

Exploring the Hill

Friends of Easter
Craiglockhart Hill



In this section

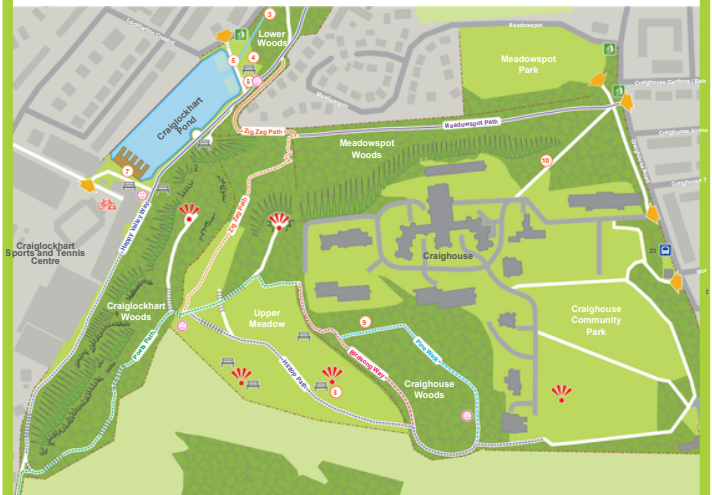
Nature Detective Activity Guide
Wildlife Signs ID Sheet
Storytelling Activity Guide
Bird Language Worksheet
Invent a Mushroom Worksheet
Trails Activity Guide

Continue at home

- Document the trip in a journal, poster, or report.
- Write down the story from the storytelling exercise..
- Use the data from the bird survey to practice creating graphs and statistics.

About the area

Easter Craiglockhart Hill has many nooks and crannies to explore. There are main paths leading through the woodlands, meadows and to the hill top. These are steep or stepped in places. There are also plenty of side paths around the hill which you can use to find hidden viewpoints and quieter spots.



How to get there

There are entrances to Easter Craiglockhart Hill from Craiglea Place, Craighouse Road, Lockharton Crescent, Glenlockhart Road, Craiglockhart Terrace and the Craiglockhart Leisure Centre. All entrances are within a short distance of bus stops. Once in Easter Craiglockhart Hill; it takes about an hour to walk around the whole hill.

Safety Check!

There are steep hills and cliffs on Easter Craiglockhart Hill so be careful of them while exploring the hill.



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Activity Guide: Nature Detectives

Easter Craiglockhart Hill is teeming with wildlife; from buzzards, foxes and badgers; to frogs, robins and bugs. However, they can be a little hard to spot, especially with a group of noisy children! Instead of looking for the animals themselves, try being Nature Detectives and look for signs of wildlife that has been in the area recently. This activity means getting in tune with the natural world around you as a lot of animal signs are well camouflaged!

Things to keep an eye out for include:

Footprints

Different animals have different shapes and sizes of feet. Their footprints should also show any large claws. If you can find several footprints of the same type in a row, you can try to work out how the animal was moving, taking small steps or large leaps.

Feeding signs

Look out for pine and spruce cones that have been gnawed, seeds and nuts that have been cracked or nibbled, or teeth marks on bark or grasses.

Pellets

Many birds cough up the parts of their food that they can't digest. They often look like tight bundles of fur and can be gently pulled apart to reveal feathers, bones, shells, plant matter, and even occasionally bits of litter.

Animal remains

Many wild animals are effective carrion eaters so there is rarely much left behind of any unlucky prey. However, you may find tufts of fur, feathers, or even some blood.

Droppings

There's a lot you can tell about an animal from its poo! The shape can be noted from a distance - herbivore have small round droppings and the droppings of carnivores tend to be sausage shaped. If you want to get a bit closer, use a stick to poke it apart and see if there are traces of berries, bones or bits of insect.

Discuss what you think made these signs? What can you tell about the animal by the type of sign left behind? Are they large or small? Do they have claws, or sharp teeth? What have they been eating?

Respect Wildlife

If you are lucky enough to stumble on some living wildlife, make sure you give them plenty of space and don't disturb them!



EASTER CRAIGLOCKHART HILL WILDLIFE SIGNS

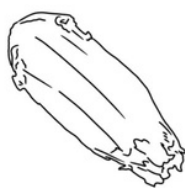
OWL PELLET



DEER POO



MOUSE



SQUIRREL



(PINECONES)

HOW MANY CAN YOU FIND?

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Activity Guide: Storytelling

Surrounded by the wonderful sights of Easter Craiglockhart Hill, it is easy to be inspired by nature. Try going for a walk, collecting natural items that take your interest, and then try to come up with a story about them. It might be fun to perform your story to the group as a play or dramatic reading.

Or bring some paper and pens and use some of our Nature Writing prompts below! These prompts were created by Easter Craiglockhart Hill's Writer in Residence, Rachel Plummer. More of Rachel's work can be found at <https://rachelplummer.co.uk>.



A Potion for Spring

Imagine you're making a magic potion recipe for the season of Spring.

What flowers would you put in? Would you choose any other ingredients? How about the smell of wild garlic, or the sound of rain, or a dash of sunshine?

How would you mix and cook your ingredients?



Bird Language

Go for a walk or look out of a window and see if you can spot a bird. If you can't see one, maybe you can hear one!

What does it sound like? What do you think the bird is trying to say?

Write a poem from the perspective of your bird, imagining what he or she is saying.



Puffball Mushrooms

Puffballs are a type of fungus that often grows at Easter Craiglockhart Hill.

Puffballs get their name because they release their spores in a cloudy puff. Spores are how fungi reproduce – a bit like seeds from a plant. The spores travel through the air, and when they land they can grow into more puffballs.

Imagine the journey a puffball spore makes. What does it see? What dangers does it encounter? What friends does it make? Does it find a good place to settle and grow?

Write a poem about the spore's journey.



Jelly Ear Fungus

The jelly ear fungus is a mushroom which grows on trees and looks a bit like an ear. You can sometimes see it growing in the woods at Easter Craiglockhart Hill.

If the trees had ears, what would they hear?

Think about the sounds of the woods – would the jelly ears listen to birdsong? Rain? Squirrels running up and down the tree, children playing, dogs barking? How does the jelly ear fungus feel about what it hears? Are there any sounds it doesn't like?

Write a poem about what the jelly ear fungus hears in Craiglockhart wood.

Exploring the Hill: Bird Language Worksheet

Imagine if you could understand what birds were saying, but nobody else could. Let's make a Birdsong to English dictionary, where we explain what the different sounds birds make mean! The first one has been done for you as an example.

Bird Sound	English Translation
<i>Caw, caw!</i>	<i>I'm hungry!</i>

This activity was created and provided by Rachel Plummer

Exploring the Hill: Invent a Mushroom Worksheet

Find as many mushroom or fungi as you can. Look at their shapes, sizes, textures, and what they grow on. Use them as inspiration to create your own mushroom, and write a poem about what makes your mushroom special. Remember, your poem doesn't have to be in normal sentences, and it doesn't have to make sense!

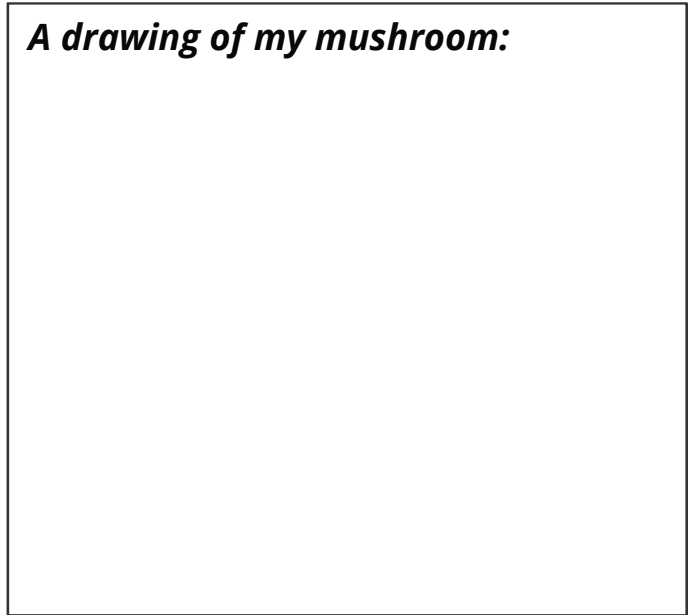
My mushroom is called:

My mushroom is:

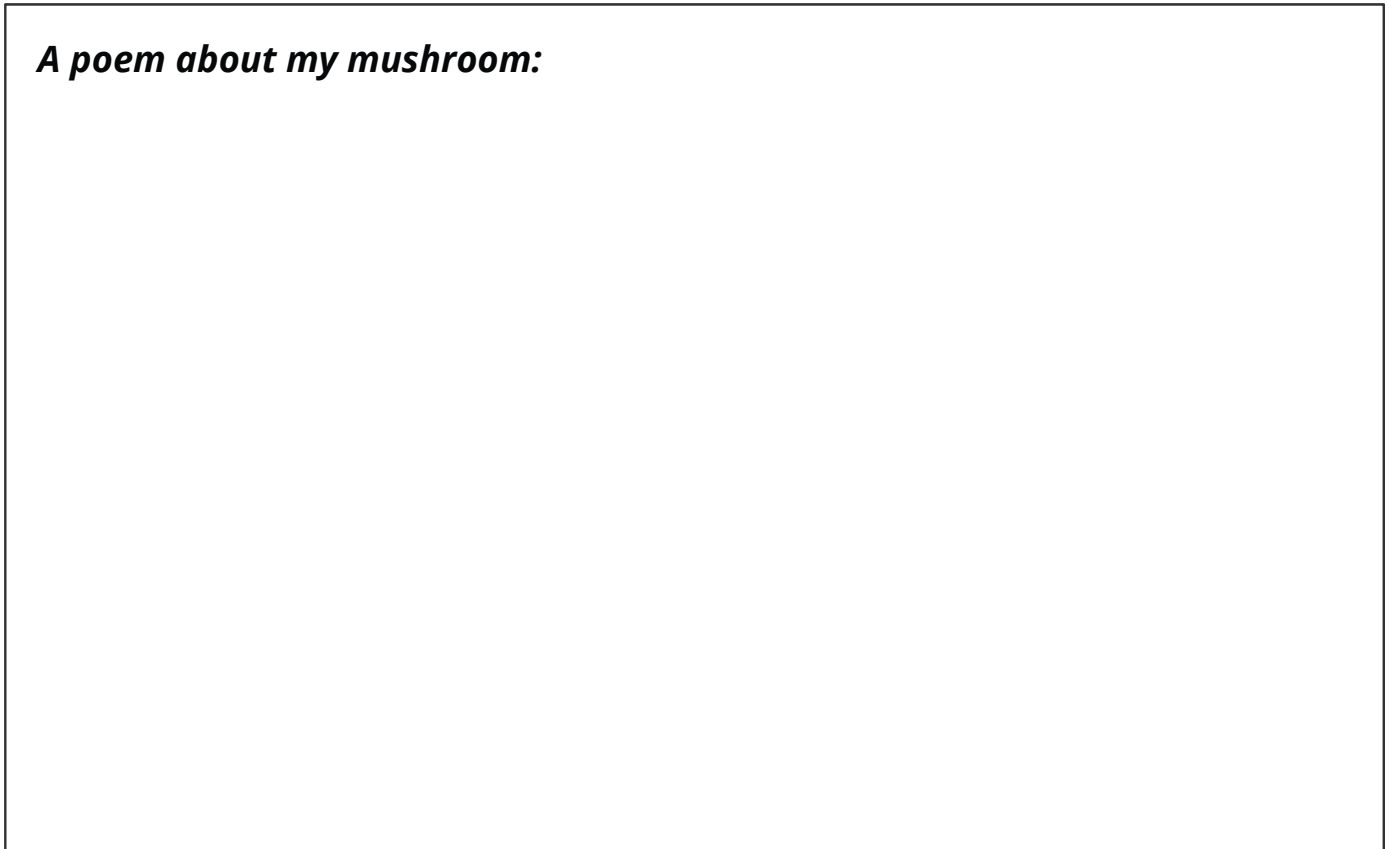
safe to eat / dangerous to eat

Where my mushroom grows:

A drawing of my mushroom:



A poem about my mushroom:



This activity was created and provided by Rachel Plummer

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Activity Guide: Trails

There are two trails on Easter Craiglockhart Hill. They are marked by blue and green waymarkers

Use our maps and the waymarkers to follow the trails around the hill.

Along the routes are information boards. You can find copies of these on page.. What else will you discover along the way?

The Happy Valley Trail

Follow the blue waymarkers along the historic Happy Valley. The route takes you from the old curling rink, through woodland, to the pond that is home to swans and many water birds. There are plenty of places to sit, rest and admire the scenery.

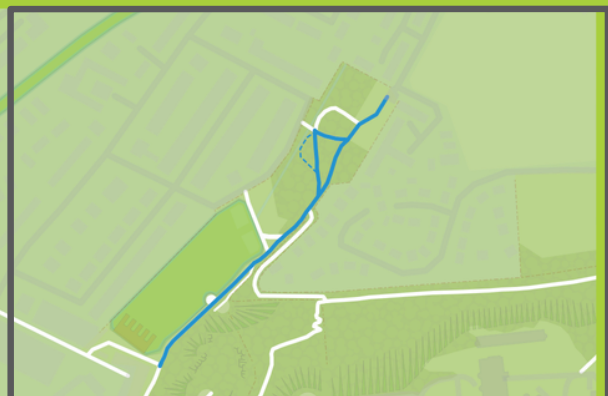
Wide and smooth paths with some short gentle inclines. The detour into the woods has a narrower, uneven path. There is a wide gate to enter the pondside area. No steps.

0.5 miles / 0.8 km

Allow 20 minutes



easy



The Woodland Trail

Follow the green waymarkers along this circular route which takes you through mature woodland, to the hill top, and back down again. Allow at least an hour to complete this, but don't rush - enjoy the sights and sounds of nature.

Some sections of steep stepped paths. Some sections crossing upland meadows with no path markings. Some paths can get muddy after damp spells.

1.5 miles/ 2.4 km

Allow 1 hour



strenuous

