

# West Blacket Association

## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2016

### **Annual General Meeting**

Monday, November 28th 2016  
Upstairs room, New Bell, Causewayside

**All Residents Welcome**

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

**800pm** **A Ramble Round Britain.  
By Boat.  
Twice.**

**Charles Warlow** - local resident, WBA member and keen sailor - will take us around Britain, with some anecdotes and an occasional scary moment. A gap year for the older person (between retirement and disability)



**Present committee members are:** Maggie Stevenson (Chair), Nigel Cumming (Treasurer), Mike Hunter (Hon Sec), Kate O'Brien (Membership Secretary), Ian Carter, Alice Foster, Richard Grant, Evelynne Hill, Rosemary Wake, Carolyn Walker.

**The Office Bearers** are willing to continue, but Carolyn Walker does not wish to remain as a member of the committee.

**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](mailto:dr.m.j.hunter@gmail.com).

For more information see our website: [www.westblacket.org.uk](http://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

We 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. The Grange Prestonfield Community Council separately considers planning applications in its area and Mike Hunter has represented WBA on it for a number of years but became an elected Councillor this year.

It has once again been a busier than average year on the planning front. Following the approved demolition of the former Paramount Printers buildings, construction of the framework for the replacement student accommodation blocks is now well advanced on Causewayside.

Approval was granted in June for development of the corner site at Upper Gray Street and Duncan Street. Demolition of the joiners workshop and the lock-ups was completed recently but full clearance of the site remains to be finished. The approved plan is for two terraced houses on Duncan Street, stone-faced & copying the design of the existing terrace to the front but with non-traditional rear layout & design, and short gardens. A two-storey bungalow will occupy the remaining space adjacent to Devon Cottage. While this represents high-density development it has to be recognised that much of the site has remained semi-derelict for several decades.

Another recently approved development on the edge of our area has been the conversion of the Minto Hotel into 8 flats, supplemented by construction of a terrace of 3 townhouses in place of the current function suite. This was approved in August but the building was put up for sale prior to planning approval and remains on the market at present.

There have been a number of applications for the Hendry and Macdonald workshop premises at 20 Duncan Street, the listing of which was contested but which has been confirmed by Historic Environment Scotland (HES). An application for demolition of the workshop was refused by the Council earlier this year but an appeal was lodged and is currently being considered by a Government Reporter. A revised version of an earlier application to construct 28 studio apartments is currently with the Council, and we have objected on the basis of gross over-development of the site.

## Social Activities

This was our seventh series of summer outings, mostly in sunny weather and it was encouraging to have some new members join the regulars.

In June, we had a wonderful afternoon, visiting The Lost Garden of Penicuik where Roger Kelly, co-founder of this community project, showed us around this 50-year long endeavour to produce food and restore the great Penicuik Estate walled garden. We also had a 'summer' picnic on Arthur's Seat with a game of rounders and ice cream with some younger ones joining us.

In July, Ron Hill led a walk - Waverley to the Forth - exploring the old Edinburgh & Northern Railway route to Granton. Our final walk, through Princes Street Gardens in September, was led by Carolyn Walker. We started at the Waverley end looking at the memorials, the trees and some of the larger buildings on Princes Street. We paused for an ice cream at the west end by St Cuthbert's and finished back at the Mound gate. Walks give a chance to meet with neighbours, old and new – all welcome, do come along next year.

## History Group

The History Group met on 22 February for what turned into a highly convivial evening thanks to the generosity of our hosts, the Maclarens. The focus of the meeting was on adapting historic homes to modern-day living, a topic which provoked lively discussion and accounts of work proposed and undertaken. In the more formal part of the meeting, Angus Cowie, who is in the process of converting the family home, guided us through what we can do with a listed building. Ron Hill reminded us of the history of the Minto Hotel, that notable social and architectural feature of our area which is currently for sale with proposals for conversion to housing. Kate o'Brien displayed some of the 'character' features to be seen in our conservation-area houses, in particular floor tiles and cornice plasterwork. Of course this then led to much chat as to how to look after them. A great evening!



The Lost Garden of Penicuik



Entrance to Scotland Street tunnel