

Visit Dams to Darnley Country Park



During the winter there's plenty to see and enjoy at Dams to Darnley Country Park.

This is the second edition of *Wagtail* a newsletter and events calendar for Dams to Darnley Country Park.

Inside you will find:

- **A history of the Barrhead dams**
- **Tips for fisher folk**
- **Spotlight on beech trees**
- **Winter events calendar**

The next edition of *Wagtail* will be in out in Spring 2009.

For regular updates about the park and events complete the form on page four.

A walk in the park

DURING THE SUMMER and autumn months the countryside rangers held a series of events including several guided walks, community fun days and a bat and moth night.

Three fun days were held during August at Darnley Mill, Cowan Park, Barrhead and Mearns Park, Newton Mearns.

These fun filled events allowed communities bordering the country park to learn more about its development and join in activities and games.

A bat and moth event took place in September near Patterton Station.

Built heritage was the theme for a well attended Dams to Darnley guided walk in September, starting at St Luke's High School, Barrhead. This walk followed the main spinal path through the park to Darnley Mill before returning to St Luke's by minibus.

October events centred around Waulkmill Glen with a guided walk and an autumn art event.



Country park walks and events are planned all year round.

New reservoir path is open for visitors

THE NEW PATH AT BALGRAY RESERVOIR WAS formally opened recently by Councillor Tony Buchanan, chair of the Dams to Darnley joint committee.

Nearly 80 people turned up to walk the 4km return route from Balgraystone Road, Barrhead to Aurs Road. A leaflet to promote the new path is planned for next year.

During the year the Moffat Centre, based at Glasgow Caledonian University, has been working on a recreation study to guide the future development of the country park. The study gathered the views of stakeholders and the wider local population.

The results highlighted that the main strength of the country park was as an area for peace, quiet and relaxation, with its scenery, landscape and natural and built heritage being greatly valued. As a result respondents visualised a country park where infrastructure and facilities should promote walking, cycling and riding, angling and non-motorised watersports, in addition to opportunities to enjoy the country park's natural and built heritage. The recommendations of the study will be considered fully by the country park joint committee. Look out for details in future editions.



Councillors and officials led by Lord Provost Sir David Richmond visit the Barrhead dams (27 September 1899).

Spotlight on park history

Barrhead dams

Despite these issues between 1847 and 1848 Waulkmill Glen and Ryat Linn reservoirs were constructed. Two smaller reservoirs, Littleton and Coalhill were also completed.

The largest water feature of the Gorbals work, Balgray Reservoir, was built between 1853 and 1854. In 1865 the reservoirs began supplying Barrhead

The dams dominate the southern half of the country park. They have various workings such as the towers that stand in Balgray and Waulkmill Glen reservoirs.

The towers are linked to outlets that control the water flow and allow the reservoirs to be drained.

At the top of Waulkmill Glen the Brock Burn was altered to run down a stone-lined waterfall.

There are sluice gates and associated buildings to the east, running below the road, where the flow of water today is continuous and rapid. The structures were built from red sandstone blocks, with the sluice gates set into the dam. An arched façade faces onto two square ponds through which the water passes. Opposite is a small, hexagonal structure for the control and flow of water

The engineering work required to build the reservoirs and the gravitational water system was immense, an impressive example of Victorian engineering at its best.

THERE MAY NOT BE MANY VISIBLE SIGNS

around Dams to Darnley of historic buildings and activity. However the area has been used for many purposes and has a long history. Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division has recently completed an inventory detailing the history of the country park area.

In future editions of *Wagtail* we'll examine a historical theme in detail.

In 1845 the Gorbals Gravitation Water Company (GGWC) was set up to provide a clean water supply to the Gorbals. The Brock Burn was identified as a suitable source and land was obtained from Sir Hew Crawford and Sir John Maxwell.

The GGWC was hampered by various issues, including landowner compensation and a parliamentary bill that was opposed at all stages by the rival Glasgow Water Company.

Tips for fisher folk at park

FOR GENERATIONS anglers have enjoyed the Barrhead dams as a picturesque and peaceful site to practise their sport.

The dams support a range of native species including pike, brown trout, roach, perch and eel.

For those who fish at the dams a few simple guidelines should be observed:

- Discarded line should be cut up and placed in the new bins or taken home.



One of the casualties from poor fishing practice.

- Litter should also be binned or taken home.
- Existing paths should be used as much as possible to avoid disturbing wildlife and for your safety.
- Parking is very limited at the dams. Make sure you do not park in front of gates at anytime. Scottish Water, farm and emergency vehicles need access 24 hours a day.
- Be considerate of others, keep radios low and check for passers by before casting.
- Make sure someone knows where you are and when you expect to return.
- Weil's disease results from rat urine. Wash your hands before eating, do not place food on the banks and cover any cuts

with waterproof plasters.

- Use the correct tackle for fish (eg wire trace for pike).
- Welfare of the fish should be your first priority. Make sure you can land your fish, use forceps to remove hooks, handle fish and keep them out of the water as little as possible.
- If your fish is deep hooked, do not pull on the line. Cut the line as far as possible in the mouth and release immediately.
- Choose barbless hooks where possible.
- Never move a fish or use live bait. Introducing fish species to an area is illegal because it can result in major disruption to a natural ecosystem, as well as introducing disease.



Angling for tips.

- Show restraint on number of fish taken and respect fishing seasons, return fish where possible.
- Fishing is a sport enjoyed by many people for various reasons from fun through to food. Respect other anglers and their motivation.
- Angling is a potentially dangerous pastime, be aware of the dangers of deep water and minimise the risks.

Darnley Mill paths

The Darnley Mill area of the country park has a network of paths, with access points on Nitshill Road, Corselet Road and from Southpark Village. This network creates two circular walks, a short walk around the pond on a mowed grass path and a longer walk on surfaced paths.

The Darnley Mill area is a haven for wildlife with species rich wildflower meadows, ponds and scrubland which attracts many different animals.

As with the new Balgray reservoir path, a leaflet to promote the routes at Darnley Mill is planned for next year.

● Entrance points

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Spotlight on beech trees

THE BEECH TREE IS ONE of the most common trees found in the woodland at Waulkmill Glen.

These magnificent trees are deciduous which means they shed their leaves each year. They have smooth grey bark and dense green foliage, which turns bright orange/brown in the autumn before falling to the ground, producing large areas of leaf litter. The fallen leaves provide a vital food source and home for minibeasts like millipedes.

Beech trees do not usually produce a good crop of nuts, called beech masts, each year, but if the conditions are right an abundant crop may be produced every five to eight years. Oil from beech nuts has been used for cooking, fuel for oil lamps

and two centuries ago beech nut butter was made commercially from British beech trees.

BEECH TREE FACTS

Beech trees will normally reach 30m (100ft) when fully grown.

The normal life span of a beech tree is about 300 years.

The Latin word for beech *fagus* may come from the Greek *phagein* (to eat).

Beech nuts were eaten in times of famine.

Beech nuts are a favourite food of pigs.



Fallen leaves from beech trees provides a welcome haven for wildlife.

Report any problems

Report any fly-tipping, graffiti or antisocial behaviour to the countryside rangers Richard 0141 577 4053 or Eilidh 0141 577 4054.

Dams to Darnley Country Park Events Calendar

- All events are FREE.
- Booking is required for some events.
- All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Date & Time: Sat 22 Nov. 10am–1.30pm(ish)
Event Title: On yer bike to Barrhead

Description: Bring your bike and meet the countryside rangers for this free cycle to Balgray reservoir and back again. There is free hire of bikes, helmets and mobility scooters and a free Dr Bike session before we set off. A £10 returnable deposit, plus photographic ID is required for bike hire. This route covers approximately seven miles over good paths, we will be stopping for lunch so bring a snack. There is a moderate incline up to the reservoirs so a reasonable level of fitness is required. All cyclists must wear a helmet and all children must be accompanied by an adult.

Location: Darnley (details on booking).  

Date & Time: Sat 29 Nov. 1.30pm–3.30pm
Event Title: Folklore of trees

Description: Celebrate national tree week on a guided walk with the countryside rangers to discover the folklore of trees.

Location: Meet at the Ashoka restaurant car park, Corselet Road, off Nitshill Road, Darnley.  

Date & Time: Sun 7 Dec. 1.30pm–3.30pm
Event Title: Crafty Christmas

Description: Create some natural decorations with the countryside rangers and boost your Christmas spirit. Make a holly wreath, willow star or tree bobbles! This is a free event and all ages and abilities will be catered for. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Location: Barrhead (details on booking). 

Date & Time: Sun 28 Dec. 10.30am–1.30pm(ish)
Event Title: Walk off your Christmas spirit

Description: Walk off the excesses of Christmas and discover the country park with this 5½km (3.4miles) walk.

Location: Meet at St Luke's High School, Springfield Road, Barrhead.   

Date & Time: Sun 18 Jan 09. 10.30am–12.30pm
Event title: Tracks and trails

Description: Learn to be a nature detective and discover the creatures of the country park.

Location: Meet at the Ashoka restaurant car park, Corselet Road, off Nitshill Road, Darnley.  

Date & Time: Sun 8 Feb 09. 10.30am–12.30pm
Event Title: Birds for beginners

Description: Learn about the birds at Balgray Reservoir on this guided walk.

Location: Meet at St Luke's High School, Springfield Road, Barrhead.  

Date & Time: Sat 28 Feb 09. Noon–3pm
Event Title: Spring clean your countryside

Description: Help spring clean your countryside with your community and the countryside rangers. Get involved, grab some gloves and get on the go. Refreshments will be provided for volunteers. All litter picking equipment will be provided, suitable clothing must be worn and all children must be accompanied by an adult.

Location: Meet at the Ashoka restaurant car park, Corselet Road, off Nitshill Road, Darnley.  

KEY CHART



No booking required



Booking is required



Bring a packed lunch



Wear appropriate clothing

Join our mailing list or contact the countryside rangers

The Dams to Darnley countryside rangers are planning a series of events throughout the year. If you would like to be sent information on upcoming events and all the latest news join our mailing list.

Name _____

Email Address _____

Address _____

Telephone No _____

To join our mailing list post or email your details to the address below.

This information will be treated as confidential and used only for the purpose stated. If you do not wish your details to be held on computer tick this box

Contact Details

Email: d2d@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 0141 577 4054 (Eilidh Milne)
0141 577 4053 (Richard Bolton)

Post: Dams to Darnley Country Park, East Renfrewshire Council, Environment Department, 2 Spiersbridge Way, Spiersbridge Business Park, Thornliebank, East Renfrewshire G46 8NG