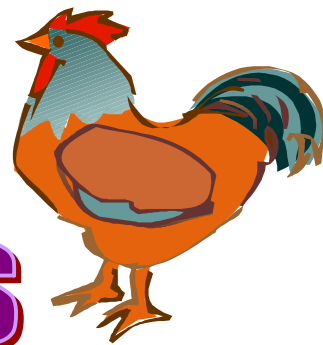


Tam O'Shanter Times



Spring 2005

NEWS

The paths around the extension to the farm was completed in January thanks to a grant of £4000 from 'Living Spaces' and the efforts of staff, volunteers (particularly from the Heswall centre) and work placements. This has also enabled us to extend the nature trail, free copies of which can be found on the souvenir counter in the café.

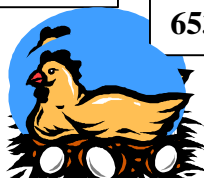
Another grant from the National Lottery Awards for All enabled us to produce a leaflet for the farm. With a map of the farm showing the layout of the paths and paddocks, the leaflet also gives information about how the farm is run, the background to the name and other answers to frequently asked questions. Freely available again from the souvenir counter, the leaflet will also be distributed through the Tourist Information Centre at the Woodside and Wirral Country Park's visitors centre. There are several other free leaflets available.

Another grant from the Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chest has enabled us to improve security at the farm. With lockers for volunteers, improved lighting and CCTV cameras, the warden and staff will be able to manage the site more effectively and safely.

Visitors will also notice building work going on in the cottage. Since the completion of the 'Ecobuilding' with new toilets we decided to close the old toilets in the cottage and incorporate the space into the wardens accommodation. Previously this was very cramped, but now should prove to be more comfortable.

Wanted

We need a secretary for Friends of the Farm. Duties are not too onerous. Taking minutes at our informal monthly meetings (now usually on a Wednesday evening at the farm), typing minutes up either at home or on the Farm's PC and recording members. Pay-all the tea and biscuits you can consume. If interested please either come to the next Friend's meeting or contact Janet on 606 9702 or John 653 9332.





Animal Update



Lily our youngest pig is expecting piglets from May 15th so watch out for them.



Arnie and Jacko are still enjoying their walks on Bidston hill and Arnie's grey summer coat will soon be showing.



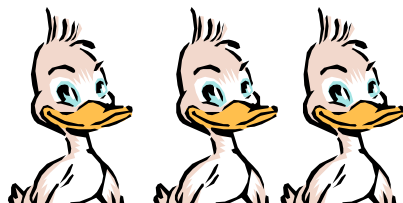
Loopy, our 11-year-old goat is not well and has been at Leahurst vets for treatment.



The sheep have been spending the last few months in Jacko's stable due to the sheep lambing, they should be expecting around March 13th to April 10th so watch out for them and please be quiet round them.



Soon we will be having ducklings and chicks on the farm from early March till July 13th so watch out in the animal house.



We have a new black female turkey to keep our other turkey company.



Our 8 rabbits are fine and healthy and enjoy being stroked on a Sunday afternoon.



Yorkie, our old sow, and our ram are up by the new land and loved to be stroked by the public.



A limited amount of feed for the poultry is sold each day at the gift shop in the café.



Over feeding can cause health problems and attract vermin so we have to restrict how much is made available each day.

If you have any food you would like to give to the animals please pass it onto the rangers or volunteers so the food can be put into their feed at night and in the morning.

Please remember do not feed the
The animals- **THANK YOU**
Paul McHugh-
Farm Volunteer





Bird Watch



Did you know that around the farm there are at least 40 different kinds of Birds, besides the hens, ducks and geese?

Where can you see them?

On The Farm Itself. Behind the cottage there are nine feeders. On these you will see often goldfinches, chaffinches, greenfinches, blue tits. Great tits, coal tits and a more unusual visitor the siskin, which arrives around March. This beautiful little finch with its striking yellow and green plumage plus a black bib and forehead (they always show yellow wing bars and rump in flight).



In The Car Park. Amongst the bushes are a variety of birds: robins, dunnocks (rather like a sparrow without white patches and with a thinner beak and grey head and underparts), wrens, blackbirds, thrushes and bullfinches.

Along The Bridle Path that leads from the farm to St Georges Way alongside the allotments. This is a good place to see the beautiful bullfinch. Listen for its call: it's a fairly quiet low whistle "deoow". The male is six inches (15cm) in length, has a black cap and completely red breast-the female is less brightly coloured. As well as bullfinches, there are blackcaps (in spring and summer) siskins, thrushes and wrens. You might also catch sight of a tree creeper if you are really lucky.

Unusual Sightings

There are always pigeons, crows, magpies, jays, seagulls and rooks nearby, but as well as these 'usual suspects' we have seen buzzards, peregrine falcons, sparrow hawks, a greater spotted wood pecker and green wood peckers around and above the farm. There have also been some beautiful little goldcrests, with the gold flash on their heads (our smallest bird-not the wren). There is also a resident heron on the hill at the moment-tadpoles please note!!

Tips For Bird Watching



Be quiet, still and patient. Let the wildlife come to you.

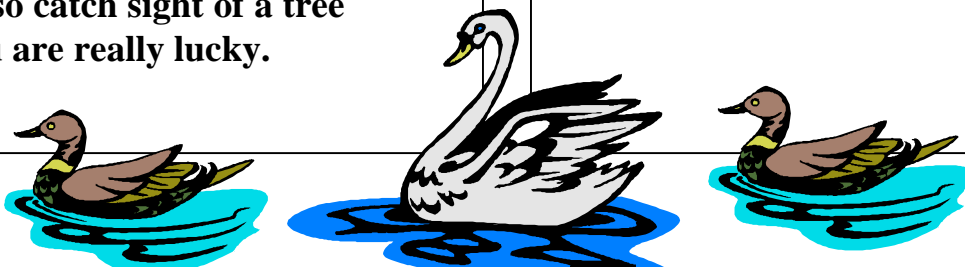


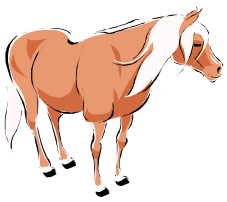
Maybe invest in a bird book and perhaps a pair of binoculars: we have found the small 8x20 are about right.



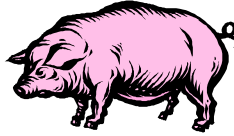
If you like, make a sketch of the bird noting its size, beak shape, colours of beak, legs and feet: also colours of feathers on the head, body and tail. Listen to its call, and remember where you saw it and how many were together.

*Above all enjoy our friendly farm
And hill.*





Events



Guided Walks On Bidston Hill

Wednesday 11th May

Wednesday 6th July

Wednesday 14th September

All free, booking essential to limit numbers

Guided Walks In Flaybrick Memorial Gardens

Sunday April 3rd

Sunday May 1st

Sunday June 5th

Sunday July 3rd

Sunday August 7th

Sunday September 4th

All free booking essential to limit numbers

Bat Walks

Friday 3rd June

Friday 26th August

All free, booking essential to limit numbers



Oxton Secret Gardens Open Day

Sunday May 8th

The Oxton Society have promised to support us with a large donation following this year's event. Please help them to support us

Future Plans

We are trying to secure for a new position at the farm. Since Rachael, our Environmental Education Worker, left last year, we have not had the funds to replace her. We are hoping to find funds to offer a three year contract starting this autumn. Look out for further updates.

We also have plans to extend the café building to provide more seating space and hope to refurbish the activity room. However all these plans depend on us being able to secure the necessary funding.

Many people do ask us why we don't have more animals or more play equipment. Our policy is to keep the animals in good, uncrowded, and hence less stressful conditions. Paddocks need to be rested for grass to recover and parasites to decline. The farm is neither a zoo, with animals on display in the same enclosures, nor a rescue for unwanted animals. We try to keep the animals productive, as a farm would do, producing meat, eggs and breeding stock. Likewise we are not a playground and although we do have a small play area we do not want this to become a main attraction, nor do we want to attract older children who may dominate the play areas!

Thank You To

Jim Chinery and MPAC for donations of materials.

Bob Hughes for his support in many ways including drawing the cottage and windmill

Mrs Williams for her knitted chicks & Easter eggs

COMMENTS PLEASE!

We'd like to know what you think of the farm:

What is your postcode -----

How often do you visit the farm?-----

Any comments, good or bad, about the Activity Room, café, play equipment, animals or anything else

Date

If you'd like a reply, please give your name and address/phone number.

Become a Friend of the Farm by joining the Wirral Urban Farm Association

Membership Fees:

Individuals £2 Families £3 Groups £5

Membership runs from April 1st

Please make cheques payable to the Wirral Urban Farm Association

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Phone Number _____

Date _____ Age (if under 16) _____

New or Renewed membership? Please circle
We have an informal meeting each month. If you would like to come along please look out on the notice board / newsletter or ring to find the date and time of the next meeting.
We are trying to encourage more members to come along. If you are interested please indicate which evenings would be most convenient

Please return to the farm on Boundary Road, Bidston CH43 7PD