

# West Blacket Association

## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2015

### Annual General Meeting

Monday, November 23rd 2015

The Minto Hotel, 16-18 Minto Street

**All Residents Welcome**

**730pm**

Welcome (refreshments provided from 700pm)

Chairman's and Treasurer's reports

Election of Office bearers and committee

**800pm**

### Bridgend – A Gardening Community

Tom Hardwick, longstanding gardener at Bridgend Allotments and member of the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, will explain the history and development of the allotments and also provide some helpful insights into successful vegetable growing



Bridgend Allotments

**Present committee members are:** Richard Grant (Chair), Nigel Cumming (Treasurer), Mike Hunter (Hon Sec), Kate O'Brien (Membership Secretary), Ian Carter, Alice Foster, Evelynne Hill, Maggie Stevenson, Rosemary Wake, Carolyn Walker.

**Office Bearers.** Richard Grant has served as Chair for 3 years and will be standing down at the AGM, but is willing to continue as a member of the committee. Maggie Stevenson has agreed to be nominated for election as Chair at the AGM.

**Nominations to the committee.** All WBA members are eligible to stand for election and new members are very welcome. Nominations in writing please to Mike Hunter, Hon Sec, 40 Upper Gray Street, or by email to [dr.m.j.hunter@gmail.com](mailto:dr.m.j.hunter@gmail.com).

For more information see our website: [www.westblacket.org.uk](http://www.westblacket.org.uk)

## Who are we?

The WBA is an amenity association for part of the Blacket Conservation Area, from Salisbury Place to West Mayfield and from Upper and South Gray Streets to Minto Street. Our main purpose is the preservation and improvement of the general amenity of the West Blacket area. This includes consultation with the Council on their plans for parking, traffic and recycling, and on Planning Applications under consideration. We also hope to encourage good neighbour relations, through Neighbourhood Watch and by organising some social events for our members. If you are not already a member, please join us.

## Planning Matters

We get notice of all planning applications, and look in detail at any which might adversely affect our area. We comment on some applications, not always negatively, and certainly don't object to all developments. We are also represented by Mike Hunter on the Grange Prestonfield Community Council which separately considers planning applications in its area.

The proposals to demolish the former Paramount Printers buildings in Causewayside and replace by purpose-built student accommodation raised many objections – not in principle but because of over-development of the site. A revised application answered many of these objections and was given planning approval. Demolition is now in progress.

There are two further planning proposals in, or affecting, the West Blacket area.

Corner of Upper Gray Street and Duncan Street: This has been a semi-derelict site for some time and the West Blacket Association welcomed in principle proposals to redevelop the site. We encouraged members and other near neighbours to comment on the proposals and many took advantage of this. We understand that this application will be considered by the council in the near future.

Hendry & MacDonalds Garage, 20 Duncan Street. A planning proposal has been submitted to build 28 'studio apartments' (ie bedsits with bathrooms) on this site, with access through the pend on Duncan Street. Details can be found on the City of Edinburgh Council website: ref 15/04585/FUL. We have objected to the density and quality of this proposed development and to the lack of satisfactory arrangements for refuse collection and parking provision.

## Social Activities

This year's programme of **summer walks** was organised by Maggie Stevenson and Carolyn Walker. The first walk on May 17th, which was well attended, started from Colinton village, continued through the glen to the Water of Leith Visitor Centre and returned via the canal viaduct and old railway tunnel. The second walk on May 27 began at Greenbank Crescent, returning to Newington via Morningside and Bruntsfield. The final walk on July 30 was a 'History Ramble' through the Astley Ainslie hospital grounds and was very well attended.



Stevenson's statue in Colinton

There have been two meetings of the **history group** this year. On November 20, Jackie Grant led a curated visit to the War Poets Collection at Craiglockhart. The focus of the meeting on 9 March, held at the MacLaren's, was on local cemeteries: East Preston Street (Ron Hill) and Grange (Rosemary Wake).

Carolyn Walker talked about the work of the recently established Friends of Newington Cemetery. Members are encouraged to share snippets of information, including events of interest, through an 'open email' list which helps to maintain contact between meetings. The next meeting, planned for February 2016, will centre on the West Blacket architectural features project which Kate O'Brien is leading.

Our **autumn social** on the afternoon of Sunday October 25 was attended by 39 members of the association. There was a quiz to challenge members' knowledge of the area. Do you recognise this letter box?



Where is this?