



A big thank you to all our volunteers for their continuing support over the winter months. A late blast of wintry weather from the 'Beast from the East' impacted a little on volunteer activity this quarter, but with spring on the doorstep it's now full steam ahead!

Spring Clean and Easter display at the Lock Keeper's Cottage

Many thanks to our Wednesday Heritage Guides – Helga, Arlene and Linda K – for undertaking a spring deep clean at the Lock Keeper's Cottage at the start of March, alongside thanks to Barbara for her customary Easter decorations currently on show. Spring flowers, brightly-coloured eggs and bunnies provide a pretty table display for all our visitors and Heritage Guides to enjoy. Thanks for all your hard work ladies.

Visitor Numbers

The Lock Keeper's Cottage and the Industry Barge continued to attract great numbers of visitors each month over the winter, with the **Industry Barge** welcoming **1,396 visitors** from the 5 January to 27 March 2018. The **Lock Keeper's Cottage** saw **2,089 visitors** cross its threshold in the same period. Thanks to all our Heritage Guides for making this possible.



Holiday Closures

The Cottage and the Barge (and the Park Office) will be **closed on Good Friday 30 March and on Easter Monday and Tuesday (2 and 3 April)**. All will re-open on Wednesday 4 April. In May we will also be closed on the two Bank Holidays – dates this year are **Monday 7 May and Monday 28 May**.

New Heritage Guides

A new batch of Heritage Guides have joined the team at the Regional Park over the last few months, with our most recent - husband and wife team, Harry and Sheena - currently undertaking training shadowing our well-experienced Guides in the Cottage and Barge respectively.

Our other 'newbies' are Deirdre - adding to her Saturday Conservation task volunteering by becoming a fully-fledged Cottage Heritage Guide - and Robert, who is settling in well to welcoming visitors to both the Cottage and the Barge.

Welcome aboard to you all!



Saturday Conservation Tasks back on track from April

After an extended break, due firstly to heavy snow brought by 'the Beast from the East', followed by public holidays for St Patrick's Day and then Easter, our **Saturday Conservation tasks will resume fortnightly from Saturday 14 April**. It will be great to get the team together again: local conservation work, good exercise, fresh air and great company – what could better on a Saturday morning in Lagan Valley!

The **provisional schedule for Saturday Conservation tasks** for the upcoming quarter is outlined below. Please note that these may be subject to change, though as usual confirmation will be emailed prior to task days.

Date	Task	Venue	Meeting place
4 Apr	Vegetation Removal	Giant's Ring	Giant's Ring Car Park
28 Apr	Vegetation Removal	Giant's Ring	Giant's Ring Car Park
12 May	Weeding around young oaks	Belvoir Oak Wood	TBC
26 May	Balsam pulling	STLD Park	Lower Stables Car Park
9 Jun	Balsam pulling	TBC	TBC
16 Jun	Balsam pulling	TBC	TBC

Update on Conservation Tasks



The team were busy in the first two months of 2018, continuing with the vegetation removal from the Giant's Ring boundary wall for the first task of the new year: carrying out hazel coppicing and scrub clearance in the young woodland at McIlroy Park over two very productive sessions in January and February, and then tackling a large stand of non-native invasive Cherry Laurel in Derriaghly Glen for the second February task.

Unfortunately heavy snow and public holidays meant that there were no tasks in March – though it wasn't for lack of enthusiasm as many of the volunteers were keen to brave the snow, had the work been feasible in the conditions. Thanks are due for your undaunted dedication.



All photos: Saturday
Conservation Volunteers at
McIlroy Park, Jan/Feb 2018

Wildlife Surveys



As part of the **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan**, Wildlife Survey Volunteers will be undertaking bumblebee surveys as part of the **Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme** this year on six transects across the Regional Park once a month from March until October.

A training and education session at the end of February by Aoibhinn Corrigan from NIEA was attended by eleven volunteers - some keen to simply learn more about these fascinating and important pollinators and seven of whom will carry forward the transect surveys. Hopefully the spring will bring some well-needed warmth for the emerging bees after the recent cold weather.



April also heralds the start of **UKBMS Butterfly Monitoring Scheme** season. If anyone is keen to get involved with butterfly surveying, please contact Dan at the Office. We would be very keen to find a dedicated volunteer/s who could carry on a long-established UKBMS transect at Shaw's Bridge left vacant this year by the sad passing of Eleanor Anderson.

It would be a fitting tribute if someone could continue this work. Please do be aware that butterfly transect volunteering does require time commitment as surveys are carried out weekly from April until the end of September and are weather dependent.



Eleanor Anderson (1943 – 2018)

It was with great sadness that we heard of the passing of Eleanor Anderson on 19 February.

Eleanor had been involved with the Regional Park since the beginning of the volunteering programme, and gave so much of her time and her passion for wildlife and the outdoors to her many volunteering roles here. She volunteered on conservation tasks, surveyed squirrels and butterflies, supported events and loved to photograph the flowers and beauty of Lagan Valley. All photographs of spring wildflowers in this edition of the Volunteer

Update were taken by Eleanor, with her keen eye and love of the natural world around her. She will be sadly missed and we extend our condolences to her family and friends. .

A small memorial event in her memory will take place at the Park in the coming months – details to be confirmed and will be sent out closer to the time.



Upcoming Spring Events at Lagan Valley Regional Park

Spring sees the Regional Park team promoting all that Lagan Valley has to offer at **Belfast City Council’s annual Spring Fair** at Malone House on **Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 April** from 1.30 – 5.30pm. We would be grateful for any **volunteer help manning the stall** on either day for a couple of hours (1.30-3.30 or 3.30-5.30pm). Please contact Genevieve at the Office if you have a few hours free and would like to help out.

Volunteer duties would involve chatting to the public about the Regional Park, about your experiences as a Volunteer and facilitating simple activities for children, e.g. colouring in/quizz sheets. **It would be great to have a cross section of volunteer roles represented** to paint a picture of all that the Park has to offer in both natural and built heritage, and to raise awareness of the great work done by all our volunteers, and the benefits this brings to our visitors, the community and of what you get back from volunteering.

LVRP Spring Events: April – June 2018

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
Fri 6 April	Dusk Chorus	Belvoir Park
Sat 21 April	Spring Wildflower Walk,	Minnowburn
Sat 28 April	Forage in the Forest	Visitor Centre
Fri 4 May	Spring Discovery Morning	Mclroy Park
Sat 5 May	Time Trek	Shaw’s Bridge
Fri 11 May	Bats about Belfast	Visitor Centre
Sat 19 May	Archaeology for All	Giant’s Ring
Thu 21 Jun	Summer Wildflower Walk,	Lagan Meadows



For more information and to book a place on any event, please contact the Park Office on 028 9049 1922

Feedback

Don’t forget to provide us with feedback. We are always interested to know of any issues, questions or suggestions you may have.

Volunteer uniforms

If any of our volunteers don’t yet have a body warmer or one of our T-shirts, please let the staff know and we will make sure you are supplied with these items.