

Tam O'Shanter Times

Summer 2013

Issue 61

Bidston Memories

I started *Bidston Memories* as a Facebook page as a way of collecting pictures and stories, however small, to share and provoke memories of Bidston village, the hill and of the surrounding area. Members are increasing every day and a comprehensive collection is beginning to form.

All of the stories share a love of the hill with a lot of childhood memories of playing on the hill in the summer time. There are lots of brilliant old photos, postcards, and paintings that have been shared for us all to see. It is amazing to see how Bidston

Hill looks without any trees; the views must have been brilliant. Other interest has included the, now closed, tunnels but there are also lots of videos, pictures and stories.

One interesting photograph that I had not seen before was of the old Bidston Aerodrome which was originally located on the current site of what is now the Bidston golf course and close to the present railway station.

There is so much history attached to the area and I hope that people will continue to share their memories or even the tall tales they have about Bidston with us.

Pay *Bidston Memories* a visit on Facebook, share your own memories or just have a look.

Deb Lindon

Bidston Community Archaeology

www.facebook.com/groups/bidstonmemories



A visit from the Mayor

Mayor Gerry Ellis and wife receiving the annual cottage rent of One Bidston Pine Cone from Senior Ranger John Jakeman

The Sheepdog with the Littlest Herd



Part Three of Shep's adventure - Shep learns about goat's milk and goes on holiday

By Brenda Noonan

A mother called to the house with a little boy in his pram. He had sores all over his body, his name was Richard. He was so ill his mum was very upset, because the hospital did everything they could, but hadn't made him better, they said his only hope was for him to live in a big 'bubble', a plastic kind of house to protect him from the outside world. Brenda and Ted were very upset and promised to do as much as they could to help him. The mistress worked on his food allergies, which got a lot better, but not all of them, so then she tried some Homoeopathic allergy tests they showed that he was allergic to everything around him, even fresh air, water trees and flowers. His food then had to be cooked in stainless steel pans, his clothes had to be made from cotton, no soap powder for his washing, no sunshine even.

It cost a lot of money for Richard to go to the clinic so the mistress went to the newspaper with a picture of him and asked the public to give money to help with his treatment. People were generous and he was able to be treated and so with all those helping him he went on to grow up and lead a good life. So tears became smiles this time for me, I was so proud of my humans and of course my friends the goats who gave their milk for his special diet.

The more people who needed the milk the more goats we needed and then we needed more food to feed them all. We were kindly given a ticket to go to the fruit and vegetable market in Liverpool for extra food for them, especially in the winter when there was nothing to pick in the fields. It was boring for me there, not like going on the fields that was great fun, lots of space to run in, smells, holes to dig, rabbits to chase, such a lovely feeling of freedom. If the gardeners were working I got to share their sandwiches and plenty of fuss. One day they were digging up new carrots. Her majesty Queen Elizabeth II was visiting a local hotel on the Wirral, the carrots were needed for the lunch, but the smallest ones were thrown to one side, so the mistress asked if our goats could have

them, so the goats were eating the same carrots as the queen on that day, there were lots of them and they were free!

There was never enough money to keep all these animals, so often the mistress would swap what she could, like the nearby bakery let us have yesterday's bread in exchange for goat's milk and some eggs for the baker's sick child. Our neighbour was a hairdresser so a haircut cost a dozen eggs. It's a good job I don't ever need a haircut! When the trees were cut and the leaves and branches taken off for goat food the tree trunks were then cut into logs, some were decorated to make Christmas presents and the rest to keep us warm on the crackling fire.

It was summer and the master and mistress took us on holiday. "We're off to Wales" they said, "To a farm". It sounded lovely, but when we arrived there as soon as our van door was opened a large dog made a grab for Bambi. She was terrified, so I stood between them and I fought with that dog, and although I was hurting – I won!

Little mistress had measles, so we had to stay in a caravan away from other children. The farmer told us of a nice spot for Cheryl, lovely sand and water to play in, while Bambi stayed in the field, we didn't want her to get lost so the master put a big wooden stake in the ground with a long chain on which was tied to her collar and the big dog was kept indoors thank goodness.

We all had a lovely time, the little mistress built sandcastles and I knocked them down! As we walked back along the lane Bambi was so excited when she heard us, she went round and round and so did the chain around her neck. I jumped the fence and ran to her just in time. I sat by her side to comfort her until the master arrived, he lifted the stake out of the ground and undid the chain and set her free. We never left her again. When we got back to the caravan, little mistress was put into the hammock which was like a garden bed tied between two trees. I jumped in as well, but the rope broke and we both fell into some stinging nettle plants. The stings were rubbed with dock leaves growing nearby to make Cheryl better. What a start to our holiday!

Back home after a very nice stay in Wales I am sitting quietly watching the fish in the pond and I am very happy. The fish jump in the air and back down again but today was different, it was very windy so the water was blowing away out of the pond. I could touch the fish with my nose and they were in a panic which I knew was bad. I must warn the mistress. When she heard me barking she came and saw what had happened and she had to run up and down the garden with buckets of water to gently top the pond up. The fish began to swim happily again and we sat together watching them, my head on the mistress's knee. She told me how clever I was. Today it was the fish I saved, what will tomorrow bring?

Well it brought a large wooden box. It had people in it, all talking and even other dogs were in it. I didn't want them in my house so I went around the back of it to chase them away but they weren't there! My humans sat looking at it smiling, so I gave up trying to find these strangers. As long as those dogs didn't want my dinner I would put up with them and that box they called a television.

Next time Part Four - Brave Shep helps in an emergency

School Incubation Projects – a growing success

We first started loaning out incubators and all the necessary equipment to schools in 1992. This was in response to one or two schools asking us to take chicks from their own incubation projects. Unfortunately, the chicks that they hatched were often unsuitable for free range conditions, hence we decided to supply eggs from birds that we wanted in our flock or knew that we could sell on to 'backyard' poultry keepers.

We started off with three or four projects a year (February – July) and one incubator. Now we aim to do at least 20 projects each year with our 7 incubators. This year we have had or are still doing projects in the following schools:

St John's Catholic Junior School
Kingsway Primary School
St Werburgh's Primary School
Little Acorns Pre School
Oxton St Saviour's School



Rock Ferry Primary School
Mendell Primary School
Manor Primary School
Leasowe Primary School
Holy Cross RC Primary School
Christ Church Primary School
Castleway Primary School
Woodslee Primary School
Stanton Road Primary
Brackenwood Infant School
St Albans Primary School
Thingwall Primary School
Bedford Drive Primary School
Somerville Primary School
New Brighton Primary School
Leasowe Early Years
Gilbrook Primary School

At least 500 children are involved in total each year which amounts to over 9,000 children over the years! Although it is often a considerable strain on the teachers involved, most recognise the enormous learning benefits to the children. To actually see chicks hatching from the egg is an experience that will stay with most of them for ever.

Some schools return the chicks to us after only a couple of days being hatched whilst others keep the chicks for several weeks and learn about growth rates, animal behaviour and animal welfare. We are unable to do more projects each year by the limitations on our time to manage the projects, space to rear on the chicks (or ducklings) and suitable purchasers of the mature birds.

If you are a teacher and interested in doing a project please ask for details at the office.

Information sheets and application forms are sent out in November with a deadline of January 1st.

A wedding on the farm

On the 30th April 2013 (Easter), following a civic ceremony in the morning, at 4.30pm Andy and Liz literally 'tied the knot' at a Druid ceremony, under a willow bower in a woodland area on the Farm, witnessed by family and friends. They promised to take care of each other, to share their lives, to support each other etc. and at each stage of their commitments their wrists were bound by ribbons. Liz was led to the venue by her son Jai and Ronnie supported his father. The bridesmaids, (daughters Jaz and Poppy and neices) in their pretty dresses with suitable footwear, carrying posies of spring flowers, accompanied the bride and groom. The reception was held in a marquee erected adjacent to the farm and despite the very cold weather everyone had a good time.



Events and activities

All events are free unless otherwise stated.

Carousel Ride

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays

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



Face Painting

Every Thursday 10am – 11am
With Claughton Children's Centre.

Playscheme activities with Wirral Play Council.

Monday July 22nd – Friday August 16th. 1.30pm – 3.30 pm, weekdays only (not Wednesday August 7th)

Free arts, crafts and games suitable for 5 year olds upwards. Need to register on the day

Play with Clay or Throw a Pot

Every day

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

Café

Many of our visitors will already be aware that our current leaseholders of the café, Richard and Jane Jeffers, will cease running the café here from September 8th.

They have run the café since 2000 providing a service for visitors and paying a rent to the farm for use of the premises. We are now considering various options where we can continue to provide refreshments for visitors and yet remain true to our core values – a service for the benefit of the community, particularly those with greater needs. Consequently we aim to have a new operator in place by September.

Farm closed at Easter

Unfortunately due to the ice and snow in late March the farm had to be closed for almost two days during the Easter holidays. This was necessary due to the hazardous condition of paths and play equipment. Apologies to

Thanks to:

Stanlow Lodge Social Committee: £200
The late Mrs Jean Tedstone: £373
Ladybird Pre-school: £40
The Community Development Foundation, Community First: Matched Fund: £1,860 - to improve the road frontage to the farm.
St James' Foundation: £1,000 for materials for the allotment project
Mr Lally: cleaning materials
The two ladies who helped Linda after her fall on Saturday June 29th

anyone who braved the cold and came to the farm only to find the gate locked. One or two people complained about the decision to prioritise the safety of visitors, particularly young children, but thankfully most people understood.

Calling all Members

We are holding a draw for all those members who have renewed their membership by the end of July. The prize is a family ticket for Chester Zoo and the winners will be notified on 3rd August. If you're not in it you won't win it! Good luck.

Thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership already, particularly those who have completed standing orders.

We are also looking for members to man the Gift Shop during the summer holidays. If anyone is willing to do half a day a week or more please contact us. Duties are not too onerous – selling items to visitors and counting the takings mostly. Rewards are satisfied children (mostly) and as much tea or coffee as you can drink!

Friends of the Farm is the working name of the Wirral Urban Farm Association (Charity number 515789) based at: Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm Boundary Road Bidston, Wirral CH43 7PD Tel: 0151 653 9332 Fax: 0151 652 4236 Email: tamoshan@wirral.gov.uk

For further information about the farm and past history look at our

old newsletters on the website. www.tamoshanterfarm.org.uk

Membership renewal

An addressed envelope together with a renewal slip was sent with the last Newsletter to those whose membership was due for renewal. If you haven't renewed your membership, please do so by the 31st July. After that date, it will be assumed that you no longer wish to support the Farm and your

name will be removed from the list of members. Please note that for £5 per year you are entitled to 3 newsletters to keep you abreast of developments at the Farm and, in addition, if you are on line you will receive information of forthcoming events for children.

Don't forget your £5 makes a valuable contribution to ensuring the farm remains accessible to all free of charge.