

Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER

May 2005

Editor: Les Hutcheon tel 334 3832

Another Year of the Friends

At the AGM held on 21 April the Chairman, Eddie Price, reported on the activities over the past year, particularly significant being the preparation of an Education Pack, which is now available to help Primary Schools in the area. Information leaflets, the completion of the wall and the tool shed now lead on to the current preparation of a marshy zone and the introduction of sculptures in the walled garden due to be in place this summer. A small venture into apiary is another potential new project.

Eddie went on to thank all the volunteers who deliver newsletters, open the Tower, the team who have been pointing the wall, those on the gate rota and helpers in the garden. We achieved third place in the Community garden category of the Edinburgh in Bloom competition. We are aiming higher this year! There are a variety of ways people can contribute to the aims of the Friends, therefore if you have a particular interest make contact and enjoy feeling part of the team.

Committee

Two members of the committee resigned, Margie Dobson and Lesley Castell. Eddie thanked both for the work they had done for the Friends. Lesley has been involved as secretary and newsletter editor since the Friends were formed 6 years ago or nearer 7 if the work of the steering group is taken into account.

Lesley has been involved since the Friends were formed over 6 years ago.

Two new members were voted on. The new committee consists of
Eddie Price, Chairman
Alex Lamb, Treasurer
Margaret Macdonald, Secretary
Willma Carroll Martin Craven
Les Hutcheon Eddie McLennan
Cecilia McPherson Os Wallace
Alan White
And Fiona Devlin of the Ranger Service as an observer.

Woodland Management Plan

Fiona explained the woodland improvement plans, the grants which make it possible and that some work had commenced.

Neighbours on the Hill

Also at the AGM we were fortunate enough to have David Windmill, the chief executive at Edinburgh Zoo. We have many exciting projects but our zoological neighbours have projects and budgets which are truly awesome. David told us of how the poor weather at Easter had drastically reduced visitor numbers but he remains optimistic for the rest of the year. Many of the zoo projects are strongly educationally biased, such as the global classroom link with schools in Zambia and the Primate study centre. The Master

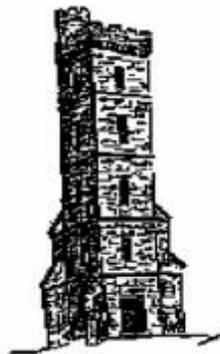
Plan for the development of the Zoo has been approved. Much detailed work is now required and it is likely to be well into next year before anything gets moving. The sale of land to the west of the Zoo grounds, probably for high quality housing, is fundamental to the success of completing the plan. David, the excellent communicator that he is, has promised to keep all his neighbours informed as soon as any decisions are made.

A Tower with a View

The Corstorphine Hill Tower, which was built as a memorial to Sir Walter Scott, will be open several times throughout the summer. This is because the Friends have a band of volunteers who can make it possible for visitors to the Hill to enjoy the spectacular views.

The Tower will be open between 2.00 and 4.00 pm on the following Sundays: -

- 29 May
- 12 June
- 26 June
- 10 July
- 24 July
- 7 August
- 21 August
- 4 September
- 18 September



Willma Carroll

Bird Survey

The Edinburgh Wildlife Explorers, a group of children from 6 to 12 years old, conduct a bird census on Corstorphine Hill during the spring and early summer. They have been surveying Corstorphine Hill since 2000 at the request of the City of Edinburgh Ranger Service, who were keen to build contacts with local wild life groups, because no surveys had been conducted during the previous five years.

The group, led by Keith Donnelly, welcomes volunteers of all ages to help to record for the census.

The group meets at the Clermiston Road North car park at 9.00 am on every other Saturday morning. The dates are: -

- 14 May
- 28 May
- 11 June
- 25 June



Martin Craven

Activity in the Garden

BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) Scotland is an environmental charity that works with volunteers to change their local environment for the better. In the last year in Edinburgh, BTCV Scotland carried out 2096 volunteer days with 1043 volunteers. This work was carried out throughout Edinburgh and the surrounding area. The projects that were carried out included the creation of a primary school wildlife garden, the planting of many thousands of trees, plants and bulbs throughout the area and the ongoing management of many areas of environmental significance and beauty.

At the Corstorphine Walled Garden, BTCV Scotland are creating a wetland area which will extend the biodiversity value of the site by offering a damp and boggy habitat which will support plant and insect species currently not represented. When completed, the area will consist of a 70 metre stretch of boardwalk and bridge surrounding and crossing a boggy area which will support plant species not seen in the walled garden. As the site is not particularly boggy at present, this will be achieved by laying out a liner which will prevent rain-water from draining away. It is hoped that this part of the garden will add interest to an already beautiful and successful restoration project.

Andy Ross

Activity on the Hill

The woodland management plan has already started with the clearing of some scrub. The appropriate tree felling will take place at a suitable time after the bird nesting season. We plan to report on the activities in more detail in the next newsletter.

Guided Walks

There is a Ranger led **badger** walk on 9 June 8-10 Meet at Clermiston Road North car park. Check with the Ranger Service to book.

There will be a **bird** walk led by Martin Craven on Sunday 19 June 10.00 am till noon. Meet in walled garden at 10.00 am.

The Friends have organised a **badger** walk on 11 September 7.00 till 9.00 pm.

For those going on the badger walks in particular ensure that mobile phones are switched off and that you don't smell like a perfume department if there is to be any chance of seeing these shy creatures.

The Friends are planning more guided walks but dates have not been established at the time of going to press. Look out for notices on the Hill notice boards and for updates posted on the web site if arranged before the next newsletter is published.

Bird Watch



Apologies to any members who went looking for white kestrels on the hill after reading the last newsletter. The list of birds spotted in the walled garden should have been "while kestrels can be seen flying overhead".

Recently buzzards have been flying overhead and perching in trees close to the garden. Chiffchaffs can be heard in the gardens in April, May and June. Their call is a repetitive "chiff chaff". Another summer visitor, the blackcap, can sometimes be heard and seen close by. The male has a black cap and the female a chestnut brown one. Other birds which can be seen in the area around the garden at anytime are tree creepers, green and great spotted woodpeckers, long tailed tits, bullfinches, greenfinches and the tiny goldcrests.

Martin Craven

Why not visit our web site at

www.corstorphinehill.org.uk

Membership

For those of you who have filled in the form and paid your subscription thank you very much. I'm sure everyone will agree that **it is rather important to know who are our members.**

For those that intended to do so but never got round to it, this is a reminder.

Please pass your name and address with subscription to:-

E Price 25 Corstorphine Hill Ave.

A Lamb 81 Belgrave Road

M Craven 42 Clermiston Road

Or indeed any member of the committee if that is more convenient

I know, you meant to, and it is only a pound (although donations are always welcome) and you intend to do it sometime. Well. You'll only forget again ...so do it **NOW!**

