



Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER No.58



Spring 2017 Editor: Fred Davies Tel: 337 9232

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Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We look forward to a busy 2017, after a successful 2016. The last evening talk by Robin Howie of 'Scotsman Walks' fame, was very well attended and we had another interesting evening on the 22nd February, hearing from Dr Mel Tonkin about Scotland's red squirrels.

We look forward to meeting as many members as possible at our **AGM and Social at the Corstorphine Heritage Centre on Thursday March 30th at 7.30 pm**. You can see the Spring-Summer programme of walks on the Hill in this issue, and I remind you that the Tower will be open to visitors for the first time in 2017 on **Sunday May 7th**.

We have been concerned for some time about the state of the Corstorphine Hill Tower, particularly the stonework, the roof, and the staircase. After some months we got the Council to undertake a full structural survey, which we received a week ago. It confirmed most of our concerns and gave detailed recommendations for remedial maintenance, at a cost of about £6000. We are applying to the Council for funding, but they are unlikely to completely fund the repairs. Thus we will start fundraising ourselves, and will be looking to our members and supporters to help us. We intend to set up a fund for the Tower Repairs, and will probably direct most of the Tower donations from visitors to this fund. We were delighted to receive a donation of £1200 last autumn from Corstorphine Bowling Club, which they had raised from events held to celebrate their 125th anniversary. Some of this money will certainly be added to the Tower Fund. We will be actively collecting for the Tower Fund at all our events this year!

We look forward to meeting you at the AGM on 30th March, and hearing your views and concerns.

It would help us greatly if you could tell me if you intend to come to the AGM to enable me to plan catering.

Gordon Swann, Chairman gandmswann@gmail.com 0131 334 4769.

MEMBERSHIP (£1): Most memberships are due between January & March each year. We enclose/attach with this Newsletter a renewal membership form for completion and return with your fee/donation. It is important that we keep our files up to date each year, so your prompt return would be appreciated, this will also ensure that you get your Newsletter as usual.

Also we have enclosed (for people who get a paper copy of the Newsletter) a membership form which is aimed at NEW members, and we would ask that current members distribute it to neighbours, friends or people you think would be interested in our work. People on e-mail, perhaps you could interest a friend by copying the Newsletter to them. Thank you on behalf of the committee for your continued support.

SPRING PROGRAMME

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Our Annual General Meeting will take place on the
30th March 2017 at the Dower House, St Margaret's Park. at 7.30pm
Refreshments**

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BIRD WALK by Ian Moore

Saturday 6th May

**Meet at Rest & Be Thankful at 9.00am –
allow 2 hours.**

Aim would be to see and hear characteristic woodland/heathland breeding birds, with particular emphasis upon the songs of up to 4 species of visiting warblers.



HERB WALK with Dr Brian Moffat

Sunday 21st May.

Meet at the Walled Garden 2pm.



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DONATIONS.

The committee wish to thank the following for their kind donations during 2016:-

*Blackhall Church, St Anne's Church, Mr John Crombie,
Corstorphine Bowling Club, Royal Bank of Scotland,
Mrs A Bunyan.*

JEAN KNOX OPEN GARDEN 2017

Jean's garden will be open this year on
Sunday 28th May, 2:00pm - 5:00pm

Details can be found on Scotland's Garden
website.



BIRD REPORT----

BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND FEBRUARY there were only 11 days of decidedly inclement weather, and only one when the temperature failed to rise above zero. Such benign conditions were ideal for many visiting birds, especially those from sub-arctic zones escaping frost and famine. Most notable was an irruption of **Bohemian Waxwings** – perhaps 200 across western Edinburgh – that could be seen in small flocks gorging rowan berries, between 21 November and 12 January. **Redwings** and **Fieldfares** arrived in above-average numbers to feed on holly and hawthorn, some 40 of the former remaining on the hill throughout, moving to forage amongst the leaf litter in February. The mild weather encouraged a handful of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** to overwinter (they normally head for Iberia – or at least the Midlands), joining the regular seasonal flock of **Common, Black-headed** and **Herring Gulls**. Frequent visitors throughout the winter period included **Redpoll, Siskin, Raven** and **Grey Wagtail**, while more unusual sightings were **Grey Heron, Woodcock, Peregrine, Skylark** and **Crossbill**. 56 species were recorded Nov-Feb, and the overall total for the hill stands at 97 species. For photographic bird & wildlife updates see <http://chilloutdoors.tumblr.com> – or click through from the 'web links' page of the FoCH website. Ian Moore.



City of Edinburgh Council Forestry & Natural Heritage Service Report to the Committee Meeting

The winter that never quite was, I hope I haven't spoken too soon! Dry, mild conditions – great for overwintering birds, small mammals and hibernating butterflies. Spring flowers almost in bloom, indeed lesser celandine seen flowering in the middle of January! Even the nemesis that is salmonberry is bursting into life earlier than expected. A new management plan has been completed for the site detailing the reasons why and the policies that dictate the way the site will be managed for the next 10-year period including a work plan of activities. A public consultation has been held over the winter period with many encouraging and supportive comments received. The plan will be formally adopted once comments have been absorbed. See https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/directory_record/377102/corstorphine_hill_local_nature_reserve

Efforts have again been targeted towards the control of the ever invasive salmonberry. Areas cleared this winter season and last will be spot treated with herbicide to control any re-growth. Dominant stands of Himalayan balsam will also be treated in the same manner. Several groups of people have been assisting us of late with a range of different tasks: Royal Bank of Scotland, Lloyds, New Caledonian Woodlands, Royal London, Edinburgh Zoo, the Green Team and Rannoch Centre, local school groups and activity clubs.

The Friends of Corstorphine Hill as always have ensured the Community Walled Garden is maintained to an excellent standard, further emphasised by the retention of the Green Flag Community Award, the wider site retaining its Green Flag Award too.

Anti-social behaviour is infrequent and I am very appreciative to those who pick up other people's rubbish and dog fouling when encountered, it helps to ensure the site is seen at its best as much as possible. It came to notice that there was use of the site by illegal off-road motorbikes and quadbikes, this was immediately reported to the Police and I would encourage anyone who sees this type of behaviour to do so or get in touch with myself/department. Some removal of felled timber was also noticed, this done without permission and by use of a chainsaw, more than likely used in an unsafe manner without proper insurance – again if such behaviour is noticed please contact us.

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City of Edinburgh Council Forestry & Natural Heritage Service

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