



The Friends of Easter Craiglockhart Hill e-Newsletter Summer 2022

**Welcome to the Summer edition of the Friends of Easter
Craiglockhart Hill e-newsletter.**

In this edition we update you with the goings-on on Easter Craiglockhart Hill over the summer months. It's been a busy period with lots of volunteer work being contributed towards various projects including; to tackle erosion around the pond, to remove yet more metal from the LNR, and to continue our Seeds and Planting program. We will outline the ways you can get involved in caring for the LNR through our newly restructured volunteering program.

There is a wildlife update, including the latest news on our resident swan family, and other interesting sightings around the hill.

We have an update on the status of the landslip area above the Meadowspot Path, details of forthcoming events, and some general public notices and news.

Finally, there have been reports that Elves have started to colonise the Craiglockhart woods! Find out how to find these mythical creatures and see if you can spot them all.



Summer Volunteering Update

Over the summer months, volunteers have contributed their valuable time and effort to helping keep ECH beautiful, and to facilitate community events. From practical tasks like live willow spiling at the pond, planting trees and wildflowers, and removing litter and scrap metal - to growing on seeds and saplings at home, handing out water to intrepid hill runners, and even adopting an area or task within the LNR to care for/undertake in

their own time. Whichever way you choose to engage with volunteering on ECH, we greatly value and appreciate all the input from our wonderful volunteers. Thank you!

If you'd like to get involved there are a range of ways you can volunteer with us, check them out below.

Volunteering Options 2022





We have recently restructured our volunteering options to allow people to engage to the degree that suits their lifestyle and means. Whether you are keen to be up to your elbows in practical tasks every day or only have occasional time to contribute. Whether you want to participate in group tasks or work alone. Even if you can't make it to ECH but still want to help! We have an option that suits how you would like to volunteer.

There are four main options choose from, check them out [here](#)

In Focus: Option 1 - Hill Patrol

This is our newest and easiest way to get involved! Hill Patrolling is designed to be incorporated into your current routine - so you can do a

Patrol whilst going for a walk, run, cycle, whatever. It is very quick and easy, and requires no specialist skills. You simply visit the LNR, take a wee note of what you see, and complete a quick Patrol Log when you get home. Data from Patrol Logs will be stored by FECH and used to paint a picture of park usage, wildlife diversity, and issues such as vandalism, fires, litter etc. We can then use this to help direct Human Resources and funding to the most needed areas and issues. The aim is to create lasting historical records about on-goings in the park which will be useful and interesting for future generations.

Please get involved, the more data we can collect, the clearer the picture becomes! Look out for on-line training events, or come to one of our walk-rounds.

[View Patrol Log document here](#)

Seeds & Planting



Mellow Days on the Hill

Erin Jackson - Community Adoption Volunteer

There's still a lovely variety of wildflowers to spot around the hill. Some – like bird's-foot trefoil and field scabious – continue to flower and attract bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Others – like teasels, common knapweed and thistles – are now mostly seed-heads, providing food for birds and shelter for insects in autumn and winter.

Lots of new perennial wildflowers were planted by volunteers this year – common mallow, crane's-bills, bellflowers and restharrow to name a few. Most are growing well and we're experimenting with seed collection so we can build our numbers.

Right now, we're preparing a big autumn plant-out so hopefully many more beautiful wildflowers to see on the hill next spring. Grateful thanks to everyone who 'volunteered from home' and looked after the little primroses and violets we'll be planting. Lots of watering required no doubt!

Would you like to plant some primroses and violets? If so, we'd love your help! The plant-out will be on Sunday 11 September from 2pm. Please just email friends@eastercraiglockharthill.org to let us know you're coming.

If you can't make that day, worry not. More baby plants are coming soon and we'll need more volunteers to nurture these – and/or grow new plants from seed over the winter. Just email friends@eastercraiglockharthill.org and we'll be in touch!

Wildlife Update

It's been an interesting few months on the hill with both humans and wildlife enjoying the long hot days. There have been many successful families of waterbirds throughout the spring and summer; Mallards, Coots, Moorhen, and of course our resident Swans. The gaggle of Canada and Pink-Footed Geese have been intermittently chased off by Siegfried and have returned. A Grey Heron visits regularly and can be seen basking on the pontoons or casting his beady eye on proceedings from the wall on the north side. There was also a rather exciting report recently of an Otter on the eastern causeway!



Further up the hill there have been sightings of Roe Deer, Foxes, and Badgers, and a recent report of Rabbits on the Craighouse Estate! Although very common, it is most encouraging to see them starting to return to ECH after an absence of quite a few years.

In the Lower Hilltop Meadow, the wildflowers are attracting a rich diversity of butterflies, moths, damsel flies, and other valuable pollinators. We are considering conducting surveys to allow us to monitor this perceived increase over time, and to determine how initiatives such as 'Metals to Petals' are contributing to this. It really is captivatingly beautiful during the summer months and hopefully it will become more so in the coming years!

To all those concerned or intrigued by the discovery of a snake skin on the

hill, it was established to be a hoax, planted by a local wind-up merchant.

Swan Watch



It's been a real privilege watching Brigid & Siegfried raise their six beautiful cygnets this year. Lots of you have contacted us with concerns about Siegfried's leg injury which thankfully he seems to have mostly shaken off. We don't know what caused it but he has soldiered on regardless, performing his Dad duties impeccably!

The cygnets grow stronger by the day and have finally developed their grown-up feathers, Mum & Dad have been conducting flying practice up and down the pond and progress is going well. Thanks to Wolf Gruellich for the various pics, especially the cygnet squadron coming in to land.



Finally, congratulations to Amber from Little Monkeys nursery, who guessed closest in our Cygnet Countdown competition! Amber pipped 8yo Violet Vaughan by 2hrs, the Logies spaniel Piper was 3rd. A better showing from human adults is expected next year!

Elves spotted in Craiglockhart Woods!

Keep your eyes peeled on the Woodland Trail as we've had reports that Elves have moved in! We've been out searching for them and so far have located one family in the Log Garden near the Willow Pirate Ship next to the gate from the pond.



Reports say that there are a total of nine doors like this, all visible from the Woodland Trail path between the Log Garden and the Woodland Drum in the upper Craiglockhart Woods. **Please help us to find them all!** We'd love to be able to make a map for park visitors to follow.

Elves are shy creatures who value their privacy and live peaceful lives, the best way to spot them is to move quietly on the path so as not to disturb them, and to make sure you're looking carefully for their front doors in likely-looking nooks and crannies.

If you see any, please send a photo and/or description of where you saw it and what colour it is for our records. When we have all nine we can make our map!

Good luck, and thanks!

Other News

Meadowspot Landslip Works

Work to repair the landslip above the Meadowspot Path continues to progress with a large section of slope stabilised. Once this work is complete, there will be tree planting to replace trees damaged in the slip and during repairs. We still do not have a specific date for completion of the work but we continue to liaise with the council and contractors regarding this issue. Hopefully it won't be too much longer.

Rats Around the Pond

There have been a number of reports about increasing numbers of rats around the east end of the pond. Rats are a natural part of the ecosystem of Easter Craiglockhart Hill and have an important role to play in the health of the LNR. However, it seems more and more of them are becoming attracted to The Causeway and up onto the road at Lockharton Crescent, due to individuals feeding the waterbirds there. Please be respectful of neighbours in this area and make sure that if you are feeding the birds, you do so from the grass at the west end of the pond, next to the sports centre, and not at the east end. Thank you.

Nomadic Bench

The recently donated and refurbished bench at the Poet's Post went walkabout in August; spending some time in the Craighouse Woods and latterly at the Hilltop. Unfortunately it suffered for its travels and had been dropped, so most of the slats were split rendering it unsittable. It has now been repaired once again and is a little narrower and cosier. The bench is now sat under a tree at Poet's Post and secured to the ground with a chain to prevent it wandering again. We hope that people can enjoy this spot to rest, picnic, or to watch the butterflies cavorting and

the goldfinches feeding on the plentiful seeds of the meadow.

Forthcoming Events

Stay tuned to our social media channels for details on events we are planning to run this autumn. We are hoping to have Anna Canning from Floramedica return for another instalment of their seasonal **Foraging Workshop**. We also hope to facilitate a **Fungi Identification Workshop** too. These events have proven extremely popular in the past so get in quick once details are confirmed!

Green Flag Award

It's a pleasure to announce that Easter Craiglockhart Hill has been awarded top marks and a glowing report in this years Green Flag Award review! Thank you to the whole ECH community for helping to keep our little LNR so beautiful and such an amazing place to visit. Well done everyone!

Dog Awareness

We love dogs at ECH and welcome loads of our K9 friends daily. However, not everyone appreciates unsolicited doggie attention, especially young kids and those who have allergies, or those who are intimidated by them. We'd like to remind all dog owners to observe 'The Golden Rule'. Thanks.



The Golden Rule



Please ensure that you and your pets' enjoyment of the hill does not cause mess or harm to other people or wildlife.