

CRAG & PEEL

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News from the Holyrood & Linlithgow Parks Ranger Service



RANGER MEETS THE QUEEN!



Lily Laing received her MBE for services to the Police and the communities of Edinburgh

We are delighted to report that a Historic Scotland Ranger Service team member now has an MBE! Community Ranger, Rosie Wylie, tells us more.

'The 5th of July was a very special day for the Ranger Service as one of our most experienced team members, Lily Laing, was awarded an MBE. She was awarded her Member of the British Empire status to recognise her dedication to the local and wider community of Edinburgh.'

Lily stood alongside members of the business community, celebrities and public servants to receive her award at the Palace of Holyrood House. The ceremony took place before the Queen's garden Party, with hundreds of guests in attendance.

Lily received her award for her service to policing and the community of Edinburgh. Through this role Lily has reached out to a vast number of children and adults throughout the community, most recently focussing her attention on designing projects to help reduce antisocial behaviour. Utilising her warm, friendly and creative

personality with an endless supply of energy, it is easy to understand why Lily's love for community involvement has been celebrated by the head of the Royal Family!

Colleagues, friends and family gathered to celebrate Lily's award at the Holyrood Education Centre following the ceremony. Lily said: "It was amazing, and I was so moved by it, because I could never have achieved this without the help of my police & work colleagues and members of the community who have helped to make a difference, so I'd like to thank them." Well done Lily!'

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VOLUNTEER PROFILE - JULIE MAINWOOD



Julie Mainwood at Linlithgow Loch

Name?

Julie Mainwood

Are you based at Holyrood Park or Linlithgow Peel?

I am a conservation volunteer at Linlithgow

How long have you been a Conservation Volunteer?

Since January 2011

What do you enjoy most about being a Conservation Volunteer?

There are so many things I enjoy about being a conservation volunteer, but I guess the best thing is being outside doing things that benefits both wildlife and my community.

Have you learnt any new skills?

I have learned how to carry out survey work (bird nest surveys & butterfly counts)

Have you found anything challenging since joining the team?

Trying to remember the names of all the wild flowers and plants; and I have found some of the more physical tasks quite a challenge, so have struggled a bit when it has come time to constructing 'French Drains' or sawing off bits of damaged trees.

What is your most memorable moment?

I think the most memorable moment for me, was back in early April, when Andy had asked for some help carrying out the bird nest surveys. We had been working our way round the Loch, when we came to a nest with a female swan on it. We were standing at the top of the bank, quietly discussing the status of the nest, was it half built, three quarters built, when the swan raised her tail and a moment later, she laid her first egg!

TINY TOADS



A very tiny toad on migration

Holyrood Park's toad population always attracts a lot of attention during their annual spring migration to spawn in our various lochs and ponds, but what are the toads up to now?

Shortly after the females have laid their eggs, the adult toads head back onto land. The tadpoles take about three months to metamorphose into toadlets: miniature versions of the adult toad.

In August these mini toads leave the water in large numbers to join the adults on land. We call this process synchronised emergence, the sheer volume of mini toads exceeding the appetite of the predators that gather to eat them. If we

get the right weather conditions the ground can appear to be moving due to the sheer number of tiny toads involved!

If they survive this crucial stage they will live for the rest of the year under stones, vegetation or dead wood. At this age they will eat ants and small flies, but as they get older they will move on to larger prey such as spiders, slugs and worms.

In winter, toads do not actually hibernate *per se*, so they still forage for food in milder periods.

At about three years of age the Common Toad reaches sexual maturity, and at that point you may be lucky enough to see these tiny creatures return to where they were born in order to become parents in their own right!



Short grass is a jungle when you are the size of a fingernail

PATHS FOR ALL WALKS IN HOLYROOD PARK



Out and about in Holyrood Park

Summer 2011 saw the launch of 'Holyrood Health Walks' run by the H.S. Ranger Service.

The photo shows Jan Tapson Volunteer Ranger, who is a trained Paths for All Walk Leader, with two of our regular walkers.

If you want to get outdoors, meet new people and gradually improve your walking confidence, join us on our next block of 6 short Health Walks.

Please get in touch with Katy Firth:

katy.firth@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

or telephone 0131 652 8150

JOHN MUIR AWARD—ELANA BADER



Elana receives her John Muir Discoverer Award

Volunteer Ranger Elana Bader has recently completed her John Muir Discoverer Award. She tells us about her experiences with the Historic Scotland Ranger Service.

'When Rosie mentioned I could do my John Muir Discovery award through the HSRS I immediately said yes.

It was a great opportunity to work on a constructive project that not only contributed to the greater community but also gave me the chance to learn something new while helping to strengthen the Education Centre's resources.

My project involved learning more about the biodiversity of Holyrood Park and culminated with the revamping of a food chain game for use in educational games.

It was great fun and I am very grateful to the Rangers involved for their help and look forward to hopefully completing my Explorer award soon!

I highly recommend the JMA as it is flexible, adaptable, and all-inclusive, and a great way to spend time with the HSRS'.

DID YOU KNOW?

Linlithgow Palace Fountain



Built in c1538, the fountain at Linlithgow Palace is thought to be the oldest surviving fountain in Britain. It was commissioned by James V of Scotland, reputedly to welcome his new French queen.

The three-tiered wedding cake structure is topped by a crown. Water, symbolising the benefits of the King's rule, poured from the mouth of the sun-face carved on the underside of the crown. The fountain features two unicorns (the supporters of the Scottish royal arms), a lion, and a winged deer supporting the joined arms of Scotland and France.

It was traditionally used as a centrepiece during special occasions, and it is said that wine flowed instead of water when Bonnie Prince Charlie stayed at Linlithgow Palace in 1745. Today the fountain is only run on selected dates to help prevent erosion. A replica can be found at Holyrood palace.

The Radical Road runs directly below Salisbury Crags and was financed by Sir Walter Scott. It was an early job creation scheme for weavers who were put out of work by the mechanisation of their trade in the 1820s. They held radical political views hence the name of the path.

There's an old childhood riddle based on this road: "Round and round the radical road the radical rascal ran, how many 'R's are in that, tell me if you can?" The answer is, of course, there are no 'R's in **THAT**. Did you get it?

The Radical Road



GET IN TOUCH

We are always on the lookout for more volunteers, suggestions or ideas. If you would like more details about our range of educational services or any aspect of our volunteer or conservation work please contact us. We look forward to hearing from you.

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RANGER SERVICE EVENTS

For information on Historic Scotland events see www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/events

Also, for information across Lothian www.outdoor-diary.info is a new website that's packed full of ideas for activities including the ones we run. Ours are marked with the code HSRS the (E) for Edinburgh or (L) for Linlithgow. There's a print version available by calling 0845 367 3787 (Edinburgh) or 01835 830 281 (Borders). Large print versions are also available from the Edinburgh number.