



# The Grange Newsletter

Grange Association

January 2018

ISSUE No. 120

**At home in the Grange**

**[www.grangeassociation.org](http://www.grangeassociation.org)**

Registered Scottish Charity SC025491

We hope you enjoy this 120th *Grange Newsletter*. This issue includes many of your favourites, such as Tom Breheny's *Nature Notes* and Roger Kellett's *Planning Update*. New data protection rules mean that, in common with other organisations, we must change how we retain personal information. As a result, we have included in this edition a 4 page pull-out on the Association, the AGM (which we hope many of you will attend), membership form for new members and a data protection consent form for all members. The Association welcomes Nigel Ayton as Community Liaison contact to replace Dorothy Ryle who has decided to retire after many years of sterling service to the Association and the Grange area. We will be highlighting some of Dorothy's achievements in the next newsletter. In the meantime, we record our immense thanks to Dorothy for her hard work and commitment.

Jenny Dawe

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Cover photo of  
song thrush (mavis)  
by GA member,  
Peter Whelpdale

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Your contributions, photographs and feedback  
are welcome. Please send to Jenny Dawe  
email: liaison@grangeassociation.com

## CHAIR'S NOTES/GRANGE CEMETERY

### Notes from the Chair, Sue Tritton

#### Grange Association Talks

Members who attend the talks held over the winter months will know that the venue moved from the Butterflies Café at Marchmont St Giles Church to the church itself in October. This was because the Church had groups who wanted to book the café weekly whereas the Grange Association only wanted it once a month. We used the church as our venue for three meetings but had adverse feedback from our audiences. We decided that it was really not suitable: the pews were not very comfortable, the area for providing teas and coffees was not conducive to mixing and chatting and the sound system was difficult to operate.

St Catherine's Argyle has offered us the use of their church for the remaining three talks this season on the advertised dates. Of course, the first talk will have happened by the time you read this. It seems likely that, if suitable, we could have a different day of the week for the 2018/19 season. Please let me know if you have a preferred day which would allow you to attend most meetings. We know that many people have regular commitments with other organisations and will try to suit the majority as far as possible.

#### Grange Cemetery update

**Alan McKinney reports on the Grange Cemetery component of the Edinburgh Southside Graveyard Project, using Community Payback Order participants to rebuild gravestones:**

Whilst only one team is now operational in the Grange Cemetery, the manner in which the work is being undertaken is now very stable. Some of the larger stones that have been laid over cannot be included in this particular Project. Clearly this is disappointing as the visual impact of the prone stones detracts from what has actually been achieved but the limitations of this Project have to be accepted – however reluctantly.

By October 2017, some 100 stones had been rebuilt with another 14 foundations prepared whilst another 3 have been dug out. On the right is a map of the graveyard with the team concentrating its efforts in areas A, B, C, G, D, H, effectively working west from its starting point in A & B.

The prevailing weather limits work activities so the team seeks to ensure it always has a 'bank' of foundations prepared. Thus, when frost prevents the pouring of concrete for the bases, it is possible to continue with the final phase and the rebuilding of

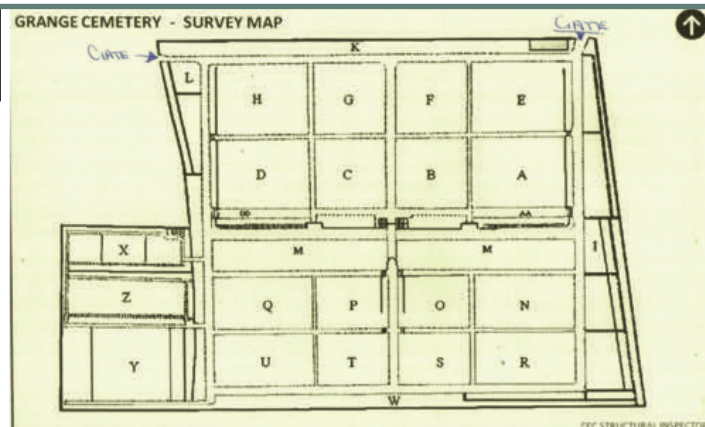
#### Local Environment – street lighting and street cleaning

The Council admits that it is taking longer than before for dark street lights to be repaired. However, there is now a very easy way to report a broken light: log on to the Council website and search for street lights – each light in a street is indicated on a plan and you just click on the problem light.

We have complained to the Council about the problem of fallen leaves not being cleared. The answer is that the streets will be dealt with "as part of the annual leaf clearing". We note that in some streets there are still leaves which have not been cleared since October 2016 and wonder when this annual cleaning will happen.

#### Grange Road – new crossings proposed

The Grange Association has been informally consulted about three proposed new crossings in Grange Road: these are light controlled crossings at Lauder Road and Cumin Place and a zebra crossing at Lover's Loan. Formal consultation is expected in early 2018 – we will try to ensure that details are on the website. We felt that the proposals were not ideal but that they may be the best solutions for the safe crossing of this busy road - especially for children going to Sciennes School.



the monuments.

Whilst the Justice Minister indicated an interest in viewing what had been achieved, the date of any visit has yet to be determined by the City of Edinburgh Council. Clearly, as those involved in this work are undertaking a Community Payback Order, there are some issues to address and this matter now lies with the Council officials. Whenever this is achieved, the work undertaken by the Grange Association in preparing its leaflet, 'Some Notable Burials', and its financial contribution to the Project will be recognised.

## SPOTLIGHT/IN MEMORY/GRANGE FAIR

### SPOTLIGHT on Nigel Ayton

The fourteenth in a series telling you about your Grange Association contacts



I moved to Edinburgh in 1997 with Christine and our two young sons, born while we were living in Beijing. On our return from China, I joined British Energy which then had its headquarters in the Gyle. I am a Chartered Engineer, having spent all my career in utilities (electricity and water). From 2003 I worked for Scottish Water, latterly setting up and running its international operation until I retired in 2016.

Christine is a Macleod and was happy to be bringing the family back to Scotland. Our home in South Lauder Road has seen our children from nursery through to graduation. We were extremely fortunate to be able to take on the house that was earlier Masson Hall – a hall of residence for women students at Edinburgh University. We still unearth odd bits of its history in the flower beds or under the floorboards.

We still feel rather like incomers, after just 20 years in the Grange, but we love living here. The peacefulness of the area, combined with the genuine sense of community, is priceless. We have been members of the Grange Association for most of our time here and we appreciate the work it does. I saw a request for someone to represent the Association on the Marchmont Sciennes Community Council and I was very happy to offer my services in that role.

### Remembering Jon Oberlander

*It was with great sadness and shock that the Grange Association learned of the death of Jon Oberlander at the age of 55 on 19 December 2017. Jon was eminent as Professor of Epistemics at the University of Edinburgh. To the Grange Association, he was a well-liked committee member from 2001 to 2011 and Chair from Autumn 2005 to Spring 2009. He was editor of the previous A5 blue newsletters from 2001 to 2010. He was a co-editor of 'Memories of the Grange' which can be found on the Grange Association website.*



Although the Oberlanders moved from the Grange in 2012, **Alison Bramley** has happy memories of a kind, pleasant neighbour:

“It was with shock and sorrow that Jon’s neighbours in Findhorn Place learned of his death just a week before Christmas. He lived at number 22a with his wife Vina and they brought up their children - Liberty, Hugh and Seth - there. They were often to be found sharing a cup of tea or a glass of wine in the sunny front garden of their house; always welcoming and contributing to the neighbourhood.

My own children played with theirs and as they grew up they benefited from Jon’s sharing of ideas and books. My eldest son is now flourishing as a cognitive scientist, his direction directly attributable to long conversations with Jon on philosophy and links to artificial intelligence and consciousness. We were familiar with his tall figure striding down the road to the Informatics Department where he was a kind, generous, thoughtful and inspiring leader. We miss him greatly.”

## Call for volunteers for Grange Fair 2018

Planning is underway for the fifth Grange Fair to be held at Newington Library in Fountainhall Road on Saturday 12 May 2018 (see ad on back page). Please put the date in your diary now. This is a fun local event for all the family that helps the local community. Last year, the fair raised funds for the library as well as the Edinburgh Dog & Cat Home.

We're looking for volunteers to help organise this year's fair and to contribute to the event e.g. put on a demonstration, showcase a special skill or performance, or to help out on the



Grange Fair, 2017

day (set up, man stalls or games, clear up after the event). If you have a suggestion or are interested in being involved please contact Anna Kulhavy (0131 623 5117) or Heather Peacock (07960 718807) or email [grange.fair@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:grange.fair@yahoo.co.uk)

We are also looking for goods to sell at the fair such as unwanted Xmas presents, books, bric-a-brac, plants.

Please let us know if you have such items to donate.

You can also contact a Grange Association committee member for further information.

# ASTLEY AINSLIE SITE/ST. CATHERINE'S

## Astley Ainslie news

NHS Lothian is in the process of appointing consultants who will consult with the general community and then draw up a masterplan for the site. Before this can be done they need to plan the relocation of the patients and the large number of support staff. This process has proved to be slower than expected and has delayed the project by several months.

The group of representatives of the Grange Association and the Community Councils had hoped to meet these consultants in the autumn but the delay has meant that the consultants have not yet been appointed. The group of representatives is now expecting to meet NHS Lothian early in 2018. Meanwhile we felt we should familiarise local residents with the Astley Ainslie site so that they can take a more active part in the consultation

when it happens. We held two days of guided walks in the autumn and were delighted that some 450 residents turned up and made these successful and enjoyable days. Thanks are due to all the helpers on these days and the walkers who provided useful feedback. If there is sufficient demand, we would be prepared to offer more guided walks in the Spring. Let us know if you are interested - details will be given on the website.

Parallel to the work of the Grange Association and Community Councils, but with their support, a small group of residents has met to discuss the feasibility of using the new Asset Transfer regulations to achieve community ownership of the site or of particular parts of it. These talks are still at a very early stage. Please let us know if you would like to be put in touch with this group.

**Roger Kellett**

**St Catherine's Argyle Church.** *Following our return to this church for our Talks, here's some of its history, mostly from the GA website:-* This church has its origins in members of a Free Church town congregation moving out to the suburbs in 1861 to meet in a hall in Causewayside, then in Clare Hall in Minto Street, with services also in a house in Mansionhouse Road [No.13]. In 1866 the new church was built, with seating for 900, called Chalmers Memorial Church, with Horatius Bonar, the famous hymn writer, as its minister. The church became Grange U.P. Church in 1900 and then, in 1929, St. Catherine's in Grange. The latter name was given because of the remains locally of a medieval nunnery of St Catherine of Sienna. A new Argyle Place Church, built at the corner of Sciennes Road in 1880, united with St. Catherine's in 1968. Originally the Argyle Place building was to be the place of worship with St. Catherine's as its extensive halls. In 1974, a disastrous fire destroyed Argyle Place Church, so St. Catherine's was refurbished to become St. Catherine's Argyle Church in 1979. In 2014, with the catalyst of the ordination of gay ministers, the then minister and many of the congregation left the Church. The congregation was rebuilt and the church's website now describes it as a "family-friendly, evangelical congregation".



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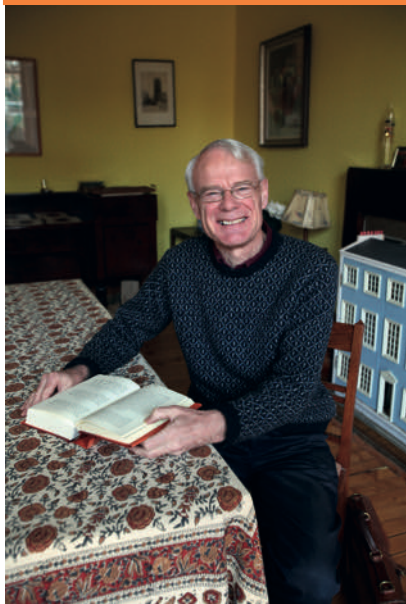
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## PROFILE - John Graham



**JOHN GRAHAM, Chair of the Grange Association from 2011 to 2015, spent nearly 4 decades as a civil servant. He spoke recently to JENNY DAWE about his career. PHOTOGRAPHS by STEVE COX**

variety of posts possible at the Scottish Office. "In Whitehall you were more likely to be in just one department. In the Scottish Office, people would move from one post to another fairly rapidly. To begin with, there was no choice about assignments but later on, with more bargaining power, I had some say about where I would go next." The downside to short postings was that he had to learn quickly. "It was sometimes hard but there were professional experts on hand – economists or architects, for example. However, it was always a challenge to get to know all the new people."

From June 1975 to October 1976, John was Private Secretary to Minister of State, Bruce Millan MP. John says this was "a great job with a very experienced, hardworking, sharp, well-prepared man". It meant spending four days a week in London. Millan succeeded Willie Ross

### A very civil servant

In a 1945 broadcast, known as "the Gestapo speech" because of an ill-conceived analogy, Winston Churchill made a fierce attack on the prospect of a new government gathering power to itself with "vast bureaucracies of civil servants, no longer civil and no longer servants". Sir Humphrey, in the 1980s *Yes, Minister* TV series, was no typical servant but he remained civil while manipulating politicians with crafty subterfuge behind a façade of humble helping. John Strathie Graham is either a match for Sir Humphrey in a mask of politeness, discretion and devotion to duty or he did spend 37 years as a loyal servant to government who remained very civil in his dealings with those he served. I suspect he really was a very civil servant.

Where did it all begin? John Graham, born in Edinburgh in 1950, grew up in East Lothian with his brother and sister. He lived in Morningside until the age of 3 when the family moved to Longniddry. John started school in Longniddry, going to Edinburgh Academy when he was 8. He gained A levels in Latin, Greek and Ancient History in 1967. He recalls his schooldays with pleasure: "I liked cricket, was active in the Debating Society and made a lot of friends that I have kept up with."

School was followed by a BA in 1972 in Classics and Ancient History at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. John notes: "I considered studying History but Classics had been taught in a small class at school with a dedicated, if somewhat eccentric, teacher, who inspired me." While at Oxford, John resolved to return to Edinburgh to work. "I might have gone to Standard Life or another big financial institution but the Civil Service seemed the best bet to get back to Scotland." To some extent, he knew what he was letting himself in for: his father had been a civil servant too.

Success in the Civil Service Competition and standard 16 week training for Scottish Office policy advisers and managers on law, finance and accountancy led to John's first jobs, from 1972 to 1975, in the Transport and Housing Divisions of the Scottish Development Department in Edinburgh. He was attracted by the

as Secretary of State for Scotland in April 1976.

Then followed two years in Glasgow as Principal, Industrial Policy Division, Scottish Economic Planning Department. "The old Board of Trade was not necessarily thrilled to become a Scottish Office function. It had its own culture. It was a small office but had some good people in it."

Every time John goes past Torness nuclear power station on the train, he recalls his next position – four years in the Electricity Division of the Scottish Economic Planning Department, dealing with the Scottish Electricity Boards. John remembers: "This was a fascinating time, covering the decision to build Torness. I had a lot of involvement with sharp people in the Treasury. I enjoyed the broad remit compared to the narrow specialism of my opposite numbers in the Department of Energy."

A short spell back in the Industrial Policy Division preceded a post John remembers affectionately. Indeed, along with the landscapes, abstracts and family pictures on his walls, a print of Dover House in his hall is a permanent reminder of his workplace from 1983 to 1985 as Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Scotland, George Younger MP. In private ownership from the 1750s to 1885, Dover House was the main London building of the Scottish Office from 1885 to 1999. "Dover House functioned a bit like an embassy. There was a great camaraderie there, making it a really enjoyable experience."

John had been invited to take on the Younger post when he was holidaying on Harris. He was confident he would like the job but had to weigh that up against having an infant daughter and a recent move into their house in the Grange. He found George Younger very different to Millan, being "more outgoing, affable, very experienced - and very forgiving if he ended up with the wrong piece of paper!" He comments: "It was exhausting physically but intellectually stimulating, having to start with an empty tray each day because of the steady flow of paper. I was in London from Monday to Thursday with Fridays at work in Scotland." He acknowledges: "It was no fun for my wife, Anne." Anne and John, married in 1979, met through work in 1973 in the office canteen in Edinburgh. After their daughter was born

## PROFILE - John Graham

in 1982, Anne “found her daughter too delightful to give up to someone else”, so did not return to the Civil Service. She will be known to some of you as Anne Stenhouse, author of e-books, *Daisy’s Dilemma*, *Bella’s Betrothal*, *Mariah’s Marriage* and *Courting the Countess*. Anne says, “I love writing dialogue – rich historical romance with lashings of humour and a swirl of thematic mystery.”

Anne’s writing came later. In the meantime, she had to cope for most of the week on her own. The Youngers were always very pleasant to her and sent Anne a fine bunch of flowers when her elder son was born in early 1985.

John’s interest in planning was fired during 1985 to 1990 in the Scottish Development Department. His remit was to advise Ministers on town and country planning policy, structure plans and on important major planning applications. Next, he had a year in the Scottish Central Services Finance Division, negotiating with the Treasury for the Secretary of State’s Departments’ running costs – no paltry sum at around £300m a year.

Highlights of 1991-96, when John was Under Secretary and Head of Local Government Group in the Scottish Office Environment Department, included local government restructuring into one tier authorities; replacement of poll tax by council tax; and advising Ministers on financial support for local government. He travelled extensively. “I developed a lot of respect for Council Chief Executives, people of real authority, as they grappled with what the new map might look like,” John notes. Wry Civil Service wit emerged when a bid to get Berwick back to Scotland was matched by a letter, dated 1st April, asking if Scotland would like to take Derbyshire too because they understood Bonnie Prince Charlie had reached there!

His career continued with two years advising departmental heads on finance. He had a lot of contact with Michael Forsyth and Donald Dewar: “both a treat to deal with.” Michael Forsyth amused John one day: “In a webcam conversation, Michael zoomed right in on me until my face completely filled the screen. He said he wanted to see if I believed in what I was saying!”

Six years from 1998 as Head of Environment and Rural Affairs covered the adaptation to devolution and the response to the 2001 foot and mouth disease. Five of the years were with Ross Finnie MSP as Minister. During the stressful Foot and Mouth period, John relates: “Ross Finnie grasped the limits of what he could do and knew the boundaries between his territory and that of civil servants. By contrast, south of the border, politicians got too involved and made things harder.”

John’s last post from 2004 to 2009 was a step down but he felt it would be really interesting to be Chief Executive of Historic Scotland. With over 300 properties in its care – from Neolithic Maeshowe in Orkney to Edinburgh Castle - the organisation’s objective was to protect and conserve Scotland’s built heritage and to encourage its appreciation by the public. John enjoyed travelling round the country, dealing with matters previously unfamiliar to him, such as pricing and measuring visitor



experience. He greatly respected the technical experts with their innovative conservation work and ability to assess viscosity and quarry origin of stone. He oversaw policy support for Ministers, including controversial proposals for listed buildings adaptations. The agency performed well under his care. On his retirement, Michael Russell, Minister for Culture, thanked John for his long contribution to public service in Scotland, adding, “I would also offer my personal thanks for the leadership he has shown ... as chief executive of Historic Scotland ... John leaves Historic Scotland well placed to meet the challenges of the future.”

Remarkably, John seems to have relished all his posts, but what were the highlights? “Working in the Secretary of States’ offices, seeing so much of Scotland, and all the interesting people I met.”

Does John have other interests? With civil service support, he spent 3 years as a non-executive director of Lloyds TSB Scotland.

He was a Governor of St George’s School for Girls for 8 years; was a session clerk of Mayfield Salisbury Church for 5 years, and is now Treasurer; and for 18 months was a non-executive board member of the Association of Chief Executives. After retirement, John served as Chair of the Audit Committee for General Register Office (Scotland) for 3 years; and as an independent member of the Risk Monitoring and Audit Committee of the Scottish Prison Service, and Chair for 2 years.

He continues to be Trustee of a scheme that gives small grants to encourage visitors to churches. He was Chair of the Grange Association from 2011 to 2015. He wrote in the Spring 2011 newsletter: “My predecessor [Sofia Leonard] is a qualified architect with deep knowledge of the area, whereas I am an interested amateur.” His enthusiasm for absorbing new information meant a very smooth transition and continuation of thoughtful comments on planning matters.

Current interests include croquet, played as a child and taken up again on retirement; visiting National Trust properties; some hill walking; gardening; and theatre, opera and concerts. He goes cycling with some retired planners. Routes are chosen with interesting heritage or planning issues, though he admits: “The routes are getting shorter and the lunches longer!”

An important part of John’s life has been travelling - from family and recent holidays in Sutherland to much further afield. Since retiring, John has visited Sicily, Turkey, Australia, Vietnam, Costa Rica, Cuba, India, Iran and the USA. Many of these destinations have been chosen for their historical and architectural interest. He has given illustrated talks to the Grange Association on architecture and conservation in Chicago and on Iranian Islamic architecture. On the afternoon of our meeting he was going to talk to the Thursday Club at his church on a trip to Rajasthan.

The comedian Paul Merton proclaimed: “When I wake up on Monday morning and I realise I don’t have to go and work at the civil service, I really think I’ve won.” On the contrary, John Graham seems a man contented with his life, thriving still on meeting new people and going to new places, who thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of his long civil service career.

# TREES/GRANGE AWARD/ CONTACTS

## Trees and walls

High walls of irregularly cut stone blocks or rubble are attractive features of the Grange and many of our larger trees are close to these garden walls. From the mid-nineteenth century, when land belonging to the former estates was sold for building, there was often a requirement that a plot should be enclosed on four sides by a high wall. But right from the outset trees were planted; and very many of them, it seems, were planted against walls.

People are still planting trees, and very often planting them too close to walls. There are understandable reasons – people like the idea of trees in their gardens, but they don't want to sacrifice the space. They don't want them close to the building because they're worried about roots disturbing the foundations. And they don't realise how big the trees will grow – or begin to think that a tree might outlive them.

Inevitably, trees can cause walls to crack, bulge or, in some cases, eventually to fall. Fortunately, though, the original stone walls seem surprisingly resilient. They do not usually have deep foundations, so roots can often grow under them without much disturbing them.

Different kinds of trees are more likely than others to damage a wall. Lime trees generally don't produce large roots near the surface, so they cause less damage than beech trees. Walls seem particularly vulnerable where a tree is growing in earth on one side that is somewhat higher than on the other. Many readers will have seen the damage caused where this was the case in South Lauder Road.

Obviously, as in South Lauder Road, where the risk of a tree causing a wall to collapse is a hazard to the public, the tree needs to be removed. But in other situations, particularly where the tree and the wall don't face a public road, the Association would encourage owners not to act too hastily. There are very many cracked walls in the area and in most cases they remain vertical and the crack will increase only slowly. A wall that remains vertical is unlikely to fall over without warning - unless the tree involved blows down.

Equally, if not more important, and an obvious point – by all means continue planting trees, but find out how big they will grow and make sure you have the space to accommodate them. As a general rule I suggest that any tree that will grow to more than 20ft should be planted no closer than 2.5m to a wall. And even then, don't take it for granted that your neighbours will be thrilled.

*Peter Pitkin*

## Grange Award reminder

Nominations are sought by 31 January 2018 for the Grange Award to be presented at the AGM in March 2018. Nominations should be for any development that enhances the area so they could include new buildings, extensions, refurbishment or landscaping including simple tree planting.

Nominated projects will be judged by the GA committee who will select projects that enhance the Grange Conservation Area. In particular we shall consider:

- Sympathetic restoration which maintains and enhances existing features
- Innovative design which respects its immediate surroundings and the wider context of the Conservation Area
- Maintenance and enhancement of trees and green spaces

The awards are open to projects completed between January 2015 and December 2017 and will consist of a small trophy and a certificate given to the winning owner. There will also be a copy certificate given to the designer or architect.

Nominations should be sent to Roger Kellett, 10 Wyvern Park, EH9 2JY or emailed to [planning@grangeassociation.com](mailto:planning@grangeassociation.com)

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### MP for Edinburgh South: Ian Murray

Tel: 0131 662 4520

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### MSP for Edinburgh Southern: Daniel Johnson

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### Councillors for Southside/Newington and Morningside:

Tel: 0131 200 2000

Address: City of Edinburgh Council, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1YJ;

Email: [first.name.surname@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:first.name.surname@edinburgh.gov.uk)

Southside/Newington

**Steve Burgess**

**Alison Dickie**

**Ian Perry**

**Cameron Rose**

Morningside

**Nick Cook**

**Melanie Main**

**Neil Ross**

**Mandy Watt**



## NATURE NOTES from Tom Breheny

### Astley Ainslie Hospital: fond memories and future concerns

**M**y first visit to the walled hospital site in 1971 made a big impression. I loved the spacious grounds, the landscaping, the big trees and the brightly coloured rhododendron shrubs and sweeping lawns. An ideal place for patients convalescing and a great place to watch wildlife. Over the years I've observed birds of prey, rabbits, foxes, bats and hedgehogs going about their daily business.

Some areas became neglected in later years when the number of garden staff was drastically reduced to make financial savings. The scented rose garden was bulldozed to create additional space for car parking and a lovely old fruiting fig tree disappeared under the rubble. A few apple and pear trees did survive and can still be seen on the steep banking beside the road. There is a giant redwood in the grounds, several large cedars and a magnificent Spanish chestnut tree with the remains of an ornamental seat which the tree has outgrown. The wooden seat planks rotted away many years ago but the three supporting cast iron dragons can still be seen deeply embedded in the tree trunk. The fallen chestnuts in November are too small for human consumption but the squirrels do collect them. On the north side of the site are two mature cherry trees producing an abundance of fruit at the end of July, but there is always serious competition from the woodpigeons, blackbirds and thrushes gobbling up the cherries before they are fully ripe. Frenetic bird activity is a helpful indicator of nature's bounty for opportunistic human hunter gatherers.

On the south side, sloping down towards the suburban railway line, is a tall stand of closely planted Sitka spruce. I am told that they were originally planted to provide Christmas trees for the wards. Those neglected forest trees grew high and mighty and blocked out the sun from the few remaining apple trees in what was formerly an orchard. I did manage to gather a few Bramleys before the trees finally gave up the ghost and the dead wood supplied me with excellent material for carving children's toys and kitchen spoons. The remaining timber provided fuel for our open fire. I gathered wood blewits every autumn at the woodland edge and always left sufficient mushrooms to cast their spores and regenerate. Eating blue fungi for the first time can be a little disconcerting but blewits are easily identified and safe to eat. Very little vegetation grows beneath the shade of the spruce trees except for stunted holly trees. Flocks of roosting woodpigeons feast on holly berries during the day, the indigestible seeds falling to the ground under their night time perches.



On week days I took my lurcher dog for a run through the wood before going to work. A pair of tawny owls at their familiar daytime roost in the large spruce tree beside the path watched me with casual interest as I passed below without disturbing them. The resident fox was not so slow off the mark when he spotted a man with a swift hound and made a hasty retreat.

A pair of sparrowhawks still nest in the hospital grounds, usually producing two or three chicks. The small male returns to the nest with ready-plucked finches, tits and small songbirds while the larger female preys on blackbirds, woodpigeons and, on one occasion, a snipe. As the chicks grow stronger, the parent birds encourage their noisy young fledglings to follow them away from the nest and into the neighbouring tree tops to be fed. The female hunts around Blackford Hill and the Midmar allotments. Once I saw her flapping past carrying a small bird in her feet down from the top of the hill, over the pond and into the hospital grounds far below.

Nocturnal woodcock are also resident in the hospital grounds. During the day they roost on the dead leaves beneath the trees and are perfectly camouflaged by their plumage. In the early summer evenings, at sunset, the males make their roding flight, circling above the trees and making a call which sounds rather frog-like. In winter I've seen their tracks in the snow beside the cedars.

The future development of the Astley Ainslie Hospital is a cause for concern. The site has been a virtual nature reserve in our leafy suburb for so many years with easy access for patients, staff and visitors to sit quietly and enjoy peace and tranquility.

Many local environmentally sensitive sites have suffered from over development in recent years and I'm hoping that those magnificent much loved trees of mine will not be disappearing under the woodsman's axe.

*[Photo of Astley Ainslie from Blackford Hill taken by Peter Whelpdale in September 2017]*

## PLANNING UPDATE by Roger Kellett

We are pleased to report that since September, four applications which we felt were inappropriate have been modified and made acceptable before being granted. These were at 5 Whitehouse Terrace, 19 Palmerston Road, 98 Findhorn Place and 9 Relugas Road.

A disappointment was planning consent being granted to make a large part of the front garden into car parking at 6 Findhorn Place. This was justified by the planners because of similar arrangements in the area, yet the planners insist that there is no rule of precedent in planning.

The owner of the land south of the Cat Clinic in Blackford Avenue appealed to the Local Review

against refusal of planning in principle for sheltered housing. The appeal was turned down.

An application for a garden room at 28 Dick Place was refused. It is a corner site meaning that the structure would have been effectively in the front garden. In both the applications for 7 Grange Loan Gardens and 6 Whitehouse Terrace we are concerned that the proposed extensions would be too near the boundary with the neighbours. At 42 Lauder Road an application has been made for an extension and garage constructed in brick. We feel this material is inappropriate for a listed building within the conservation area. A decision is still awaited for these three applications.

### APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING CONSENT, September - December 2017

#### The following applications were granted:

- 171 Whitehouse Loan.** Internal alterations.
- 60 Fountainhall Road.** Extension to side and rear with new entrance door. (Variation.)
- §\* 5 Whitehouse Terrace.** Un-subdivide. New rear extension.
- §\* 19 Palmerston Road.** Subdivide house into three with second floor above garage.
- 54 Grange Loan.** Internal alterations.
- 1F1 27 South Oswald Road.** New stone retaining wall and stone steps.
- 41 Lauder Road.** Internal alterations.
- St Raphael's, 2 – 6 South Oswald Road.** Replace old aluminium windows with uPVC.
- 2 Grange Crescent.** New side door & internal alterations.
- \* 6 Findhorn Place.** Car parking in front garden & new rear windows.
- §\* 98 Findhorn Place.** Enlarge rear windows.
- §\* 9 Relugas Road.** Extension and freestanding garden room. (No changes to roof).
- 56 Sciennes.** Convert rear window to door.
- 22A Findhorn Place.** Rear extension.
- 29 Mansionhouse Road.** Large side extension to south.
- 16 Relugas Road.** Rear roof extension.
- 11 Hope Terrace.** Changes to front garden.

#### The following applications were refused:

- \* 15m South of 38 Blackford Avenue.** Permission in principle for sheltered housing. Refusal upheld at Local Review.
- \* 28 Dick Place.** Garden room/office in front garden.

#### The following were still pending in December:

- §\* 9 Blackford Road - Garage 12m East of 1 Whitehouse Terrace.** Convert existing garage into annexe accommodation for 9 Blackford Road. [Awaiting decision since July 2016].
- \* 7 Grange Loan Gardens.** Rear extension.
- Marchmont St Giles Church.** Extension into courtyard to south.
- \* 6 Whitehouse Terrace.** Replace garage with two-storey garage/study at rear boundary.
- 15 Eden Lane.** Free standing timber garden workshop.
- Marchmont St Giles Church.** 4G antennas in steeple. Change louvres to replicas.
- 25 Findhorn Place.** Conversion of garage into a study.
- 8 Grange Road.** Extend kitchen at garden level.
- 15 Grange Terrace.** Hardwood conservatory to rear.
- \* 42 Lauder Road.** Remove garage and rear offshoot. Construct new garage and extension.
- 15 Findhorn Place.** Internal alterations and new windows.
- 2A Dick Place.** Install roof vents.
- 27 Hatton Place.** Replace windows with matching.
- \* 7 Mortonhall Road.** Extension on top of existing garage.
- 9 Glenisla Gardens.** Move kitchen and new doors at garden level.
- 8 Tantallon Place.** Changes to outshoot and access gates.
- 5B Hope Terrace.** Create new vestibule.

*\* Signifies a comment or objection was lodged by the GA.  
§ Applications modified after the plans first appeared.*

# GARDENING

## Gardening matters

The Garden Exchange Group ended the gardening year in early November with a seeds and plants exchange meeting, distributing our surplus resources to other members.



If you have spare plants and seeds that you want to donate to a good home, please get in touch and I will advertise them to garden group members. We will

commence meetings again soon with our traditional visit to a garden full of snowdrops or spring bulbs.

By the time you read this it will be too late to plant spring bulbs, but it is worth thinking about summer

and autumn flowering bulbs which can be rewarding for little maintenance.

The photo (left column) is of nerine bowdenii. These exotic "Guernsey lilies" appear in my garden every October without fail and last at least a month with almost no input from me. It is a South African bulb and although all the books will tell you that they need full sun, mine flourish under an old pear tree. Perhaps it is the dry conditions they like.

I do not pick these as I enjoy this late surge of colour in the garden, but I hear that they make good cut flowers. There is still just time to plant some and so I am looking for a space to plant a few more that I shall grow just for picking.

*Edythe Murie*

To join the Grange Garden Exchange group and to hear about future activities write to: [gardens@grangeassociation.com](mailto:gardens@grangeassociation.com) or phone Edythe Murie 07779 763930



*Have a berry good gardening year!  
Berry photos courtesy of Grange Association member, Peter Whelpdale.*

## VIEWPOINT joy in later years

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Care Home - Oswald Road

### St Raphael's

Care Home - South Oswald Road

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# EVENTS 2018

## Dates for your diary

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF VENUE TO ST. CATHERINE'S ARGYLE CHURCH, 61 - 63 Grange Road

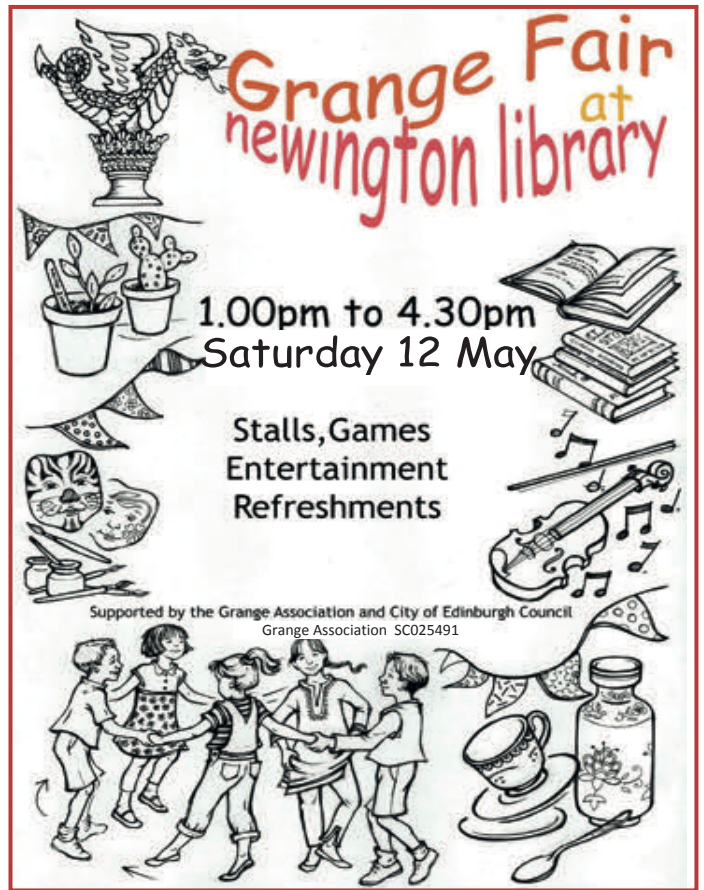
**Thursday 01 February:** Richard Torrance, whose interests include genealogy, 19th and 20th century Scottish photography and the Incorporation of Candlemakers, will present *The Grange and Marchmont 100 years ago - an illustrated talk*.

**Thursday 01 March:** AGM, to which all members are invited, followed by a talk by Alan McKinney, who has been leading the project using Community Payback labour in the Edinburgh Southside cemeteries, on *Community Payback in action*.

Meetings will be in St Catherine's Argyle Church. Coffee, tea and biscuits at 19:00 precede the main talk at 19:30, except for the AGM which begins at 19:00 preceded by refreshments at 18:30.

### Ads

**Fiona Hastie - Self-employed Mobile/Freelance Hairdresser** - Hairdressing in your own home by Jenners trained stylist with many years' experience. For an appointment to suit, please call mobile 07932 763522; home 0131 447 1968; or email [fionahastie@me.com](mailto:fionahastie@me.com)



Poster by Alexa Rutherford

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