

Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER No.65



Summer 2019 Editor: Fred Davies Tel: 337 9232

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Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

Chairman's Report.

The Winter Talks and Spring walks have been very successful. We have walks on the Hill planned for June, July, August and September. The Tower is open every Sunday until September 29th which is Edinburgh Doors Open Day. We are open Saturday 28th also.

We had our AGM on 16th April and welcomed two new members to the committee- **Rowan Muir** who has been doing a great job publicising our activities through social media – you can now find us on Facebook. She also did a lot of work to promote the Scurry or fun run around the Hill in March with around 200 participants in spite of discouraging weather. FoCH provided several marshals. The feedback from the participants was very positive, and Scurry Around gave us a generous donation.

Gail Bridges has also joined the committee to liaise with dog walkers, private and professional, by far the largest group of users of the Hill. We feel it is important to maintain communication with dog walkers, most of whom enjoy the Hill without causing any problems to other users. Hopefully the next Dogs Blog follows!

Following the AGM, the committee is as follows:-

Gordon Swann (Chairperson)

Peter Taylor (Secretary)

Fred Davies (Vice Chairperson & Treasurer)

Eddie Maclennan

Ian Moore

Iain McGeachy

Hugh Edwards

Dr Brian Moffat

Rowan Muir

Gail Bridges

On a more serious note, there have been a number of gorse fires on the southern slopes of the Hill, destroying large areas of gorse which provides nesting habitats to many birds. The dry weather over the last few months is partly responsible but it looks as if quite a few of these fires were started deliberately. Police and Fire Services as well as Council staff have been involved in trying to combat this problem.

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

SUMMER PROGRAMME



Sunday 23rd June Corstorphine Hill Highlights Walk



Gordon Swann will lead this 3½ mile walk lasting about 2 hours around most of the Hill, showing the views, history and geology of this remarkable park. There are several options to shorten the walk so don't worry if you get a bit weary! The walk is based on the leaflet prepared last year by Ian Moore.

Meet at the walled Garden at 2 pm.

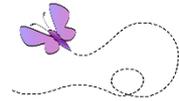


Sunday July 21st Bees, Bugs and Butterflies Hunt

This is a family event, and children who want to catch beasties are especially welcome. If you can, please bring a magnifier and a small plastic bottle to catch the beasties.

This will be led by David Adamson and Gordon Swann.

Meet in the Walled garden at 2 pm.



Sunday August 11th The Trees of Corstorphine Hill

The Hill has a great variety of trees, more than most woodlands, over 30 species.



Each has its own place in the ecosystem, and its own story.

Dr Brian Moffat will lead a ramble around the Hill to explore these trees.

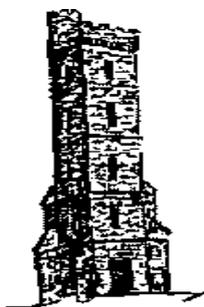
Meet at the Walled Garden at 2 pm.



Sunday September 29th Fungus Foray

David Adamson will lead our always popular hunt for these fascinating inhabitants of the Hill in Autumn. Families are especially welcome – children are sharper eyed and nearer the ground than adults!

Meet at Cairnmuir Road car park at 2 pm.



**Corstorphine Hill Tower will be open every
Sunday
2pm-4pm until the end of September.**

SPRING/SUMMER BIRD REPORT



Birds that might be described as ‘indigenous residents’ continue to thrive, and Corstorphine Hill remains an important site for locally scarce breeding species such as Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit, Mistle Thrush and Stock Dove.

Thanks to its varied and historically unadulterated habitat, some 40 species breed on, or in close association with the hill, and they do so in densities not generally found in the surrounding countryside.

Summer visitors have arrived from Africa in impressive numbers, with Blackcap and Chiffchaff well into double figures; Willow Warbler sang but does not appear to have established this year; Whitethroats are trying to establish territories at the time of writing. Swallows are breeding in the vicinity of the zoo, which provides a ‘farmyard’ environment compatible with their North American name, Barn Swallow.

Undulating spring weather patterns brought the earliest first Chiffchaff on record, March 3rd, but one of the latest first Swifts, May 19th.

In this, the last summer of the decade – and at a time when environmental concern has perhaps never been more acute – it is perhaps worth reflecting on the birds of the hill during this period. Sadly, the story mirrors the national and international picture. While Nuthatch has been gained as a regular breeder (since 2011), the following seven species have been lost: Kestrel, Pheasant, Green Woodpecker, Collared Dove, Linnet, Pied Wagtail and Yellowhammer (a 20% decline in diversity).

What these have in common is that they are birds replenished to the hill from ‘rich’ farmland, a habitat that has largely disappeared – accounting for most of the 40 million birds that the RSPB estimates have been lost in Britain since the 1970s. Let’s hope this is a trend that will see some reversal by the end of the next decade.

Ian Moore

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

Ian Moore

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



City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service Report.

June Newsletter 2019

Update on activities across Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve:

Following on from persistent incidences of fire raising in 2018, the trend has continued into this year. There seems to be a pattern of sporadic gorse and grassland fires on the southern slopes of the hill. Most locations follow paths and desired routes and seem to be acts of wilful fire raising. The matter has been raised with Police Scotland, their Wildlife Crime Officer and the local Fire Brigade who have attended regularly to extinguish. Signage has been appended detailing the risk of fires and harm they cause to the environment; the incidents are being logged and I suggest anyone suspecting individuals to be involved in this behaviour to contact Police Scotland 101 and notify the City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service 0131 529 2401.

General Site Management

Ongoing enquiries and solutions sought to water run-off on the north-eastern fringes of the hill

Graffiti removed from wall at south entrance

Enquiries regarding the provision of bee hives on the hill progressing

Enquiries regarding the provision of pop-up coffee/tea/refreshment stand progressing

Grassland enrichment project with Buglife and the Conservation Volunteers

progressing through turf removal, planting and seeding of wildflower (Green Flag vicinity)

Low-key access related event held at Hillpark entrance to the reserve on 18/05/19. In attendance was Police Scotland Community Officers, Police Scotland Wildlife Crime Officer, Environmental Wardens and Natural Heritage Officers. The event was aimed at promoting responsible access

Scurry around Corstorphine Hill event held in March with over 200 competitors and an expert marshal crew mostly made up of Friends of Corstorphine Hill volunteers – well done!

Site reconnaissance undertaken regarding the suitability for Forest Kindergarten provision

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and Corporate Volunteering

Several volunteer groups have been involved with INNS clearance, namely

salmonberry however the focus is now on Himalayan balsam due to seasonality.

Edinburgh University Conservation Volunteers, several corporate establishments,

Climate Action Corstorphine, the Green Team and the Conservation Volunteers have all assisted lately or are scheduled to do so soon.

**David Kyles - City of Edinburgh Council Forestry and Natural Heritage –
Natural Heritage Officer - Inverleith Farmhouse, Inverleith Park, 5 Arboretum
Place, Edinburgh, EH3 5NY - 0131 529 2421 -**

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20064/parks_and_green_spaces