



## NEWSLETTER No 67 Autumn 2016

### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROJECT – ‘OUTSIDE’ a huge success

Over the last year, thanks to funding from Awards for All, we have been focusing on engaging young people in our work to conserve and enhance the Water of Leith. In all, 25 practical tasks were undertaken in partnership with 13 different youth organisations – especially Youth Build who completed 7 tasks. A total of 292 young people gave 870 hours during clean-ups, path work, habitat creation, walling and landscaping sessions. We hosted 15 work placements from 6 different local high schools and supported 4 Duke of Edinburgh Awards placements, 6 whole classes to achieve their JASS awards and helped 7 John Muir award participants with their volunteering and practical work. Evaluation forms showed us that 100% of those who took part thought the sessions were relevant/useful and fun. 100% had never done anything like it before and 100 % wanted to do it again. These were the most popular words used to describe how they felt after a task – proud, happy, tired, enthusiastic and challenged.

Project Officer Ben McCallum says “It has been a privilege to deliver the Outside Project and to witness the benefits the project has given to the people and communities that were involved. Often the participating young people would have limited or no practical or hands-on experience but were keen to seek future employment in a trade or other similar occupation. Recognising this, we chose conservation tasks that would provide the skills and confidence needed to improve their chances of finding future work.



Apart from the practical benefits of learning new skills, the experience taught the young people the importance of a good work ethic, such as turning up on time, site health and safety, and working as part of a team. The tasks were also tailored to have a clear and defined goal that would give the young people something to work towards and give them a sense of achievement once completed. The tasks were mostly carried out on busy sections of the Water of Leith walkway and it was quite common for members of the public to stop and congratulate the young people on the work they were doing. The reaction from the young people when this happened was fantastic and further enhanced the positive feeling as noted on the feedback forms. Furthermore, I think it was beneficial for members of the public to witness first hand groups of enthusiastic young people working to improve something which they value.”

*Young people from Youth Build learn drystone walling skills from The Drystone Walling Association, South East Scotland*



# We never "Tyre" of River Clean-ups!



dumping. The aesthetic issue is the least of our worries, the environmental damage is significant. Large artificial items can trap wildlife and break down into smaller pieces that can be swallowed by fish, which in turn are eaten by birds and larger mammals. To combat this issue the WOLCT has engaged 336 people in clean-ups since April. They have clocked up an impressive 838 hours which is the equivalent of 120 working days of pure clean-ups. What would the river look like without all this effort?

One man's junk is another man's treasure. Sometimes clean-ups can produce amusing finds alongside the usual plastics, trolleys and traffic cones. In Balerno, volunteers from Black Rock found a vibrator!! And a clean-up in Warriston produced a statue of the Hindu deity Ganesh, who rather coincidentally is widely revered as the remover of obstacles!

So far this year Water of Leith Conservation Trust volunteers, groups from the local river communities, youth teams and volunteers from the corporate sector have once again removed piles of litter and debris from our urban waterway. It never fails to amaze us how much junk our teams retrieve! We estimate that during the 17 clean-ups since April we have 'cleaned-up' around 70 cubic meters of rubbish (enough to fill two standard shipping containers). Often quite large, awkward and heavy items get jammed in inaccessible places and it takes great skill and team work to get them out the river.

The 'tyre'less volunteers with Colinton Amenity Association had just such a challenge back in April. After heavy rains a tractor tyre was washed downstream and became wedged on top of Redhall Weir in Colinton Dell. Using ropes and leverage, eight volunteers managed to remove the item from the weir and roll the huge tyre up Redhall Mill steps and along the walkway to the closest road access for pick up by the Council. Volunteers had a similar issue in Leith removing what was once a rather nice leather couch!

This dumping and the litter make the river look dirty and uncared for and encourages further



The biggest clean-up team of the year was the 'Geocachers' Cache in Trash Out event at Saughton Park (pictured below) – 46 volunteers joined in and another couch and a bed were amongst their finds.



# What's On This Autumn and Winter

## Duck Race Day Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Sept

Please support the event and our work by selling tickets on our behalf – books of 5 tickets are available at the Visitor Centre or call us

**GREAT WATER OF LEITH**  
**DUCKRACE**  
& FAMILY FUNDAY

  
WATER  
of LEITH  
Conservation Trust

**SUN 11<sup>th</sup> SEPT 2016**  
3 Duck Races, games, kids activities and refreshments

### Yellow Duck Race - £2 per duck

Tickets on Sale from August to win a Michelin Starred Lunch and vouchers to dine out along the river



### Blue Duck Race - £1 per duck

Buy on the day for a better chance of winning tickets to top Edinburgh Attractions – ideal family days out

### Reservoir Duck Race

Malt Whisky and Champagne are among the prizes for this race of Giant Ducks. Watch Mr Blue, Mr White, Mr Pink etc race and have a go at the sweepstake.



Fun starts at 2pm, races from 3pm at  
**THE WATER OF LEITH VISITOR CENTRE**

24 Lanark Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1TQ (Opposite the Blue Goose)  
Buses 44, 34 or walk to the event along the Water of Leith Walkway.  
Additional Parking available along Lanark Road

[www.waterofleith.org.uk/bigevents/](http://www.waterofleith.org.uk/bigevents/)

## Guided River Walks

Places on these walks will be limited so please call / email to reserve your space. £4 (members £2) 0131 455 7367. Dates and details are below.

### Sun 24<sup>th</sup> Sept - Hidden Industry Part 1 The Dean Village to Canonmills

The hidden past of the river is revealed as we seek out signs of its industrial life. Meet at 2.00pm on the old bridge in Dean Village, on Bells Brae off Dean Bridge, Queensferry Rd

### Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct - Hidden Industry Part 2 Bonnington to Leith

The hidden past of the river is revealed as we seek out signs of its industrial life. Meet at 2.00pm on Newhaven Road, on the bridge by the Walkway

## Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October

### AGM and Members' Evening, 7.30pm

By special invitation our guest speaker will be: Robin Howie, well known in Scottish hill-walking circles and writer of the popular walking column in The Scotsman every Saturday. The AGM and presentation will be followed by a drinks reception. Free for Members, Guest £2

## Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November

### Wild about Winter, 7.30pm

Anna Channing of Floramedica and friend of the river will take us on a 'virtual forage' to explore the wealth of edible and medicinal plants to be found on our doorstep – even in winter. We will delve into their history, lore and use both past and present

## Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December

### Seasonal Crafts Session, 2-4.00pm

Join us to make some seasonal decorations using natural materials, activities will be suitable for adults and children. £4 (members £2)

## CHILDREN'S EVENTS at the Visitor Centre

**£4 per child (2-3.30pm) Booking essential**

Tel :0131 455 7367

Email : [admin@waterofleith.org.uk](mailto:admin@waterofleith.org.uk)

### Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October – SURVIVE!!

Water, Food, Shelter and Fire are the keys to survival, learn new skills from our 'wild' leaders

### Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October - ROTTEN!!

Delve in to the decomposing worlds of fungus, compost and poo!! A 'rotten' event which promises to leave you mucky

## Events enjoyed by all

We have had a very eventful summer. In May our Plant Sale was a huge success raising a fantastic £950 – thank you to all who helped out and came to buy plants. Following this, 12 learnt about the secret and microscopic life of fungi with our workshop lead by the Botanical Society of Scotland. As summer arrived, artist Helen Jackson lead a 'joyful' weekend where the students were able to draw outside and produced a wonderful selection of paintings of the river, rocks, trees, flowers in the meadow etc



## Dean Valley Landslide



No good news, I'm afraid. The landslide which has caused the closure of the walkway between Belford Road and Dean Village is still moving and this section of path continues to be closed. Engineers are currently assessing what can be done to stabilise this steep slope in a very inaccessible part of the river. Please follow the diversion.



## Grotty Grottos

In the Dells of Craiglockhart are two Gothic-style Category B listed grottos constructed around 1760. They were originally part of the designed landscape of the Redhall Estate: later became part of the Craiglockhart Estate following a sale of land. Sadly they have seen the ravages of time and vandalism. Thanks to funding from local Neighbourhood Partnership Grants we were able to commission a Condition Report and Options Appraisal for the grottos. The results make for interesting reading and sadly many repairs are deemed urgent and necessary. Over all, to 'make good' both grottos, around £73,000 will need to be found. The owners, City of Edinburgh Council, now have the report and are discussing a way forward to conserve these delightful heritage features for the future.

## Flood Prevention Works Update

We are pleased to report that the construction of the new flood walls and earth embankments for the Water of Leith Flood Prevention Phase 2 works started in June this year and is progressing well. The works are underway across large sections of the project and to date piling works have been completed in Roseburn Park, Riversdale Road and to the rear of the properties on Corstorphine Road.

We are near completion of the pigmented concrete wall across Roseburn Park and cladding of the flood walls in other sections of the project will be commencing shortly. The demolition of the Baird Bridges is now complete, the river is being made wider in this section to form a 2 stage channel in the river, hence the reason for a wider bridge. Construction works on the new bridge foundations will be commencing shortly which will involve the use of a large piling rig. Both the pedestrian and road bridges will be replaced with one new bridge that will include a public footpath.

Unfortunately, a large section of the Water of Leith Walkway had to close for the construction of the scheme. Walkway diversions are in place with arrows and maps displayed. We will endeavour to reopen closed walkways and roads as soon as we can. On a positive note the weather conditions this summer have been favourable, if this continues we would also hope to commence earth works for the new earth embankments adjacent to the training pitches at SRU Murrayfield.

Should anyone have any enquiries regarding the project please contact:

**Email : [enquiries.wateofleith@mclh.co.uk](mailto:enquiries.wateofleith@mclh.co.uk)**

**Tel : 028 9034 1420**

*We would like to take this opportunity to thank the local residents for their continued support.*

**How to join the Water of Leith Conservation Trust** - Complete the form and post payment to the address below or visit [www.waterofleith.org.uk/join](http://www.waterofleith.org.uk/join) and join through our PayPal account

<b>Individual membership</b>	<b>£16</b>	<b>Concession (retired, student, unemployed)</b>	<b>£10</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>£30</b>	<b>Group (schools and voluntary bodies)</b>	<b>£32</b>

Name..... Date.....

Address.....

Email..... Tel No.....

**Please post to:**

**Trust Administrator, Water of Leith Visitor Centre, 24 Lanark Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1TQ**

[www.waterofleith.org.uk](http://www.waterofleith.org.uk) [admin@waterofleith.org.uk](mailto:admin@waterofleith.org.uk) 0131 455 7367 @WOLCT Registered Charity SC000015