

# Friends of Corstorphine Hill

## NEWSLETTER No.63



Autumn/Winter 2018 Editor: Fred Davies Tel: 337 9232

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Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

### Chairman's Report.

Summer Events have been blessed with good weather and the numbers of participants has increased. Ian Moore led a Birdwatching Walk in May, Brian Moffat a Wildflower Walk in June and a Tree Walk in August. David Adamson and Gordon Swann led the Annual Bug Hunt for families in the Walled Garden in July. The numbers attending the Bug Hunt and the Tree Walk were markedly higher than last year, maybe due to weather but probably also our Facebook page which Rowan Muir started in July. The last guided walk was the family Fungus Foray on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September, this is very popular judging by previous years. We had good visitor numbers to the Tower in May-July but lost two Sundays in August due to heavy rain and cloud. The last dates for the Tower opening are, as usual, the end of September with the Doors Open Days in Edinburgh.

We are pleased to have co-opted two new members to our Committee: Gail Bridges is one of the many professional dog walkers who has used the Hill for many years and who supports and adheres to the Council's code of practice. We believe that as the largest group of users of the Hill, dog walkers, both private and professional, deserve a voice in FoCH. Rowan Muir has recently moved to live on the Hill, and is also a dog walker. She has volunteered to set up Facebook pages for FoCH, and as mentioned above, they seem to be having some effect on the numbers of visitors attending our events.

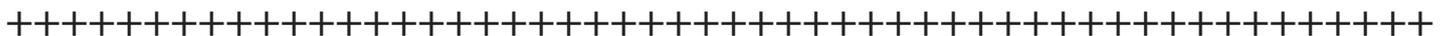
I regularly attend meetings of the Edinburgh Greenspaces Forum (formerly Friends of Parks Forum). Our meeting in April was attended by Councillor Karen Doran who is now responsible for Parks, Greenspaces and Cemeteries in Edinburgh. David Jamieson, Head of Parks Greenspaces and Cemeteries, and a long-time supporter of Friends groups also spoke about the work of his department and their hopes and plans for the future. At a meeting of CEC councillors in August particular mention was made of the excellent work done by the Department of Parks, Greenspaces, and Cemeteries, and the invaluable assistance to that work provided by Friends Groups all over our city. It is nice to be appreciated now and then!

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### **\*\* CHERRY TREE\*\***

Please let us know what you think- the memorial cherry tree south of the centre seat has become big for its position. It was planted in memory of Iain McDonald whose original idea it was to restore the Walled Garden. We can replace it, trim it back, or let it be. Input from FOCH members very welcome to [pstay@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:pstay@blueyonder.co.uk) \*\*\*

The Macdonald memorial bench remains on the top path.



**Note: We are now on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter. Search for FOCH or Friends of Corstorphine Hill where you can check for event news.**

# WINTER TALKS PROGRAMME

All talks take place at the Leonardo Hotel (formerly Capital Hotel), Clermiston Road at 7.30pm

## Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October “The Edinburgh Shoreline Project.”

This is a project run by The Scottish Wildlife Trust, and the City of Edinburgh Council to involve and inform local people about our shoreline which extends from Queensferry to Joppa. Events are occurring until March next year to do with the history, environment and wildlife of the shoreline.

**Talk by Charlotte Johnson, the director of the project**  
**Edinburgh Botanic Garden has an exhibition on the Shoreline Project from Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> Sept. until Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Oct.**

## Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November. “Past, Present and Future of Saughton Park”

**Talk by Peter McDougall, Project Development Officer.**

This talk will tell us the history of Saughton Park and update us on the redevelopment programme.



## Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019 “The Corstorphine Astoria Project”

**Ian Anderson, Chairman of the Corstorphine Trust**

He will talk about the restoration of the Kirk Loan Hall, now the Astoria Centre, by the Trust. He will also tell the story of the Corstorphine Astoria cinema organ, which is being restored and will be installed in the Centre next year.

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### **WHAT DO YOU CALL IT?**

Many features of Corstorphine Hill, like big fields and main paths, do not have names. Sometimes it would be helpful to be able to locate a place by name rather than a roundabout description. Maybe you have your own names for places, or know about traditional names.

If you do, please send them, or any comments, now to [pstay@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:pstay@blueyonder.co.uk).

Here are a few suggestions, more welcome:

#### **Fields (working from North to South)**

Willowtree Field- the smaller field beside Clermiston Road North car park with a big willow tree

Bridges View Field – the big field opposite the Hotel with a good view of the three Bridges

School Field – the smaller L-shaped field opposite the Primary School

Snow Field – between Clerwood House Lane and Tower Lane popular for sledging etc

Garden Field – between Tower Lane and Hillwood House beside the Walled Garden

The Triangle – the sloping field up the path by the Zoo from Cairnmuir Road

The South Slope – south of Rest and Be Thankful facing the Pentlands

#### **Main Paths (all running North to South) :-**

Craigcrook Path – lower path on east side nearest to Craigcrook Road

Eastern Path – main path along east side of Hill from Bunker to Golf Course

Zoo Path – from Cairnmuir Road car park along Zoo fence to RABT and on to the South Slope

Ridge Path – intermittent path from the Tower along ridge of Hill to Bridges View field



# AUTUMN BIRD REPORT



The regional importance of Corstorphine Hill as a nature reserve is particularly apparent in autumn, when many migratory birds visit to feed upon invertebrates and wild fruits. Much of our countryside has been depleted by agrochemicals, which makes the hill something of an avian ‘Tebay Services’ along the otherwise rather barren route south. In mid-August up to 100 Common Swifts, House Martins and Barn Swallows gathered to fatten up on airborne insects. The swifts departed for their African wintering grounds at the end of the month, while the martins and swallows were still present into late September, usually on the east side of the wooded escarpment. Throughout this period, small parties of Spotted Flycatchers could be found in sheltered sunny spots, also – as their name suggests – feeding upon airborne insects. Other insectivorous passage migrants seen during early autumn included Redstart, Willow Warbler and Meadow Pipit, while among visiting seed-eaters were Redpoll, Siskin and Crossbill. Soon Redwings will begin to arrive to feed on what looks to be an excellent berry crop – holly, hawthorn and rowan – and, if we are lucky, they may be joined by Waxwings. On a navigational note, calm conditions on 15<sup>th</sup> September saw a significant southerly passage of Meadow Pipits, along with the first few skeins of Pink-footed Geese flying down from Iceland – for both of these species the hill is a beacon to guide progress over the Forth estuary. Local Lothian birds also use it as a landmark, and recent sightings of non-residents have included Raven, Curlew, Grey Heron, Oystercatcher and Cormorant.

For regular flora & fauna updates visit: <https://chilloutdoors.tumblr.com> or connect via the ‘web links’ page on the FoCH website.

Ian Moore

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## My Favourite Hill – *The Adventures of Shirlie Basset*

Hi, my name is Shirlie, and I am really excited to share my first ‘Dog Blog’ for the Friends of Corstorphine Hill Newsletter.

I am a four year old Basset Hound and I love my walks round Corstorphine Hill every morning with my naughty sister Macy, my mum Gail and all my dog walking friends from **Putting Dogs First**.

‘The Hill’ is my absolute favourite walk as there are lots and lots of great places to explore, tons of interesting smells to sniff and sometimes I can even see some of those weird tree climbing animals with the bushy tails that I like to bark at.

My mum really enjoys walking me and the gang round the hill, no matter the weather, because she always meets really friendly people to say hello to and she says it’s always kept nice and clean.

Hopefully I’ll get asked to come back and tell you about some of my other exciting tales; like the time naughty Macy played golf, and Macy’s ‘Big’ adventure.

Anyhow, for now, thanks for reading my ‘tail’ and I hope to see you soon up on the Hill (remember to say hello, and..... ahem.....I love treats!)

Love from Shirlie Basset.....



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



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***Walled Garden. September 2018.***

On the 19<sup>th</sup>. September, the southernmost of the Aspens (*Populus tremula*) in the shrub rose bed was 2/3rds destroyed by the gale. Originally 3 aspens had been planted, the southern one being felled by a gale, and replaced by one of its suckers (shoot from roots). The centre one was removed 7 years ago. It was decided to remove the remnant of the latest victim, which should allow the roses to flourish.

A team of volunteers has replaced the rotten planks on the boardwalk, and helped tidy generally. They return in October to do pathwork.

Again we had a prolonged dry spell during the hot May, June and July, but the garden survives. Currently, it's good to see clumps of cyclamen and the roses, establishing; the golden hop at the top hut looking almost grapevine-like with its trusses of hops, and the burgeoning fernery. This spring there were very few spotted orchids in the oakwood.

**Hugh Edwards**

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***City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service Report.***

A Natural Heritage Service report will be held over until the next issue.

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