

Tam O'Shanter Times

Spring 2010

Issue 51

Animal update

We have recently received some great news about our Manx Loaghtan ewes.. They have all recently been scanned by the vet who confirmed them all to be in lamb (pregnant) they shall be lambing from 25th March to the 18th April. Sadly the ram has been returned to his home in Shropshire after doing a great job with our ewes. He will be missed by staff and visitors. The Manx Loaghtan are a rare breed of sheep most commonly found grazing the hills of the Isle of Man. This breed of sheep is reared for the excellent quality of meat it produces. The wool is also used to make clothing which can be highly priced. The Manx Loaghtan is a multi horned breed normally with two or four horns, although they can occasionally be born with more or be polled. This means they are born with no horns at all. The sheep will soon need to be sheared ready for the summer months, be sure to watch out for those dates.

Sadly this year Snuffles the Gloucester Old Spot sow has been struggling to become pregnant so the farm will be buying in some young weaned pigs to be reared for meat. The boar will soon be returning to his home in Liverpool so your chance to see him is becoming shorter.



Recently a large number of fertilised chicken and duck eggs along with an incubator were sent off to a number of primary schools around the Wirral area. The children and teachers of the schools will be looking after the eggs until they hatch and the young chicks and ducklings will then be returned to the farm the week before the Easter holidays where you can come along and meet them. Some schools do keep the chicks for several weeks for learning purposes. Some will be sold to backyard poultry farmers and others will be introduced to our own group of poultry.

Mona and Marigold the three year old Golden Guernsey goats are doing well but are not happy about the cold weather we are having at the moment. Just like you and me they don't like to be out in the rain or the cold, they would much prefer to be lying in the sunshine. The Golden Guernsey breed is a golden colour which ranges from medium gold being the most common but this golden colour may vary from a pale blonde to a deep bronze. This breed of goat is often very friendly and quiet. The milk is relatively high in fat and protein to make it suitable for making yogurt and cheese.

During the winter period the farm had to say goodbye to one of our geese who had a bad leg for a while and along with the vet we decided that the best thing was to have him put to sleep. He had a long and happy life on the farm and lived to be sixteen years of age.



Volunteers

Many thanks to all the volunteers who have worked on the farm recently.

Some of these are pupils from school on work experience or from college on placement. Some come for a few hours at weekends or during the school holidays and are working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award whilst others come because they like animals and want something to do. Some decide they want a career with animals possibly as a vet or veterinary assistant and need experience of working with animals before attending college or to gain employment. Others are unable to gain employment but with support are able to contribute to this community project. The demand for places far outstrips our capacity, which is limited by the size of the farm, enough staff to supervise and adequate suitable tasks to match the range of abilities.

Our minimum age for volunteering is 12 years old. We are able to provide café vouchers (funded by WUFA), certificates to recognise the



amount of work completed and, of course, references for college or employers. Where possible we try to link in with national or regional initiatives on volunteering such as the 'v' awards for 16 – 25 year olds co-ordinated by the Volunteer Centre at Wirral CVS.

If you are interested then please ask a member of staff for an application form and fact sheet



New for Easter 2010

Refurbished play equipment – now with sound!

Try out the tractors and listen to a real tractor starting up or other animal sounds nearby.

Listen to our own version of Billy Goats Gruff as you cross the bridge near the pond and don't forget to make the cow 'moo' with your donation of a few coins.



Woodland Skills courses

Following the successful Beginners Gardening course and Basic Woodland Skills course run by Andy there will be another Basic Woodland Skills and an Intermediate Woodland Skills course starting after Easter.

There will be a maximum of 10 places and the courses will run on a Monday morning 10am – 12 and Monday afternoon 1pm – 3pm.

These are free courses run by the St James' Centre, 344 Laird Street, Birkenhead CH41 7AL, - 0151 670 9974. Please call in there or ring to book onto the course.

Starting dates to be confirmed.

Thanks to:

Shopfitting and Building Services Ltd, Wallasey for their donation (£200)

Inner Wheel Club of Heswall for their donation (£100)

Margaret Daniels – hand made cards

All the volunteers who helped construct and run the Santa's Grotto

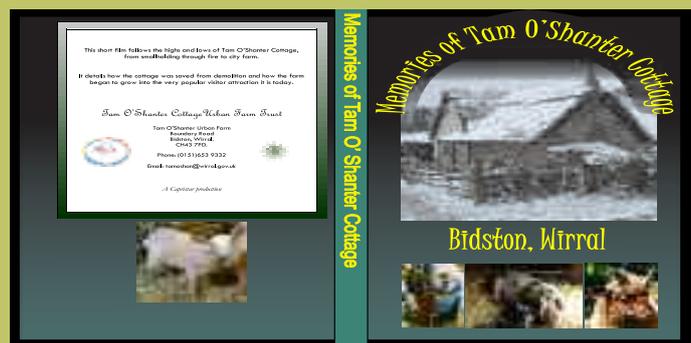
Karl Williams and *Wirral Tree and Hedge* for woodchip

Mrs Elliott and the *Merseyside Model Railway Club* for the freezer

MEMORIES OF TAM O'SHANTER

DVD

Only £1 with this voucher!



Events and activities

Storytelling

Tuesday, March 30th

Thursday, April 1st

Tuesday, April 6th

Wednesday, April 7th

All free in the Activity Room

1pm - 2pm and 3pm - 4pm.

Sessions are designed for ages 4–11 but suitable for all the family. No need to book, just come and take a seat to be whisked away to the land of make-believe.



Egg Decorating and Mask Making

Easter Sunday, April 4th

1–3pm. In the Activity Room.
Small charge for materials

Farm Tots

Every Thursday 10–11.30am during term time. Free. Run by Claughton Children's Centre in the Activity Room and on the farm. For under 5's with adult supervision.



Bidston Windmill Openings

Saturday April 3rd

Saturday, May 1st

Saturday, June 5th

Saturday, July 3rd

Saturday, August 7th

Saturday, September 4th
10am–12 noon

There is a minimum height restriction for access to the higher floors (1.06m).

Children under 11 years old must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Free admission.

May Half Term

Look out for Spot the Dog. Penguin Books will be creating free activity packs and hopefully some sort of competition. More details nearer the time.

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens Guided Walks

Come and find out all about the fascinating history of Birkenhead and stories of the personalities that helped make it the way it is. You will be very welcome. All on the following Saturdays:

10th April – Non-Conformist Area

18th May – Church of England Area

12th June – Roman Catholic Area

10th July – Non-Conformist Area

14th August - Church of England Area

11th September (New for 2010) – Military Walk (Taking in Military and War related graves). Would you please note that the Military Walk will be in two separate sessions, one starting at 11am and the second part starting at 2pm.

Meet at Tam 'O'Shanter Farm at 11am. (Flat shoes recommended, and an umbrella or raincoat just in case it rains) Run by Claughton Children's Centre Tel 0151 488 5948

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

Membership

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

Recent subscriptions (i.e. since October 1st 2009) will last until April 2011.

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.

