORAY'S PLEASURE GROUNDS NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2013

### Chairman's Comments

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the Moray Feu newsletter. I hope you will be able to come to the party on the 13th of December at 11 Forres Street, 6.30pm to 8pm.

The Committee takes this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Robert Hay, Chairman

### Gardens

I am pleased to report that we have now appointed a replacement Head Gardener for Alex. His name is David Wood, an experienced horticulturalist, and previously employed as a senior gardener at Edinburgh Zoo which has eighty nine acres of varied landscape. David decided two years ago to advance his career by undertaking a full time course with The Scottish Agricultural College, where he achieved student of the year 2012 and completed an HND, awarded with merit. He also won prizes this year at Gardening Scotland and at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. We hope he will be starting on 9 December, but this is subject to the arrival of his new baby before that date. We wish him well with both baby and the new appointment.

As you have probably noticed, John has been working hard clearing the leaves which are still coming down in droves. Since he is single handed at the moment this is a full time job for him and therefore the only gardening that is currently going on until help arrives.

LUC, the landscape architects appointed to produce a conservation management plan for us, have provided us with a draft which is currently being considered for comment.

Fiona Jarvie, Gardening Subcommittee

### Waste

Residents of the Moray Feu have responded very well to the new once-weekly collection of waste in Gull Proof Bags (GPBs), and we can all look forward to rubbish-free pavements from now on. GPBs are occasionally left out for too long, or rubbish is presented inappropriately, so please remember:

- Put GPBs with black rubbish sacks out at 6.45 on Thursday only
- Take empty GPBs into your property on Thursday evening or Friday morning early

The Council asks residents not to:

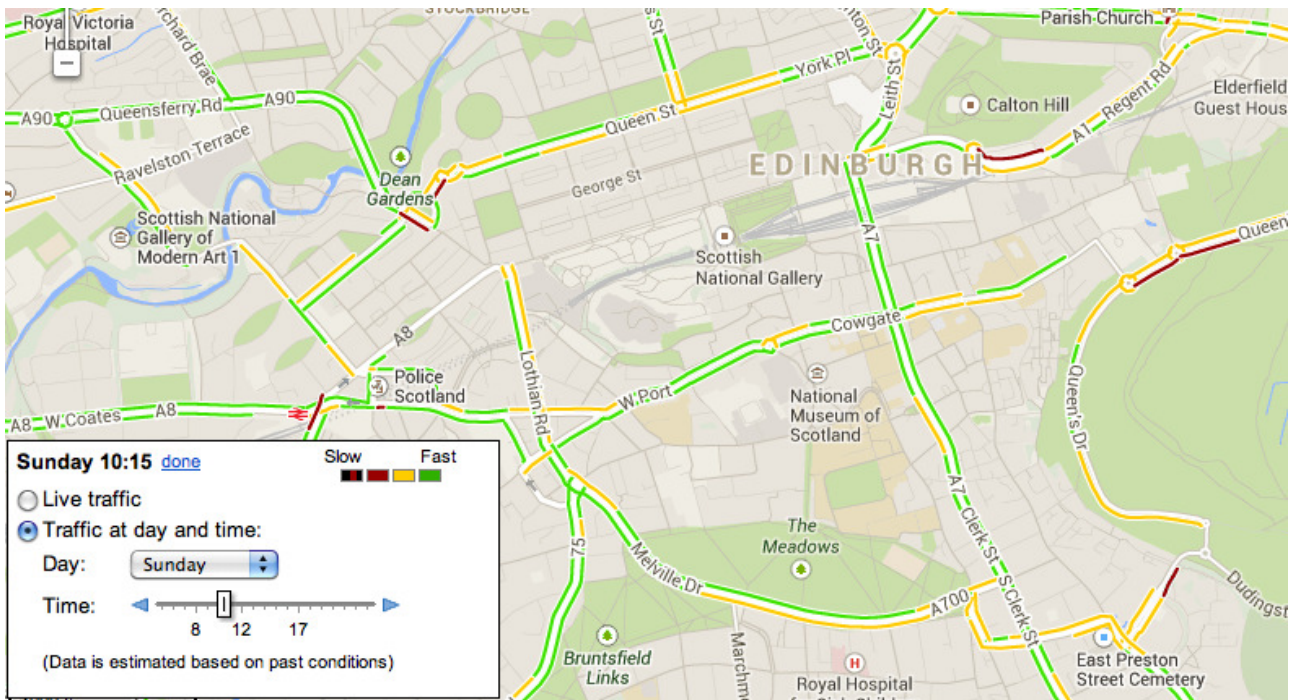
- Put GPBs out on any day other than Thursday
- Place plastic bags on railings, only in the GPB.

Fran van Dijk

### Tram traffic displacement

As roads re-open for the Tram we can all see the impact of the Tram Traffic Regulation Order. Despite promises that traffic in residential streets will rise by no more than 2-5%, the Council has left only one route that can be used by all traffic through the city centre – Randolph Crescent – Great Stuart Street (RC-GSS). Though the Council accepts that cobbled residential streets are not suitable for heavy vehicles (HGVs) and has installed signs advising this, they have not placed these where they can be seen before HGVs are committed to going through the Feu.

Sat. Nav. traffic systems now show Princes Street as equivalent to a 'footpath' for route planning purposes (see map) and so the residential streets of the North West are now programmed in as the main thoroughfares for



all traffic to and through the centre of Edinburgh. This is already evident in the traffic flows measured by Google in the above map.

This is likely to get worse as there is still too much public transport remaining on Princes Street for the Tram to run. The Council is now grappling with the problem of what to do with the buses and cyclists as pavement widening at various parts of the route means that even one cyclist can bring the whole thoroughfare to a crawl. The consequence is that RC-GSS is now being used by ‘out of service’ buses as well as HGVs to minimise the amount of traffic on Princes Street. When one bus driver was asked why he used RC-GSS he replied: “It doesn’t say that you can’t!”

The bus driver neatly captured the planning approach by the City of Edinburgh Council – they have focussed exclusively on a vision for the City Centre using Parliamentary authority to set aside any complaints of residents regarding traffic displacement. They have been very fast to ban cars and HGVs from commercial streets, but then try to encourage more to come into the city through incentives such as free parking in the ‘Alive after Five’ campaign.

In short, the Council has reduced road space in the centre, but both expects and is actively promoting higher levels of traffic to come in and out of Edinburgh over longer periods of the day. Unfortunately the Council’s policy means that this increased traffic now has to access the city centre via residential roads.

The Tram, when operational, will make congestion worse as it is now an additional transport system, not even able to replace the Airport bus or the No. 22, which will both continue to serve the public!

### The Democratic Deficit

Having rejected the findings of the West End Traffic Workshops, organised by your Transport and Environment subcommittee at the invitation of the Council, the Council has created a much smaller ‘Transport Forum’. Only one member of that Forum actually lives in the city centre but the Forum is being asked to approve plans to move inter-city buses off Princes Street on to Queen Street in a way that is likely to directly affect city centre residents. For example, this approval is requested without any admission that residential streets may then be required to carry both ‘in service’ and ‘out of service’ inter-city buses – the largest, heaviest buses in service in the UK. These buses are so

intrusive, that the Council promoted a weight limit in Charlotte Square that would prohibit such buses from entering or exiting the square via Hope Street.

Incredibly, the Council claim that they cannot put in place similar protection for residential streets.

### **Not just one street or one community!**

As the above map from Google shows, traffic congestion is now a feature of residential streets even on Sunday morning. *However, this is not just a problem for one street in one community.* Accidents have increased in the residential parts of the city centre and congestion spreads outwards neighbouring communities such as Stockbridge are directly affected as well. This includes residential parts of the Old Town as traffic that would previously have used Princes Street is now directed by Sat. Nav. to take the Western Approach road and then through the Cowgate and Holyrood park – roads far less suitable for heavy traffic than Princes Street.

This means that it is important to make links with adjacent communities who have now been hoping for improvements since 2008 when tram works started, but who will see things get worse as the Tram commands what is left of the road space in the city centre.

### **STOP PRESS - Charlotte Square TRO**

The arrangements for this Public Hearing have just been announced, and set a very tight timetable and surprisingly restrictive process:

- Submissions on paper (electronic copies are not sufficient) by 18 Dec 2013
- Hearing on Tue 14 to Wed 15 Jan 2014

The Reporter, Mr Robert Loughridge, has chosen to deal with the impacts of the proposed TRO on existing traffic flows *separately* from consideration of how traffic might be displaced by the scheme into adjacent streets. This artificial separation of necessarily linked elements, if allocated equal time, will mean that they are examined on

different days. Adequate representation would require each complainant to take two working days leave to attend, placing an unequal burden on complainants versus proposers.

If you have received an invitation to attend this Hearing, please let us know whether you intend to and let us have a copy of your submission so that we can make sure your concerns get represented (e-mail below).

### **What can you do as individuals?**

As your Traffic and Environment Subcommittee we have represented your concerns to Edinburgh's Council, the Scottish Government, DEFRA and the UK Government, run the West End Traffic Workshops and successfully taken your concerns to the UN in Geneva. However, with one exception, we have been refused participation in the 'new' Transport Forum and need new voices to be heard, and new links between communities to show just how many people living in Edinburgh are affected.

We would like you to:

(i) think of your friends across Edinburgh who are affected by the displacement shown in the map above, and ask them to send their email details to us so that we can keep them informed and involved. Please send these to:

Alistair Laing [emersontcl@tiscali.co.uk];

(ii) refer to our website:

**[www.edinburghtramfacts.com](http://www.edinburghtramfacts.com)**

- for background information and encourage people to get involved in spreading the word through the social media attached to the site

(iii) Contact us – via Alistair's address – if you would like to join our subcommittee or have any skills or resources you would like to help our campaign with.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Ashley Lloyd .

## **Neighbourhood Watch**

### Rise in crime in Newtown.

Over the spring and summer there have been several break-ins in our area. The police have been targeting a number of groups who opportunistically break in during the day light hours giving the appearance of tradesmen or similar. Basements are most at risk.

The police have a very useful document which can be accessed by contacting their home security team on the following link:

[EdinburghPreventandIntervent@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:EdinburghPreventandIntervent@scotland.pnn.police.uk)

The document contains information on measures to make your home more secure as well as sensible advice such as not opening doors to unexpected callers etc...

I have renewed our membership with neighbourhood watch so that the current committee will receive emails regarding crime in our area. The Committee members will endeavor to disseminate this information to the Moray Feu house holders and are currently examining the best way to do so.

Julie Stirling

## **Honey Bees**

Finally, the committee wonders if there may be a case for introducing bees to the bank gardens. The position is ideally suited to bees largely because of the lime trees of which they are peculiarly fond. The hive or hives could be placed in an out of the way corner of the garden possibly behind the gardeners hut and their presence would not be noticed unless you sought them out.

It would require an enthusiastic group of feuars to manage the bees but if you have done it before, or if you would like to take up a fascinating hobby please register your interest with the office.