

VOLUNTEER SUMMER PARTY THURSDAY 2nd JULY BBQ AND SOCIAL EVENING

The National Scenic Areas Project warmly welcomes all volunteers and conservation staff that they have worked with to a barbeque and social evening at RSPB Mersehead Reserve. The evening will start from 6pm with a chance for the volunteers to socialize, and enjoy some food. Please let Ian know whether you wish to attend by Friday 19th June.

FUTURE VOLUNTEERING EVENTS

TUESDAY 2nd JUNE

10.00am -2.00pm

Ha Ha Clearance,
Cally Walls Project.
Meet Cally Palace Hotel,
Gatehouse of Fleet. NX600550

TUESDAY 9th JUNE

10.00am -2.00pm

Ha Ha Clearance,
Cally Walls Project.
Meet Cally Palace Hotel,
Gatehouse of Fleet. NX600550

SATURDAY 6th JUNE

10.00am – 12.00pm

Rockcliffe Beach Clean
Meet: Rockcliffe main car park.
NX852535

WEDNESDAY 10th JUNE

10.00am – 12.00pm

Explore the Sea Shore
Mossyard, Gatehouse of Fleet
Meet Mossyard car park
NX553519

SUNDAY 7th JUNE

11.00am – 4.00pm

World Ocean's Day Celebration
at Rockcliffe
Meet Rockcliffe Beach NX858537

Implementing the Management Strategies for the National Scenic Areas

SATURDAY 13th JUNE
10.00am – 12.00pm
Port William Beach Clean
Meet: Second Sands, on the
A747 Port William NX337443

SUNDAY 14th JUNE
11.00am – 4.00pm
World Ocean's Day Celebration
at Port William
Meet: Second Sands, on the A747
Port William NX337443

TUESDAY 16th JUNE
10.00am -12.00am
Tree Survey,
Garries Wood
Meet: Town car park,
Gatehouse of Fleet. NX595553

WEDNESDAY 18th JUNE
9.30am onwards
Reserve Work,
Meet RSPB Mersehead Reserve
Sulwath Centre, NX925560

TUESDAY 23rd JUNE
To Be Confirmed

WEDNESDAY 24th JUNE
9.30am onwards
Fence Clearance
Meet RSPB Mersehead Reserve
Sulwath Centre, NX925560

FRIDAY 26th JUNE
Time to be confirmed
Wildlife Gardening with the
ARC Volunteers
Meet RSPB Mersehead Reserve
Visitor Centre, NX925561
**If you intend to help with this
event please contact me for
more details.**

TUESDAY 30th JUNE
To Be Confirmed

THURSDAY 2nd JULY
6.00pm – 8.00pm
Volunteer BBQ
Meet RSPB Mersehead Reserve
Sulwath Centre, NX925560

**Volunteers please note THERE IS NO VOLUNTEERING
IN JULY**

**For more information or to book for these events please
contact Ian Brown, National Scenic Area Ranger,
01387 260180, mobile 07824708110 or ian.brown2@dumgal.gov.uk**

Ron declares war on the Spanish

Ron Forster is concerned about the number of Spanish bluebells which have appeared at Boat Green and in Garries Wood. The Spanish bluebells compete with the native bluebells and can also hybridise with them. To protect our native bluebells he asked the council to spray the foreign bluebells but funds were not available. He checked with Scottish Natural Heritage who said that it was OK to dig them out as they are not a native species. Ron has started on this project and would welcome any help in tracing the Spanish bluebells and removing them.

English Bluebells - Flowers of native bluebells are narrowly bell-shaped, with straight-sided petals, deeply curled back at the tips. The majority of flowers droop from one side of the stem. The anthers are creamy-white and the leaves narrow, usually between 7-15mm wide (although occasionally up to 20mm).



Spanish and Hybrid Bluebells –The bell-shaped flowers of Spanish bluebells and hybrids open more widely than on English bluebells, with the petal tips just flaring outwards or curling back only slightly. Some flowers may droop from one side, but most are arranged all around the stem and held more erect. The anthers of Spanish and hybrid bluebells are usually pale to dark blue, and the leaves are wider, up to 30-35mm across.

*From the Royal Horticultural Society Gardening Advice web page (<http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profiles0507/bluebells.asp>)

Cally Walls Project – Haha

This month the Fleet Valley NSA Volunteers and Forestry Commission Volunteers have been concentrating on clearing the undergrowth from the haha. The haha is a ditch backed with a drystone wall at the edge of the lawn. This gave the impression from the big house that the lawn was continuous with the adjacent fields but prevented cattle and deer from invading the garden. With years of disuse the ditch



has filled up with fallen leaves and the wall has become overgrown with trees and rhododendron. The Volunteers have now cleared the bushes and saplings and burnt them. Chainsaws will cut down the larger trees and the Forestry Commission will bring in a digger to clear out the ditch to allow the Dykers access to repair the wall. The Cally Hotel ground staff have volunteered to clear dead trees which have fallen across the haha.



Cally Walls Project – Training

The first two drystone dyke training days took place this month. Six of the NSA Volunteers and four Forestry Volunteers plus Kenny spent a day taking a section of dyke to pieces then rebuilding it under the supervision of Alex Sharpe. Demolishing an existing wall stone by stone allowed Alex to explain how the walls were put



together to ensure that the wall holds together and sheds rainwater. It is like building a three dimensional jigsaw and it is important to find just the right shaped stone to fit on the wall. Although it looks as if it might be very strenuous, most of the work is in fitting medium sized stones and wedging them in place with smaller pieces. As you are working in a team there is always someone able to



lift and place the heavy stones if you cannot manage. Places are now available on more Training Days for anyone who would like to learn drystone dyking. Training is free. Anyone interested should contact the NSA Ranger, Ian Brown.

Garries Wood

A project has started to carry out a wildlife survey of Garries Wood to establish if anything needs to be done to improve the wood, either from the environmental or the aesthetic point of view. Maps of the wood and record sheets are available from the Mill on the Fleet.

Volunteers and members of the public are asked to record any plants, animals or birds that they see in the woods. Of particular interest are any rare or unusual plants or animals or any garden escapes such as Himalayan balsam or



Japanese knotweed. These records will be mapped to provide a picture of the wood over a year and will be used for planning the future management of the woods.

Wildflower meadow

The wildflower meadow should only be cut once a year in September, after the wild flowers have produced seed. Last year it was cut by the council 2 or 3 times in spring and this seems to have reduced the spring flowering plants. However a large patch of bluebells has appeared and some ladies' smock has survived in the wetter areas where the mower could not reach. Other wild flowers are starting to grow in the meadow and things should improve as the year progresses.

Glencaple Bridge Repairs

On Monday 11th May a party of NSA volunteers and the Walking Free Centre lads undertook the repair of the wooden bridges crossing the various streams and ditches intersecting the Nithside walk near Glencaple. Loose and rotten boards were replaced, and wire netting stapled across each bridge. The only downside to an otherwise successful day was the non-appearance of the new telephone poles sourced through BT, which are needed to bridge the wider crossings. Perhaps this accounts for the rather wistful appearance of the three volunteers on one of the bridges that is due for replacement! The Walking Free Lads certainly seemed to enjoy the sunshine, which doesn't always follow us around!



Kirkconnell Flow Fencing It's Done !!

After many sessions, in all weathers (surprising how sunny it seems in these pictures), we finally completed it. From the initial clearance of the site and old stock fences, to the last nail in the new fence, the volunteer group has done an amazing amount of work, and can be justifiably proud of the end result (despite problems with fence geometry over the undulating ground!). Well done everyone who took part on the various project days. If a picture paints a thousand words, here's several thousand to give a flavour of the project as it developed – nice bit of seasonal change in the trees too.