

# West Blacket Association & Neighbourhood Watch

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Newsletter November 2005

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## Annual General Meeting

The West Blacket Association AGM will be held on Monday November 21st at the Unionist Club, 5 Duncan Street. All residents welcome.

730pm	<i>Refreshments and membership renewals</i>
800pm	<i>Chairman's report</i>
	<i>Treasurer's report</i>
	<i>Election of Officers &amp; Committee</i>
830pm	<i>Discussion: Parking &amp; Traffic (City Official John Gill)</i>
930pm	<i>Close</i>

## Parking & Traffic

Parking within West Blacket is a continuing problem. The WBA Committee has written to local churches pointing out, very politely, that cars parked on pavements on Sundays are a hazard to pedestrians, especially those with young children and the disabled. Although we had very encouraging responses from the churches, and the problem went away for a few weeks, we were advised that some of those parking on pavements in the evenings and at weekends are local residents.

Our plans in 2001 for traffic calming in West Blacket, including prevention of through traffic between Duncan Street and Blacket Avenue, were discussed with City of Edinburgh Officials and Councillors. These proposals were withdrawn because of objections from local residents. Does anyone feel we should try again, obviously for different measures? In a broader context, how do residents feel about the major changes to traffic in the centre of Edinburgh during the previous 6 months or so? Have these met the Council's objectives of speeding public transport, encouraging cycling, and making life more pleasant for pedestrians?

## Membership

Subscriptions for the year to November 2006 remain at £2/individual or £3/household and may be paid at the AGM or, if you are unable to attend, to Evelynne Hill. Newsletters are delivered to all residents, but some events may be advertised only to paid-up members

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*Please return this slip to Evelynne Hill, WBA Treasurer, 37 Upper Gray Street*

Name :

Address :

£2 enclosed

£3 enclosed

## West Blacket Association

For new residents, the Upper Gray Street Association was set up in 1966 to object to the proposed demolition of a Georgian villa at what was then 20, now 22, Upper Gray Street. The association subsequently expanded, as the West Blacket Association, to become the community association for the part of the Blacket Conservation Area not 'within the gates' and therefore not represented by the Blacket Association. The two associations are distinct though often confused. For those with internet access, further details and some local history can be found at - <http://www.calamari.art.btinternet.co.uk/WBA/>

Although community associations cannot have the same constitutional status as Community Councils, the City of Edinburgh Council sees us as important conduits for local opinion. No less important a function of community associations is to foster good neighbour relations, both by organising social events, and more formally in the Neighbourhood Watch which has been active in West Blacket for more than 10 years.

The present committee membership includes some residents of very long standing, but we have been fortunate to have had infusions of new blood at intervals, including some members who have moved to the area only very recently following the new developments.

**Chairman:** *Brian Charlesworth, 39 Minto Street . 662 1725  
brian.charlesworth@ed.ac.uk*

**Secretary:** *Mike Hunter, 40 Upper Gray Street. 667 1767.  
dr.m.j.hunter@btopenworld.com.*

**Treasurer:** *Evelynne Hill, 37 Upper Gray Street. 667 0675.*

**Neighbourhood Watch:** *Jane Griffiths, Stella Pryde, James Campbell*

**Other Members:**

*Irene Brown, 32 Minto Street*

*Ian Carter, 3 Bartholomew House, 12 Duncan Street*

*Jackie Grant, 3 Duncan Street*

*Jeff Robinson, 1 Middleby Street*

*Chris Theobald, 8a South Gray Street*

Jackie Grant, who has served on the WBA Committee since 1990, including terms as Hon Sec, Chair, and Planning Officer, now wishes to stand down from the Committee. We owe her a big thank you.

The other current Officer Holders and Committee Members are willing to continue during 2005-6, but the committee would welcome new members, by election at the AGM (nominations cordially invited - to Mike or Evelynne please) or by co-option.

## Neighbourhood Watch News

"Neighbours who watch" may remember some confusion about police:neighbourhood liaison this time last year. Eventually a standardised newsletter replaced regular police meetings with neighbourhood watches, and the police undertook to attend annual meetings of street or neighbourhood associations. The West Blacket Neighbourhood Watch decided that we would continue in existence, with street representatives meeting each other occasionally, and ensuring that the newsletter was displayed in the usual places. These are the newsagents in Minto Street, the post office in Salisbury Place, and Nigel Griffiths surgery.

The police newsletter improved over the year, with a mixture of local news and general advice and announcements. Unfortunately there have been hitches in circulation over the past 3 months. The police will ensure that circulation resumes again now. The newsletter is also distributed in libraries and other public places. We now have a new community Inspector, Graham Jones, and community beat officer John Leadbetter (Tel 666 2222).

The West Blacket NHW is very grateful to Col Robert Gurdon, one of our founding members, and to Stella Pryde, both now standing down. Their contributions have been invaluable and will be greatly missed. Thanks to James Campbell, South Gray Street, for taking their place and representing the neighbourhood watch at WBA meetings. If you would like to be involved in Neighbourhood Watch, please come to the forthcoming West Blacket AGM, or contact existing street reps.

<i>Duncan St:</i>	<i>Jill Baldwin 667 4022</i>
<i>Middleby St:</i>	<i>Jane Griffiths 667 4496</i>
<i>Minto St:</i>	<i>Alan Westlake 667 7154</i>
	<i>Kate O'Brien</i>
<i>South Gray St:</i>	<i>James Campbell 668 4347</i>
	<i>John Paterson 662 8490</i>

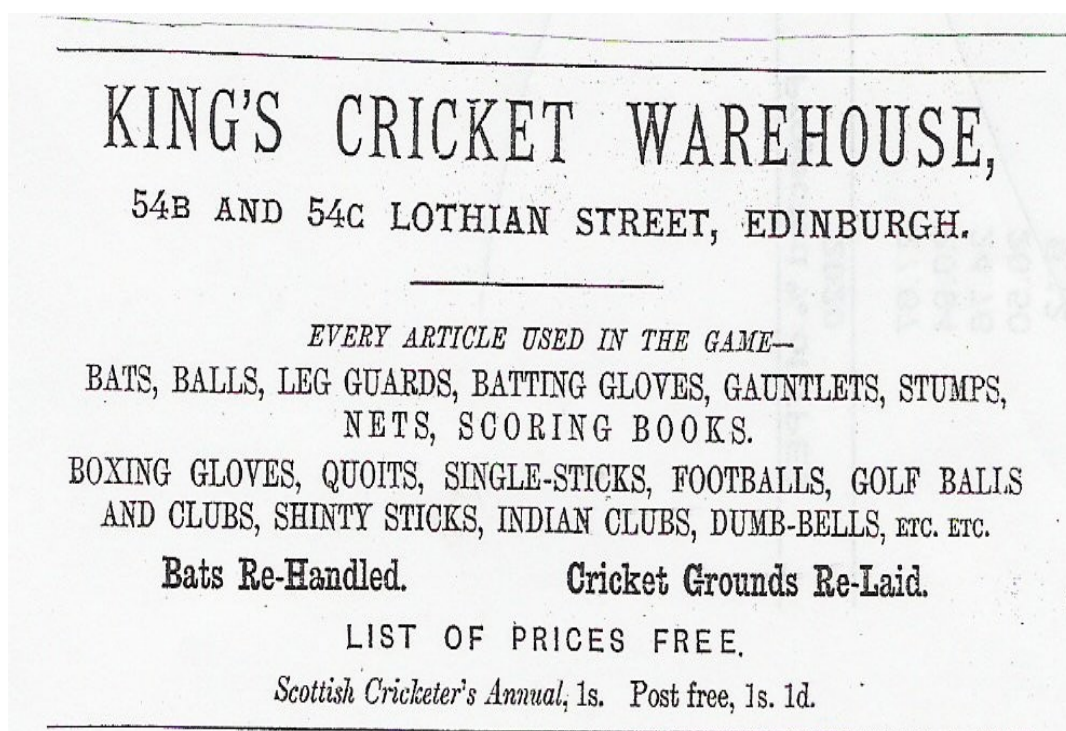
## Planning Matters

Living as we do in an Outstanding Conservation Area, we cannot change the external appearance of our houses without obtaining Planning Permission from the City of Edinburgh Council. If a house is individually Listed for its architectural or historic interest, even internal alterations may require Listed Building Consent before proceeding. Applications for Planning Permission are notified to local residents in case they may wish to object. These notifications appear in the Edinburgh Evening News, and are copied to amenity associations such as the West Blacket Association. Immediate neighbours are required by law to have individual notification. The WBA does not always comment on planning applications, but will be pleased to discuss objections and may lend support. Objections to planning applications must be considered by Planning Officials and may be put to the Planning Committee. If the objection is judged to be valid, the objector must be informed of the Council's decision. It is generally believed that objections from many individuals are more likely to influence the Planning Committee than a single objection from an amenity association such as ourselves. However, do not expect your objections always to influence the outcome. Applicants for planning permission are well advised to approach Planning officials in advance and to tailor their application according to advice received.

## Local History: Ron Hill

West Blasket can claim a brief association with one of Scotland's first professional sporting personalities.

The 1891 Census shows Percival King, together with his wife and niece, living at 25 Upper Gray Street. All three then operated their 'Cricket Warehouse' on the now demolished south side of Lothian Street, close to the McEwan Hall.



Percival King (born in London in 1835) came to Edinburgh in 1861/62 as Cricket Professional to Merchiston School. Alongside coaching, playing and organising cricket he soon established his sports equipment business.

Through most of the 1870s and 80s he edited and published a *Scottish Cricketers' Annual*, detailing the fortunes of Scotland's many clubs of the time. (His own prodigious batting performances feature among the comprehensive statistics.)

Growing interest in football (both association and rugby) and in lawn tennis provided further custom for the warehouse. (Even goalposts feature in their price lists.) Other sports enthusiasts catered for were golfers, gymnasts, and exponents of croquet, hockey and lacrosse.

Perhaps the Kings became tired of commuting from Upper Gray Street. The 1893-94 *Post Office Directory* shows them living at 42 Lothian Street, a few yards from the shop that continued operating till around the end of the century.