

Blacket Association: Annual Report – 2011 / 2012

This will be my last Report as Chairman; it will also be a brief one. The major happenings of recent years, namely the redevelopment of the Alfred Place site and the changeover within the 'five streets' (as elsewhere across the South Side) to a 20mph speed limit, dealt with in some detail last year, were completed over the course of 2011-2012. The main outstanding item has been the repair of the Pugin gate-piers at the east end of Mayfield Terrace where getting some action from the relevant part of the Council and then a job slot within the mason's work programme took up a good deal of our Secretary's time. As I write this, work has begun on the southern gate-pier and hopefully will be closely followed by restoration of the less-damaged northern one.

The new event of 2011-2012, which proved to be the highlight of the year was the 3rd June street party, held in Alfred Place, on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee. The weather was kind, the numbers attending were high and a good time was had by all. In short, the afternoon was a great success, and that was in large part thanks to the planning and hard work put in by Hazel Fletcher and her team.

I have enjoyed my years as Chairman and the work this involved with my volunteer colleagues on the Committee - in particular, former Secretary Ian Carter and current Secretary Bob Cupples - who have stood the Association in good stead over a period which involved the most significant development within the boundaries for many years past and, hopefully, for very many years to come.

Ray Footman

Neighbourhood Watch

We had a good start to the year with no incidents being reported to me until the night of 4th March 2012 when there were two burglaries of occupied houses - one at the east end of Mayfield Terrace, and another in north Blacket Place. A car was probably stolen to order from Mayfield Terrace, the thieves having broken in only to steal the car keys. A large TV was taken from the other house, access being gained through a jemmied window – the stolen car may have been used to take away the TV.

These were the most serious crimes committed all year – in at least one case, the thief exited through the front door. The Police advice is to hide car keys, lock the front door securely, and if possible keep expensive articles out of public sight. There was an attempted telephone scam involving a credit card in late August but the recipient of the call did not fall for it. An e-mail warning was circulated on this and other telephone scams. As far as I am aware, no-one in the area has been caught out.

More recently, there have been some break-ins to motor vehicles. Two happened on the same evening – a car was broken into from which a laptop was stolen in Mayfield Terrace and after smashing a window, a sat-nav taken from a car in Blacket Place. Then a campervan in Blacket Place was broken into, the goods rummaged, but nothing taken – it appeared that there was nothing valuable that could be sold on quickly. Police advice is to empty vehicles if possible, particularly of valuable items.

As far as we know, there have been no houses burgled, while the owners have been away this year. And although we have suffered less crime than usual this year, we must still be vigilant against the opportunist, and not lower our guard. I would like to thank my NW team for providing me with the information and for collecting e-mails.

Alison Mowat

Blacket Avenue Working Party

There were two main thrusts to our activities in the past year. The first was a major tidy around and to the trees and bushes, mainly in Blacket Avenue but also in Mayfield Terrace. The aim was to lift the canopy and to let more light into the beds and on to the pavements – where possible, we tried to improve the sight lines at road junctions.

The second activity is a longer term one. We planted a lot of snowdrops, crocosmia and vinca – we hope to see the fruits of our labours in the years to come with increased floral ground cover at various times in the year. And we did the never ending chores of clearing rubbish, spreading manure and generally keeping the trees, bushes and beds in as good a state as we could manage.

However we have not been helped by the state of the wall and the fenced area on the south of Blacket Avenue at the entry from Minto Street. We feel that the wall is not only unsightly, it is also unsafe. We are hindered from getting these repaired as we are not the owners of the land affected.

We have tried to persuade the land owners (City of Edinburgh Council) to intervene directly but as yet they have not done so, as far as we are aware. The timber fence, the cost of which was a joint expense between the Association and the Council some years ago, has also not been reinstated. This is not only a depressing sight but it has also hindered planting in this part of the shrubbery.

Hugh Mackay