



The Grange Association

Covering The Grange Conservation Area

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 55

AUTUMN 1993

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- ♦ *A talk with slides about old Edinburgh* by Trevor Yerbury, TUESDAY, 12th October in St. Catherine of Argyle, at 7.30 p.m...
- ♦ *AGM followed by an Open Forum 10 years of conservation.* There will also be an exhibition to show changes during that time, TUESDAY, 16 November in St. Catherine of Argyle, at 7.30 p.m..

Trees

The treescape of the Grange is conservative, which is as it should be, because that yields a desirable unity. There is scope, however, for a little more adventure in some of the elements along the lines of an occasional flaring Gleditsia, Embotrium or Parrotia.

Given the will to plant something more exciting than yet another Kanzan Cherry or cooking Lawson Cypress, the Royal Botanic Garden is an inspiring source of possibilities or there are excellent books to consult - none better than Alan Mitchell's *'The Gardeners Books of Trees'*, published by Dent in 1981. The Royal Botanic Garden Herbarium library have many and endlessly helpful librarians.

Having chosen a tree by these routes, it may well not be available at Garden centres - their throughput is insufficient to justify stocking any but the most obvious. Fortunately the cost and nuisance of pursuing a first choice are trivial if divided through by half a century of pleasure. In Scotland there are good selections of ornamental trees available, among others, from Ben Reid of Aberdeen (0224-318744) or T. W. Christie of Forres (0309-72633) - both catalogues free. In southern England Hilliers of Winchester still offer an astounding range albeit with a minimum order of £50. Most helpfully, almost every plant you can think of and the nursery(ies) where you can buy it, is listed in a fat annual paperback. It is entitled *'The Plantfinder'* and is available at good book shops, libraries and here (667-9577)

Alistair Scott

The Grange Association survey 1993

This survey, designed to discover facts and figures about the Grange area and the attitudes of residents to issues such as planning and traffic, was enclosed with the last newsletter. The Association Committee would like to thank those of you (378) who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire. Entry of the data to a computer for analysis is complete. It is already clear that strong views are held by Grange residents. The results will be announced in future editions of the newsletter and possibly at the AGM in the autumn. The committee will use the conclusions to guide and support our future activities.

Donald MacRae

Reminiscences

Ma Duncan's

The Penny Well is a familiar landmark towards the East end of Grange Loan. Round the corner from it in Causewayside, however, was another penny well which was a very familiar feature of my boyhood days - the Vantas machine in Ma Duncan's sweetie shop. Ma was a formidable character, dispensing couthy words of wisdom along with soor plooms and ogo-pogo eyes. But ah! the Vantas machine - great glass bowl of rusty-coloured fizzy water which scooshed out into a glass, 'with beaded bubbles winking at the brim'. For us youngsters this drink was magic - a penny for a Vantas was indeed a penny well - spent.

Here, at Ma Duncan's, was where we repaired after cubs and scouts, here was our cafe-society, here, it was rumoured, our big brothers encountered strange creatures called girls. Good as a Vantas was, however, Ma's best value undoubtedly was her ha'penny soda lunch - a carton of sherbet, a stick of licorice, and five little crackers, yes, all for a ha'penny! I used to measure the rise in the cost of living by the rise in the cost of a soda lunch. When it eventually reached threepence, I stopped lunching. But I am particularly grateful to Ma and her Vantas machine for making possible the first pun I ever remember hearing. A very popular pre-war malted loaf was called Youma, and when at table my eldest brother was asked to pass the loaf to me he posed the question 'Will you, Ma, give me a Vantas? It took a little while for me to get it, but then the full splendour of this glorious pun hit me, and I felt that life would never be the same again. Also, now that Ma Duncan's has become a Chinese carry-out, it isn't.

Nigel Thomson

Other reminiscences, both short and long, written or verbal would be most welcome by The Grange Association. Please contact Elsa Hendry

Grange Association Garden Forum

Torrential rain on the evening of 10th June failed to dampen the enthusiasm of the Chairman, Tom Shearer of Broughton, as he skilfully led the panel of experts of Margaret Swain, Geoff Brooks, Binkie Thomson and Jean Stirling. Many Grange members gathered at the Church Hall of the German Speaking Congregation armed with questions and plant samples to seek advice, encouragement and wise comment from the panel.

Richard Ewing

Grange Cemetery

Many members will remember that last winter we had an interesting talk on Monuments in Edinburgh. Mr. Turnbull suggested that the Grange Association should make a study of the monuments in the Grange Cemetery and their inscriptions. The Committee thought this an idea well worth considering and a meeting was arranged with Mr. J. A. M. Mitchell of the Scottish Genealogical Society.

Mr. Mitchell gave us a great deal of valuable help on how such a study might be organised, the recording of information be best done and how it could be collated. He pointed out that the study might look at a number of different aspects, e.g. the movement of population from country to town at different periods, the changing trades and professions, even the varying tastes in monuments! A record had been made many years ago by Mr. Mitchell's father concentrating on recordings burials before 1850, the date when registration of deaths was made compulsory by statute.

An enterprise such as this would certainly take a good deal of organisation and a considerable number of people could be involved, recorders (walking in pairs) of the information, transcribing editors and compilers of lists. So before embarking on it, the Committee would like to know how many members would be prepared to take part in what would be a joint venture with the Community Council, starting probably in the Spring 1994. If you would like to be involved contact Gerry France.

Sheila Reid

'Antique dealers'

Beware of men at the door offering to buy your furniture. There have been some incidences recently in 'antique dealers' have rung the bell ... sounded plausible... been let in... made a ridiculously low offer for some pieces. This has been accepted and a receipt signed.

If you have any furniture you wish to sell, **contact a reputable firm**. Do not let in ANYBODY who rings the door bell or otherwise approaches you uninvited. No reputable antique dealer would call at your door without a prior appointment..

If there is somebody at the door like this, after you have said ' NO THANK YOU', ring the police and describe the people involved. Ring 662-5000. The police have recently informed us that a substantial number of antiques have been recovered which were subsequently found to have been stolen.

Grange notelets

In white, the Wyvern motif in black on the front. Size 4 1/4 by 6 inches, price £1.20 per pack of 10 including envelopes available from Maureen Kvebekk, 39 Mansionhouse Road.

The Grange Association Committee

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Gerry France, 67/6 Grange Loan (667 5891) **Secretary**

Marion Cantley, 59 Fountainhall Road (667 8074) **Treasurer**

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Dorothy Ryle, 33 Mansionhouse Road (667 1444) (Co-opted)

Alistair Scott, 26 Dalrymple Crescent (667 9577) **Trees**

Michael Walsh, 17 Tantallon Place (667 1708) **Trees**