



Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER No.44

JUNE 2012 Editor: Fred Davies Tel: 337 9232

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Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Capital Hotel on Thursday 12th April and was well attended. As acting Chairman I welcomed everyone and conveyed the committees thanks to all our volunteers for Newsletter delivery, Tower and Walled Garden gate openings throughout the year.

This was an important AGM in that we had to elect a new Chairman and Secretary.

Gordon Swann is a long-standing committee member and indicated that he was willing to take on the role of Chairman and we confirmed Peter Taylor as our Secretary. After the re-election of committee members who were due to stand down (Eddie MacLennan, Brian Moffat and myself) and the appointment of Hugh Edwards as a new committee member, Paul Edie took the chair and we elected the office bearers. Many thanks to Paul for attending the meeting and assisting with the elections. Fred Davies, Editor. The new team is as follows:-

Gordon Swann	Chairman.....	334 4769
Fred Davies	Vice-Chairman, Treasurer & Newsletter Editor.....	337 9232
Peter Taylor	Secretary.....	336 1628
Martin Craven	Membership Secretary.....	334 1247
Eddie MacLennan	Co-ordinates work in the Walled Garden & keeps photographic records.....	539 0836
Ian McGeachy	Rota for Walled Garden gate opening & Notices.....	476 5499
Kirsty Straughan	Assistant Newsletter Editor.....	334 1884
Brian Moffat	Botanist with interest in the Hill & Walled Garden	
Hugh Edwards	Walled Garden	

Dear Friends

It was a great honour to be asked to be Chairperson of the Friends at the recent AGM. I accepted with some trepidation, as we all know that the late Eddie Price was a hard act to follow. However, with the enthusiastic support of the new Committee, and of course all our hardworking volunteers, we shall do our best to take the Friends forward in the traditions of caring for and developing our Community, which have been so evident over the last 12 years.

We have had two Guided walks on the Hill so far : the Geology Walk on 25th of March in beautiful summer- like weather attracted 30 visitors to hear David McAdam share his deep knowledge of the Hill's early history. The Bird Watching walk on 13th May was less well attended probably as the weather was more typically Scottish Spring – cool and windy. The birds were mostly hiding but singing, and the RSPB members present helped us to appreciate the art of identifying birdsong. There is an outdoor event each month as detailed later on, so we hope to see you at some of these, and enjoy the summer, when it comes !

Gordon Swann, Chairperson, Friends of Corstorphine Hill.



SUMMER WALKS

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.

Sunday 10th June, Wild Plants Walk – ‘Natives, Naturalized, and Nasties’ 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 22nd at 2pm in the Walled Garden Storytelling for Children.

Prizewinning local children’s author Alette Willis will lead a storytelling session for children aged 4-8 on themes related to Corstorphine Hill.

Children must be accompanied by a parent or carer.

Sunday 12th August . ‘ Butterflies, Bees, and other Beasties’.

Gordon Swann and David Adamson 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 16th 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.

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Now that spring has sprung and summer is nearly upon us, we would like to hear what animals, plant life and birds you see around the hill.



Remember to visit the Walled Garden, where a selection of plants and trees have a “Folklore” plant label for you to read as you wonder round.





CORSTORPHINE HILL TOWER



The Tower will be open every Sunday during the summer from 2pm till 4pm starting on **Sunday 6th May** until **30th September**
 Also Edinburgh Open Doors Days **22nd & 23rd September**.
 If you would like to help with the Tower opening -phone Gordon - 334 4769



Come and visit us at the Corstorphine Fair on Saturday 2nd June 2012

HISTORICAL NOTES - The Account Book of Sir John Foulis of Ravelston 1671-1707

Sir John Foulis was born in 1638 and died in 1707 and led a very full life. By his first wife, Margaret Primrose, he had fourteen children born between August 1662 and March 1680. In August 1690 he married his second wife, Ann, they had one child, which died in infancy. In 1697 he married for a third time, Mary Murray, by whom he had several children.

The estate of Ravelston, to which Sir John succeeded on the death of his father George Foulis, lies on the east side Corstorphine Hill. He also had a town house at Foster's Wynd, a narrow close which led from the High Steet to the Cowgate. For amusement he would go to the horse racing which was held at Leith, he and friends would watch the races, then dine and stop off at one of the many Edinburgh taverns on their way home. While at Ravelston he enjoyed hare-hunting and the land between his estate and Ratho was well suited. He was also fond of bowls and refers to playing at Pratt's Field in the Potterrow.

He refers to many people in the accounts with which he had dealings and also items which he purchased, here are some of the entries:- (these are taken directly from the book and are in broad Scots)

1672		£	s	d
	In hansell to Pipers and drummers	1	09	0
	For a mutchkin seck and a mutchkin of claret wine		13	8
	For a dozn and a halfe of golfe balls	4	07	0
	Spent at Leith for golfe	2	01	0
	To Hary Murrays mans pennie weding and fiddlers	3	04	0
1679				
	To mistiris urqht (Urquhart) to buy green droget and thread	1	06	8
	To Hastie, shoemaker, in west port, for 2 pair of Gray shoes	4	04	0
	To John Peacock for barberizing me	0	12	0
	To ye poor at ye kirk door	0	6	0
	To Mr Linn for 4 ell and a qrter mixt gray cloath to be a ryding coat & Brecks	40	0	0

I hope you enjoyed learning a little about Sir John and had fun trying to work out what the words mean!

RANGER REPORT June 2012

Natural Heritage Service: Friends of Corstorphine Hill Newsletter Article

The growing season is well upon us, the Hill is greening nicely. Red campion bursting into colour, comfrey flower heads emerging and nodding, foxgloves in leaf awaiting their time to display, the odd primrose dotted around, carpets of bluebells beginning to fade – all wonderful to see. Then, low to the ground, the rhubarb type stems with readily identifiable leaves are noticed, and again, there's more.....and before you know it, the carpeting effect seems endless – yes, our great enemy Himalayan balsam is on the march especially at the north eastern end of the Hill. The fight begins immediately.

Sadly, this time of year signals our attempts to control the spread of invasive, non-native plant species such as the balsam previously mentioned, Japanese knotweed, salmonberry and common spirea. We have some extra help this year – Scottish Wildlife Trust trainees undertaking Ecological Survey training will be mapping all invasive species across the Hill meaning we will have up to date records to compare with older surveys giving indications as to how successful our control efforts have been to date. The Invasive Species Control Team (newly established) within the Council will also be out treating the full range of invasives. Combine this with our volunteer and corporate days which will be staged throughout the growing season, we will make a dent in their spread. Check out the noticeboards onsite for information on identifying these culprits and what you can do to help.

The City of Edinburgh Council Countryside Ranger Service is changing. We are merging with the Pentland Hills Regional Park Ranger Service to form the City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service. The new Natural Heritage Service will:

- Continue to manage key Natural Heritage Parks and green spaces across the City;
- Deliver countryside and visitor management services in the Pentland Hills Regional Park;
- Manage outdoor access matters and carry out associated statutory duties including the management of the Outdoor Access Forum; and
- Provide specialist technical and project support on natural heritage matters throughout the City.

There will be a larger pool of staff managing 12 Natural Heritage sites and the Pentland Hills Regional Park. From a visitor, regular user or Friends Group point of view, it will be business as usual. There will however be some new faces within the team seen out on the Hill. The service will be centrally located in Hermitage House, Hermitage of Braid with satellite workstations in the Pentlands and at Cammo Estate being utilised more effectively. These changes will provide greater flexibility for the Service and make efficiencies that will sustain the longer term management of Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve; Edinburgh's other Natural Heritage Sites and the Pentland Hills Regional Park.

If anyone has any issues, points to raise or the likes, please feel free to contact me by email:

david.kyles@edinburgh.gov.uk or by phone 0131 447 7145.

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