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Blocked Gulleys

The blockages in the gulleys on the cycle track seem to be intractable. Flooding has been extensive on occasion over recent months. It is hard to tell if rubble is still down there in the wake of construction of the cycle track or if the blockages occur because of earth, twigs and other debris washing down into the drain. We chase CLARENCE up regularly and would urge all park users and cyclists to do so as well when flooding occurs – 0800 25 25 25. Remember to ask for a job number, as being able to quote it helps with the (sadly, inevitably necessary) follow up phone calls.



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Current committee – office bearers

Chair: Jane Christodoulidis (tel: 556 7260 chair@kgvsy.org.uk)
Secretary: Judy Conn (tel: 556 6143 secretary@kgvsy.org.uk)
Treasurer: Lesley McClymont (tel: 557 2198 treasurer@kgvsy.org.uk)

Please join the Friends or renew your subscription for another year.

Suggested subscription £5/Concession £1

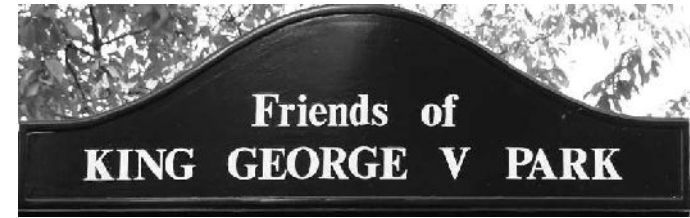
Cheques to Friends of King George V and Scotland Yard Parks

Please send to Judy Conn, 1 Fettes Row, EH3 6SF

Name.....Amount.....

Address.....

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FRIENDS OF KING GEORGE V AND SCOTLAND YARD PARKS

Scottish Charity SC033445

NEWSLETTER Spring 2011

Scotland Street Tunnel Play Area

We now have to hand an impressively comprehensive Conservation Statement dealing with the history of the tunnel and the park. The Statement records their historical and cultural significance, establishes a conservation policy and sets the context for future work to improve the tunnel mouth, adjacent playground and the park as a whole. Our thanks to Edinburgh World Heritage and to Diageo who jointly funded the Statement and to architects Simon Laird Associates who drew it up. The Statement should provide a useful basis for approaching funders for help with future development of the site as a dedicated and managed facility for young people. Internal work, external work or both? – those are the issues which the working party, of which the Friends are members, is currently debating. For a start, Simon Laird Associates will work up costings for the kind of flexible and imaginative use of the external space which they envisaged three years ago in the wake of the survey they carried out for us of the views of local residents. The Secretary can email a PDF copy to any park user interested in seeing the Conservation Statement.

Many people have suggested that a good fund raising venture would be for the Friends to organise and charge for trips up the tunnel and word of mouth indicates that there would be no shortage of takers. If only..... Unfortunately the tunnel is classified as a Confined Space and a risk assessment has highlighted the potential for build up of toxic gases. As a result gas monitoring equipment and a mine rescue team are required for any visits or inspections. All this however, did not deter Callum MacLeod, the leader of the open air youth club in the park, and PC Greig Stephen, now attached to Broughton High School. Having jumped through all the administrative hoops and with the Fire Brigade in attendance, they took a group of young people up the tunnel on 15th February, to the huge excitement of all

concerned. Sadly, from a practical point of view this is likely to have been a rare occurrence.

The promised lighting for the eastern section of the park has still to be installed but we are reassured by the knowledge that funding for it has definitely been allocated and we are confident that it will be in place by the time the nights begin to draw in again.

Fencing

Something to look forward to.... We have been lucky enough to net some money which seems to have been sloshing around the bottom of the Council's coffers at the end of the financial year and, as a result, new railings are on order for the entire Eyre Place and Logan Street boundary of the park. This is truly good news. The current fencing, at its best not much more than a step up from chicken wire, is broken down in several places allowing short cuts into the park through the bushes, creating illicit paths of compacted earth. New railings will enhance not only the park but also the streetscape.. We are grateful to Ritchie Fraser, our Community Parks Officer, who has achieved this for us.



Planting

More thanks are due to Ritchie and to Jennifer Johnstone, our Park Ranger. A word in their ear led to the relaying of the granite setts surrounding the beds at the Logan Street gate, where the uncontained earth otherwise regularly washed down the slope in heavy rain. For good measure Ritchie and Jennifer also arranged for the beds to be replanted and the cherry on the cake in this corner of the park is the reinstatement of the gates.



Back in November Jennifer obtained 5000 crocus bulbs for us and the first day of our recent hard winter's frost and snow coincided with the day set aside for a community planting session. We eventually got the bulbs into the ground just as their more mature kin were blooming elsewhere in the city. They will come into their own next year.

A cautious welcome may be due to some promising green shoots. The native bluebells which we planted two years ago and which had subsequently stubbornly failed to show the slightest sign of life may have relented. A few have appeared on the slope down from Royal Crescent. We may see a little bluebell wood there yet if we are patient – well, possibly very patient.

And, finally, we realise that we have a real trouper of a tree, planted last year inside the circular seat in the centre of the park. We had feared for it – after all a judas tree is native to the Mediterranean and doesn't seem like the best choice for a frost hollow in a northern European east coast city even in a mild winter, let alone one with record low temperatures – but, there it is, looking bright as a button. It has survived the natural hazards of winter. We hope it will have no human ones to face should the summer ahead bring out the vandals..

Parks Assessment 2010

Once again in the Council's annual rating of the city's parks we have been graded Very Good. And once again we are perplexed as to how that can be. Certainly the park has improved markedly over the past six or seven years but it has a way to go. The assessment takes the form of two unannounced visits by one or two members of Parks and Greenspaces staff, often accompanied by a volunteer, perhaps a member of another park's friends' group. They employ a quality check list, ticking off such boxes as Cleanliness and Maintenance, Sustainability, Health and Safety and Signage.

Bellevue Chapel

On 15th and 16th August a group from the Chapel in Cornwallis Place have generously offered to carry out some much needed maintenance work in the park – weeding and hoeing, with particular emphasis on scraping away the grass and earth which in so many places obscure the attractively laid granite setts which define the edges of the paths. Jennifer Johnstone has promised practical support and we hope to provide an arsenal of hoes. The group will be happy to welcome any other park users who would be willing to pitch in. On the evening of the 15th August they hope to have a singer and music in the park. We will post more details on the notice boards nearer the time.