

Dower House Café – coffee with a view

Euan Hyslop and his partner Sayana Dueñas who hails from Ecuador opened the Dower House Café, based in St. Margaret's Park in Corstorphine, in November last year. Combining living and working together in the business with bringing up their wee boy Angus involves a bit of juggling.

Having spent lockdown in Ecuador they came home to open the business just as it was easing. Sayana is hands on doing the baking with a couple of other members of staff, but what they pride themselves on is the quality of their coffee, realising that there is a market for good quality coffee in Corstorphine.

While the couple were spending time in Ecuador they visited many coffee producing farms and are now pretty knowledgeable of the whole coffee growing process.



Lovely art work to tempt buyers is hung on the walls of the café

Euan previously worked as a support assistant in Edinburgh

schools and supported care experienced young people although that role ended with lockdown. Facing the daunting prospect of coming back to look for work they discussed a long held wish to open a hospitality venue. He sent an email to the trust. It turned out to be good timing. He said: "I floated the idea of running a business there and it was just by absolute luck, that they were looking at ways of bringing in more revenue as I suppose a lot of small organisations are, particularly at that point during the pandemic when they were closed.

"We were really lucky that Jane Kerr was fairly new in the role as chair of the Corstorphine Trust was pretty open to the idea. And you can see that this is a beautiful space. It has been a central part of the community for a number of years."

The original team of three has now become five, and the business has tried hard to integrate into a tight community.

Euan explained: "We ran a competition with Corstorphine Primary School to have our logo designed; We're cooperating with The Corstorphine Trust to get people into the community archives and museum upstairs. The community police service use our space for drop-in clinics; We are working with the Corstorphine Art Group and Corstorphine Primary School to display and sell local art work in our upstairs gallery, and we are making arrangements to become a hub for litter picking events in and around the park and wider community."

The building is set in St Margaret's Park in an enviable open space. Euan said: "Our coffee is delivered by Machina. The young guy who delivers it commented on one of the first runs to us about how beautiful the view of the Pentlands is."

Euan is passionate about the building where the café found its home. He said: "The building itself, 'The Dower House' was built in 1588. It's teeming with history and character and has been a central part of the community for decades. Many of the locals who frequent remark at how brilliant it is that they're

able to access the building now. For example, when my dad and I were working long days last year kitting out the space, an elderly couple named Davie and Amy, and her sister Esther who suffers slightly from dementia, saw us working away and started enquiring. It turns out that during WWII they, and the rest of their class from the School across the road, were taught in the building as the school was being used by the MoD.

“About 20 years later, their brother-in-law lived on the top floor as the local Parky. Davie, Amy and Esther now come into the Café every week for lunch.”

The café is open 8.30am until 4pm every day except Mondays.

The Dower House 1A Orchardfield Avenue Corstorphine EH12 7SX.



Euan Hyslop combines being a councillor with running a coffee shop. Here he is photographed with Helen PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter