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Image caption –

Welcome to our twenty sixth edition of Wagtail, the newsletter and events calendar for Dams to Darnley Country Park.

Inside you will find:

- **Autumn events look back**
- **Country park update**
- **Wildlife witter**
- **Looking ahead**
- **Highlights of 2014**
- **Winter events calendar**

The next edition of Wagtail will be out in spring 2015.

## Autumn antics

THE ONLY EVENT IN A quiet August was our annual 'canine competitors' assault course. Dogs big and small (and their owners) had a go at our jumps and hoops.

We held another two regular events in September. Our 'build a bivvy' den making is always popular and this year was no exception, with many a sturdy shelter made. On our annual longer walk we made the journey to the Greenock Cut at Muirshiel Country Park and were rewarded with a glorious day with great views over the Clyde Estuary. A big thank you to the countryside rangers from Muirshiel for their help and talk about the park.

The poor weather on our 'Batman and mothin' event prevented the bats from appearing but not the large frog that was found! During



An autumnal fairy made on our 'crafty capers' event.

our 'crafty capers' event, held during the October school holiday, children made hedgehogs and fairies using leaves, conkers and anything else they could find.

Our final event of the autumn was our 'fungi frolic' walk where, with a little help from Professor James Milner-White of Glasgow University, we managed to find many and varied species of fungi.

## Country park update

AS PART OF THE DAMS to Darnley project, work is ongoing to improve access to, and visitor facilities within, the country park.

In mid August an agreement between the UK and Scottish Governments and the local authorities within the Clyde Valley area was signed. The City Deal agreement will contribute £1.13 billion to major infrastructure projects across the Clyde Valley area over the next 20 years. Within East Renfrewshire a number of proposed City Deal projects will benefit the country park and its visitors. Identified City Deal projects to be funded include the straightening of Aurs Road, plus the associated establishment of a Dams to Darnley visitor centre with car parking and a new Barrhead South Railway Station, on the western edge of the country park.

Further details of

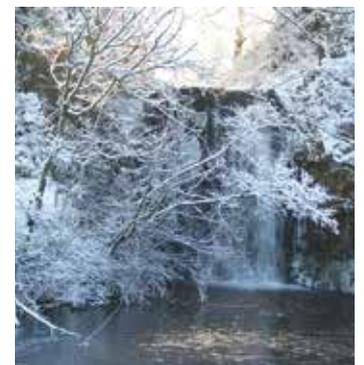


Image caption –

infrastructure, access, landscape and biodiversity enhancements associated with the planned development of Barrhead South have also been detailed within Supplementary Planning Guidance produced recently by East Renfrewshire Council. These will include new and upgraded paths, improving access to and within the Country Park.

Future editions of Wagtail will provide updates as available.

# Spotlight on park wildlife

## Eilidh & Joe's wildlife witter

WHAT A STUNNING autumn colour we had! As trees go dormant for winter they lose the green food-making chlorophyll in their leaves. As this green fades we can see the orange and yellow colours of the leaves that have been there all along. Reds are created when glucose in the leaves is trapped and reacts with sunlight and cold nights. So this autumn has been perfect for beautiful colour. Finally

the leaves die and brown waste products are all that remain.

When the rain eventually came, mushrooms appeared. On a walk with Scottish Wildlife Trust we identified 34 different species of fungi in the country park (and we did not even make it into Waulkmill Glen woodland)! Thanks to Graeme Walker for sharing his fantastic knowledge with us. One species we saw a lot of



Beech jelly disc.

was beech jelly disc. As the name suggest, look out for this fungi on dead beech trees.

The countryside rangers saw their first jay in the country park at the start of October. These normally elusive woodland birds come out in the autumn to forage for and bury acorns, to be found in tougher times. One bird will bury several thousand acorns each year.

Also in October we surveyed our new pond which was only completed six months ago. Already we have found 14 different species! These included: damselfly larvae, dragonfly larvae, water boatmen (greater and lesser), mayfly larvae and great diving beetle. Ponds are brilliant for biodiversity, providing a home, food and water for many species.

## Looking ahead to 2015



A citizen science project from 2014.

WE ARE BUSY PLANNING for 2015 in the country park. As well as some of our usual events, including the dog assault course, den building and Halloween activities we are intending to try a few different things for next year. Look out for our events calendar which

will be published early in the New Year which will list all of our events for 2015.

We will be running a few events next year through the Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) Network. OPAL is a UK-wide citizen science initiative that allows the public to get hands-on with nature, whatever their age, background or level of ability. The Glasgow City of Science partnership became a member of OPAL this year. On the days when the countryside rangers are not holding an event, OPAL will be running some of their own within the country park, through their community scientist, who is based at the Glasgow Science Centre.

During the year ahead the countryside rangers are aiming to study the country

park's mire habitat. Mires are marshy areas which are wet at least six months of the year and have their own distinctive flora. We are also hoping to put up some bat boxes in the country park to increase the number of roosting sites.

A major project for our volunteers is to clear out the old curling pond. Currently the pond is heavily overgrown and difficult to see.

The countryside rangers will also be promoting access for horses within the country park during 2015, as well as running an event with the British Horse Society. Finally, we also plan to focus upon encouraging responsible amongst dog owners, in line with access legislation.



## REPORT ANY PROBLEMS

Report any antisocial crimes in progress to the police on **101**

Other antisocial problems such as fly-tipping or graffiti should be reported to the countryside ranger service on **0141 577 4053/54**

Outwith office hours call 'Clean Glasgow' on **0800 027 7027** or East Renfrewshire 'Ring and Report' on **0800 013 0076**



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### Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

- take responsibility for your own actions
- respect the interests of other people
- care for the environment.

# Highlights of 2014

## Wildlife finds

THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR WAS THE SIGHTING OF A ruddy darter dragonfly, a first for the country park and the wider area. In terms of birdlife we have also had great sightings of our resident kingfishers this year, which always brightens up our day. Whilst there are always plenty of sightings of dippers, this year we had another first for the country park, a jay. A not so welcome find was the presence of a New Zealand flatworm which is an invasive non-native species.



Ruddy darter.

## Events

A NEW EVENT FOR US IN 2014 WAS ARCHERY. LAPWING Lodge came along to teach us some new skills in July and managed to get everyone on target by the end! They returned a few weeks later as part of our Commonwealth Games themed family day. Hundreds of folk turned up and tried various fun sports. In August we again had our dog assault course which this time was held at Patterton. Another great, fun day for everyone involved.



Commonwealth family fun day.

## Volunteers

WE DREAD TO THINK WHERE WE WOULD BE WITHOUT our volunteers. We cannot thank you enough for all your commitment, hard work and putting up with our terrible banter. A massive achievement for the year was completing elm tree pond. From a barren hole, to a wildlife haven it is great to see the product of all the blood, sweat and tears. Believe us, after shifting 20 tonnes of clay to line the pond, only for it to still not hold water, is enough to bring anyone to tears!



Some of our wonderful volunteers.

## Jogging club

FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR WE RAN A 10 WEEK jogging programme to take people from zero to 5K. With our ever enthusiastic coach Howie Pitman for encouragement and Matthew Wilder ringing in our ears, we reached our goal. It was made fun throughout with games and training that included being snails and centipedes! I think by the end of the 10 week programme everyone was surprised with how far they had come.



Nobody's gonna break a ma stride.

## Corporate volunteers

AS WELL AS OUR FORTNIGHTLY PUBLIC VOLUNTEERS WE have had lots of helping hands from corporate groups. During 2014 this included Santander, Silverburn and Scottish Water. The step from an office to wearing waders and pulling rubbish out a burn is a big one. Thank you so much for your good spirits and willingness to take on any task thrown at you. If your company wants to volunteer with us please contact the countryside ranger service, details are on the back page.



Santander volunteers.

# 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.

## Walking in a winter wonderland

Saturday 10 January, 10am – 12.30pm

**Description:** Walk off the seasonal spoils on a jaunt around the country park with the countryside rangers. This walk will cover approximately six miles at a steady pace.

**Location:** Meet at the World Buffet restaurant car park, Corselet Road, Darnley G53 7RN.



## February flocks

Sunday 22 February, 1 – 3pm

**Description:** Bring your binoculars and telescopes and join the countryside rangers on this walk to spot flocks of our winter visiting birds on Balgray Reservoir.

**Location:** Meet at the Balgray Reservoir car park, Balgraystone Road, off Springfield Road, Barrhead G77 6PG.



## To infinity and beyond

Friday 6 March, 6.30 – 8.30pm

**Description:** Join the countryside rangers and experts from Glasgow University to sort the stars from the satellites and the planets from the planes. An indoor talk at St Luke's High School will ask 'what's in the sky just now?'

An outdoor viewing session will follow at Balgray Reservoir, letting you use some of your new found knowledge.

**Location:** St Luke's High School, Springfield Road, Barrhead G78 2SG.



## Try Science: British Science Week

Saturday 21 March, 1 – 3pm

**Description:** The Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) network is a UK-wide citizen science initiative that allows you to get hands on with nature, whatever your age or knowledge. Why not come along and take part one of OPAL's environmental surveys within the country park? Learn how to look after the environment by helping out in a nationwide science project. We do not have enough scientists in the UK so come and find out how you can get involved in some citizen science. From digging up worms to bug hunting, find out how simple fun activities can really contribute to our knowledge of the environment.

**Location:** Meet at the World Buffet restaurant car park, Corselet Road, Darnley G53 7RN.



## KEY CHART



Booking required



Wear suitable clothing



Bring binoculars

## 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

**Email:** [d2d@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:d2d@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 0141 577 4053/54

**Web:** [www.damstodarnley.org](http://www.damstodarnley.org)



**Post:** Dams to Darnley Country Park, East Renfrewshire Council, Environment Department, Thornliebank Depot, 190 Carnwadric Road, Thornliebank, East Renfrewshire G46 8HR.