

Five things you need to know today



National Poetry Day – Harlaw Hydro – Swimming in Edinburgh – Water of Leith sculptures – Queensferry Crossing

– These gondolas? A woman asks.

– Aye?

– A new transport initiative? An integrated system with the buses, so that –?

– Ye’ve seen yer last bus.

– With the trams then, so that –?

– Trams! (another gob mightier than the last) Gon-dol-as, I’m telling you!

Our only hope in this damn climate. Fleets of them, flotillas, convoys lining up along the City Bypass.

We’ll hear them serenading nearer when the time comes.



Today is National Poetry Day and so when The Edinburgh Reporter met the Edinburgh Makar, Ron Butlin, earlier in the week, he was asked to produce some appropriate lines of verse for publication here today. The theme for the day is ‘Water’, so the Makar suggested the above excerpt from his poem ***The Gondolas of South Bridge*** recently published in his collection *The Magicians of Edinburgh* by Polygon.

Harlaw Hydro is held up by the council leader in his recent discourse on Cooperative Councils as a great example of

cooperative working. This is a community share offering to set up a hydro power scheme which would firstly make a return for the investors, mainly individuals who have invested from £50 upwards, and secondly would use the profits for community based projects, including a dynamic educational display at the former Pentland Ranger Centre which is situated close to the dam. The City of Edinburgh Council has been involved in the scheme to the extent of offering practical help rather than money.

The share offering which closed earlier in the year was oversubscribed. The initial cost of the scheme to take water from the Harlaw Reservoir to run a turbine at the foot of the dam is £313,000, and the latest news after raising the finance is this:-

“Following a meeting with the City’s flood prevention team and the Panel Engineer responsible for approving any changes and ensuring the integrity of the dam it became clear that a detailed design of the hydrology is needed to obtain their approval. Accordingly the hydrology design has been separated from the main contract and we will shortly be commissioning a design engineer to undertake this work.”

So although the money is there and the [planning permission](#) is already almost a year old, there are still some steps to go through before it becomes a reality.

Continuing with the water theme, have you ever jumped off the high diving board at the Commonwealth Pool? Well The Edinburgh Reporter has to confess to doing just that some years ago, but now in the days of improved health and safety you have to learn to do these things properly. If you want to swim in Edinburgh then [Edinburgh Leisure](#) has many pools which offer great facilities to learn no matter what age you are. And there are diving courses too as well as just learning to do the front crawl...

Edinburgh Leisure reported in August that 720,000 people visited the swimming pools which they own, with over 225,000 of those visits being made to the Royal Commonwealth Pool alone. Despite that the deficit for the period to 30 June 2013 was £24,000, although that is less than their projected figure of £67,000.

You will find Edinburgh Leisure swimming pools at these

Locations:

- Ainslie Park Leisure Centre
- Dalry Swim Centre
- Drumbrae Leisure Centre
- Glenogle Swim Centre
- Gracemount Leisure Centre
- Leith Victoria Swim Centre
- Portobello Swim Centre
- Queensferry High Recreation Centre
- Royal Commonwealth Pool
- Warrender Swim Centre

The [Antony Gormley](#) statues forming the project known as [6 Times](#) placed in the Water of Leith in 2010 were removed last year.

The update from the National Galleries is as follows:-“As you know, the 6 Times project has suffered some frustrating technical difficulties which have forced us to remove the four figures that were sited along the Water of Leith. After a period of discussion with both the artist and ECC we are now in the process of pulling together all of the relevant information to submit a new planning application for their reinstallation. This will be progressed in tandem with consultation from a structural engineering firm who will be looking into altering the current mechanism we have on the works. I should stress that the length of time before we see the figures back in the river is still uncertain, (due to the complexity of the project) but rest assured we are working hard to try and get them back in place.”

Meantime we shall have to make do with a video of Antony Gormley talking about his work at a TED event in 2012.

The largest single transport project to be undertaken in Scotland in recent years is the Queensferry Crossing which will be another option for some traffic travelling between South Queensferry and Fife.

The most recent news on the project is that it will cost around £145m less than anticipated. Not the usual kind of announcement one expects in connection with projects of this nature, it was explained by the government that it has been brought about by “successful management of the project and the delivery of key milestones”.

You can watch the progress from one of seven webcams set up to show you the progress of the construction by clicking the link [here](#).