

Ferry Attractive

Issue 5 Spring 2008

Summertime!

Suddenly it's summer (well almost). This is the time of year when we remind ourselves of the good work the local environmental groups do, before we ask you once more to support us as we plant up the town.

Last year was the fourth (yes *fourth*) year in a row that South Queensferry won the title "Best Urban Village" in the Keep Edinburgh Growing Competition. This was a massive tribute to the work of all the groups, organisations, businesses, eco-schools, nurseries, eco-congregations, and, of course, local residents. Sadly, this competition will no longer be running, but as a community, we are very proud that our efforts were recognised by the City of Edinburgh Council, who frequently refer to Queensferry as "a model community". To find out exactly why, keep reading...

GreenFerry Trust

Video

GreenFerry has had another busy year as you will find out here, but you can also see it for yourself in our recently-completed video, "Inspiring Queensferry". With the help of a grant from "Awards for All", we asked Mike Spring, a local artist, to film a complete year of the environmental projects going on here. The video will soon be in all the schools, and we will use it after this to help us get grants for even bigger projects, which was the main idea behind it.



Hanging baskets

This year, we have arranged for 50 baskets to arrive in June. Local businesses and other organisations pay for these individually, and we can then look forward to seeing the High Street burst into colour over the following weeks. Plants this year will be lavender, blue, red and white with a combination of plants as follows: surfina, geranium, impatiens and bacopa -- approximately 1500 plants altogether. GreenFerry pays a local plumber to check the automatic watering systems, and the traders then see to their own systems after that, if any problems arise.

Planters/Containers

We now have a staggering 72 containers of varying shapes and sizes at various locations around the village, and we plant these up twice a year. As you can imagine, this means that our planting operations have become rather extensive. Here's how it's done: two of our members, Andrea and Jeana, get together to create a colour-coded diagram for each box or tub. And thanks to their careful preparation, the planting process is now much easier to manage -- volunteers use their diagrams as a guide. Local people (that's you!) turn out in good numbers to help on the day, and this makes a huge difference. Thank you all especially the teenagers who have never let us down. Planting day this year is 8 June. Meet at 10am at the Police Station. Please come if you can. We do need as much help as we can get.



Garden Projects

With yet another grant from the council, we set out last year to improve some public spaces. Under the direction of Jeana (who by now we refer to as our "garden design expert"), we gave the police station garden a make-over, ripping out and replacing old plants, and topping it off with two tons of new soil and gravel. We then tackled Brewery Close and gave that area a facelift too. This was enhanced by the donation of a large palm tree from local resident, Jean Hall. (Moving the tree across the High Street was an operation in itself which you can see on our website.)

Morison Gardens

The rose garden in Morison Gardens seemed to us to be rather tired and crying out for re-planting. So we spoke to residents and six of them agreed right away to help us paint the railings. Sam Smith from Edinburgh Council then became involved. He listened to the residents' ideas, and looked at our plans. Together, we decided there was room for a play space for young children, and soon the work began. While this was going on, GreenFerry asked residents what plants they would like to see, and went off to buy them. Now, this area is transformed. Residents can sit out at the front or enjoy a little bit of light gardening while the youngsters whiz safely around on their tricycles.

Scotstoun Shops

As an experiment, we set out three large flower tubs at Scotstoun shops. The lads from the Pool Hall helped us move, fill, and plant up these tubs, and then helped with the watering. Well done, boys. We're ready now to put out a few more for everyone to enjoy.

Hill Court

From the Vision for Queensferry exercise, we learned that we should help residents improve the area at Hill Court flats at the bottom of the Loan. So, to start this off, we put up six flower-boxes on the railings facing the High Street. These immediately attracted the attention of John Watson, a local resident, who added the decorative blue circles and diamonds. Then we put out three large tubs at the entrance from the Loan. Local beavers and cubs came out to plant these up with noisy enthusiasm. (That was one happy evening.) Next, we asked the council about upgrading the garage doors and roofs. All this has made a real difference. However, it is the residents themselves who deserve most of the credit for keeping the area in good order — not an easy task when folks regularly dump large items there. (For a free special uplift, you can contact the council on **0131 529 3030**) Sadly, since writing this, one of the residents, Mrs Julia Kirkwood, has passed away but she will always be an inspiration to us for the way she kept that magnificent balcony of flowers at Hill Court.



Dalmeny Bench

Late in the summer, with the help of Age Concern, Scotland, we completed our fund-raising for a new bench at Dalmeny. Edinburgh Council kindly installed this for us in a site chosen by local people. The mobile library stops at this spot, and, we are told, the driver is looking forward to having his lunch there. Everyone is generally delighted with the bench especially the members of Dalmeny Art Club, who gave us the very first donation towards it.

Painting Parties

“Painting parties” consist of a small group of local people who turn out every week on good weather days to paint the town’s railings. For this we must especially thank Danny Murphy and Cath Paterson who were very committed to “painting the town”.

Garden tools

We have quite a number of tools now, including some power tools. All are cheerfully cleaned and sharpened by Rupert Crowe, a retired engineer, who says it keeps him pleasantly busy. All our tools and equipment are available to the community (call Joyce on 331 4153) and, of course, we are always happy to accept old tools if you’re clearing out.



Free stuff

Freecycle Queensferry continues to grow under the watchful eye of Graham Clarkson. This network is always busy as people offer (free) items which would otherwise end up in a big hole in the ground. Members have increased to 630, and at least half a dozen new items seem to appear on the site every day.

Publicity

GreenFerry featured in the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers’ (BTCV’s) latest handbook, called “Supporting Communities -- a guide for new volunteer groups.” The Forth Estuary Forum also ran a full-page article about GreenFerry in their magazine “Forthsight”. Joyce (GreenFerry chair) was interviewed on television for STV’s Scotland Today, and appeared (twice) on radio -- Talk 107 and Jubilee FM.

Susan Chaudoir, an American student at Edinburgh University, chose GreenFerry as the subject of her Master’s degree. In her analysis, she said that GreenFerry helped bond the community together and raised the profile of environmental issues. This was duly reported in the Queensferry Gazette which has printed many articles about us. And, we also have a regular feature now, in the Ferry Fair programme.

Agilent Technologies, who sponsor this newsletter, have increased the print run from 1000 to 1500 which will help us publicise our work even further and raise much-needed funds for new projects.

Awards

BTCV also nominated GreenFerry for Community Group of the Year in its “Green Heroes” Awards 2008. We didn’t win but each committee member is now the proud owner of a much-coveted ‘Green Heroes 2008’ T-shirt, soon to be seen at our planting day. You can now see the cast-iron plaque which we won in the Calor Gas “Scottish Community of the Year” competition on the wall beside Picnic Coffee shop. Thank you to Kenny Sinclair, who put this up for us.

GreenFerry Website

Our treasurer, Andrea, is also our “webmaster” and uploads photographs to our website. This allows grant-givers to quickly see the work that we do, and this really helps when we apply for money for new projects.

The website also shows us at the Ferry Fair where our “artistic director”, June, assembles us all in costume and somehow manages to get us to parade elegantly down the High Street. It is all good fun, and brings extra publicity -- so she tells us. June’s costumes this year included a burry man and burry woman. You can enjoy this and all our pictures by visiting our website: <http://www.greenferry.org.uk>

Queensferry's BIG clean-up

The highlight of CleanFerry's calendar this year was, without a doubt, the BIG litter clean-up in February. This was jointly organised in partnership with Iain Jamieson (Community Neighbourhood Action Unit) and our park ranger, Iwan Thomas. We involved, wait for it, **540** people. It was quite easily the biggest clean-up Queensferry has ever seen. We had children from all four Primary Schools, students from Queensferry High School, two nursery groups, two eco-congregations, the Rotary Club South Queensferry, Lothian and Borders Police, Queensferry Ramblers, Tesco's staff team, Burger King staff, Scotmid staff, two Edinburgh Councillors, Environmental Services staff, the Park Ranger, Environmental Wardens, Community Council members, CleanFerry members, and many more residents and businesses who joined in independently and let us know afterwards.



The event was given massive publicity in:

- STV's "Scotland Today"
- The BBC News website
- Keep Scotland Beautiful website
- The Queensferry Gazette (two front-pages, and a centre-page spread.)
- The Evening News (pre-publicity)
- City of Edinburgh's "Outlook" newspaper.

However, ever keen, CleanFerry's litter teams continued to be active afterwards, swooping down on one or two additional "black spots".

Apart from this, individual members of "Litter-pickers Anonymous" now number 60. These are volunteers who go round the village in their own time just to help keep the place clean. Bravo. We don't all drop litter, of course, but it only takes a few seconds to pick up a loose crisp packet and deliver it to the nearest bin.

In another interesting development this year, we spoke to the manager at the Queen's Crossing about the litter problem there (not all their litter either, we hasten to add). He promptly arranged to pay for one of our keenest volunteers, Vic Joyce, to clean it up and keep it that way. (Happily, Vic found a fiver in the process!) We plan now to approach other businesses to encourage them to take on proper responsibility for the litter on their land. Plastic bags, plastic gloves, and fast-food debris are a particular problem.

Beachwatch

In September, our annual Beach Watch clean-up and survey went ahead as usual thanks to help from staff and pupils of Queensferry Primary School.

Kirkliston Environmental Group (KEG)

Last year, CleanFerry helped organise a joint clean-up of the cyclepath between Queensferry (from Dalmeny) and Kirkliston. Residents from both villages helped out. Joyce then gave a presentation in Kirkliston, about CleanFerry, and that led to another clean-up there soon after. Soon after, the residents formed "Kirkliston Environmental Group" and have become active in a campaign to save Pike's Pond, a local beauty spot.

Future Plans

East Terrace

Our window-box project is well underway now, with support from residents of East Terrace and a small council grant. Look out for 55 brand new boxes on window sills at that end of the village.

Rosebery Court

Interact is a group of young people from Queensferry High School guided by members of Rotary. These youngsters are keen to show what they can do themselves in the community. We are helping them work with residents of Rosebery Court to put in raised flower beds so that disabled and elderly can enjoy a bit of gardening there in the summer.

Priory Garden

We hope to do some replanting in the Priory Church Garden in the autumn, and to include a herb garden.

Recycling

Residents in Queensferry have really taken to recycling but there is still some confusion about what can and can't be recycled. So, we plan to host an information event to answer your questions. Meantime, please remember that if you leave anything lying OUTSIDE the bins, then it just stays there until the council workers clear it away (into landfill) or, worse, it blows away as litter. Either way, this creates a problem.

CleanFerry is part of Greenferry Trust, a registered charity.

Friends of Ferry Glen

It has been another busy and successful year in Ferry Glen. The scars that all the path-building left are beginning to heal and the bridge that was severely damaged by fire was replaced with a more substantial one. Work continues with City of Edinburgh Council to fund the removal of certain trees, and a trial spraying of the plant invader -- the dreaded few-flowered leek -- looks to have been effective.

Work is also underway to try and improve the Back Braes. And thanks to the hard work of our chairman, Gordon Wood, FoFG have produced a new management plan for local people to consider. What happens after that will depend upon your comments and approval, our ability to get funding, and our determination to make a difference.

During the last year, local school children planted primroses and we are waiting to see if these 'take'. They also helped us plant 40,000 bluebells over the past two autumns. Sadly some of the bird boxes built by St Margaret's Primary School pupils were vandalised but some survived and were used by the local blue-tits and other birds.

In the late summer we held a very successful and fascinating 'Moth Trapping and Bat Detection' night led by some local experts. This was a very enlightening evening. We also held a nature walk, a herbal walk, and a storytelling event for children, which were all well-received. A regular group of volunteers go out every second Monday to keep the Glen relatively litter-free and we are indebted to them for this.



Plans for the future include signs and interpretation boards to help visitors enjoy the Glen. This spring we are planning to hold a nature hunt, and another moth-trapping event.

Echline Community Woodland

In June, Echline Community Woodland celebrated its 15th Birthday, with plenty of local folk visiting the special event. They were treated to a video of the original planting day back in 1992, a guided tour, a search for mini-beasts, storytelling, face-painting and live music on a wooden African marimba.

Primroses and bluebells are becoming well-established in the woodland as leaf mould begins to form and replace the original grasses. Red campion, hedge woundwort and bramble are also doing well under the broadening tree canopy. Last year, bullfinches came into the woodland as did long-tailed tits. Wood pigeons and blackbirds also bred successfully.

Our trusty band of volunteers continue to clear litter, tend the wild plants and gardens, and strim the grass to help keep the area tidy. This year we hope to get a new heavy-duty strimmer to replace the first one that was bought nearly 15 years ago and is now getting a little tired -- like the rest of us!

If you would like to be involved in helping to look after any of Queensferry's woodlands, contact Jim Steele on 07850 194502

Beautiful Queensferry

The Beautiful Scotland competition judges will visit Queensferry between 4-15 August. However, the award structure has now changed. Before, all entrants received a certificate with a set number of thistles (like a star rating). In future, they will get details of their actual score, and a certificate graded as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Gold (Outstanding) | 85% or above |
| Silver Gilt | 75-84% |
| Silver | 60-74% |
| Bronze | 50-59% |

Based on last year's entry Queensferry would have been awarded a silver certificate. For more information, contact Brenda Wilkinson (331 4183).

It's a Parkie's Life

It's hard to believe that I have been working in Queensferry as park ranger for over a year now. The first thing that struck me when I came was the amazing community spirit here. Now, a year or so later, I am still astonished by the positive energy. It has been put to me many times by a wide variety of people, both inside and outside the council, that Queensferry is a "model community", and I would wholeheartedly agree. I have been involved in a variety of events and projects both in Queensferry and in Kirkliston, most recently the Big Clean-up, which was far more successful than we could have dreamed, showing what can be achieved by working in partnership.

A chance meeting in one of the town's parks brought about a wonderful storytelling afternoon when I arranged for James Spence, a storyteller from the Borders, to come to the Ferry Glen. In partnership with Friends of the Ferry Glen, Greenferry, and Queensferry Library, "Ferry Tales" took place on what was probably the only dry day of the summer. James wove spellbinding tales that entranced both young and old in the atmospheric setting of the Glen.

Seeing all the good work that is taking place in Queensferry inspired me to see if it could be recreated in Kirkliston. Now, with the hard work of a few dedicated residents, we have been steadily cleaning up there too. More and more people help out, and we have now established "Kirkliston Environment Group". Eva Wallace, a P2 pupil from Kirkliston, designed a splendid logo. To find out more, visit: <http://www.kirkeg.co.uk>

I am always keen to hear what you have to say on how we can improve the green spaces in the area. If you have any ideas, please call me on 07990 787026 or e-mail: park.ranger1@btconnect.com

Iwan Thomas (Park Ranger)

Sponsored by Agilent Technologies.