

Trust Talk

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE CORSTORPHINE TRUST

Summer 2026



A Summer of Stories

The weather might be as changeable as ever, but one thing that is always constant is your quarterly **Trust Talk**. It's been another busy season at **The Corstorphine Trust** with lots to update you on, including our proposed purchase of The Corstorphine Astoria Centre and a recent project with the Citadel Arts Group. As ever, we delve into the archives to explore memories of Corstorphine's past and look ahead to some more exciting events. We're also thrilled to share that Molly's Coffee Shop has opened at The Dower House, so be sure to pop along for a drink and a bite - and visit our museum whilst you're there!

We hope that you enjoy this Summer 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 Summer 2026 edition of our smashing wee quarterly which is **Trust Talk**. I hope that you've had a good summer. I, for one, have enjoyed the warmth and long days.

The cafe is now open which means that the museum and archive room opening hours have settled down. We were a bit stop/start for a few weeks but thanks to everyone's flexibility we got there!

Kevin Grunill was here in July to tune the organ so we took advantage of that and got him to put a programme together for a most entertaining concert. He played music from the movies ranging from the theme tune of Titanic to tunes made famous by Carmen Miranda (sadly he'd forgotten to bring his fruit hat with him). A great night was had by all.

There are still tickets available for North Sea Gas and Nicola's Poptastic concert in September. They promise to be great nights full of toe-tapping tunes and we hope to see you there.

The historic walks have been well received and resulted in us getting more volunteers which is great news. Welcome to them and a big thank you to Stephen and Ian for leading the walks. There's still space on the September one so if you, or someone you know, would be interested in joining it, you can book online or in person at the office.

We've started welcoming more groups to The Kilgour Room. It's so nice to see it being used again. Remember that it's available for hire during the day and in the evenings and with the cafe now open, they will be only too happy to discuss any catering requirements you may have.

As always, for your delectation, we've got lots packed into the next seven pages. Our Trustees and volunteers have been busy as have our backshop staff. As always, my grateful thanks to you all.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and I hope to see you in The Dower House soon.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jue'.

Chair

The Results Are In!

A massive thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our survey about purchasing The Corstorphine Astoria Centre from Corstorphine Old and New. We were delighted with the number of responses received with the overwhelming majority of you saying yes. It's not too late for you to respond online via the email link or return your voting paper.

The next step is for the church to poll their congregation - which will have been done by the time you read this - then we'll put the results together and move forward with the application for funding. **Watch this space!**

From the Archives

In the mid 1840s, James Mollison - known to his friends as Jeems - left his native Angus and came south to Corstorphine to ply his trade as a quarryman in the whinstone quarry on Corstorphine Hill. He had a musical bent and soon after his arrival in Midlothian he became precentor in Ratho Kirk. Choir practices were held in his cottage in winter months. An allied hobby was making fiddles.

James had a son George who like his father was musical. As a fine tenor singer, he took part in concerts in the Music Hall, Edinburgh. Locally he sang duets with Mrs Douglas Brown whose husband gifted St Margaret's Park to Corstorphine.



George in turn had a son Robert who followed his father as a market gardener at Woodbine Cottage Nursery in North Saughton Road. Robert (Bob) Mollison grew up and lived out his life in Corstorphine, a respected villager with a keen interest in local history.

A.S Cowper 1976

DAYS GONE BY

SOME CORSTORPHINE MEMORIES FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF ROBERT MOLLISON (1889-1970) OF WOODBINE NURSERY

The village smiddy is no more, no longer is heard the familiar clink-clink-clink of the hammer meeting metal as the blacksmith plied his trade or the musical tattoo on the anvil as he stotted his hammer between strokes. Silent is the rumble of the bellows that once blew his fire into a blaze. Nor is there the sizzling as the red-hot shoe was pressed on the horse's foot, followed by the smell of burnt hoof.

In the good old days, the coos would be driven from their byre to the field beside the kirk and as milking time approached their mooing could be heard for they wanted back to the byre.



The end of July or the beginning of August saw the bee skeps being taken to the hills for the heather season. A lorry would leave one night, after the bees were all home, with the skeps belonging to different bee-keepers. They would arrive at the destination in time to get them set up so that when morning broke, the bees lost no time in getting out to the heather. And so, they were left there in the care of a nearby shepherd. The lorry made the journey again when the season was over and the honey could be brought back home.



The rhubarb season brought great activity in Dovecot Road as early as four in the morning a string of two wheeled lorries would be drawn up beside the dyke. In the field on the other side, workers would be busy pulling the young dew-laden rhubarb stalks which were handed over the dyke to the owners of the lorries. Off to town at the gallop shouting along the way "rhubarb tuppence a bunch".

Upcoming Events

North Sea Gas

Saturday 22 August 2026 | 7.00 pm

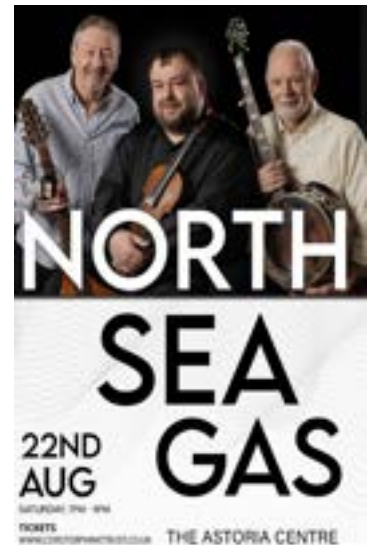
The Corstorphine Astoria Centre | Tickets are £18.00

The Corstorphine Trust are delighted to announce that North Sea Gas will be performing at The Corstorphine Astoria Centre on 22nd August 2026.

One of Scotland's most popular folk bands, the trio comprises Dave Gilfillan, Grant Simpson and Ronnie MacDonald. Since their foundation in the 1980s, they have released 22 albums and continue to sell-out shows across the world.

With fantastic vocal harmonies and incredible instrumentals (including guitars, fiddle, bouzouki, mandolin and bodhrán – to name a few!), the trio are renowned for their exceptional musicality and storytelling.

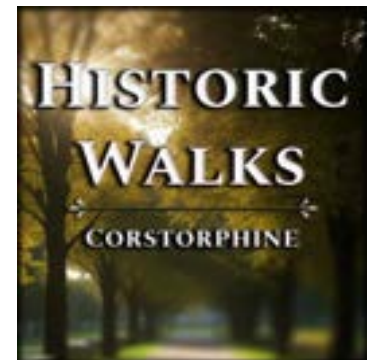
North Sea Gas remain a stalwart of the Scottish folk scene and this is sure to be a fantastic evening of song, music, and entertainment!



Guided Historic Walks

Saturday 19 September 2026 | 10.00 - 11.00 am

Are you interested in learning a bit about the History of Old Corstorphine, whilst taking in fresh air? The Corstorphine Trust is providing guided walks through the 'Old' village this year. With two Corstorphine Trust stewards as your guides, you can learn a little bit about the origins of Corstorphine, its churches, the Dovecot and some of the more colourful events that are part of the village tapestry.



The event costs £5.00 per person and starts at 10.00 prompt from outside The Dower House, St. Margaret's Park.

POPTASTIC PIPES

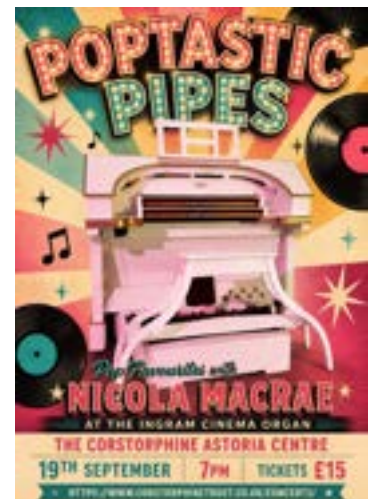
Featuring Nicola MacRae on the Ingram Cinema Organ

Saturday 19 September 2026 | 7.00 pm

The Corstorphine Astoria Centre | Tickets are £15.00

Following the success of last year's Magic Moments concert, we are delighted to welcome Nicola MacRae back to the Astoria Centre on the world's only surviving Ingram cinema organ.

In POPTASTIC PIPES, Nicola will showcase the remarkable versatility of this unique instrument with a lively selection of pop favourites spanning the decades. With music from the 50s to the 80s and beyond, this concert promises an evening packed with nostalgia, melody, and musical flair.



Get ready for a truly poptastic, toe-tapping evening at the Corstorphine Astoria Centre!

Tickets are available to purchase online for our upcoming events at: <https://www.corstorphinetrust.co.uk/concerts/> or by contacting the office on 0131-316 4246 to reserve tickets.

Tickets must be paid for within one week of reservation.

Could This Be You?

As you know, The Corstorphine Trust is a busy place and it relies on its volunteers to keep it running.

We have some exciting opportunities coming up and we thought we'd reach out, in the first instance, to our members to see if there's anyone out there who would be willing to take on one or other of them.

Treasurer

Kathryn has decided to step down from the role. This is a key role that ensures the smooth running of The Trust. It's a busy one but would suit someone who perhaps has a financial background, knows their way around a computer and has a bit of time on their hands.

Events Organiser

We have two fantastic buildings in the heart of Corstorphine Village. We are looking for someone who can plan, coordinate and run events from conception to completion.

If you think you might be interested in either of the above roles, please contact Jane at: chairman@corstorphinetrust.co.uk

2027 Calendar

One of our stewards, Helen, volunteered to create a calendar for 2027 and we think it's very good! It's now available to buy either online or from the archive room at The Dower House and is an absolute snip at £6.00.

A great idea for Christmas (yes, we did just mention the 'C' word)!!



Molly's Corstorphine

If you're a regular visitor to St Margaret's Park, The Dower House or use Facebook, you'll have noticed that the cafe is now open.

Although the opening day ended up being later than originally planned, it went with a bang - I for one thoroughly enjoyed my (apologies to any non-meat eaters who may be reading) hog roast sandwich.

We wish them every success at The Dower House.



Corstorphine - and Beyond

Citadel Arts Group Comes to Corstorphine

Although Citadel Arts group is based in Leith, its most recent projects have strayed into other postcodes: EH5, EH7 and this year into EH12 with a project here in Corstorphine. This is where I lived from 1956 until the 1970s, on the site of the Forrester family's castle. It has been a joy to reconnect with the 'Friendly Village' and meet with so many people who generously shared their memories of 'Corstorphine - and Beyond', the title of Citadel's illustrated book of local history and living memories.

My parents were loyal members of the 'Lit', the Corstorphine Literary and Geographical Society, so I probably inherited my interest in local heritage from them. My father occasionally unearthed nails and even a stirrup from the garden in Castle Avenue and some of his photos of the area feature in the book.

Research for the project brought me to The Dower House where archivist Frances MacRae always made me welcome and helped provide stories from The Corstorphine Trust archive and most of the photos that make the book so attractive. Without the help of the Trust, 'Corstorphine - and Beyond' would be much poorer. Many other groups also welcomed me into their gatherings and shared personal memories: The Community Hub Men's 'Moving Forward' Group and the Craft Group, and the RNIB Group at the Astoria Centre, both on Kirk Loan; the Old Parish Church minister, Rev Moira McDonald, and her congregation and Tuesday Group; and the people at the 'Friendly Corner' at St Ninian's Church. All contributors received a free copy of the book and most other copies were snapped up by local people.



'Corstorphine – and Beyond' was launched in May in the Hub with a performance of Hilary Spiers' play, *The Seed that Never Dies* about Scotland's first School of Gardening for Women situated on Corstorphine Hill in the early 1900s. Citadel Arts presented three further plays based on Corstorphine history to a packed Dower House audience in July. Richard Spiers' scripts movingly memorialised the Witch Hunt and the 'White Lady'. We ended the afternoon with Bill Haddow's play, *Amalgamation*, giving humorous local reactions to the time in the 1920s when Corstorphine joined the rest of Edinburgh. An audience member told us the performances gave, 'great insight into local history'. We hope to revive the plays in 2029 in the Old Parish Church when they look back to the building's ancient origins in the 12th century. The project clearly demonstrated that there is considerable interest in the stories of Corstorphine and Citadel Arts Group is happy to collect these and share them more widely through drama.



Liz Hare
Artistic Director, Citadel Arts Group

CORSTORPHINE LITERARY ASSOCIATION

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R E T R O S P E C T

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The following is an extract from the booklet published in 1930 to mark the Jubilee of the Corstorphine Literary Association. Prophetically, this was entitled "1880-1930 and Onwards" and in this year 1960, thirty years on, it is appropriate that the sentiments expressed then should be read by present-day members and inspire them to further efforts to ensure the continuance of the Society in the future and the attainment of the Centenary in 1980.

"Fifty years ago a small group of villagers met in the back room of a tailor's shop in the High Street, near the School, to consider the question of forming a Literary Association. Villagers we call them, not residents, as we are now become. We can picture that little gathering eagerly discussing the feasibility of such an undertaking, their mental vision unclouded by the mist of smoke from pipes aglow. How long they sat, or how many pipefuls of tobacco were consumed ere the great decision was reached, we can but surmise.

The advantages of a Literary Association would be evident. Fifty years ago a journey to Edinburgh in search of entertainment was a consideration; for the last bus home started from Coltbridge at 8 p.m., and a return on foot, whatever the state of the weather, was regarded as an unavoidable, rather than a desirable, conclusion to the evening's programme. We wonder which of those pioneers of the Association first dreamt of the idea. Happily, his castle in the air was not left to float there, but was brought down

As Seen On

A few months ago we were approached by the travel search engine Kayak asking if we'd like to be listed on their website as an activity for people to do while in Edinburgh. Well there's no such thing as bad publicity so we said yes!

Our listing went live in May and it can be found here <https://www.kayak.co.uk/Edinburgh.29671.guide> under Other Activities/Show More.

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
18:30-19:30 Clubbercise

TUESDAY

10:00-12:00 Costume Cubs Baby Class
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

10:30-11:00 Tanya's Dance-Fit: Hip Hop Family (babies and under 5s)
11:15-12:00 Tanya's Dance-Fit: Mum's Fitness Class
17:00-21:00 Taekwon-Do

FRIDAY

09:05-10:05 Realistic Pilates
16:00-18:45 Capital Allstars

SATURDAY

09:30-11:00 Inspire Theatre Workshop
11:00-12:30 Inspire Theatre Workshop
13:45-15:30 Corstorphine Connect Sight Loss Group (*third Saturday of the month*)
13:45-16:15 Corstorphine Community Centre Tea Dance (*last Saturday of the month*)

SUNDAY

09:30-12:30 Hong Kong Christian Church (*first/third/fifth Sunday of the month*)
13:30-15:00 Organ Practice

Get in touch

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Edinburgh, EH12 7SX
☎ 0131 316 4246
✉ info@corstorphinetrust.co.uk

We hope that you've enjoyed this Summer 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.