

## **Leg 6 Braid/Balerno and Swanston/Burdiehouse burns (Upper reaches of both rivers)**

Leave the Firrhill Tesco Superstore and head towards the distant Pentland Hills. Head through the car park. A very short path leads towards a roundabout. Cross the right-hand most road to take a short lane into playing fields. Follow the left-hand edge of the fields. Cross left over a small bridge. When over bear right, upstream. Follow the burn as it bears right. Soon a footbridge joins from the right. Do not cross, instead turn left uphill, to climb steps into the Gallolle housing. Turn right and follow the road through pleasant, well-proportioned housing to meet the main Redford Rd. Turn right and after a few dozen paces cross into the entrance to woods.

Go through the woods, on well-maintained paths. Keep the river on your left. As the woods end, cross a small bridge to come upon the entrance road to the Polo Fields housing development. Go over Dreghorn Road. Heading towards the Pentlands a tarmac path leads to the left passing a play area. Keep the Polo Fields housing on your left. Where the housing ends, keep onwards. Rise slightly before descending to the right to re-join the stream in trees. Keep on upstream. Easily pass beneath the ring road to reach a gate on the left. Once through the gate, aim uphill for Bonaly Tower and Reservoir. Ascend following the right-hand edge of the field. Near the top of the field, bear right into trees. A good path leads ahead. It rises, somewhat up and down in places, to emerge near the Bonaly Car Park.

Turn left, uphill, and follow the good track all the way to Bonaly reservoir. Pass through the conifer plantation. On exiting, keep ahead and right. Soon the coll - the watershed of the Bonaly Burn - is gained. Pause. The next objective is the top of Capelaw Hill. Climb the slope to your left, and head up the ridge to the top. Next, descend directly towards Allermuir Hill. Cross through a gate and over the track, at the wide coll, to begin the steep climb up to the very top of Allermuir (493m). This is the watershed between the Figate/Braid/Balerno/Dean burns that we have followed from the coast and the Swanston/Burdiehouse/ Brunstane burns, that we will soon follow - to reach the sea at Brunstane (at the end of leg 7). Allermuir is actually a hydrological apex. Water drains in three totally different directions. Namely down the Esk, Swanston and Bonaly burns.

Begin the decent by setting off along the ridge towards Caerketton Hill. We are aiming for Swanston. The ridge leads downwards. However, after about 150m leave the ridge by descending to the north. Pick out a long, slow diagonal descent beneath Byreside Hill. Make your way downwards past springs (the sources of the Swanston burn). Aim for the T-woods above Swanston. Half way down, keep to the right of the quiet, lonely Muillieputchie (345m) ridge. (The author plans for his ashes to be scattered on the ridge hereabouts, with a nice view over Edinburgh!!)

Before reaching the woods various paths coalesce. At their junction continue down, and follow a well-constructed path to Swanston village. Pick up the road. Follow it down. Pass Swanston Farm Steading on your left. The road leads you over the by-pass. Take the first right into the housing estate at Caiyside. Curve down - right – back towards the busy by-pass. Follow Caiyside round, alongside the by-pass, to the bitter end. Rise slightly to exit by a footpath that leads up to Swanston Dr, the Biggar Rd. and on the right the Craigdon Mountain Sports (café, toilets) complex and the end of this leg of the Edinburgh's Five Rivers walk.

# Route map

