



The Grange Association

Covering the Grange Conservation Area

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 1989

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE GRANGE ASSOCIATION

The Annual General Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, 5th December 1989** in St. Catherine's Argyle Church Hall, (opposite the east gate of the Cemetery), at 7.30 p.m. Subscriptions for 1990 may be paid from 7.00 p.m. (£2, Concession £1). The speaker will be Councillor Cairns, Chairman of the Planning Committee of the District Council, who will introduce the subject, "The New Policy for Development in Villa Areas" (see the *Newsletter*, Summer 1989, and '*The Scotsman*' *Property Supplement*, 7 September '89). Mr Graham Duncan, Director of Planning, E.D.C. and Mr David Cameron, will give details of the policy. Other subjects may also be discussed.

THE YEAR IN THE GRANGE

1989 will be remembered for its fine summer, when The Grange gardens looked their best. This was very evident when ten of them were visited by members of the Association and their friends, who enjoyed a beautiful afternoon in beautiful gardens, beautifully kept — each with a special feature, and finally a delightful garden-party given by our secretary. We must thank all the proprietors and everyone who helped with the tea.

As The Grange is still such an attractive district, residents should note that the publication of the "New Policy" restricting development in villa areas is an important step towards keeping its amenity intact. The ideas behind the Conservation Movement have become widely accepted, and are seen to be linked with "green" issues (ecological, not political!). The constant work of The Grange Association Committee in monitoring local planning applications has attempted to maintain the standards set out for our district in *The Grange: A Case for Conservation, 1982*. During the past year, plans for eleven important sites have been examined and, where appropriate, recommendations made to the Planning Authorities. There have been many applications, for minor alterations and additions.

The Committee continues to work on various schemes: for "calming" traffic in The Grange; helping to extend the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, which, under Police guidance, is gaining in popularity; and, as always, considering various ways of improving the environment. A donation has been made to help an adjacent local association, and also to Councillor MacLaren's appeal for money to plant bulbs in open spaces. The results will doubtless be

seen in the Sciennes and the Meadows next spring. As noted last summer, we are compiling lists of tradesmen who have worked on house maintenance in our district. Miss Cunningham (667 4174) would be glad to have further information from residents to be passed on to others when requested, (on a "friendly" basis — no liabilities). All committee members will welcome any other ideas which might benefit our environment.

MEMBERSHIP — IN GENERAL AND OF THE COMMITTEE

This year, which sees an inevitable rise in the membership subscription for 1990, the Committee has issued approximately 11,000 *Newsletters* since last November. Every household in The Grange should receive one; there are about 2750 in each delivery, but our membership can be counted in hundreds. While next year the number of issues might be reduced, depending on the amount of information to be disseminated, we should very much like to increase our membership, and to meet future printing costs and other expenses in conservation and environmental improvement. We can offer members free entrance, normally, to the functions which we arrange where accommodation costs must be met — (bring your membership cards with you!) — but our major aim to attract more members is to ensure support for both local and general environmental improvement in the City. Please pay a membership subscription for next year in order to preserve and enhance our own civic amenity. We must also at this point record our very grateful thanks to all our friends who help with deliveries of the *Newsletters*.

There will also be vacancies on **The Grange Association Committee**, on which members may serve for up to four years. All residents, with every kind of practical and professional skill, will be welcome to offer themselves for election, or to be co-opted for occasional consultation on specific matters. For example, at present we have no one with specialised legal knowledge, though we have had such members in the past. We are fortunate in having four architects of whom two are planners, and, of these, one is a conservation expert; but, while this fact gives the Association expertise in planning matters, there must be many residents who could contribute in many other ways. Anyone who would like to be considered for election or co-optation should contact the Secretary (667 1444).

STONEMWORK

The Association is concerned about the **painting of stonework** in conservation areas. It should be noted that the character of The Grange is such that there are no restrictions about the painting of woodwork (in which all house-owners show very good taste); but stone should NOT be painted. The visual effects may or may not be satisfactory; the real problem is that paint causes deterioration of the stone fabric. Mr Bob Heath, a consultant on stonework to the National Trust, explained this in detail at the meeting about "Maintaining Older Houses" on 26 April 1989. Stone-cleaning is also a hazard; it might be advisable to postpone any such plans until current research on the subject has been taken further. See the *Summer Newsletter* for details.

BONFIRES

Last spring, the Association received a letter from a local resident with which he enclosed an article from *The New Scientist*. This described the effect of bonfires; "a tonne of average garden waste gives off 30 kilograms of carbon monoxide... more insidious is the effect of partial combustion on the chains of carbon atoms that make up cellulose" as various toxic substances including carcinogens were released. No-one knew how dangerous these were, but the writers continued with descriptions of various bad effects of slow-combustion-bonfires; people with respiratory weaknesses were specially at risk from exposure to such air pollution. Even more dangerous was the burning of synthetic materials in the open, of which the process was described in some detail. A further article emphasised that legal control of such nuisances was minimal.

In a letter to Councillor MacLaren, who took up these points with the District Council, the Principal Pollution Control Officer suggested that the dangers were less imminent, when one took "into account the dilution by a vast amount of air" (e.g. in large gardens, presumably), and where bonfires burned fiercely. He also referred to the necessity of burning, on the spot, wood infected by Dutch Elm Disease, and noted that legal control of garden bonfires would be very complicated.

There is clearly a conflict of interests, or perhaps of evils, in this matter. Gardeners, who constantly encounter pests and plant diseases, some of them serious, will say that the best, most hygienic way to deal with them is to burn infected material on the spot. To put it into a dump will only spread the infections — even in transit, and who knows what their long-term effects may be? On the other hand, pollution by forms of smoke (particularly, as *The New Scientist* stated, clouds of blackish smoke — the effect of incomplete combustion) constitutes a health risk. Compromise appears to be difficult, but perhaps bonfire burners might think of using garden incinerators for quicker combustion (as many do), and, as everyone doubtless knows, of never burning modern synthetic materials in domestic surroundings. But then, what about the problems of emissions from industrial plant chimneys, including waste-destructors? On these, there are some legal constraints, as *The New Scientist* mentioned, but it did not give any such details of the combustion process as were given in the case of bonfires. Indeed, this is a complicated subject.

NEW TREES IN OLD GARDENS Dr Pitkin writes:

In 1982 Mrs Isobel Simpson estimated that there were about 10,000 trees in The Grange. In the chapter on trees in *The Grange: A Case for Conservation* she says that there are now fewer trees in the district than there were a hundred years ago and that many of the larger trees have been replaced by smaller-growing kinds with shorter lifespans. As former open spaces continue to be built upon, there is some concern that more trees have been lost since 1982, and that the wooded character of The Grange is changing.

Although I regret the building, particularly the flats which occupy so much of the area of the sites they are built upon, I think there are now probably more trees being planted in private gardens in the area than at any time since the

gardens were first laid out. The gardens in The Grange are generally well looked after and gardening has become a vogue pastime. A reasonable variety of young trees can be bought locally and, compared with the cost of felling a tree, they are cheap.

Unfortunately these observations cannot reassure us that the sylvan character of the district will persist. On past experience many of the trees now being planted will be felled or severely lopped long before they reach their full size. The trees on offer at garden centres are usually the kinds which sell well for small gardens on new housing estates, laburnums, cherries and crab-apples, not the sort of thing which lends character to an area such as this. It is not nearly so easy to come by a young tree (even something as common as an oak or lime) which will grow to 100 feet.

We should be giving more thought to what we plant and where we plant it. Do we want a tree for a short-term or a long-term effect? Trees can be very useful as temporary screens, shelter, etc. as long as one remembers to remove them once they have served their purpose. For trees planted for their long term effect we must visualise them as they will be 50 or 100 years hence. The commonest failing is to plant with no regard for the eventual size of the tree. They are planted too close together, too close to buildings, beneath overhead wires or too close to existing trees, so they are doomed from the start. There is nothing wrong with planting trees in groups on large sites (groups of the same kind look best) but they must be thinned as the trees grow. There is nothing wrong with planting more trees in your garden than it can eventually accommodate, as long as you decide beforehand which ones you will remove and give the big trees the big sites.

The other common failing is to plant trees which look 'nice' in other gardens nearby. In this way everyone ends up with a 'Kanzan' cherry (paper-handkerchief pink), a purple-leaved cherry-plum, a laburnum and a red-leaved Norway maple. If you want to plant a tree for posterity plant something interesting and different. If you have room, plant something big. It will rob your garden of water, sunlight and nutrients and fill your drainpipes with leaves, but it will give your garden more character than a few rows of vegetables and will lift your spirits, and our spirits, in a way which the vegetables never could.

A list of trees suitable for city gardens may be borrowed from me at 8 Blackford Road or the Nature Conservancy Council, 12 Hope Terrace.

P. H. Pitkin.

PLANNING

Proposals to extend property should respect the privacy and amenity of neighbours. Especially where extensions are planned at first floor level, the overlooking of neighbouring 'living rooms' must be avoided. Windows should look inward over garden areas or towards the street. Recent Planning Applications have not observed this rule and adjustment to plans have been requested by the Planning Department to preserve privacy.

An appeal against the refusal of Planning Permission for a block of flats at 61-69 Grange Loan has been lodged with the Secretary of State. We trust that the District Council's policy document for Villa Areas will apply and a development of a similar pattern will be recommended with the formation of two 'Villa' sized volumes sub-divided into flats with a central road access onto Grange Loan, maintaining the character of the area.

SATELLITE ANTENNAE

These devices are not yet commonplace and controls for their installation are outlined in Planning Guidelines issued by the District Council. It states that "They must be screened effectively from public view. Antennae will not normally be acceptable on the front or street elevation of any building." Within The Grange the conditions of the Guidelines should readily be implemented and installations made to comply.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

61-69 Grange Loan See above.

17 Hatton Place. The University has appealed to the Secretary of State against refusal of planning permission for a laboratory in the back garden.

33 Hatton Place. The Association has strongly objected to the current proposals for a three-storey extension on the grounds of over-development for the site.

20 Cumin Place. The Association consider that plans for an extension constitutes 'over-development of the site'.

36 Mansionhouse Road. The house has recently been sold with the existing planning permission to build a house in the garden.

1A Fountainhall Road. A Leisure Activities Company has applied for permission to construct a Dance Studio at the former Tyre Depot.

Edinburgh Solicitors' Property Centre. The Association is in touch with the Centre about the need to point out to prospective purchasers in The Grange District that it is a Conservation Area with an Article 4 Direction, which means that every alteration or addition requires Planning Permission.

To Miss M. Mathieson, Hon. Treasurer, 6/2 Dalrymple Crescent (667 3234)

I/We wish to join/rejoin The Grange Association and enclose a remittance of £..... (Membership is £2.00; Concession £1).

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone

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Members of The Grange Association Committee 1988/89:

- Mrs Sofia Leonard, 12 St. Albans Road (667 2339) (Chairman).
Mrs Dorothy Ryle, 33 Mansionhouse Road (667 1444) (Secretary).
Miss Mary Cunningham, 18 Dick Place (667 4174).
Mrs Nicola Crosbie, 4 South Lauder Road (667 3980) (*Newsletter* Distributor).
Miss Caroline Fortescue, 5 Seton Place (667 1291) (*Newsletter* Editor).
Eric Hannah, 84 Findhorn Place (667 2279).
Mrs Ann Hepburn, 22 Mansionhouse Road (667 7767).
Professor Paul Jowitt, 22 Fountainhall Road (667 5696).
Dr Derek Lyddon, 38 Dick Place (667 2266).
Miss Marjorie Matheson, 6/2 Dalrymple Crescent (667 3234) (Treasurer).
Donald Millar, 8 Seton Place (667 5071).



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