



The Grange Association

<http://www.the-grange.org>

Newsletter No 80

Autumn 2004

Recognised Scottish Charity SCO25491

Forthcoming Events

- Wed 13 October** The Royal Observatory has been on Blackford Hill for over a century of scientific and technological revolution. Its aims are unchanged since the Earl of Crawford, on hearing in 1888 of its possible closure, declared 'it shall not be!' and secured it a bright future. Peter Brand, Professor of Astrophysics at the ROE, will lead us through this fascinating story of the Observatory, and of the strange Universe discovered by the astronomers.
- Wed 17 November** Having visited the islands in the Firth of Forth over many years, Nora Henderson has amassed a wealth of knowledge. Her illustrated talk is one not to be missed.
- Wed 1 December** The Christmas Party will be held as in previous years at the German Church in Chalmers Crescent at 7.30 pm. Come and enjoy an evening of music, fun, wine and shortbread.
- Wed 23 February 2005** Annual General Meeting. An opportunity to come and join; new members welcome. Paul McAuley has kindly agreed to be our AGM speaker. Having just returned from the USA looking at the work of Scottish sculptors there, and given his work as Assistant Keeper of Conservation (Monuments) in Edinburgh, we are assured of a fascinating evening.
- Wed 23 March** Alan Victor is a world-wide traveller. His audio visual presentation 'Alps from the Top' is unique, following the flora and fauna from the tops of mountains, down past the snow and tree lines to the valley floor. How does he manage to film such scenery? ... come and find out.

Unless otherwise stated, meetings take place at 7.30pm in St Catherine's-Argyle Church Hall, Grange Road. Tea, coffee, and biscuits are served after the meeting. If anyone has suggestions for future speakers or events, please get in touch.

Christina Somerville and Judith Reeves

Late News: (1) We are honoured and pleased to note that, in recognition of the Association's work, our Chair, Sheila Reid, has been invited to visit the new Scottish Parliament building by our local MSP, Mike Pringle. (2) We have received a donation of £250 from Scottish Life. It might be appropriate to devote this to a particular item or project, so we welcome suggestions from our members. And if you're not already a member and would like to join, do contact Marion Cantley.

Environmental Task Force Pilot Project

The South Edinburgh Local Development Committee (LDC) area has been chosen to carry forward an innovative and ambitious project to improve the quality of the environment for the whole community—without adding to the budget allotted for work and staff. The Grange Association was very pleased that the time limit for the pilot scheme in South Edinburgh has been extended to the end of September. So far it seems to be working well under a very inspirational manager—although there was some concern about a slippage of standards during his unavoidable absence for some weeks because of illness. It is understandable that it will take some time to establish best practice, as a matter of course. One of the real successes, it seems, has been the establishment of working partners between the various departments of the Council dealing with environmental matters. We hope that everyone feels that things are improving, and we await with great interest the decision of the Council on which of the schemes being piloted will finally be chosen for wider implementation.

The Environmental Forums that have been established have met several times and it is hoped that their remit will gradually include a wider range of purely local concerns than at present, relieving the load on the South Edinburgh LDC. However, this will not mean the disappearance of the City Development Group, which was set up some years ago by Councillor MacLaren, and is now chaired by Councillor Tritton; its specific remit is to deal with problems in Merchiston, Marchmont and Sciennes. This meeting of local groups, councillors and officials has proved very valuable.

Ruth Munro has been attending the meetings of the Environmental Forum in the interests of the Grange Association, and we are very grateful for this, and for her readiness to volunteer as Environmental Warden for the Sciennes ward. Ruth is also willing to “house” one of the Council’s “Clean-up Boxes”. So we should be in a good position to report on, or to deal with, problems if they arise. We would hope for a volunteer to be Warden in the Marchmont and Morningside part of our area: we have representation on two Forums! Volunteers please contact Sheila Reid. Of course, any member of the public can report directly on local environmental matters—the Council will supply us with freepost, tick-box postcards.

As Autumn approaches, and “It’s a wearisome time for the fa’ o’ the leaf”: quite literally the “downside” of having our beautiful treescape. We will be hoping that the Task Force will deal expeditiously with the problem of leaves on pavements, and with choked gullies. Please let us know if you are worried; contact numbers are given in the box opposite. It’s also worth noting that there is apparently funding available from the South Edinburgh LDC for the Environmental Forums, so if you have a good idea for improving or beautifying our area, please be in touch with Ruth Munro or Sheila Reid. The next meeting of the South Edinburgh LDC itself is Monday 27th September, at 7pm in Gracemount High School. Anyone can attend, and find out what is new for South Edinburgh. Minutes of the meetings are available on the notice board in Newington Library.

Sheila Reid

Grange Conservation Awards recognise outstanding contributions to improving the quality of the area by residents. Types of “enhancement” which might warrant an award include: restoration of high quality gates or railings; high quality repair of stonework; new building contributing to the character of the area; and tree planting and landscaping complementing the local streetscape. Candidate awards are currently under consideration; we warmly welcome further recommendations.

Reminiscences: Cold days and jelly cubes

My parents were missionaries in India, where I grew up. In the summer of 1946 they came home to Edinburgh, and that autumn I went to Esdaile school. I spent seven on the whole happy years there, learnt a lot and made good friends; but my two overwhelming memories of those years are of temperature, and food.

I do remember sunny summer afternoons in the garden, and our short-sleeved yellow blouses; but mainly I remember being cold. Cold walks on Blackford Hill, where I looked down on rows of red-blanketed beds on the verandahs of the Astley Ainslie and wondered how on earth the occupants survived. Coming in cold from church on Sunday and clinging to barely warm radiators. Walking (running strictly forbidden) down cold corridors into cold classrooms. Getting into a cold bed (no hot-bottles allowed, though I did have a wonderful pair of pink woolly bedsocks), and in the morning, taking my cold clothes in beside me to warm them up before putting them on.

Food, of course, was rationed, and school had our ration books. But we were each given the page with our sweetie coupons, which were good for a pound of sweets a month. We could not have sweets during the week, but at the weekend we were allowed to go out to Marchmont, spend our coupons and pocket money, and eat the proceeds. Much careful deliberation went into these purchases so as to make the most of the coupons. I remember a Fry’s chocolate bar—was it called Five Boys?—which was only one ounce in weight: you could have two of those and two tubes of fruit gums all for a quarter of the precious pound. But the imaginative shopper could do better, could go beyond coupons. At King’s the chemist you could buy Horlicks tablets, Ovaltine tablets, and chewy blackcurrant lozenges, made by Allenbury, in a smart tin. McGregor on the corner sold broken bisuits, quite small quantities, in a brown paper bag and, best of all, jelly cubes. The joy of jelly cubes was that, once you had taken off the main wrapping, they didn’t rustle: you could retire to your cold bed with eight jelly cubes, rip them apart with your bare hands, share them with your mate in the next bed, and chew for hours without incurring the wrath of even the most observant of dormitory prefects.

Oddly enough, I never think of making a jelly nowadays: it’s so cold and slithery.

*Patricia Ahrens, via
Dorothy Ryle*

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Derek Bryant 07769 953060 derek.bryant@edinburgh.gov.uk
Sciennes, Newington and Prestonfield Manager:
Forbes Ewing 07876 390970 forbes.ewing@edinburgh.gov.uk

Planning Developments, End-March 2003 to End-August 2004

The Association among other community groups continues to be consulted on planning matters at local and national scale. The most important recently concerned the Scottish Executive's consideration of a change to planning law to allow a third party right of appeal. If you would like to know more about this, or about details of the committee's views on particular applications, please contact Graham Dickson. The Council's Planning Portal provides useful details of applications, at <http://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk>

Significant Applications

***Whitehouse Loan/Newbattle Terrace**: site now for sale with planning consent for 14 flats.

***75 South Oswald Road (Sunnyside)**: revised scheme for flats and parking in contemporary style approved.

***91 South Oswald Road**: site clearance begun, application submitted for 1 house on adjoining site.

***Land at 146 Whitehouse Loan**: telecommunications monopole application refused, now to appeal.

***58-62 St Alban's Road**: site sold with planning consent, further application pending for modifications to details of news cottages. Strong protests at two excessive and inappropriate developer's signs.

***2 Oswald Road**: protracted correspondence between GA and neighbours and Planning Department about continuing unauthorised work. Applications eventually approved.

43 Grange Road: a contemporary design for a side extension, felt by the planning group to respect the integrity of the existing stone villa, and therefore accepted.

Astley Ainslie Hospital: there are continued delays to the start of the new Prosthetics building.

Applications and Decisions from End-August 2003 to End-March 2004

All considered by Planning Group; * indicates comments made by Grange Association Committee. Note that the category Withdrawn usually means only that an application is being reconsidered to avoid its being refused: most are later re-submitted in a revised, somewhat less contentious form.

Approved

Alteration and/or extension to dwelling house at:

*25 Findhorn Place, 2 Relugas Road, *25 Falcon Gardens, 27 Mansionhouse Road, 17A Seton Place, 27 Fountainhall Road, 120 Findhorn Place, *51 Fountainhall Road, *28 Mortonhall Road, 5 Blackford Road, 18 Canaan Lane, 17 Seton Place, 17 Blackford Road, *7 St Catherine's Place, *16 Mortonhall Road

Others:

122 Causewayside Erection of electrical equipment cabinets and cabling to rear of building

12 Cumin Place Alterations to lower villa flat

- 30 Dick Place Replace non-original railings with period cast iron railings, gate
- 30 Blackford Avenue Form driveway in front garden
- 17 St Thomas Road Erect garden hut
- 1 Dalrymple Cres Install new door and upgrade external finishes to garage
- 16 Cumin Place Erection of decking and pergola
- 3 Grange Road + 132 Causewayside
Comprehensive remedial works
- *47 Grange Road Demolish glasshouse to rear side of dwellinghouse
- 54 Grange Loan Demolish existing and build new garage
- 42 Findhorn Place Replace metal gate with timber gate
- 8 Kittle Yards Install external air conditioning unit
- *58-62 St Albans Rd Enlargement of entrance porches etc.
(Amendment to previous consent)
- 106-108 Causewayside Change of use from shop to flat
- *58-62 St Alban's Rd Sign to display future development of site (with visual and consultants' names)
- *1 West Relugas Rd New entrance and rear porch extensions, form driveway off Blackford Avenue
- 17 Hatton Place Alter hard landscaping of garden
- 8 Dalrymple Cres Extension to kitchen and formation of new driveway
- 17 Tantallon Place Erection of summerhouse
- *39A Mansionhouse Rd Form new vehicle access, dormer extension, alter and enclose stair
- *2 Oswald Road Widen access gate from Oswald Road

Refused

- *20 West Relugas Rd Attic conversion and extension to rear
- *15 Sciennes Gdns Erection of double garage, alterations to driveway entrance position
- *Astley Ainslie Hospital
Proposed MRI suite (temporary 5 years)

Pending

- 2 Kilgraston Court Installation of replacement PVC glazed entrance screen
- 18 Lauder Road Replacement of existing timber windows with black aluminium and timber windows (phase 2)
- *1+1A St Alban's Rd Form roof garden over existing bedroom extension
- 40 Dick Place Alterations and extension
- *58-62 St Alban's Rd Revisions to mews cottages, bays, materials, dormer pitches, hip to R mews
- 22A Findhorn Place Extension to form new bedroom to rear, form new door to extg front window
- 56 Sciennes Convert flat to office (class 4)
- 19 Strathearn Road Erection of conservatory
- *2 Oswald Road Proposed lock-up garage/studio and landscaping, widen road access gate

43 Grange Road	Alter and extend existing dwelling
*14 Kilgraston Road	Alterations to existing house including new bow windows and balconies
*6 Palmerston Road	Extend dwelling
13 Grange Crescent	New dormers front and rear, extension to garage with velux rooflight to rear
*1A Palmerston Rd	Proposed alterations and extensions
4A Sciennes Gardens	Erect tool shed in back garden between orange blossom bush and house wall
119/1 Grange Loan	Replace existing windows/doors with white UPVC
Land at S. Oswald Rd	New 3-storey dwelling
1A Beaufort Road	Change of use from dwelling to medical surgery annexe (first floor only)
3 Glenisla Gardens	Alterations to stair, windows and door at lower ground floor level
3 Eden Terrace	French windows at rear, form deck and steps in communal garden
2 Lauder Road	(Douglas House) Alterations to entrance driveway and gates, new carport
10 Wyvern Park	Convert part garage to dressing room and bathroom, new path to front door

Nature Notes

The month of April was a good one for nesting birds this year. Global warming seems to have been an advantage to some species, including butterflies. The peacock butterfly is now a regular visitor to our garden in April. We also get regular sightings of red admirals, tortoiseshells and orange tips. They seem to like the overgrown herbaceous borders.

I watched a pair of dippers on the Braid Burn "fishing" for food to feed their young. The nest was inside the tunnel at the front of the house in the Hermitage. The pair were very methodical in collecting their food and took turns diving in a very small area. They seemed to be concentrating their efforts around just three rocks in the burn. The dippers remind me of bumblebees, the way they whizz past with their wings just a blur, propelling their dumpy bodies along every twist and turn of the burn. I have to smile, whenever I see them bobbing up and down on a stone before every dive. The distinctive white breast reminds me of a baby's bib.

On Blackford pond I watched a heron with its prize one evening. It had caught a very large fish and was having some difficulty in dealing with it. The fish looked like a roach, a silvery member of the carp family with orange fins. I stood for twenty minutes watching the slow progress of a bird with time to spare. The gangly heron hardly moved the whole time I watched it. When it did, it was to dip the unfortunate, still flapping, fish into the water. Eventually the heron threw its head back and with a great struggle began to swallow the large fish inch by inch, head first, almost choking in the process. I was mesmerised witnessing the event and was convinced the bird would have a problem with this fish supper. The shape remained clearly visible in the

bird's expanded neck, which had now assumed the width of a cricket bat from the front view. The grey hunter tilted its long beak upwards and began to jerk its head backwards, stretching its neck and assisting the downward motion of the obstruction in its gullet. Then in slow motion, the bird's head came back down again into the familiar repose position. The long dagger beak was then wiped over and over again, presumably to remove the slime and scales. I watched a well-contented bird become invisible again as it stood silently in the shadows.

By an odd coincidence there was a programme about herons on the wireless when I got home. A modern Scottish poet had described the bird as "a flamingo dressed by Presbyterians".

With the help of a cawing crow that helped me to look upwards, I saw a buzzard drifting lazily high above Glenisla Gardens one morning. This is the third sighting for me in the area but I suspect it's a common occurrence. The nearest nest that I know of is one at Gogarburn near the airport. Buzzards are extending their range significantly.

In the Hermitage one morning, I heard the high-pitched cry of a sparrow hawk. It was perched on a sturdy horizontal branch in a larch tree, plucking a small bird with great enthusiasm. The loose feathers drifted downwards on the breeze and passed within inches of my face. The victim was a chaffinch. After about five minutes I shifted my position to get more comfortable and betrayed my presence. The female dropped from the branch with its prey in its feet and disappeared into the trees on the other side of the burn.

Five minutes later, my dog Jack flushed a pair of partridges in the cattle field at Midmar. The birds split up but stayed around watching our movements. From previous experience I guessed that there were probably chicks nearby in the long grass. The partridges used to favour the old tip next to the golf course before the new woodland was planted. They prefer to sleep on open ground where it's easier to detect predators.

There was a serious incident in the field at Midmar Drive in the second week in June. Locals and visitors will be familiar with the cattle that graze there during the summer months. A loose Ridgeback dog ran amok in the field causing the eight young calves to stampede in panic. The dog singled out one animal and chased it into a gate where it broke its leg. A vet was called and the unfortunate animal was put down where it lay. The dog's owner has not been traced. There have been several serious incidents on the hill concerning this breed of dog. A Ridgeback has attacked other dogs in the area while the owner looked on making no attempt to intervene. One of its victims was fatally injured and was later put down by the vet. The police were informed by the owners but could take no action due to the fact that the breed is not on the "dangerous dogs list". Perhaps now would be a good time to reassess the classification of the breed.

Tom Breheny

The Grange Association Committee 2004/5

Sheila Reid 108 Findhorn Place EH9 2PB	667 4876	Chairperson
Marion Cantley 59 Fountainhall Road EH9 2LH	667 8074	Hon Treasurer
Graham Dickson 5 Glenisla Gardens EH9 2HR	667 2738	Honorary Secretary, Planning
Andrew Bell 17 Hatton Place EH9 1UB	662 4354	Minute Secretary, Planning
John Duffus 43 Mansionhouse Road EH9 2JD	667 3682	
Derek Lyddon 31 Blackford Road EH9 2DT	667 2266	Honorary President
David McCardel 24 Dick Place EH9	667 7426	Planning, Neighbourhood Watch
Ruth Munro 18 St Catherine's Place EH9 1NU	668 4783	Newsletter Distribution, Social
Jon Oberlander 22a Findhorn Place EH9 2JP	667 9551	Vice-Chair, Newsletter Editor
Judith Reeves 125d Grange Loan EH9	667 5570	Gardens, Social
Dorothy Ryle 33 Mansionhouse Rd EH9 2JD	667 1444	Community Liaison
Christina Somerville 111 St Albans Road EH9	667 9797	Social, Web Site

Alistair Scott 26 Dalrymple Crescent EH9 2NX 667 9577 Tree Advice

Alistair is no longer on the Committee, but, he is very happy to continue to offer advice on trees.

Copy date: 3/9/04. You are welcome to quote from this newsletter, but please acknowledge the source. The information in this newsletter is as accurate as we can make it, but we do accept articles in good faith without necessarily being able to verify the contents.

The newsletter is still our principal means of informing you about our forthcoming meetings and activities. Nearer the time of the events we also put up posters in obvious places—like the library—and members of committee put them on their gates. But the list above reveals that many streets in our area have nothing to remind the passerby of our events. It would be most helpful if some kind people would volunteer their gate for posters, even occasionally. If you think you might do this, please contact the Chair.

<http://www.the-grange.org>

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