

Welcome to Dams to Darnley Country Park



Dams to Darnley Country Park sits between Barrhead, Darnley and Newton Mearns

THIS IS THE FIRST EDITION of our newsletter - *Wagtail* - devoted to the new Dams to Darnley Country Park.

You'll find information about:

- **The country park landscape.**
- **Our new path at Balgray reservoir.**
- **A spotlight on Grey Heron.**
- **Our events calendar.**

The next edition of *Wagtail* will be in Winter 08 or get regular updates using our form on page four.

New rangers set to spread the word

DAMS TO DARNLEY HAS two new countryside rangers in place.

Eilidh Milne and Richard Bolton will be working to help establish the country park and to build a series of park events.

It's all part of a one year pilot funded by the two councils - East Renfrewshire and Glasgow - and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Councillor Tony Buchanan, chair of the country park joint committee said: "Our new rangers will be the very public sign that Dams to Darnley Country Park is starting to develop.

"For many residents and visitors the rangers will be the public face of the park

and their knowledge and enthusiasm will be key to helping develop it as the location of choice for local residents and wider visitors looking to enjoy the walking, and leisure activities the park has."

Richard and Eilidh are planning a series of events and guided walks at the park, the first events calendar and contact details are on page four where you can get regular updates.



Countryside rangers Eilidh and Richard

The latest update on the country park

EAST RENFREWSHIRE AND GLASGOW CITY councils are working together to create the new country park called Dams to Darnley within the greenspace next to Barrhead, Darnley and Newton Mearns.

The country park is still in its early stages of development, which means there are limited facilities on the ground.

Over the coming years the country park will continue to develop through a series of improvements leading to new recreational and visitors facilities.

Improvements to what's there in the park, including stone walls and cast iron Victorian railings have already taken place and there are new signs, benches and bins.

The first path improvements in the country park have taken place this year at Darnley Mill and Balgray Reservoir.

In future editions of *Wagtail* we'll bring you more details and regular updates on work in the park.

We are also working on a new website for the country park which we should be able to give you more details about in the winter edition of *Wagtail*.



Balgray Reservoir



Meadow Brown Butterfly

The country park's diverse landscape

The country park is made up of a patchwork of different landscapes, including open water, wetland and burn, woodland, scrub, grassland and farmland.

Water

The Barrhead dams are the most striking feature in the country park, dominating its southern half and covering over 220 acres. The dams are made up of a series of interconnected reservoirs: Balgray; Coalhill; Ryat Linn; Littleton and Waulkmill Glen, owned and managed by Scottish Water. The reservoirs, all of which are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, are home to a range of different wild birds all year round, whilst they also attracts many winter visitors.

Woodland

Pockets of woodland can be found across the country park. The ribbon of woodland which runs through its heart, from Darnley Mill in the north to Waulkmill Glen, is the most important. Waulkmill Glen is not only a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of its geology, but is also an important ancient semi-natural woodland.

Grassland

Large areas of grassland can be found throughout the country park. The grassland around Darnley is particularly rich for wildflowers, such as common spotted orchid and greater bird-foot-trefoil. On warm summer days grasslands also attract lots of butterflies - common blue, meadow brown and ringlet can all be seen.

Scrub

The country park contains miles of hedgerows, each acting as wildlife corridors linking up habitats within the country park and the wider countryside. The country park hedgerows, which are mainly hawthorn and blackthorn, also provide home for a wide variety of wildlife. Areas of mature scrub have also developed within the country park, such as at Darnley. During the autumn, berries within hawthorn scrub provide a vital food source for birds such as redwing and fieldfare.

Be responsible outdoors

THE LAND REFORM ACT gives everyone access rights for walking, cycling, horse riding and all other forms of non-motorised access to most land and inland water across Scotland.

With these rights comes responsibilities.

As a visitor to the park, or when visiting the outdoors, make sure you act responsibly by respecting people's privacy, safety and livelihoods. Also make sure you look after Scotland's environment.

This is particularly important with the Dams to Darnley Country Park because much of it remains as working farmland in private ownership.

When visiting the country park please use the litter bins and help us tackle anti-social behaviour.

Report litter, vandalism or flytipping to the countryside ranger service (contact details on page four).

As the country park is developed a network of paths is being put in.

Access rights and responsibilities are explained in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com



Know your outdoor access rights and responsibilities

Pathway opens park up

A PATH IS IMPROVING access into the heart of the Dams to Darnley Country Park.

The path runs from the Ashoka Restaurant on Nitshell Road (where there are several bus links) to Aurs Road in Barrhead.

The northern half of the route runs along Corselet Road. From here there are a series of entrances from Corselet Road into Darnley Mill. Although Corselet Road is a very quiet public road, it is occasionally used by vehicles.

The path takes in many of the country park's main features.

The southern half of the route follows the edge of Ryat Linn, Waulkmill Glen and Littleton Reservoirs, passing under the Victorian railway viaduct.

Most of the route is

relatively flat, although a short section rises steeply towards Waulkmill Glen Reservoir from the north.

The 3.6km route connects to the new Balgray Reservoir path at Aurs Road.

You will need to be extra careful crossing Aurs Road because it is a busy route between Newton Mearns and Barrhead.



The path links from The Ashoka restaurant into the country park

New path at Balgray Reservoir open



The new Balgray Reservoir path which links into the main path through the country park was completed in September.

The path at Balgray Reservoir is already proving popular. The route runs parallel to the southern shore of Balgray Reservoir. The path is flat and is ideal for all users.

The 2km route can be accessed from two new entrances at Balgraystone Road and Aurs Road. Parking is limited at Aurs Road, but the path is only a five minute walk from Springfield Road at St. Luke's High School in Barrhead. New seats have been installed along the path, making it a great place to stop and admire the views. Many people use this opportunity to watch the birdlife such as the grey heron.

Spotlight on grey herons

GREY HERONS CAN BE seen regularly in the country park around the ponds, burns and reservoirs.

These impressive birds are almost a metre tall with a wing span of 155-175cm.

Mainly grey and white they can often be found on the waters edge where they slowly stalk their prey before striking with their powerful yellow bill, catching fish, frogs, insects or even small mammals.

Grey herons have a loud croaking 'kah-ark' which can often be heard at dusk when they are flying to their night-time roosts.

FACTS ABOUT... GREY HERONS

Grey herons nest in colonies in trees where they build big stick nests.

Grey herons weigh up to 2kg - that's the same as two bags of sugar.

There are 14,200 pairs of grey heron in Britain.

Grey herons can live for over 25 years.



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: Sunday 21 September
Time: 11.00am - 1.30pm
Event Title: **Dams to Darnley
Guided Walk**

Description: Enjoy a guided walk along the central spine of the country park. Approximately 5½ km in length this walk is an excellent way of discovering the country park.

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



Date: Saturday 4 October
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm
Event title: **Autumn in Waulkmill Glen**

Description: Discover the autumn colours and seasonal changes of Waulkmill Glen on this countryside ranger led guided walk.

Location: At the Ashoka, Nitshill Road,
Darnley.



Date: Tuesday 14 October
Time: 11.00am - 2.00pm
Event Title: **Kids and Kites**

Description: Enjoy a fun filled afternoon as we create kites & learn about flying creatures that can be found within the country park.

Location: Meet at Mearns Park, Newton Mearns.



Date: Sunday 19 October
Time: 1.00pm - 3.00pm
Event Title: **Autumn Arts**

Description: Join the Countryside Rangers on an adventure to the magical Waulkmill Glen woodland and create natural works of art! This event is suitable for all ages, children should be accompanied by adults. It will involve a short walk over uneven surfaces.

Location: Meet at the Ashoka, Nitshill Road,
Darnley.



No booking required

KEY CHART



Wear appropriated clothing



Booking is required



Bring a packed lunch

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 _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Telephone No _____

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

Contact Details

Email: d2d@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk
Web: Currently under development
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