



# Friends of Corstorphine Hill

## NEWSLETTER No. 25

February 2006

Editor: Les Hutcheon Tel 334 3832

### Chairman's Tidings

Since this is our first newsletter of the year may I take this opportunity to wish you all a healthy, wealthy and happy 2006.

Reflecting on last year, it is the first time Corstorphine Hill has seen such major improvements with the instigation of the woodland management plan. Large areas of rubus and invasive trees have been cleared and tree surgeons have attended to the safety needs of many other trees. At the time of going to press we are planning the participation of volunteers in a replanting operation with native trees.

The walled garden gained second prize in Keep Edinburgh Growing, best community gardens competition. We also gained a certificate of improvement from Beautiful Scotland in Bloom. The wet woodland project in the garden has made good progress and will be completed this spring. I would like to thank all the volunteers who give up their time to help throughout the year.

Looking ahead to the summer we aim to have a programme of walks, talks and opening the tower. The Corstorphine Fair is back again in June and we will again be attending.

This year we are trying out an initiative to increase our membership thus bringing the benefits of joining the Friends to more people. Those of you who live locally may find that you have received an extra copy of this newsletter. We would like you to pass on the extra copy to a friend or neighbour who may be interested in the Friends and our activities. I look forward to meeting you at the AGM if not before.

Eddie Price

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be held on **Thursday 20 April** at **7.00 pm** in lecture theatre B, Queen Margaret College University, Clerwood Terrace.

#### Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Approval of the minutes of the 2005 AGM
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members
7. Any other business

The minutes of the previous meeting and the annual accounts will be available at the AGM. This an excellent opportunity to keep in touch with current activities and meet like minded people who share a concern for the best possible use of the Hill.

## Corstorphine Hill LNR Woodland Management - Progress Report

### Forestry Works

The forestry works have been completed successfully. There was an opportunity to undertake the forestry works over the whole site this winter, instead of over 2 years as originally planned. Advice was sought from the Countryside Ranger Service and SNH and it was generally agreed that completing the forestry works in one period would lessen the ecological impact and reduce disruption to the users of the Local Nature Reserve.

The felling works went well and were completed earlier than scheduled due to dry weather conditions and the efficiency of the contractors.

### Salmonberry removal

Visitors to the Hill may be aware of the large areas of salmonberry, an invasive plant from North America which has colonised and spread within the site. The plant is a member of the Rubus family and is related to the bramble, however doesn't resemble bramble in that it is upright, growing to 3 metres tall. Salmonberry grows in dense thickets making it difficult for other plants to establish beneath it.

The salmonberry has been cut back where it occupied large areas and where there was little tree cover. Clearing these areas has allowed a greater area for the planting of native broadleaved trees.

### Tree Planting

The open areas created by selective felling, clearance of salmonberry and scrub, will be restocked with young trees in February.

In addition to restocking, enrichment planting will be undertaken in areas of woodland where thinning has taken place. Young native trees will be planted among the existing trees to diversify the age and species composition of the woodland.

Over 20 000 bare root transplants (whips) will be planted on the hill in February. Many will have tree shelters fitted to protect them from rabbit damage.

Four planting mixes will be used, based on the National Vegetation Classification for the areas, the original planting and the local conditions on the hill (this is covered in the woodland management plan).

- Lowland mixed broadleaved
- Oak/birch mix
- Shrubs
- Policy woodland mix

The majority of the trees will be the lowland mixed broadleaved mix consisting of pendunculate oak, ash, downy birch, rowan, sessile oak, silver birch, hazel and hawthorn and will be planted on the eastern side of the hill. The oak/birch mix will be planted on the western side and consists of pendunculate oak, sessile oak silver birch, downy birch, rowan, gean and hazel.

The shrub mix comprises silver birch, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, guelder rose and goat willow and will be predominantly be used in planting by Queensferry Road and in pockets elsewhere on the site. Policy planting is a more formal planting mix dating back to 19<sup>th</sup> Century, associated with Clerwood and Hillwood Houses. The mixture will consist of deciduous and coniferous trees which will be planted on the site near Hillwood House & Clerwood House.

A tree planting event has been organised for Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February.

### Path works

Path construction is likely to commence in March and continue for approximately 10 weeks. The up-grading and construction of paths follows the proposals in the woodland management plan. This year the following whinist paths will be constructed:

- 2020 m of 3m wide paths
- 700 m of 2m wide paths
- 1000 m of 1.2m wide paths
- 1700 m of upgraded 2m wide paths

It is hoped that the path construction planned for next year can be brought forward and constructed this year in the same period.

Once again the visitors to Corstorphine Hill may experience some disruption during the construction of the paths. Some routes will not be accessible due to machinery in operation. It would be appreciated if visitors to the Hill could adhere to notices displayed on site advising safe routes to use in this period.

For more information about the woodland management on Corstorphine Hill please contact Jane Bilous, Trees & Woodlands Officer on 311 7078. [jane.bilous@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:jane.bilous@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## **A Walk on the Wetside**

Work on the wetland at the garden has almost finished! The boardwalk has been completed, the liner inserted and the many tons of soil moved back into the wetland area. In addition, the bridge has been erected and the site has been landscaped with the addition of a native species hedge and rotting logs. The rails for the bridge are being built by a local group and will be added soon, while we are waiting for spring to plant out the wildflower plugs!

Andy Ross.

## **Summer Tower Opening Programme**

The plan is to open the Tower on Sundays at fortnightly intervals throughout the summer. The first date is 4th June when the Tower will be open from 10.00 am till 4.00pm as part of the Corstorphine Fair celebrations. All other opening times are limited to afternoons between 2.00 till 4.00pm.

The dates are

- 4 June
- 18 June
- 2 July
- 16 July
- 30 July
- 13 August
- 27 August
- 10 September

finishing with 24 September

Willma says that she would like to thank all the volunteers who put in the effort last year so that visitors could enjoy the spectacular views from the top.

No doubt she will be in touch with you all in person to enlist your help again when she makes up the tower rota.

Anyone wanting to know more about the Tower opening or offering to help can contact Willma Carroll on 476 5594.

## **Winter Visits and Talks Programme**

This year we have seen the reinstatement of our winter programme. This has been highly successful with two of the events visiting local places of much interest. Looking ahead we hope to continue with the winter talks next year. In the meantime this is a reminder that the last of our talks will be held on Thursday 2 March at 7.30pm in Queen Margaret University College. The talk is entitled *The Rocky Foundations of Corstorphine Hill* and will be given by David McAdam who has an unequalled knowledge of the geology of the Hill.

Cecilia McPherson

## **Newsletter Deliverers**

I would like to thank all the newsletter deliverers, especially Alan White and John Harrison who deliver bundles to other deliverers as well as delivering in their own areas. With the addition of extra volunteers in the last two years I have almost managed to get the number of households per deliverer down to twenty or less.

However, some volunteers are currently delivering to areas away from where they live and two deliverers have recently moved away. I am therefore looking for deliverers in Broomhall, Drumbrae, North Gyle and South Gyle.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact me, Martin Craven on (0131) 334 1247. This is a very important, though not too arduous a duty, as we aim to produce three newsletters a year.

Martin Craven

## **Bird Walk**

The first guided walk of the season is on birds and will be led by Martin Craven. It will take place on Sunday 28 May. Meet in the Walled Garden at 10.00 am and the walk will last about 2 hours.

## Help Us Make History

We're planning to publish a history of the Hill, and are looking for all the information you can give us. There's plenty available before about 2000BC and after about 1990AD, but that still leaves quite a gap in the middle.

In particular, we'd like to know more about occupation on the hill - farming, and any forms of cottage industry that might have gone on over the centuries. We're looking for reliable historical information about people who lived and worked on the Hill throughout history.

Any information on structures on the Hill would be particularly welcome - for example, does anyone know anything about the stone structure close to the Tower? Do you know of any structures that have now disappeared?

We'd also be interested in the history of the Hill's wildlife - can you tell us when specific trees were planted, for example, or when the first badger set was recorded?

And what about the Hill's place in recorded Scottish history? Did Bonnie Prince Charlie grace us with a visit? Are there any links with the Covenanters? With Mary Queen of Scots? Did the Hill ever have a defensive role in wartime - at any time from the Roman occupation to the second world war?

If you can answer these or any of the many questions on the Hill's history, please make contact by dropping me a note and I'll get back to you to pick your brains in compiling as much information as possible concerning past activities on the Hill. I look forward to hearing from you.

Alison MacKintosh  
The Coach House  
71 Clermiston Road  
EH12 6UY

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## FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The fee is **£ 1.00 per member per year**. Donations are also welcome!  
It is important to keep our records up to date, therefore, please fill in the form below even if you have supplied the information before and return the form along with your subscription to Eddie Price 25 Corstorphine Hill Avenue, Martin Craven 42 Clermiston Road, or indeed through any member of the committee or your newsletter deliverer if you see them.

**First name.....Surname.....**(please print)

**Address.....Postcode.....**

**E-mail ( if applicable).....Tel. No.....**

As always we can use volunteers who in turn enjoy participating in preserving the reserve. Activities can vary and here are examples where you can indicate in which direction you can make a contribution.

Committee work ;give a talk ;leading a walk ;newsletter delivery ;  
newsletter production ;organising talks ;organising walks ;taking a turn on the  
Tower rota ;walled garden maintenance ;opening/closing the garden ;other .

**Friends of Corstorphine Hill**

Registered as a charity No. SCO28842

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