

West Blacket Association

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2019

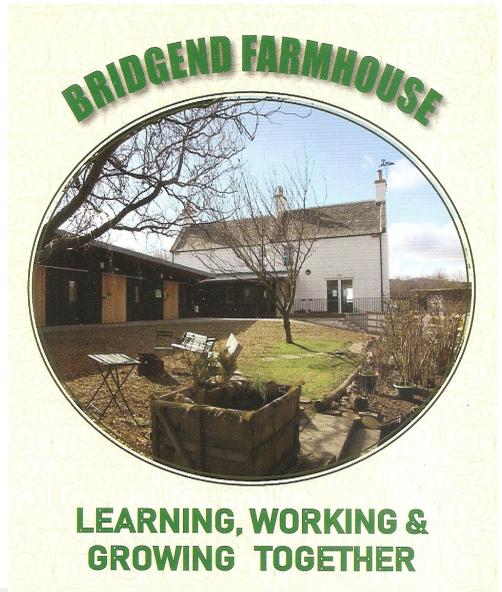
Annual General Meeting

Monday, November 25th 2019
Old Bell (upstairs room), Causewayside

All Residents Welcome

730pm Welcome (refreshments provided from 700pm)
Chairman's and Treasurer's reports
Election of Office bearers and committee

800pm **Donna McArdle,**
*Bridgend Farmhouse
Development Manager,*
will talk about the aims,
progress to date & future plans
of this local project.



Present committee members are: Maggie Stevenson (Chair), Nigel Cumming (Treasurer), Mike Hunter (Hon Sec), Kate O'Brien (Membership Secretary), Ian Carter, Alice Foster, Evelynne Hill, Rosemary Wake, Charles Warlow & Cathie Wright.

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

For more information see our website: 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

Work on converting the former Minto Hotel to residential use had continued slowly during the year but would appear to finally be nearing completion. Minto St has been the location of several other proposals this year; - a proposal for a substantial bedroom extension at the rear of the Thrums Hotel (14-15 M St) which was subsequently withdrawn following significant objections; - a further extension at the rear of the guest house at 23 Minto St which was refused by Planning; - and approval for the conversion of the Strathallan Guest House at 44 Minto St to 4 flats (a similar scheme had been approved previously but that permission had lapsed). Just to the south approval was granted at the end of 2018 for conversion of the Abcorn Guest House at 4 Mayfield Gardens to a 15 person House in multiple occupation (HMO) but both this & the Strathallan appear to be continuing as guest houses meantime.

This year finally saw a start being made on the corner site of Duncan St and Upper Gray St where approval exists for the construction of 2 townhouses on Duncan St and a separate cottage in Upper Gray St. Work on foundations for the 3 houses started in March and was completed by July. The lack of further activity thereafter was surprising but would seem to relate to a building control delay as a warrant for the superstructure works of the townhouses has only just been issued in October.

The other substantial proposal in Duncan St was the proposed conversion of the Hendry & Macdonald workshop to student accommodation which finally received approval this year. We have been informed of some limited changes in preparation but revised drawings have yet to be lodged with Planning. The substantial alterations and roof works at the National Library building on Causewayside were completed during the year and the two yellow flue pipes on the Upper Gray Street frontage are now down to one!



Original Flue Pipes

West Blacket History Group

Childhood was the theme of the annual meeting (25 February), once again graciously hosted by Kate and Nigel. We were joined by several teddies in spending a convivial evening with memories, possessions, match the baby quiz, and kiddy party delights.

On 4 April several members visited the Edinburgh City Museum Collection Centre at Broughton Market. It was fascinating to see the wide range of artifacts held and maintained there, ancient and relatively modern (such as dolls' houses and the bronze pigeons which used to adorn Leith Walk). We appreciated also that our hosts got back on queries which they could not answer on the day. Another interesting and social year.

Iain MacLaren

Iain MacLaren, long resident in this area, was a valued member of the WBA and a generous host, together with his wife Fiona, in welcoming members of the History Group to their home on several occasions. Iain died, aged 92, on 3rd October and a thanksgiving service at Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church on 12th October was attended by members of the Association.

Bartholomews

A staff reunion lunch party on 7th September at Roger Pountain and Alice Foster's house for some of the employees of John Bartholomew & Son Ltd.

included a visit to see inside the former works, on the suggestion of Sandy & Ian Carter. The 25 guests who were able to take part very much appreciated this unusual chance – not only to see the conversion of the grand entrance hall for the first time since the company was moved to Bishopbriggs in 1995 (after merging with William Collins and other companies to form the present HarperCollins mega-publisher), but also to see Ian and Sandra's flat – where they had some Barts' memorabilia on show. The flat was for many years the main drawing office until the 1970s, and later the sales office, with the company's first computer (occupying its own room!). In the photo, Ian Carter is on the far right and Alice in the middle at the front.



Inside Bartholomew House

Garden Party in South Gray Street

On the afternoon of Sunday 16th June, WBA held a Garden party; a good number of members came along - some bringing delicious nibbles, home bakes and other goodies.

Luckily, the sun appeared and we relaxed with a glass or two of fizz and then tea and tasting of the fine home baking. It was a pleasant, sociable summer afternoon.

We were joined by one or two younger ones who were inducted into the dark art of golf croquet, explored the outhouses and the new pond in Maggie and Colin's garden.

Thank you all for your welcome contributions which were much appreciated.



Smiles, Glass of Fizz & A Sun Hat