

Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER No.41

JUNE 2011

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Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for all their hard work for the Friends, particularly, Les Hutcheon, who is retiring from the committee after many years. He has done a fantastic job editing our Newsletter. Best wishes for the future Les.

He also thanked Councillor Phil Wheeler for his presence and support. He also thanked the many volunteers who helped to distribute the Newsletter, worked in the Walled Garden and kept the Tower open on Sundays. More volunteers were still needed at the Tower and for the odd vacancy in the distribution network. There is an especial need for more female members to come onto the Committee.

Three members of the committee were due to stand down, Martin Craven, Eddie MacLennan and Iain McGeachy, all three wished to be re-elected. We have two new members who were elected to the committee, Kirsty Straughan and Peter Taylor.

The new team is as follows:-

Eddie Price	Chairman.....	539 1088
Donald Gorrie	Secretary.....	337 2077
Fred Davies	Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and contact for Wedding Photo's in the Walled Garden	337 9232
Martin Craven	Membership Secretary and Newsletter distribution	334 1247
Eddie MacLennan	Co-ordinates work in the Walled Garden, keeps photographic records and assists the Chairman with talks to local groups.....	539 0836
Ian McGeachy	Organises the gate rota for Walled Garden and notice boards.....	476 5499
Gordon Swann	Organises the Tower rota, as well as organising the summer walks and winter talks programmes	334 4769
Brian Moffat	Botanist with interest in the hill and Walled Garden.	
Kirsty Straughan	Assistant Newsletter Editor.....	334 1884
Peter Taylor	Interest in the Walled Garden.	

Payment of annual subscriptions and any donations can be made using our boxes placed in Corstorphine Library, Blackhall Library, Balgreen Library and the Dower House.



Summer Guided Walks Programme.

These informal walks are suitable for all ages and are designed to introduce the varied plant and animal life of the Hill to local people.

Sunday 29th May, Wild Plants Walk – ‘Natives, Naturalised, and Nasties part 3 !’

Local Botanist and FoCH committee member, Brian Moffat will lead a walk showing the great variety of common and uncommon plants on the Hill, starting at 2pm, in the Walled garden.

Sunday, 3rd of July. Storytelling for Children: Meet in the Walled Garden 1.15pm

Kirsty Straughan invites children aged 4-8 years old and their parents to come and hear the story of the walled garden, take part in a bug search and plant some wildflowers.

Sunday August 7th. ‘ Butterflies, Bees, and other Beasties’

Gordon Swann will lead a hunt, with nets etc. for the smaller inhabitants of the Hill. Nets and Bug Bottles provided. Children, old and young, especially those good at catching things especially welcome !

Meet at the Walled Garden at 2pm.

Sunday October 2nd . ‘Fungus Foray’

David Adamson will lead another of his very popular searches for interesting fungi on the Hill.

Meet at the Kaimes/Cairnmuir Road car park at 2pm.



WALLED GARDEN....



The ever popular garden is a hive of activity, with volunteers working Tuesdays (11am-1pm) and Thursdays (2pm-4pm). If you can help us with any gardening activity, just call in on the above days or give us a call. Judging for the Green Flag award (previously called Green Pennant) 2011 has taken place and we hope to secure the award for another year.

Visitors to the award winning walled garden are welcome to write to us with their comments.

CORSTORPHINE HILL TOWER OPENING DATES.

The Friends are pleased to announce that this year the Tower will be opened by our volunteers for viewing every Sunday afternoon from

2pm until 4pm starting on:-

Sunday 1st May until Sunday 25th September

and also on

Saturday of the Edinburgh Open Doors Day

Where exactly is Robert Louis Stevenson's Rest-and-be-Thankful in his "Kidnapped"-?

In The Scotsman [23 Jan. 2010], an article appeared under the headline, "Immortalised in RLS's classic – now beauty spot to be saved from harm." It suggested the beauty spot, Rest-and-be-Thankful [afterwards RabT], was agreed to be a single location and this was beyond debate. This is untrue – but takes a little picking apart.

Afficionados of "Kidnapped" will need no reminder that the "action" centres on the kidnapping aboard ship off South Queensferry of the young hero, David Balfour, in order to deprive him of his rightful inheritance. His wicked uncle, Ebenezer, who wrongfully occupies the estate and House of the Shaws – the inheritance – arranges the kidnap. After a circumnavigation of Scotland and shipwreck, the liberated David along with Highlander, Alan Breck, trek across war-torn Highlands to return to the Shaws and confront Ebenezer. The journey to the north and west of South Queensferry is shown on the standard map folded into "Kidnapped".

RabT is off this map – but well described. The Shaws, fictitious for obvious reasons, is plainly described as in Cramond parish and near Cramond village. From there [i.e. to the northwest]. "we came the by-way over the hill of Corstorphine, and when we got near to the place called Rest-and-be-Thankful, and looked down on Corstorphine Bogs AND over to the city and the castle on the hill, we both stopped..."[2nd Ed: p.309]. There David Balfour and Alan Breck part, the climax of the tale.

Four locations have been suggested for RabT: I. The Scotsman's vantage-point, the official one today, where benches look out over the castle and Old Town: II. The head of the footpath from Ravelston Rd./Mary Erskine School: III. A knoll that lies within the Zoo overlooking II. [David Windmill and Gary Wilson, of the Zoo, have maintained this]: IV. The official site [with statue] on the Glasgow Road near Western Corner.

None of these fit the bill – a two-part view of the city and bogs [see AND above; Balgreen, standing on the boggy "The Stank", all now drained was formerly Boggreen] A fifth vantage point is proposed at the south-east corner of the Hill – and this is precisely the ground that the Zoo covets for its grand plans.

It is hoped to have an expanded version of this article published – perhaps in the "Book of the Old Edinburgh Club" – in the near future. It will be complete with the local itinerary, all relevant maps and a bibliography.

Dr Brian Moffat



(Please cut out and keep for reference)

Sunday 29th May, 2pm (Walled Garden)
Wild Plant Walk- "Natives, Naturalised &
Nasties- Part 3"

Sunday 3rd July, 1.15pm (Walled Garden)
Storytelling for Children

See Newsletter for full details:-
Sunday 7th Aug. 2pm (Walled Garden)
"Butterflies, Bees & other Beasties"

Sunday 2nd Oct. 2pm (Meet at
Kaimes/Cairnmuir Rd. car park)
"Fungus Foray"

RANGER REPORT May 2011

At this time of year, Corstorphine Hill looks spectacular: bursts of colourful flowers and new leafy greens on the trees. Couple this with the unseasonal warmer weather of late and there is no excuse not to get out and savour it.

The Countryside Ranger Service has as always been busy on Corstorphine Hill. Some of the activities undertaken of late are as follows:

We have run several educational activities for local schools and some from further a field. With Forest School growing evermore we have more and more requests for groups to use the Hill for such purposes, this is normally agreed to after site visits to determine areas to use, amount of usage the area can sustain, certain responsibilities placed upon the group such as leaving the area as it was found and using braziers if lighting fires etc.

We have again attempted to reinforce the hedge on Clermiston Rd N especially opposite the Capital Hotel, which had little to no impact – again we will try this during the forthcoming period but give added protection through temporary fencing this time.

We have been carefully monitoring badger activity through liaison with the Edinburgh Badger Group. Some excellent viewing was had last year where some juveniles were actually brushing past people in the viewing group, amazing to experience!! We are running 2 watches this year but unfortunately they are both fully booked (some people had actually booked a year in advance).

Sympathetic minor enhancements have been undertaken to the access from Balgreen Rd where if you follow the perimeter boundary rather than continuing straight up at the top of the tarmac path, access is better (especially during wet weather). With Corstorphine Hill now a Green Flag site meaning a certain level of management has been achieved which has to be improved year on year. National Spring Clean time is now and on the 13th of April we had 25 willing volunteers clearing litter from the Hill, a grand job done by all! Thanks to those who were involved.

Way marking proposals for the Hill are now nearing completion, this was an idea brought forward by FOCH where we assisted in looking at locations, styles, wording and by producing electronic maps – look out for these in 2011/12.

Invasive non-native species controls: a bigger drive to control the 5 or so different species present on the Hill will take place this season and thereafter.

New threshold signage was installed replacing the old style which just said “Corstorphine Hill LNR” with “Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve”, this was a point raised by FOCH and addressed through partnership working with HM Prison Service, who produced them.

There are many other proposed small scale projects in mind for the forthcoming period such as making some of the paths more appropriate for cyclists and dog walkers through introduction of chicanes and possibly some purpose built features for biking enthusiasts which will hopefully lead to less guerrilla style mountain bike features randomly appearing. As always, through signage and through the relationship with FOCH, these projects will be notified and if needed consulted upon before any work is undertaken on the ground.

David Kyles .

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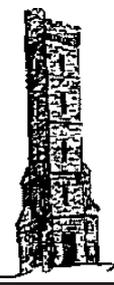
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Friends of Corstorphine Hill

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**EVENTS
PLANNER
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