

Blacket Newsletter: 1st June 2009

Join The Gardens Open Evening On 26 June

All residents and their friends are cordially invited to join their neighbours from the Association's 'five streets' for this month's Annual Open Gardens Evening, which will be held on Friday 26 June between 6.30 and 8.30 pm. An advance thank-you should go to those householders - at 10 Blacket Place and at numbers 20, 24/24a and 38 Mayfield Terrace - who have kindly agreed to open their gardens from 6.30 to 7.30pm. Thanks also to those at 34/36 Mayfield Terrace, where the event will culminate with a drinks and nibbles party - from 7.30pm for an hour or so. Any proceeds will go towards the Association's annual expenses - including planting within the Blacket and Mayfield Terrace roadside garden and tree areas. So, both have a pleasant evening out and help support our environment.

Bothered By Traffic? You Can Help

There was a lively discussion at last winter's AGM about vehicles using Blacket Ave/Place and Mayfield Terrace as short-cuts and, on occasion, speedways between the adjacent main roads to east and west. In this context, it was seen as especially ironic that Edinburgh's first-ever designated residential conservation area still had virtually no traffic calming measures in place to minimise the dangers, particularly to the younger and older members of the local community, from speeding through traffic. It was also noted that there seemed little promise of early Council action on this front. A desire to encourage a more positive approach by the City led to the proposal that we should mount our own traffic survey, during a non-holiday week this summer, so up-to-date info would be available to the Association in pursuing the need for action with the road authorities. It is now planned to carry out the traffic survey during selected morning and afternoon periods between Monday 15 and Friday 19 June. If you are about in Edinburgh and could spare an hour or two on one of the days during this week, to help record the flow of traffic, your assistance would be really welcomed - particularly by those members of the Committee who have already agreed to help. If you may be able to contribute to this particular good cause please contact Ray Footman or Ian Carter.

Need Some Help Now & Then?

Members will be aware that many students from the University of Edinburgh stay in or around the South Side. What you may not know is that a good many of these students look for part-time work round the year and that the University's Careers Service runs a part-time employment scheme (SAGE), to help put these undergraduates and postgraduates in contact with households and other potential employers in the area who may have some suitable spare-time work on offer. If you think you could use some assistance, within or outwith the house, why not check out, or get in contact with SAGE on www.careers.ed.ac.uk/employers or tel 651 1615. (there is no charge to employers). They will be happy to advise on availability/suitability of part-time student workers for particular recommended hourly rates, etc.

Don't Forget Our Website

Since launching our 'www.blacketedin.org' website early in 2008, such feedback as we have had has been largely favourable and, a year or so on, we are now planning a few changes. Don't forget, all local residents have a chance to contribute; for example, with photo or written material covering the history of the area. If you have anything you think might be relevant, please contact the Editor

The 'Five Streets' On One CD..And On Google View

If you were at the last AGM, you may have seen the photo survey of facades of properties across our conservation area. If any member would like to have a copy of the CD, we would be pleased to send you one in return for a £5 contribution to the Association's coffers. Contact the Website Editor
Copies will also be available at the Autumn AGM. Not all members may know that the local facades now appear on Google Maps Street View.

A Pillar Fell....But Was Saved And Rose Again - Thanks To Messrs Zank & Carter

As many members of the Association will recall, an unidentified motor vehicle last year smashed against one of the fine old stone gate pillars that mark the entries to Blacket/Mayfield, so that it posed a potential threat to passers-by. Thanks to initial prompt reporting action by long-time Blacket neighbouring resident, Bertram Zank, the pillar was partly dismantled and the removed stones fenced off by Council employees. The matter of restoring the Blacket Avenue pillar was thereafter regularly followed up by the Association's Secretary, Ian Carter, and the Pillar was eventually rebuilt earlier this year. This did not happen, however, without a certain amount of detective work in the archives, from which Ian Carter established, to his satisfaction, that the previous Lothian Region local authority had agreed maintenance of the pillars would be a Council responsibility. It then took him some time and repeated approaches to see the work was done. Now that it is, we owe thanks to the two Blacket residents and, latterly, to the Roads Department.

What's In Prospect Within Blacket And Down The Road?

Not surprisingly, planning matters regularly loom large on the Blacket Association's agenda, and these are closely monitored, in particular, by the Association's Secretary, Ian Carter. Equally unsurprisingly, however, given the economic situation, 2008/2009 has seen relatively little high-profile activity. Despite the initial flurry of consultative activity in 2008 over the Rowans site, off Alfred Place, there has, apparently, since been no further action by the owner to secure revised planning permission for the site (leaving in place the limited residential development permission, granted some years ago, on which there are presently no known plans to proceed). More recently, the present owners of the Cameron Toll site and shopping centre have made public their intentions to seek a revised planning permission for an extension of activities on the site. A presentation was made to the May meeting of the local Grange/Prestonfield Community Council which envisaged further retail, catering and leisure developments on the south side of the site, while maintaining the present car-parking capacity. It is understood that an application has now been lodged with the Council, with any comments expected before 12 June. While strictly speaking this is off our pitch, the Blacket Association has registered concern about any developments in this area which might further exacerbate traffic volumes.

Please Keep An Eye Open

Maintaining our environment depends, in part, on all of us. If you come across local instances of damage or dumping, please contact Alison Mowat of Neighbourhood Watch or Ian Carter, Association Secretary.

Ray Footman, Chairman BLACKET ASSOCIATION

Ian Carter, Secretary