

Log on to Dams to Darnley Country Park



Dams to Darnley Country Park is home to wildlife waiting to be discovered this spring.

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

Inside you will find:

- Winter events **lookback**
- Website goes **live**
- History feature on the **Waulkmill Glen ruins**
- Volunteer **news**
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The next edition of *Wagtail* will be out in summer 2009.

Winter lookback

OVER THE WINTER THE countryside rangers ran events from the active on *yer bike to Barrhead* to the sedate *crafty Christmas*.

On a cold November morning 14 cyclists set off from Darnley Mill. The event included a free bike inspection from Dr Bike and cycle and mobility scooter hire. Later that month Waulkmill Glen provided the perfect spot to celebrate national tree week with tales of folklore and mythology.

In December everyone had a great time at Auchenback Resource Centre making willow stars, holly wreaths and other natural decorations, and the three and a half mile *walk off your Christmas spirit* event helped shed the holiday excesses.

Nature detectives were looking for animal *tracks and trails* around Darnley Mill in January. Some were spotted, including deer tracks, but the earlier rain made most signs elusive.



Visitors saddled up to join the on yer bike event at the country park.

New country park website goes live

YOU CAN NOW GO online to find out everything you need to know about Dams to Darnley Country Park.

For a new website has been launched.

It's your chance to get up to date information and news about the country park.

The new website has pages with news and events, how to get to the park, details on walking, cycling and riding routes and dedicated sections on wildlife and history.

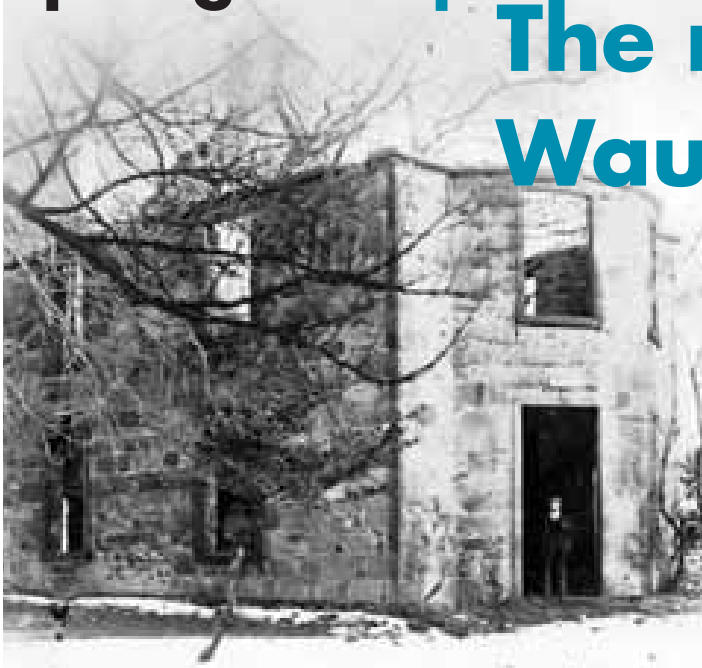
The what's on section has details of all the latest guided walks and events. The website also contains a great image gallery with dozens of fantastic photographs, most of which were taken by our very own countryside ranger, Richard Bolton.

Check out the new country park website at www.damstodarnley.org



Spotlight on park history

The mystery of the Waulkmill Glen ruins



Debate surrounds the use of the 150 year old Waulkmill Glen ruins.

IF YOU PEER INTO WAULKMILL GLEN WOODS FROM Corselet Road you might make out an enigmatic ruin nestled amongst the trees.

The two storey building first appeared on the Ordnance Survey map around 150 years ago.

The building has led to much debate. Evidence points to both a residential purpose, with its large bay windows, dressed sandstone exterior walls and interior plaster, and an industrial one, suggested by the apparent lack of chimneys or hearths, the large windows and stone lined water channels around and beneath it.

It seems likely, given its age, that the building is related to the Darnley Bleachfields/Printfields.

The bleachfield was in decline by the 1860s and the structure may have been allowed to deteriorate after a short period of use.

It could be in these buildings that Charles Tennant experimented with chemical bleaching compounds, the water channels suggest a connection to a process that produced liquid waste.

It is also possible that the building served as a "woman house", as described in the First Statistical Account by the Reverend Monteath published in 1791, where women who were not married lived during the summer season while working at the bleachfields.

The building may never have been finished or rarely used. The apparent lack of heating suggests that the building never served a domestic purpose, although intriguingly in this photograph it does appear that you can make out the faint outline of a chimney.

The mystery continues and the Waulkmill Glen ruins, nestled in the woods at Dams to Darnley, will spark debate for some time.

Visitors to the area should remember that Waulkmill Glen ruins is in a dangerous condition so you should keep out of the building itself.

Calling all D2D volunteers

THE COUNTRYSIDE rangers are looking into starting a country park volunteer group.

This is a chance for you to regularly get involved in protecting and improving the country park.

The group could get involved in all sorts of projects from wild flower planting to water vole surveying.

The charismatic water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) is an important local species.

It features in the Glasgow Local Biodiversity Action Plan which contains objectives and targets for promoting its long term viability.

Across Scotland the water vole is one of our most threatened native

mammals. It was once abundant throughout Britain, but there's been a dramatic decline since 1950.

If you're interested in getting involved in volunteering, contact the countryside rangers. Details can be found at the back of the newsletter.

Volunteers were invited to join countryside rangers to give the park a spring clean on 28 February.

The clean up aimed to make the park more attractive to visitors and safer for wildlife such as this stonechat photographed sitting among litter.



Report any problems

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

Spinal path linking Darnley Mill to Balgray Reservoir

The spinal path is a two and a quarter mile linear tarmac route through the heart of the country park, linking Darnley Mill to Balgray Reservoir.

The northern half runs along Corselet Road, a very quiet public road with no footpath, just off Nitshell Road at the Ashoka restaurant.

The network of paths in Darnley Mill, which you can get to from Nitshell Road and Southpark village, also connect with Corselet Road.

The southern half takes in Waulkmill Glen and the Barrhead dams. It also passes under one of the 14 arches of the Victorian railway viaduct which carries the Neilston line. This part of the route is not open to traffic but is sometimes used by service vehicles.

The southern end joins the Balgray Reservoir path on the other side of Aurs Road. This is a busy road between Newton Mearns and Barrhead, so great care needs to be taken in crossing.

Most of the route is flat, but there is a gentle rise between Darnley Mill and Waulkmill Glen and a steeper section up to Waulkmill Glen Reservoir.

The route has narrow kissing gates at Waulkmill Glen and Aurs Road, just before the start of the Balgray Reservoir path. Improvements to make these gates accessible to all users are planned.



Spotlight on bluebells

THE BLUEBELL IS A WELL known feature of British woodlands and in the park they can be found in Waulkmill Glen woods.

Growing up to 30cm tall and bending over at the top, these bell-shaped flowers are visible during April and May, creating a fabulous carpet of lavender-blue.

Internationally the bluebell has a restricted distribution, so local populations are important. In Glasgow it has its own species action plan as part of Glasgow Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

The bluebell is a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 so it's a criminal offence to remove the bulbs of wild bluebells. See the events calendar for May's bluebell walk.

BLUEBELL FACTS

Honey bees can steal nectar by biting a hole in the bottom of the bell, reaching the nectar without pollinating the flower.

Like many blue flowers, pink and white forms occur naturally in the wild.

Bluebells were used for glue in book binding and fixing arrow flights and as a source of starch for linen processing.

Two Royal Navy ships have been named HMS Bluebell.



Bluebells are protected and can be seen at the park in April and May.

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.

Event: Dambusters clean up

Date and time: Saturday 14 March, 12–3pm

Description: Help clean up the Barrhead dams. Refreshments and equipment will be provided and children must be accompanied by an adult.

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



Event: Discover the dams

Date and time: Saturday 28 March, 10am–2pm

Description: A guided walk from Newton Mearns. This walk requires a moderate level of fitness.

Location: Meet in Newton Mearns – details on booking.



Event: Walk the Craigie

Date and time: Thursday 9 April, 11am start

Description: Discover the country park from Duncarnock Hill, known locally as the 'Craigie'. This walk requires a moderate level of fitness, but the views make the effort more than worthwhile.

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



Event: Pond life

Date and time: Wednesday 15 April, 2pm start

Description: Explore the beasties that live in the underwater world at Darnley Mill. Places are limited and booking is required.

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



Event: Fishing for tips

Date and time: Sunday 19 April, 12–3pm

Description: Reluctant with rigs? Losing lures? Join the countryside rangers and local angling experts for some free tuition at the 14 Arches viaduct, next to Waulkmill Glen Reservoir. For more information or directions please contact the countryside rangers.

Location: Meet at the 14 Arches, Waulkmill Glen Reservoir, Barrhead Dams.



Event: Blooming bluebells

Date and time: Saturday 9 May, 10:30am start

Description: Take a chance to see the rich colours of the woodland flora on this countryside ranger led guided walk as we discover a carpet of bluebells among the many species of wildflower.

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



Event: Teddy bears' picnic

Date and time: Saturday 16 May, 11:30am–2pm

Description: Bring along your favourite teddy to join in the fun and games. All teddies must be accompanied by an adult.

Location: Meet at the Auchenback Resource Centre, 64 Aurs Drive, Barrhead.



KEY CHART

	No booking required		Booking required		Bring a packed lunch
	Wear appropriate clothing		Bring a teddy bear		

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)
Website: www.damstodarnley.org

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