

West Blacket Association

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2010

Annual General Meeting: November 29th

Winter Warmer

Summer Walks

Local History Group

Garden Visits

Glut Group



A GARDEN IN WEST BLACKET

www.westblacket.org.uk

View from the Chair

Rosemary Wake

West Blacket is a small area but we may seldom meet our neighbours (this may be especially difficult for newcomers). When we do, it is clear that this is a friendly place. WBA aims to sustain our local community. New this year is the 'Glut Group' which lets us share surplus plants and produce. This operates by email. A model for the future? This has been a good year for real get-togethers. Notable is the number of people involved in activities, helping with history meetings, summer walks and socials. Thanks especially to the hosts who made possible our enjoyable prowling round back gardens in August.

The Committee has continued to monitor planning applications, maintain the Neighbourhood Watch, and represent the area at the Community Council and Civic Forum. It has also looked to the future. We spent time on revising the Constitution to permit co-option; on finance; and on how to maximise membership so that the Association can continue to work effectively for residents. This is the background to the proposals being put to the AGM.

Feedback is that the WBA is valued but this is a small area and if the many are not to be subsidised by the goodwill of a few, we need to recruit and retain members. Feedback is also that people are vague as to whether they have paid a sub. To assist with this, members will in future receive a card to pin up in an obvious place...

Last year we welcomed architect Ben Tindall to the AGM, to talk on Energy Saving in a Conservation Area. This year's guest, Angus Miller of Geowalks, fits well with our recent focus on getting out and about.

I hope to see you at the AGM on 29 November and at WBA events in the future. Please join us. And support us.

Annual General Meeting 2010

November 29th, 715-900pm

Minto Hotel, 16-18 Minto Street

At this AGM, the West Blacket Association Committee will ask approval for changes to our Constitution. We will also propose an increase in the annual subscription, which has remained at £2/£3 since 1993, and invite members to pay by standing order. 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.

715pm Welcome (tea/coffee provided)

730pm Chairman's report

Treasurer's report

Amendments to Constitution

Annual subscriptions

Election of Office Bearers and Committee members

800pm **Angus Miller, Geowalks**

In the volcano's shadow: how Edinburgh's geology has shaped our city

830pm General discussion (cash bar available)

900pm Close

West Blacket Committee 2009-10

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

Irene Brown, Minto Street

Ian Carter, Duncan Street

Alice Foster, Upper Gray Street

Richard Grant, Duncan Street

Jane Griffiths, Middleby Street

Kate O'Brien Minto Street

Winter Warmer

Kate O'Brien

The period immediately after Christmas and Hogmanay can be rather bleak and cheerless. So the West Blasket Association planned a Winter Warmer, a social gathering at Kate and Nigel's house in Minto Street, for an afternoon in late January.

Association members were invited to come along and greet their neighbours, getting 2010 off to a convivial start with drinks, nibbles and abundant community spirit. Around 40 people from 22 households attended, and were suitably warmed by mulled wine, a blazing fire and each other's company.

Summer Walks

Evelynne Hill

In July and August, some members of the Association got together for eight walks around the south side of the city. The walks were informal with people coming along on evenings when they felt like a stroll. Our routes took us around Holyrood Park, to Blackford Hill and by the Innocent Railway to Duddingston village. On two walks with historical interest we went as far as the Canongate and around the Grange.

Most evenings were sunny and calm and fortunately on the one very wet evening the rain cleared just as we set off. On our walks we enjoyed good company, along with fine Scottish summer light and stunning views of our city.



West Blacket History

Going behind the Facade

'Bartholomews' in Duncan Street is so much part of our landscape that we don't notice details of the facade or to think about what went on inside. Members of the History group went behind the facade in March when we got together in the upper hallway and saw elements of the building of 1911, and of Falcon Hall, still in the atrium.



We were meeting to hear Robbie Bartholomew talk about his memories of the family firm. As he described the process of updating maps (continuously needed to reflect changing political boundaries, new emphasis on roads and paths as cycling, touring and walking became popular, decline of railways) we reverently passed round copper plates, lent back by the Bartholomew Archive at the NLS. We marvelled at the skills at each stage of producing folding maps. And at the weight of unbound copies of the mighty Times Atlas of the World which were stored in the hallway and crazed the floor tiles (reassuring to current inhabitants who might have worried about structural causes...).

Our thanks to Robbie Bartholomew and his sister-in-law Ginette, widow of John Bartholomew, for providing us with fascinating insights. And of course to the Carters for allowing us to share their insider view.

The autumn meeting 'Where do you think you are?' (Ron Hill/Rosemary Wake) focused on local history sources including maps, census, directories, wills and newspapers, illustrated with reference to two houses in Duncan Street and to the people behind the Hope Cottage Child Garden. Thanks to the McGowans for hospitality.

The History Group meets twice a year, spring and autumn.

Gardens Event, August 22

Jane Griffiths

Those who caught both Impressionist Gardens and WBA Gardens in August may have been struck by the complementarity. The sunny Sunday wander in our own backyard proved a microcosm of the glorious National Gallery exhibition with its wide range of gardening styles and purposes. Between them 11 gardens here displayed the exotic and formal, ancient and spacious, productive and pleasing, secretive and sheltering, children's playground, everyone's delight - we even had a new public garden which looks like adding an interesting social and visual space to Duncan/Upper Gray Streets. And outstripping the Impressionists we had a fascinating urban bee-keepers garden.

Enthusiastic thanks to all garden owners and Pete Jackson of Earthy - and to the sun which gave an Impressionist glow to the gardens and their visitors.

Glut Group

Kate O'Brien

Are you keen to share your bumper crop of apples, or the extra tomato seedlings you can't bear to throw away? Hate to waste that unfinished packet of seeds which might not keep until next year? Or would you like to benefit from someone else's extra goodies? If you're interested in sharing plants, seeds or produce with your neighbours, join the *Glut Group* and we'll make sure everyone knows what's on offer. Thirteen local households have signed up already, but we're always keen to recruit new members. If you'd like to take part, please email Kate O'Brien at kate.obrien@hotmail.co.uk, or phone 667 4362.

Neighbourhood Watch

Jane Griffiths

Police liaison arrangements have been "reviewed" again, which has resulted in low quantity and quality of contact since PC John Leadbetter was transferred elsewhere. There is now a Safer Neighbourhood Team based at St Leonards whose role will be explained at the AGM.

Gardens Event Photos



Apples in Minto Street



Manicured Lawn



Duncan Street Architectural Garden



Where is this?



Pete of www.earthy.co.uk at...



Earthy's Community Garden