

Merchiston & Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch Public Meeting & Social Event

**Sunday 21st February 2010
2.30pm, Polwarth Parish Church Hall**

“Crime, Crime Prevention and Court Action”

With the following Guest Speakers:

Inspector Ian Moffat

Sector Inspector for South Edinburgh - recent trends in criminal activity and the priorities and structures put in place by Lothian and Borders Police to combat these, including the implications for community policing

PC Alan Hopper

Community Beat Officer - summary of crimes and crime trends in our area over the past year

Sheriff John Horsburgh

Insights into the links between police and court action and sentencing policies.

Refreshments will be available and all local residents are welcome.



www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk

MERCHISTON & POLWARTH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

January 2010.

Dear Neighbour,

Welcome to the ninth Merchiston & Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter! I hope that you find it both interesting and helpful.

► **OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AREA**

The notice of our Public Meeting to be held on **21 February 2010** shows two logos, one for our own Neighbourhood Watch and one attesting to our membership of the Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches (www.aosnw.co.uk). The streets in our Neighbourhood Watch area are listed at the end of this newsletter.

► **TAKING ELECTRONIC ADVANTAGE**

Currently we have over 120 email addresses on our mailing list of local neighbours who have opted to receive updates of our **Newsletter**, the **Police Reports** and/or **Breaking News bulletins** that way.

There are significant advantages to providing us with your email address:

- you receive news bulletins immediately they become available;
- you can receive monthly Police Reports for the area, along with short adverts for local events that all help to bring the Neighbourhood together;
- you will ultimately help us save on the costs of printing and paper, and on the physical demands of pavement delivery.

There are many more residents in the area who do have internet access, but whose email address we do not yet have. We are therefore unable to distribute information electronically to these people.

Listed below are the house numbers of the streets in our area for which we do have email addresses – if your address isn't listed, **please do visit our website (www.neighbourwatch.org.uk) and click on the word 'Contact'**. This takes you to a very short online registration form.

Ettrick Grove	5.
Ettrick Loan	1/3, 1/4, 4, 8.
Ettrick Road	1, 4, 4a, 4B, 6a, 7, 8, 9B, 9C, 10, 10B, 10/2, 10/3, 11, 11C.
Gillsland Park	3/2.
Gillsland Road	1, 2, 2A, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2J, 2K, 3, 3C, 4/7, 6/1, 8/4, 17/1, 17/2, 17/3, 17/6, 17/9, 17/10.
Merchiston Avenue	8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 27, 32/5.
Merchiston Crescent	12/d, 14b, 14c, 18.
Merchiston Park	9C/1, 9C/2, 18A, 18B, 19, 22, 31.
Mid Gillsland Road	3, 5.
Napier Loan	3, 4.
Napier Road	1C, 1/1, 1/2, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 8A, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 24, 28.
Polwarth Grove	5, 6, 17.
Polwarth Terrace	1, 2, 8, 10, 22B, 24B/5, 39A/2, 44, 44A, 46A, 70, 84, 94A, 97/4, 100A.
Spylaw Road	25, 31/1, 33, 38, 40, 49/1, 49/4, 56, 56/10, 68.
St Teresa Place	1/6, 2/1, 2/2.
The Limes, Napier Road	3, 4, 12, 16.
West Castle Road	4, 13, 16.

Please do register if you have not already done so. Don't let one of the shortest roads - Napier Road - put the longer streets to shame! If your house number is listed above, but your neighbour's house number is not, then why not give them a New Year nudge to register?! You

can be assured that your contact details will not be shared with any other group or organisation at any time.

It goes without saying that the worth and effectiveness of the news bulletins is linked directly to the number of people who can access them quickly; and the more contacts that we can gather, the better our Neighbourhood Watch will be for everyone and for the safety of our neighbourhood.

Our web site manager, Nevil Hopley, writes.....

'Over the past 12 months, our Neighbourhood Watch website has continued to share relevant information including nine monthly Police Reports and seven Breaking News Bulletins.

There have been over 630 pageviews on the website, with the most frequently viewed page being the Breaking News, followed closely by the Monthly Police Reports.

*The **Breaking News** section has been a useful forum for circulating relevant, local information quickly. These have included incidents ranging from car wing mirror vandalism to phone call scams as well as updates on burglars who have confessed after being apprehended!*

Communication is two-way! Please also use the web site or speak to your street coordinator to pass on any **suggestions** you have to the Neighbourhood Watch Committee. If you're not sure who is the coordinator for your street, then click on the words '**About Us**' on our website and scroll down the page to see the full rogues' gallery of portraits...'

► **REVIEW OF OUR LAST MEETING**

Our last meeting, in February 2009, was on the 'Digital TV Switchover'. It was very well attended by around 50-60 local residents.

Our first speaker was John MacNeill, Assistant National Manager of Digital UK, the independent organisation leading the change to digital across the UK. He reminded us that the date of the switchover in our part of the country is 2010/11 and that by then it would be essential, if we wished to continue to watch TV, to have made the switch. He explained what was involved and how it might impact on the usefulness and/or need for adjustment of existing equipment eg. TV sets, recorders, aerials.

He cautioned that there were 'cowboys' about determined to cash in on the change, persuading people into unnecessary change or renewal of equipment. He stressed that it would be important to take advice from reputable suppliers before making any change and that in many cases there would be no need for any change whatever. He explained the Help Scheme which is available for certain categories of householder.

He also provided copies for participants of a 'A Good Neighbour's Guide to the Digital TV Switchover' – a pack containing very helpful advice in the form of an information leaflet, a DVD explaining the switchover and a CD – ROM with printable fact sheets. **We still have a number of copies of this material which will be available at the meeting on 21 February 2010.**

Our second speaker was Richard Horan, Sector Inspector for our part of the city. He had previously been stationed in the Borders, which was the first region in Scotland to "go Digital". He thus brought extensive knowledge of the scams being perpetrated by conmen in connection with the change, particularly on elderly and vulnerable people, and provided excellent advice on how to avoid them.

► **NEXT MEETING- 'Crime, Crime Prevention and Court Action'**

Our next meeting will be on **Sunday 21st February 2010, at 2.30pm in Polwarth Church Hall**. See the details on the front page of this newsletter. The meeting will focus on crime and crime prevention, and court action. We are fortunate to have secured input from three contributors bringing different perspectives....

Inspector Ian Moffat, who has recently replaced Richard Horan as Sector Inspector for South Edinburgh, will talk about recent trends in criminal activity and the priorities and structures put in place by Lothian and Borders Police to combat and prevent these, including the implications for community policing;

Our Community Beat Officer, PC Alan Hopper, will present a summary of crimes and crime trends in our area over the past year;


Sheriff John Horsburgh will provide insights into links between police and court action and sentencing policies.

They will then comprise a forum to field our comments and questions.

Again, we are grateful to the outgoing Polwarth Minister, Linda Dunbar, for allowing us to use the hall.

► **POLICE REPORTS**

These are produced on a monthly basis and are available directly from our website (www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk). There are three ways in which you can access these:

1. by registering your details via the website, you can request to be sent a monthly email alerting you to when a new report is available for download from the website.
2. You can subscribe for free to the  RSS news feed from the website, so that you know when any new information is posted.
3. you can ask your Street Co-ordinator to let you see a paper copy.

► **NEWS ALERTS, BREAKING NEWS & INCIDENT REPORTS**

Over the last 12 months, we have received and posted on our website many Crime Alerts and Reports. These have included:

- a report that the new owner of a house was burgled at 3am as the thieves gained access through a window left opened accidentally. Despite 4 adults being asleep in the house, many items were stolen including their car which became the get-away vehicle.

- the news that a 21 year old male was detained and during his subsequent interview he admitted to five housebreakings in Merchiston, plus housebreakings in Comiston Road and Polwarth Crescent.

- a report that an opportunist thief helped himself to building materials in the grounds of a house undergoing renovation. A local resident called the police, who attended the scene and took notes and a description of the thief.

- reports of a telephone scam from 'a representative of BT' who attempts to disconnect you unless you pay amounts from £31 to £118.

- the news that one area of Edinburgh has become the first 'No Cold Calling Zone' that reduces bogus callers and doorstep crime by making it clear to potential callers that the residents within these zones do not welcome uninvited doorstep traders. Signs in windows and on lampposts will discourage traders away.

The Police have a unit at Fettes HQ which stores and analyses information of this kind received from the public. An impressive number of arrests have been made using this data.

PC Hopper says "**Do NOT be afraid to contact the police.** We would rather investigate a matter to discover it is a false alarm, than to be involved in a long and protracted investigation into crime. **DO NOT think that you will be wasting police time.** You may in fact be saving police time and assisting with the detection of offenders."

If you see anything at all that you think is suspicious:

DO PLEASE REPORT IT TO THE POLICE. The telephone number for St Leonard's Police Station, which covers our area, is 0131 662 5000.

Our Community Beat Officer, PC Alan Hopper, is always very helpful & can be contacted at St Leonard's Police Station on 0131 662 5022 or by e-mail **alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk**

If you live in Polwarth Grove, your Community Beat Officer is PC Julie Cochrane, also very helpful. She can be contacted on 0131 221 2008 or by email **julie.cochrane@lbp.pnn.police.uk**

Inspector Moffat is based at St Leonard's Police Station (tel. 0131 662 5000), and his email address is **ian.moffat@lbp.pnn.police.uk**

In emergency, of course, you should ring 999.

► **SOUTH EDINBURGH CRIME PREVENTION PANEL**

This is a forum, organised by PC Carlyn McGhee of the Crime Prevention Unit of Lothian and Borders Police, on which our Neighbourhood Watch and others in South Edinburgh are represented. If there is anything in particular that you would like raised, please email me at **nisbet@neighbourwatch.org.uk**

The Panel obtains, for selling on at cost, small items relating to personal and home security, such as **Personal Attack Alarms** (£4), **Shed Alarms** (£10) etc. We still have a few of these which will be **available for purchase at the meeting on 21 February 2010.** Neighbourhood Watch window stickers are available [free of charge](#).

► **MERCHISTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Speaking up for the People of Merchiston! This is the motto of Merchiston Community Council (MCC) and we do our best to live up to it. We are a group of 21 local residents, all volunteers, whose statutory responsibility is to ascertain and reflect the views of the people living in our area, on a wide range of topics – planning, licensing, anti-social behaviour, litter, graffiti, parks maintenance, re-cycling, pavement repairs and parking, to name but a few - and to do what we can to get any problems resolved by the relevant authorities. We are statutory consultees on planning applications and sit on a number of City of Edinburgh Council committees. All of our meetings are open to the public. The next meeting of MCC will be on Tuesday 26th January 2010 at 7.00pm in the Eric Liddell Centre, Holy Corner. All local residents are welcome. Website **www.merchistoncc.org.uk** or telephone 447 8846.

Ian Doig represents the Merchiston & Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch on MCC and provides a useful link between the two organisations, whose aims and activities have in common that they serve the interests of local residents.

Bridget M. Stevens, MCC Chair (**chair@merchistoncc.org.uk**)

► **EMERGENCY CONTACT FORMS**

Street Co-ordinators continue to supply and collect *Emergency Contact Forms*. These are a means (entirely voluntary and confidential of course) of providing details of any relatives/lawyer/other contact whom you would like to be informed in the event of an emergency. They can also be used to record information about people who hold keys to your

property. Completed forms are passed on to the police to assist in case of emergencies – the information is not shared with any other individuals or organisations. Many people have commented that this is an excellent idea. Ask your Street Coordinator if you would like a form or they can be obtained from the website in either Word or Adobe PDF format.

► **AND ALSO NOT TO BE MISSED.....**

On Saturday 6 February 2010 at 7.30pm, to inaugurate the Polwarth Church Speakers Club, local author, Jim McCarthy will give an illustrated talk –

'Journey into Africa: The Life and Death of Keith Johnston, Scottish Cartographer and Explorer (1844-79).

In his talk, Jim, the book's author, will tell of Keith Johnston's background in Edinburgh, his attempts to forge a route from the Indian Ocean to the Central Lakes of Africa on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society and his last journey which ended in his early death in a Tanzanian village; and how he, Jim, attempted to locate Johnston's grave in what is now the great Selous Game Reserve, which Jim administered in the early 1960s.

The talk will be followed by a light supper. BYOB.

► **AND FINALLY**

Again, we are extremely grateful to local Estate Agents **Hunters Residential** (part of **Gillespie Macandrew LLP Solicitors**) for covering the printing costs of this Newsletter. Also to Nevil Hopley for arranging for the copying to be done at **George Watson's College** and to both Nevil and Linda Alston (who also maintains the distribution list) for their patience in finalising and formatting the Newsletter. We receive no public or other funding and we do have costs that need to be met throughout the year. Contributions towards these are always gratefully received.

Thanks to you all for your feedback and support. We look forward to seeing you at our **meeting on 21st February 2010.**

Yours faithfully,

Nisbet Gallacher

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and Chair.
email: nisbet@neighbourwatch.org.uk

► **SUMMARY OF RELEVANT POLICE TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR OUR AREA:**

St Leonard's Police Station Incident Centre: 662 5000

Police – for all serious emergencies: 999

Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111

This is the number to ring if you want to talk confidentially about your suspicions of a particular crime or a particular individual.

Merchiston Community Beat Officer PC Alan Hopper: 662 5022
or by email at alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk

Polwarth Grove Community Beat Officer PC Julie Cochrane: 221 2008
or by email at julie.cochrane@lbp.pnn.police.uk