



# TALKIN TARN Country Park FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

## Education Cabin and Website

The log cabin is a popular resource at the tarn, used regularly for meetings, training courses, school groups, kids parties, scouts, beavers and brownies. It is available for anyone to hire out.

We have groups who regularly use it for their clubs and groups on an evening as well as for special events such as birthdays, weddings and retirement parties. Call the Site Office for up to date prices. Catering can also be provided from the tearoom. They can do a range of food from

BBQs and buffets to sit down three course meals. The cabin as well as being fully accessible with its own toilets, also has a small kitchen area allowing groups to self cater if they prefer.

Details on the cabin, further pictures and a download of our kids party pack can all be found on our website pages.



We have developed a series of web pages for Talkin Tarn which can be found by using the address below.

[www.carlisle.gov.uk/talkintarn](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/talkintarn)

Here you will find up to date information on all the events, activities and facilities.

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## Adding up to a lot of Mathematical Fun

Have you seen the chessboard and numbered dice posts on site and wondered what on earth they are for?

It's part of a Numeracy Trail. This is a trail of mathematical problems for children to solve while also enjoying a walk through the woods. The trail is marked with posts with dice engraved on them. At each point, children take part in

an activity to test different mathematical skills such as grid references, adding and subtracting, geometry, distance and estimating, using as many natural features as possible as well as a few we have added. This self led trail has an accompanying guidance pack of ideas for teachers on its use. Contact the site office for further information.

The Chessboard in particular will be used for children to practice grid references as well as environmental education games such as predator and prey



interaction. These life size activities will aim to get children interacting in their learning while

hopefully also having a lot of fun.

## Summer Wildlife Reports

As we move further into early September, the weather continues to be wet and windy, and on several mornings recently there has been that autumnal feel in the air.

Wildlife wise it has been fairly average, some of the notable being the absence of certain species we normally have. The two in particular of note, are the butterfly orchid and the wood warbler. Last year, we were all amazed at the sudden appearance of a butterfly orchid in the patch of grassland in front of Farlam Field by the metal gate. However, this year it failed to appear. Some of the rarer orchids can be very fickle and it is not uncommon for them to 'pop' up one year and disappear the next.

The wood warbler is a welcome summer visitor; its presence usually being denoted by its high pitched 'metallic' call. This year, we had no wood warblers recorded on site. Maybe this has something to do with their migration patterns. Numbers of birds are positively correlated

with the numbers of caterpillars available but nesting success during caterpillar outbreaks is not especially high. It would seem that they did not arrive in high numbers nationally, which is obviously linked to the length and difficulty of the migration route. Weather conditions, predators, available food resources and predation during their winter in Africa will also affect summer numbers.

Typical numbers of chiffchaff, willow warbler, blackcap, garden warbler, redstart, pied flycatcher, spotted flycatcher and reed bunting have been seen breeding in the usual places.

The mute swan has successfully raised one cygnet, and even now there is a coot with two newly hatched chicks. Good luck to them both!

Several little grebes have been reported over the summer, all non-breeding.

The helleborine orchid seems to have done well again this

summer, and the Orchid Meadow next to the car park is thriving.

Of particular note, especially when walking round the lake, is the large expanse of waters' edge vegetation. This marginal area, between the lakeside path and the waters' edge, has continued to develop well since the 'stock' fence was erected several years ago. This area has a high species richness, partially botanically, is a good area to spot dragonflies and damselflies, as well as butterflies and feeding ducklings. The floral list is spectacular, including interesting plants such as sneezewort, meadow vetchling, wild angelica, yellow flag iris, soft rush great willowherb, yarrow, yellow rattle, common spotted orchid and mint to mention just a few!

Things to look out for over the next few months are all the fungi appearing. At the moment there are plenty of russula species, the red, yellow and grey topped white fleshed fungi, much loved by slugs.

## Introducing James

Hi, my name is James Hallam and I am working two days/week on a voluntary basis at Talkin Tarn and one day/week with Carlisle City Council's Green Spaces section for a year. This is in order to gain practical experience as well as it being my placement year for my

degree in Countryside and Environmental Management, at Harper Adams University College, in Shropshire.

I have lived near Carlisle on the Solway coast for most of my life and for the past four years have volunteered during the holidays on local National Nature Reserves. I look forward to meeting many of you around the Tarn soon.



James Hallam

## Site Work

Several jobs have been completed over the last few months.

The **changing rooms** have been fully refurbished and the new doors have just been put on. The changing rooms are well used by our regular water sports groups such as the rowing club, sailing club and Carlisle sea cadets.

The **old flower bed** area that used to contain one of the old wooden rowing boats has been taken out and tidied up. The

boat had rotted and was removed several months ago. The bed was initially planted up but several plants were quickly stolen. This area has now been removed and tidied up with a new bank retainer.

The **cairn** next to the rowing boat hire shed that was started as part of an event a year or so ago was never properly finished and suffered several set backs. It was decided to abandon this and the area

has now been cleared and re-seeded.

The **willow seat and table** had reached the end of its life despite repairs over the years. This has now been removed and it will be replaced with a new version.



New Changing Rooms

## Car Park Update & Pot Holes

We have suffered for many years from pot holes in the car park. These are repaired short term by our on site team and then a few times a year by contractors.

The pot holes have now been repaired three times this year already by contractors. The wet summer has not helped and any work completed is quickly washed out again.

Unfortunately, this is a problem with this kind of surface and really it is best if repairs can be made in drier weather periods. However, this is not always possible. We are looking into other ways of maintaining the higher wear areas.

The tarmac drive has also been repaired this year with all pot holes being filled.

New car park beds have quickly grown up and we are finding parents welcoming them as a safe haven for children and dogs while they are unloading the car. We have also noticed that cars are parking much better now they have something to park up against as a guide. This not only improves safety and keeps gangways clear, it also helps maximize the space available.

We are trying to avoid putting up too many signs in the car park as people responded previously that they didn't like this. Instead, we have painted a one way arrow on the road. Please keep to the one way system to help avoid accidents and maintain the

flow of traffic.

Four new disabled parking bays have been created at the bottom end of the car park. These are in addition to the ones behind the tearoom. This was in response to demand from our many visitors who enjoy using the Tarn due to its high levels of accessibility.



New Car Park Layout

## Boathouse Tearoom—Update

### An Evening Tiptle

The Boathouse tearoom is now fully licensed for the sale of alcohol both on and off the premises! From the beginning of June until the end of August, the take away café has stayed open on a Tuesday and Thursday

evening until 8pm and many of our customers have enjoyed an early evening glass of wine or Geltsdale Real Ale while



watching the rowing club training session. We hope to repeat evening opening next summer.

### Cheeky Monkey!

Our English Lakes ice cream has been enjoyed by many this summer no matter what the weather has been! Two new flavours have been introduced over the summer Triple Berry Smoothie and Cheeky Monkey (Banana and Chocolate) which have been popular and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

### Small Change

If you are visiting the Tarn and the tearoom, please bring as much change with you as possible. We are trying to reduce trips to Brampton for change, to save those car miles.

### Gluten Free Option

The tearoom has been constantly improving our cake selection, we now cater for gluten free diets.

### Need a Present?

Why not buy a tearoom voucher as a thoughtful present to guarantee a nice afternoon out. Enquire at the tearoom or call **016977 41050** and ask to speak to Heather.

## Trembling Tales and Trails Event

Halloween just got scarier, you have been warned!

Saturday 31 October 2009, 1pm – 7pm

Spooky woodland trail, crafts, storyteller, face painting.

Fancy Dress Competition (prizes)

Must be booked in advance

Cost £6/child £2/adult

Suitable for under 10s

## Weekend Volunteers

Come and give us a hand to look after the Park, get some exercise 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.

## Updates

The **new notice board** is still being constructed for the car park and will go next to the entrance down to the Alex Boathouse. New interpretation panels that will also replace the out of date ones on the stone plinth and at the side of the tearoom. These are currently at final draft stage. We hope to have these all up by early autumn.

The **bird and squirrel** feeding area will soon have a new screen. The willow screen has not grown, being too shaded by the trees. However, some purpose built screens have been bought and are currently being installed.

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Photography by: Fiona Shipp

This leaflet is available in alternative formats please call Talkin Tarn Site Office