



# Friends of Corstorphine Hill

## NEWSLETTER

No. 37

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Editor: Les Hutcheon Tel 334 3832

### **Chairman's Tidings**

As this is the first news letter of 2010 may I take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and prosperous new year.

2009 saw us entering the walled garden for the prestigious Green Pennant and the hill for the Green Flag !! We were successful in winning the Green Pennant but not with the Green Flag. Our success with the Green Pennant meant we were the first garden in Scotland to win this accolade of which we are very proud as this is a national award.

We entered for the Edinburgh in Bloom Competition and won 3rd prize in the community garden category. 2009 was also our Tenth Anniversary and we celebrated it in style.

On the 8th of August we had our first open day which was a great success with a turn out of approximately 500 people. The following day we followed up with a dinner at the Best Western Capital Hotel; this was enjoyed by all with a fair amount of credit going to the hotel staff for the excellent service we received.

In 2010 our secretary Donald Gorrie is still representing our interests with the plans of the zoo. At the moment the wheel seems to be turning in our favour. We have arranged a meeting with David Windmill the Chief Exec of the zoo on the 1st March and it will be very interesting to hear their latest plans, it will also give us an opportunity to give them our ideas.

For those members living in Clermiston Road North it has been decided to remove the tables which because of their position have attracted too much undesirable attention. We will relocate them on another suitable site on the hill.

One of the main problems of the last ten years has been the collection of the annual fees. We have now put in place specially adapted collection boxes in the Blackhall & Corstorphine libraries and also the Dower House. Hopefully this should save members a lot of hassle in getting their subs. to us.

This year also sees the Corstorphine Fair on the 5th of June. We look forward to meeting you all at our display table.

The A.G.M this year is on the 20th April @ 19.30 in the Best Western Capital Hotel

Thank You  
Eddie Price

## Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on **Tuesday 20th April 2010** at **7.30 pm** at the **Best Western Capital Hotel Clermiston Road**

### Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Approval of the minutes of the 2009 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

We saw significantly greater numbers of visitors to the Tower last summer culminating in Doors Open weekend in September when we had more than 100 visitors on both Saturday and Sunday.

Because of this we would like to open the Tower every Sunday afternoon from May to September, instead of alternate weeks. Obviously we would need twice as many volunteer hours, and many new volunteers to achieve this. Please contact Gordon Swann if you could spare 2 hours on some Sunday afternoons showing people the magnificent views from our Tower. Tel 0131 334 4769, email [gandmswann@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:gandmswann@blueyonder.co.uk)

## Summer Walks Programme

The programme is still being arranged but the first one will be a **Birdwatching Walk at 10.00 on Saturday 15th May**, meeting at the **Clermiston Road North car park**, led by **Keith Donnelly and Martin Craven**.

**Brian Moffat** will lead a plant walk on **Sunday 13 June at 2.00 pm**, starting in the **Walled Garden** entitled "**Natives, Naturalised and Nasties II**"

There will be at least one walk or other event in July August, and September. Look out for updates in the next Newsletter

Gordon Swann

## **Autumn & Winter Events**

In October we had a very interesting talk on the History of Cramond, and this was followed in November by a visit to Beechwood House for a guided tour. In February Alison MacKintosh presented an extremely interesting well researched talk on the Houses of Corstorphine Hill and their owners.

In November we held a bulb planting afternoon for families. Unfortunately there were more FoCH volunteers than visitors, but all the bulbs were planted, some in the garden, and some on the Hill, so we will look out for them in a few weeks.

Our pre Christmas Social in the Dower House was again well attended and very enjoyable, enhanced by ladies from Forth Valley Chorus with some seasonal songs !

The last evening talk is on Tuesday March 23rd when Sarah Clarke will talk about Medicinal Herbs.

## **Membership and Activities**

It is membership renewal time again therefore you are urged to use the form that came with this Newsletter and to fill it in right away in case you just let it drift. That way you will not miss out on news and events in 2010.

You may wish to be a member just as part of the community, and that is fine, however, you may like to come along to some of our events such as the summer walks or evening talks. You may even enjoy a bit more participation and the renewal form shows how a variety of ways are available to join in and help.

Activities in the Walled Garden give great scope for getting a bit of fresh air. That does not necessarily mean back breaking work.

There is plenty of scope for more cerebral pleasures. A knowledge of plants and possibly artistic skills would enable us to update our information leaflet on the garden.

A guide of what plants to look out for each month and indeed visiting insects and birds would provide an interest to visitors to the garden.

Of course there is always grass to cut during the summer and beds to be prepared and weeded to show off the diversity of plants on display.

Or just come along to to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the garden.

## Spring Report from the Countryside Ranger Service

After the coldest December and January on record, it's nice to see some greenery around after the thaw!

Out on the hill, despite the weather, regular patrolling has been taking place. When the snow was lying, it was an ideal opportunity for tracking the mammals of Corstorphine Hill, especially the badgers, quite amazing just how active these creatures are at this time of year – some people believe they hibernate which is not the case, they do reduce their activity and there's more reliance on using fat deposits but active foraging and territorial marking takes place all year.

Corstorphine Hill LNR has again been put forward for a Green Flag Award – a quality assurance scheme for parks and gardens. It was unfortunate not to receive the award last year; however, with judge's comments taken on board and acted on in the intervening period, a positive result is expected by all this time round.

Some of the activities occurring since the last newsletter have been:

- Recovery of redundant tree tubes
- Fly tipping and litter removal
- Liaison with property owners abounding the site with reference to garden waste appearing on LNR land
- Remedial actions to damaged trees at Corstorphine/St John's Road
- Rotten fence posts replaced
- Damage to hedge along Clermiston Road by sledges addressed.

Over the past 6 months, there have been a couple of unfortunate accidents out on the hill involving dogs and their owners. It is often the case when out walking on the hill that you deviate from the main path network and explore some of the wilder areas, you never quite know what you might find; a fox resting up in a spot of sunshine, butterflies flitting from flower to flower or some rabbits cropping the turf. It is always worth bearing in mind that at one stage a few hundred years ago there were 10 working quarries on the hill, there are also a number of wells which watered the workers. All the wells are capped and fenced off and all the steep drops along the formal path network have some sort of barrier in place. Make sure you know your orientation; look for landmarks that indicate where quarrying took place, but most importantly, go out and enjoy Corstorphine Hill LNR for what it is taking into account the natural and historic man-made features that could pose risks.

David Kyles

**Friends of Corstorphine Hill**

Registered as a charity No. SCO28842

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