

# Ferry Attractive

Issue 6 Spring 2009

QueensFerry and District Environmental Newsletter

## Nine days that shook the world

The BIG community clean-up takes the top slot in this year's newsletter, and here's why...

Unbelievable as it may seem, over **1300** people took part easily doubling (and almost tripling) the number we had last year.



Over a whole week, we had wonderful support from all our local primary schools, and from Queensferry High. Local nursery groups, and the Churches' Eco-congregations also formed teams. We also had support from Norman Work (councillor), Rotary members, Tesco's (who sent a staff team), Burger King, and The Dakota Hotel. And we had excellent support from Environmental Services, Council Community Safety Officers, Environmental Wardens, and even the Environment Manager for Almond Ward, Murray Black, who said the event "exceeded all expectations". MSPs Margaret Smith and Robin Harper (see picture above) came to meet the teams and offer their congratulations.

At Port Edgar Marina (a new area for us), local resident, Barbara Agnew, enlisted volunteers from the Scouts and Sea Cadets. They plan to make this an annual event in their calendar.

In Kirkliston, environmental group, KEG, organised a clean-up, as did Kirkliston Primary School. Right up until the last day, people contacted us, asking to take part. *The Body Shop* sent along 18 staff volunteers, and the ever-reliable members of CleanFerry, of course, turned out in good numbers. Thank you all.

CleanFerry members also helped with other clean-ups at Ferry Muir, Hopetoun Road Wildlife Site, and at Piper's Cave.

So how does all this clean-up activity shake the world? Well, through taking part in clean-ups, we find that people become very aware of litter, and that brings them to think about unnecessary packaging. This makes them think about waste and the need to reduce it. They go on to think about buying goods loose, using their own bags, saving energy, or planting their garden so as to attract bees and other important insects. Small changes like this can send a strong message to encourage us all to reduce our "carbon footprint". Grand as it sounds, we are, yes, helping to save the planet for future generations. As an organisation, we also support the Climate Change Bill and will be encouraging politicians to take key decisions in Copenhagen this December.

### Other CleanFerry activities

A few months ago, we were concerned about the litter collecting in and around *The Queen's Crossing* (almost none of it theirs, we hasten to add). We spoke to the manager who saw the problem immediately, and arranged to pay a CleanFerry volunteer, Vic Joyce, to keep it clean on a regular basis. Other businesses are also taking more responsibility. Tesco is now in touch with the High School, and we hope to be doing some follow-up work there. Finally, we must address the problem of drivers who jettison rubbish from their car windows on their way up to the traffic lights at both roundabouts. Queensferry deserves better.

### Graffiti

Local resident, Grant Sangster, offered to take over our graffiti list during the BIG Clean-up. He created maps and photographs of sites and passed these on to the council. So, many more sites were found and cleaned this year. And (thanks to a grant from *Action Earth*) GreenFerry can now supply "graffiti wipes" to anyone who wants to quickly remove graffiti from street signs, metal bins, junction boxes, post boxes, lampposts etc.

## Free Range Litter Pickers

Our “Free-range Litter-pickers” now number over 70 people and some now also carry graffiti wipes with them on their regular outings out of doors.

## Other GreenFerry Activities

### 02 Energy-Saving Project

In the summer, we heard about an energy-saving scheme organised by 02, which offered FREE energy-saving measures to householders. Using the GreenFerry mailing list, we set to work right away, telling people about this, and we put together an application in three days, to meet the deadline. Happily, 02 approved it, and 12 local households received cavity-wall insulation, loft insulation and other energy-saving measures -- all completely free. That should help reduce the carbon emissions -- not to mention the bills.

### East Terrace



With a small grant from the Parks and Gardens Capital Programme, we extended our planting project along the High Street to East Terrace. Jeana, our “garden-design expert” led volunteers and residents in planting around 30 window boxes for the railings and front-facing window sills. That was a remarkable day with over 25 residents turning up. This included a team of local plasterers who gave up their valuable drinking time at the Anchor Inn to help us plant, carry and secure the boxes. (See our website for the full story and photographs.)

### Hanging baskets

We had 50 hanging baskets in the High Street last year but expect this to go down as some businesses, sadly, have had to close and others are being refurbished. Thank you to those businesses who are still able support us and who

do their bit to contribute to the attractiveness of the High Street. Each pays for their own basket while GreenFerry pays for the automatic watering systems to be checked and switched on. This arrangement seems to work well and we will continue to do this as long as we can afford it. The hanging basket project is now almost a “stand-alone” project. We would love it if someone could manage this for us. (That just means walking up and down the High Street, taking orders.) We are becoming so busy with projects that we are trying to “farm out” the easier ones to let us get on with others.

This summer the flowers will be predominantly yellow and gold to mark the golden wedding anniversary of Tom and Lyla Martin who have been active members of the community for many years. (Tom is currently chair of QDCC.) Congratulations both.

### Planters/Containers

GreenFerry now looks after 76 containers and tubs. We re-planted the two alpine planters outside the Priory Church, as well as those at Scotmid, and Scotstoun shops. Local people keep these well watered. We could never manage otherwise. Jeana and Andrea (our treasurer) between them organise the planting. Andrea put numbers on all the boxes this year, and this simple change, along with a map of the boxes, made the whole operation run much more smoothly. Thankfully, the community never fails to turn out to help us get the plants in. We couldn't manage otherwise.

### Freecycle Queensferry

Freecycle Queensferry is about giving and getting second-hand “free stuff” locally, and this group has almost 700 members. There is *much* more to managing this than you may imagine, so Graham Clarkson, who keeps track of it all, richly deserves our thanks. Google: Freecycle Queensferry

### Priory Garden

Last year, we said we would try some replanting of “dull bits” at the Priory Church. Now we have much grander ideas: we are working with a local landscape architect, Barbara Mitchell, and members of the church, to draw up plans to improve the entire grounds. Worry not -- these will be displayed for approval and comment before we consider any changes. This project could easily become a ten-year plan and our biggest project to date. It is both exciting and daunting, but, then, we like a challenge.

## Princess Anne visit

Lord Provost George Grubb arranged for Princess Anne to visit Queensferry in January. Members of GreenFerry and other environmental groups met the princess at the Priory Church where she saw a collection of photographs which illustrate the work we all do. She was suitably impressed.



## Webmaster

Andrea continues to upload our photographs which helps a lot when we come to apply for grants. Our website is at <http://www.greenferry.org.uk> and well worth a look. Andrea has also worked efficiently as GreenFerry treasurer for many years and we are grateful to her for doing this. However, she would now like to step down and so we are rather urgently seeking someone to fill this position.

## Tools

From various donations, we were able to buy more litter-pickers and other equipment. The Council also gave us six small wheelie bins, adapted so that we can organise our clean-up equipment into “kits”. Any organisation wishing to organise a clean-up may now borrow these. We also have tools we can lend out.

## Publicity/Links/Networking

The “Almond Neighbourhood Partnership’s Environment and Heritage Working Group” consists of council representatives and local environmental volunteers. We can take local issues directly to the council, hear of council plans, and enjoy council support for our projects. The new re-organisation of local government into “partnerships” is working well for environmental groups such as GreenFerry. The Council were particularly helpful during the Big Clean-up, offering us publicity as well as financial support.

## Future Plans

We are looking at the possibility of planting a Wild Meadow this year, and we are also keen to promote allotments. (Rouken Glen Garden Centre are about to make land available. Contact them to register your interest.) And we hope to organise an evening to promote recycling.

## Fund-raising

GreenFerry raises funds in various ways, for example: “Joyce and Jim” busking in the local supermarkets; local people and organisations sending donations; and from our newsletter kindly sponsored this year by *Johnson Controls*. However, more than ever, we need individuals or groups to organise an event in our favour so that we can get on with the projects. We also desperately need to fill a hole in our funding as two major sources of funding have dried up. Please, if you can help in any way, let us know.  
*Joyce Faulkner (Chair): 331 4153 or 07931 901115*

## Friends of Ferry Glen

If you take a walk through the Ferry Glen, you will notice that many improvements have been going on there this year. The community-wide engagement in the autumn helped the group to prioritise this work. People wanted to see improvements to Catherine Terrace and to the Back Braes path. There was also a call to open up some of the views and erect signposts. Also on the list was to install lighting at the Scotmid tunnel, and to improve the access to the cyclepath from Stoneycroft Road.

Friends of the Ferry Glen have been working with the City of Edinburgh Council to bring about some of these improvements. A solid access ramp was installed from Stoneycroft Road and a number of dead or diseased trees were taken down to let in more light and create a more welcoming and open feel to the place. Sightlines along the Back Braes have also been improved, and a notice board was put up at the entrance next to St Margaret’s Primary. The council is now applying for further grants to cover the cost of selective tree felling along the Back Braes.

Local activities continue in the Glen, from litter-picking to planting. Most recently, nature expert, Jim Steele, led a “dawn chorus” walk to help participants identify birds from their birdsong. Around a dozen people turned up on one of the sunniest mornings of the Spring.

*Gordon Wood (FoFG Chair): 331 3076*

## Echline Community Woodland

The woodland floor is gradually losing its grass, and in its place there is Primrose, Herb Robert, Hedge Woundwort and Red Campion. Many of the flowers have been planted, but some have made an appearance of their own accord, which suggests that the woodland ecology is healthy and vibrant. Birds are more and more noticeable in the canopy and shrub layers, and include Blackbirds, Robins, Wood Pigeon and various Tits together with Bullfinches and Thrushes. In late winter we managed to erect more nest boxes and hope that these will be occupied in future seasons.

This year we bought a new, more powerful trimmer, which makes it easier for the operator to cut through the more rank grasses and plants around the main wooded area. We are grateful to Queensferry and District Community Council for helping to secure funding for this. Finally, our small band of volunteers is always on the look-out for helpers. If you fancy helping out please let us know.

*Jim Steele (ECW Co-ordinator): 07850 194502*



## Beautiful Queensferry

The Judges from Beautiful Scotland visited Queensferry in August. They visited various places in the town and were given a presentation followed by tea and biscuits, provided by Queensferry Fairtrade Group, in the Church Hall. In September we were given a Silver Award with 142 out of a possible 200 points. If we had been given a further 8 points, we would have had a Silver Gilt Award. We wish to thank all the various groups who help us with our entry into the competition. The award and the portfolio can be viewed at the library.

*Brenda Wilkinson (BQ Chair) 331 4183*

## From your Park Ranger:

I have been working one afternoon a week with P6/P7 pupils from Dalmeny PS on their Forest School in Cockhill Woods. Forest School offers learning and education outdoors. Apart from learning to appreciate the natural environment, Forest School takes a holistic approach which enables children to learn about themselves, develop confidence in their own abilities and encourages respect for others. The children take part in various activities, from playing woodland games to whittling elder whistles to building shelters. The scheme has been so successful we are now encouraging other schools to adopt it. We are incredibly lucky in this area to have so much quality green space.

Did you know the Rose Gardens on Station Road is in the top ten best parks in the whole of Edinburgh? Take a trip there soon to see the improvements that have been made under the direction of Community Parks Officer, Douglas Cruickshank. Lighting has been put in place to make the park safer, and there has been lots of new planting, including snowdrops planted by pupils from Queensferry Primary. Queensferry Girls Brigade built bird boxes to encourage more birds to the park, and several more biodiversity projects are in the offing. Keep an eye on the notice board for further developments.

And finally, I am working on the possibility of a mountain-bike track in the town. It is very early days yet, but there is a piece of land that would lend itself perfectly to such a resource, and initial reactions have been very encouraging. Watch this (green) space.

As ever, if you want to contact me about anything, please just get in touch.

*Iwan Thomas: 07990 787026.*

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### Dates for your diary:

\*\* GreenFerry Planting Day: Sunday 14 June 10am

\*\* Tree Fest: Saturday and Sunday, 18 & 19 July

\*\* Hopetoun House Open Day: Sunday 26 July

\*\* Stop Press: Climate Change Conference: To Copenhagen and Beyond. 30 May. 1pm.

[www.foe-scotland.org.uk/copenhagenconference](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/copenhagenconference)

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