

**SUMMER/AUTUMN 2010**

**No. 53**



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**FORK**

**NEWS**

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Female Goosander

[www.fork.org.uk](http://www.fork.org.uk)

### ***A note from the FORK News Editor***

I am preparing this edition of *FORK News* from Australia. I am here for an Australian summer, having been enticed back by the promise of celebrations and anniversaries including my niece's wedding, a class reunion, a good friend's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. The absence of a festive season in the southern hemisphere for six years was beginning to feel like a deprivation, so when the invitations started coming my way, I really couldn't resist them.

Having said this, yesterday the sun was shining, and it was a delightfully warm 22C: not at all bad for early spring in Tasmania. Today, however, it is a cool 15C, and the rain has been relentless. If this keeps up I will be overcome with nostalgia for Glasgow!

I had planned to follow on from Lucy Reynolds who pushed off our new *River Stories* series with her feature on the Lambro in northern Italy, by presenting an interview that I made with a frequent visitor to the Kelvin. However, as I am here, I have decided to take the opportunity to offer some impressions of another river from the other side of the world, and thus on this occasion follow in Lucy's footsteps. The river in question, the Derwent River, runs through my home town of Hobart.

I was hoping to have this edition to you for October. I was not able to complete my editing and formatting partly due to the frenetic departure schedule, and because some of the contributions for the edition didn't reach me before I left Scotland. We do our best, and I am sure that we all know how difficult it is to address all the demands that accompany us on our daily lives, and packing up at short notice for a long and distant absence certainly sets the cats amongst the pigeons!

I hope you all enjoy this edition of *FORK*, and I wish you all a very happy Festive season. I will send you warm sunny wishes from a beach somewhere Down under....

If anyone has any ideas for a story, collects one, or would like to share their own, please do contact me on [dbrhopkins@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dbrhopkins@yahoo.co.uk) and I will be pleased to publish it.

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**The Chairman of Bearsden**

This edition we miss out on one of Hazel's bird illustrations, but thanks go to David Barry for his lovely photos of a female gossander (cover) and a female mallard and her brood

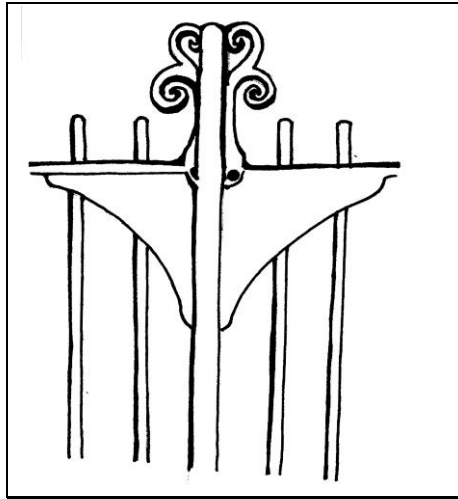
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**WHAT AM I?** by Lyn Dunachie



For the solution to this edition's *What am I drawing?* Go to page 12

**GLASGOW NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

welcomes new members

Visit [www.gnhs.org.uk](http://www.gnhs.org.uk) for the forthcoming programme  
of excursions and events

or phone Richard Weddle on 0141 339 1343

For more FORK news, visit [www.fork.org.uk](http://www.fork.org.uk)

## **CONVENER'S CHAT SUMMER 2010**

By Mark Eden-Bushell

**T**he most important event to have taken place this year was our Gala held in early June as part of the West End Festival. *FORK* had many more visitors to the Gala than ever before. Feedback from the stall holders was generally positive with all stalls, with one exception, reporting a profit. The reasons for this exception have subsequently been considered, with a view to ensuring a change of fortunes for that stall next year.

We were blessed with superb weather, as is our usual fortune. I maintain, however, that the unprecedented attendance reflected an increased readership of the West End Festival Diary. Fionna and I noticed that quite a few people came to support one of the really excellent musical groups and enjoyed it so much that they stayed on. All good for *FORK!*

The profit for this year's event comes in at about £1,400, and this bearing in mind the fact that we had no White Elephant Stall, and we also had the outlay for the purchase of additional gazebos. Not a bad effort! The profit is mainly due to the success of the Bar, and here we recognise the wonderful work from Sally Thompson and her helper. This year the Bar stayed open for an extra hour or two, and those who stayed on for the Bar were treated to the musicians' delightful playing. This was a bit of an experiment, and by all accounts a well conceived and successful one!

Speaking of gazebos, did you notice how the gazebos magically appeared and disappeared? Not magic at all, but all the work of a team who dealt with this task superbly. All who helped have already been thanked, but another thank you does not go amiss!

If any *FORKs* have any comments or ideas for future events, I would be delighted to hear them. Similarly, anyone would like to arrange the raffle is keenly invited to get in touch with me.

Gala aside, a number of people have indicated that they do not like the system of e-mailing the *FORK* News, preferring instead the traditional newsletter form. I think I agree! However, it does save us a lot of money and is a far 'greener' way of distributing the *FORK* News. However, not everyone has access to email, and I post the magazine out to these FORKs. Having said this I still have not posted the last issue, for which I apologise profusely.

I would be grateful to hear the views of those FORKs who have not yet expressed an opinion on this matter. If we continue to print and distribute paper copies of *FORK* news, this cost will need to be recouped somehow. Do we put up the cost of membership to cover this, or do we try to carry on as we have been? Are there alternative ways?

Past issues are always available on *FORK* Website. If you are worried about forgetting the address, just remember FORK, and enter it into Google! You will then be able to select [www.fork.org.uk](http://www.fork.org.uk).

Now three heartfelt requests! In order to keep *FORK* afloat, there are some essential tasks that need attention. Would someone who has an hour a week to spare like to come and help with the filing in my study? We also require someone to look after our very simple book keeping. Apart from my warm welcome, you would find 2 small Labradors who would give a hearty welcome! There is also a cat in house but she spends most of her time either outside or curled up asleep on our bed, so you might not meet her. And out with office work, we are seeking someone who would like to convene our cycling programme.

Charles Thompson has been generous in taking on the role of *FORK* Secretary. I am sure that all FORKs will join me in extending a big 'thanks' to Charles for this gesture.

## ***FORK BIRD REPORT***

*by Hazel Mills*

**T**he report in the last *FORK* news was written at the end of March so this one covers the months from April until August.

April saw the return of the warblers - **Blackcap** and **Chiffchaff** in the Botanic Gardens, and **Willow Warbler** further upstream at Dawsholm. **Sand Martins** are one of the earliest migrants to arrive, usually reaching central Scotland in late March. At least eight of the Sand Martin nests were occupied this spring - if you stand on the Benalder Street bridge and look downstream towards the Clyde you will get a good view of the nest sites, which are in the wall that bounds the right bank of the Kelvin. By 20 June the nests were empty but Sand Martins were still present, feeding above the river. About a quarter of the pairs may attempt a second brood. Sadly there seemed to be very few **Swifts** again this year - I saw no more than four together at any one time throughout the entire summer.

Many of our small birds must have survived the long spell of bitterly cold winter weather as there were plenty of **Wrens** with territories along both banks of the river, and good numbers of **Blue Tits**. However my impression is that numbers of **Long-tailed Tits** were down and I saw fewer **Goldcrest** than usual. There were also fewer sightings of **Greenfinch**, which may have been due not to the winter weather but the prevalence of trichomonosis, a disease caused by a parasite. Transmission is most likely to occur through contaminated food or water, so those of us who feed our garden birds should be careful to clean and disinfect feeders regularly and move them to different sites of the garden every so often. More detailed information is available from [www.ufaw.org.uk/gbhi.php](http://www.ufaw.org.uk/gbhi.php).

In May there were two broods of **Mallards** by Kelvinbridge, and Blue Tits were bringing caterpillars to their young in a nest in the wall by the Big Blue. After a dry spell the water level was so low that **Dippers** were able to feed on the face of the weir below Queen Margaret Bridge.

In the second half of June **Song Thrushes** were feeding fledglings opposite the arboretum and there were families of Blue Tits, **Great Tits** and Long-tailed Tits between the Ha'penny Bridge and Kelvingrove Park. A young **Great**

**Spotted Woodpecker** was observed at Dawsholm. **Kingfishers** have been seen throughout the summer along the stretch of the river from the Ha'penny Bridge to Kelvinbridge but I do not know of any nests.

Each year a few of the **Goosanders** stay on during the breeding season, and on 16 July a female was keeping a watchful eye on a brood of six well-grown youngsters who were diving for food along the riverbank by the arboretum bridge. On 16 August a large flock of Blue Tits, Long-tailed Tits and Goldcrest were foraging in the tree canopy - a sure sign that autumn is on the way.

**Bullfinches** were seen in the arboretum throughout the summer. These beautiful birds are quite secretive and can be hard to spot when the trees are in full leaf but often their soft but distinctive 'peu peu' call gives them away.



Thanks to David Barry for this photo of a female mallard with her chicks on the Kelvin

***NEXT CLEAN UP DATES***

***Sat. 4 December, 10.30am - around noon***

***Check the website for venues***

**LOST MILLS ON THE KELVIN NO.13:  
DAWSHOLM PAPER MILL** by *Stuart Nisbet*

**A**s we saw in the last edition of *FORK*, two separate mill sites on the Kelvin bore the 'Dawsholm' name. Here we look at the upstream site, 'upper' Dawsholm. Both upper and lower Dawsholm first appear as mill sites in the 1750s, although they are quite possibly much older.

One of the earliest references to upper Dawsholm appeared in an advert in the Glasgow press in February 1755, placed there by the trustees of the deceased James Graham of Dawsholm. The lower Dawsholm in this reference indicated the seventy acre lands of Dawsholm, including the houses, mills and machinery of two snuff mills and a paper mill, all in working order. Roy's military map, from around the same date, shows the mills and denotes the lade.

This mill was situated at the west end of the old four-arched sandstone bridge where Dawsholm Road (now pedestrian access only) crosses the Kelvin. A string of buildings stretched down the riverbank below the bridge, some built out into the river on columns. Little of this now survives apart from some of the foundations.

Dawsholm is a good example of one mill site having various uses; all powered from the same lade. The earliest known use of the site was as a snuff mill, in about 1745. A paper mill was also operating soon after. The combination of paper and snuff mills is curious as there is no obvious link between the processes, although both paper and snuff mills were common in the Glasgow area. Dawsholm was still operating as both types of mills in 1795. There are also references to a grain or barely mill in the eighteenth century.

The paper mill at Dawsholm was the longest lasting and largest mill on the site. For at least three generations from the 1780s the mill was worked by the McArthur family, who had a warehouse in Glassford Street in Glasgow. The mill continued operating through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, finally closing in 1970.

At first glance, very little remains on the site, compared with surviving photos of the mill. However, by walking upstream from the bridge, the large dam or weir and the start of the lade are evident. The lade provided water power for the machinery and drove the pulping mill. However the Kelvin was often too brown and silty to be used in the actual paper making process. A string of settling ponds was created above and west of the site, fed by a small burn. The ponds also survive.

Cardonald College Glasgow is delighted to support the excellent work carried out by the Friends of the River Kelvin

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## **WENDY'S WALK** by Wendy Rattray



### A FORK IN THE ROAD

**H**aving spent the summer truly frustrated with my walking restricted because of a slight neck injury, I am keen and eager to get stuck in again, so here is my latest notion ...

Best not get too ambitious, so a nice wee walk on another beautiful river, the Avon. This one is centred on Chatelherault, and can be accessed from Central Station, in Glasgow, and then you are on the doorstep of the walk. The name has always intrigued me, not being very linguistically inclined, and I wonder at the Glaswegian pronunciation! (or any pronunciation!!). Anyway, it is an 8km walk, and taking roughly 2 hours (more for me, now being very unfit), and it offers a place for a welcome and much needed cup of tea at the end. The terrain is not too taxing, with only a couple of steeper places, and some steps. This is planned for Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October, although open to change if consensus is for another date.

Let's hear from you!! Or I will be walking alone...

*Editor's note - I apologise for retrospective printing of this notice, but include it here for general reference.*

## **LIVING WATERS PROJECT UPDATE** by Eilidh Spence

*Living Waters Celebrates its first year of project.*

**T**he Glasgow Living Water Project has just celebrated its first year of work. Over the last 12 months more than 90 volunteers have assisted with practical habitat management, survey work and public events. These volunteers have spent over 600 hours of their own time assisting with many aspects of the project, including provision of training on species identification and pond conservation techniques.

The support in Glasgow has been amazing. Volunteers and representatives from many different organisations have made a huge positive impact upon ponds and surrounding habitats in the Glasgow region. *Froglife* would like to send out a huge thanks to all the dedicated volunteers and other individuals that have assisted with the project over the last year.



*Froglife* are now looking to expand the project into North Lanarkshire. Anyone interested in future posts with *Froglife* are advised to keep checking the

charity's website for vacancies. Go to [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)  
The Living Water Project is funded by Heritage Lottery Funding, Biffaward and Glasgow Landfill Community Fund.

Above photo: Pond enhancement at Dawsholm Park LNR.  
Photos from Eilidh Spence

For further information on the Living Water Project please contact Eilidh Spence at [eilidh.spence@froglife.org](mailto:eilidh.spence@froglife.org) or call 01413390737.



Hibernaculum creation at Cardowan Moss LNR

Thanks go to Eilidh Spence for the accompanying photos to this update

*Do any FORKs have any ideas for feature stories for the next FORK news? Perhaps there are some folk who would like to contribute to the River Story series, or offer their opinions about the conservation issue raised in this edition?*

An advertisement for 'Walkbusters!' dog walking services. The ad features a white dog's face on the right side. The text on the left includes: "If your dog's alone and you're not at home...who you gonna call?" in a speech bubble, the 'Walkbusters!' logo with a paw print, the phone number 'Tel: 0793 175 5050', 'DOG WALKING/SITTING SERVICES in Glasgow\*West', the website 'www.walkbusters.co.uk', the email 'Email: info@walkbusters.co.uk', and 'FULLY INSURED AND POLICE CHECKED' at the bottom.

***WHAT AM I? Solution: Gate at centre of Snow Bridge***

## ***MINK ON THE KELVIN***

**T**hese photos were posted on Flickr by Garry Milligan, and we have his permission to reproduce them for FORK News. Gary writes, *'I came across a family of mink on my way home from work, near the Kelvin Aqueduct of the Forth & Clyde Canal. They were trying to get the last of the family out from the wrong side of the aqueduct wall (!), and not too bothered by the camera. I think they may be American mink (Neovison vison). Someone can perhaps advise..'*



The photos are absolutely charming, and it is lovely to be sharing our urban spaces so immediately with wildlife. Garry's contribution offers an opportunity to raise the issue of how we relate to introduced species in our habitats.

Minks reside in many of our river habitats around the UK and as the photos so clearly show, they are curious,



interactive and sociable animals. They prey on fish, but also on birds that live and nest in and around waterways. In the context of the Kelvin, this would include kingfishers, gossanders, mallards

and other ducks. A representative from the RSPB indicated that the official position of the organisation is that any introduced species is considered a potential

threat to our native species, and the threat to birds such as kingfishers is real: there are undoubtedly casualties.

I sought the official position from the Glasgow City Council Parks and Recreation but no one returned my call or responded to my emails. It would be interesting to hear the opinions of FORKs on this matter. All thoughts welcome.

*FORK* editor: Debra Hopkins  
[dbrhopkins@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dbrhopkins@yahoo.co.uk)

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**RIVER STORIES** by Debra Hopkins  
Memories of the River Derwent

The city of Hobart is the capital city of Tasmania. It is nestled under Mount Wellington, and is built on the river Derwent. The river flows into the Tasman sea and apart from being a busy port for commerce and tourism, the river provides an important backdrop to the lives of Hobartians, and the residents of its many suburbs.

I left Hobart for the big smoke of Melbourne and later on for more distant shores almost thirty years ago, and have visited a handful of times. Now after six years I have returned and am spending a few weeks with my sister who lives in Howrah, one of the eastern riverside suburbs. The opposing photo was taken from what is known as the Bellerive bluff - an outcrop of elevated land separating the Bellerive and Howrah beaches.

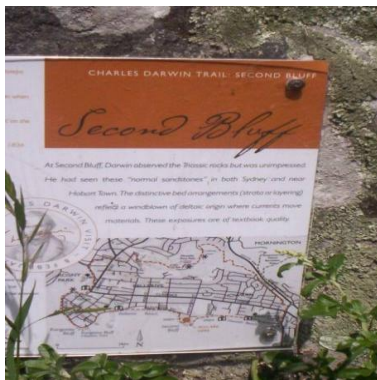


The river was visited and surveyed by Chalres Darwin in 1853: the Beagle moored at various locations on the river, including what is now known as Kangaroo Bluff. During his stay in and around Hobart he recorded features of the natural history of the river and its habitats while walking along the river's shores, although what he saw of the geology was not novel to him, having already visited Sydney and seen the same Triassic rock formations there.

Over the past few weeks I have followed the tracks of the great man daily, as I take my pleasant beach walks, and I find it curiously moving, not only because my wonder at the vision and genius of Darwin seems to be brought into especially critical relief through sharing this proximity, but also because it is along these beaches and the bluff rather than in the classroom that I took my first lessons in natural history.

One of the advantages of growing up in one of the river's suburbs was that I had the beach and the riverside as my playground - I dropped off my school bag and took a moment to refuel with an Anzac biscuit and a glass of juice and then high tailed it the two hundred metres or so to the beach and headland where I loved swimming, exploring, and drawing all manner of my exhibits until I was forcibly removed from the beach by one of my siblings sent on a mission from my mother. I have long lost track of my records but the memories flow afresh on every beach walk.

Darwin might be more impressed by the opportunities for marine life sightings today. In August a southern right whale gave birth in the River Derwent, a few kilometers out from the port of Hobart, and mother and calf delighted spectators for weeks with regular sightings of the pair cruising the river.



Every year, around New Year's Day, the port comes alive and rejoices with the arrival of the beautiful ocean yachts as they finish their journey from Sydney to Hobart.

*This is recognised as one of the world's great yacht races, and having witnessed this event many times, it really does inspire.*

*Above: A signpost indicating Darwin's Beagle visit to the Derwent*

**MINUTES OF THE 19th ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING OF  
THE FRIENDS OF THE RIVER KELVIN HELD AT  
HA'PENNY BRIDGE HOUSE  
AT 12.30p.m. ON SATURDAY 6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2010**

**PRESENT:** Mark Eden-Bushell, Charles Thompson, Fionna Eden-Bushell,, Kenneth Elder, Stephen Bostock, Lyn Dunachie, Ian Reddick, Olivia Scott, Ann Laird, Veronica Matthew, Helen Cameron, Kenneth Thornton, Richard Phelps and Allan Twigg.

**ELECTION OF SECRETARY:** Charles Thompson was elected as FORK Secretary by Fionna Eden-Bushell and seconded by Lyn Dunachie

**APOLOGIES:** Lucy Reynolds,

**MINUTES:** The Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> A.G.M. were passed on the motion of Lyn Dunachie and seconded by Fionna Eden-Bushell.

**ACCOUNTS:** The income & expenditure accounts for 2007 & 2008 were explained by the Treasurer, Kenneth Elder who answered questions. Ann Laird asked whether the Treasurer had applied for the tax relief available on gifts to the Society. The answer was not yet.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** The Convener suggested that the membership fees should not be increased & remain as follows:- Young Kelvin £3, Individual £12, Families£18, Corporate £100, Life Membership £120, Unwaged £10 and unwaged couples £15.

**CONVENER'S REPORT:** The Convener, Mark Eden-Bushell gave his address. He thanked Charles Thompson who was elected as the Convener Depute at the last A.G.M. & has now been elected as FORK's Secretary. He looks after Ha'penny Bridge House and has remade the kitchen, paid for by Lyn Dunachie in memory of her husband, Findlay. Charles organises the Clean-Ups and the food which follows them.

Charles Thompson also looks after Safety, has qualified in First Aid and work with Children.

Debra Hopkins is now the ***FORK NEWS*** Editor. She is at present in Australia, but the Autumn Number will be produced.

A group of Students from Glasgow University are now studying FORK and will be making their recommendations for FORK's future activities.

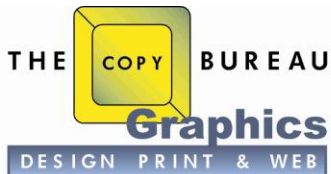
**NOMINATIONS FOR & ELECTION OF COMMITTEE:**

The present President, Convener and Committee were re-elected on the motion of Stephen Bostock and seconded by Ann Laird

**A.O.B.:** None

**DATE OF NEXT A.G.M.:** Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011.

***FORK CONVENER***  
*A. Mark Eden-Bushell*  
*32 Clouston St*  
*fax/tel. 0141 946 4542*  
***info.fork@ntlworld.com***



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