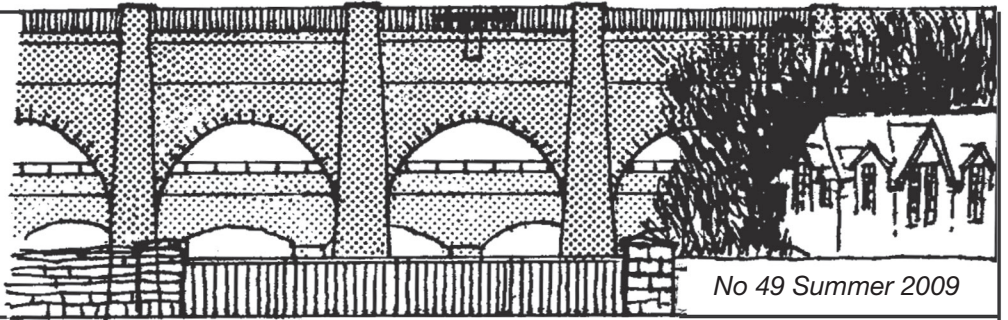


# UNDER THE BRIDGE



No 49 Summer 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER OF LEITH CONSERVATION TRUST

## RIVER RAMBLE – A Grand Day Out

What a day we had for this year's sponsored walk, even the sun shone on everyone. Nearly 50 walkers set off from Balerno at 10.30, on Sunday 19th July, intent on making it to Leith and helping to raise money for the Trust. In less than an hour and a half the walkers began to arrive at the Visitor Centre, where they were treated to lunch and a coffee before heading off on the longer leg to Leith. A brisk pace was set and in less than 4 hours the front man had arrived at the destination; a boat moored outside the Malmaison on the Shore. Congratulations to Rodger (pictured) for crossing the line first. He was shortly followed by 5 ladies and a very game 14 year-old doggy. Then there was a lull while we waited for the rest of the now 39 strong pack to arrive. All enjoyed a drink on deck to celebrate their achievement.



We give a big thank you to ThreeBrand for use of their boat and Booker and ASDA for providing some of the refreshments. Thanks to all walkers and the fundraising volunteers for their help. We raised nearly a Grand on our Grand Day Out.



## BIG ANNUAL CLEAN-UP TIDIES THE RIVER FOR SUMMER.



The Bells Mill Blitz – included the very smelly lade clearing.

Once again we have so many people to thank for keeping the Water of Leith clean, green and beautiful. Since April there have been 24 workdays with volunteers, community groups and local businesses on the river, amounting to some 1400 hours of effort. The following groups have all taken part in activities since April:

- Scottish Government –Landscapes Division
- Geocachers
- Edinburgh University Students
- Coltbridge Residents
- Warriston Crescent Residents
- Colinton Amenity Association
- Tippereth Composters
- Bonaly Primary School –Families
- Dean Village Association
- Stockbridge Community Council
- Inverleith Cubs
- Standard Life
- Craigmouth High School
- Green team with George Watsons x2
- Roseburn Primary School
- The Rock Trust
- Scottish Funding Council
- Green team work party
- Royal London
- HBOS
- Scottish Water

and of course our stalwart band of cleaner-upers.



Scottish Government Team at Bonnington

## MICRO – HYDRO POWER UPDATE

Thank you, to everyone who expressed an interest in our article in the last issue about the potential to generate electricity from the Water of Leith. Since, four communities have come forward with an interest in getting projects off the ground in their area. Kirknewton Community Council hope to generate power from the outflow of Harperrig Reservoir, Balerno Community Council from Harlaw outflow, the Dean Village Association are keen to see the large weir back in use and residents of Redbraes hope to generate power near Bonnington.

At the moment funds are being sought from Community Energy Scotland to carry out detailed design, engineering and feasibility studies on these potential sites. It is envisaged that if these trail blazing projects work, other communities along the river may benefit from this free source of power. If you are interested, the Dean Village Association are having an open meeting to discuss the potential in their area on Tuesday, 22nd September at 7.30pm in the Dean Village Church Hall at the junction of Dean Path and Ravelston Terrace. We also hope to have a special presentation on the subject for our AGM in October.

## Youth Diversionary Fishing Project

The Honorary Bailiffs of the Water of Leith, Lothian and Borders Police and the Water of Leith Conservation Trust have been working together on an innovative fishing project this summer with the aim of giving young people something positive to do with their time.

The 'youth diversionary fishing project' has taken young people selected by the police, to the river bank and given them opportunity to have three days fishing with the bailiffs. They receive training in how to use the equipment, and the best techniques to use whilst fishing. Around 15 young people have taken part and if they stick with the training for the 3 days they will be given the basic equipment to keep. We hope the project will prove to be a success and if so it may be rolled out at more locations along the river next season.

## What's On

### Final Summer Guided Walk

#### Sun 23rd August – Stockbridge Saunter

A guided walk from Dean Bridge to Canonmills, discovering the social and natural heritage of this beautiful part of the river.

Meet at 2.00pm on the old bridge in Dean Village, on Bells Brae off Queensferry Road. £3.50, members £1. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

### Half Term Children's Event

#### 20<sup>th</sup> October – Wilderness Survival Skills

Hone those survival skills along the Water of Leith. Build a shelter, find food for free and discover bush craft. Cost £3.50 per child (Accompanying adult free). Start at 2.00pm until 3.30pm. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL** 0131 455 7367 admin@waterofleith.org.uk

## Investing In Wildlife

During the Spring of this year, the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) invested in an Investigative Support Officer to assist Police Wildlife Crime Officers around Scotland in their investigations. The role is funded by the Scottish Government and demonstrates its commitment to tackling wildlife crime head-on. Salmon poaching is one of the areas that the NWCU is giving priority to this year, while also taking a keen interest in the unlawful trapping of eels. There is, of course, an abundance of eels in the Water of Leith and eel traps have been found before in the river.



EEL

During the same time but at a local level, some twenty-five Police Officers and River Patrollers met at the Water of Leith Centre for an "Awareness Meeting" to learn more about the river and to discuss problems that it attracts. This followed the pattern of a similar meeting two years ago and covered subjects including the role of the Conservation Trust, fishing, wildlife crime, anti-social behaviour and pollution. It proved a useful conduit to bring partnership working between the Water of Leith and Community Police Officers closer together.

In June, three new Wildlife Crime Police Officers were recently appointed in Edinburgh to investigate animal and environment-related offences in the city – PC's Samantha Campbell, Sarah Potter and Hannah Medley. This level of investment and commitment by Lothian & Borders Police places Edinburgh in a very strong position to tackle wildlife criminals. The wildlife and flora in the Water of Leith should also feel the benefit too with greater access to wildlife legislation and Police resources via the new officers. However, the Police can only take action on wildlife or environmental crime if it is reported to them in the first place. I would urge anyone who sees an offence being committed on the river to report it to the Police on 0131 311 3131 and to use the services of the new Wildlife Crime Officers; if none are immediately available, leave a message and one will call you back. Alternatively, Crimestoppers can be used to report offences anonymously on 0800 555 111.



## TREASURE HUNT



### THE PIRATE ADVENTURE STARTS AT 1 PM

**JOIN THIS TREASURE ISLAND THEMED HUNT IN THE DELLS. ENCOUNTER PIRATES AND LOCAL LEGENDS AS YOU FOLLOW THE CLUES TO FIND YOUR OWN 'PIECES OF EIGHT'.**

**TREASURE HUNT STARTS FROM THE WATER OF LEITH VISITOR CENTRE AND FOLLOWS AROUND A MILE OF CLUES THROUGH THE DELLS.**



**£5 PER MAP,  
ENOUGH TREASURE  
FOR ALL.**

**FAMILY FUNDAY,  
GAMES AND REFRESHMENTS  
AT THE CENTRE.**

**PIRATE COSTUME OPTIONAL BUT WILL  
BE REWARDED**

## Blooming marvellous Plant Sale

A huge thank you goes to all the volunteers and visitors who helped to make the Plant Sale such a success. We raised over £950!! 100 plant hunters visited the sale in the first 2 hours, despite the rain, and seemed delighted with the range of plants on offer, not to mention the cake stall. Our thanks also goes to ALBA trees and Pentland Plants Nursery for their donations of plants.



## RIVER NEWS ROUND-UP

The Flood Defence Scheme has stalled yet again, this time due to insufficient funds being available for the whole scheme. The Flood team are looking at various options such as phasing the works but it is unlikely the main scheme will be started until late 2010. A glimmer of hope is that the programmed advanced work will go ahead with the work at Harlaw and Threipmuir starting this winter.

Bells Mill Weir, at the bottom of the steps to the Gallery of Modern Art, has been the focus of discussion lately as it is beginning to deteriorate and a number of large holes have appeared. Under the Water Framework Directive rivers should be returned to their most natural state and any barriers to wildlife removed. However the importance of this weir to the character and heritage of the Belford area is undeniable so the City has decided a 'stitch in time' repair is appropriate. Thank you to SEPA for their advice and local activist John Riddell for his persistence.



Bells Mill Weir Bryce Morrison

The City of Edinburgh Council and ourselves are currently fundraising to fix some of the path issues affecting the walkway from Roseburn to Dean Village. The planned works will sort out all the adjoining steps on and near the walkway,

re-surface sections upstream of Dean Village to make the path wider where possible and finally sort out the drainage problems at the 'Donaldson's Puddle' near Belford.

## Thank you to our supporters...

We have been delighted to receive support from all quarters recently and would like to thank the following for choosing to support our work:

- **Standard Life** and volunteer Yvonne Carruthers whose efforts helping the Trust scooped her the Chairman's Award and us a £1000 donation from Standard Life
- **02** generously gave us over £600 to buy more tools to tackle the wayward vegetation along the river
- Shoppers at the Morningside branch of **Waitrose** voted in June, with tokens, to donate a share of £1000 to the Water of Leith Conservation Trust. We had tough competition but on the final count we recieved £305.
- More volunteers from **Royal Bank of Scotland** were rewarded for their hard work helping to clean-up the river and as a result we recieved a very welcome £250
- **The Russell Trust** and **The Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust** have both committed a £1000 to get our Community and Volunteer Development programme off the ground.

## River Blogger

Do not forget to sign up for the news feed on our fantastic new website – you will receive all the latest news from the river and have the chance to comment on any of the issues raised. So far we have over 100 people signed up to the news email and countless 'Tweets'. Since we launched the site in March I have posted 34 blogs, which are sent to subscribers in weekly emails. **CLICK ON** the 'Stay in touch' section on the home page.

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:

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <b>Individual membership</b>                                | £16 per year        |
| <b>Family</b>   | £30 per year        |
| <b>Concessionary rate</b> (retired or unemployed; students) | £10 per year        |
| <b>Group</b> (schools annd voluntary bodies)                | £32 per year        |
| <b>Life membership</b>                                      | £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