



# Friends

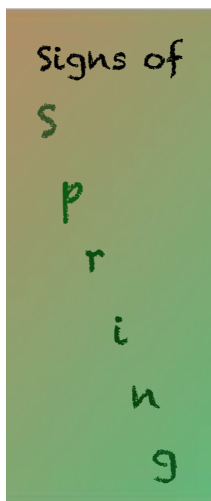
of FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK  
and GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL  
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE  
**Issue No: 123    March 2022**

website: [www.forestfarm.org.uk](http://www.forestfarm.org.uk)

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Photo: **SteveFFPhotos**  
- taken 2nd February



Catkins on a large hazel tree in Scout Field.  
See Rosemary's walk report on Page 6

Photo: **Rosemary Waters**, taken 1st February.



Herons! Photo: **Tracey Coleman**  
- taken January 2022



Frogspawn 24th February.

- Photographer: **Lee Smith**



Photo; **Cheryle Thurlow**

- taken 5th February



Photographers:

Above - **Bob Davies** taken early March.

Left - **Sharon Smith** taken 30th January

Right - **Colin Harvey** taken 28th February



## March 2022 Newsletter

### Editorial

Hello Friends,

*When you read this edition, you might think I have indulged myself a little (perhaps you have thought that for the last 16 years!), but it is my last newsletter.*

*Little did I think when I arrived in Whitchurch that not only would I be on the Committee, but editor of the newsletter. It was a steep learning curve, especially after Robin Sotheby passed away; he did the layout. But, it has been a great way to make friends and the Reserve has brought such a lot of pleasure.*

*There is so much bad news around us that I have tried not to dwell on, e.g. unwarranted damage to the Reserve. However, I note that loss of habitat and species have featured more frequently. Some is due to climate change, some was due to use of insecticides and management of land, but awareness of biodiversity is increasing and action is slowly being taken by organisations and volunteers.*

*On the plus side, the variety of birds, animals, insects and plants right in our locality is a real bonus. I have spent many happy hours looking at the amazing photographs on our website (Forest Farm Wildlife and Wildlife at Forest Farm). Also, the area is fortunate to have many willing volunteers to provide much needed help to the Rangers.*

*So, I have included quite a lot of photographs of a place we treasure and work to protect..*

*Fortunately, I am not leaving the area, so can continue to visit, 'do my bit' and hopefully meet up with some of you there.*

*With very best wishes,*

**Sheila**

### **Please note:**

**The next newsletter will probably be published in July.**

### **New Editors**

I am delighted to tell you that **Naomi and Paul Brightmore** have come forward to 'have a go' at being editors for forthcoming editions of our newsletter. They told me they have no experience of doing this, so it will be a challenge! I know we all appreciate their offer very much.

It was always a great help to me when people submitted articles. This is partly because the newsletters do not just reflect my tastes and interests, but also because it saves me looking for material to include! This has been the case particularly during Covid when so many of the activities we would normally report on have been cancelled.

Also, something you may not have thought about is that until I receive articles, I have no idea of their size and content and therefore, which and how many relevant illustrations to find.

I am sure Naomi and Paul will welcome articles from you and I wish them every success.

**Sheila Austin**

### **Deadline for articles for next newsletter - 10th June**

**See back page for contact details**

| <b>Contents</b>                                  | <b>Page</b> | <b>Contents</b>  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|--|-------------|
| Reserve Report                                   | 3           | Calendars 2023!/"not a bad morning at Forest Farm ..." | 8           |
| Scout Field Access/Velindre                      | 4           | Coppicing, pollarding/Volunteering                     | 9           |
| Where has 16 years gone?                         | 5           | Trees for Wales/ Water vole ecology                    | 10/11       |
| A nature walk around Forest farm                 | 6           | Threatened arable plants in Wales/ Gabi Simon          | 11          |
| Natural solutions to Climate Change - grasslands | 7/8         | Events   | 12          |



## **Reserve Report**

### **Alec Stewart - Community Ranger**

I am writing this report from home as storm Eunice blows through, so it will be interesting when I am back in work in the morning as I suspect the chainsaw will see some work.

It has been fairly quiet wildlife wise with just the usual suspects turning up at the hides, although not the numbers of **snipe** that we usually get in the winter. Not sure why this is. Perhaps due to the mild conditions, we have not had much of a movement of birds around the country?

I know we have had a male and female **fox** around as I have footage of them on our wildlife camera. However, some sad news was that we did find a dead fox near the second hide. It looked like a youngster, possibly one of this year's cubs. Sightings of a **weasel** have been reported from several locations so it is good to hear that they seem to be doing well.

The **snowdrops** are out and spreading from where we planted them and the **primroses** seem to have established really well. With Innovate Trust, we planted more (native) **bluebells** and already I can see them poking through. This will be an ongoing project with more planted in different locations around the Reserve.

Signs of Spring are everywhere with the **hazel** in the Scout Field looking very impressive covered in catkins and shining in the brief period of sun we had. **Blackthorn flowers** are showing and young sprouting **hawthorn leaves** emerging.

I was ably assisted by Jess, our new trainee Ranger in putting up some **new nest boxes** around the farm buildings and garden and also out on the Reserve. Already, I have seen **great and bluetits** checking them out. So, let's look forward to some better weather, the **swallows** will be back in no time at all!



Photo of a Snipe in the wetland.  
Taken by **Norman West**



Swallow in flight. Photo taken by **Cliff Woodhead**

### **Hide 2**

As we wait for the replacement hide, the Rangers have erected this temporary screen.



## **Summer Open Day at Forest Farm**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022 10am-4pm**

Join the **Giving Nature a Home in Cardiff team, RSPB Community Park Rangers, Wildlife Trust and Buglife** for a variety of fun engaging activities for all ages including pond-dipping, bug hunting and bird spotting.

A photo workshop for adults will be run from 1400-1530 and is free but pre-booking is essential please.

See Events, back page for more details

## SCOUT FIELD ACCESS

If you walk over the foot bridge at Forest Lock, you will pass an area on your right hand side known as the Scout Field where Scouts from Whitchurch camped for many years.



For two years the Rangers and various groups of Volunteers cleared various invasive species eg Himalayan Balsam, to enable the native plants to flourish.

In the spring of 2020 there was a fantastic display of spring flowers. Unfortunately, all that hard work was wasted when the pandemic restrictions stopped all volunteering. The invasive species soon started to re-colonise the area.

The Rangers have recently been provided with tractors to assist with maintaining the Reserve. However, at present, it is not possible to access to the Scout field and surrounding areas with this equipment.

The Friends have been approached by the Rangers to assist in funding a new bridge at Forest Lock to enable access for the small tractors they now have.

We have agreed in principle, but will not give a final decision until a firm estimate is received. We will keep you updated when more information is known.

## VELINDRE

In Spring 1992 the Health Board announced that the Whitchurch Hospital Fields (aka the Northern Meadows) were surplus to future operational needs and were to be disposed of. The Friends of Forest Farm committee suggested that the Council purchase the land, with the intention of it being included as part of an extended nature reserve. The Council looked into purchasing the land but only at the agricultural value. However, it soon became apparent the Health Board wanted to maximise the value of their assets by selling the land with planning permission for houses which therefore was beyond the financial resources of the Council. This was not taken any further, unfortunately.

Thus started protracted planning applications, offers to give part of the fields to the reserve and a Planning Enquiry which finally granted permission in 2001 for the building of houses.

For the next ten years, despite opposition and representations by Friends of Forest Farm at the various planning committees, the applications were extended and an attempt to increase the number of houses from 88 to 148 was rejected. The health authority also looked into building a stroke unit on the site.

For the next five years not much happened. The building of houses could not commence as there was a planning clause which required Whitchurch Hospital to be redeveloped before any other development could take place. Whitchurch Hospital was still being used until 2016.

It was during this time that Velindre saw the potential of the fields as the location for a new hospital.

After a protracted period of consultation, we are now at the point where preparation has started for the building of the new Velindre Hospital. This has included using part of the railway cutting and land within the reserve for an access bridge which has resulted in the removal of a large number of trees (mainly ash and sycamore).

The final design for the project has yet to be determined, but in the meantime, preparatory work has commenced.



The committee has always been opposed to the development around the Reserve and on the meadows. The next stage of the planning process is the design of the buildings and a major public consultation exercise for people's views on the final design is underway. The Friends of Forest Farm committee will continue to take an active part in this to ensure, as far as we are able, we fulfil our Constitutional obligations to protect the Reserve.

**Martin Chamberlain** (who also supplied the photographs)

## March 2022 Newsletter

### Where has 16 years gone?



The iconic Kingfisher  
Photo: **Drew Davies**

My introduction to Forest Farm was in 2005, joining my husband there for lunch when he had started his new job and I was house hunting. We walked around and had a picnic outside or, *should* it rain (in Wales?), one of the hides. Later, this is where I saw my first kingfisher - and I was hooked. We joined the Friends, hearing some most interesting and varied talks and going on wonderful trips organised by Duncan Hockridge which he started in 2004. I joined the Saturday nature walks led by Phil Baker and then Stella Wells. One of the highlights was hearing the prolonged and loud song of the Wren. We enjoyed great events led by the Rangers too - not least 'Foods of the Forest' - a real treat. Happy days.

I have been reflecting on the changes, some brought about by the Friends' practical and financial support, with the Rangers and other voluntary organisations. One was a new pond behind the Wardens' Centre, enhanced by wooden sculptures\* of the three stages of a butterfly (now two left!). A new orchard was begun nearby - now with more than 50 native fruit trees. The bog garden (Mary Gillham's Memorial Garden) was constructed. Improvements to the Wardens' centre itself provided a new kitchen and toilet facilities - invaluable in making it a location for events such as our October Open Day. Ah, the Open day - another great reintroduction by the Friends which has proved very popular indeed. Here's hoping we can have one in 2022.

Opposite the farmhouse (now the Rangers' base), the original pond was brought back to life by the Rangers with new heavy duty lining. In the same vicinity, the picnic area by the car park was enhanced by a willow tunnel and the magnificent giant and other sculptures\*. Fencing and signposting was erected all around the Reserve by the Council. Forest Farm was awarded a much deserved Green Flag in 2020.

We now have one new metal bird hide and another to be installed. The bird hides used to be the focus of many volunteering efforts, repairing and re-painting them, until they were burned down ... Covid delayed things and we are still waiting to use money to enhance what has been replaced by the Council.

The canal - sadly no project there, but many ad hoc repairs to the canal edge itself, protective planting or fencing, temporary repairs to the path, a start at clearing tree debris from the canal and some (hard, manual) de-silting at the Asda end. It is a great sadness and extremely frustrating to me that more has not been done to protect the longest remaining section of the Glamorganshire canal. Personally, I would rather the Council spent some money on this rather than the canal project in the city.

My sincere thanks to all Committee members past and present for their support while I have been editor; the Rangers - who have been so helpful with information. Some people I want to mention in particular; Mike Wiley, Paul Davies, Alec Stewart and Paul Pinnell have supplied some fascinating 'Ranger's Reports' for almost every newsletter. It has been a privilege to include many wonderful pictures of Forest Farm taken by very talented photographers. My thanks to all of you but especially Cliff Woodhead, Colin Harvey, Steve Turner and Tony Fisher. I have, at the last minute, frequently requested specific



photographs of flora and fauna mentioned in articles. Alec Stewart, Raj Chettri and Gareth Stamp have also supplied some fantastic photos - and information. Last but not least, it's been a real pleasure to include some great articles from local people with their memories of and stories about Forest Farm

It has been a joy to meet with so many of you and share the affection and support for the Reserve. I will still be up there anticipating the thrill of seeing a kingfisher again and hope to see you there.

With best wishes,

**Sheila**



## ***An early spring walk around Forest Farm Nature Reserve***

***by Rosemary Waters***

I was very pleased when Sheila asked me to accompany her on a walk around the Reserve at the beginning of February. It was a long time since I visited. As I parked my car near the Warden Centre Pauline (Fisher), the membership secretary of the Friends of Forest Farm, parked beside me. The three of us set off.

It was sad to see the burned out barn and sheds containing work materials belonging to various other volunteer groups; the result of vandalism, a problem the area has been plagued with.

We walked around the pond, no frogspawn as yet.

The orchard trees are growing well. I remember a wet day in November 2007 when I watched (helped a little) the planting of the first fruit trees. Perhaps this year, Covid virus allowing, we will be able to hold an Autumn Open day and visitors can again taste the freshly pressed apple juice.

From the new replacement hide we saw a lone Heron, and a Moorhen. The wardens had been busy cutting back the reeds around the scrape.

As we approached the gate leading to where the smaller hide and its scrape had been situated, Pauline scattered some bird seed. I think the local bird population were waiting and we had a close up view of several favourites, Great Tits, Blue Tit, Male Blackbird, Robin, Male Chaffinch, a Nuthatch and I think the star of the show, a Male Bullfinch.

On the canal there were many more Mallard ducks than I think I have ever seen there. As we walked along the canal bank- avoiding the large puddles, the bright blue flash of a Kingfisher made my day as it flew above the canal.

At Forest lock we crossed the bridge, there was plenty of water flowing down the leat, overflowing from the reserve pond. In 'The Scouts Field' there was a Hazel Tree, in full bloom. In the sunlight it looked golden with its appropriately named Lamb's tail catkins, the male flowers. A harbinger of Spring.

Back across the bridge near the Forest lock, a bench made a pleasant resting place for us as we tried to put the world to rights.

This bench commemorates Ted Edwards - a founder member and tireless supporter of the Friends Group. He died in 2005. My first monthly Saturday walk at the Reserve, in early 2000's was led by Ted and I was hooked



Photographers:  
Moorhen - **Ted Lucas**  
Male Bullfinch - **Janet George**



I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sheila for all her hard work on the 4 magazines a year she has edited for 16 years. Persuasion and cajoling us for articles and observations has certainly paid off and I think she deserves her retirement to pursue her own interests. I know she is to stay on the committee and will continue to enjoy visits to the Reserve.

I appreciate the friendship we started when we were both on the committee.

I hope you are not squeamish but, clearly, although no frogspawn was seen in the pond early February, there was some about as demonstrated by this photo taken **Steve Clare** on 26th February. As someone remarked, 'look at those feet'. Ed.

*This is the fourth and last article from from the Wildlife Trusts Wales website [wtwales.org](http://wtwales.org) under "Natural solutions to climate change". We have had Woodlands, Wetlands and Peatlands - and now Grasslands. I am aware that its inclusion in this newsletter could be viewed with some irony, however, it is my personal decision to include it as it completes the excellent series I have taken from the Wildlife Trusts website. Ed*



### **What are grasslands?**

Grasslands are an ancient habitat, very much ingrained within our culture. Following the last Ice Age, around 12,000 years ago, mossy vegetation and weedy plants colonised bare ground, which was left behind when the glaciers melted. Gradually these areas developed into communities of grasses, sedges and herbs as more plants found a home - resulting in the wonderful flower-rich meadows we find (all too sparingly) today.

### **Why are grasslands important?**

'Unimproved' grasslands are extremely important for wildlife. 'Unimproved' means grassland that hasn't been reseeded, fertilised or drained. Whilst considered to be on less 'productive' soil they support a huge range of species, including green-winged orchid, snake's head fritillary, bird's-foot trefoil and pasque flower. The sheer abundance of wildflowers in these habitats can be spellbinding!

Thanks to this amazing array of flowers, a wide range of insects, from bumblebees to butterflies, feast in these areas, and they in turn are prey for birds and mammals. Birds of prey, such as barn owls, can be found hunting along margins, and adders slither through the grass.

### **A natural solution to the climate crisis**

UK grasslands store two billion tonnes of carbon in their soils, but this is vulnerable to disturbance. Between 1990-2006, conversion from grassland to arable production (such as ploughing to grow crops) released 14 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Species-rich grasslands are huge carbon stores and when managed carefully, e.g. through herb-rich leys and sensitive grazing, they lock in carbon and boost biodiversity.

Grasslands have a huge potential for locking up carbon, not only due to the plants we can see on the surface, but also due to the relationships between the plants, fungi, bacteria and many other species which help enrich the soil with carbon.

### **Threats and pressures**

Most of today's grassland is farmland or rough upland grazing, with only a tiny proportion of 'unimproved' grassland remaining. In England there are around 4.5 million hectares of grassland, of which just 100,000ha are unimproved.

Degradation began in the 19th Century, when guano (droppings from seabird colonies) was used as fertiliser. This was later replaced by artificial alternatives. During the 1940s and 1950s chemical fertilisers, herbicides and new grass varieties were used to increase yields. At the same time government incentives (to help national self-sufficiency) encouraged farmers to plough up grasslands. During the 20th Century, 90% of lowland grasslands were lost.

In the uplands, the story was different, but the decline in grassland was just as dramatic. Here, overgrazing led to the conversion of moorland and blanket bog to less wildlife-rich upland acid grassland and rush pasture. Unimproved, species-rich grassland is still being lost (although the rate of loss has slowed) and grassland on protected sites is deteriorating. The numbers of butterflies and breeding birds, such as curlew and lapwing, continue to decline.

*continued overleaf*

## **“Natural solutions to Climate change” - grasslands cont’d**



### **Conservation and recovery**

Protecting and restoring the UK's grasslands could play an important role in achieving net zero carbon emissions. It must be recognised that there is some debate over the role of grazing in supporting grasslands' ability to capture carbon, since grazing animals are responsible for carbon emissions and ruminants, particularly cattle, release methane – a greenhouse gas with more heating potential than CO<sub>2</sub>. However, well-managed and low levels of grazing is recognised as increasing soil carbon and biodiversity, while overgrazing can result in the release of carbon from the soil.

*I know it's only February (as I write this) but our calendars for the last two years have been really successful, so much so that already we are looking at one for 2023. We had to add to our order for 250 copies of the 2022 calendar! Ed*

### **Calendars for 2023**

No sooner had we published the 2022 Friends of Forest Farm calendar, than plans for next year's publication have already begun.

The many photographers who contribute to the various Facebook pages associated with us have been asked permission for their photographs to be included if selected.

To try and ensure as wide a variety of flora and fauna as possible, themes have been set to assemble images for consideration. (This is a small selection of the photos to be included in the 2023 calendar.)



The current photo layout, which we intend to repeat, allows for the inclusion of many more images than our first calendar and enables us to include many more excellent quality images. We are blessed by having so many talented photographers in our midst.

We hope to be able to have the calendar available for our Autumn Open Day so that purchases can be made as Christmas presents.

**Anthony Matthews**

*(Might this tempt you to rise early? Ed*

“Not a bad morning at FF, beautiful sunrise at 07.00 hrs, heron at the first hide catching frogs and newts, a few redwing high up by the hide, woodpecker near the stinky pipe. Kingfisher fly by at the stone bridge. Bullfinches high up at the second hide Little birds at the gate to the second hide, reed buntings showing well. Wren and Goldcrest along the stream near the stone bridge and a chiffchaff at the orchard pond.”

28/02/ 2022. Forest Farm Wildlife Facebook  
**Andre de Sande .**



## ***Coppicing and Pollarding***

Coppicing is a pruning technique which entails cutting a young tree down to ground level in Winter or early Spring. This not only provides timber e.g. beanpoles for climbing plants, but stimulates growth of new branches from the stump. Rotational coppicing in sections of woodland is part of management; the increased light stimulates growth of flora on the forest floor.

Native trees suitable for coppicing include Hornbeam, Hazel, Willow and Ash. Over centuries, the practice has provided hurdle fencing and woven panels for wattle and dawn houses, thinner sticks were used for fuel in baker's ovens and, as charcoal for furnaces. Finally, as we know, coppicing e.g. cornus, can also promote young, colourful stems.

Pollarding is like coppicing but most of the trunk is left, so the new stems sprout from the top of that trunk. We have seen this with London Plane trees along streets. Willow and Elder are other trees suitable for pollarding which, done on a regular basis, allows an otherwise large tree to be kept in check. It also lets in light and rain at ground level for planting bulbs.

***Sheila Austin***

## ***Volunteers coppicing at Forest Farm in February***



Rangers and volunteers spent the morning hedge laying at the back of the wetlands at hide 1.

Laying the hedge opens up the flight path into the wetland for waterfowl and waders, and creates a nesting habitat for small birds.

It also provides an opportunity for the Rangers to pass on their skills to volunteers, helping to keep a vital country craft alive.



## ***Other volunteering***

### *December 2021*

On a chilly, dry day, ten volunteers pruned some of the apple trees in the orchard.

Serious pruning there started about 3 years ago, and many of the trees are inevitably 'reacting' to it by generating lots of watershoots — vigorous branches, which grow straight up, producing little or no fruit and crowding the tree. They need to be removed (or at least cut back) so that when the tree starts growing again in Spring, it can use its energy to strengthen the main fruit-bearing branches.



Also, a number of trees need one or more of their lower branches removing — they're too low for fruit-bearing

### *January 2022*



Ten volunteers spent a beautifully sunny winter's morning, clearing bramble and

other encroaching vegetation (eg, self-seeded sycamore, willow and dogwood) from around Forest Lock.



*All photos taken from our website [www.forestfarm.org.uk](http://www.forestfarm.org.uk)*

## TREES FOR WALES

The Welsh Government, working with the Woodland Trust, has launched an initiative offering every household in Wales the chance to plant a native tree in their garden, or have a tree planted on their behalf.

'The ambition is to establish a National Forest for Wales that benefits us all— through education, recreation, health and wellbeing—as well as providing many environmental benefits. The National Forest will be developed over time for generations to enjoy. Similarly, offering trees in this way will give every household in Wales the chance to see their own tree develop for generations to enjoy.

It is hoped this initiative will inspire many individuals and local community groups to become involved in the National Forest Programme.'

The first trees will be available to collect from March 2022, from one of five regional community hubs with more established across Wales by October 2022.

Instructions and guidance will be available if you want to plant a tree. There will be volunteers to assist or plant a tree on your behalf at locations across Wales.

For more information: <https://gov.wales/national-forest>

### **Water vole ecology and the Trust's\* reintroduction programmes.**

#### **- Report of a pre- Covid talk !**

*I was thinking about all the different plants, animals and birds I have seen - or seen pictures of - at Forest Farm over the 16 years we have lived here. A photo of a vole came to mind; not a water vole, a bank vole. It reminded me of an unused article my husband Albyn wrote on a talk about water voles by Kerry Rogers Conservation Manager for Cardiff and the Vale branch of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales\* Ed.*

Water voles can weigh up to 500g and are the largest of the three vole species found on mainland UK. They require boggy areas with about a metre width of dense vegetation beside slow moving waterways or fen land, but can also be found in small numbers in some upland peat bogs. A male requires a territory of about 300m of river bank.

In the last 30 years there has been about a 95% decline in numbers; now only perhaps 3-4000 in the UK. Habitat loss is a factor, but the main cause is predation by mink that kill any they come across. Water voles are also preyed on by otters, heron, stoats and foxes etc. They can hide from otters in their burrows, which usually have a land and a water entrance. Stoats and weasels can enter the burrows but the voles escape into the water. However, mink are good swimmers and are small enough to enter the burrows and follow the voles into the water. They store prey and so kill any voles they come across.



Photo: Peter Trimming  
Wikipedia

Water voles rarely live longer than 18 - 24 months, but females can have up to 50 young a year. Herbivores, they live on reeds and grasses but are poor swimmers and their fur soon becomes water-logged. Their round faces and shortish hair-covered tails distinguish them from rats.

The South Wales Trust has reintroduced them in three locations where they have become extinct. Much data has to be collected before reintroduction to identify and conserve suitable habitat. Importantly, mink need to be trapped and continuous monitoring undertaken or else they will rapidly destroy any water vole population. This is expensive – a reasonable area of habitat of 50 sq km costs up to £500 per day

*Cont'd on next page*

### **Water vole ecology and reintroduction programme cont'd**

Local reintroductions: a riverside nature reserve near Kidwelly with a nearby local population; the Trust's reserve in the Gwent Levels - and mink control measures mean they have spread quite widely there in recent years. We saw them at Cosmeston Lake Country Park. Reintroduction has been successful there but, as an isolated site, there is little prospect of the voles being able to spread elsewhere.

Welsh government agencies have identified about three sites in Mid Wales where existing vole populations can be expanded by controlling mink. Many other calls on resources such as red squirrels, wetland birds, traditional meadows etc mean there is no likelihood that anywhere else in South Wales will be selected for water vole reintroduction. The Rangers would like to have water voles at Forest Farm but how likely is it with some of its key predators (heron, mink, foxes and stoat) on the Reserve?

### **Albyn Austin**

I have a little book from **Plantlife Cymru** which I must have found at their stall at some point. It's entitled **"Threatened arable plants in Wales. An identification guide."**

I quote from their introductory page:

*"Corn marigolds can still be seen creating a blaze of golden colour, and less well-known species such as corn spurred, filed woundwort, weasel's snout and dwarf spurge can still easily be found."*

*Wales is also a hotspot for some very rare arable plants including small-flowered catchfly, large flowered hemp-nettle, corn buttercup, shepherd's needle, broad-fruited cornsalad and cornflower."*

Wonderful common names for these plants! Most are found in the more remote areas of Wales like Anglesey and the Gower.

### **Sheila Austin**



*Many of you will know of Gabi Simon, a photographer well-known at Forest Farm, who passed away suddenly at the end of last year. The following was written by her partner Barbara..*

Gabi Simon - devoted many years to painting, but it was photography that dominated most of her free time and became her greatest passion. Humble, warm-hearted, always smiling, with a big love for the natural world. She very often took her little nieces to the Forest Farm

to show and teach them the riches of nature in this lovely place.

She met many photographers there with whom she really enjoyed talking and exchanging photography-related experiences. She was very affected by the devastation of hide 2, which she considered an important place - and not only for photographers.

Forest Farm was special to Gabi. She was always excited whenever she'd go there as it was plentiful with wild animals, dragonflies, grass snakes, foxes, butterflies and wildflowers. She loved to photograph (and feed) the various species of birds. Gabi thought Forest Farm to be the best place for kingfishers; she would marvel at the quality of the water in the canal.



For almost 17 years Gabi lived in Cardiff and Forest Farm Country Park and it became her most favourite place. There she would find peace and spend hours photographing nature, especially her beloved birds.

*We are most grateful for a generous gift to the Friends of money donated in her memory at her funeral. A request has been made to plant a tree in her memory; the remainder to be a contribution to replacing the bird hides.*



## Events March - mid August 2022

### VOLUNTEERING

- details of sessions will be posted on our Facebook page  
and sent to members by email around a week in advance.

**CARDIFF WILDLIFE DETECTIVES** For the whole family. Get close to nature all year round .  
Sessions are led by Giving Nature a Home in Cardiff. Go online for either organisation to book.  
3rd Sunday monthly (excluding August) Cost just £2 for each child ; accompanying adults are free.

| DATE                           | EVENT   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>MARCH</b>                   |   |
| Sun 20th Mar<br>10.00 - 12.00  | <b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives. Hibernation! Activities at Forest Farm.</b> Wakey, Wakey'! It's time to learn about what sleepy creatures will get up to now it's Springtime. Meet at the Wardens' Centre, Forest Farm Road, CF14 7JJ. Tickets are limited.   |
| <b>APRIL</b>                   |   |
| Fri 22nd Apr -<br>Mon 3rd May. | <b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives.</b> An introduction to <b>City Nature Challenge</b> . City Nature Challenge is a global urban bioblitz using the iNaturalist phone app (and iRecord) to involve as many people as possible in recording wildlife in one weekend (29 April-2 May 2022).                    |
| Wed 27th Apr<br>19.00          | <b>AGM</b> at Ararat Centre for the Community, the Common, Whitchurch CF14 1PT. See P.?? Any change to this plan will be notified on our website <a href="http://www.forestfarm.org.uk">www.forestfarm.org.uk</a>   |
| <b>MAY</b>                     |   |
| Sun 15th May<br>10.00 - 12.00  | <b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives. Grow your very own tree from seed,</b> Collect tree seeds from the Reserve to plant and look after  |
| <b>JUNE</b>                    |   |
| Sat 18th<br>10.00-16.00        | <b>Summer Open day at Forest Farm.</b> Fun and engaging activities for all the family. FREE activities and parking. Meet at Forest Farm Rd., Whitchurch CF14 7JJ  |
| Sun 19th<br>10.00 - 12.00      | <b>Cardiff Wildlife detectives. River shuffle on the Taff at Forest Farm.</b> Discover what creatures live in the River Taff.   |
| <b>JULY</b>                    |   |
| Sun 17th<br>10.00 - 12.00      | <b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives.</b> Moth ID session at Forest Farm. Discover what moths have been caught in the overnight traps.  |
| <b>AUGUST</b>                  |   |
| Sat 20th Aug<br>20.00          | <b>Bat Walk at Forest Farm <u>Booking Only</u>.</b> Join the Community Park Rangers to discover the bats feeding around Forest Farm using bat detectors. Please bring a torch. Sensible clothing and footwear essential. Meet at the Warden Centre, Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 7JJ. FREE |

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.