

NATURE AROUND DUDDINGSTON

Do not forget the wonderful variety of nature around our village as the longer days allow us out in the evening and the, hopefully, better weather makes us want to have a walk locally.

The old volcano is a fascinating place where you can still see lots of features from when it was active 360 million years! Walk along the Queen's Drive and see the rubble that came rolling down the volcano and solidified. See how the intrusion of the liquid magma fired the underlying rock at Hutton's section at the eastern end of the Radical Road. And see the section itself and ponder how this helped the founder of the actuality of Deep Time, Dr James Hutton, to realise that Earth was greater than 4,400 years old which was the prevailing theological view at the time.

Look at the nooks and crannies at the bottom of Samson's Ribs and along the Queen's Drive where the castle rock comes into view to see plants which are struggling to survive having been re-introduced after they were collected to oblivion by our Victorian forefathers. Sticky catchfly is a beautiful pink flower in June for example. Wonder at the exquisite rock roses growing improbably out of rock crevasses. Marvel at the sedums clinging onto bare rock. And gather the natural harvest of the autumn brambles.

And do not forget the birds. Right now climb onto the knoll above Windy Goul and look right into the nests of the Grey Herons: a splendid colony of around 20 breeding pairs so close to the City. Count the pairs of Mute Swans nesting around Duddingston Loch and hope that, for once, there might be successful breeding on Dunsapie Loch if the predatory gulls can be defeated. Listen for the Great Spotted Woodpecker hammering away. Watch the Canada Geese flighting out on the daily journey for feeding and back for roosting. And listen to that amazing raucous sound of the rooks gathering into the ash trees along the side of the Innocent Railway.

I hope that your rambles in and round the Village, Holyrood Park, Meadowfield Community Woods, The Field and Bawsinch will be just as exciting and rewarding as mine have been over the last 17 years.

Roger Crofts