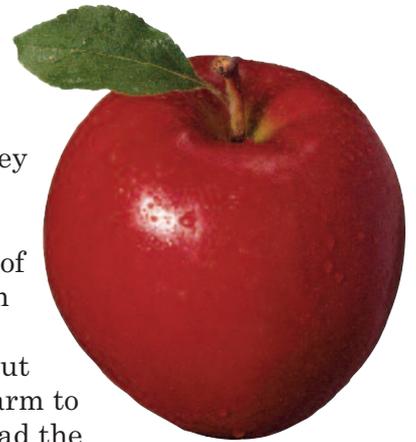


National Apple Day



people to taste. They also provided a display of apples that, with a couple of additions from farm Trustees, meant 24 varieties were set out for visitors to the farm to admire. Children had the chance to colour in their own paper apple and tie it to the 'tree', which is on display in the farm's activity room.

If anyone is growing apples other than the varieties listed, particularly if they're old traditional varieties, we'd love to hear from you so we can put them on display next October.

Dessert: Moss Seedling, Discovery, Duchess's Favourite, Ellison's Orange, Ashmead's Kernel, Lord Lambourne, Blenheim Orange, Egremont Russet, Red Windsor, Sunset.

Cooker: Hawkbridge, Costard, Keswick Codling, Bramley, Lord Clyde, Catshead, Newton Wonder, Arthur Barnes, Lord Suffield.

Cooker/Dessert: Howgate Wonder, Lane's Prince Albert, James Grieve, Peasgood's Nonsuch, Lord Derby.

This year brings the 21st celebration of the charity Common Ground's 'National Apple Day' (October 21st). On 17th October Wirral Tree Wardens and Wirral Wildlife held an Apple Day celebration at Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm. This was in addition to Wirral Wildlife's usual Apple Day events at Eastham and Brimstage, and we hope the farm will be added to the list of regular venues in future. Members of Wirral Wildlife brought along their apple press and boxes of mixed apples to make fresh, delicious juice for

Farm News

Courses

Andy McCulloch, our multi-skilled cottage tenant and jack of all trades, runs a number of courses through the Beechwood Community Trust (BCT), St James' Centre and Moreton Day Centre.

On Thursdays there is a DIY course (fully booked) up until December 15th.

On Wednesdays from the 10th November until December 15th the Moreton Day Centre will be

doing a variety of practical tasks including horticulture and farm maintenance.

From Monday November 1st there will be a 6 week taster course in DIY / bushcraft / horticulture. During the February half term there will two days for 10 – 14 year olds from the Beechwood estate to take part in bushcraft and green woodwork, building on the success of other sessions during the summer and October. See Andy or Fran at the BCT.

Look out for posters on the farm about more courses. Different conditions apply depending on the funding and the organisation managing the course.



Animal update

As at 28th October we have the following numbers of livestock:

- 1 Gloucester Old Spot sow for breeding
- 3 GOS x Saddleback porkers for meat
- 4 Manx Loaghtan ewes for breeding
- 8 Manx Loaghtan lambs for sale (on Hilbre Island)
- 2 Golden Guernsey goats (nannies)
- 4 pet rabbits
- Jacko (donkey) and Arnie (shetland pony)
- A pair of Cambridge Bronze turkeys and a pair of Bourbon Red turkeys
- 3 geese (2 Brecon Buff and 1 Embden)
- 21 ducks (5 Aylesbury, 5 Indian Runner, 3 Cayuga, 3 Silver Appleyard, 4 Khaki Campbell and 2 others)
- 3 Guinea Fowl
- 17 hens and 8 cockerels including Lavender Araucana, Light Sussex, Silkie, Maran and Rhode Island Red
- 8 white doves

In the last few months 5 pigs have been sold for meat bringing in £1,083. However there are many costs involved including the following.

- Approximately 216kg of feed / pig at an average cost of 30p / kg = £65 each
- Straw approximately £5 each
- Butcher's costs of £53 / pig
- The sow costs approximately £300 / year to feed and a further £80 / year for straw.

The 3 pigs left will go to the abattoir on Monday November 22nd and we will be selling the limited amount of sausages approximately 10 days later. Sometimes these sell out within a week. Bacon and gammon joints will be available a few weeks later after the butcher has completed the curing process. Again, these are sold on a first-come first-served basis until they are all sold.

Around Christmas time we will be borrowing a boar to put to the sow in order to have a litter of piglets around April and the process will start again.

We have also recently sold last years 4 Manx lambs to a smallholder from Macclesfield for £55 each. This year's lambs (8) are currently grazing on Hilbre Island but may have to be sold sooner rather than later. During November we will try to borrow a ram to put to our 4 ewes so that we will have lambs next spring.

Arnie has now recovered from his eye infection and our bank account is £320 lighter as a result. With feed, wormers, farrier's charges and other incidentals Arnie and Jacko cost approximately £600 / year plus any veterinary costs which may or may not occur.

In these harsh economic times it is probably appropriate to highlight some of the costs of running the farm and sources of income.

In the last financial year (up to April 4th 2010) total feed and livestock costs came to over £6,000. Veterinary fees came to £265 (less than average and not including treatment for Arnie). Insurance was over £4,000 and professional fees £3,000 (higher than average). Security, water charges and administration costs amounted to £1,500 whilst tools, equipment, and maintenance of buildings amounted to £1,700 (less than average).

Our income comes from sales of produce and souvenirs £9,880; donations £3,850; café rental, events and unrestricted grants (£4,460). Last year we were also very fortunate and grateful to receive a generous bequest from the late Mrs J.L Boggie. Special projects such as the sensory equipment on the play equipment and paths are funded by grants which are usually restricted for that purpose.

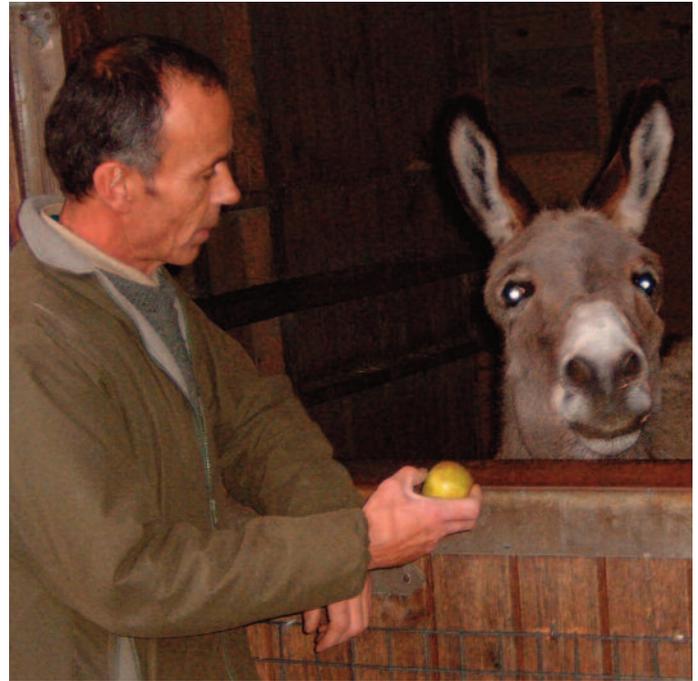
Full details are available in the annual report produced by the Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust (registered charity number 505444). There is a charge of £5.00 for this document to cover costs.

Staff changes

We recently said goodbye and good luck to Peter who retired in October. Peter was at the farm from June 2002, first as a tenant in the cottage and then as a ranger on the Farm. Peter could turn his hand to a variety of tasks from organising our fairs to working with volunteers with the animals, fencing, path laying etc etc.

Amy also went off to a new job in September after completing 6 months with us under the Future Jobs Fund. It was a real stroke of luck when we were approached in February to provide a place for her. Her enthusiasm and farming skills proved to be extremely beneficial to us especially at a difficult time and it was with great disappointment that we were unable to continue with her employment.

Although the farm is run by the Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm trust (a registered charity) it does rely on Wirral Council to provide core staffing. In recent years there were 2 full time Rangers for the farm, a Ranger and Estate Worker based at the farm but with duties on Bidston Hill and Flaybrick Memorial Gardens and a Senior Ranger with responsibility for the farm and Bidston Hill. The Trust has been able to



supplement this core staff with others from time to time depending on funding (mostly through the National Lottery), however, this is very difficult to achieve and usually is only for a specific project for a short duration. Now, in these times of great uncertainty, we are facing Council cuts which could cause serious problems to the continued running of the farm!

JOHN EMMERSON 1936 – 2010

It may be hard to imagine a time when this farm was nonexistent and the old cottage, which had been popular for many years, had almost been forgotten. During the 1970s the building was rescued from the bulldozers by the Birkenhead History Society and rebuilt as a Field Study Centre for schools, as a focal and exhibition point for local history and a public facility for promoting Bidston Hill.

In this time, before PCs, there lived a generous proprietor of a local printing firm. He was known as John Emmerson who was also an enthusiastic committee member of the Birkenhead History Society. He and his business, Birkenhead Press Ltd., played a significant part in the establishment of the brand new 'Tam O'Shanter Cottage Field Study Centre' A few of our older readers may remember typewriter produced stencils, sticky smudgy ink and a hand cranked revolving drum which were all necessary to produce amateur, black and white leaflets, newsletters, invitations and such like, by schools and societies. How fortunate were we then to have the support of a professional printer. John produced, in abundance, coloured posters,



invitations, letters, booklets and newsletters, which he generously donated to the cause over many years.

As a Trustee he was also personally involved with numerous fund raising events and gave talks to other interested bodies until the Cottage was a well and truly established part of Bidston Hill once again. The amalgamation with the Wirral Urban Farm Association in the 1980s turned it into the successful Urban Farm, which is enjoyed by so many visitors today.

Sadly John Emmerson died on the 14th August 2010 at the age of 74. He had never retired from the printing trade and in 1982 established 'Countywise', dedicated to the production of books and booklets about local History and events which he had always been passionate about to the end of his life. In fact, earlier this year, he had been involved with the Bidston Ranger in the production of 'The Detective Trail around Flaybrick Cemetery'. All his associates at the Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm fondly remember him and the part he played in its revival will never be forgotten.

Events and activities

Santa's Grotto at the Farm

Saturday 11th December

12 noon – 4pm

Come and see Santa at the Farm in his purpose-built grotto. Tickets are available from December 1st 2010, £3.00 for everyone who wants a present. There is a limited number of tickets so to avoid disappointment on the day it is best to purchase a ticket beforehand.

Tel: 0151 653 9332 or email tamoshan@wirral.gov.uk

Winter Walk

Thursday 6th January

10am – 12noon

Join the Ranger for his New Year walk around Bidston Hill and Flaybrick Memorial Gardens to shake off a little of the Christmas excess! Find out about some of the history, trees, plants and geology. No need to book. Meet at Tam O'Shanter Farm in the courtyard. Suitable clothing and footwear advised. For further enquiries Tel: 0151 653 9332 or email tamoshan@wirral.gov.uk

February Half Term

Crafts

Saturday February 19th and

Wednesday February 23rd

10am – 12noon and 1.30 – 3.30pm

Join us at the farm for some fun craft activities; a small donation is appreciated for this event. No need to book.

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

www.tamoshanterfarm.org.uk



Traditional Storytelling

Monday 21st, Friday 25th,

Saturday 26th February

1pm – 2pm and 3pm – 4pm

Be amazed by tales of fire, earth, air and water. Hear stories from all over the world brought to life with props and puppets. Suitable for all the family. No need to book, just come and take a seat; admission free.

Carousel Ride

Tuesday 22nd and Thursday

24th February, weather

permitting.

Small fairground ride suitable for young children. 80p / ride.

Thanks to:

The Soroptimist International Club Wallasey for their continued support with the Gift Shop on Sundays.

Bryan Jackson ACMA (CEJ Accounts Ltd) for his accountancy work.

Richard Sparkes (Davidson Williams Ltd) for free metalwork.

F2, Year 1 and Year 2, St Peters C.E. Primary School, Heswall for sponsoring the pigs.

Margaret Daniels and Pat Beard for making cards for sale.

The past Mayor of Wirral, Cllr

Andrew Hodgson - £500 from the

Mayor of Wirral's Charity Fund.

The Rotary Club of Heswall - £250.

Windmill Walk

Wednesday 23rd March

10am – 11.30am

A guided walk by the Ranger to the 19th century brick tower windmill. A chance to see inside and find out about the first recorded mill on Bidston Hill. Booking essential. Suitable clothing and footwear advised.

Sorry, no dogs.

Tel: 0151 653 9332 or email:

tamoshan@wirral.gov.uk

WUFA AGM for 2010/2011

Open to all members.

This will take place at the farm on Wednesday 19th January, 7.30 pm as usual, tea and coffee available from 7.00 pm.

WUFA funds café vouchers for volunteers

As well as providing free hot drinks (tea and coffee) volunteers can claim a £1.00 voucher for use in the cafe for every 10 hours worked. For those working all day we fund half price vouchers for hot food from the café. Please ask a member of staff.



Membership

£5 / address / year. Due on 1st April. Please make cheques payable to *Wirral Urban Farm Association*.

You will receive three newsletters per year, an invitation to the AGM in the autumn 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.

