



The Grange Association

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

Newsletter No 83

Autumn 2005

Recognised Scottish Charity SCO25491

Forthcoming Events

- Wed 12 Oct** David Donald has travelled to places as diverse as Antarctica and Kenya, but tonight he is taking us to Thailand, Malaysia and Sumatra. With his enthusiasm for and knowledge of these places we will be transported into another world.
- Wed 16 Nov** Jim Pryde was closely involved in one of the most complex transportation exercises undertaken in recent years—Concorde's final journey from Heathrow, by road and sea to the National Museum of Scotland premises at the Museum of Flight, East Fortune. This is a fascinating story, and we are assured of an interesting and amusing evening.
- Wed 7 Dec** The Christmas Party will be held as in previous years at the German Church in Chalmers Crescent at 7.30pm. Come and enjoy an evening with friends old and new, stories, songs, wine and shortbread.
- Wed 22 Feb 2006** Annual General Meeting. An opportunity to come and join, new members welcome. The formal business of the AGM will be followed, as usual, with a presentation; the topic of this will be advertised in the New Year edition of the newsletter.
- Wed 22 March** Aileen Fox, of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds will be talking about the RSPB's activities in Scotland. In the meantime, for local bird news, check out pages 7 to 8.

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

The Grange has suffered a great loss: Sheila Reid, Chair of the Association, died suddenly on 2nd August, aged 76 years. After Sheila's funeral, many people, including our local councillors and MSP, asked "What about the Grange Association now then?" Sheila clearly was seen as a linchpin.

We will of course continue the good work, and will be looking for a new Chairman to take over at the next AGM. An appreciation of Sheila's contribution to our community is on page 2.

Sheila Reid: An appreciation

As those who attended her funeral will know, Sheila's energetic work for the Grange was just one of her many activities and interests. A native of Glasgow, she moved to Edinburgh with her husband Archie, and played roles in numerous local organisations. A play-leader at the Sick Kids for many years, and librarian too, she was an elder of Craigmillar Park Church for 13 years, and Sunday School leader for 43! Her interest in local history led to her becoming a volunteer guide at Huntley House museum, and her love of France led to her involvement with the Franco-Scottish Society.

But in addition to all her other activities and achievements, Sheila made an outstanding and unique contribution to our community through the Grange Association. She served on the committee for over 15 years, the last 10 as its very active Chairman. She organised, inspired, and usually refreshed, the committee at its meetings in her home; she arranged and hosted the Association's public meetings on a great variety of topics. Sheila had a unique way of chairing meetings, warmly greeting everyone, including the late-comers, and never failing to comment on the good or adverse weather conditions, before introducing the business of the evening. The distinctive notices for the meetings were drawn up in her own handsome calligraphy. Sheila also represented us at several of the Council's local meetings, notably the Local Development Committee and Local Environment Committee. She derived particular pleasure recently in the assembly of the publication 'Memories of the Grange', to which she herself contributed—an excerpt appears below.

In all this, Sheila never failed to convey a "joie de vivre" which, through her French connections, always seemed to be more than a joy of life.

The notice in the paper described Sheila as a "caring friend to many". The truth of that simple phrase will be recognised by all who knew her remarkable gift of finding, remembering and developing particular common interests—language with one, poetry with another, local history or flowers with yet another. The wonderful thing was that she had the capacity and generosity to do all this with everyone, with real care and boundless good humour.

Sheila cared too, deeply, for the Grange. The inscription in St Paul's Cathedral reads "If you seek a monument, look around you". Perhaps the conservation of the Grange itself may be seen as part of Sheila's monument. However, the Committee of the Association is also considering ways of permanently marking Sheila's contribution to the area. One possibility is to place an interpretation board in the Grange Cemetery—a project in which Sheila was keenly interested. It may also come about that the various organisations that benefitted from Sheila's energy and engagement come together to find a way collectively to mark the breadth of her achievements. The committee will take this matter forward, and present a proposal at the AGM. In the meantime, ideas for, and contributions towards, a memorial for Sheila are warmly welcomed.

The Committee

West to East: Coming to live in the Grange

Having admired the Grange on Sunday walks, Sheila and Archie soon moved to 108 Findhorn Place ...

The back kitchen had two really deep tubs which I could barely reach the bottom of with any ease and pumping up and down taps. I can still see our wonderful plumber pulling his shirtcuff down to polish them - 'I haven't seen these since I was an apprentice'. The bells were still in position and he offered to sell them - 'We might get 14 pounds for them'. We thought it might well come to that but decided to keep them and they can still ring a peal like cows in an Alpine meadow when struck by the window pole on special occasions - and we do! The maid's room off the kitchen, now the pantry, had an unglazed window space, discreetly covered by a net curtain. We filled the space up but kept the gas tap for her light out of sentiment, thinking of the poor lass who must have stewed there on summer nights and dreaded the summons of the very impatient littlest bell. But out went the boiler with the shining copper lid which the previous proud owner had assured me could give a snowy white wash and I'm sure it would have, but ... Out also went the tiled Triplex grate which took up almost a whole wall, surrounded as it was by an enormous stone mantelpiece, now the rockery in the garden. I nearly changed my mind about the grate on overhearing the workmen saying things like, 'My, she would have been the proud woman when this went in. It would be the latest thing.' I really felt like a vandal, even worse when it came out and the cavern in the wall seemed so deep that I was quite sure my next door neighbour would have no difficulty in pouring me a cup of tea if I poked my finger through! The first Christmas we entertained the family in a kitchen empty of all but the table and the new cookerhood with a big pink bow on it ...

Since then all the family celebrations have been in our house. We have enjoyed two lots of Silver Weddings, as well as our own, two Ruby Weddings and a Golden Wedding, and several 21st Birthdays and lots of carol-singing parties and in the way that life has, some very sad times of togetherness too. Of course our walks in the Grange continued and for me, at least, not just at blossom time, but everyday as I went up and down to work at the R.H.S.C., keeping my eye open for my 'seasonal markers' - the first snowdrops, the scilla-lined path, the first catkins, those wonderful camellias, the best Autumn leaves for collages with the children in the playroom at the hospital. Archie and I had much cause to bless the rectangular layout of the Grange for the possibilities of lengthening walks, after he had been in hospital.

Walks became differently focused after The Grange Association came into being. We were at the crowded founding meeting in Mayfield Church Hall and my husband became Vice Chairman for quite some time before travelling up and down to London and pressure of work intervened. But he was happy to come back to the Committee after retirement, taking great pleasure in the activities and the companionship. Later I was to follow in his footsteps - 'faint, yet pursuing'.

I have many reasons to be thankful that our transplanting from our native heath proved to be so happy and I can say with pleasure, after all these years, 'I come from Glasgow, but my home is in Edinburgh', for we found not just a beautiful place to live, but wonderful friendship, kindness and community from the people with whom we share it.

Sheila Reid - July 2003

Planning Developments End March 2005 to End August 2005

The Grange Association has been approached to comment on three documents: the Scottish Executive white paper on 'Modernising the Planning System', the Edinburgh City Local Plan consultation paper and the draft of the Edinburgh City 'Tram Design Manual'. Unauthorised alterations to the property at 14 Kilgraston Road have resulted in enforcement action being taken by the Planning Department.

Significant Applications

*75 South Oswald Road: work commenced on new flats.

*91 South Oswald Road: work commenced on new flats.

Astley Ainsley Hospital: construction of new prosthetics building continues.

The above mean that 3 major developments are taking place in one confined area of the Grange.

*20-24 South Oswald Road: revised scheme for 9 flats under consideration.

59-67 Ratcliffe Terrace: consent granted for 13 flats, 2 mews houses, 2 commercial units.

*Falcon Gardens: Conversion of (St Peter's) School to form 4 flats and 6 new build flats (as amended)

Applications And Decisions From 26 March 2005 To 26 August 2005

All are 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.

Granted

Alteration and/or extension to dwelling house at:

20 West Relugas Road, *13 St Catherine's Place, 17 Relugas Gardens, 32 Findhorn Place, 23 South Oswald Road, 33 St Alban's Road, 40 St Alban's Road, 9 Whitehouse Terrace, 35 Relugas Road.

Conservatories at: 32 Findhorn Place, 33 St Alban's Road, 9 Relugas Road, 24 West Relugas Road.

Others:

133 Grange Loan Erect temporary building for period of 5 years

21 West Relugas Rd Form run-in in front garden.

*15 Sciennes Gdns Erect garage with WC, new entry in existing wall.

26 Grange Road Rebuild existing garage, extend to rear to create utility room.

30A St Albans Road Change of use to HMO with 6 tenants.

14 Mortonhall Road Form new window opening.

47 Grange Loan Certificate for lawfulness for double glazing.

2 Grange Crescent Installation of satellite TV dish.

*2 Oswald Road Increased access gate from Oswald Road.

*2 Oswald Road Alterations (in retrospect/not covered by previous application).

5 Blackford Road Variation of previously granted permission.

*119/1 Grange Loan Form windows and door to lower apartments.

*119/2 Grange Loan Form windows and door to lower apartments.

*121/1 Grange Loan Form windows and door to lower apartments.

*121/2 Grange Loan Form windows to lower apartments.

- 40 Dick Place Alter front garden parking, new gate, replace shed, new storage shed.
 31 Fountainhall Rd New railings.
 2 Lauder Road Variations to new detached property & alterations to windows in garden flat.
 6 Relugas Gardens New porch.
 122 Causewayside Replace timber louvers with GRP to accommodate telecommunications apparatus.
 43 Canaan Lane Enlargement of on-site parking. (Royal Blind School)
 10 Mansionhouse Rd Remove door & windows at rear, form 2 new doors & windows.
 30A Mansionhouse Rd Replace existing utility room with enlarged extension form kitchen. Install toilet.
 *29 Mansionhouse Rd Redevelopment of rear garden. Erect shed, summerhouse, porch. Terrace.
 49 Fountainhall Rd Erect external deck, French windows, railings.
 26 Dick Place New cast iron fence.
 121/1 Grange Loan Replacement windows.
 9 Whitehouse Terr Alterations to roof & internal layout of existing (attached) outhouse.

Refused

- *35 Grange Terrace Front garden run-in.
 32 Lauder Road Conservatory.
 *29 Grange Loan Attic conversion & formation of roof terrace to rear with dormer & velux to front.
 16A Mortonhall Rd Conversion & extension of roof space to form bedroom.

Withdrawn

None

Pending

- 9A Strathearn Road Dormer windows & rooflights.
 21C South Oswald Rd Attic conversion including installation of rooflights to side & rear.
 *35 Fountainhall Rd Form car parking space in front garden.
 20/1 Mortonhall Rd Hardwood conservatory.
 *20-24 South Oswald Rd Demolition of existing bungalow, construct 9 apartments.
 12 St Catherine's Pl Alter double garage to single and form new entrance to house.
 5A Sciennes Gdns Provision of external curved stairlift to existing stairway.
 17 Relugas Gardens Extension to existing building.
 12 Oswald Road Timber framed conservatory at 1st floor level & replacement windows. (Invalid on receipt)
 13 GF Strathearn Rd Single storey extension to rear of flat.
 1A Palmerston Road Alteration & extension to house.
 13 West Relugas Rd Vehicle run-in.
 34 GF Fountainhall Rd Conservatory.
 6 Palmerston Road Extend dwelling.
 8 Tantallon Place Install 3 rooflights and alter pipework to rear.
 9 Blackford Avenue Replace rear windows with French doors.

Traffic Calming: The Next Generation?

Earlier this year, we asked members for their views on extension to traffic calming. Parts of the Grange—particularly up to Grange Loan—have had calming measures in place for well over a decade, while the area around Sciennes School has been treated more recently. Measures include: various types of road humps (originally known as ‘sleeping policemen’), with and without channels for cyclists; less bumpy speed tables, where a section of road is built up to the level of the pavement; and road narrowing (or ‘chicanes’), with trees to mark some entry points to the calmed zone.

The particular point this year was that, given congestion charging, more traffic might be expected along Grange Road and its side-streets. In the event, of course, congestion charging was rejected at referendum. On the other hand, extensions to the Controlled Parking Zone may lead to our streets being less choked with commuter parking: and hence, some drivers may be tempted to negotiate them at higher speeds. So the question remains: would more calming measures be welcomed, or resisted?

First, we thank those of you who responded: about ten members in all, rather fewer than anticipated. This level of response may reflect a lack of concern about calming in general, or perhaps a sense that—like it or not—the area would be so far down the priority list for further measures that it’s not even worth worrying about.

The balance of opinion (3:1) was in favour of further measures. It was felt that drivers are less likely to use calmed roads as rat-runs, and traffic is generally slower, making the roads safer for cyclists, and allowing children to play games on side-streets. On the other hand, taxi drivers dislike them, emergency services are slowed down, and humps can cause damage to suspensions and exhausts if drivers approach them at any speed. Furthermore, some drivers race between each calming measure, rather than driving smoothly; and this less efficient driving pattern generates more vehicle emissions. It is also possible that the trend towards fuel-inefficient SUVs is encouraged, because these vehicles are relatively immune to humps. No-one local mentioned it, but some people also find the noise pollution disturbing—either from the ‘bump’ a vehicle makes on a hump itself, or perhaps from the revving as drivers speed off towards the next hump.

This list of disadvantages has been used, and elaborated upon, by campaigners against traffic calming, particularly in the London Borough of Barnet, led by London Assembly member Brian Coleman. On his initiative, road humps have been removed from some streets in Barnet, and this has led to tension between the Borough and Transport for London. Partly as a result of this, the London Assembly’s Transport Committee has carried out research on the matter.

The picture that is emerging is that road humps do definitely reduce injury and death. It had been claimed that the London Ambulance Services estimated that more lives were lost than saved (due to ambulances having to move more slowly). But these claims have not been substantiated by any evidence to date. On the other hand, there is also a general consensus that road humps, although relatively cheap, are by no means the best way of reducing speed and accidents. For instance, road narrowing makes drivers check their speed, with less effect on emergency services

and vehicle suspensions. Furthermore, speed cameras can be used either to flash up displays showing vehicle speed (or the current speed limit), or to capture the details of drivers flouting the speed limit. Various legal (and, no doubt, financial) issues have yet to be resolved before we see more speed cameras used for local traffic calming. Needless to say, those people who resent speed limits in general will be no happier with this alternative. But it looks as if the future of traffic calming is not just 'more humps'. And, realistically, it may be some time before any kind of future traffic calming materialises in the Grange.

Jon Oberlander, with special thanks to Adrian Redfearn and Marion Cantley

Nature Notes: Buzzards in the Grange

In the early spring of this year I caught glimpses of a single buzzard in the woods at Hermitage. Its presence was advertised by flocks of angry jackdaws flying in hot pursuit whenever it rose above the tree line. The scale of this raptor is very impressive at close range. It has a broad wing span and seems to dwarf all the other birds in the Hermitage, except for the slow flapping heron. One windy morning at the end of April, I heard the familiar mewing cries normally associated with buzzards keeping in contact with each other at a distance; high above the wood were two buzzards soaring like eagles. They had left the crows and jackdaws way down below and were riding the wind upwards on fixed wings, spiralling higher into the clouds. I watched them as specks in the sky and saw them stoop downwards, one following the other in roller coaster mode. This flight pattern is a common practice with breeding buzzards. When the birds descended and landed in the wood they showed interest in a tall Scots pine tree on the south facing slope. Its thick foliage would have made a suitable nest site for the pair. There was an old crow's nest from the previous year.

Early in May, the buzzards were seen regularly around the vicinity of the wood. I began to search all likely nesting places in the area. I thought I got lucky one morning when I heard an unfamiliar sound from somewhere high in the treetops. I was hoping it might be a buzzard chick; the call was a sort of chortling, warbling sound. When I located the exact position of the bird it was high up near the top of a Scots pine. It turned out to be a male kestrel sitting on a broad bough next to another old crow's nest and preening itself while it crooned to its mate. From my position on the steep hill overlooking the roughly constructed nest I could see the long tail of the female overlapping the twiggy platform. I sat and watched the male preening for about twenty minutes. He was aware of my presence. My dog Jack, who was standing beside me, was bored, whining to get on with a decent walk. The hawk launched itself from the tree and the sun caught the lovely rust colour of its wings.

The kestrels were successful in rearing two chicks and I was lucky enough to watch some of their early training flights across the old Blackford Quarry. Both parents were involved in getting their offspring to follow them on short flights from ledge to ledge. It was a noisy affair and the up draught on the quarry face greatly assisted their efforts. A passing buzzard received short shrift when it cruised over the kestrels' domain. The little falcon stooped down from above, and then again from underneath, with its sharp feet raking at the buzzard's underside. It was a David and Goliath moment that proved successful in driving the bigger bird out of the area.

[continued page 8]

The Grange Association Committee 2005/6

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Dorothy Ryle 33 Mansionhouse Rd EH9 2JD	667 1444	Community Liaison
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.

One of the best places to watch kestrel activity is from the top of the steps near the radio mast, overlooking the field at Midmar. One evening I saw the adult female flying low level like a sparrowhawk along the ridge of the crag. A small sparrow-sized bird flew from a gorse bush and headed across the open sky towards the nearest copse on the hillock in the field. The kestrel pursued it in level flight and caught it well before it reached the safety of the trees. This mode of hunting by a kestrel was new to me. I have also found three partially eaten shrew kills by kestrels this year. Voles are usually eaten whole but the shrew seems very much a second choice.

The buzzards have remained in the area and I think I now know where the nest is. I'm hoping to see adolescents over the hill this autumn. The rabbit population will prove easy meat for them.

Tom Breheny

Copy date: 1/9/05. You are welcome to quote from this newsletter, but please acknowledge the source. The information herein is as accurate as we can make it, but we do accept articles in good faith without necessarily being able to verify the contents.

<http://www.the-grange.org>
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Printed by
Dupliquick, 28 Great King Street,
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