

Dumfries and Galloway National Scenic Areas

Countryside Volunteer News

JANUARY 2008

EVENTS IN THE FLEET VALLEY NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

TUESDAY 8th JANUARY

10.00am-12.00pm.

Path clearance and winter tree identification at Cream of Galloway. Meet Cream of Galloway car park, NX600518

TUESDAY 15th JANUARY

9.30am-12.00pm.

Rhododendron clearance, Cally Woods. Meet Old School House, Cally Woods, Gatehouse of Fleet. NX 600557

TUESDAY 22nd JANUARY

9.30am-12.00pm.

Rhododendron clearance, Cally Woods. Meet Old School House, Cally Woods, Gatehouse of Fleet. NX 600557

TUESDAY 29th JANUARY

10.00am-12.00pm.

Board walk clearance, Brickworks. Meet Brickworks car park, Gatehouse of Fleet. NX 595562

TUESDAY 5th FEBRUARY

9.30am-12.00pm.

Rhododendron clearance, Cally Woods. Meet Old School House, Cally Woods, Gatehouse of Fleet. NX 600557

TUESDAY 12th FEBRUARY

9.30am-12.00pm.

Rhododendron clearance, Cally Woods. Meet Old School House, Cally Woods, Gatehouse of Fleet. NX 600557

TUESDAY 19th FEBRUARY

10.00am-12.00pm.

Habitat Management, Port MacAdam. Meet Cardoness Castle car park, Gatehouse of Fleet. NX 591553

THURSDAY 21st FEBRUARY

Otter Study Evening – see below

Venue to be announced

Booking essential by 31st January

TUESDAY 26th FEBRUARY

9.30am-12.00pm.

Rhododendron clearance, Cally Woods. Meet Old School House, Cally Woods, Gatehouse of Fleet. NX 600557

TUESDAY 4th MARCH

9.30am-12.00pm.

Rhododendron clearance, Cally Woods. Meet Old School House, Cally Woods, Gatehouse of Fleet. NX 600557

TUESDAY 11th MARCH

No Volunteering

Otter Study Evening

Having spent a number of years in Shetland, most of my spare time was spent watching otters until one day I was asked by my company to assist with a long term, hands on study of the animals. I have never lost my interest in the otter. On moving to Gatehouse it soon became obvious that there was a reasonable population in and around the town. I therefore began to gather information on their sightings and activities. I was also commissioned to conduct a survey in relation to otters on a proposed development in the town and this added to the information

I then took it upon myself to extend the survey. Ian and I took it a little further and found that today there are some 70-80 points of interest in and around the town relating to otters. It was therefore suggested that I give a sort presentation on the animal followed by a field trip where 'tracks, trails and signs' could be shown to those who were interested. It is proposed to give the first part, the presentation, on 21st February 2008 at a venue in Gatehouse of Fleet to be decided. Booking is essential for this evening, please let Ian know if you plan to attend by 31st January

Pete Dale

All Change at the Park

2007 saw more new features gracing Garries Park – each involving a significant volunteer element.



The Sensory Garden - “Healing Seat” - was designed and built by Roger Lewis and planted up by Cally Gardens. Volunteers unloaded, cleaned and graded the donated stone using the surplus to build the bridge over the streamlet between the mown park and the Wildflower Meadow where a handsome

interpretive panel is now installed. Ron Foster chose the site, Jim Logan provided some of the photos and Ted Percy some of the words.



Ted Percy

Tits on show at Port Macadam

In early 2006, eight volunteer-made affordable homes for first-time fliers were installed in the wood between Port Macadam and Cardoness Castle. That spring five of the eight were occupied by families of blue tits. 2007 saw the same number of occupations but one great tit family augmented their number. There are plenty more good sites available here, so the plan is to construct and install more boxes this spring.

Ted Percy

Nest boxes in Killiegowan Woods

Pete Dale carried out an inspection of the bird boxes in Killiegowan Woods. He found that 14 boxes had been used successfully by blue or great tits; 1 box had been occupied by tits but the eggs had not hatched; flycatchers had used 4 boxes - in 3 cases ousting blue or great tits already in occupation and 2 boxes were empty. All boxes were cleaned out and repairs carried out where necessary.

EVENTS IN THE EAST STEWARTRY COAST AND NITH ESTUARY NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS

THURSDAY 17th JANUARY

9.30am onwards.

Rhododendron Clearance at Kirkconnell Flow National Nature Reserve.

Meet Kirkconnell Flow car park,

THURSDAY 31st JANUARY

9.30am onwards.

Rhododendron Clearance at Kirkconnell Flow National Nature Reserve.

Meet Kirkconnell Flow car park, near Mabie Forest, NX932703

THURSDAY 24th JANUARY

9.30am onwards.

Fence removal with RSPB.

Meet West Preston Farm, Southernness, NX958558

FEBRUARY'S TASKS

TO BE CONFIRMED

Volunteer Outing to Sulwath Brewery



On the 17th December the volunteers joined together for a visit to the Sulwath micro-brewery in Castle Douglas for the Christmas meeting. After an introductory half pint of beer, the owner gave a detailed description of the brewing process including a chance to taste the various classes of malted grain and smell the hops used in the brewery. This was followed by

a tour of the brewery and finished off with the opportunity to sit and chat over a second half pint of their excellent beer.



Volunteer Time Sheets

It is important for projects such as the NSA Project to record the number of days that people spend volunteering to show to existing funding partners such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, and potential future funding partners how successful the project is, and how well supported it is by committed volunteers

Previously I kept attendance records for tasks in the East Stewartry Coast and Nith Estuary, and only asked my Fleet Valley Volunteers to fill out time sheets in order to record time spent not only at organised events but also the time contributed individually for the project.

However, the decision has now been made that all committed volunteers should fill out monthly time sheets and return them to Ian either at the last task of the month or by post. I have altered the Time Sheet from that previously used by the Fleet Valley Volunteers. It now records the number of days (or fraction of days) spent volunteering, rather than the number of hours. Also it is recognised that some volunteers travel long distances, so this travelling time can now be included. The number of hours converts into volunteer days thus:

1 hour = ¼ day
2 – 3 hours = ½ day
4 - 5 hours = ¾ day
6 - 7 hours = 1 day

Some of the Fleet Valley Volunteers have already submitted time sheets for the Sulwath Project; I will convert the hours recorded into volunteer days and return these to you to sign for validation.

I enclose copies of the new time sheet with this newsletter.
Many thanks for your co-operation,

Ian

For more information, or to book onto events, please contact Ian Brown, National Scenic Area Communities Ranger on 01387 260180, mobile 07824708110, email ian.brown2@dumgal.gov.uk or by post at Ian Brown, National Scenic Area Communities Ranger, Dumfries and Galloway Council Offices, Newall Terrace, Dumfries, DG1 1LW

Many thanks to Jim Logan for producing this edition of the newsletter, and to Ted Percy and Pete Dale for their contributions. If you would like to contribute to the next edition of this newsletter please send your articles and photos either direct to Jim Logan at j.logan67logan@btinternet.com or to Ian.