



Great weather for ducks!!

Dawn broke on the first Water of Leith Duck Race back in September; predictably it was dull, damp and drizzly. But this did not deter the many hundreds of people from joining in the funday and supporting their sponsored duck. We launched over 1700 small plastic ducks into the river accompanied by 18 large corporate ducks, and the event raised in excess of £2,500. Thank you to all who sponsored a duck. It was quite a spectacular sight!



Over the summer members and volunteers were hard at work selling tickets and organising the ducks and the event, the newly formed fundraising group's first real challenge. We were amazed at the response, and owe a debt of thanks to the prize givers: Flyglobespan, Diageo, top Edinburgh Tourist Attractions, Hunter Wellingtons, Kwikfit and Greens Gym. The 1700 small ducks were sold for £1 but in amongst them were 18 Giant Ducks all sponsored by local businesses, each raising £50. Nicky Brown Consulting (1st), Water of Leith 2000 (2nd) and Royal Bank of Scotland (3rd) were the winners with the following all making it to the finishing line: Pentland Landrover, ASDA, ARUP, BOOKER Cash & Carry, Graham Brown Consulting, LOGICA, kimscompany.com, BRIGHT GREY, Water of Leith Honorary Bailiffs, Scottish Conservative Party, Scottish Green Party, St Georges School for Girls, Colinton Dentist, Randolph Hill Group, and the Leith Agency.

The funday was hugely popular, with a piper to serenade the ducks, games and face painting for the children, warming teas and cakes for the parents. Next to the Duck Race the most popular activity was the Children's Boat Race - where the visitors designed and built a craft from scratch and raced it down the river. For more photos of the day see the back page. Thank you to all our supporters and the 40+ volunteers and bailiffs who helped with activities and with catching all 1700 ducks.

ALL IS WELL ON THE WATER OF LEITH

David Hicks from the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust explains some 'monumental' projects they have been undertaking in Dean Village and Stockbridge

St Bernard's Well

Conservators have been investigating the condition of St Bernard's Well, as part of the on going Twelve Monuments Project led by Edinburgh World Heritage and the City of Edinburgh Council.

Scaffolding was erected around the monument to allow conservators to closely inspect its condition. This was particularly important for some of the details on top of St Bernard's Well, such as the eccentric 1888 addition of a pineapple finial. Paint remnants have been identified, hinting that the pineapple may once have been a gleaming gold colour.



In the dome above the statue of Hygeia, conservator Graciela Ainsworth has mapped and recorded the emergency dunting of the ceiling rose which was found to be in extremely vulnerable condition. The pieces will be stored at the Museums Collection Centre for analysis and future use. Preparations for a conservation scheme are underway and it is hoped that, subject to successful fundraising, works will start on site next year.

Well Court

The major restoration project at Well Court is progressing well. The work is funded by Edinburgh World Heritage and the property owners under the Conservation Funding Programme for the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Among the carefully sourced traditional materials being used are hand made Rosemary clay tiles. Where the existing tiles are still in good condition they are being cleaned and retained, but where new

tiles are required they are carefully chosen to match the colour and qualities of the original.



Chimneys have been re-built in Corsehill sandstone, carefully selected to match the original stonework. New decorative iron railings have been installed and stonework to the boundary walls is under repair

The modern concrete courtyard will be replaced with sandstone paving, according to the intentions of the building's architect Sydney Mitchell. This open area will be used for outdoor ceildhs and other community events, perhaps for the first time. Work is expected to be complete by spring 2009.

A BEQUEST OR A LEGACY?

At a time of 'credit crunches' and 'cutbacks' the finances of the Trust are under some strain and the gift of a bequest or the provision of a legacy in a Will would be very much appreciated, and help to ensure that our 'Ribbon of Green' will continue to be a source of enjoyment for future generations. Please give a thought - a bequest or legacy need not be a large amount and can have tax advantages. For more information contact Helen on 0131 455 7367, in confidence.

SHOP ONLINE & HELP RAISE FUNDS

When you shop online through **easyfundraising** you raise funds for WATER OF LEITH CONSERVATION TRUST. Shop online with 600+ well known retailers and every purchase you make will generate a free cash donation. Amazon, EBAY, Argos, Next, M&S are among many others. **easyfundraising** is free to use and you won't pay a penny more for your shopping. You could even SAVE money with over 100 exclusive online offers from many of your favourite high street stores. Start raising funds today by registering at:

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/waterofleith

WHAT'S ON IN 2009

Wild West China

Part 1: MON 26th JANUARY 7pm

Part 2: MON 9th FEBRUARY 7pm

at the Water of Leith Visitor Centre

Join Fred and Rita Daniels for another epic journey. This time we visit the remote and spectacular region of Xinjiang in North West China for an entertaining and fascinating journey through China's largest province. Then, in Part 2, the journey continues through Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Samarqand and the Inner Walled City of Khiva – once a crossroads for the explorers of Asia and a vital link in the silk route. **Special Fundraising Evening in aid of the Water of Leith Conservation Trust**

£4 members (£5 non members) includes Chinese themed refreshments.
Call 0131 455 7367 for details

PENTLAND INSPIRATION

EXHIBITION will be on show at the Visitor Centre from 26th Jan to 9th Feb

Wildflowers of the Water of Leith Monday 9th March - 3.00pm

A talk to whet the appetite for Spring as we celebrate the wildflowers which grace the banks of the Water of Leith. We will be revealing the results of our Wildflower Survey and be treated to beautiful photos by Charles Everitt. Member £1 (£2 non-members)

PLANT PLEAOUR FAMOUS PLANT SALE WILL BE ON 9TH MAY, SO.....PLEASE PREPARE / POT ON ANY PLANTS YOU NO LONGER NEED AND FIND THEM A NEW HOME

STAFFING NEWS

We are delighted to announce that Charlotte and Pat Neary had little baby Holly on Christmas Day 2008. The first Christmas baby in Edinburgh. Mum and baby are doing well.

But the river and clean-up schedule will not be disrupted as we welcome back Nickol Stewardson as Community and Volunteers Officer covering Charlotte's maternity leave. You may remember Nickol as a volunteer, or for a time 3 years ago when he was Volunteers Officer with the Trust. Since then he has been sorting out the Forth as a Project Officer for Forth Estuary Forum. We are delighted to welcome him back.

AND ANOTHER THING...

As my quest to see the Water of Leith otter continues, I recently had time to reflect on the species. How far we have come from the days of *Tarka The Otter* when otters were driven downstream by a pack of hunting dogs. Such activity is now illegal, of course.

Otters seem to capture the imagination of children and adults alike. Indeed Oscar the Otter is the mascot for the *Partnership For Action Against Wildlife Crime* schools' programme. However, although still rare, the otter is now fighting back. In recent years, they have caused excitement by returning to rivers flowing through the centre of some English cities. This, of course, is an encouraging statement about the cleaner nature of the river water and a point we should acknowledge regarding our own Water of Leith otters. Too much pollution would certainly see the otter desert the river for cleaner waters, but their presence suggests a degree of purity.

The brown trout and bullheads in the Water of Leith offer an otter bountiful foraging while the wooded banks along certain stretches provide potential for holts. These are habitats maintained through the hard work of the Bailiffs and the Conservation Trust.

So why haven't I seen one yet? Well, otters are usually nocturnal and can wander up to 30 miles per night! It simply comes down to being in the right place at the right time.

Otters are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and it is an offence to interfere with an otter or its "place of shelter," or to be in possession of any body part.

If we are to keep otters in the Water of Leith, the habitat and water purity need to be preserved. Consequently, I would urge you to please report any incidents of pollution to the Conservation Trust or SEPA. Similarly, please report any incidents involving the potential disturbance of an otter or its holt to the Police on 0131 311 3131 and ask to speak to a Wildlife & Environmental Crime Officer; if one is not immediately available, leave a message and one will call you back. Alternatively, Crimestoppers can be used to report offences anonymously on 0800 555 111.

PC Charles Everitt
Wildlife & Environmental Crime Officer
Lothian & Borders Police

More Duck Race photos



The Launch



1700 ducks numbered and ready to race



The Winning Giant Duck



Training future Clean-up Volunteers

WALKWAY UPDATE

The link path from Lanark Road to the Walkway in Currie is open again following the cessation of works on the Kinleith Development site. The down stream route is still not accessible. Tram works at Roseburn have stopped and the path is open, however, the diversion will be in place again as there is more to be built. Concerns over muddy paths at Belford, Colinton and Bonnington have been traced to drainage issues and the Ranger Service as looking into a solution. Elsewhere the seasonal scourge continues. The Rangers and our Volunteers do our best to clear paths in the Winter. If you know of a muddy spot let us know, and we will add it to the hit list.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sadly the river needs more clean-up attention and the volunteer team will be out on:

Friday 30th January at the notorious blackspot of Bonnington - meet on West Bowling Green Street at 10.00am

Sunday 15th February - Poets Glen Work Day near Currie.

Friday 13th March - clean-up location to be confirmed

Sunday 5th April - BIG Spring Clean - meet at the Visitor Centre at 10.00am

Call 0131 455 7367 email admin@waterofleith.org.uk if you would like to join the team.

If you have an article, letter or photo for the next edition of Under the Bridge please send it to:
Water of Leith Conservation Trust, 24 Lanark Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1TQ admin@waterofleith.org.uk

How to join the Trust

Please enrol me/us as a Friend of the Water of Leith Conservation Trust. I enclose the following payment:

Individual membership	£16 per year
Family	£30 per year
Concessionary rate (retired or unemployed; students)	£10 per year
Group (schools and voluntary bodies)	£32 per year
Life membership	£150 single payment

Name..... Date

Address..... Tel No

Please post form and payment to: Trust Administrator, Water of Leith Visitor Centre, 24 Lanark Road, Edinburgh EH14 1TQ
www.waterofleith.org.uk admin@waterofleith.org.uk 0131 455 7367