

200 Memories

Bolam@200 project

There are many stories I could tell of the 20 + years I worked onsite including the infamous Bolam Yeti, seeing the most amazing wildlife during the Foot & Mouth epidemic, teaching many generations of children in school trips and working with the Buddhist monks at Harnham, however one funny story is of the fat lazy duck stuck on the ice.

As often happened the lake itself would easily freeze over in the winter and often visitors would be concerned over the swans, ducks and other water fowl that seemed to be stuck on the ice. Often calling into the office and asking what we could do to help them. One visitor actually suggesting we air lift the swans out by helicopter!! Obviously we did not take that idea seriously! However one day a family turned up and said they were concerned about one duck seemingly on its own stuck on the ice. Of course we usually said that the birds are fine and will be ok however they came back the following day and said it was still there. Not believing that a duck would be silly enough to actually get its legs frozen in the ice we said ok we will check it out over the coming days. It was not close enough to shore for us to closely observe it.

Two days later it was still there so with heavy heart thought we ought to do something about this and proceeded to inflate the rescue boat and think of a plan to rescue it. The only thing we could think of was to have one person at the front with an axe to smash through the ice and two others to try and pull the boat forward by sticking the oars in the lake bottom. Once we got close enough we would have a net to catch it. As you can imagine this took time and after an hour we were making progress and were confident that this would work and all the time the duck looking on quite blankly at us.

Within feet of the bird and within spitting feathers much to our disgust the obviously well fed and lazy duck decided that was the good time to make its move and simply stood up on the ice and walked off in a different direction.

Needless to say if we had got our hands on it Duck a l'orange was on the menu for tea!!!