

Tam O'Shanter Times

Autumn 2013

Issue 61

Best Bites

On Monday September 9th we welcomed new operators for the café. Social Services' Best Bites will now run the café in partnership with us as a training facility for adults who have barriers to employment. This is a change in emphasis from the previous management of a private business operating for profit and paying rent to the farm.

Best Bites Tam O'Shanter Café	
Hot Drinks	
Tea.....	£1.20
Twinning's Tea.....	£1.30
Filter Coffee.....	£1.50
Nescafe Coffee.....	£1.20
Hot Chocolate.....	£1.50
with cream and marshmallows.....	£1.80
Cakes and snacks	
A selection from.....	£1.50 to £2.00
Children's cakes from.....	50p to £1.50
Crisps.....	60p to 80p
Chocolate bars.....	80p
Sandwiches and Toasties	
With salad garnish & homemade coleslaw	
Cheese.....	£3.00
Egg Mayonnaise.....	£3.00
Gammon.....	£3.30
Chicken.....	£3.30
Prawn.....	£3.80
Choice of salads.....	from £3.00
All day breakfast.....	£4.50
Beans on toast.....	£2.50
Bacon on toast.....	£2.50
Egg on toast.....	£2.50
Sausage on toast.....	£2.50
Extra items.....	50p
Sausage Rolls.....	£1.00
Pasties.....	£1.50
Meat and Potato.....	£1.50
Cold Drinks	
Apple juice.....	60p
Water, still and sparkling.....	90p
Canned drinks.....	80p
Milk, per glass.....	60p
Orange juice.....	60p
Fruit Shoots.....	80p
Children's Meals	
Burger / vegetarian burger / Sausage / Vegetarian sausage / Fish Fingers / Nuggets all served with chips and side salad or beans + choice of drink.....	£3.00
Baked Potatoes	
With salad garnish & homemade coleslaw	
Cottage Cheese.....	£3.00
Cheese.....	£3.00
Beans.....	£3.00
Tuna.....	£3.30
Prawn.....	£3.80
Extra portion.....	50p
Bowl of chips.....	£1.50
Vegetarian breakfast.....	£4.50
Cheese on toast.....	£2.00
SEE SPECIALS BOARD DAILY	
Ice Cream... Tub.....	50p
Lollies.....	£1.20

6.10.13

Sample menu only. Please note prices may not be accurate

During the next few months we will be re-decorating and installing new equipment. Please be patient during these changes, especially when the farm is busy and our staff are adjusting to the new operation. Our long term plans are to seek funding to update and improve the café facilities with more seating space and larger kitchen area.



Tam O'Shanter: An essential prescription for the heart and soul

If you have read the title, then I am sure that you are thinking that this is not an article for the newsletter. Shouldn't it be either sent to the BMJ or the medical page in one of the daily newspapers? To be honest this is a story about me and how by chance I found the answer to my problem.

Two weeks after my retirement from the Health Service after forty years, I was admitted into hospital with the blue lights flashing. Three weeks later, I returned home with four new coronary arteries and a knapsack full of drugs. Having never smoked, keeping reasonably fit and not overweight, I felt somewhat aggrieved, and as the clock ticked, I began to feel uncomfortable with myself. Even though the operation was a complete success and my external scars healed, inside my head, the picture was black.

I needed something to divert my focus. Surfing the net, I came across Tam O'Shanter and decided to offer my services as a volunteer. This was 18 months ago and since then I have never looked back. In this small farm I found a group of people who had the time and patience to listen to my fears and wows and offer advice. Getting involved in the day to day running of the farm improved my physical prowess, and meeting and chatting to visitors improved my confidence. Then of course there are the animals. They are my unsung heroes. They are such fantastic listeners and though they don't offer advice, they provide a tonic that isn't



available on prescription – Empathy. What more could you ask of a person, place or an animal, which can provide such a fantastic service and, of course, with no charge for the services, you are on to a winner.

So that's it. Perhaps the title should have been 'In praise of Tam O' Shanter' but hopefully you can understand. I have great admiration for all the staff and volunteers with whom I work with on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There a few words that can express my gratitude and appreciation. Thank you all for helping me find myself again.

Geoff Farm Volunteer



Young artist in residence

Young artist, Tom Mouldsdale, is currently in residence at the farm painting a mural for the new cafe. He can be seen at various times in between his studies at the local college and will take commissions. Why not come and have a look at his progress whilst enjoying a cup of coffee in the cafe?



Harvest time

After a late spring but a good, albeit short, summer we are harvesting the rewards of our growing season. Various crops have been grown in the allotment thanks to the new polytunnel funded by 'Your Wirral'. Potatoes, pumpkins, beans, salad crops and more have been grown. The hens have enjoyed the surplus too.

Next year we hope to grow more and use it in the café or sell the surplus on the farm. The hanging baskets, produced by Andy and gang, have been much admired too. Again, next year we hope to produce baskets for sale from the farm.

It is also the time of year when we begin to sell surplus stock produced during the year. Eight

pigs were reared during the summer and have been turned into sausages, bacon and pork. Five ewe lambs are for sale for breeding whilst the two ram lambs will be fattened. We will be looking for a ram to put to our four breeding ewes and a boar to put with our two sows to produce lambs and piglets again next year.

New additions include four guinea pigs and two rabbits. Look out for them in the rabbit house or during pat-a-pet on Sunday afternoons.

After a tough summer when the bees suffered from the persistent varroa mite they are now doing well taking plenty of sugar syrup, bringing in lots of pollen (ivy flowers are particularly good at this time of year) and the queen is laying lots of eggs. The signs are good that they will go into the winter as a strong colony ready to produce honey next year all being well.

Friends Prize Draw

Congratulations to Rachel Crawford and family who won our first prize draw for July - a family ticket to Chester Zoo. Rachel emailed after her visit:

"Hi John, The four of us would like to say a big 'Thank you very much' to all at the Farm for our day out at Chester Zoo. We saw all the new baby animals - rhinos, orang-utans, elephants and meerkats. The giant bugs gave us all the creeps. Here's a picture of us with the elephants, all enjoying the sunny weather. Many thanks, *The Crawford Family*"

Our next draw is for a ticket for two to the Light Cinema. All members as at Nov 15th will be entered.



Nursery Field, Boundary Road

This area of land is currently owned by Wirral Council and managed by Parks and Countryside for informal recreation. It was previously a horticultural nursery with greenhouses and belonged to the house nearby, hence it's name.

It has been proposed that this field be incorporated into Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm and used for horticulture, livestock, education and training volunteers.

If you have any concerns or comments about this then please contact me at the farm.

John Jakeman

Events and activities

All events are free unless otherwise stated.

Carousel ride

October half term, Monday 21st to Friday 25th

Small fairground ride suitable for young children - £1.00/ride. All day, weather permitting.

Play with Clay or Throw a Pot

October half term Every day

Paint various pieces, prices from £1.50 to £12.00. Aprons, paint, brushes supplied.

Fancy throwing a pot or modelling with clay? These can be fired and collected one week later. £3.50 to throw or model, £1.50 firing charge

Santa's Grotto for Schools

from Monday 2nd December
Ring 653 9332 for details



Santa's Grotto.

Sunday December 8th 12.30 – 4pm

Visit Santa in his decorated Grotto and receive a present. See Jacko in his stable with a Nativity Scene. Hot refreshments available. Numbers limited but to guarantee a present from Santa please purchase a ticket for £3.50 in advance from the Gift Shop or Rangers Office, though some should be available on the day.

Tickets on sale from December 1st



Green Flag

For the eighth year in a row we have been awarded a Community Green Flag (previously Green Pennant) in recognition of the quality of the farm as a site for public recreation. Wirral has a number of Green Flag parks managed by Wirral Council's Parks and Countryside section including Bidston Hill and Birkenhead Park. This a national award that we are really proud of achieving.



Thanks to:

The late Mrs Deirdre Ainsworth who remembered us in her Will and left the farm £1,500. We are very grateful and will use the funds to maintain the farm for our many visitors.

Contact details

Friends of the Farm is the working name of the Wirral Urban Farm Association
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Wirral CH43 7PD

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Membership renewal

£5 / address / year, due on the 1st April. New members joining after October 1st will not be due for renewal until April the following

year. Please make cheques payable to: Wirral Urban Farm Association. You will receive three newsletters per year, an invitation to the AGM and the opportunity to become more involved by joining the committee. We do appreciate donations either through the box in the Animal House or with your subscription.