

# Trust Talk

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE CORSTORPHINE TRUST

Summer 2021



## Sun on the Horizon

Summer is in full swing which means longer days and that elusive sun making an appearance. With society beginning to reopen, we are now able to look forward to what the future might hold and are pleased to share some of those plans with you in the **Chair's Letter** overleaf.

We also have some fantastic updates from our **Archivist**, including a new memorial to the Corstorphine Witches, and a compelling piece from a local anthropology graduate.

We hope that you enjoy this Summer Edition of **Trust Talk!**



## Stay in touch

Although our doors may be closed for now, you can follow us on our Facebook and Instagram pages.



THE CORSTORPHINE TRUST



@THECORSTORPHINETRUST

# Chair's Letter

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Hello everyone and welcome to the summer edition of Trust Talk. As I'm sitting at my computer to put 'pen to paper', the sun is splitting the sky. Whether you're day tripping, staycationing or in the back garden, I hope you've managed to enjoy a little bit of the good weather and long may it continue.

As you'll see in the following pages, we've been busy and I don't expect the next few months to be any different!

After the organ restorer left in April, we contacted a couple of members of the Edinburgh Organists Society who had made themselves known at Doors Open Day 2019. They have readily and enthusiastically agreed to 'run in' the organ for us by playing it twice a week. Although we have the ability to set the organ to play itself, the console also needs to be used. I'm pleased to report that they think it's sounding better after each session so I hope it won't be long before we can set up a programme of events.



The executive committee were called to arms to help clearout the attic on what turned out to be a very successful morning but blooming heck - what an incredible amount of "stuff" we had! Along with her other work, Frances reveals one attic 'find' in her article later on.

We were able to reopen The Corstorphine Astoria Centre in the spring and it has been enthusiastically used by groups old and new. As we progress through the easing of lockdown we will start looking at reopening The Dower House to the various groups who used it pre-pandemic. However, what we won't be doing in the short term, is reopening the kitchen. We've been approached by a young couple asking if we would rent the space to them for a cafe. A large majority of the committee voted in favour of the venture and they have now applied to the City of Edinburgh Council for permission. Assuming the application is successful, the kitchen will be refurbished and their plan is to open the cafe six days a week. That, in turn, means The Dower House will be open and having spent many an hour in it over the last 16 months it really needs to have life breathed back into it. They are committed to making the cafe a welcoming, friendly, community led space so we hope to see as many of our 'old' regulars back as possible. We're sure you'll agree that this is an exciting venture for The Trust.

Before closing I need to do two things. The first is to say hello and welcome Priyanka. She's the newest member of the team. Along with Adriana, she is carrying out the caretaking duties between the buildings. You can read more about her in this edition.

And the second is to (sadly) say goodbye and thank you to Tristan. He will be leaving us at the end of August to take up a new role at Edinburgh University. Our loss is very much their gain and I wish him every success for the future. Tristan's replacement is a lady called Sara who we met through one of our recent recruitment drives. Sara will be taking over from Tristan at the end of August.

Well folks, enough from me. Enjoy the rest of the summer and I look forward to welcoming you back to The Dower House in the not too distant future.

Best wishes.

**Chair**

# From the Archives

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I am sure, like many people, none of us could have envisioned that in March last year we would find ourselves in a global pandemic. Our lives have been turned upside down and inside out, and our way of living has changed forever. The archive team have missed welcoming visitors to our museum and hope that it won't be too long until we can safely open our doors again. Over the past few weeks, I, along with Tristan, have been remodelling the museum and exhibits. We found an old kist when we were clearing out the attic and have filled it with artifacts which we hope will be of interest.

Along with the other areas that were amalgamated into Edinburgh in 1920, I have continued to work with the Edinburgh City Archives on the ReDrawing Edinburgh project. Look out for news on an exciting multimedia installation which will showcase an anthology of images, words and music that celebrate the identities of these areas over the past 100 years

Some of you will remember the beautiful stones that began to appear outside St Ninian's Church last year; I am happy to say that they have all been collected and stored in a safe place. The intention is to place them in St Margaret's Park and at this moment in time the organisers are waiting on the necessary permission from The City of Edinburgh Council to go ahead with this.



Finally, I was approached by a local lady, Emma Cowan, asking if I had any information on The Corstorphine Witch Hunt Trials which took place May-September 1649. In our records, we had a piece of research done by the academic Norah Carlin which I was able to pass onto Emma. I also put Emma in touch with Norah and together they took part in a podcast. You can listen to the podcast on Spotify using the link below or by searching 'Witches of Scotland' in the app:

[https://open.spotify.com/episode/3GERbjcbOIOMTNU7KLVk30?si=LTYHdR43Sym96TYnzLSu5Q&dl\\_branch=1&nd=1](https://open.spotify.com/episode/3GERbjcbOIOMTNU7KLVk30?si=LTYHdR43Sym96TYnzLSu5Q&dl_branch=1&nd=1)

At this moment in time, a petition is before the Scottish Parliament to pardon, apologise and create a national monument to memorialise those people in Scotland accused and convicted as witches under the Witchcraft Act 1563. After discussions with The Trust Executive, we decided to erect a plaque to have those killed properly remembered. The plaque will be placed beside the pinnacle taken from the Old Parish Church Tower and which now sits in front of The Dower House; this seemed the most appropriate place as one of the accused, Beatrix Watson, was imprisoned in the tower.

Hopefully we can reopen The Dower House in the not-too-distant future. In the meantime, if anyone has any queries or questions, I can be contacted at [archivist@corstorphinetrust.co.uk](mailto:archivist@corstorphinetrust.co.uk).

Frances MacRae, Archivist

# Meet our Team

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It has been almost three years that I have been living in Edinburgh when I came from Mumbai, India. Moving away from my city, family and friends to another city with different culture and people initially was challenging. However, now I can call Corstorphine my home as I believe the people and the place have welcomed me and my family with open arms. The people around are very friendly which has helped my transition to be a smooth process.

After being a stay-at-home mum for nearly three years, I have recently joined The Corstorphine Trust in June 2021 and have enjoyed every single day. I have been very fortunate to have such a wonderful Trust, senior members and co-workers around me. I am good at cooking vegetarian Indian dishes which my eight-year-old, Dheer, and my husband enjoy the most.



Priyanka Rathod, Caretaker

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# Doors Open Day

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On Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th September, **The Corstorphine Trust** will be participating in Doors Open Day, an annual event which sees a number of sights across the country open their doors for the public to explore. Whilst this year will look a little different due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, with a number of virtual and in person events planned, we hope to be able to allow visitors into **The Dower House** on Saturday 26th September to view our recently refurbished museum space. On Sunday 26th September, **The Astoria Centre** will open for you to enjoy the recently refurbished Ingram Organ which we hope to be able to play for you live. Of course, this is still largely dependent on what restrictions remain in place at the time but we will be sure to keep you all updated with the exact details and timings of our events on our website and social media channels.



In the meantime, do take a look at the Doors Open Day events online to find out more about this year's plans: <https://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/>.

# Swallowing the Village: The Impact of a Growing City on Surrounding Landscapes and People

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As a student of anthropology, you might expect my dissertation to be on some exotic tribe in Polynesia or some great political reformation in rural South America but instead, during a nationwide lockdown, I had my sights set closer to home. I was soon to learn that there was far more to Corstorphine in terms of its history and people than I ever would have imagined. I am proud to say that I have put Corstorphine on the anthropological map with my merit-receiving dissertation.

The inspiration came to me when volunteering at Corstorphine Hill Walled Garden in spring 2020 in which I would often see the same visitors arriving for their daily constitutional and members of the Friends of Corstorphine Hill labouring the garden to perfection day after day. What I was seeing was a sense of local community in Corstorphine that I had not seen before that inspired me to delve into the history books and to reach out to local residents who could give me more of an insight into Corstorphine's community, past and present.

The main aim of the dissertation was to look at the change in the community throughout history and how it is connected to the changes in the landscape. In my dissertation, the history books cover the medieval and early modern period (such as Alison Mackintosh's excellent work). The Corstorphine Trust archives had oral histories that covered the 1800s through to the present day and I was also fortunate enough to interview local wisemen Andrew Bloom and Jim Hunter who gave me an insight into the changes in the landscape and community over recent decades.



For young people of my generation, we have only ever known Corstorphine as being part of the endless urban landscape that goes from South Gyle to Musselburgh, forming the City of Edinburgh. You do not need to go back far in history to a time when Tesco was a piggery, Clerwood was called the Buttercup Farm and much of Drumbrae, East Craigs and surrounding neighbourhoods were simply small settlements surrounded by farmers' fields. In Corstorphine, there are no longer any stables, nor market gardens, nor can one find the famous Corstorphine cream in any shops. At the beginning of the 20th century, Corstorphine was still very much an agricultural community and now there is barely any visible traces of this community in the landscape that is now urbanised.

As the landscape has changed in Corstorphine, I believe it has also changed the sense of community as the world and culture has generally become more centralised and globalised. Certainly, amongst the surveys I did with locals, much of the older generation feel a stronger sense of community in Corstorphine than that of younger people. Often this was to do with involvement locally with the church or with societies such as The Corstorphine Trust, The Geographical and Literacy Society, or the local bowling club. In an economic sense as well, many young people tend to only use large supermarkets whilst for the older generation, it is not uncommon to also use the high street shops.

What conclusions did I draw from my time researching, interviewing, and writing about Corstorphine? I believe Corstorphine has a very rich well of history and many fascinating stories to tell. It is unique in many ways, and I couldn't think of a better community to grow up in (or write a dissertation about). Having a local community is certainly important as we can be there to help each other in times of need as the past year has shown. To anyone reading this, I recommend that you explore around Corstorphine, get involved with the local community and read about its history.

**Jacob Scott, 22, University of Aberdeen graduate**

*If you would like to read a copy of the dissertation (30 pages), contact me at [jacobscott1999@hotmail.com](mailto:jacobscott1999@hotmail.com) and I can send through a copy.*

# The Corstorphine Trust Shop Online

You may remember that in our Winter 2020 edition of **Trust Talk** we shared plans to relaunch our cotton tote bags after our previous run sold out. We are delighted to share that our new design is now available for purchase from our online store! Each bag is emblazoned with both **The Corstorphine Trust** and **Astoria Centre** logos on either side in our classic **hunter green** so, not only will you be showing your support by purchasing one, you will be able to wear it on your arm.

We also have a restock of our Old Corstorphine tea towels which feature beautiful illustrations of iconic local landmarks including the Sycamore, the Cross of Corstorphine and, of course, The Dower House. Both our tote bags and tea towels, as well as our usual selection of books, postcards and other merchandise, can be purchased at the following link:

<https://www.corstorphinetrust.co.uk/shop-categories/>



## Shop with a Smile



As well as our online store, we also previously shared another way you can support The Trust when you shop online. When you purchase items through Amazon, you now have the ability to donate to a charity of your choice each time you place an order - including **The Corstorphine Trust**. By placing your order through **AmazonSmile**, 0.5% of your order (which may not sound like much but, in these difficult times, every little really does help!) will be donated to us at no additional cost to yourself.

To register, simply visit:

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/SC000913>.

Recently, Amazon announced the ability to use **AmazonSmile** through their mobile app as well so you no longer have to navigate to their web store each time you want to take advantage of their charitable donations.

*To activate AmazonSmile in the mobile app:*

1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu (=) & tap on “**AmazonSmile**” within Programmes & Features
3. Select **Corstorphine Trust** as your charity
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate **AmazonSmile** in the mobile app

# Corstorphine Community Centre: Moving Forward after Lockdown

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**Corstorphine Community Centre**  
191 St John's Road, Corstorphine

Eighteen months on and we all recognise the impact that COVID-19 has had on everyone in the community, including the intended delivery of activities at Corstorphine Community Centre since March 2020. However, CCC has adapted its services to offer ongoing support to the community with specific attention to reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness. Our aim now is to reconnect members of the community and continue to offer support and services in a safe environment.

During the initial lockdown, CCC collaborated with the Old Parish Church to support the wider community by collecting prescriptions, shopping and delivering hot cooked meals to around 200 people living on their own or shielding up to three times a week. With these deliveries, we included weekly quizzes to keep the community active and connected. The meals were prepared by local restaurants including The Torfin, Prana (Abida), Chinese Manor House and Jill's Deli.

The CCC food bank was set up to support the most vulnerable members of the community and supported around 100 families in total. Financial and food donation support was overwhelming from local businesses (including The Village Café and Cafe Vigo), supermarkets (including Tesco, Co-op and Morrisons), local churches and individuals, and of course the team of volunteers who coordinated it on a weekly basis.

As part of the Scottish Government Connecting Scotland initiative, CCC was successful in being awarded fifty iPads to help our elderly and most vulnerable members stay connected to friends and family and to continue to carry out our group activities online. Digital Champion volunteers were recruited from high school pupils, students, retirees and those furloughed to offer one-to-one support to get the community online. A team of volunteers kept the community connected with ongoing welfare phone calls, WhatsApp groups or zoom calls where available.

During the changing restrictions and Scottish Government guidelines, from August 2020 CCC adapted the programme to allow for social distancing 'meet ups' for the groups within local restaurants and cafes. This meant that groups were restricted in numbers but had an opportunity to have a good meal and meet up with the others within the group. The Charity Shop was only able to operate at a limited level for a short period but many of the shop volunteers supported the community with the other CCC volunteer opportunities. The Shop is open again and thriving with good quality donations being received.

CCC has been successful in bringing in financial support to the community in the form of grants to the total of around £30,000 as well as in kind support and, of course, the invaluable time offered by all our volunteers. A huge thanks to all our collaborators, funders, donors, volunteers, staff and supporters for continuing to assist CCC to help keep the community connected, safe and reducing social isolation.

We appreciate that these are unprecedented times and we have begun to welcome groups back to centre and offer a blend of centre activities, external meet ups and online support with clear safety guidelines.

Our full programme of activities can be found on our website: <http://www.corstorphinecommunitycentre.org.uk/corstorphine-hub/>. You can also email us at [corstorphinehubdevelopment@gmail.com](mailto:corstorphinehubdevelopment@gmail.com) or call 07580 659 67.

Rachel Helms, Development Worker at the Corstorphine Community Centre

# The Astoria Centre

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The Astoria Centre has now reopened, with a number of adult and children's activities running throughout the week. If you're interested in booking the hall, please send an email to [contact@corstorphineastoriacentre.co.uk](mailto:contact@corstorphineastoriacentre.co.uk) for more information.



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## MONDAY

13:45-16:30 Bumblebee Sports  
18:15 - 19:45 Yoga

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## TUESDAY

10:00-12:45 Music Bugs  
13:30-15:30 Line Dancing

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## WEDNESDAY

09:45-11:15 Bumblebee Sports  
12:30-13:30 Pilates  
16:00-19:00 Taekwon-Do

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## THURSDAY

09:45-11:45 Tanya's Dance Fit – Hip Hop Babies/Tots  
13:00-14:00 Easy Exercise Class  
17:00-21:00 Taekwon-Do

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## FRIDAY

09:30-10:30 Pilates

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## SATURDAY

09:30-12:45 Inspire Theatre  
14:00 - 15:30 Corstorphine Connect Sight Loss Group (*every third Saturday from August*)

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## Get in touch

**Corstorphine Heritage Centre**  
The Dower House, St Margaret's Park  
Edinburgh, EH12 7SX  
☎ 0131 316 4246  
✉ [info@corstorphinetrust.co.uk](mailto:info@corstorphinetrust.co.uk)

We hope that you've enjoyed this Summer edition of **Trust Talk** and we look forward to welcoming you all back to The Dower House, hopefully in the not too distant future.

In the meantime, you can continue to contact **The Corstorphine Trust** via email, telephone and post.