

West Blacket Association

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2014

West Blacket Association AGM
Monday, November 24th 2014
St Columba's Middle Hall, 13 Upper Gray Street

All Residents Welcome

730pm Welcome (refreshments provided)
800pm Chairman's and Treasurer's reports
Election of Office bearers and committee

830pm

Local resident, WBA member and artist
Bob Lees will give an illustrated talk on
'Painters in Arran'

based on the idea that some famous
artists may have visited the island



930pm Close

Membership of the committee. All WBA members are eligible to stand for election. Nominations in writing please to Mike Hunter, Hon Sec, 40 Upper Gray Street, or by email to dr.m.j.hunter@gmail.com

Present members are: Richard Grant (Chair), Evelynne Hill (Treasurer), Ian Carter, Alice Foster, Mike Hunter, Kate O'Brien, Maggie Stevenson, Rosemary Wake, Carolyn Walker.

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.

What have we done this year?

We do 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. Change is necessary, even in a Conservation Area. However, this year a major student housing proposal on our border – on the site of a partially derelict printworks on Causewayside – did appear to be a threat to the amenity of the area.



The WBA committee, having looked at the plans in detail, did not object in principle to student housing on this site but felt that the scale and density of the proposals were inappropriate. We alerted members to our objections, and encouraged them to submit their own comments. A revised proposal has now been submitted, reducing the student occupancy from 187 to 152, and making the development less intrusive in other ways.

And what else?

We try to organise a **social event** each year for members. This year there was a 'February Fizz' to cheer ourselves up after the winter. It was well supported and much appreciated.

This year saw our fifth series of **summer walks**. We walked near the West Blasket area and had two outings which took us further afield. We had a fascinating ranger led afternoon at Dalkeith Country Park (illustrated below left). Our enthusiastic guide showed us around the estate taking us to Dalkeith Palace, the ancient oak wood and the meeting place of the two Esk rivers.



On a July evening, we gathered at South Leith Parish Church and heard about its history. We then walked to the head office of Raimes Clark and Co Ltd, off Leith Walk (illustrated above right). We toured this fine Georgian town house, learned about the firm's long involvement in pharmacy and saw many intriguing artefacts. Our visit was completed with generous hospitality from our hosts, Kate O'Brien and Nigel Cumming.

The **History group** this year invited members and other participants to a 'talk and show' of family memorabilia from WW1: this included the 1916 Zeppelin raid on Edinburgh during which a bomb fell in Causewayside. There will be a follow-up trip to the Craiglockhart war poets library.