



# Friends of Corstorphine Hill

## NEWSLETTER No. 38

June 2010

Editor: Les Hutcheon Tel 334 3832

### Observations from the Annual General Meeting

The Chairman thanked all the volunteers who in various ways contributed to the efforts which made the Friends so successful. He made particular mention of the auditor and the web-site manager. He restricted his comments to a mention of the successes over the past year because there was a very full agenda to interest the meeting. Four members of the committee were due to stand down after their due period in office; Eddie Price, Donald Gorrie, Fred Davies and Gordon Swann and fortunately all had indicated a willingness to stand again for re-election. Councillor Wheeler took the chair temporarily till the four members were re-elected there being no other nominations.

The new team is as follows with specific interests and contact numbers:-

Eddie Price	Chairman.....539 1088
Donald Gorrie	Secretary.....337 2077
Fred Davies	Treasurer with an additional interest in wedding photographs..... .....337 9232
Martin Craven	Members secretary with an additional interest in newsletter distribution as well as in birds...334 1247
Les Hutcheon	Newsletter editor with an additional interest in the walled garden. .....334 3832
Eddie MacLennan	Co-ordinates work carried out in the walled garden, keeps photo graphic records and assists the chairman at giving talks to local groups.....539 0836
Ian McGeachy	Organises the gate rota for the walled garden and a specific interest in notices on the Hill.....476 5499
Gordon Swann	Organises the Tower rota, as well as organising the summer walks and winter talks programmes.....334 4769
Brian Moffat	Botanist with specific interest in the Hill and the garden
Cecilia McPherson	Committee member backing up Gordon on the talks programme

The boxes placed in Corstorphine and Blackhall libraries as well as at the Dower House for payment of the annual subscription have been a great success.

## **How the Zoo Sees Its Development**

David Windmill gave a short presentation about the Zoo, where it is now and how he sees future developments. No date has been placed upon when a new plan might be presented but he declared a total commitment to consultation with ourselves.

Although Mr Windmill had to depart for another engagement, two of his team remained to answer questions. Several points were raised during the discussion and it was apparent that consultation as early as possible in the process would be to our mutual benefit.

## **Any Other Business**

Concern was raised about the proposed wind turbine. Objections had been submitted from the Friends, the Ranger Service and the Aviation Authority. The planning application had yet to be considered but it was thought that it was highly unlikely that approval would be granted.

Applications had been submitted for the Green Flag award for the Hill and the Green Pennant award for the Walled garden.

Since the meeting we have been told that judging for the Green Flag will be held on 21 May and representatives of the Friends are invited to be present. Judging of the Walled Garden will be carried out by unannounced visits between now and 11 June.

## **Corstorphine Tower Opening Dates 2010**

The Friends are pleased to announce that this year the Tower will be opened by our volunteers for viewing every Sunday afternoon from 2 pm until 4 pm,

Starting on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, until Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Open Doors Days which attracted over 200 people to visit the Tower last year will be on September 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> this year. Again we need volunteers to open the Tower 2-4 pm each day

## **Additional Outings**

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30 pm Guided Badger Watch.

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August at 15.00 Guided Walk around Cramond Island led by a CEC Ranger.

Both these events are limited to 15 people over 16 and **MUST** be booked in advance with me, **Gordon Swann on 0131 334 4769.**

## **Summer Guided Walks Programme**

These informal walks are suitable for all ages and are designed to introduce the varied plant and animal life of the Hill to local people.

### **Saturday May 15th, Spring Birdwatching Walk**

Keith Donnelly and Martin Craven will lead the walk starting at 10.00 from the Clermiston Road North car park.

### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June, Wild Plants Walk – ‘Natives, Naturalized, and Nasties part 2 !’**

Local Botanist and FoCH committee member, Brian Moffat will lead a walk showing the great variety of common and uncommon plants on the Hill, starting at 2pm, in the Walled garden.

### **Sunday July 4<sup>th</sup> at 1.15 pm in the Walled Garden Storytelling for Children.**

Kirsty Straughan will lead a storytelling session for children aged 4-8 on themes related to the Hill. Children must be accompanied by a parent or carer.

### **Sunday July 18th . ‘ Butterflies, Bees, and other Beasties’.**

Gordon Swann will lead a hunt, with nets etc. for the smaller inhabitants of the Hill. Nets and Bug Bottles provided. Children, old and young, especially those good at catching things especially welcome !  
Meet at the Walled Garden at 2pm.

### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August at 2pm. Herbs and Medicinal Plants on Corstorphine Hill.**

Local Herbalist Sarah Clarkson will lead a walk to show you the useful plants which grow on the Hill.  
Meet in the Walled Garden at 2 pm.

### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September. ‘Fungus Foray’**

David Adamson will lead another of his very popular searches for interesting fungi on the Hill.  
Meet at the Kaimes/Cairnmuir Road car Park at 2pm.

## **Discovering the Walled Garden**

Pretty soon after starting to help out the team of volunteers who tend the Walled Garden, I found myself agreeing to write about it for the Newsletter. But these aren't really my very first impressions: those go back more than the ten years or so since the Garden was officially opened, and an earlier call for volunteers from the man whose vision started it all off – the late Iain MacDonald. That involved heaving logs and branches around to roughly mark out the line of accessible pathways through a woodland garden of natural species, typical of the Hill. The old garden was then more of a jungle than a garden, but the idea certainly took root and – with the hard work of the Friends over more than a decade- has produced today's oasis in the city.

The Walled Garden is rather more than your average garden.

It is a garden with quite a formal shape, when looked at from above, but with an informal style. The core theme of native trees, shrubs and plants has been built around with the addition of garden and exotic plantings. Open areas with attractive benches are complemented by several other varied habitats –including heathers, a bog garden, a wild flower meadow and an apple and cherry orchard- all to a human scale and sheltered by the old stone walls all around.

The garden has developed its own character - a pleasant mix of the natural-but not too wild, and the tended but not too manicured- that visitors appreciate and enjoy. So do the birds that build nests in the walls, while keeping a wary eye open for the buzzards- wheeling and mewing high above when not being mobbed by the local crows...

No real garden is ever finished, and this one continues to evolve from year to year. At the time of writing, early May, the Garden is producing a burst of bulbs and blossom: growth that is all the more striking after being held back by the unusually hard winter. Like many other gardens there have been a few winter casualties to be weeded out. But most of the garden has survived unscathed and ready for another season. The apple trees will soon be in bloom and the many summer-flowering shrubs are again beginning to flourish in the traditional Scottish garden areas, frequented by butterflies and bumble bees. Some new alpine planting is in progress and the rose hedge will soon be out. And the rare Corstorphine sycamore continues to thrive.

Some other areas are open for development and the gardening Friends would very much welcome suggestions about what people would like to see next.

If you'd like to help in the Garden (no experience necessary!) please come along when you can on Tuesdays from 11am-1pm or Thursdays from 2 pm –4 pm.

Many of the Friends will know about the successes of the Garden in competitions and recorded in previous Newsletters. This year we will be involved with the "Its Your Neighbourhood" campaign which is about rewarding efforts towards environmental improvement and community involvement: hanging baskets not necessary! Go to [www.beautifulscotland.org](http://www.beautifulscotland.org) for more information.

The Garden team will keep you posted about how we get on.

Much more information about the Garden can be found on the Friends of Corstorphine Hill web site [www.corstorphinehill.org.uk](http://www.corstorphinehill.org.uk)

Pete Taylor

## **Corstorphine Fair**

The Corstorphine Fair 2010 will be on Saturday 5th June 11 - 4 pm in St Margaret's Park. We will have a stall and will need volunteers to be on duty to meet the public on that day.

### **Friends of Corstorphine Hill**

Registered as a charity No. SCO28842

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Secretary: Mr D Gorrie, Garscube Terrace Edinburgh EH12 6BW. Tel 0131 337 2077

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