

Trust Talk

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE CORSTORPHINE TRUST

Spring 2024



Eventful Times in Corstorphine

With the blossom on the trees and some much more agreeable weather, it feels as though Spring has truly arrived. In this latest edition of **Trust Talk**, we are delighted to share details of this year's upcoming events; from concerts to an exciting history talk, be sure to pop the dates on your calendar! Continuing the historical theme, you'll find reflections on our village's past in **From the Archives**, as well a fascinating article examining the foundation of Corstorphine Parish Church.

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



Stay in touch

For more updates on our opening times, you can follow us on our Facebook and Instagram pages.



THE CORSTORPHINE TRUST



@THECORSTORPHINETRUST

Chair's Letter

Hello everyone and welcome to the Spring 2024 edition of Trust Talk.

As I'm sitting here, typing my chat, there's a big yellow round thing up in the sky. I've Googled it and apparently it's the sun. I don't know about you but I'd forgotten what it looked like! Perhaps we might be lucky and see a wee bit more of it in the coming months.

Thanks to all who attended the AGM whether in person or online. We did have a few nervous moments as 7.30 pm approached and we didn't have a quorum however a few members appeared just in the nick of time and we were able to proceed! For those who couldn't make it, there have been a few changes made to the constitution. Nothing too controversial but if you want to see the new version, it's on the News page of our website.

We were delighted to be able to support the Corstorphine Window Wanderland with their fantastic community event again in February. It saw residents, community groups, local businesses and schools decorate their windows to create a magical outdoor spectacle for families to enjoy. To see some of the many imaginative window displays check out their Facebook page: facebook.com/CorstorphineWindowWanderland.

We've got another packed edition for you including a bio from Alastair who is diligently digitising all our archive documents, an interesting Archives article from Frances, a reminder about membership fees from Kathryn, some really exciting events for your diary from Tristan and Stephen has written another interesting article about the origins of the Corstorphine Parish Church. Thanks everyone for your contributions.

As always, I need to extend my thanks to those who willingly give up their time for us each day/week. The Trust simply couldn't run without your help.

I hope you enjoy this issue and we look forward to seeing you at The Dower House soon.

Best,



Chair

Corstorphine Fair 2024

We're very much looking forward to the return of the Corstorphine Fair on **Saturday 1st June!**

Could you spare an hour on the day to help steward the archive room, museum or our marquee? If so, please get in touch at info@corstorphinetrust.co.uk.



From the Archives

With thanks to Joan Cameron for her wonderful memories of Clermiston House.

As a child, perhaps 6 or 7, I used to go to the house every Sunday afternoon to have tea with Mrs Inverarity and her ward Bronia, who was a refugee from Eastern Europe, I believe.

To get to the house from home in Hillview Road, I went to the top of Corstorphine Bank Drive, climbed over the stile into the field and following the path which is now Caroline terrace, went through the gates in the tree line, to the back of the walled garden and round to the house. A flight of steps went up and over the sunken area to the front door, which I seem to remember was a sliding door leading into a vestibule.



To the left of the hall was the drawing room and music room with a large grand piano, which I only remember seeing into once. To the right was a sitting room where we sat round the fireplace which had a fireguard with a padded seat all around the top. There were three sofas facing the fire which seemed to me as a small girl to be large with thick squashy cushions. Behind this room was a smaller sitting room where Mrs Inverarity sat surrounded by her Pekingese dogs - many years later both this room and her bedroom upstairs had very unpleasant smells, as the many puppies lived in them. When she was too old and infirm to go out walking, it meant that the dogs were not outside as often as they should be.

Towards the back of the house down a stair was the library, which had a large desk and a billiard table. Donald, her son, always seemed to be in this room and always produced a bag of Pan Drops from a drawer in the desk. He had what is now called "learning difficulties" and was eventually sent to live in Craighouse. We had tea in a room - which may have been the kitchen - in the basement.

As you came out of the front door there was a lovely view over to the West Lothian countryside. There was a lawn leading down to a Ha Ha separating this from the field beyond. The path across the lawns ended in a large equestrian statue, which I have been told was moved to the farm used by the SSPCA at Cramond Brig. In one corner of the lawn was a lovely summer house. It was mounted on a system of wheels which meant that as the sun moved from east to west, you could push it around to take full advantage of any sunshine.

As well as a farmhouse and outbuildings there was a building which was a squash court where I understand the Rolls Royce was stored on blocks during the war. The walled garden enclosed a tennis court, a swimming pool and sunken garden with a fountain. The pool did not have water in it then and we sometimes had to go into it to rescue hedgehogs which had fallen in. The pool was, I believe, covered and was used when the college took over the grounds. As well as these facilities there was a croquet lawn and a curling pond.

When I took ill Mrs Inverarity would send down baskets of wild strawberries which grew all over the walled garden. Many years later when I got my first "Buggy" - an invalid car - Dad took me up there and I practised my driving. Later when I got my first mini we went back as it was quiet and I was able to do three point turns and reversing around corners without worrying about traffic.

I doubt if there are many traces left of these memories, but they are still very vivid to me.

Joan Cameron
March 2024

Meet the Team

Hello folks, I'm Alastair, a member of The Corstorphine Trust, one of the team that curates the museum and also digital archivist for The Heritage Centre.

I became a member of The Trust because of sheep ... and an accident. Back in 1963 a driver of livestock took the then Meadow Place roundabout (which lay on a slope) with too much haste, the loose livestock shifted and over the truck went. Like a scene from *One Man and Nae Sheepdug* the surviving sheep went looking for pasture. Luckily for the driver the staff of the local Newbigging piggery were on hand to corral the sheep safely away until picked up.



They ended up in my late father's garden where they found not only pasture but the vegetable plot too and while the sheep grazed, filling their stomachs on lawn, turnips and other home-grown vegetables fit for a Burns Supper, a picture was taken of my mother at the window with the sheep in the garden. This picture appeared in a local newspaper, the only pictorial evidence that this legendary event ever occurred vanished without trace. A search for this picture led me to The Corstorphine Trust.

Alas no picture of this event was found but what I did find was a treasure trove of pictures, thousands of documents that catalogue the origins of Corstorphine from Romans, a castle, churches, farmlands, a wee village and the stories of the people that lived in it. Looking after these treasures are a welcoming, friendly collective of Corstorphine Heritage enthusiasts.

A couple of years ago, I was asked by The Trust if I would be willing to start digitising and indexing the documents in the archive. Having helped digitise the photographic archive it was time to turn attention to the vast collection of documents The Trust holds. A special scanner was purchased which photographs the documents digitally and can also read the printed text. It's quite a smart piece of kit - it's basically a small self-contained photographic studio linked to the main computer. When the images of the documents are photographed and processed, the software will check for the presence of printed words (a process known as Optical Character Recognition or OCR). The software then overlays the interpreted text with the image into a document that can be searched by the computer.

To give you an idea of the scale of this, out of the 351 Document folders I have thus far scanned 79 with a further 272 yet to scan. This equates to approximately 7600 individual pages digitised so far. There are numerous other folders to follow so all-in-all I'm going to be kept out of mischief for quite some considerable time!

Alastair McKay
Digital Archivist

Have You Renewed Your Membership?

We are in the process of bringing our membership list up to date. If you have not renewed your membership for over one year could we ask that you do so soon.

Current rates of membership are:	Annual Adult Membership	£15.00
	Annual Family Membership	£25.00
	Life Membership	£150.00

Our bank account details are:	Name	Corstorphine Trust
	Account Number	00191139
	Sort Code	83-19-04

You may pay by Bank transfer or Paypal or perhaps you would consider setting up a Standing Order? Alternatively, pop into the office at The Dower House where we would be happy to assist you.

If we do not hear from you by 31st July 2024 we will assume you do not wish to renew your membership. If that is the case The Corstorphine Trust thanks you for your past support and wishes you well for the future.

Kathryn Clark
Treasurer

Upcoming Events

We're delighted to share several upcoming events taking place at both The Corstorphine Astoria Centre and The Dower House, so make sure you pop these dates in your diary!

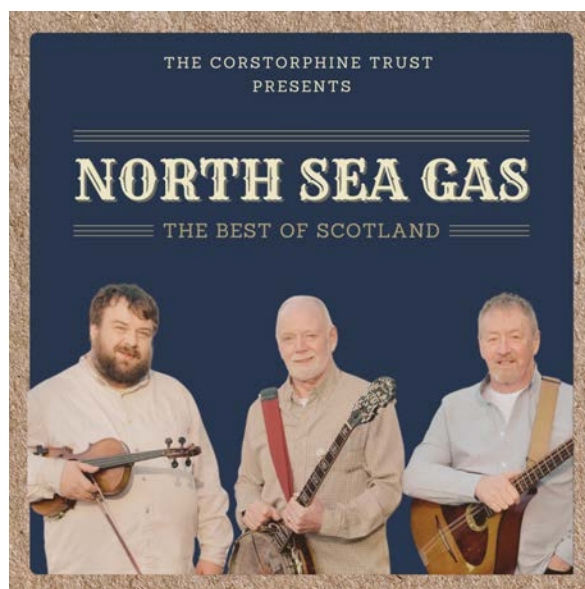
TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE

North Sea Gas: The Best of Scotland

8th June 2024 | 7pm | The Corstorphine Astoria Centre

Six years after they last performed at The Corstorphine Astoria Centre, we're delighted to announce that the brilliant North Sea Gas will be returning in June. Since their foundation in the 1980s, they have released 22 albums and continue to sell-out shows across the world. North Sea Gas remain a stalwart of the Scottish folk scene and it's sure to be a fantastic evening of song, music, and entertainment!

Tickets are now available to purchase via The Corstorphine Trust website: <https://www.corstorphinetrust.co.uk/events/north-sea-gas-in-concert/>.



SAVE THE DATE!

More details and ticket information for the following events will be shared soon:

Pick of the Pops: Nicola MacRae and The Ingram Organ – A Musical Journey through the Decades

14th September 2024 | 7pm | The Corstorphine Astoria Centre

History Talk: Helen Kay on the Life and Work of Chrystal MacMillan

27th October 2024 | 3pm | The Dower House

Donald MacKenzie – Silent Film Night (Film TBA)

8th November 2024 | 7pm | The Corstorphine Astoria Centre

If you'd like the latest information on our upcoming events, please get in touch to be added to our mailing list: events@corstorphinetrust.co.uk.

Corstorphine Parish Church: Beginnings

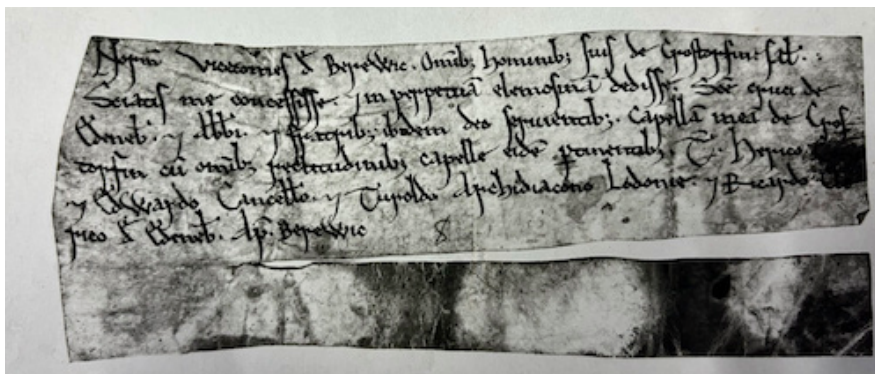
Written by Stephen W. Murray

The origins of the Parish Church of Corstorphine are somewhat elusive. What we do know is that, as far back as 1128, a votive chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary was already extant. A charter of this time makes reference to the Chapel belonging to Norman, Sheriff of Berwick, and it later became part of the church of St. Cuthbert. Around this time, King David I bestowed the church of St. Cuthbert upon the Abbey of Holyrood, along with the chapel at Corstorphine and six acres of land.

Nothing remains of this Chapel. Opinion differs as to its original location. Generally, it is assumed to have stood on an east-west axis – approximately where the North Transept of the present Church sits. However, it may also have stood on the part of the nave extended during the 1828 construction (i.e. west of where the organ now stands).

Interestingly, David I alone is usually credited with giving the Corstorphine land and its chapel to Holyrood; however, the charter referred to above specifically states that Norman the Sheriff himself gifted it. The King confirmed this later; and Norman himself was a witness to the Royal charter (Cowper, 1991, pp. 2-3).

The Charter of 1128, where Norman, Sheriff of Berwick grants his chapel to Holyrood Abbey.



“Normannus vicecomes de Berewic omnibus hominibus suis de Crostorfin salutem Sciatis me concessisse et in perpetuam elemosinam dedisse Sanctae Cruci de Edenburg et abbati et fratribus ibidem Deo servientibus capellam meam de Crostorfin cum omnibus rectitudinibus capellae eidem pertinentibus Testibus Henrico Comite et Edwardo cancellario et Turolde archidiacono Lodondiae et Ricardo cleric de Edenburg Apud Berewic”

A translation of the text reads:

“Norman, Sheriff of Berwick, to all his men of Corstorphine, greeting. Know that I have granted and given in perpetual alms to the Holy Rood of Edinburgh and the abbot and brethren serving God there, my chapel of Corstorphine with all rights pertaining thereto. Witnesses, Henry earl and Edward chancellor and Turolde, archdeacon of Lothian, and Richard, cleric of Edinburgh. At Berwick.”

(Holyrood Charters No.8, reproduced with kind permission from The Corstorphine Trust)

Aside from a brief mention during the reign of Alexander II (1198-1249), when an exchange of land was made between David Le Marishall, the owner of Corstorphine, and the Abbey of Holyrood, the next reference to the chapel came about at the time of Sir Adam Forrester.

The Chantry Chapel (c.1400-1405)

Adam bought the land of Corstorphine from the More family of Abercorn c.1376 and sought permission to erect a votive chapel, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, near the then existing chapel of Corstorphine, during the last years of the fourteenth century. This was, in effect, to be a ‘chantry chapel’. Such buildings were quite common in medieval times and were designed in order that parishioners, in addition to regular worship, would be expected to say masses and prayers for the welfare of the landowners and benefactors of their villages.

The position of Adam's chapel has, at time of writing, never been fully ascertained. The only clue we have is that it was '*...in contigua...*' to the existing Virgin Mary chapel at that time. Being 'contiguous' of course doesn't really help as it could mean 'adjacent to', 'at right angles to', and so on. Various writers and historians have offered credible opinions. Thomson, writing in 1946, and Milligan (1929) were of the opinion that the chancel of the existing Parish Church, with its great east window and sacristy (now vestry), was Adam's votive chapel (Thomson, 1946, p. 10; Milligan, 1929, p. 16). The presence of the sedilia (seating for three priests) and a piscina (stone water basin) on the south wall of the Chancel, lends weight to this theory. In all likelihood, the altar would have been beneath the window.

For others, however, it isn't as straightforward. Another contender for this chapel is the South Transept (now the Baptistry). Here too, can be found pre-Reformation elements of worship: niches that may have been an altar and a credence table, for example. Interestingly, there is a stone effigy of a knight with its feet facing what would have been the altar. There is a possibility that this may be a representation of Adam Forrester himself. Although much of this may be conjectural, Cowper (1991) has made a convincing argument that this transept, and part of the nave that runs eastwards at right angles to it as far as the Chancel arch, was Adam's chapel. Either space, however, is possible; as he would want to be interred nearest an altar, for his soul's merit (Cowper, 1991, p. 8).

The Collegiate Church (c.1405-1429/1444)

Adam Forrester died during 1405. His son, John, took the idea of the chantry chapel and embellished it greatly. John began to draw up plans for a 'collegiate church'. This project had cathedral-like aspirations, in terms of scale. A collegiate church was essentially like a college. It would be overseen by a provost, and under such control would be a number (or 'chapter') of 'prebendaries': essentially non-monastic priests that came from surrounding churches (e.g. Gogar, Ratho, Dalmahoy and so on) and would officiate for determined periods of time. The priests, paid from land revenues, would either reside in the Church itself or other specifically provided establishments, or 'prebends'. The collegiate church would also have singing choir boys as part of its retinue. We know that when Margaret Forrester (Adam's widow) died c.1420, she left provision in her will for additional chaplains and choir boys (Cowper, 1991, p. 10). It may be argued that the Collegiate Church was the first seat of education in Corstorphine, as the choir boys would have to learn Latin in order to deliver liturgical offices of the day.

The extent, and direction, to which John built on his father's chapel is, again, open to debate, as can be seen from the arguments above. If we assume that Adam's chapel was indeed part of what is now the South Transept, it may be argued that John built eastwards, providing the Chancel and the Sacristy to its north, and possibly the bell tower to the west. As mentioned above, the south wall of the Chancel still has its sedilia and piscina, for pre-Reformation officiating. Interestingly, if this is the case, the line of the original medieval arch can still be seen between the Nave and the Chancel arch (Cowper, 1991, p. 11).

Work on the Collegiate Church was completed, and it was founded during 1429. Recognition came in 1444, when a papal bull was issued by Pope Eugene IV. A foundation charter of this time states that the Collegiate Church had been set up in a church burial ground - "*in cemiterio parochialis ecclesie de Corstorphine*" (Cowper, 1991, p. 3). From this time, until the winds of Reformation began to take hold, the Collegiate Church functioned as a large Chantry Chapel; alongside the Votive Chapel of the Virgin Mary, where parishioners would tend to their ecumenical needs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cowper, A.S. (1992) *Historic Corstorphine and Round About, Volume 1, Church and Parish Life* (Second Edition), The Corstorphine Trust, Edinburgh (2003).
- Milligan, O.B. (1929) 'Corstorphine and its Parish Church', John Orr, Edinburgh.
- Thomson, D.M. (1946) *The Corstorphine Heirloom*, John Blackie Press, Edinburgh.

Suggested further reading:

The Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1845 (<https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home>).

The Astoria Centre

The Astoria Centre continues to flourish, 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 for more information.



MONDAY

09:45-11:45	The Sensory Sessions
13:30-15:30	Dog School Edinburgh
18:30-19:30	Clubbercise

TUESDAY

13:30-15:30	Line Dancing
16:05-16:50	Tutti Tots: 2-4 years
18:30-19:30	Clubbercise

WEDNESDAY

09:30-11:30	Christine Mills - Pilates Scotland
12:30-13:30	Realistic Pilates
16:00-18:00	Taekwon-Do
18:45-19:45	Clubbercise

THURSDAY

09:45-10:15	Tanya's Dance-Fit Hip Hop Tots: 2-5 years
10:30-11:00	Tanya's Dance-Fit Hip Hop Babies & Movers: 0-2 years
11:15-12:00	Tanya's Dance-Fit: Mum's Fitness Class
13:00-14:00	Easy Exercise
14:30-16:30	SWI (<i>second Thursday of the month</i>)
17:00-21:00	Taekwon-Do

FRIDAY

09:05-10:05	Realistic Pilates
13:00-13:45	Tutti Footy FC: 2-3 years
13:45-14:30	Tutti Footy FC: 3-4 years
14:30-15:15	Tutti Footy FC: P1 & P2
16:00-19:00	Capital Allstars

SATURDAY

09:30-11:00	Inspire Theatre Workshop
11:15-12:45	Inspire Theatre Workshop
13:45-15:30	Corstorphine Connect Sight Loss Grop (<i>third Saturday of the month</i>)
13:45-16:15	Corstorphine Community Centre Tea Dance (<i>fourth Saturday of the month</i>)

SUNDAY

09:30-12:30	Hong Kong Christian Church (<i>first/third Sunday of the month</i>)
09:30-14:30	Hong Kong Christian Church (<i>second/fourth Sunday of the month</i>)
13:30-15:00	Organ Practice

Get in touch

Corstorphine Heritage Centre

The Dower House, St Margaret's Park
Edinburgh, EH12 7SX

☎ 0131 316 4246

✉ info@corstorphinetrust.co.uk

We hope that you've enjoyed this Spring edition of **Trust Talk** and we look forward to welcoming you to The Dower House.

You can continue to contact **The Corstorphine Trust** via email, telephone and post, as well as following us on social media for updates on our hours.