



# The Grange Association

Covering The Grange Conservation Area

NEWSLETTER NO. 52

AUTUMN 1992

### NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As noted in our spring and summer newsletters, the Annual General Meeting of The Grange Association will be held in St Catherine's -Argyle Church Hall on TUESDAY, 24th NOVEMBER, 1992, at 7.30 p.m.; we hope for a large attendance. Subscriptions for 1992/93 may then be paid; please find the subscription slip inserted in this newsletter. The meeting will precede a talk by Mr Malcolm Cant.

### A BRIEF REPORT ON THE GRANGE IN 1992

Perusal of these two previous newsletters will show that the main concerns of The Grange Association Committee have been the Central Edinburgh Local Plan, and traffic problems in our area. Both these subjects continue to demand much attention; future progress will be duly reported.

**Traffic Calming:** Our Traffic Calming sub-committee, led by Professor Jowitt, has met Mr Cross of the Highways Department and Councillor Mrs MacLaren, who is on the Highways Committee of Lothian Regional Council. It seems that the Association's proposals (detailed in *Newsletter* No 51) would have a greater chance of being implemented if businesses with interests in our area, as well as residents were to show their commitment to the scheme by giving it some sort of positive support, possibly involving a contribution to a percentage of the costs.

**Social Functions:** There have been four of these this year. We remember with great pleasure Mr Basil Skinner's talk on 22nd March; *Holyrood in the Nineteenth Century* was a subject calculated to appeal to an historically-conscious audience which showed an active appreciation of his fine collection of slides, and lively comments. On 24th April, the Committee entertained members at a wine and cheese party; old and new friends had a chance to meet and talk on this very happy evening. We should like to record that Committee members are extremely grateful to Dr and Mrs Lyddon for allowing the Association once again to use the drawing-room at Grange Park House and for so kindly welcoming all the guests.

The third function was our walk round the Astley Ainslie Hospital grounds on May 9th, by which time the wet summer was threatening; fortunately most of that afternoon was dry. Mr M. Walsh and Mr A. Scott pointed out the features of various trees - three varieties of cedar, as well as chestnuts, holm-oaks and others. Miss Cunningham, who has a special connection with the Hospital, produced for the occasion an interesting written commentary which begins, "The large green site, with its gardens, was from the beginning considered as an important contribution to the improved health of patients referred from the Royal Infirmary." (Note the practical use of a green area within a city district, and reflect on the necessity of curbing both unsympathetic and incongruous development. The recent intrusive car park in what had been a woodland area is an example in the hospital grounds, but this is a widespread problem.) We later



saw the beautifully kept gardens of three houses in Whitehouse Terrace, and we thank all the owners for making possible these much enjoyed visits.

The winter programme began on 13th October when Principal Rowan of Edinburgh College of Art spoke on *Living in Edinburgh*. His talk was partly autobiographical and partly scholarly and informative with comments on, and slides of Edinburgh buildings from Holyrood Abbey to (in time) the College of Art, and with further remarks about recent developments. The audience was clearly inspired by his enthusiasm and erudition.

### **THE COMMITTEE 1992/93**

The following members, having served for four years or longer, are due to retire in December 1992; Dr Lyddon, Mrs Ryle, Miss Matheson, Professor Jowitt, Miss Fortescue. At the same time, Mr Deans will retire after two years, and Dr Read, who joined last December, is leaving The Grange and so also the Committee. The present secretary, Mrs Ryle (33 Mansionhouse Road, 667 1444), would be glad to receive, as soon as possible, nominations for the election of residents who would serve on the Committee from January 1993. Names should be proposed and seconded, with, of course, the candidate's approval, at the **Annual General Meeting (24.11.92)**. We would refer readers to our note in *Newsletter no 44* (Autumn 1989) in which we gave fuller details about the election and in certain cases co-optation of Committee members. The arrangements are laid down in the constitution of The Grange Association.

### **UNWANTED MAIL**

Last July, some residents may have received a letter, with Edinburgh and London telephone numbers, from someone apparently looking for a house in Edinburgh, who was unable to find a "suitable property" and suggested a possible purchase of the recipient's home. A Committee member followed up the enquiry and discovered that the sender was in fact a property developer who nevertheless declared categorically that he was genuinely looking for a family house. No doubt this is possible, though it is hard to credit that "suitable properties" were in short supply last summer, but the writer's method of approach is unsatisfactory. Any residents who have been worried by such letters should inform a Committee member so that the problem may be generally assessed.

### **TREES OF THE GRANGE**

Trees are important to The Grange perhaps next in line to the villas, the layout, the stone walls and the setting between Arthur's Seat and Blackford Hill. The combination of these four elements establishes the place uniquely. Remove any one element and the whole is diminished. The treescape has had to adapt to the changing times, as much as the villas and the gardens. As always, what we see now is in a state of complex transition. Every year people are deciding to take down trees or establish new trees for varied reasons of their own but no doubt affected, consciously or not, by the prevailing tree culture. Few people are planning to plant a quincunx of monkey puzzle in the back garden.

Has someone already tackled a history of the trees of The Grange? If not, it would be entertaining to try. Perhaps these questions will stimulate some memories. What were the tree species in Kirkwood's plan of 1817? They were clearly in formal avenues or rows and might have been species like wych elm, common lime, and sycamore much as the present line along Sciennes Road opposite the Sick Children's Hospital.

As the villas became occupied, people would have started planting trees. No doubt then as now, there were some splendidly inappropriate species being planted in small spaces like



hybrid poplars or Northwest American conifers. But were there broadly accepted ground rules for most situations? For the larger gardens, copper beech, Deodar, Atlantic cedar, Monkey puzzle, weeping ash perhaps? For the smaller gardens, what? Most of the bigger trees in The Grange are common species; no harm in that, but it does point up those which are less common. There must have been some plantsmen around to choose Turkey oak, (Lauder Road) Tree of Heaven, (Dick Place); Chalmer's Crescent) Locust tree, (Cumin Place) or Silver pendant lime, (Hope Terrace). Does anybody know who they were?

There are a fair number of bigish walnut around and all of them looking quite healthy. Incidentally they are much beloved of the squirrels as the fruit is ripening. What evidence did their planters have that walnut would grow so successfully, or was it all experimental? In among the planted trees there are a good many which have arrived and been allowed to stay. A few are plain daft, others are admirable such as the birches. Both British species are here and in considerable variation from very 'pubescens' to very 'pendula'. A particular favourite in this category is the common and underrated elder. It is heartening to know that the elder was greatly enjoyed by so discerning an eye as Turner. There is a splendid grandfather elder growing over the wall in Hatton Place.

In recent years there has been a great spirit abroad which augurs well for the future treescape of The Grange. Here, casually observed, is a selection of fairly recent plantings of entertaining species. (No doubt there are many more behind the walls.)

Maidenhair	Ginko biloba	(Dick Place)
Tibetan Cherry	Prunus serrula	(Findhorn Place)
Turkish hazel	Corylus colurna	(Grange Loan)
Paper-bark birch	Betula papyrifera	(Dalrymple Crescent)
Honey-locust	Gleditsia triacanthos	(Dalrymple Crescent)
Snake bark maple	Acer rufinerve	(Hatton Place)

The prize must go, however, not to The Grange at all but to Warrender Park Road and the Acacia dealbata growing merrily away there against all the odds.

ALISTAIR SCOTT, July 1992

**NOTE:** We are very grateful to Mr Scott for contributing this excellent article; we hope that it is not inappropriate to add the following reminder, as anyone whose umbrella has, during the past dripping summer, become entangled in overhanging greenery will understand why we are appealing to garden-owners to ensure that branches or hedges of any kind, below a height of seven or eight feet, are kept cut back vertically in line with the edge of the low front-garden or higher adjacent walls.

#### PLANNING APPLICATIONS (since May, 1992)

**62 St Albans Road (Bank of Scotland Training Centre):** (4 June 92, A1210). Additional car-parking.

**4a Chalmers Crescent:** (8 June 92, A1264). Form a run-in.

**1 Mansionhouse Road:** (15 June 92, A1334). Alter and extend dwelling-house.

**36 Mansionhouse Road:** (24 June 92, A1435). See application no A1129, *Newsletter* No 51.

**13 Dick Place:** (24 June 92, A1438). Erect conservatory.

**17a Seton Place:** (1 July 92, A1473). Erect conservatory above porch.

**38 Fountainhall Road:** (15 July 92, A1596) Erect conservatory.

**35 Grange Loan:** (6 August 92, A1767). Alter and extend dwelling-house.



**The Astley Ainslie Hospital, Grange Loan:** (27 August 92, A1929). Upgrade and improvement works to create new Lothian College of Nursing, (Lothian Health Board).

**15 Findhorn Place:** (23 Sept 92, A2115). Alter and extend nursing-home. (See *Newsletter* no 49, Autumn 91)

**Minor Works:** Satellite Dish (approved), Skylight (pending at time of writing), porch (5 October).

The following applications were APPROVED on the noted dates:

**Those noted in Newsletter no 51:**

**13 Grange Road:** (5 March 92, A508; coach-house converted to dwelling-house) 29 July 92.

**3 Lauder Road:** (8 April 92, A793; run-in). 5 August 92.

**14 Sciennes Gardens:** (21 April 92, A859; summer-house). 24 June 92.

**Those noted above in this Newsletter, no 52:**

**17a Seton Place:** (1 July 92, A1473). 9 September 92.

**38 Fountainhall Road:** (15 July 92, A1596). 25 August 92.

The following applications were REFUSED on the noted dates:

**In Newsletter no 51:**

**3 Chalmers Crescent:** (27 February 92, A349; run-in). 9 April 92.

**In Newsletter no 52:**

**62 St Albans Road:** (4 June 92, A1210). 26 August 92.

**4a Chalmers Crescent:** (8 June 92, A1264). 5 August 92.

All other applications noted recently are under consideration *at the time of writing*. It should be noted that, in the case of 36 Mansionhouse Road (A1129/92 as in *Newsletter* no 51) and 15 Findhorn Place (A746/91 as in *Newsletter* no 49, Autumn 91), further new applications have been submitted.

In the case of 59 Grange Loan (Masson Hall) (A2438/91 as in *Newsletter* no 50, Spring 92), the matter is being referred to the Secretary of State as a listed building is affected. The architect of the house was R. Rowand Anderson - see *The Grange: A Case for Conservation*, Page 54.

Individual comments should be sent to: Councillor R. Cairns, Chairman, E.D.C. Planning Committee; Councillor Mrs Moyra Forrest, member of this committee; both at the City Chambers, High Street; and Graham Duncan, Director of Planning, E.D.C. Planning Department, 1 Cockburn Street, EH1 1BJ.

#### FUTURE EVENTS

In the New Year we look forward to illustrated talks on  
Edinburgh Graveyards and early photographs of  
nineteenth century Edinburgh.

WATCH THIS SPACE.