



# Friends of Corstorphine Hill

## NEWSLETTER No.45

OCTOBER 2012

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Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

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### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

It is sad to report the passing of another committee member and long time supporter of the Friends, Donald Gorrie. He became ill after a severe stroke last December, and died in August. There have been many tributes to his work over many years as Councillor, MP and MSP for West Edinburgh. After retiring from active politics he became Secretary of the Friends and was a very effective and valued member of the Committee for several years. His long political experience made him extremely effective in negotiations with the City Council, the Zoo and many others over that time. We miss him greatly, and extend our sympathies to his family.

In the last few months the Committee have been considering a number of issues including :

**Commissioning and installing waymarkers on the Hill.** We have secured most of the funding we need for this so should be able to take it forward in the next year.

**Cycle use on the Hill.** We are still waiting to join a Council Working Group on this ,which they assure us will be set up this Autumn when they will have new Ranger staff to participate in the Group.

**Invasive Species.** 'Foreign' Plant invaders such as Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, and Salmonberry have been increasing their coverage of the Hill, smothering native plants for many years. The Rangers with various volunteer groups have been trying to remove these plants for some years, the most recent work day being 1<sup>st</sup> August. It would be good to have a Friends group to participate in these clearances, but our volunteers are quite heavily committed in the Walled Garden and other activities, particularly over the summer. We are looking at obtaining funding to pay for more volunteer groups, such as Conservation Volunteers to carry out this work.

**Community Green Flag award** : We received this award for the second successive year ( also the two previous years when it was call the Green Pennant) for our Walled Garden, the only such award in Scotland. Many congratulations to our tireless team of Garden Volunteers ! Edinburgh received more Green Flag awards than any other city in Scotland, for its many greenspaces, including Corstorphine Hill .

In spite of the so- called summer our outdoor events continued successfully this year. The Wild Plants walk in June, the Bugs and Beastie Hunt in August, and the Children's Storytelling in July all attracted good numbers in fine weather. Kirsty has written more about the Storytelling later on. In September we have the Fungus Foray on the 16<sup>th</sup> and Doors Open Days on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, probably both over by the time you read this, but they have both been very successful in previous years and we hope this will continue. Visitor numbers to the Tower have been less this year, after steady increases the last 3 years, probably because of a number of cool wet Sundays, and competition from the Summer of Sport on TV.

We have arranged some winter evening talks on topics of local and general interest , as you will see, and of course there is always plenty to see and do on the Hill or in the Walled Garden all year, so please come out and enjoy it !

**Gordon Swann, Chairman.**



## WINTER PROGRAMME

### Talks

#### “Wildlife of St Kilda”

Dr Richard Luxmoore, Senior Nature Conservation Adviser, National Trust for Scotland.

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 7.30pm**

#### “Water of Leith”

Helen Brown, Water of Leith Conservation Trust

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 7.30pm**

#### “The Bartholomew Archive – A Cartographic Window into Edinburgh’s Past

Christopher Fleet, National Library Scotland.

**Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> 2013 7.30pm**

All talks will take place in the **Capital Hotel**, Clermiston Rd. Edinburgh.

### Botanical Notes from the Hill



Each year, new species are still identified on Corstorphine Hill. One rather spectacular shrub came to our attention in 2010. As it is by a well-used path, it must have been overlooked. It is called Himalayan Honeysuckle (*Leycesteria Formosa*) or, when used for feeding game-birds – Pheasant-berry.

My Indian-born grandmother called it Purple Pagoda Plant – or maybe she made that up!! It is not a true Honeysuckle or anything like one. It is now spectacular, with purple-black globose berries forming beneath burgundy-coloured “pagoda-like” flowers and foliage.

Why not take a look as it is two minutes from the Walled Garden on the path to Kaimes Road car park.

**Dr Brian Moffat**



### STORYTELLING IN THE GARDEN

**22nd July**

This year we were delighted when Alette J Willis agreed to lead the storytelling in the walled garden. Alette won the Kelpies prize in 2011 for her debut novel- How to make a Golem and Terrify people. The story features Corstorphine Hill Nature Reserve and the tower and is a great read for 8-12 year olds and older! Alette enthralled the children with her traditional foke lore stories. The weather held out, sunny although a bit windy which was perfect for Alette's first story about Strong Wind, a native american warrior. After the storytelling the children were shown around the walled garden and, for those who were feeling energetic, the day was rounded off by a trip up the tower. Our thanks go to Alette for giving the children and adults, a memorable day.

**Kirsty**

## Natural Heritage Service Report.

### Autumn Edition

The summer that never was is over. Paths washed out due to heavy rain, root plates of trees lifting and falling over due to heavy rain, puddles everywhere due to heavy rain, water streaming off the hill – perhaps we may get some respite with the winter approaching!!

Given all the wet weather, the path network on Corstorphine Hill coped well with the regular maintenance of ditches and culverts paying dividends – some areas did rut towards path edges but in terms of the Natural Heritage Sites in Edinburgh, Corstorphine Hill coped well. In between the heavy downpours (and sometimes during) sustained efforts were made in mapping and halting the spread of our great nemesis Himalayan Balsam – several corporate groups, student groups, volunteer groups and indeed the Friends of Corstorphine Hill contributed in this effort. A top down approach was initiated and will be sustained over forthcoming years.

Corstorphine Hill retains its Green Flag Award demonstrating ongoing positive management and improvement to the Local Nature Reserve and congratulations again to the Friends of Corstorphine Hill for retaining their Community Green Flag Award (previously the Green Pennant Award) for all the hard work and effort in maintaining and improving Corstorphine Hill Community Walled Garden.

Some activities planned for the autumnal and winter period include planting more hedgerow species to fill gaps in the hedgerow on Clermiston Road; delivering a tree themed guided walk; hacking back stands of salmonberry and creating better access on Tower Drive (the track leading from Clermiston Road past the walled garden to the Tower) through some tree thinning and encroaching limb removal. We will also be liaising with the Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society and the City Archaeologist to examine a number of putative archaeological sites across the hill and others in order to enhance archaeological knowledge of existing features and to extend work previously carried out. It is hoped there will be involvement available to those with a local interest, keep track of dates and information on the many information display cases dotted round the hill.

If anyone has any issues, points to raise or the likes, please feel free to contact me by email: [david.kyles@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:david.kyles@edinburgh.gov.uk) or by phone 0131 447 7145.

David Kyles, Countryside Ranger, City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service.

Newsletter Contact: **Fred Davies (Editor), 5, Saughtonhall Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5RH**





# Coach Trip to Kailsie Gardens, nr Peebles.

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013

## The History of Kailzie Gardens

Kailzie was originally known as West Kelloch, which means wooded glen. Remnants of old forts on the hill indicate that man has lived here for a long time. The first recorded mention was in 1296 when William of Hop Kallow swore allegiance to Edward I and paid the then princely sum of 30 shillings to the King. In 1326 King David II confirmed a grant in respect of Hop Kailzie to James of Tweedie. It remained in the Tweedie family for several centuries, and at some stage they built a keep, the site of which can still be clearly identified. More history can be found on their web site [www.kailsiegardens.com](http://www.kailsiegardens.com)

Situated 2.5 miles from Peebles town centre on the B7062, **Kailzie Gardens** in the Scottish Borders are open 7 days a week throughout the year.

In their seasons, the Gardens provide a rich variety of colour and charm for both the keen gardener, and for the visitor simply wanting to enjoy a beautiful garden in peaceful surroundings

Apart from the gardens, principal attractions for a day out include live viewing of the Tweed Valley Ospreys (Easter to August) **Entry to view the Ospreys is £3**, the restaurant, a gift shop, and a picnic area.

Kailzie is not a National Trust garden, but is privately owned and run by the family - there is a small charge for entry depending on the season.

**The coach will leave from the Capital Hotel, Clermiston Road at 10.30am and will leave Peebles at 3.30pm (approx) for return. (Open to members and their friends)  
(You will be allocated a seat/s on a first come basis & notified by telephone to confirm)**

**Note: Cheques will not be cashed until we have sufficient bookings for this trip**

Detach here-----

**Applications, with payment, should be sent to:-**

**Friends of Corstorphine Hill c/o Fred Davies, 5 Saughtonhall Place, Edinburgh EH12 5RH**

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

**KAILSIE GARDENS, nr PEEBLES**

**Please reserve.....places at £14 each to include coach travel and entry.**

**Cheque payable to “Friends of Corstorphine Hill” for £.....enclosed**

**Name and Address (Please Print).....**

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**Contact Telephone Number.....**