

Help SOS Leith to cherish their blue space

SOS Leith is a campaign group based in Leith which aims to clean up the area.

Who are you?

#SOSLeith is a small group of local resident volunteers concerned about issues of litter, water quality, sewage, silt, conservation and heritage in and around the lower basins of the Water of Leith. We formed in 2019, primarily to take action about piles of rubbish forming at the Victoria Bridge.



What do you hope to achieve?

We hope to protect and enhance the area and we are prepared to challenge authorities, businesses and landowners if something is not right for the community.

Why is this important?

We feel that we need to celebrate, value and fight for what we have at the Shore. In an area with so little green space, we have to cherish our 'blue' space.

What form does your campaign have?

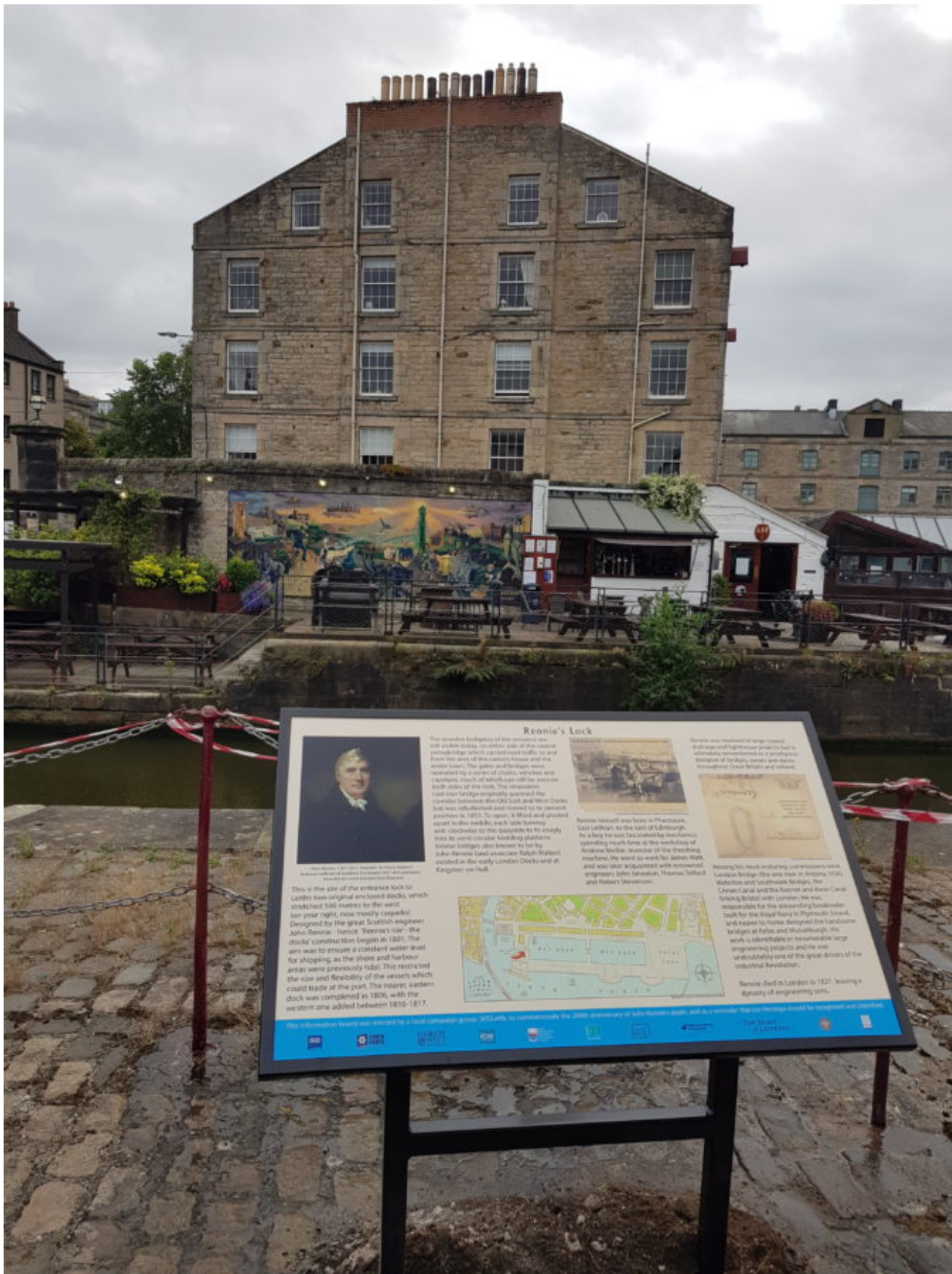
It takes a variety of forms, including our social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, from handing out free litter pickers to lobbying and corresponding with politicians and bodies such as Scottish Water and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

We've organised petitions around litter and sewage and held a public meeting to raise awareness. We've designed booms that help deflect water-borne litter. We stock flower containers on The Shore and last autumn erected an information board at the historic Rennie's Lock Bridge. Current campaigning is focussing on sewage and silt. We've had help on this from students at Edinburgh University and we're in the process of linking up with universities to do some practical research.

How can people reading this article help?

Like-minded volunteers need to take a proactive role and be able to respond quickly to fast-moving events. Contact your elected officials and make them do the job they are supposed to be doing for you and your neighbourhood. And take a litter-

picker with you if you're out for a walk.



Rennie's Lock

The wooden lockgates of the original one and a half lock, on either side of the central stone bridge which carried road traffic to and from the area of the custom house and the water basin. The gates and lockgates were supported by a series of stone, brick and cast-iron masts of which can still be seen on both sides of the lock. The remaining cast-iron bridge girders supported the counter between the Old East and West Docks but was refurbished and moved to its present position in 1873. The open, A-shaped canal avoided apart in the middle, with the turning and circulation to the basin to be empty and its semi-circular building platform. Similar buildings also known to be by John Rennie (and associate Robert Walker) erected in the early London Docks and at Kingston-on-Thames.

Rennie was involved in large-scale drainage and highway projects that were widely remembered as a prodigious designer of bridges, canals, and roads throughout Great Britain and Ireland.

Rennie was born in Perthshire, East Lothian, to the east of Edinburgh. As a boy he was fascinated by mechanics, spending much time in the workshop of Andrew Mackay, master of the clock-making trade. He went to work for James Watt, and was later acquainted with prominent engineers John Smeaton, Thomas Telford and Robert Stevenson.

Rennie's most enduring commission was London Bridge. This was in London, West, Middlesex and Southwark. Rennie, the Chief Engineer and the Robert and John Canal Surveyors with London, the was responsible for the surrounding fortifications for the Royal Navy in Plymouth, South, and plans to horse-drawn the handsome bridges at Kilmac and Murrumbidgee. His work is identifiable in numerous large engineering projects and he was undoubtedly one of the great drivers of the Industrial Revolution.

Rennie died in London in 1821, leaving a legacy of engineering work.

This information board was created for a local campaign group, MGLA, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of John Rennie's death, and is a reminder that our rivers need to be managed and protected.

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