

Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER No.56



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Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

Chairman's Report.

Our Spring – Summer Activities have started well: Ian Moore took about 30 people from Rest and be Thankful to the south slope of the Hill on a lovely sunny morning on 9th April . Many birds were in evidence, both seen and heard. We all had a very enjoyable and informative morning.

Brian Moffat also had fair weather for his annual ramble and discourse on the wildflowers of Corstorphine Hill with about 15 would be botanists.. He has a story to tell about every plant, and it was another enjoyable and informative expedition. Many thanks to Ian and Brian.

We have had good visitor numbers and lots of donations in the first 6 weeks of Tower openings. We are still looking for some more volunteers to help us open the Tower every Sunday afternoon from now until the end of September. If you can help, please contact Gordon Swann.

The Friends had a stall at the very successful Corstorphine Fair on 4th June, which attracted thousands of visitors to enjoy a warm sunny day out and help local charities and voluntary groups. We gave out publicity material and talked to visitors about our work and gained 17 new members.

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped at the stall on Fair Day.

Gordon Swann (Chairman)

SUMMER PROGRAMME

Tree Walk, Sunday 31st July.

Brian Moffat will lead this popular annual tree walk. Meeting at the Walled Garden at 2pm.

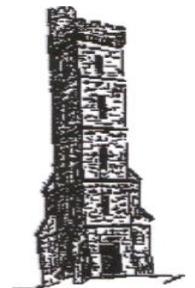


Sunday 7th August *'Bees, Butterflies and other Beasties'*

A hunt in and around the Walled Garden to discover the smaller inhabitants of Corstorphine Hill. Young beastie catchers especially welcome! Meet in the Walled Garden at 2pm.



Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th September are *Edinburgh Doors Open* days. We will open the Tower 2-4 pm both days. We usually get lots of visitors so again, volunteers to help at the Tower would be welcome.



Sunday 2nd October is our annual



Fungus Foray led by David Adamson, to find and identify these intriguing inhabitants of the Hill in autumn.

Again, young fungus finders are especially welcome. Meet at Cairnmuir Road car park at 2 pm.

SPRING/SUMMER REPORT



Four species of warbler breed on Corstorphine Hill – Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Whitethroat and Willow Warbler – and all of these birds have returned in 2016 from wintering grounds as far away as sub-Saharan Africa (quite a feat for creatures that weigh roughly the same as two tea-bags). They have joined spectacular local residents such as Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Nuthatch, Tree Creeper, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit, Mistle Thrush, Linnet, Tawny Owl, Sparrowhawk, Stock Dove and Buzzard, to number among the 45 species that nest on or around the Hill – a tribute to its ancient and varied habitat, and a rich food chain that is free of destructive herbicides, pesticides and fungicides.

Many birds use the Hill for navigation, and passage migrants during the spring period (or just passing!) have included Osprey, Fulmar, Goosander, Grey Heron, Cormorant, Oystercatcher, Pink-footed Goose, Greylag Goose, Raven, Hooded Crow, Sand Martin and Meadow Pipit. The total number of species recorded now stands at 94. For latest sightings see:

<http://chilloutdoors.tumblr.com>

Ian Moore

GARDEN UPDATE

For 2016 we have published a revised version of the walled garden leaflet. This includes a little geographical data and updates the current planting – the various pre-designated zones and, by omission, where trees have been removed. As the trees heighten we felt it important to conserve a more open and sunny northern half to balance the shadier south half.

The wet/dry boardwalk area challenges the imagination to become attractive, but the Irises and loosestrife are well established, and Hostas, Rodgersia and marshmarigold are improving the effect. In the wildflower meadow, broadcasting of “Grow Wild” seeds in 2015 resulted in a virtual monoculture of *Tripleurospermum inodorum* (“scentless Mayweed”) and an attempt is being made to introduce *Papaver* and *Nigella* this year. Fingers crossed! Roses have been planted in the north-east corner and some other ornamentals. In the shady south east, a fernery is being developed, so more effort will be made to reduce the nettles and raspberry there. At winter’s end, with the assistance of the Ranger and his team, the garden was relatively clean and tidy. The spring surge and the current rain are reasserting the usual ‘wild and wooly’ look. The number of volunteers has reduced again and certain areas run the risk of neglect. Anyone wishing to spare a little time helping would be very welcome.

Hugh Edwards.

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



City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service Report

Summary of report given at the AGM:-

The non-invasive species (floral)- salmonberry , cut and burnt, re-growth to be treated with herbicide this year. Himalayan balsam treated with herbicide, to be continued this year. Small isolated stands of Japanese knotweed treated (thanks to Hugh), large stand below timber store to be treated by specialist.

There has been continued liaison with the Nuclear Bunker developers, mostly regarding access. A new barrier just beyond the formal access gate to the Bunker area has been installed, with a small pedestrian path adjacent.

Several instances of littering cleared as encountered. Queensferry Road entrance constantly being cleared due to the funnelling of wind and the break in the wall. Graffiti of furniture, signage and the Tower is persistent. We continually remove as encountered. Path maintenance- Glendale were used to mechanically scrape all the formal paths and steps, clear drainage ditches and culverts and to re-align waterbars and cross-drains. Corstorphine Road boundary wall repaired after medium sized elm tree compromised integrity.

Commercial/professional dog walking is very popular and Corstorphine Hill is the most used site for this activity in Edinburgh. CEC has initiated a scheme whereby such dog walkers are encouraged to sign up and abide by certain conditions when using a public park, such as, picking up after, being respectful to other users, only walking 6-8 dogs at any one time and having appropriate insurance. A CEC officer can request a card, issued if registered, on site and if found to be contravening the rules or not registered, asked to leave. Very rarely, if at all, has this occurred. Around 100 people have registered Corstorphine Hill LNR as their preferred park to use.

Again, the regular message is to promote information sharing, notification of concerns, even very small issues are important. Please do not hesitate to make aware either indirectly through FOCH or direct.

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