

# TALKIN TARN Country Park FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

## Woodland Planting Progression

Thanks to everyone who helped out with our tree planting in March. It was a huge success with hundreds of people turning out over the two weeks and lending a hand. A whole range of people were involved including local primary schools, scout and brownie groups, and community payback teams as well as fifty or so members of the public. The trees are doing well despite a period of very dry weather not long after they were planted, with

a high survival rate. We will go in and check all of them this winter and replace any that have died. Many thanks to AONB North Pennines for funding to make this happen. In the meantime our application was submitted to Woodland

Grant Scheme for funding for the rest of the work and this has now been approved and we plan to plant a further 8,000 trees early this winter in the adjoining fields behind sluice wood and through to the Talkin Road. The tender for this contract will be going out over the next few weeks.



A Family Hard at Work Tree Planting in March

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The map shows the areas that will all be planted. Area 1 has already been planted leaving areas 2, 3 & 4 to be the focus of the planting this winter.

## Wildlife Reports - by David Pearson

At last we have had a good spell of weather here at the Tarn. As we move further into August the weather continues to be wet and windy, and on several mornings recently there has been that autumnal feel in the air. It has been a typical summer, with the occasional spell of exceedingly glorious weather interspersed with showery, rainy wet days. Just the same as two years ago!

It is interesting how your focus changes with regard to wildlife. Normally here at the Tarn we dip into all aspects of wildlife, noting birds, plants and animals in equal measure. However, recently the site has been particularly prolific with regards to flora. The Tarn has three interesting orchids, and a very rare Helleborine. The Helleborine you will be familiar with, as the Narrow-leaved Helleborine has recently been the subject of an exclusion fence in Top Wood to the right of the car park as you enter the site. This species has now finished flowering and is not noticeable, since the green foliage blends into the surrounding vegetation. Two other orchids that show well are the Northern Marsh Orchid

*Dactylorhiza purpurella* and the Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsia*. Both of these species are very variable in colour, leaf spots and form. With the Northern Marsh Orchid the flowers are uniform reddish-purple to purple flowering early. The leaves are unspotted. The Common Spotted Orchid flowers vary from white to pale/dark purple. The leaves are narrow and usually dark-spotted. It flowers noticeably later, between May and early August. This species is currently showing really well in the meadow adjacent to the car park. They show a range of form, habit and colour from nearly white to deep mauve/purple. Exciting however is the increase in numbers of our Greater Butterfly Orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*. This amazing orchid has flowers that are pure white to greenish-white. The flowers have a long lip at the front and very long spur up to one inch long, so only long tongued butterflies and moths can reach inside. While the moth or butterfly is feeding it picks up pollen on its head from the modified stamens, and transfers this to another plants stigma, and pollination occurs. The plant can grow quite tall and with

broad ribbed leaves it is quite conspicuous when you begin to notice them.

The other interesting plant to note in the vicinity of the Butterfly Orchid is the Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*. Yellow Rattle is so named because of the sound effect produced by the ripe seeds rattling inside the capsule. It is a low annual with yellow flowers with two purple teeth on the upper lip. The leaves are toothed, oblong-linear and un-stalked. It grows in profusion in the grassland between the Farlam Path gate and the Alex Boathouse/wind turbine field on your left as you walk around the path. Unusually it is a hemi-parasite – that is, it fixes its roots onto a root system of an adjoining grass, and extracts water and minerals from it.

Should you see a plant, bird, insect or animal that you have not seen before please report it to the site office, we will help you identify it and it may even be a new species for the site!

## Squirrel & Bird Antics Watched with a Cuppa!

With funding from the Learning Communities Network we have been able to install a bird/squirrel camera in the feeding area to monitor our wildlife visitors. The CCTV style cameras record 24hrs a day and are transmitted onto a screen in the tearoom for everyone to see and enjoy at their leisure. We hope that in the future we will be able to stream these pictures onto our schools moodle website. Also, that the



camera on the Tarn will be able to be live on the web allowing our water sports users to view the weather conditions before setting out from home.



The New Screen in the Tearoom

# Site Updates

## Events Success

We have had three large events since the last newsletter. The annual water sports day, which as usual, was well attended and all the sessions fully booked. Thank you to all the clubs and Brookbank Canoes who supported the event with their equipment and tuition. The Rowing Club Regatta was a record breaker with a new record number of entries and a fantastic sunny day helping the turn out. Lakes Alive once again organised an excellent event for us with a Banquet evening with a street party style full of entertainers attracting 1,000 people!

## Wildflower Meadow

Our wildflower meadow next to the car park has put on a good show of orchids this year and now the time has come for its annual cut. The grass is cut and removed to help reduce nutrient levels in the soil and encourage wildflower growth. This is a very traditional form of meadow management which takes place after the flowers have seeded each year.

## Birch Removal

Volunteers have been working to remove birch saplings from the Roman Wood area. We are trying to maintain this area in its

present state and thus need to remove the birch which would naturally come in and help dry out the area.

## Rosebay Willowherb & Ragwort Removal

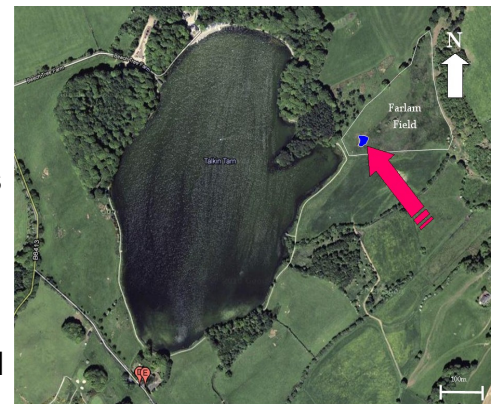
Both of these species are common sights in the area. Both are classed as invasive species and we have been working to remove as much as possible from the site.

## Proposal To Benefit Waders & Dragonflies

We are currently applying for planning permission to undertake work to create a shallow pool in Farlam Field. The provision of shallow water and muddy margins are important to feeding waders. A very gentle slope with an uneven finish will produce a shallow pool which will remain wet longer within the scrape and allow a gradual exposure of the feeding surface. The proposed scrape will be approximately 1.3ha and also be a great habitat for invertebrates such as dragonflies.

We feel it would be a valuable addition to the conservation of the site. We welcome feedback about this proposal and have already invited comment from Natural England and Cumbria Wildlife Trust. If there are no

significant objections then we plan to carry out the work in October/November. Some of the soil that is dug out will be used to carry out bank stabilisation works next to the Alex Boathouse. Here we will also be installing some rock rolls to recreate the bank. If you would like further information, please contact David Pearson. Email [davep@carlisle.gov.uk](mailto:davep@carlisle.gov.uk) or call 016977 3129



Location of Scrape at Talkin Tarn



Size and Location of Scrape Within Farlam Field

## Boathouse Tearoom Update

### Autumn Opening Hours

September - November

Takeaway service only from downstairs on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Main Tearoom open.

Weekends takeaway service **and** Main Tearoom are open.

Opening Hours 10.30am - 4pm

### Waiter/Waitressing Staff Required at Talkin Tarn Tearooms

Part time hours on a rota and on a casual basis.

Must be over 16 years old or over.

For further information call Heather Thomlinson Tearoom Manager

Tel: **016977 41050**

### Car Park Works

The car park has suffered lately from all the rain and despite weekly scraping and pot hole filling we have struggled to keep on top of it. Contractors have been on site digging out the worst areas and relaying fresh stone. We are trialling a bigger grade of stone as a base in the hope this will drain the bottom corner better.

### Netmums Vote Us Silver

**Netmums** is a unique online local network for mums and dads offering parenting information, activity ideas as well as local boards to network in their local area.

Netmums Website has awarded us a silver award in their vote on their favourite free place to go in the North West. We received 20.37% of the votes in joint second place with Whinlatter Forest. Bitts Park, in Carlisle, won the gold award with 25.93% and Hammonds Pond was bronze in joint 3rd place.

### Green Flag Award Success

For the 2nd year we have been awarded a Green Flag Award for the park. This award is judged by Country Park professionals. From this year's report summary:

***"Talkin Tarn Country Park continues to be a credit to Carlisle City Council, providing many different types of user facilities and experiences for local people including educational facilities, whilst protecting and conserving the built and natural heritage. This is all the more impressive considering that this is carried out on a site of modest size.***

***"The Management Plan and visit demonstrated that every aspect of site management has been considered in great detail."***

### Weekend Volunteers

Come and give us a hand to look after the Park, get some exercise, fresh air and make new friends at the same time.

Our Weekend Volunteer Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, from 10am to 3.30pm. Wear old clothes and bring a packed lunch.

Call the site office for more details.

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Photography by: Fiona Shipp

This leaflet is available in alternative formats please call Talkin Tarn Site Office - **016977 3129**