

Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER No.73



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Registered Charity No. SCO 28842

Chairman's Appeal..... WE NEED NEW MEMBERS FOR THE FRIENDS COMMITTEE *Fancy trying something new in 2024?*

The Friends of Corstorphine Hill have a few vacancies on the committee which looks after all our voluntary activities and we are looking at increasing our capacity to organise volunteers and social media activity.

Working with the Edinburgh Council Parks and Green Spaces team, we keep a protective eye on the Hill which is a Local Nature Reserve. We also organise guided walks, evening talks, Tower opening and link with a variety of users of the Hill including local primary schools, forest kindergarten, orienteers and a variety of voluntary groups.

Cooperating with a wide range of Hill users, we try to ensure that people can enjoy a variety of activities without disturbing other people or harming the natural environment.

We take an active interest in any developments on or adjacent to the Hill.

Committee members steer and monitor all this activity and we are able to promote new projects.

Meetings are about every two months and usually on Monday evenings. You are very welcome to come along informally to a meeting to see if you might be interested. The next available meeting is on 27th May at 7 pm in Saughtonhall Church Hall.

Contact: Peter Taylor – e-mail pstay@blueyonder.co.uk for more information.

See also the Friends of Corstorphine Hill web site

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Other news.....

Tower Opening. Next month I will start to prepare this year's rota. We open the tower each Sunday afternoon 2-4 pm, starting Sunday 5th May. We need 3 volunteers each Sunday to meet and greet visitors. It's very easy and good fun. It's good if you can manage to climb the Tower, but not essential.
CONTACT Gordon Swann gandmswann@gmail.com or 0131 374 4390.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS.....can be paid as follows:
Post to Mr Fred Davies,(Treasurer) 5 Saughtonhall Place, Edinburgh EH12 5RH
(Cheques payable to “Friends of Corstorphine Hill”)
or boxes in Corstorphine Library, Blackhall Library, Drumbrae Library Hub.
or by bank transfer to our Account No. 00175308 Sort Code 80-11-05
(Please put your surname and initial in the reference box so we know who is paying)

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WE WILL SOON NEED A NEW TREASURER: CAN YOU HELP?

The Friends of Corstorphine Hill will soon need a new Treasurer. Are you or someone you know willing to explore taking over the role of Treasurer?

You would succeed Fred Davies who has given many much appreciated years to the job.

The Treasurer looks after the income and expenditure of the Friends, arranges for the Annual Accounts to be prepared and audited and keeps the Friends Committee well informed at approx. bi-monthly meetings and an AGM.

The role is entirely voluntary. Although stepping back from being Treasurer, Fred will continue on the Committee to help as required.

The Friends of Corstorphine Hill, one of many “Friends of Parks” organisations in the Edinburgh area, was set up over 20 years ago to protect and promote the Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve, inclusive of the Walled Garden, for the benefit of local people and visitors.

If you have some practical finance experience and think you might be interested, please contact Fred Davies on 0131 337 9232 or daviesfd@blueyonder.co.uk for further information.

Corstorphine Hill
The Finest Views the Eye can Feast On

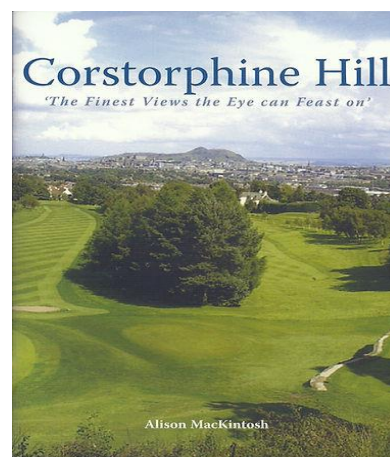
by Alison MacKintosh

ISBN 987 0 9557379 0 9

Reprinted and Updated 2015

This is the first book to draw together the disparate threads in the history of the hill, in the context of the people who have admired and lived on it. It will be welcomed by all those with an interest in the landscape and history of Edinburgh.

This book is available directly from Friends of Corstorphine Hill. To make an enquiry or place an order, please contact us via [email](mailto:) or through our [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcorstorphinehill/) page.



Cost of publication: £5.00 + £1.50 postage if req'd

Winter 2023/4 Wildlife Report

The first harbingers of change were spotted as early as 6th September, when skeins of Pink-footed Geese began flying down on a northerly airstream, a passage that lasted for two weeks, to be followed by the regular second wave between 8th-18th October. These are likely separate populations that hail from Iceland and Greenland respectively. The Greenland geese breed 3-4 weeks later, hence their staggered departure.

Summer migrants gradually disappeared from the hill, with the latest birds being Chiffchaff on 11th October, Lesser Black-backed Gull on 13th October, and the many-thousand-strong annual continental Woodpigeon passage dwindling by the end of the month.

Balmy days in October saw butterflies such as Red Admiral and Speckled Wood, and Silver Y moths, along with Natterer's Bat still on the wing until the 14th, when the first wintering Redwings were coincidentally noted. Also, likely Icelandic birds, up to 20 remained on the hill until mid-January, first devouring a bountiful crop of holly berries, and gradually moving to forage for invertebrates amongst the woodland leaf litter.

Regulars may have noticed curious honking and barking sounds emanating from overhead, or perhaps the ATC pylons. The culprits are a family of up to 5 Ravens, which have spent much of the winter period on the hill. I have a suspicion that these carrion-eaters have found a food source in the zoo, perhaps at some small risk to their own safety!

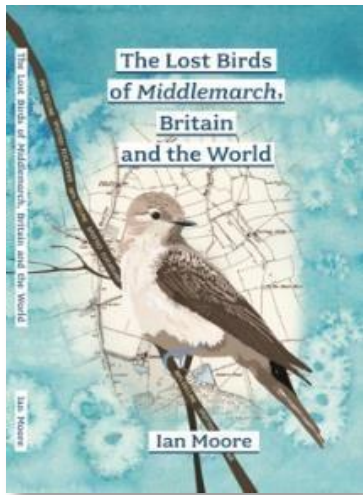
Other passing birds, not regularly present, included Goosander, Grey Heron, Mallard, Peregrine, Rook and Siskin. About 10 Common Gulls and 30 Black-headed Gulls wintered on the Clermiston side of the reserve.

Spring is around the corner, but the resident birds do not wait until 21st March to establish territorial claims. Great Tits are normally the first to detect the change in day length, and were already singing by Hogmanay, just 10 days after the solstice. By the end of January, they had been joined by Coal Tit, Nuthatch, Robin, Song Thrush, Stock Dove and Woodpigeon, along with the melodic Dipper beside the Water of Leith at the foot of the hill.

Roe Deer were present throughout, and a small group looks set to breed again in 2024.

See photoblog at: <https://chilloutdoors.tumblr.com>

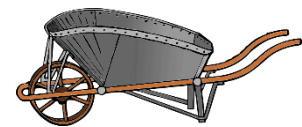
Ian Moore, FoCH Committee Member, wildlife liaison.



Ian Moore is the author of a new book, ‘*The Lost Birds of Middlemarch, Britain & the World*’. This features a section on the bird life of Corstorphine Hill. All royalties will be donated to wildlife causes, including a share to Friends of Corstorphine Hill. To learn more, [simply click on this link](#).

Photos in this report, all taken on Corstorphine Hill, in chronological order: Roebuck; Orange Tip on Bramble; St Mark’s Flies on Gorse; juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker at nest hole; Whitethroat and Germander Speedwell.

Walled Garden Report.



The main work of the volunteers throughout the year is keeping the garden reasonably tidy but also involves some maintenance work.

This last year has seen the repair of the rockery wall to the right just inside the gate, to make it safe and we hope a lovely feature this coming year. We have also encouraged volunteers to take on the development of small areas of the garden to ensure the garden evolves and maintains interest. In this regard a major project in the last few months has been the clearance of an unruly bed of *Rosa rugosa* just above the pond. In its place we will build 4-5 small starter plots that will be offered to the local community to grow their own choice of plants.

This will enhance our remit as a ‘community garden’ and bring more local engagement into the garden. The garden always welcomes new volunteers to help keep it looking its best.

Information about how to apply for these starter plots is in this Newsletter, on our web site and Facebook pages.



YOUR SPACE IN THE WALLED GARDEN?



Designated as a 'community garden' the **Walled Garden on Corstorphine Hill** brings pleasure to all those who visit. It is looked after by a hard working group of volunteers.

At this time, we would like to enhance the community aspect of the Walled Garden by offering **4 or 5 small starter plots** (approx. 3m x 1.6 m) for local people to grow their own choice of plants. We hope this will encourage enthusiastic gardeners as well as complete novices, especially children, to become involved.

Applications are invited for the assignment of plots for a **period of one year**, renewable with the agreement of the FOCH Committee. There is **no charge** for the use of each plot. However, applicants should be, or become, members of the [Friends of Corstorphine Hill](#) (membership charge is £1 minimum per annum)

These starter plots are small scale and only one plot can be held by each person/household. To help us select successful applicants we would appreciate a sentence or two explaining why this opportunity interests you. We hope you will support this pilot project.

We look forward to receiving your applications by e-mail to – pstay@blueyonder.co.uk

The closing date for applications will be 4pm on Friday 12th April 2024

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Walled Garden is managed and maintained by volunteers from the Friends of Corstorphine Hill.



Access to the plots may be withdrawn by the Committee at any time at their sole discretion. Plots may not be sublet.

The Walled Garden is City of Edinburgh property and all Council regulations apply

