

Macbiehill Farmhouse and the Bread Matters Smallholding



About us, the work we want help with, and what to expect when you get here.

We grow organic food (and fuel) for the household, and for guests on courses, on a five-acre smallholding. We usually keep a few animals. In summer 2014 we have a flock of geese.

The smallholding is an agro-forestry system, combining trees with arable crops. We need help with all the usual growing, planting, weeding and harvesting work, and tending animals. Occasionally there are small construction and maintenance jobs.

This is a great place for volunteers who have some knowledge and experience in organic growing and want to learn more, who enjoy working hard and having their hands in the soil.

Andrew will work alongside you and give you full explanations and instructions at the start of a job. He has many commitments in addition to farming, so it is important that you are able and happy to work alone and unsupervised. It is physical work.

The Household

Macbiehill Farmhouse is powered by renewable energy. We run Bread Matters entirely from our home, so have a fairly busy office.

There is no smoking in the house or any of the outbuildings and we prefer to host non-smokers. If you do smoke, please use the old containers provided as ash trays.

Who will be here?

We occasionally gather a larger groups of volunteers but generally only have one person or a couple at a time. If you prefer to be with other volunteers please make this clear when you apply.

Food and Accommodation

In exchange for your work on the smallholding, we provide good food and accommodation. There is always plenty of fresh, nutritious food, including real bread. We eat meat and fish but can cater for vegetarians.

Our diet is seasonal and local as well as organic; we use barley, oats, pulses and root vegetables, eggs and dairy products, small amounts of meat, green vegetables, berries, salads etc. depending on what is available. The helpers who enjoy it most are those who also eat everything and don't want processed foods.

If you have a specific dietary requirement such as dairy-free or vegan, please let Veronica know when you apply.

Volunteers stay in a double bedroom with en suite bathroom, in our four-berth caravan, or in a tent.

The barn has a kitchen for preparing and eating meals (when camping - and for large groups). It also has a heated shower room with composting toilet.

The farmhouse has a small back kitchen, which we often use for *breakfast and lunch*. We have a reliable but SLOW internet connection there; please don't stream films or download large files.

We usually gather in the farmhouse kitchen for the evening meal. This space is also the baking studio, so is out of bounds during bread Matters courses.

It is very quiet here in the evenings, so it is not the place for helpers who want a lively nightlife.

The Baking Studio

We use the farmhouse kitchen for Bread Matters courses, for professional catering and as our family space. It's a food business, with very high standards of hygiene. Please help us with this by leaving all outdoor/work clothes and shoes in the porch, washing your hands thoroughly, keeping the food preparation areas clean etc.

We don't need baking or cooking help. Volunteer help is for the smallholding and the growing, so this isn't a good placement for wwoofers who want to learn to make bread or to work in a professional kitchen.

The Local Area

Our situation is rural and quiet. We are close to Whitmuir Organic Farm, which has a restaurant and shop.

We are 17 miles from the centre of Edinburgh.

The nearest village, West Linton, is about an hour's walk away. The nearest bus stops are at Leadburn and Penicuik - with bus services to Edinburgh, Peebles etc.

Neither bus stop is within walking distance, so we will need to give you a lift.

What to Bring

The weather is very changeable and can be severe.

These are the items you'll need in most weathers:

- work gloves
- a hat
- walking boots/wellies/trainers - not too heavy to work in but keep your feet warm and *dry*
- warm layers e.g. thermal vests and leggings
- overalls or waterproof trousers and a breathable, waterproof jacket.

Note - we can provide some extra items but you need to bring basic, adequate workwear.

Denim jeans are not suitable for working outside as once they are wet or muddy they stay that way.

You are welcome to use the washing machine for clothes. There is no instant drying as we don't have a tumble dryer.





The point of volunteering here is to learn about organic farming on a small scale, with the purpose of feeding people from the land, whilst helping us to actually do some of it.

The work varies according to the season and the conditions, but it's a real farm so some tasks can't wait and have to be done as soon as the weather permits (or regardless of the weather).

There are some comments too

A working day might be:

- 7.15 feed and let out geese, top up their water, open polytunnel.
 - 8.00 breakfast, then meet with Andrew to agree jobs for the day
 - 9.00 weed and mulch between soft fruit bushes, trees or mixed hedge
 - 10.45 tea/coffee break in barn or back kitchen
 - 11.00 weed and pick salads in the polytunnel or plant potatoes or grain
 - 12.45 bring salads in, wash them, have lunch
 - 14.00 pick beans in the polytunnel and continue weeding soft fruit
 - 16.30 tea break then bring vegetables in and peel them for supper
- OR

- 11.00 cut grass and rotavate soil ready for sowing
- 13.30 lunch
- 15.00 help Andrew to move animal houses and set up electric fencing



Hostels in Edinburgh

These are the places our volunteers and low-maintenance visitors have enjoyed and recommended.

Book ahead.

Edinburgh has a lot of hostels but also a lot of visitors and you are unlikely to find a bed/room you are happy with at short notice at a weekend or in the summer (especially at Festival time). It's always best to book in advance.

1 **Central Hostel (SYHA)**

(off Leith Walk, near to St Mary's Cathedral)

Edinburgh Central
9 Haddington Place
Edinburgh EH7 4AL
Tel: 0131 524 2090

The hostel has its own café.

Beds from £19.50 for adults, £17.50 for children.
Rooms from: £43.00

<http://www.syha.org.uk>
email central@syha.org.uk

The Youth Hostel Association caters for families as well as young people and independent travellers of all ages. The central has a range of rooms and facilities. There are lockers in the rooms for personal belongings, but no drying room for wet clothes (cyclists beware). You can walk there from Waverley Station in about ten minutes. Ignore the change of road name; just proceed down the hill and it is on the left (on a corner).

2 **Metro Hostel (SYHA)**

Like the Central, this is run by the Scottish Youth Hostel Association. It is only open in the summer vacation, as it serves as a hall of residence for Edinburgh University during term time.

<http://www.syha.org.uk>

3 **High St Backpackers Hostel** (Old Town)

8 Blackfriars St.
Edinburgh
EH1 1NE
Tel 0131 557 3984

A large, busy hostel, with great social areas, and more of a 'party' atmosphere. Bedside lockers, a quiet lounge with internet and wifi and a lot of social life.

<http://highstreethostel.com>

4 **Royal Mile Backpackers** (Old Town)

105 High St
Edinburgh
EH1 1SG
Tel 0131 557 6120

Beds from £13.

Operated by the same people as the High St hostel, the Royal Mile is smaller, has fewer beds per room, and is a bit quieter, but its kitchen is very small and more difficult to cook in. As the two are related, visitors can use the facilities in either hostel.

<http://www.royalmilebackpackers.com>

Travel Details

When we have agreed to host you please telephone 01968 660449 or email us one week before your arrival with the date and time of your travel arrangements.

Tell us which bus you are taking from Edinburgh and what time it arrives; we will collect you from the bus at Penicuik, Leadburn or West Linton:

From Edinburgh Airport to Macbiehill Farmhouse via Penicuik or West Linton (approx travel time 90mins):

All buses stop immediately outside the airport.

Look for the Lothian Bus Airlink Service No. 100

which will take you to the City Centre

Get off at West End, Stop QC Hope Street

Walk 3 minutes to West End, Stop XE Lothian Road

Take the Lothian Bus No. 47 to Penicuik

Get off at the main bus terminal on the High Street in Penicuik, next to LDiL supermarket.

From Waverley Station to Penicuik (approx travel time 55 mins)

Walk out of Waverley Station, turn left up to North Bridge to the Lothian Bus stop Old Town,

Stop NE North Bridge, take No. 37 to Penicuik

Get off at the main bus terminal on the High Street in Penicuik, next to LDiL supermarket.

BUS FARES

Adult: £1.50

Child: 70p

You will need to have the correct money as the buses do not give change

From other parts of Edinburgh Lothian buses no 15, 37X, 47X etc. Check the up to date timetable.

