



# Friends of Corstorphine Hill

## NEWSLETTER No.43

MARCH 2012 Editor: Fred Davies Tel: 337 9232

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Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

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### EDDIE

Dear Friends,

As many of you are aware, Eddie Price lost his fight with prostate cancer on the 29<sup>th</sup> December. He was your chairman, and my Dad. It has been well documented recently of all the work Dad did for charities, including the Friends, in the eulogy Paul Edie did at the funeral, on Paul's personal blog, and the tribute to him in the Edinburgh Evening News, but I wanted to do a more personal one.

It feels very strange writing this about him, as he was never a man who accepted praise very well, and normally my job was re-writing his part of the newsletter! I was Dad's unofficial PA. Or should I say, one of the many..... I have lost count of the speeches, letters etc. that I have restructured and reworded, and the grant applications filled in for things that I would never have thought of. This is because Dad was a perfectionist and so passionate about all things related to the Hill. He was also stubborn and determined which is exactly what you need in a chairman out to achieve things for the Hill, less so for those of us close to him! Dad revered the Friends achievements, not because he wanted to say, "I've done that", but so he could say, "look at the beautiful open space we have here, let's enjoy it".

Dad has left a huge hole in my Mum's, my sister Joanne's, my and the rest of the families lives, but also very big shoes to fill with the Friends of Corstorphine Hill. He had a charisma about him that meant we were all frequently roped into doing things that we had no inclination to be part of, but ultimately enjoyed! We are so lucky that we had someone with such drive and enthusiasm in our lives. I hope that the Friends group continue with this drive and enthusiasm so we can all continue to enjoy Corstorphine Hill the way Dad did, as none of us could ask for a better legacy than that.

Caroline Turnbull

(Nee Price)

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#### **Our Friend and Colleague.**

The committee of the Friends of Corstorphine Hill send their deepest sympathy to Margaret and the family. Eddie will be greatly missed for his knowledge and leadership. We will endeavour to do our best and take the Friends forward as he would have wished.

Fred Davies (Editor)



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be held on **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at 7.30pm in the Capital Hotel, Clermiston Road, Edinburgh.**

### Agenda

1. Apologies
  2. Approval of the minutes of the 2011 AGM
  3. Matters arising from the minutes
  4. Chairman's Report
  5. Treasurer's Report
  6. Election of Office Bearers & Committee Members
  7. Any other business
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### **FoCH Events**

Last year we had an interesting and well attended talk in November about the Union Canal, from a member of the canal Society, and our usual pre Christmas Social on December 7th. Eddie Price managed to attend with his wife Margaret, and although very ill, was his usual sociable self. It was good that many of us were able to see him before he passed away just after Christmas.

#### **This years events:-**

**Tuesday February 28th 2012.** Talk on Edinburgh's Old Town.

This is at 7.30 pm in the Capital Hotel and will be given by Andrew Broom, an experienced volunteer guide and leading light of the Corstorphine Literary & Geographical Society.

**Sunday 25th March.** Guided walk looking at the Geology and Early History of Corstorphine Hill.

This will start at 2 pm at the Cairnmuir Road car park, and will be led by Dr David McAdam, retired geologist and expert on the Geology of Edinburgh, who gave us a fascinating talk on the subject last year.

**Thursday 12th April,** FoCH Annual General Meeting at the Capital Hotel at 7.30 pm.

**Sunday 13th May.** Guided Birdwatching walk on Corstorphine Hill.

This will start at 10 am at the Clermiston Road North car park, and will be led, as previously by Keith Donnelly of the RSPB. Suitable for all ages.

As usual there will be a walk or other outdoor events on the Hill each month over the summer. These will be notified in the next Newsletter and in posters on the Hill and elsewhere.

**Gordon Swann, Events Organiser**



## CORSTORPHINE HILL TOWER



The Tower will be open every Sunday during the summer from 2pm till 4pm starting on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May** and finishing with Edinburgh Open Doors Days **22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> September**.

If you would like to help with the Tower opening -phone Gordon - 334 4769

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### IN THE WALLED GARDEN IN FEBRUARY

February in the Walled Garden is – well – *February...*

But there are some highlights of colour, the hamamelis mollis at the top (east) side is in full orange/yellow bloom, and the first daffodil fully out was spotted on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

February is a time for other work, and the team have been busy on general maintenance. We lost only one garden tree, a pine, in the winter storms, while one large tree fell (without damage) on the west wall from outside. Access to the decking area is temporarily restricted until the slippery surface has been cleaned- a work in progress. Acquiring some heavy concrete slabs, through Freecycle, transporting and laying them in preparation for a new metal storage unit is nearly done. The new unit has been fully funded by the Western Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership.

Plans are afoot for some new planting of dogwoods with mahonia as an informal shrub hedge on the west side to give year-round interest, and a re-think of planting in some of the bog garden is in hand.

Spring bulbs are well on their way now – snowdrops are in flower, daffodils and narcissus are coming up strongly, and new tulips are lurking with intent, just below the surface.

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

*Included with this Newsletter is the annual renewal membership form .*  
*If you would like your Newsletter sent by e-mail, rather than delivered, please fill in the section on the form. This will, in time, save on paper and shoe-leather for our deliverers.*

## **RANGER REPORT March 2012**

### **Friends of Corstorphine Hill late Winter/early Spring Newsletter Article**

Corstorphine Hill is a special place at any time of year, but especially now when everything is on the cusp of bursting into life. Indeed, with the exceptionally mild winter this year we can see this process begin earlier than ever. One noticeable aspect of this is the non-native, invasive, *Rubus* species salmonberry, which is unbelievably in flower! This has not stopped our efforts to control its spread. We have had several volunteer groups working on the hill to hack it back and remove the root system – this is the start of this season’s concerted effort to control non-native, invasive plants present on the Hill.

The New Year storm had an impact on Corstorphine Hill and quite a few large, mature trees fell, the majority of these have now been cleared by CEC Forestry and smaller trees were cleared by the Countryside Ranger Service. Please let us know if we have missed any – contact information at the bottom.

The Friends of Corstorphine Hill were successful in applying for a Community Grant from the Central Scotland Green Network for £1000. This paid for three days of work from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, along with new tools and materials. The crux of the work was to maintain the path network, improving the ‘Rest and be Thankful’ area by installing a new interpretation panel and improve an area of woodland by planting native trees, protecting trees and removing sycamore trees.

Mountain biking and cycling has always taken place on Corstorphine Hill, even before the introduction of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code when cycling in the Local Nature Reserve was prohibited. Most people cycle on the Hill responsibly, taking care and consideration of other users. A small minority don’t. Mountain bike trails and features do appear and in some cases scar sensitive areas of the Hill. Blocking these routes and removing the features doesn’t work as new ones soon appear. The Countryside Rangers feel that improving dialogue, providing information and education are the key to achieving a balance between different user groups and encouraging responsible cycling on the Hill. To this effect, an initial meeting has taken place with key people involved in local mountain biking to look at how such activities can take place without compromising the natural beauty of Corstorphine Hill LNR. This improved dialogue will continue until a balance is achieved. The Countryside Ranger Service, as land managers, need to control this activity and if this means a designated area where trail building can occur and be actively managed, this seems the most sensible option to pursue. Nothing will take place on the ground without full consultation of local community groups, regular users of the Hill and key stakeholders first.

If anyone has any issues, points to raise or the likes, please feel free to contact me by email: [david.kyles@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:david.kyles@edinburgh.gov.uk) or by phone 0131 447 7145.

David Kyles, Countryside Ranger, City of Edinburgh Council Countryside Ranger Service.

**Date for the Diary: National Spring Clean on Corstorphine Hill LNR, Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 10am – 3pm, drop in event, meet at Clermiston Road North car park, all tools, materials and refreshments supplied. Hope to see you there!**