

West Blacket Association

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2011

Annual General Meeting: November 28th

Social Events

Summer Walks

Local History Group

Glut Group

Neighbourhood Watch



SUMMER WALK

www.westblacket.org.uk

View from the Chair

Rosemary Wake

It seems a strangely quiet year compared with last, perhaps due to all that snow and waiting for spring, or perhaps summer... For the Committee it was less busy since the proposals for amendment to the constitution and for setting the Association on a more secure financial footing, all of which had been time-consuming, were passed by the membership at the 2010 AGM. Following the business meeting we enjoyed a fascinating session on how geology has shaped our city, with especial reference, of course, to our local volcano. We are most grateful to Angus Miller of Geowalks for accepting our invitation and for struggling through the snows to reach us. And to the Minto Hotel for providing the venue.

Nor has it been a particularly busy year for planning applications, monitoring which is one of the most important activities of the committee. Road works have continued to be a matter of concern, and we have continued to press for the upgrading of the road surface of South Gray Street. From the spring we were aware that some streets in the area, including Minto Street, were to be dug up to allow upgrading of gas mains. This did not happen as initially scheduled. It was disappointing that alerts regarding parking only appeared after work had started and following enquiry from members of the Committee but clear-up work on the first phase, including relaying the cobbles in Middleby Street, has gone well. Disruption will continue for some time, however, as there are many weeks of work still ahead.

The variety of events held in the past year is described elsewhere in the newsletter and I would like, on behalf of the membership to thank again those individuals involved in organising them. Social get-togethers, visits, walks, the glut group, the history group - a varied menu. It is also reassuring to see that the Neighbourhood Watch, which in the WBA works through an email alert system seems to be coming to life again.

Hope to see you at the AGM and best wishes for the year ahead!

Annual General Meeting 2011

November 28th, 730-930pm

Minto Hotel, 16-18 Minto Street

At this AGM, most of the current committee will stand for re-election at the meeting but we are keen to recruit further members. If you would like more information on what is involved, contact any of the office-bearers. Nominations for election should be sent to the Secretary.

Rosemary Wake has been a very active Chairman since her election in November 2009 and now wishes to relinquish that position but remain as Committee member. Richard Grant has agreed to stand for election as Chairman from November 2011.

730pm Welcome (tea/coffee provided)

800pm Chairman's report

Treasurer's report

Election of Office Bearers and Committee members

815pm John Palmer, **Grange/Prestonfield Community Council**

The New Kid on the Block; the role of the GPCC

845pm General discussion (cash bar available)

930pm Close

West Blacket Committee 2010-11

Chairman: Rosemary Wake, 9B Middleby Street.

Email: erwake@btinternet.com

Treasurer: Evelynne Hill, 37 Upper Gray Street

Tel: 0131 667 0675

Secretary: Mike Hunter, 40 Upper Gray Street

Tel: 0131 667 1767. **Email:** dr.m.j.hunter@gmail.com

Ian Carter, Duncan Street

Alice Foster, Upper Gray Street

Richard Grant, Duncan Street

Jane Griffiths, Middleby Street

Kate O'Brien Minto Street

Social Events

During the last two years, the West Blacket Association has organised a number of social events for its members. This is one of our important functions. Suggestions for future events (and offers to host them) are welcome.

Winter Warmer

Around 30 members attended the WBA's Winter Warmer in February hosted this year by Jackie and Richard Grant in Duncan St. We have now run events like this for the last few years and they provide an opportunity for convivial company and socialising on a winter's afternoon when Christmas and the New Year are well behind but spring still seems distant. Thanks to all those members who joined us for this event.

Autumn Celebration

It was good to see members at the 'Autumn Celebration' on Sunday October 2nd . As well as socialising over wine and nibbles, tea and scones, we took the opportunity to fund-raise for Barnardo's children's charity which operates locally. Contributions of books, plants and garden produce were sold, enabling us to make a donation of £150.

Also in attendance were a number of A-list fruit and vegetable celebrities, including Dame Marrow Fonteyn, The Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Poppers and Pipers, Harry Potater, and joint prize-winners Popeye (made from spinach of course) and Chuck Berry.

Thanks to Kate o'Brien and Nigel Cumming for hosting, and all who participated.

Social Bridge

Since September we have had a small group of social bridge players getting together for occasional games. Some are regular club players and others are trying to remember their bidding and playing skills.



Opening a bottle of wine

Summer Walks

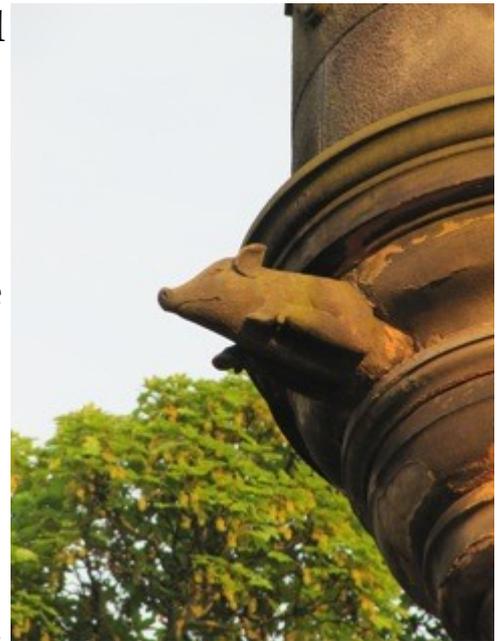
Evelynne Hill

Our second summer walks programme started in May with two evening wanders following the excellent 'Southside Heritage Walk' leaflet produced by the Southside Heritage Group (available from the South Side Community Centre in Nicolson Street). We extended our second walk into Greyfriars Churchyard and found the resting places of many famous Edinburgh citizens.

We continued with nearby walks to Blackford Pond and the Hermitage of Braid, Holyrood Park and Duddingston and the Innocent Railway. A 'History Walk' then took us out through Sciennes and Marchmont and back by Bruntsfield Links and the Meadows where we saw some evidence of the International Exhibition of 1886.

Our final walk was on a Sunday afternoon when we took the bus to Little France. Our walk took us into Craigmillar Castle Park, past the Castle, down Lady Susan's Walk and then to the Bridgend Allotments. We were very lucky to spot a bullfinch and to come across a fine patch of orchids. Also, to our delight, the allotment holders were having an open day and we were able to 'stock up' with their produce. We crossed Dalkeith Road and explored Inch House and grounds before returning home by Craigmillar Park.

We managed some impromptu socialising on some of our walks with a stop off at the Sheep Heid Inn and a glass of wine in a quiet garden. Have you any ideas for next year? We would love to hear from you.



Heriots Gateway Pig

West Blacket History

Rosemary Wake

WBA members with an interest in local history had various ways of indulging it this year: a meeting, a visit and the 'history walks'.

The best-known green sites in south Edinburgh are the Meadows and Holyrood Park but there are others less obvious. In April, Peter McGowan talked to the group about surveys of historic landscapes, illustrated by three he had carried out for the City of Edinburgh. Newington Cemetery, on the west side of Dalkeith Road, opened in 1846, its layout comprising walks, trees, terraces and catacombs. The others, Inch Park and Pollock Halls, had their origins in domestic settings. Inch Park, today a public park with sports pitches and the council's plant nursery, started as the estate of Inch House (now used as a community centre). Edinburgh University's Pollock Halls complex developed around three 19th century Scots baronial villas - St Leonards, Salisbury Green and Abden House. All had a connection with the Nelson publishing family. The landscape combines mature trees from the old gardens and imaginative plantings producing fine displays for each season. The reports are fascinating and are available as pdf downloads on the edinburgh.gov.uk website. We are most grateful to Peter for introducing us to them.

June saw the long-heralded visit to the Royal College of Surgeons. Iain MacLaren was our guide. He gave us a very informative and lively commentary on the building and its collections, taking us to rooms not normally seen by the public. He showed us portraits and sculptures of many noted surgeons explaining their contributions to the development of medicine. We were able to wander round the museum with its many displays and Iain was on hand to answer questions and to provide anecdotes. We greatly appreciated Iain's arranging of the visit and his enthusiastic presentation.

As with the visit so with the walks - you can't beat having an enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide, indeed guides, in this case Ron and Evelynne Hill who brought together material and led us round and behind the streets and buildings of the university area and across the open spaces of the Meadows.

Glut Group

As we enter the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, a reminder to members of the Glut Group that if you have any excess plants or garden produce you would like to share, we'd love to hear from you. New members are always welcome - if you would like to join us, please contact Kate O'Brien, kate.obrien@hotmail.co.uk

Neighbourhood Watch

We continue to receive newsletters from Lothian & Borders Police, as well as regular and often very useful communications from the Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches. In recent months we have also formed a link with the nearby Blasket watch, with a view to sharing information about local concerns and incidents. Our strength is in our local knowledge so if you are aware of any crimes in the area and think it would be helpful to alert your neighbours, please contact Kate O'Brien kate.obrien@hotmail.co.uk so that the information can be passed on. New members are most welcome - help with running the NHW would be greatly appreciated and need not be time-consuming. If you are interested, please contact Kate directly.

West Blasket Email

We are now routinely using email to communicate with members who have access to email and are happy for us to do this. Email allows us to communicate quickly and easily and has been used during the past year to notify members of events and pass on information about local developments. We are grateful to members who have given us their email addresses for this purpose and we will be continuing to use email as our primary method of written communication in the future.

Nevertheless, we will continue to ensure that members without email continue to receive paper notification of WBA events.

Autumn Celebration Photos



Celebrity Vegetables



Books on Sale for Charity



Junior Winner



Senior Winner

History Walk Photos



Newsletter Editor: dr.m.j.hunter@gmail.com