



FRAW News – May 2018

Recent Work Parties

Regular users of the Walkway may have noticed that we have been doing some tree-clearing down-river from Cramond Brig – this is part of a continuing process. Over many years a variety of trees have grown up along the river banks to the extent that in summertime the foliage is limiting views to the water. We are seeking to provide a better experience of the Walk by selective thinning of these trees which are mainly self-seeded species such as sycamore and ash.

The trees are being cut off at low level and as they are all deciduous, most will come away again from the base - effectively we are coppicing the trees. The roots remain active and intact and continue to bind the soil on the banks. Many of the trees have been damaged by squirrels and other factors. Thinning the trees out improves the health and strength of the remainder and reduces wind-blow.

The marking of the trees has been done by the Forestry Service and the work agreed by the Head of the Forestry Service and by the Natural Heritage Service.

A big concern is the muddy state of the path. With work on the Weirs and the prospect of replacing the Steps, remedial action has been an ever-postponed prospect. On a wet April day an intrepid band of our volunteers installed two drainage pipes north of the Steps to see if this is effective. We hope this experiment is a precursor of things to come. At the same time leafmould and general debris was shoveled from the steps by Fair-a-Far Mill and the Salvesen Steps.

Weirs and the River Life Project

FRAW are delighted that the work to install the new fish pass at Fair-a-Far is finally completed and the contractors have moved out.

The new fish pass looks good, although some of the stone from the temporary crossing is still in the river and it is shallower in places and the direction of flow may be affected. We will have to watch this to ensure there is no impact on the foundations and support of the ruins of Fair-a-Far Mill. Once the new pass has 'bedded in' it we can hopefully look forward to fish and eels using it.

The pathway from School Brae to Fair-a-Far has been reinstated fairly well, though the borders haven't been restored and there are huge gaps where trees and shrubs have been removed. This could have an impact on the riverbank and cause erosion in places. The grassy area in front of the weir was a muddy mess – as was the path around it – but hopefully it will recover, and we will be pressing the Council to get this properly restored.



We are still waiting to hear the RiverLife team's plans for the weir at Dowie's Mill. FRAW and C&BCC have met with the project team and outlined our concerns and they have committed to present their plans to the local community and listen to our views. Ultimately, the decision will lie with the City of Edinburgh Council and we will also make our views known to councillors and officials.

Cramond P7 Project

In Autumn last year we were pleased to start a project with Cramond Primary P7s. It is part of the 'Me and My World' module of the Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS). The children are working towards their silver award and involves working for the 'good of the community and the environment'.



Lesser Periwinkle

On the grassy area opposite Cockle Mill some ground was prepared and they sowed seeds that would be attractive to moths, butterflies, bumblebees, and honeybees. They also put in a selection of plants. Fritillary, Lesser Periwinkle and Cowslips are now flowering (see photos) and should attract bees whilst Cowslips may also attract butterflies and moths. In May the children will

continue planting, putting in Red Campion, Teasel, Rock Rose and Nottingham Catchfly.

As expected there is a considerable amount of weeding to do as well!

As a result of this project the children will learn about the importance of pollinating insects and will make observations on visiting species.



Fritillary



Cowslip

Salvesen Steps

Plans to replace the Steps with a low-level disability compliant replacement around the rock face has been a long and frustrating process over what is now several years. Engineering consultants are now working on a key stage preparing costings that will determine if the project will proceed to tendering for construction. Their report is due in June and we will advise our members accordingly when it is released.

Membership Renewals

We are very grateful to everyone who has renewed their membership for 2018-19. Your support is very important to us and your subscriptions and very generous donations, help us continue our work.

There are few people who haven't yet renewed and if you are one of that number we hope you'll consider doing it soon. With new Data Protection legislation coming along, we'll be writing to everyone asking that they confirm they are happy for us to hold information and understand how we use it and why. If you are not a member, we cannot keep your details on our files and you will no longer receive emails from FRAW. If you haven't already done it, please renew now