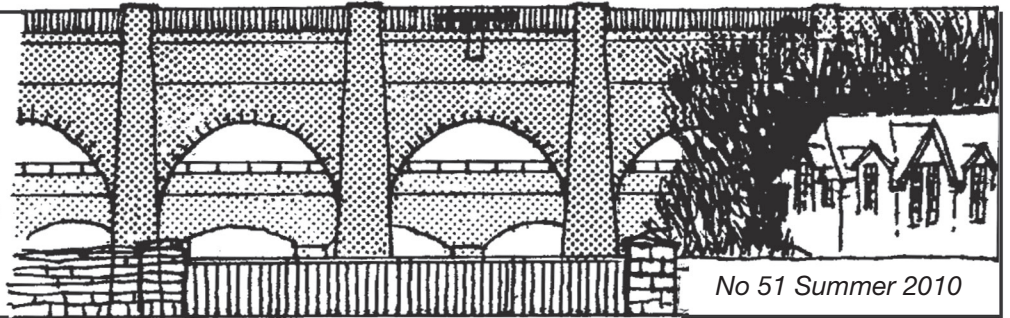


# UNDER THE BRIDGE



No 51 Summer 2010

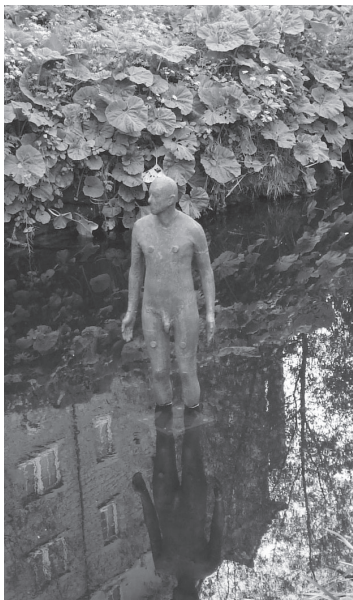
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER OF LEITH CONSERVATION TRUST

## BIG CLEAN-UP – BIG THANK YOU

Each year we give the river a thorough clean-up before the summer arrives and before the vegetation masks all the rubbish. 2010's effort has been a great success with 19 clean-ups taking place from Balerno to Bonnington, since the end of March, which is almost 2 a week along 12 miles of river. We wish to thank the following groups for all their help and of course to our volunteers who have been out four times since April. We estimate we have removed around 80 cubic meters of rubbish from the river, enough to fill a double decker bus!! Thanks also to Action Earth for a small grant to help us with buying equipment for all these events.



Tesco Bank, Institute of Chartered Accountants, Scottish Life, SIAS, Leith Scouts, Sustrans Cycle Rangers, Dregghorn Cadets, Warriston Residents Association, The Princes Trust, Geocachers, Coatbridge Residents, Roseburn Primary, Dean Village Association, Merchiston Castle School, Colinton Amenity Association, Bonaly Primary School, Stockbridge Community Council, Edinburgh Junior Chambers of Commerce, Standard Life, Scottish Funding Council, Firhill High School, and 25<sup>th</sup> Morningside Cubs.



## ‘6 TIMES’ – ANTONY GORMLEY FIGURES ARRIVE IN THE RIVER

On 22nd June 2010 I walked with Antony Gormley (and a press entourage) as we discovered the ‘6 times’ project in the Water of Leith. Antony was seeing the figures for the first time in situ and it was very interesting to hear his thoughts about the river and why the figures were located and orientated as they are. The first is at the Gallery of Modern Art (sunk into the pavement), then in the river at Bell's Mills, Stockbridge, St Marks Park (pictured), and Bonnington, with the final figure standing at the end of the old pier in Leith. For more pictures, videos and a link to the Galleries website, visit [www.waterofleith.org.uk](http://www.waterofleith.org.uk). The placement of these figures has been very controversial, provoking strong feelings amongst friends of the river. Love them or hate them, go and visit them all before you make up your mind.

# **WATER OF LEITH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **- a landmark achievement to safeguard the future of the river**

The Water of Leith Management Plan has been prepared for a consortium of bodies that have an interest in the management of the river. Funded by SNH and City of Edinburgh Council and written by Sue Bell Ecology, the plan is designed to represent common views and aspirations in order that stakeholders can work in co-operation for the management of the river, making the best use of scarce resources. The plan is designed to last for ten-years (2010-2020), but will be reviewed annually. It covers all major uses of and interests in the Water of Leith.

The plan has been commissioned by the **Water of Leith Action Group**, a consortium of 13 bodies including the Water of Leith Conservation Trust, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Forth Ports, Water of Leith Honorary Bailiffs, and City of Edinburgh. The plan was needed as many different agencies and organisations manage the river. Some of these, such as the City of Edinburgh Council and SEPA, have statutory responsibilities for aspects of the river's management, whilst others are voluntary organisations. This plan provides direction for all stakeholders and landowners over the future management of the river. Shared objectives and priorities will give clarity to the implementation of action along the river and a unified and agreed plan will mean greater support from all stakeholders and greater opportunities to seek funding to support projects. Defining roles and responsibilities and reporting on performance against objectives will deliver a more cohesive approach to the river's management.

The Plan defines a vision, aims and objectives for the Water of Leith between Harperrig Reservoir and Leith Docks and identifies over 80 actions to achieve these. Actions include both ongoing and new activities and are grouped according to their urgency for implementation. Targets for each action are also defined. The 'Lead Body' responsible for implementing each action is identified, together with other stakeholders who will also have a role in implementation.

The main plan is supported by two supplementary documents. These documents, whilst providing valuable background information and additional detail, are independent of the main plan. The first

supporting document comprises ten "Topic Papers" that collate and interpret the background information upon which the plan is based. They bring together disparate data sets held by different organisations to provide a summary of the historic and current status of the river including management issues. The topics considered are:

- management;
- biodiversity;
- fisheries;
- archaeology,
- cultural and built heritage;
- recreation and access;
- education and interpretation;
- geodiversity;
- landscape;
- planning; and
- water.

The second document comprises two sets of maps, which identify Environmental Assets and site specific management issues (e.g. need for new signage).

The Plan has to pass through CEC Planning Committee and then the Action Group can formally adopt it during the autumn meeting. You can view the final draft on the Management Page of the website or call into the Visitor Centre to see a copy.

## **MISS SHIELA MCDONALD: AN APPRECIATION**

The Trust has been greatly saddened of late by the sudden passing of one of our longest serving Trustees. Shiela McDonald became involved with our work back in the 1980's when we were a fledgling organisation. Her unwavering support and expert advice especially in matters of planning have been welcomed and appreciated at our meetings for over 20 years. We would like to express our sincere sympathy to her remaining sister and family.

## **BIGGEST AND BEST PLANT SALE EVER**

Hundreds of people flooded to the Centre back in May for the Plant Sale. We had more stock than ever and eager volunteers on hand to help customers with their plant selections. In all we raised £1,028 from plant sales alone, taking an additional £360 in teas and homebaking!! This is more than ever before, so we must say a huge 'thank you' to all the volunteers who gave their time and provided plants and baking, and to Pentland Plants and Alba Trees for their donations.

## SINGLE MUM AT MURRAYFIELD

Following the tragic loss of the male swan, the female has received a lot of support from local people and is being watched to ensure she and the remaining two signets are fine. This is the latest photo of the brood from Derick Thompson



## CHILDREN'S EVENTS

All events cost £3.50 per child (Accompanying adult free) & start at 2.00pm until 3.30pm.  
BOOKING ESSENTIAL 0131 455 7367

**Tuesday 20th July - Funky Flora**

**Tuesday 27th July – River Dipping Part 2**

**Thursday 29th July - Wilderness Survival Skills**

**Tuesday 3rd August - Wild at Art**

**Tuesday 10th August – River Dipping Part 3**

**Thursday 12th August - Water Force**

## SUNDAY GUIDED WALKS

Members £1 (non members £3.50)  
BOOKING ESSENTIAL 0131 455 7367

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July**

**Roseburn to Dean Village Walk**

A guided walk through the river heartland; discover the beautiful Bell's Mill area and historical Dean Village. Meet at 2.00pm at the Entrance to walkway on Roseburn Cliff off Corstorphine Road

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August**

**Colinton Village Walk**

Follow in the foot steps of Robert Louis Stevenson and James Gillespie on this guided walk through the village of Colinton discovering its history and wild places. Meet at 2.00pm in the Car park under Gillespie bridge in Colinton, off Bridge Road.



## Duck Races & Fun-day Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September

Adopt a duck for just £1 and compete for fantastic prizes. Fun starts at 2pm with races at 3pm

## A WILDLIFE WHODUNNIT?

Many people often say to me "It must be wonderful being a wildlife crime officer" while conjuring up images of cute and cuddly animals. Now I find the position extremely fascinating and rewarding but I usually respond by saying "Well... you're always dealing with dead things." That is the sad reality; crime against wildlife can often cost the animal its life.

During the spring, there were a couple of incidents where carcasses appeared on the Water of Leith. The first was where two swans were found dead on the same day but in separate locations along the river. The circumstances appeared suspicious so we recovered one of the bodies and sent it for post-mortem to establish the cause of death. The results were inconclusive but at least no foul play was suspected. However the mystery remains as to how the swans met their end. One suggestion put forward was that with the water levels so low, the swans were able to feed off areas of the riverbed that they can't normally reach and had eaten something that disagreed with them. It certainly sounds feasible... but I guess we shall never know.

The second incident involved a young fox depositing the head and leg of a roe deer in a resident's garden near to the river. Sadly, they belonged to a newly-born fawn and were very fresh. This raised many questions as to what had happened and, with no lines for Police enquiry; we can only surmise that the fawn may have been attacked by a dog. I wouldn't like to think any owner would intentionally allow their dog to take such a young animal and suspect that this was simply an unfortunate accident. It is, of course, an offence to deliberately allow a dog to kill deer. Nevertheless, it is incredible to think that roe deer are breeding in Edinburgh along the banks of the Water of Leith.

Wildlife in an urban environment will always be exposed to greater risks than their country counterparts. Pollution, dogs and habitat disturbance are just a few of the various threats they have to face. That is why it is important for us to offer our wildlife as much protection as possible and why wildlife crime officers seek to fully investigate all suspicious incidents. They can be reached on 0131 311 3131; if 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.

Charles Everitt  
National Wildlife Crime Unit

## RIVER NEWS ROUND-UP

### Bell's Mills in Bloom

In the autumn of last year we began a new management regime for the haughland at Bell's Mills Weir. Over 500 wildflower plugs were planted and over a kilo of wildflower seed cast in the area. The harsh winter has meant the effect of the planting was not as dramatic as hoped but the results of our efforts can be seen with flushes of cornfield annuals, yellow rattle, Giant Bellflower, Oxeye Daisy, St Johns Wort and Hawkweed, all doing well. See photo. We plan to 'hay make' again this autumn to clear off the vegetation, so hopefully in years to come all the seed and plants will have a chance to flourish.



### Walkway improvements

There are now new steps and pathway improvements along the Walkway from Roseburn to Dean Village. Over £40K has been spent in the area upgrading access thanks to funding from WREN (a landfill tax credits provider), Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership and CEC Services for the Communities Department.

### Fishing News

The honorary bailiffs who manage the brown trout fishery on the Water of Leith wish to remind readers that the season is underway and the river has been stocked twice with trout, you need a permit to fish but they are free, and this year there is a glossy new leaflet to help guide first time visitors to the river and expand the knowledge of the regular anglers...tight lines. Season end 30th September.

### MINK!!

Sadly this aggressive North American visitor has really taken a strong hold this summer with at least two families breeding successfully in Slateford and Stockbridge – do let us know if you spot them.

## HIMALAYAN BALSAM

### Public Enemy no.3

Giant hogweed and Japanese Knotweed have long been a problem along the Water of Leith and this year extensive spraying had helped reduce the plants from Slateford to Leith. Volunteers have also been involved in mapping the location of individual plants so we can send details to the councils to tackle all areas. However the ever present Himalayan Balsam has, over the past 2 years, really taken off along the river. This rather pretty plant with orchid like flowers has spread so much that in some areas of the river it is all you can see growing on the banks.

So, we have been on the offensive. Squads of volunteers during June have been pulling up the plant before it has chance to flower and set seed. This hand method of treatment is much more environmentally friendly than chemical spraying and will hopefully knock back the populations.

### A BEQUEST OR A LEGACY?

At the 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. Please give a thought – the 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.

**And Finally.....** we bid a very fond farewell to Philippa McDonald our teacher who after 12 years of running a very popular environmental education service at the Visitor Centre, is retiring. Phillipa had been seconded to the Trust from City of Edinburgh Council's Children and Families Department and among her many other roles as Development Officer and Grounds for Awareness Coordinator, has delivered high quality teaching services to the many hundreds of school groups who have visited us over the years. We thank her whole-heartedly for her support and wish her a happy retirement.

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 and 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