



Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER

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Chairman's Tidings

As this is the first newsletter of the new year, I would like to take the opportunity to wish all our members a happy 2009.

On reflection of our achievements during 2008, I would undoubtedly say our greatest success was the publication of our book "The Finest Views The Eye Can See". This gives an insight to the history of Corstorphine Hill and is an excellent read. Anyone interested in owning a copy can purchase this book at a price of £5.00 from Corstorphine Library or from members of the committee.

2008 also planted the seeds for our applications for both the GREEN FLAG AWARD (for the Hill) and THE GREEN PENNANT AWARD (for the Walled Garden) If we are successful then the walled garden will be the first Green Pennant awarded in Scotland.

Some unfinished business from last year is the woodland management plan, which has instigated some significant changes to the hill. Anyone walking round the hill will have noticed the improved path ways, the new seats and picnic tables and observed the trees and lack of intrusive rubus, also the bird and bat boxes.

Looking forward to 2009, our secretary Mr Donald Gorrie has worked very hard representing our best interests during various meetings regarding the zoo planning application. I would like to thank him for pushing for a positive outcome. Decisions will be made in June or July this year. Please keep your fingers crossed and let common sense prevail.

This year is our 10th anniversary of the Friends and if we are successful with our award applications they will certainly be the pinnacle of our celebrations.

We have now, with funding from the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership spent £800.96 this year on plants to replenish the walled garden. We will take delivery of the plants in March. As usual if there are any volunteers willing to assist with the planting we would be most grateful. "Some things have never changed!!!!!"

Finally a date for your new diaries our AGM will take place on 21st April 2009 at 1930 hours in the Capital Hotel.

Thank you,
Eddie Price

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on **Tuesday 21st April 2009** at **7.30 pm** at the **Best Western Capital Hotel Clermiston Road**

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Approval of the minutes of the 2008 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

Tower Opening 2009

Once again, volunteers from FoCH will open Corstorphine Tower to the public from May to September. The view from the top of the tower is one of the finest in Edinburgh, taking in the city, the Firth of Forth, the Ochils and the Pentland Hills, a panorama in all directions.

The tower will be open on Sunday afternoons from 2 – 4 pm every 2 weeks.

The dates are : May 10th, 24th.

June 7th, 21st

July 5th, 19th

August 2nd, 16th, 30th

September 13th, 27th.

Gordon Swann

Scottish Homecoming



The week from 29 June till the 4 July is the main focus for Edinburgh in the Scottish Homecoming celebrations. Like the Corstorphine Trust who will be welcoming visitors we too will be delighted to see visitors with Scottish connections.



Know your Friends

It is membership renewal time again and this year you will find the renewal form on a separate page . This is to encourage you to fill it in and send it off with your modest subscription without having to destroy other articles in the Newsletter, which you may wish to keep for reference about dates of events.

As usual we are asking for volunteers partly to make you all feel involved. In particular there will be extra work needed in the garden and we very much appreciate the loan of a rotavator from Hire Station in St. Ninians Drive to help get the ground prepared for the plants.

Summer Guided Walks

Saturday 2nd May 10.00 starting from Clermiston Road North car park.
Keith Donnelly will lead a birdwatching walk.

Sunday 24th May 2 pm starting from the Walled Garden.
Botanist Brian Moffat will lead a walk introducing the great variety of plants on the Hill, entitled 'Natives, Naturalised, and Nasties' !

Sunday 21st June 2 pm starting at the Walled Garden.
Local herbalist Sarah Clarkson will lead a walk looking at the many useful herbs which grow on the Hill, entitled 'Medicinal Plants of Corstorphine Hill'. This is part of National Herbal Medicine week.

Tuesday evening 7th July at 7.30 pm , Edinburgh and Lothians Badger Group will lead a Badger Watch. Numbers are restricted and participants must follow certain guidelines so attendance is by booking only from : Gordon Swann, tel. 0131 334 4769.

Sunday 17th July at 2 pm in the Walled Garden, Kirsty Straughan will lead a story-telling session on themes related to the Hill. The stories are aimed at 4 – 8 year olds, and their parents, of course.

Sunday 9th August at 2pm starting in the Walled Garden. Gordon Swann will lead an expedition, as last year, to find and identify 'Butterflies, Bees, and other Beasties'. Nets and bug bottles provided, children, young and old, especially welcome !

Sunday 20th September at 2 pm, starting from Kaimes/Cairnmuir Road car park, David Adamson will lead another of his perennially popular 'Fungus Forays'



Evening Talks 2008 – 09

We have had another very enjoyable season of talks etc., starting in November with Edinburgh and Lothians Badger Group talking about our local furry friends. You can meet them in person on 7th July !

In December we had another very enjoyable Pre – Christmas Social in the Dower House, with wine, mince pies etc.

In February Mr. William Yuill gave us a fascinating illustrated account of the development of north and west Edinburgh railways since 1850.

On Tuesday March 10th we have a talk on the development of the Edinburgh Tram Project from one of the Community Engagement Project Officers.

Gordon Swann

Ranger's Spring Report

Corstorphine Hill has been regularly patrolled and maintained over the last period and this will continue. Regular litter picks have been undertaken and fly tipping removed from car park areas when required.

Our Forest Education Programme with Stevenson College was a major success running from September 08 through to January 09 culminating in a presentation and awards ceremony back at the college where the students all received their John Muir Explorer Award. Along with this particular group, we have had the regular conservation group from Stevenson College working on all of the sites we manage undertaking a range of different tasks from litter picking, path scraping, to vegetation clearance and drainage works. We welcome their assistance and hope this productive relationship continues. BTCV have continued this theme with many a path scraped, drainage ditch cleared and culvert unblocked assisting the Countryside Ranger Service with maintenance issues across all of our sites.

Some of you may be aware of the mountain bike activity that has significantly increased on the eastern slopes above the Hillpark development and is causing some erosion issues. Through the help of volunteers we are making repairs but this process is an ongoing one and one that needs to be undertaken given the current levels of very visible erosion present and the fact that some of the runs were interfering with active badger sets. Lothian and Borders Wildlife Crime Officers are aware and have also been monitoring the area.

Again, the Forestry crews have been in felling diseased Elms on the hill, year on year the number felled never seems to reduce. This year a large number of mature specimens have been felled and will hopefully be removed from site, not doing so defeats the purpose as the disease remains live under the bark of dead trees. If trees were to be left on site they would be required to be de-barked or burnt. We are working with foresters to make sure every effort is taken to protect paths during the felling process. However, continued access is vital because if this felling was not carried out, we risk losing all the Elms on site.

The City of Edinburgh Council Countryside Ranger Service has also put forward several sites for a Green Flag Award this year, Corstorphine Hill LNR being one of them. If successful, the whole profile of the Hill will be lifted nationally, which could lead to further external investment in the future. Coupled together with this is the application for a Green Pennant Award for Corstorphine Hill LNR Community Walled Garden, similar to the Green Flag, however, completely driven by the local community. If successful, this will be the very first Green Pennant Award issued in Scotland, we await the outcome with anticipation.

David Kyles

Friends of Corstorphine Hill

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