

ETTRICK/GILLSLAND/NAPIER/POLWARTH/WEST CASTLE

# NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

MEETING/SOCIAL EVENT

*Sunday 18 February 2007*

*2.30pm*

*Polwarth Parish Church Hall*

***FACES OF EDINBURGH***

*a talk by*

***Hamish Coghill***

*Local historian and former Evening News journalist Hamish Coghill is the author of numerous books about Edinburgh including Lost Edinburgh in which he sets out to trace many of the lost buildings and find out why they were doomed. Lavishly illustrated, Lost Edinburgh is a fascinating insight into an ever-changing cityscape.*

*(published by Birlinn – signed copies will be available at the meeting)*

*plus*

*Meet your local Community Police Officer, P.C. Alan Hopper, who will give a report of crimes committed in the area and advice on crime prevention*

**Refreshments      All welcome**

**Admission free**

# NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

*Merchiston Community Council  
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH*

14 January 2007

Dear Neighbour,

This is the fifth of our Neighbourhood Watch Newsletters. If you are new to the area and would like to see the earlier issues (dated August 2004, May 2005, September 2005 and March 2006), please let me know. The streets which we cover are given at the end of this letter.

## *Update on events/developments since last Newsletter*

A large gathering of local residents on 9 April last year heard our distinguished neighbour, author *Alexander McCall Smith*, talk in characteristically modest and entertaining fashion about his famous Edinburgh creations. There were some searching questions (and some intriguing answers) about the research he does and the models he uses for the events and characters which appear in and around 44 Scotland Street. Our friendly local locksmith, Mike Harper, was also present with a display of locks and plenty of advice about the best ways of securing not just houses and flats, but garages and garden sheds as well. Contact him at Bruntsfield Lockshop Tel 221 6562 or 07734 069982. Website [www.bruntsfieldlockshop.co.uk](http://www.bruntsfieldlockshop.co.uk)

## *Beware!*

Royal Mail, the Police and the Trading Standards Office have asked us to make people aware of the following scam.

A card is posted through your door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that they were unable to deliver a parcel and that you need to contact them on 0306 661 1191 (a premium rate number). **DO NOT** call this number as this is a mail scam originating from Belize. If you do call this number

and you start to hear a recorded message, you will already have been billed £15 for the phone call.

If you receive a card with these details, then please contact Royal Mail Fraud on 02072 396 655 or ICSTIS (the premium service regulator) at [www.icstis.org.uk](http://www.icstis.org.uk) or Edinburgh City Council's Trading Standards Office tel 529 3030 or email [env.con.svs@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:env.con.svs@edinburgh.gov.uk)

Other current scams include phone calls and emails purporting to be from your credit card company or your bank, asking you to confirm certain details about your account. A genuine credit card company or bank will never do this, so you should never give any information to these fraudsters. Report their activities to the security department of the company/bank or to the Police.

### ***Graffiti Alert!***

Our Community Police Officer PC Alan Hopper has sent the following message:

“There has been a rise in the amount of graffiti in the Merchiston area recently. One notable 'tag' is the name NICO. I am currently trying to establish all locations where this word appears. Could I ask that if you happen to see the word NICO, or any other significantly 'new' graffiti that you contact myself by email ([alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk)) or phone (666 2222) to make me aware of the location. It may be that I am already aware of the location but any help will be much appreciated. Thank you.”

### ***Street Lighting***

As reported last time, requests for improvements in *street lighting* in Polwarth Terrace, have been lodged with the City Council. The wheels of Council bureaucracy turn very slowly but, with the help of PC Alan Hopper and Cllr Sue Tritton, we now have some progress on this. PC Hopper has been assisted by the Community Safety Department who carried out a lighting survey of the area. It is now agreed that the lighting at Napier Road and Polwarth Terrace is inadequate – indeed “falls way below the recommended lighting levels” – and Cllr Tritton has presented the official findings to the relevant council department. We must continue to press the Council either through Cllr Tritton or direct to ensure that appropriate action is taken, and without further delay. Dark streets are a gift to criminals.

## ***New Red Alert Website***

Launched in October 2006, as a collaboration between local authorities, the emergency services and the Police, this website will be used, in the event of a significant civil emergency in the Lothian and Borders area, to give vital information to the people who live, work in, or travel through Lothian and Borders. Information will also be given about traffic blackspots caused by road accidents and about road closures generally. And severe weather. Have a look at it!  
[www.lbalert.info](http://www.lbalert.info)

Civil emergencies are rare events. Despite Lothian and Borders being a safe area, some of the emergencies that have affected the area in recent times include:

- Wide area flooding
- Severe weather conditions
- The fuel crisis
- Foot and mouth

## ***Emergency Contact Forms***

Street Co-ordinators continue to supply and collect *Emergency Contact Forms*. These are a means, entirely voluntary of course, of providing details of any relatives/lawyer/other contact whom you would like to be informed in the event of emergency. Completed forms are passed on to the police. Many people have commented that this is an excellent idea. Ask your Street Co-ordinator if you'd like a form.

## ***Police Reports***

These continue to be received on a monthly basis. Ask your Street Co-ordinator if you'd like to see them.

## ***Incident Reports***

Quite separately from the Police Reports, we encourage people in our area to let us know of any crime-related incidents in which they have been involved or which they have heard about. These may or may not have been reported to the Police but neighbours can often learn from them.

***If you see anything at all that you think is suspicious, DO PLEASE REPORT IT TO THE POLICE. Howdenhall Police Station tel. no is 0131 666 2222.***

*Our Community Beat Officer, PC Alan Hopper, is very helpful & is contactable at Howdenhall (666 2222) or by e-mail [alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk)*

As always, the important thing is to be vigilant at all times, and to report anything suspicious you see not just in your own home or back yard but in your neighbour's as well. Looking out for one another is what Neighbourhood Watch is all about. The number to ring is 666 2222 (Howdenhall Incident Centre) or in the case of serious emergency 999. Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 is the number to ring if you want to talk confidentially about your suspicions of a particular crime or a particular individual. You can contact Merchiston Community Beat Officer PC Alan Hopper either via 666 2222 or by email at [alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk)

### *Fire Safety Checks*

Lothian & Borders Fire Brigade are still providing these free of charge. Telephone 0800 169 0320. If the Fire Inspector considers that you need a smoke alarm, and you would like one, this will be provided and fitted FREE OF CHARGE. In this connection, we have been warned that some elderly people in the area have received bogus telephone calls purporting to come from the Fire Brigade. Please note that the genuine Fire Brigade personnel never make contact by phone unless you ask them to and always carry official ID.

### *Home Security Checks*

Lothian and Borders Police also offer FREE Crime Prevention Surveys offering advice on your home security. To arrange a survey call 0131 654 5512

### *South Edinburgh Crime Prevention Panel*

This is a forum, organised by PC Steve McGill of the Crime Prevention Unit of Lothian and Borders Police, on which Neighbourhood Watches from all over South Edinburgh are represented. I try to attend its meetings and to pass on concerns that we have in this area. If anyone has anything in particular that they'd like me to raise, please let me know. Also, the Panel is keen to recruit new members. If you are interested, please phone PC McGill on 221 2100.

*NB Current advice from SECPP is that the best way of securing sash windows, especially at ground floor level, is by sash bolts. P.C. McGill can advise. Over-60's may be able to have the bolts fitted free of charge.*

### *Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches*

**This is now up and running and Ian Doig represented us at its conference in August 2006. He has submitted a comprehensive Report of the day's proceedings, which is available either from him or from me. AOSNW aims to be an active forum for discussion of issues relating to the prevention of crime and community safety generally. Have a look at its website [www.aosnw.co.uk](http://www.aosnw.co.uk)**

### ***Other topical issues***

**Although they may not appear at first sight to be related to crime or security, we thought you might be interested in the following:**

**James Gillespie's High School Trust is organising an oral history project capturing the memories of people who have attended the school and also people living in the community. Donnie Henderson, who is compiling the history, has agreed to give a presentation at the next meeting of Merchiston Community Council. It will take place at 7pm on Tuesday 20 February, probably at Viewforth Church (check with us nearer the time.) All local residents are most welcome to attend. If you cannot attend this meeting, and have memories that you'd like to contribute, please contact: Frances Benton, James Gillespie's Trust Development Officer at the school and leave your name and address at reception for Frances and she will contact you.**

**The presentation will be followed by MCC's monthly meeting, at which there will be discussion of issues to do with planning, licensing and policing – with particular relevance to Merchiston. Again, all are welcome.**

**As you may have read in the local press, an application to convert the Redholme House Hotel on Colinton Road into a hostel for homeless people was withdrawn at the last minute. There had been a large number of objections and expressions of concern from residents.**

**An application from the Etrick Hotel to have its late licence extended was approved, despite objections from over 100 neighbours. Questions are being asked as to how this came about.**

**Parking continues to be a hot topic in Merchiston. As residents will be aware, most but not all of the streets in our area are scheduled to be included in the new Controlled Parking Zone which, having been postponed three times already, is now due for implementation on 7 March. Some residents in the area from Gillsland Road to the junction of Polwarth Terrace and Colinton Road (known as "The Gillsland Triangle") wish their streets to be included, which would require a Variation Order to amend Zone 3. Look out for the public consultation.**

***And finally.....MAY WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS PLEASE ?***

**The customary reminder that Neighbourhood Watches are voluntary schemes, run by volunteers who personally bear the costs involved. We receive no public funding and are therefore always on the lookout for ways of minimising these costs. In this connection, we want to be able to communicate with as many of you as possible by email so, if you haven't already given us your email address, please do so now. Send it to your street co-ordinator (see end of this letter). Being able to get in touch with you by email also means that you can receive quick alerts about matters, for example, that the local police feel should be brought to residents' notice quickly. But, if you do not have email, please don't worry – we are delighted to continue providing you with a paper copy of the Newsletter. We are extremely grateful to local Solicitors & Estate Agents Hunters (part of the Gillespie Partnership) for printing this edition of our Newsletter free of charge. But we do have other costs that need to be met throughout the year and contributions towards these are always gratefully received.**

**Thanks to you all for your feedback and support. And we look forward to seeing you at our Hamish Coghill event on 18 February.**

**With best wishes,**

**Yours sincerely,**

*Bridget M. Stevens*

**Chair, Merchiston Community Council**