

Volunteer Update June 2018



A big thank you to all our volunteers for their continuing support throughout the spring months. Thanks to several weeks of early summer sunshine the Regional Park has been buzzing with wildlife and visitors alike...and they say there is more on the way! What better time to get out and enjoy the beauty of Lagan Valley.

Visitor Numbers

The sunshine throughout May brought visitors flocking to the Regional Park, and although there was an impact on visitor numbers in the latter half of June with the café closed for refurbishment works, our dedicated Heritage Guides still welcomed **3,013 visitors to the Cottage** and **1,093 visitors to the Barge** in the period from the 1st April to 26th June. Thank you all for keeping the stories of the Lagan Navigation and its Lock Keepers alive.



Holiday Closures

The Cottage and the Barge will be **closed from Wednesday 11 – Friday 13 July inclusive.** And also on the Bank Holiday on **Monday 27 August.**

New Heritage Guide

Another quarter, another new Heritage Guide! It has been a pleasure to welcome Michael on board the Industry Barge. Michael enthusiastically jumped straight into his new role after the briefest of shadowing periods, and has been doing a fantastic job engaging with our visitors. Thanks Michael for joining the team at LVRP!



Update on Conservation Tasks

Our Saturday Conservation Volunteers have been busy this quarter with a variety of tasks across the Regional Park.



April's two tasks and the first task of May saw the volunteers coming full circle to complete the vegetation removal from the historic **boundary wall at the Giant's Ring** which has been ongoing over several seasons. This fantastic volunteer effort laid the groundwork for NIEA assessment of the wall's condition to inform present/future restoration work.



Indeed on our latter tasks, volunteers have been able to see the fruits of their labours paying off, as repointing of the stone wall adjacent to Giant's Ring House has already commenced.



Thank you all for your hard work over all the tasks at the Giant's Ring. I know that many of you have a particular love of working on this site, and indeed who wouldn't on a site of such national importance, and with such a view on a beautiful sunny day!

For the second May task and the first task of June, the volunteers were busy on Belfast City Council's Bee-licious meadow site at Clement Wilson Park removing young aspen suckers from the species rich grassland.

The work carried out by the volunteers here will facilitate machinery to cut and lift 'hay' in late summer, thus reducing fertility and encouraging a diversity of wildflowers to benefit our pollinators and visitors alike. Thank you all for your hard work in the heat, and thanks also to Orla Maguire, BCC Biodiversity Officer, for coming along to both tasks and telling us all about the Bee-licious project.





For the last task of the quarter, the volunteers were at Derriaghy Glen removing Himalayan balsam, a yearly seasonal task to manage the spread of this non-native invasive species. More balsam bashing is on the cards for next month – both back at Derriaghy Glen and at Minnowburn along with the National Trust.

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
7 Jul	Balsam bashing	Derriaghy Glen	Yew Tree Walk
21 Jul	Balsam bashing	Minnowburn	Minnowburn car park
4 Aug	Ragwort removal	Minnowburn	Minnowburn car park
18 Aug	Meadow Management TBC	Clement Wilson	Lock Keeper's car park
1 Sep	Vegetation management	Belvoir (young oaks)	TBC
15 Sep	Scrub coppicing TBC	STLD	STLD Lower Stables car park
29 Sep	Scrub coppicing	STLD	STLD Lower Stables car park

Other volunteer news

Our **Volunteer Rangers** have also been busy with balsam removal at Mary Peter's Track, carrying out bumblebee and butterfly surveys and assisting the Ranger Service with patrols and litter. Thank you all for your efforts over the last few months.



Thanks are also due to our **Wildlife Survey volunteers** for their ongoing work carrying out bumblebee and butterfly transects, contributing important local data into national monitoring programmes from which population trends and distributions are determined.

Our annual **Daubenton's Bat Waterway Survey** will take place again this August, so we will be looking for volunteers (present and new) to undertake the transects along the Lagan. Details will be sent out in July.

Sue McManus (1959 – 2018)



It was with great sorrow that we heard of the passing of another of our long-term volunteers at the Park, Sue McManus, on 9 April. Sue had volunteered since the outset of the volunteering programme and had a great love of the Regional Park. Sue was also a very talented artist, and a gentlewoman in all senses of the word. She fought her illness with great strength, bravery and positivity down the years – and should be an inspiration to us all.

We will be arranging a planting ceremony in the autumn (the best time for planting trees and shrubs) for both Sue and Eleanor, who passed away earlier this year. Details to follow.

Events – Thank you!

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped out at the **BCC Spring Fair in April.**

The minibeast hunt and kingfisher colouring-in competition went down a treat, and the winning children were delighted when we contacted them to pick up their prizes after the event. **Kenny the Kingfisher** was a big hit with the kids and he survived the heat...though he was probably a little lighter by the end of the day!

Thank you all for sharing your volunteer stories and promoting our wonderful Regional Park to the public on both days. It was fantastic to have a cross section of Volunteers from across heritage and conservation to promote all that the Park has to offer.



Upcoming events – Mclroy Park

On **Monday 16 July**, LVRP's Mclroy Park will be one of the 48 UK sites hosting **Chris Packham's 'UK Bioblitz – Nature Reserves are not Enough!'** citizen science campaign, recording flora and fauna on site with the help of park staff and local experts. The results of the 2018 UK nature audit will be recorded to create a benchmark, which will help measure the rise and fall in numbers of different species on these sites in the future.

Several schools and a local wildlife group have been invited along to join the recording effort and learn about what's on site. Volunteers are invited to attend/assist with surveys, and the event is open to the public. The core hours on site will be **7am – 11am**.

If you are interested in coming along, or for more info, please contact Donna at the Park Office on 028 9049 1922 or admin@laganvalley.co.uk, (as Genevieve will be on annual leave from 7 – 19 July).

Upcoming events - Annual events programme

Details of this quarter's annual events programme are outlined below.

Further details can be obtained from our printed programme, available from the Visitor Centre and other outlets, on our website and Facebook page, or by telephoning the Office on 028 9049 1922. Please note that events **must be booked** as spaces are limited.

Events are **free for our volunteers**, though donations are always welcome.

So why not come along to one of our upcoming events, or promote them to your family and friends – there is something there to interest everyone!



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

LVRP Summer Events: July – Sep 2018

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
Fri 6 July	Introduction to Moth Trapping and Identification: Part 1	Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) Visitor Centre
Sat 7 July	Introduction to Moth Trapping and Identification: Part 2	LVRP Visitor Centre
Thurs 19 July	Bumblebee and Butterfly Safari	Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park
Thurs 19 July	Secret Garden	Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park
Sat 28 July	Butterfly Ramble	LVRP Visitor Centre
Fri 3 Aug	Summer Discovery Morning	Lisburn Island Centre
Fri 24 Aug	Edenderry Evening Trail	Minnowburn
Sat 1 Sep	A Walk Among the Trees	Malone House
Sat 8 Sep	Hedge Fun	Minnowburn

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