



# *Environment Matters!*

**Lions International District 105N**

**2023 – 24**

**Bulletin 1**

**September**



Picture credits: The Five Sisters of Kintail – Malcolm Hogg  
Peacock butterfly and Red Admiral – Ron Henderson Aberdeen Bon Accord

## Thoughts from beneath a bonnet....



Illustration credit: Lion Jodie Galloway  
Aberdeen Bon Accord L.C. (SCIO)

In July 2017, Lions International updated the core service areas of Lions International to include five key areas. I wonder how many Lions Clubs then considered Environment as the most important of them. A good number of Clubs in 105N have risen to the challenge by including environmental projects within their programmes. Some have even changed their approaches to working with other Clubs to achieve this.

There is a growing realisation with Joe Public that humanity has not done anything like enough to avoid major change and that this will impinge on the lives of those of our generation and those following. National media quoted a poll which 46% of those polled considered that, in the UK, legislation and enforcement had not done enough to address climate change.

Politicians, worldwide, have laid out their ambitious and laudable aims to show their environmental credentials. Sadly, greenwashing has too often replaced genuine commitment to making real change and commercial interests are usually of higher priority than enforcing improved commercial practice.

Regrettably, there are some Lions in our District who do not accept the importance of doing something to mitigate the environmental damage our lifestyles have caused and continue to cause. Indeed, some years ago, the environmental efforts of my own Club occasioned a PDG to remark to the effect that his Club did real Lions work rather than environmental.

Make no mistake, the consequential impact of climate change on hunger, disaster relief and humanitarian needs will overtake our ability to lessen them. The UN General Secretary, Antonio Guterres announced on 27<sup>th</sup> July that the “earth warming” phase was now over and that the “earth boiling” phase has now started. Like it or not, this is the way of the present as well as the future.

Whether Lions are to be of relevance in addressing the present and future needs of our global community, depends on how we respond to the challenge. Business as usual or being ostriches burying our heads in the sand and hoping it goes away. The latter is not an option. The time to act is NOW!



Illustration credit: Lion Jodie Galloway  
Aberdeen Bon Accord L.C. (SCIO)

Malcolm Hogg

D.O. Environment

## Elf 'n safety

Many clubs carry out beach litter picks as part of their programme. Regretfully, to our shame, many popular beaches are contaminated by raw sewage. This is likely to increase as torrential downpours seem to be increasing. These overpower the antiquated drainage systems and water companies then discharge into rivers or directly into the sea.

Listed are the beaches that have been found to be the dirtiest according to Clear It Waste's, a commercial waste processing and recycling company's study of 400 beaches this summer. The score is based on a mark out of 10 for cleanliness based on suspended sewage particles and the level of sewage bacteria in the water. Other groups list completely different beaches!

1. Wharfe at Cromwheel, Ilkley - Bradford. 3.5/10
2. Blackpool North - Blackpool. 4.85/10
3. Weston Main - North Somerset. 4.99/10
4. Blackpool Central - Blackpool. 5.61/10
5. Blackpool South - Blackpool. 5.62/10
6. Dunster Beach - Somerset West and Taunton. 5.67/10
7. St Annes North - Fylde. 6.2/10
8. St Annes - Fylde. 6.27/10
9. Weston-super-Mare Sand Bay - North Somerset. 6.28/10
10. Heacham - King's Lynn and West Norfolk. 6.55/10
11. West Bay, Westgate - Thanet. 6.88/10
12. Tynemouth Cullercoats - North Tyneside. 7.03/10
13. Bridlington South Beach - East Riding of Yorkshire. 7.03/10
14. Bognor Regis (Aldwick) - Arun. 7.07/10
15. Southport - Sefton. 7.11/10
16. Wolvercote Mill Stream - Oxford. 7.13/10
17. Cleveleys - Wyre. 7.17/10
18. Scarborough South Bay - Scarborough. 7.18/10
19. Combe Martin - Combe Martin. 7.2/10
20. Fleetwood - Wyre. 7.23/10

Please take poo into account when planning any beach or waterside litter picks and include in your risk assessment.

## **“First do no harm”.**

As Lions, we pride ourselves on doing good. Many Clubs are now engaged in environmental projects and can take pride in our local impact. However, we must reflect on our own “green credentials” as well. A good example of this is a favourite advertising tool of Lions used to promote the logo and brighten up stalls.



Once they are deflated, they can attract animals to eat them and can be difficult to pass through their digestive systems. This can result in choking or blockage. Balloons are made of plastic and as such may take many decades to break down – a high price for a few hours use. Some authorities claim that supposedly biodegradable ones were totally unscathed after 6 months of industrial composting. To ensure we do good, regular auditing of our activities is needed to underpin our commitment to the environment. Lets start by banning the balloon!

## **Around the Club.**

Thanks to the Clubs who have let me know what they have been up to since the last bulletin. Firstly, thanks to those who responded to the request for feedback from Clubs which have been planting trees. I am sure that this represents a conservative figure.

From the returns I have received, Clubs who have been tree planting are

Aberdeen Bon Accord

Harlaw Academy Leo Club

Garforth and District

Filey

Holme Valley

Darlington (who also donated £1000 to another local tree planting project)

Tickhill and District

Harrogate

Ryedale

Together, almost 2000 trees were planted!

WildTribe Heroes books are still being presented to schools, Harlaw Academy Leos and Aberdeen-Bon Accord Lions are in the process of delivering twenty sets to local primary schools and Castleford and Pontefract have presented to Cherry Trees Academy in Pontefract.



Presentation of a set of Wildtribe Heroes to Cherry Trees Academy by Castleford and Pontefract Lions

Castleford and Pontefract have also been busy recycling 5000 pairs of specs, as well as milk carton tops, blister packs, ink cartridges, ring pulls and used stamps. Harlaw Leos collected twenty-five black bags of school uniforms at the end of last school year. With a cost-of-living crisis and with clothing production being a major source of water pollution, this is a win-win event.

### **Bit of good news!**

The rise in sea temperatures is proving the death knell of many coral reefs which, in turn, threatens the countless species living in them. Coral reefs are made up of individual polyps which have algae living in them. The algae provide food for the polyps. If the temperature rises too much, the algae die and the polyps struggle to survive, at best, or simply die out. Reefs with this happening bleach.

However, studies done by Newcastle University on the coral reefs of Palau, show that some algae are managing to adapt to the higher temperatures and both the algae and coral polyps are surviving. Hopefully, a sign of things to come.

### **How native is native?**

Climate change is changing the flora and fauna in the UK. Animals and plants which, in the past did not manage to survive in our climate are and will continue to turn up and become established.

A familiar one to all of us is the Red Admiral butterfly. Previously, all the UK Red Admirals arose from ones which migrated from the continent each summer and bred in the UK. None overwintered successfully in the UK. This year, the species overwintered successfully in the South of England.

Occasionally, small blips occur when a species does become established only briefly. A good example of this happened after WW1 when soldiers returning from warmer foreign climes carried the bug for causing malaria with them. Normally, this cannot tolerate UK temperatures, but the weather was unseasonably warm that year. Mosquitoes in nearby marshes fed on the soldiers with malaria and became infected leading to a short malaria in the Kent area. With the temperatures increasing, this could well happen again.

We may not get herds of wildebeest making their way up the A1, but our native species will change, some exotic species will become resident, and some long-established species will vanish.

A good example of one we don't want, but which is now established in the South of England is the termite!

### **Right to Roam?**

On national TV last week, a rambler commented on the medical and psychological benefits of woodland walks and the relatively small area open to walkers in Yorkshire as much of the area is in private hands with no public access. The interviewer touched on the other side of the debate that increasing access would lead to the irresponsible members of the public causing environmental damage and increase costs to landowners. The interviewee countered that access had to be given before education on responsibilities could take place. What do you think?

No-one can doubt the benefits to many people of gaining access to rural or wild places. However, the number of events arising from members of the public putting their personal wishes above those of others has risen enormously. In Scotland, as a teen and young man, I and many others mountaineered very freely over private land, without incurring the wrath of landowners. This largely, remains the case today, except where large concentrations of "toonsers" congregate in number and pay little consideration for the needs of wildlife, or the impact of their recreational activities on nature. This was down to the fact that we respected the mantra "Leave only footprints".



Lochranza, Isle of Arran

Malcolm Hogg

One of Scotland's most famous islands is Skye. You may have seen Bear Grylls access it hanging out of a helicopter instead of using the bridge (opened 1995) or the Glenelg ferry.



The ferry boat MV Glenachulish, the last manually operated turntable ferry in the world.

Malcolm Hogg

Perhaps his choice of transport may have been down to the traffic jams to well known beauty spots or the lack of parking spaces which some visitors think gives them the right to use passing places for stopping for a brew up, making a bad situation worse.

Another similar situation arises on the North coast road advertised as the NC500. Beautiful - but with single track roads, small communities and few amenities for tourists. There, one local reported that he opened his door to find a motorhome blocking his driveway whilst the driver defaecated behind the shrubs in his garden. When he remonstrated with the man, he was sworn at and told that he had no choice due to the lack of public facilities.

Wildfires destroying habitats have arisen due to thoughtless and inconsiderate attitudes. Children playing in sand dunes have been burned by charcoal from disposable barbeques being buried and left.

Many of us are familiar with the widespread belief in the dog-poo fairy, who is much busier than the tooth fairy. The dog-poo fairy however collects from trees and fences. Apparently, as it is not the owner's fault that there is not a bin to hand, that absolves them of the responsibility to dispose of it properly.

The change required is educational. Those Clubs who have presented Ellie Jackson's books to schools have supported efforts to make children more aware of their environmental responsibility and are helping to "catch them young" and give hope for the future.

Can Lions play a role in educating adults about responsibility?

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/238150478749545>

The link above shows the aftermath of a music festival which took place in District 105N. Normally, the abandoned tents, sleeping bags and rubbish left at festivals is bulldozed and then to landfill.

At least recycling the tents and sleeping bags abandoned by the thoughtless and ignorant can provide some refugees with some protection from the elements. Is there potential for Lions Clubs to expand this to provide support for some of our homeless?

### **A bit of light relief!**

The link below takes you to a bit of education and fun about wombats!

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1353081325634704>

### **It's the season for .....**

With all parts of the District now enjoying autumnal weather, some things are predictable. Rain and gales will happen and, equally predictably, I am appealing to the gardeners amongst us to delay tidying up flower beds. Many invertebrates complete their life cycles in the hollow stems of some perennials and others do so in the leaf litter. Who knows, you may be rewarded by visits from a hedgehog raking for food before hibernation.



Dead flower stems of *Astrantia* and accumulated leaves and twigs from the shrub border

Photo credit Rosemary Hogg –  
Aberdeen Bon Accord



And lastly! In Iceland the young puffins are leaving the nest and do so by throwing themselves off cliffs into the sea. Unfortunately, they can be confused by the lights of townships and wander into towns where they have little chance of finding the sea. Many Icelandic communities have a wonderful response to this issue. Please see the link below.

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/142803798904366>