

Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER No.52



MARCH 2015 Editor: Fred Davies Tel: 337 9232

www.corstorphinehill.org.uk

(e-mail: daviesfd@blueyonder.co.uk)

Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

Chairman's Report

Our Annual General Meeting will be held in the Capital Hotel on Wednesday 15th April at 7.30pm.

(Including a short talk by Alison MacKintosh)

Please come along and give us your opinions and ideas.

Since the last Newsletter we have had a very successful programme of talks in October, November and February, organised by Fred Davies. The annual December Social was also enjoyed by all who attended.

The Management Plan for the Walled Garden has been agreed and is being taken forward by the gardening Group.

We have been participating in the Edinburgh Friends of Parks Forum, which now includes about 30 Friends Groups.

We continue to share information and experience with other Friends Groups, and we submitted a joint paper to the Council in relation to forthcoming Budget Cuts. The Forum members will be actively involved in implementing the Edinburgh Living Landscapes Project, part of a Europe wide initiative to improve biodiversity in parks and greenspaces. This is a long term project to improve the biodiversity and the amenity value of Edinburgh's parks and green spaces by changing some of the mown grass areas into wildflower meadows, planting more trees, and trying to improve 'Green Networks'.

We need to reprint Alison McIntosh's excellent book on Corstorphine Hill this year. Alison has agreed to revise the first edition, and we are applying for funding.



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You will find attached/enclosed a renewal membership form to fill in and return with your membership fee (still only £1) and any donation . This year we are listed for Gift Aid, so if you can, fill in the appropriate section. Prompt return of this form will ensure your continued delivery of the Newsletter and helps us keep our records up to date. If you don't have your Newsletter sent by e-mail, and would like to add your name to the list, please fill in the e-mail address section on the form.



A buzzard from Corstorphine Hill Tower

Photo: Eddie MacLennan

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UNUSUAL HAZELNUT HARVEST IN EDINBURGH

An unusual hazelnut harvest in Edinburgh has been recorded in the Walled Garden on Corstorphine Hill. By all local accounts this is unprecedented. A single hazel tree of unknown origin and newly mature, is bearing an estimated four hundred plump and succulent hazelnuts – see illustration A.



Illustration A



Illustration B

They have begun to fall and seem not to have attracted the numerous squirrels (apparently happy with beech nuts and acorns). This crop corresponds to the Turkish hazelnut crop - “Turkey is the first world hazelnut producer and exporter” (FAO) - shown in the latest issue of Saudi Aramco World which tells us we must dry ours (see illustration B) for three weeks before consumption at Christmas.

Dr Brian Moffat with photographs by Iain McGeachy: Friends of Corstorphine Hill.

The Walled Garden (lying to the north-west of Edinburgh Zoo) is run and funded by volunteers – The Friends of Corstorphine Hill - and is open daily. The garden was originally designed and laid out by TV’s Beech Grove Garden Team with the Friends in 2001 onwards. For further information please see the Friends website: <http://www.corstorphinehill.org.uk/index.html>

W.I.H. McGeachy
30 Clerwood Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 8PG

SUMMER EVENTS.



Bird and Wildlife Walk

Corstorphine Hill, Saturday 2nd May

Led by author Ian Moore.

Please meet at the top of Kaimes Road at 8.45am

Geology and Early History of Corstorphine Hill, March 29th 2 pm.

David McAdam, acknowledged expert on this subject will lead a walk, starting at Cairnmuir Road car park.



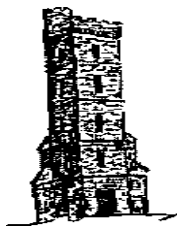
Wild Flowers of Corstorphine Hill, June 7th at 2 pm

Brian Moffat, Committee member and local botanist will lead a walk around the Hill to see the great variety of plants that we have - native and introduced, including some of the troublesome invasive species..

Meet at the Walled Garden at 2 pm.

Trees of Corstorphine Hill, July 12th at 2 pm.

Brian Moffat will lead a walk around the Hill to explore the variety of trees both native and planted, which characterise our beautiful Nature Reserve. Meet at the Walled Garden at 2 pm.



The Tower will be open to visitors on Sunday afternoons, 2-4 pm from 3rd May until 27th September

Friends of Corstorphine Hill thank the following for their funding:-



Building communities. Transforming lives.



City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service Spring 2015

Spring is upon us already (or almost)!

Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve has weathered well over the winter period, only a couple of trees and larger limbs lost due to the high winds. The formal path network and associated infrastructure has stood up well to the occasional heavy downpour! Regular maintenance of drains and ditches will continue to ensure this. Cleansing of diseased elm trees from the Hill has continued over the winter period. Some larger trees were removed from an area above Queensferry Road leaving a large gap in the canopy. This area will either be re-stocked with native broadleaf trees or managed as a woodland glade.

Efforts have continued towards controlling the spread of Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*). It is very important not to undertake this work during the nesting season – although the shrub does form a monoculture to the detriment of native ground flora, it does provide good nesting habitat and food production for birds! There will be a heavier sustained effort aimed at controlling this particular problem species around September time.

The green deserts forming the western slopes of the Hill lying above Clermiston Road / North will change their appearance this year. At present, these large expanses are managed as Standard Amenity Grass. They will now be managed as Low Maintenance Grass. Depending on the growing season, these areas can experience numerous cuts per season at great time and expense. Relaxing the cutting schedule will obviously greatly reduce costs but more importantly be hugely beneficial for wildlife. It will be interesting to see what type of species grow under the new cutting schedule; this could be supplemented through wildflower seeding in certain areas and through leaving other areas to grow longer. The traditional sledging slope (immediately to the north of the walled garden) will be cut well in advance of any possibilities of snowfall! Regular footfall patterns across these areas will be cut throughout the season ensuring access is not compromised.

From Ravelston Woods to Corstorphine Tower: Saturday 30th May 2015. 13:30 – 15:30. A guided walk illustrating some of the varied history associated with the area. BOOKING ESSENTIAL. LIMITED SPACES LEFT.

Contact naturalheritageservice@edinburgh.gov.uk or phone 0131 529 2401.

**City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service
Hermitage of Braid
69a Braid Road, Edinburgh
EH10 6JF
0131 529 2401**

naturalheritageservice@edinburgh.gov.uk