



Hill & Hermitage

Newsletter of the Friends of the Hermitage of Braid & Blackford Hill
Spring 2004 Volume 5, Issue 2 ISSN 1470-9945

ffF...ff.. February BURN CLEAR-UP

Ice breaker

There had been a lot of rain over the previous month, so the Braid Burn was almost in spate for the first Friends clean-up of 2004, but around a dozen brave souls turned out on Sunday February 8th to help remove the accumulated plastic bags, crisp packets, cans, bottles and other debris deposited over the previous few months by our less responsible fellow citizens. We



One of the lower stretches, next on the list, photograph taken after a previous clean up, you should see it now!

spent several hours clearing the stretch upstream of Hermitage House, filling over twenty bin bags in the process, and these were collected the same afternoon in the pickup by Fergus, who had very nobly come along in his spare time to contribute. Unfortunately we also sent quite a bit of rubbish swirling down towards the sea as it escaped our clutches in the raging torrent - so apologies to any of our readers who

may visit Inch or Figgate Parks and find our efforts adding to the large amount of locally produced litter that they already suffer from. At the end of the afternoon some of us were wet and cold (especially those who had opted to brave the stream in wellies rather than waders) but pleased to have improved a section of our favourite environment, at least temporarily. However, the litterlouts seem to run a round-the-clock replacement service, so

we'll be back to continue the never-ending contest with them. Next time we hope to have a go at the more downstream sections of the Burn, so do join us there if you feel like doing something practical to help the Hermitage. Helpers on the bank are an important part of the team, so you don't even need to get your feet wet! (Rob Elton)

Burn Clear-Up

Sunday 28th March 2004

Meet at Hermitage House 1pm

Bring the family, all welcome.

Your burn needs you!

HILL & HERMITAGE

All correspondence, including articles, letters to the editor, advertising enquiries and competition entries to:

Andrew Coates
Tel. 0131 447 0370 or email:
andcoates@blueyonder.co.uk

We are always seeking writers of articles.

Have you been to one of the friends events and would like to air your views? If you want to have your article considered for the next newsletter be sure to send it before the next copy deadline **14th June 2004**

For information about paying your annual membership by **Gift Aid** or about **joining** Friend's of the Hermitage of Braid and Blackford Hill, please contact ROB ELTON (Membership Secretary) on 0131 667 4079 or email:
rob@robeldon.demon.co.uk

Apologies to all those who noticed the incorrect volume and issue number on the last edition.

EDINBURGH CITY LOCAL PLAN (ECLP)

The restructuring of the Edinburgh local plans may have a knock-on effect on the classification of the Midmar field's green-belt status. Though the recent public enquiry into the classification of the field upheld its green-belt status, the agents for the AG Laing Trust have made an appeal for a report to be commissioned by the Scottish Executive. A source in the planning department said that the report is unlikely to be completed before June and the council does not have to accept the reports findings. In fact the planning department website* states the following:

“The current intention is for the ECLP to follow the format set by the more recently prepared local plans that it will replace. Policies and proposals in these plans have been the subject of recent consultation, and in many cases have been examined at public inquiries and found to be robust.”

Though Edinburgh City Council have previously stated they would fight any move to overturn the green-belt classification there is likely to be renewed pressure from the A G Laing Trust to redefine the site's status in the new plan. All those who have previously raised their concern should continue to be vigilant and encourage others to get involved.



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THE HERMITAGE QUIZ (answers on the back page)

- 1) Who was on the throne when Hermitage House was completed? Was it a) James I? b) George III? c) Queen Victoria?
- 2) If you came across *Troglyditus troglyditus* in the Hermitage, would it a) fly away from you? b) scuttle away from you on four legs? or c) turn round and say "Who are you looking at pal?"
- 3) What was Blackford Pond originally used for? a) Boating? b) curling? c) fish farming?
- 4) When was the Friends of Hermitage of Braid & Blackford Hill set up? a) 1899? b) 1999? c) Never heard of 'em.
- 5) The Agassiz Rock is named after a) an African Weapon b) a famous scientist c) a scientist you've never heard of?
- 6) Which one of these is not currently a Countryside Ranger working from Hermitage House – a) Duncan b) Fergus c) Fiona d) Wendy?
- 7) What was the name of the feature film partly shot at Blackford Pond three years ago – a) Daybreak, b) Teabreak, c) Give us a break?

* http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/CEC/City_Development/Planning_and_Strategy/Edinburgh_City_Local_Plan/ECLPIntro.html

Events

Burn clean-up!

Date: Sunday 28th of March 2004 at 1pm.

Venue: Hermitage House

After a successful burn clean-up at the beginning of February we are going to continue the effort, this time we will work our way along the section of burn to the east of Hermitage House. Tools, gloves, wellies / waders and safety advice all provided – wear outdoor clothing and strong footwear. This event will go ahead whatever the weather, so see you there if you can spare the time.

If you can't make it by 1pm, come along later and you will find us working somewhere along Braid Burn.

For further details e-mail enquiries@fohb.org or telephone Rob Elton on 0131 667 4079.

Dawn Bird Watch

Date: Sunday 16th of May 2004 at 4.30am.

Venue: Meet at Braid Road entrance of the Hermitage of Braid.

An event for the early risers amongst us – a unique opportunity to discover bird life at sunrise and to hear dawn chorus whilst the rest of the city is sleeping. Bring waterproofs, boots and binoculars if you have some. Despite the insanely early start this proved to be a well attended and very enjoyable event in 2003.

Please book in advance by contacting Duncan Priddle by e-mail ⇨

duncan@cecrangerservice.demon.co.uk or by phone on 0131 447 7145.

Flowering Plants Guided Walk

Date: Friday 4th of June 2004 at 6.30pm.

Venue: Meet at Hermitage House.

A guided walk by local expert botanist and naturalist Jacqueline Muscott. Find out more about the plants at the Hermitage of Braid – and any other wildlife that we see on the way. The walk will be at a leisurely 'botanists pace' and will last about 2 hours. It is perfect for people with little or no knowledge of plants, but will be equally enjoyed by the keen botanists amongst us.

Bring boots and waterproofs, and meet at Hermitage House at 6.30pm.

For more information e-mail enquiries@fohb.org or telephone Pete Matthews on 0131 466 2392.

"The Rights and Wrongs of Rights of Way" – a talk by the Scottish Rights of Way Society

Date: Thursday 24th of June
Time and venue: to be confirmed

Come along to a fascinating talk and slideshow on the rights of way in Scotland and discover what affect new rights of way legislation may have on the

Hermitage of Braid and Blackford Hill.

Details of the time and venue will be advertised in the next Hill and Hermitage newsletter and will be shown on the Friends' web site.

For further information please e-mail enquiries@fohb.org or telephone Pete Matthews on 0131 466 2392.

Other Forthcoming Events

Badgerwatch 2004 – after the success of the 2003 event, another Badgerwatch will take place in July 2004 on Corstorphine Hill.

Bat Talk and Watch – this event has become a regular feature on the Friends' calendar and is always very well attended. This year's event will take place during August 2004.

Further details of both these events will be advertised in the next Hill and Hermitage newsletter and will be shown on the Friends' web site.

Hermitage Photography Competition 2004

Do you have photographs taken in the Hermitage?

They could be still lifes, landscapes, photographs of Friends' activities or just family days out. We are looking to create an archive of images of the Hermitage for use in the Hill and Hermitage newsletter, in the display area we have in Hermitage House and also on the web site.

To make things more interesting H&H will be giving a prize for the best images submitted before the end of 2004, (the best photographs will be decided by the Friends of the Hermitage and Blackford Hill committee and one will be announced per edition of H&H until the end of 2004). Competition rules and details of how to enter an image will be posted on the website www.fohb.org or available from the Friends display in Hermitage House from Saturday the 3rd of April 2004.

Bat Boxes in the Hermitage

After our second "boxing event" in which three members and Fergus Cook took part we have now put up four bat boxes in two locations in the woods. We would like to thank a member of the Lothian Bat Group, Natalie Taylor, for taking the time to walk the paths in order to choose the best possible sites. Thanks also go to Mr Peter Westbrooke who kindly donated one of the boxes. (Susanna Dunbar)

Unusual Birds

The rangers have asked anyone sighting any rare or unusual birds in the Hermitage or on Blackford hill to let them know. Telephone or visit Hermitage House (0131 447 7145). As well as their usual jobs; flora and fauna surveys, litter management, tree planting etc. they are participating in the RSPB Bird List 2004.

Just to get you in the swing of things try identifying the bird on the right, answers to the editor, but there are no prizes it is just for fun.



Who am I?

Quiz Answers:

1. b = 3pts.
2. a (it's a wren) = 3pts.
3. a = 3pts, b = 1pt (we can't say it was never used for curling).
4. b = 3pts, c = 1 pt (for honesty).
5. c = 3pts, b = 1 pt (come on, admit you'd never heard of Lewis Agassiz before. He was a geologist who was one of the first to describe the Ice Age).
6. Wendy = 3pts.
7. a = 3pts. Straight to video.

How did you do?

25 pts or more. What a fibber. The maximum is 21 pts.
20 pts or more. You are an expert on the Hermitage of Braid. In fact, you are probably one of the Countryside Rangers doing this quiz on your tea-break.
15 pts or more. An average kind of score. That's really interesting...zzzzz.
10 pts or more. This isn't your kind of quiz, chum.