



Friends

of FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK
and GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

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website: www.forestfarm.org.uk

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year



Atmospheric picture of the canal taken in 2013. Photographer unknown.

NEW STARBUCKS AT CORYTON - *Martin Chamberlain*

A planning application has been submitted to Cardiff Council for a drive-in Starbucks at Coryton near to the petrol station.

Members would be aware that, for many years in the past, there have been issues with the existing fast food providers at Coryton although the present management are working to improve the position.

Litter is already a problem in that area and the Committee are therefore concerned that another fast food establishment would add to this problem affecting that part of the Reserve.

Representations have been made to the local elected representatives that the following legal agreements are in place as part of any planning permission

- A 2.5 metre close link fence is put around the site to stop litter blowing onto the Reserve
- That Starbucks or any franchisee must remove any of their litter within 500 metres of their site

Continued overleaf

Editorial

Welcome to you all and a Happy Christmas!

As ever, we both look back and forward at this time of year. What were our highlights? Certainly one was our Open Day with our most successful day ever in recent years (P5) and we have (just) reached over 400 members for the first time. The Rangers base now being on site is starting to make a difference to the Reserve, as is the help of other groups with our volunteering tasks e.g. clearing tree debris from the canal, the woodland garden (p7) and litter picking. (right)

We received the Frog Environmental report on the canal (and we look forward to hearing what action is being proposed). With the completion of Radyr Hydroplant, the Taff trail reopened. Sadly though, the Melingriffith Water Pump continues to need repairs.

It was encouraging to see so many children at our Open Day; it would be great to think that they are or will be as interested as young Boris who submitted a wonderful report (P10). Thanks to him and John Wilkins (P8) - are you inspired to help the project or compare the 1991 survey?

Developments are always around us, currently Starbucks and a new Velindre Hospital - see report from Martin Pp1-2, P6).

This is my opportunity to thank you, the Friends, for your support, the volunteers including those who have led walks, those who deliver our newsletters and last but not least the Rangers who do such a fantastic job. We really do appreciate it.

With very best wishes for a peaceful and Happy New Year..

Sheila Austin

NEW STARBUCKS (cont'd)

Similar objections were raised when the original fast food establishment was built. It is hoped that requirements such as those above will be in place and that the continuing, though improved, litter problem along Longwood Drive area will not be increased.

(Friends will be aware that earlier in the year, support and joint effort with Pendywallt Rd Community Watch, Whitchurch PACT, Keep Wales Tidy, McDonalds, GE Healthcare and ourselves resulted in the Council taking some action. The litter problem has improved but has not gone away and needs constant vigilance.

Read on ...

I have just been notified of the results of a litter pick on 3rd November, organised by McDonalds. As usual it was a joint effort; this time McDonalds, Pendywallt Rd Community Watch, Tidy Taffs and Whitchurch PACT. They worked behind Asda, the path from the Village Hotel to Asda and Longwood Drive collecting 12 bags in all, 7 bags from Longwood Drive - compared to 70 at its worst.

So you see that litter does continue to be a problem and the various organisations are still active. Ed)

Apology ... to Craig Williams M.P.

I missed his name off those present in the photo of the opening of Radyr Hydroplant in the last newsletter. Ed

Deadline for articles for next newsletter - 8th Feb 2017

See back page for contact details

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Forest Farm Hives

As Summer ends and Autumn and Winter are upon us, the honey has been harvested and the bees are now in their hives, clustered together to generate heat in order to survive the Winter.

In the summer months, bees make and store their honey to feed themselves and the queen through the Winter. Usually a good hive will store more than they need; this excess honey is then taken from the hive by beekeepers for their own use or sold.

In the case of Forest Farm, the proceeds from the sale of honey is ploughed back into the apiary for the upkeep, to feed the bees, for equipment and general maintenance of the hives.

Care must be taken to leave enough stores (honey) for the bees to survive the winter. If stores are low, a sugar solution is introduced as a feed for the bees to make up the shortfall.

During the winter months, Pauline and I will be doing maintenance work at the apiary e.g. cutting back overgrown shrubs, nettles, grass and repairing any storm damage and general tidying up around the hives.



Photo from www.BuzzAboutBees.net

Peter Roberts

In olden days, a common practice was for newlyweds to drink mead, a drink made from honey, for one month (one phase of the moon) to assure the birth of a son. Thus the term, 'honeymoon'. No sorry, I have not checked out if it worked.

Foraging bees visit 5 million flowers to produce 600 grams of honey. They forage a 4 - 5 kilometre (2 - 3 miles) radius from the hive in search of food. That is the equivalent of nearly 6,000 acres.

One mouthful of every 3 foods we eat comes from plants pollinated by bees. Without bees' help, many commercial crops would suffer. 60% of the fruits and vegetables we eat need honey bees to pollinate. Therefore, a Spring without bees could endanger our food supply, and impact on our whole economy.

Considering the somewhat erratic weather and more than ample rainfall this year, the bees at Forest Farm have worked tirelessly on our behalf. At our Open Day (on 8th October), 50 jars of honey were sold and many of our members and visitors were disappointed it sold out so quickly.

I hope that by remembering some of the above facts, your spoonful of honey will taste all the sweeter!

Pauline Fisher

ANNUAL SUMMER COACH TRIP

In July 2017 we shall be having our usual coach trip.

If you have any suggestions of where our destination should be this time and which is a maximum of 2 hours travel away please contact Duncan

Tel: 02920626111

or email duncan3@hotmail.co.uk



Come rain or shine !!

Forest Farm Nature Walk 10.00 - 12.30

Every 3rd Saturday. Meet at the Wardens Centre

Post Xmas/New Year Walk - 10.00 Jan 15th

See the site of the proposed new Velindre Hospital

Meet Martin at Wardens Centre

Don't forget our ***Evening Talks 7.30p.m.***

Ararat Centre for the Community Whitchurch

18th Jan and 15th March



Reserve Update **from Nicola Hutchinson** **Conservation Officer**

Many of you may be wondering how things are progressing with the plans for work to develop Forest Farm as a whole and the canal improvements in recent months.

While you may not have noticed big things happening yet, work is going on behind the scenes at the moment and you should start to see some improvements in the central building and car park areas soon. We have sourced some grant funding to improve signage, the picnic area, and reline the old pond by the farmhouse. This should start to make the site feel more joined up - rather than a bit disjointed which has been the result of the site's history with more than one organisation based here for a long time.

The recent study by Frog Environmental on the Canal has highlighted a number of priorities which will need to be addressed. Some of this can be tackled without sourcing funding but some will certainly need to be grant funded so will take a bit longer to get started on. We have started to do the preliminary works for this but it all takes time I'm afraid - so please be patient with us.

Also, many of you may know that we have been getting repairs done on the Melingriffith Water Wheel recently. There is a new motor and a number of the timbers were replaced. However, while we did get it turning again briefly while Penybryn Engineering were on site, we have unfortunately found a crack in the wheels casting which will need repair. We also found that more of the timber spokes needed replacing than first thought. This is a bit of a set back but we are working with them to get things repaired and trying to source the funding to do this work.

Finally, if anyone wants to get involved with our work to develop **the farmhouse garden area**, we are looking for people who have a few hours spare and like pottering in gardens to give us a hand. You can contact me at nhutchinson@cardiff.gov.uk or [02920445903](tel:02920445903).

Reserve Report

by Raj Chettri - Community Park Ranger

One of the projects that the Rangers have undertaken at Forest Farm is to re-establish the "Butterfly meadow". With the sharp decline in pollinators such as the butterflies, bumble bees etc., there is a need for wild flower meadows to sustain these precious invertebrates.

The original meadow had, over the years, become rank and overgrown with docks and grass. Sadly, meadows don't remain meadows without mowing or grazing or ploughing, without annual management. Unlike in gardens and vegetable plots, to have a vibrant wildflower rich meadow the fertile topsoil has to be removed and the seed mix sown on the less fertile substrate layer. Early in the year this was done with the aid of a mini digger. The fertile topsoil was piled by the side as an embanking with a view to providing a base for early spring flowering plants such as wild daffodils and native snowdrops. The main meadow had to be continuously "Weeded" to get rid of the ground ivy and deep rooted docks. All this requires a lot of manual labour and this was provided by the eager volunteers from the Innovate Trust's Green days Project as well as our long term volunteers and some from Europe.

The whole project was funded by Buglife's Cardiff Urban Buzz project, which is funded by Biffa Award, Garfield Weston Foundation and the Heritage Lottery Fund. In Cardiff it works in partnership with the City of Cardiff Council's Ranger Service. The project's aim is to engage with local communities to create over 100 new places for our precious pollinators. They are enhancing public green spaces by planting flower-filled pollinator patches, wildflower meadows and providing new pollinator nesting sites such as bee banks and hotels.

Friends of Forest Farm Open Day - October 8th



What a great day we had! It was the busiest ever in recent years - and a lot of you stayed for a while, took part in several activities and returned for refreshments at intervals!

The Committee were so busy that in fact we didn't get out much to take many photos! It doesn't look as though many people were there. We estimated that we had about 250 visitors and it was lovely that so many of them were families.



Apple pressing, - and John keeping an eye on his young helper.

Here is a selection of some photos of the activities and stands and a 'nature piece' from Amelia Thomas, read by her beside the mural at the back of the Wardens' Centre.

A young interested observer of some Seren Willow artefacts



Nature defines us. What we are. Who we are

We live it,
We eat it,
We breathe it.

Without nature, we are nothing.



Being creative is nature's way of working itself through us, helping to put our thoughts and dreams into the world. It is the same silent energy that moves along the stem and into the colour of petals.

Music, art, poetry and dance are the four elements of hip-hop culture. A modern day culture.

Yes; we live in a modern world, but we are not so far removed from our ancestors. Why is it that we enjoy getting 'back to nature'? Our love of simple things; hanging out in the park, camping, walking through the woods with friends. It reminds us of what we are, where we came from, and, more importantly, it re-energises us, reinvigorates the soul. We drink in our surroundings and connect with living things. We close our eyes and remember that we are but part of a bigger picture.

Listen to the birds of the air, putting their own creativity into the world, in the same way that we do when we paint, we rap, we dance or make music. They are expressing their own true and instinctive selves. Nature is how we do this. Our connection with nature is our key link to our innermost self.

Embrace it, live it, enjoy what it offers, but remember that one day, at the end of it all, when the last grain of sand drops away from what made us, us, we, every one of us, will go back, back to nature.

And our essence, what made us who we were, what made us unique as individuals, will run like the colours on a palette board, back into the nature that created us, that sustained us, that united us.

We owe nature all, and must use our talents in whatever form they manifest to show our respect.



facebook.com/millimagic



@artbymillimagic



The Rangers and visitors near the RSPB stand

Sincere thanks to everyone for contributing to the success of the day; all the Rangers there, the RSPB, the stall holders and craft people, Dexter the corn snake!

We are also specially grateful to:

Onllwyn Eggs - who donated eggs to sell for our funds; Peter's Forest Farm Honey - the sale of which is used to maintain the hives; Jenny and Stephen Turner for donating a special cake.

Last but by no means least; we signed up 12 new members, 5 renewed - and one person donated £30 to adopt a tree in the orchard.

Forest Farm Nature Reserve - October Walk
by Elaine Olsen



The regular walkers met again for an October walk. We were blessed with splendid sunshine, which the birds also seemed to be making the most of - they were chirping as if it was the height of the mating season.

Having enjoyed the display on the feeders at the hide by the wardens hut of the usual suspects, robin, sparrow, nuthatch, dunnock, blue, great and coal tits, we then trotted up to the bridge across the river to Radyr train station. A low river provided perfect conditions for a dipper to feed at the edge of the pebbly beach and a grey wagtail was also in evidence. Some of our party were lucky enough to catch a first glimpse of the day of a kingfisher taking advantage of the clear water to catch a late fish breakfast.

We lingered in the warm sunshine rather longer than usual before walking across to the first of the pair of bird hides on the ponds. Here a lone snipe was foraging in plain sight and we were able to enjoy the view at quite close range. After a few minutes a kingfisher landed on one of the perches and proceeded to fish in the pond.



Snipe at Forest Farm Wetland
Photograph by Norman Watson

Once he had departed, we headed for the second hide, where a great tit paid us a visit, actually in the hide. We were unable to reward him as no one had brought any seed. However, a photographer was in attendance and he shared his biscuit with a robin who landed on his hand. At this hide, we had a fine display from another kingfisher, who proceeded to fish and fly from reed to reed.

We left there and headed up to the canal, passing the meadow where a herd of cows was keeping a buzzard company while he foraged for worms. At the canal a large flock of ducks looked at us expectantly, but we still had nothing for them!

Lastly, a mixed flock of long-tailed, great, blue and coal tits, along with gold crests tweeted in the canopy. Having not seen a single heron on Forest Farm, I was pleased to be greeted by one on my way home, as I crossed back across the bridge at the train station.

Velindre Hospital - Update

In the last newsletter we communicated Velindre NHS Trust's plans for a new hospital in the lower part of the hospital meadows and continue to be in discussion with Velindre as plans are developed.

In the last month, ground surveys have been undertaken throughout the hospital meadows to get an understanding of the ground conditions to enable the Trust to develop their plans.

One of our major concerns was about access to the new hospital from Coryton Interchange, which may have to be via the top section meadows of the Reserve. However, Velindre are now investigating with Asda whether part of their road network can be used to access the new site. Whilst discussions are at an early stage, we are hopeful that this alternative route will be successful

In January 2017, Velindre will undertake the first part of the planning process with their initial planning application. As the Friends of Forest Farm continue to be in discussions with Velindre, we will keep you updated as plans develop.

Martin Chamberlain

A Woodland Garden Project - and Volunteering

This is a project to make the (vaguely triangular) piece of ground at the small car park by the canal into a woodland garden. Raj Chettri, (one of the Rangers) is leading the project. It has been funded by donations from Ted Edwards family and Whitchurch W.I. (Ted was of course a founder member of the Friends of Forest Farm and its Chairman for many years.) Volunteers from Innovate Trust's Green Days Project and Cardiff University have helped prepare the site and the plan is to involve schoolchildren in the planting. How great is that??

Photo taken before work started.
Sheila Austin



The start was not promising! Raj reported that it "is not as simple as it seemed when I volunteered to take the lead. It is full of self sown ash whips. We found that rather than uprooting it in the past, it was cut so the stumps are very well established and deep rooted. Alec and I decided to dig it up but we found that the soil is only a few inches thick and underneath it is sub strate. It will therefore take a while for us to prepare the site before any planting can be done."

However, fortunately there are 2 groups of enthusiastic volunteers. One of them was Cardiff University Wildlife and Conservation Society. Lucy Rowley, (Vice President) sent in the following:

They are "a group of students who are not only passionate about the environment and wildlife but also love to help with conservation tasks in our local area. Our society is actively taking part in conservation events through nature reserves and The Wildlife Trust.

The before and after shots show what we achieved at Forest Farm. A large group of us all got to grips with clearing ash saplings and had an enjoyable morning. The area was being cleared in order to plant a woodland garden; the goal of achieving this spurred the team on. The woodland garden would help to increase the diversity of species in the area as well as offering beautiful scenery for passers by. We hope to continue working alongside Forest Farm in the future to help conserve the nature reserve."



Volunteers from Cardiff University
Wildlife and Conservation Society - photo from them.

Raj has now told me the Cardiff University group are returning on 13th November to clear the site of self-sown ash saplings and soil preparation. If it can be done on the day, the next phase will involve felling some trees and placing some heavy logs to act as a feature and stop cars using it as parking. The tree felling and hard scraping is weather dependent i.e when the wind condition is benign and the heavy lifting involves getting a high up vehicle. Only then will a local school who will help to plant the bulbs

So, when you are up in the area, you know what is going on, and you can keep an eye on progress and look forward to a lovely woodland garden in the Spring.

Sheila Austin



After the volunteers work. Photo: Martin Chamberlain

The Mary Gillham Archive Project, a volunteer's view

by John Wilkins (FoFF/MGAP Volunteer)

Regular readers of this magazine might well recall, from a previous issue, an appeal by Dr. Alan (You can call me Al) Reeve - Project Officer of SEWBReC's "Mary Gillham Archive Project" - for volunteers to help with digitising the mountain of material (box files, ring-binders, diaries, surveys, reports, photographic slides etc.) that comprise her archive.

I read that magazine item and, with no little initial hesitancy on my part, made up my mind that I could make an offer of a (fairly) regular amount of my time to be of some assistance (however small) in helping with what will be, in total, a two-year project.

What a good decision that was! The six months or so that I have been involved with the project has seen not only an enhancement of my IT skills and my knowledge of both local and "foreign" flora and fauna but has also brought me into contact with a team of pleasant, friendly and knowledgeable volunteers who, from the outset, have welcomed me into their midst and have readily shared relevant aspects of their knowledge with me.



Photo supplied by
the Mary Gillham Archive Project

Co-incidentally, one of the most recent items from Mary's archive with which I have been involved in committing to computer, is the survey of what was deemed to be "Surplus" land north of Whitchurch Hospital. This survey*, undertaken in the autumn of 1991, formed a part of the submission to the City of Cardiff Council by The Friends of Forest Farm and Glamorgan Canal Local Nature Reserve opposing housing development on that above "surplus" land.

'Friends' with memories stretching back that far, will no doubt remember their "protest" against the planned encroachment into the natural habitat of so many wild creatures and plants and will also recall their satisfaction (and that's probably an understatement!) when the proposal for the development of the land in question was rejected.*

Mary's records show that the above proposal was only one of a number made (and subsequently rejected) over the course of many years - a proposal to extend BT's land use into the surrounding area being just one of these.

Of course, Friends/readers will be aware that you can win any number of battles without winning a war. It can only be hoped, therefore, that the "authorities" concerned will address the very real concerns and pay sincere attention to the suggestions of the Friends of Forest Farm (and of other similarly interested bodies) in their attempts to keep to a minimum the impact that the development will have on the area's wildlife.

This autumn brings about the 25th anniversary of the above survey, so it was thought that you might like to see listed the flora that was present in 1991 to compare and contrast that list with what can/could be found on the site in 2016.

As stated at the beginning of this item, the Mary Gillham Archive Project continues for nearly another year and a half - so a welcome is extended to those who have the time (and the inclination) to *join the team of volunteers* involved in it. Contact Al by phone on **07961516587** or by e-mail alan.reeve@sewbrec.org.uk.

Given Mary's involvement over so many years with Forest Farm and with other areas of natural importance, it would seem self-evident that many readers will have had (regular?) contact with her.. If you would like to contribute relevant and appropriate *memories of Mary* to the project then you can send them to Al at the above e-mail address.

The project's website (marygillhamarchiveproject.com) lists "*field trips*" that are arranged to mirror some of those that appear in Mary's archive and you will be most welcome to join with us on any of these that appeal to you - regardless of whether or not you are a volunteer.

On www.flickr.com/photos/marygillhamarchiveproject/albums you will find and be able to look at *photographs taken by Mary* at Forest Farm and at other locations around Wales and beyond.

Finally, should you have an interest in reading *the full seven-page submission appendix* from which the above lists are taken then you can email Al for a copy.

(Mary Gillham was born in 1921 and passed away in 2013 having lived from 1962 to 2011 in Gwaelod y Garth on the outskirts of Cardiff. She was a noted Botanist, Biologist, Naturalist, Conservationist (and probably many other "ists") who was involved in the "promotion" (and often the establishment) of numerous conservation areas other than Forest Farm e.g. The Dare Valley Country Park, Cosmeston etc.)

(* Planning permission for building on the hospital meadows was in fact granted 5 years later in 1996. Ed)

December 2016 Newsletter

Plants listed on the Reserve and Hospital Fields between the Railway Cutting and Long Wood in September 1991

Scientific name	Common name	Scientific name	Common name
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Smooth Meadowgrass
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent	<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Downy Birch	<i>Potentilla sterilis</i>	Barren Strawberry
<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	Butterfly-bush	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i> ssp <i>holosteoides</i>	Common Mouse-Ear	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	Enchanter's-nightshade	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock
<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	Common Spotted-orchid	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	Hemp-agrimony	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Euphrasia officinalis</i> agg.	Eyebright	<i>Scorzoneroidea autumnalis</i>	Autumn Hawkbit
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	<i>Senecio erucifolius</i>	Hoary Ragwort
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort
<i>Galeopsis tetrahit</i>	Common Hemp-nettle	<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser Stitchwort
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion
<i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i>	Marsh Cudweed	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small-leaved Lime
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	<i>Tilia cordata</i> X <i>dasystyla</i> = <i>T x euchlora</i>	Caucasian Lime
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser Trefoil
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>	Rough Hawkbit	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Wych Elm
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder-rose
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed	<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy	<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Common Dog-violet
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain		

"Brilliant Birds"
An article with illustrations by Boris Cook
Aged 9

Brilliant Birdlife
Hello my name is Boris. I live in Whitechurch in Cardiff.
And I am nine years old. I am a frequent visitor to
Forest Farm. Forest Farm is a great place for
wildlife in the suburbs. I like birdwatching.
After waiting (some times it takes quite a bit of
patience!) I saw some unusual birds.
On one particularly good spotting day
I saw; a treecreeper zig-zagging across
a broad trunked tree; a grey heron perched
on the weir waiting patiently for fish;
a grey wagtail flitting over rocks in the river;
a goosander wading in the river; a sleek otter
paddling to the bank; a mouse scurrying across
the canal path; and a jay screeching across
the field. Another day sitting in the hide I saw
a kingfisher poised ready to pluck its meal from
the water's edge; a reed warbler swaying on
the tall grasses; a dipper sifting the
river bed whilst a juvenile buzzard
mewed over head. Just think how lucky we
are to have such a diversity of wildlife right
on our door step.
20/9/2016



This is a first for me - an article submitted by a young and enthusiastic visitor to Forest Farm Nature Reserve. It's well written, both neat and descriptive, and the illustrations are wonderful.

Thank you Boris for sending them in to us. I'm sure all our readers will enjoy your contribution to our newsletter. Editor

Elm tree planting on Hospital meadows.

You will see in our Events section that we are planning to help Community Ranger Gareth plant elm trees on our January volunteer day (8th January 2017 **at 1 - 4pm - not the usual morning session**). In advance of that, here is some information from Gareth.

Buglife's Urban Buzz project, together with the City of Cardiff Council will be planting several varieties of elm tree on five sites in Cardiff between Bute Park and Forest Farm to provide important habitat for the White-letter hairstreak butterfly which has declined by 53% in the UK since the 1970s.

Elm trees, once common across Britain, have drastically declined since the 1970s, when Dutch elm disease ravaged populations across the country. The White-letter hairstreak breeds and lays eggs on elms and so also suffered when they lost this vital food source for their caterpillars. There are a few known populations in Cardiff and it is these which the project is targeting to ensure habitat for these insects. Forest Farm Meadow still has a small population of White letter hairstreak and the Elm planting project can only help secure this population for the future.

Foods of the Forest September 2016

For quite a few years now the Park Rangers have run Spring and Autumn "Foods of the Forest" events. Led by two of the Rangers, we began by looking at the hedgerows near the Warden Centre and then walked down to the river and along the bank before returning along the lane.

The Rangers pointed out various edible plants and shrubs. Both hawthorn berries and leaves are edible - also oak acorns which, when ground and roasted, were used as an alternative to coffee in wartime. Round oak galls, formed by a tiny wasp, were collected and used to make black ink in the past. Rose hips are used for syrup and jam but the hairs and seeds inside the hips are not edible - the hairs in particular must be removed. Hazel and beech nuts (beech mast) are familiar to us as a food. Elder flowers and the berries can be used in drinks.

The foreign invasive plants on the Reserve - Japanese Knotweed stems and Himalayan Balsam seeds can also be edible. Young nettle shoots are edible, the older ones are very stringy and, in fact, the fibres were used for string and even for cloth at one time. The fresh shoots and roots of Burdock are edible; some of us knew about the Dandelion and Burdock cordial. The seeds are in sticky cases that attach to clothes and fur which helps the plant to spread. Wild raspberries were also spotted, but not enough for us to sample them.

Comfrey leaves can be eaten; at one time the roots were used to produce a plaster for broken bones - "Knitbone" was the common name for it. Coltsfoot was used medicinally; inhalation of the steam from boiling its leaves was used for bad chests. We can eat most of the vetch (pea) family except for fleabane. Silverweed roots were good to eat and the leaves were used to soothe sore feet.

Most young shoots are edible in moderation. However be careful - make sure you know what you are eating. Some plants and berries are NOT edible - the pretty little red berries of the Woody Nightshade were pointed out; these are poisonous.

Returning to the Warden's Centre, we ate a delicious snack of watercress soup, with fresh bread, herbed walnut salad with mushroom quiche followed by hazelnut chocolate cake with blackberry cardamom pavlova. All truly delicious and the recipes were available for those of us who wished to try them at home.

Our thanks to Nicola and the Rangers team for another lovely evening

Albyn Austin

Membership 401!!!!

Once again a really busy Open Day which saw 12 new members joining the Friends and another two new ones afterwards because they enjoyed the day so much!

Welcome to you all and for making this our highest membership ever! We are the largest Friends group (of parks/reserves) in Cardiff. Keep it up.

Not forgetting all our other members, your continued support is really appreciated by us all and makes it all worth while.

Pauline Fisher
Membership Secretary

We are seeking your views on the following via any committee member or www.forestfarm.org.uk

Newsletter in colour? Colour makes such a difference to our newsletter. Email recipients get it in colour anyway but we'd like to do this for all Friends. So the Committee have decided to explore further the costs of producing a colour edition permanently - either in part i.e. certain pages in colour, or the whole newsletter using advertising to meet the extra cost. We will keep you informed of the results of our research.

Forest Farm Calendar or Notelets? A suggestion has been made that we produce a calendar or notelets for sale. We wondered if people are using their electronic devices now and there is too much competition for pictorial calendars? They are also time dependent. Then we thought maybe notelets might be better. We would use photos of Forest Farm of course.

Events at Forest Farm December 2016 - March 2107

DATE	EVENT
Sun 11th Dec 10.00 - 13.00	Friends Volunteering Event. ALL WELCOME. Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch CF14 7JJ
Sat 17th Dec 10.00 - 12.30	Nature Ramble. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see (and hear) the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them.
Sun 18th Dec 10.00 - 12.00	Cardiff Wildlife Detectives. An exciting new club for children. Poo and pellet dissection/ID + fatball feeder making. Run by the RSPB and City of Cardiff Council Rangers. For more details/ to register , email cymru@rspb.org.uk or tel 02920 353000.
2017	
Sun 8th Jan 13.00 - 16.00	Friends Volunteering Event. Elm Tree Planting on Hospital Meadows. ALL WELCOME. Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch CF14 7JJ
Sun 15th Jan 10.00 - 13.00	Post Christmas Walk. Meet Martin at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch to walk off those Christmas goodies. After, refreshments available at the Wardens Centre . Donations requested.
Sun 15th Jan 10.00 - 12.00	Cardiff Wildlife Detectives. An exciting new club for children. Birdwatching. Cardiff Bay Wetlands/Forest Farm. Run by the RSPB and City of Cardiff Council Rangers. For more details/ to register , email cymru@rspb.org.uk or tel 02920 353000.
Wed 18th Jan 19.30	Evening talk. Subject of talk TBA. Please watch our website or look out for posters. At Ararat Centre for the Community, Plas Treoda Whitchurch CF14 1PT. Refreshments. ALL WELCOME.
Sat 21st Jan 10.00 - 12.30	Nature Ramble. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see (and hear) the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them.
Sun 12th Feb 10.00 - 13.00	Friends Volunteering Event. ALL WELCOME. Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch CF14 7JJ.
Sat 18th Feb 10.00 - 12.30	Nature Ramble. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see (and hear) the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them.
Sun 19th Feb 10.00 - 12.00	Cardiff Wildlife Detectives. An exciting new club for children. Nature activity. Run by the RSPB and City of Cardiff Council Rangers. For more details/ to register email cymru@rspb.org.uk or tel 02920 353000.
Sun 12th Mar 10.00 - 12.00	Friends Volunteering Event. ALL WELCOME. Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch CF14 7JJ
Wed 15th Mar 19.30	Evening talk. The Glamorgan Canal by Stephen Rowson. At Ararat Centre for the Community, Plas Treoda Whitchurch CF14 1PT. Refreshments. ALL WELCOME.
Sat 18th Mar 10.00 - 12.30	Nature Ramble. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see (and hear) the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them.
Sun 19th Mar 10.00 - 12.00	Cardiff Wildlife Detectives. An exciting new club for children. Scavenger Hunt. Run by the RSPB and City of Cardiff Council Rangers. For more details/ to register email cymru@rspb.org.uk or tel 02920 353000.

Published on behalf of The Friends of Forest Farm and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve by
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 The Editor wishes to state that all views expressed by contributors are their own, as is the responsibility for them.

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