

Dragon Boat Race in Leith – have you entered yet?

✘ The organisers of a dragon boat festival to be held at Western Harbour, Leith, in September are hoping for a royal boost for the event.

Media outlets throughout the world featured pictures of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge taking part in a dragon boat race in Canada earlier this week.

The royal couple went head-to-head in a dragon boat race on Prince Edward Island, in what was described as one of the more entertaining engagements of their tour of Canada. However the prince was not so gentlemanly, and did not just allow his new wife to win the race.

And Cron Mackay said he hoped coverage of the royals having a great time would inspire people to take part in the Western Harbour event, which he is organising on behalf of the Rotary Club of Leith.

Mr Mackay, a former president of the club, said: “We are working hard to line up what’s set to be a spectacular fun-filled event for all the family on 3rd September. We have had great interest from companies, organisations and individuals, but all we need now is just a few more teams to come forward.

“The Duke and Duchess clearly had a fantastic time in the event in Canada and I know everyone who takes part in our Dragon Boat Challenge will do likewise.”

The Rotary Club, which hopes the event will raise thousands of pounds for good causes, is appealing for teams to take part.

Each team is asked to nominate a crew of 20, comprising 16 paddlers, a drummer and reserves. Each boat will have a

helmsman, provided by Dragon Boat Events Ltd., the company which is also supplying the 40ft vessels.

Racing will take place from throughout the day over a 250-metre course that passes by the former Royal Yacht Britannia. Spectators will be able to view the action from both the quayside behind safety barriers and from the Ocean Terminal shopping centre. They will also be able to enjoy a range of other attractions, with stalls, a tented village and local bands.

It costs £500, including VAT, to enter a team and each participant is expected to raise personal sponsorship of at least £75. Two-thirds of the funds raised by each team will go to the charity of the team's choice, with the remainder going to Rotary and other local charities.

Sponsors will be urged to donate their money under the Gift Aid arrangements, so boosting the value of sponsorship.

A range of prizes will be on offer. The Sir Tom Farmer Quaich will go to the winner of the grand final, and the winning team will have £200 donated to its nominated charity. There will also be £200 prizes, again donated to the team's nominated charity, for the team raising the most sponsorship and the individual in any team who raised the most money. There will be a prize for the best-dressed team.

The minimum age for participants is 16 and all team members must be able to swim.

Information on how to enter is available from Mr Mackay on 0131 552 1070 or on the website www.leithdragonboats.com

Picture caption: Cron Mackay, of the Rotary Club of Leith, with the bow of a dragon boat