



Friends of Forest Farm

AUTUMN 2022

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It has in the human world (on so many levels) been an unusual, eventful and stressful summer generating a lot of anxiety and concern. Forest Farm has rather reflected this mood whilst also being a small sea of calm in a wider turbulence. Now we turn towards the new season of autumn and the challenges which it poses to the local wildlife and to the natural world as they start to prepare for the coming rigours of winter and the rebirth of spring. We have articles on some of the creatures which have been seen on the reserve this summer and also articles on both hedgehogs and garden birds as they face winter's challenges.

"There is something so special in the early leaves drifting from the trees-as if we are all to be allowed a chance to peel, to refresh, to start again." Ruth Ahmed

After many years of debate, lobbying and controversy major decisions have finally been made and physical work has commenced on the new hospital which is to be located on the Meadows. I am sure you have all seen and heard signs of it. This development has a long common boundary with the Forest Farm reserve. It continues to pose both threats and perhaps opportunities for us. Martin our secretary, has written an article explaining the latest position. We intend to monitor this development closely and we will be communicating with and challenging the developers when necessary.



We have had lots of beautiful weather this summer, but this has been accompanied by major drought conditions with big implications for our wetlands and other areas. This is reflected in the Rangers Report.

Great news - finally the new (fireproof) hide has arrived. Photograph of a sparrowhawk by Colin Harvey, "My first ever shots from the new hide today, not a bad start?". No major developments with the replacement of burned down barn yet - still plodding through the bureaucracy, but we wait hopefully.

The immediate threat and concerns with Covid have diminished for most, and a gradual return to more normal events has started. See the articles on our recent Open Day, the volunteers report and the recommencement of the Talks Programme.

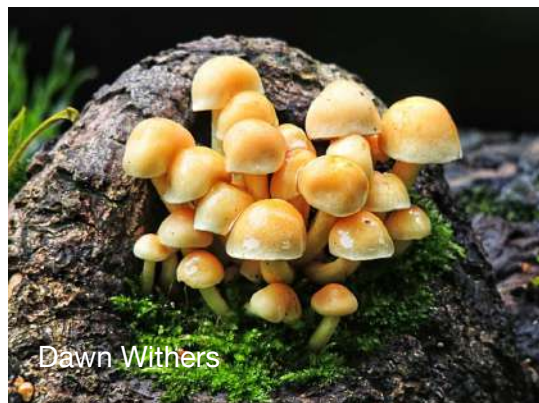
Thanks to all our members for your continued support. We look forward to hearing from you and as always would love to have any suggestions and contributions for the Newsletter.

Wishing you some joyful autumn walks around Forest Farm over the coming months.

RANGERS' REPORT SUMMER 2022

The Summer and Autumn open days have come and gone, the leaves are beginning to turn and at last the rain is falling.

It has been a long hot and dry summer. In fact, the rainfall levels across the country have been exceptionally low from early spring. This has led to the scrapes and ponds, and at one time the canal drying up. The canal had a problem with a blockage, but even when cleared the water levels are still not high enough to fill the ponds and wetland. We are looking into changing and adapting the pipe system, along with other measures, so that we can prevent the wetlands from drying out. We have to be careful as the canal is a SSSI and we are not allowed to extract more water than we are already doing. With climate change this situation will be an ongoing challenge for all of us, and conserving our natural resources is of the utmost importance.



Dawn Withers



Ellen Morris Photography

Wildlife around the reserve overall is doing well with all the usual sightings. It looks as though it has been a good year for Golden ringed dragonfly with a number of sightings and people able to photograph them. Indeed, most insects seem to have done well with the warm temperatures and our meadows and pollinator areas have been buzzing with life all summer.

We are slowly getting back to normal now and have been able to put on several events. The Summer Openday was held on the one day we had some showers but even so good numbers of people turned up and enjoyed the pond dipping and various stalls we had on offer. We were also able to carry out our first Bat walk since Covid, which proved to be popular with about 45 people turning up. We all enjoyed a lovely

evening stroll around the reserve and encountered plenty of bats, both seen and heard on our bat detectors. Next year we will be putting more events on both at Forest farm and around the city.

So as the rain falls and hopefully starts to fill our ponds it's now the time to head out to the woodlands and enjoy the autumn.

Alec Stewart



"Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns."
George Eliot



MY FAVOURITE PICTURE

“Have you seen the Kingfisher?” It’s the question I’m asked most often during my long hours sat in a hide or along the canal bank at Forest Farm. More often than not, my reply is that I haven’t - before I reel off a list of the birds and, hopefully, other animals that I HAVE seen during my visit.

For me, that sums up Forest Farm - it’s a place where you can come across a wide range of wildlife, some of it very common like the Robins and Great Tits that seem to flit into view wherever you look - but also slightly harder to find species, of which the male Bullfinch is my personal favourite.

And then there’s the Kingfisher. The cherry on the cake of any visit to Forest Farm. I don’t measure the success or otherwise of any of my photographic excursions by whether or not I’ve seen The King. But I always leave with an extra spring in my step when I know I’ve got a few decent shots of him (or her) on my memory card.

So it seems only right that my favourite image from Forest Farm is of a Kingfisher. It was taken early this summer and it was the first time I’d seen that flash of blue out of the corner of my eye for many months.

I got the photo when I was sat in a hide early one morning before anyone else was around. As usual, the bird arrived on the perch before I’d even had time to react and it left me with a dilemma. I was using a very long lens (a Canon 600mm f4L) and up until then I’d been photographing warblers and buntings in the reeds, so I had an extender on my lens as well. My focal length was 1200mm - and that’s normally too much for photographing Kingfishers at this distance, but if I risked changing my lens then I might lose the opportunity.

So, I decided to rattle off a few bursts of images to have something “in the bag” before changing lens. Surprisingly, when I reviewed the images at home, I liked the 1200mm images the best because of the way the reeds beyond the bird had been rendered as a smooth background. My

images without the extender didn't have that and the background was more "busy". Having the bird so large in the frame also meant I could print this image very large if I wanted to!

I've only been visiting Forest Farm for a couple of years so I consider myself a newcomer. But in that time, I've learned quite a bit about what a special and diverse place it is. I travel quite a lot around South Wales on my wildlife photography adventures, but Forest Farm is the place I return to most often - especially if I just want a place where I can feel comfortable and relaxed while doing what I enjoy. It's also the only place I visit that has its own community of people - whether they're photographers, walkers, nature lovers or just world-weary folk looking for some peace and quiet. There's something for everyone down at "the Farm."

Camera - Canon 5DIV

Lens - Canon 600mm f4L with a Canon 2x extender

Focal length - 1200mm

Shutter speed - 1/800s

Aperture - F8

ISO - 3200

Michael Brownhill

Editor's note: *We'd like to make this a regular feature, so all you photographers out there please send us your favourite picture and tell us why. If you can give a few hints to others that's even better*

Skylark

Suddenly above the fields you're pouring
Pure joy in a shower of bubbles,
Lacing the spring with the blue thread of
summer.
You're the warmth of the sun in a song.

You're light spun to a fine filament;
Sun on a spider thread -
That delicate.

You're the lift and balance the soul feels,
The terrible, tremulous, uncertain thrill of it -
You're all the music the heart needs,
Full of its sudden fall, silent fields.

Katrina Porteous.

with kind permission
Katrina Porteous, *The Lost Music* (Bloodaxe
Books, 1996)
www.bloodaxebooks.com

KINGFISHERS - FACTS AND FIGURES



Photo - Anthony Matthews

Male and female adults have the same plumage. To tell the difference, look at the bill. In females, the lower mandible (bill) is mostly reddish/orange, with the black largely restricted to the tip. In males, the bill is largely black, although some colouring can be present.

Juveniles, when they first fledge, have a white tip to their predominantly black bill - this can remain for many months. They leave the nest from mid-May onwards. The gender of a juvenile can be tricky to determine - as it matures, the colouring changes to reflect the gender. Very young kingfishers (i.e. straight out of the nest) have black legs and feet which gradually change to orange as it matures.

The kingfisher's predominant method of fishing is the perch/watch/dive method as many of you may have seen at Forest farm. But I have seen them hovering quite often whilst searching a stretch of water.

Most birds are mature enough to start mating at one year old. A typical nest is built in soft riverside banks and the female lays shiny white eggs. Both parents help with incubation, but it is thought the female does the lion's share whilst the male hunts for them both. Clutch sizes vary from one to up to ten eggs. Two broods are often produced.

Kingfishers prefer still water or slow moving water - at Forest farm the two scrapes have provided good hunting grounds, as does the canal. A 10cm fish is about the largest it can handle. After catching its prey, the bird stuns the fish by slapping it against the perch, juggling with the fish until the head is facing toward the bird, and then swallowing it to avoid problems with spines on the back of some fish. Undigested elements of fish (bones, scales etc) are regurgitated as pellets.

Kingfishers are very territorial. When the breeding season is over, the male and female go their separate ways. By autumn, the feeding territories are largely established - a male adult's area is predominantly the same as his summer breeding territory. The female usually has another area nearby. Juveniles are not tolerated for very long by the parents and are usually forced to move on and find their own territories.

It is estimated that only about 20% of kingfishers that fledge reach their first birthday (British Trust for Ornithology). Moreover, about 70% of those who survive the first year, do not make it to the second. So, typical life expectancy is 2-3 years at best, although there are of course always exceptions to the rule. The British record is about four and a half years.

Anthony Matthews

VELINDRE UPDATE

In early July, our committee members were invited to see the two shortlisted designs for the new Velindre Hospital. As the final decision had still to be made, confidentiality agreements had to be signed to meet the legal requirements of the process.

In August, the Velindre Project Team announced that the Acorn Consortium has been selected to build the new Velindre Hospital, the design of which can be seen on the Velindre Matters Facebook page.

It is planned that the new Hospital will be open for patients in Autumn 2025. This is 25 years after planning permission was first granted, following a public enquiry to build housing on the site. It followed a 10 year battle to save all, if not some, of the site for the Reserve.

To start the enabling works the railway cutting will be closed for the next nine months, resulting in the closure of the footpath through the Railway Cutting. We have held a meeting with the Velindre Project Team to discuss construction techniques, pathway diversions and timescales. For example, we have strongly opposed a proposal to temporarily divert a footpath through Longwood, on the grounds that this would be detrimental to this SSSI, and also unsafe during winter months since the path is muddy and uneven.

In addition, we are requesting regular meetings with the Acorn Consortium to develop a working relationship and highlight our concerns as the project develops to completion.

M J Chamberlain

AT LAST - THE NEW HIDE!



We have great cause for celebration - a new fire-proof hide was installed on 28 September. Costs have been covered by the landowners, Cardiff Council, and big thanks are due to the wardens for their hard work in making this happen. The Friends will provide additional funding to finish it off with panelling, and next year it is planned that both hides will be given a more attractive, and eco-friendly 'Green Roof', again funded by the Friends.

Please note: it's not formally open for use yet, as it needs to 'settle' and then be finally levelled, and the Rangers need to build some fencing either side of it, so please be patient.



GUESS THE SPEED LIMIT

1. A470 Manor Way Whitchurch: Is the Maximum speed A 60, or B 30, or C 20 MPH?



2. A4054 Park Road Whitchurch: Is the Maximum speed A 60, B 30, or C 20 MPH?



3. Forest Farm Road Whitchurch: Is the Maximum speed A 60, B 30, or C 20 MPH?

The answers are: 1: 30 MPH

2: 20 MPH

3: 60 MPH

In last December's newsletter I advised that, after years of trying to get the speed limit on **Forest Farm Road** reduced to 20 MPH, it would be part of the Whitchurch 20 MPH zone, implemented in Spring 2022. The signs for 20 MPH around Whitchurch went up as planned, but the national speed limit (60 MPH) remained for Forest Farm Road. I contacted the Highways department and explained that surely some mistake had occurred as Forest Farm Road is:

- A single track road
- With no pavement
- Part of the Taff Trail
- Used by many cyclists and walkers

They said they would look into it and six months later nothing has been done.

What can you do to help us?

- **Contact your local councillor:** for a list go to: <https://cardiff.moderngov.co.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?FN=WARD&VW=LIST&PIC=0&LLL=0>
- **Contact the highways department:** <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Parking-roads-and-travel/highway-improvements/Pages/default.aspx>
- And finally **contact the GOSAFE organisation** to highlight the lack of actions by the highways department of Cardiff Council, and the continuing dangers of a 60 MPH limit on this road. <https://gosafe.org/contact-us/community-concern/>

M J CHAMBERLAIN

VOLUNTEER REPORT, SUMMER 2022



In June, a dozen wonderful volunteers from the Friends' group helped to tidy up the towpath. The main task was clearing away the cut-up remains of a large limb from a willow tree, which had to be removed after it split from the main trunk and fell right across the towpath.

After that, they cut back a lot of overgrown vegetation and trees, to keep the towpath accessible and safe, taking care not to remove

things like the common spotted orchid (see photo) which had recently appeared to brighten things up.



In July, the full-time and volunteer Rangers carried out some more much-needed repairs to the canal bank and towpath.

The bank is now being reinforced with concrete-filled hessian 'sandbags', which weather to look like rough stone. It's not perfect, but it's much more durable and very much cheaper than the previous method, which used coir rolls. Once the new edge has been put in place, the eroded area is filled in with aggregate and then topped with stone dust. Sadly, there's still a *lot* of work needed to repair all the erosion, but progress is definitely being made.

As with other places, **Himalayan Balsam** has invaded many parts of Forest Farm. It's got a pretty flower head, which is why it was introduced to England as a garden plant in 1839. However, it's incredibly invasive and spreads rapidly, especially along watercourses, outcompeting native flowers. The only environmentally sound way to control it (i.e., no herbicides) is to remove the plants by hand before the seed pods appear. As a result, a lot of volunteer activity in the early summer is devoted to "balsam bashing".



In June, no fewer than 42 volunteers from Lloyds Banking Group took a day away from the office to clear a huge amount of Himalayan balsam from the Scout Field. And July's Friends volunteering session saw 15 people spend a very hot Sunday morning pulling it up along the banks of the Melingriffith feeder, from the stone bridge up to the weir.

We know there will still be a lot of Himalayan Balsam appearing next year, but hopefully rather less than there might have been.

Activities around a nature reserve are necessarily seasonal, so late summer and early autumn sees a lot of work in the wetland areas. Unfortunately, the disruption created by COVID-19 meant that only a limited amount of work could be done on the wetlands over the past couple of years, with the inevitable result that a lot needed doing this year.

At August's volunteering session, eight volunteers spent a hot and sunny morning clearing piles of reeds in the wetland at hide 1. The reeds had been cut earlier in the week by the full-time and volunteer Rangers, as part of the annual maintenance of the wetlands. With the nesting season over, cutting the reeds in parts of the wetland creates habitat for different species over the autumn and winter.



With August's Friends' session having been on last Sunday of the month, **September's** followed soon after, with 10 volunteers raking-up yet more cut reeds at hide 2. They also removed some encroaching trees from the edge of the 'scrape'. This was done to improve flight lines for birds and to increase the amount of light reaching the wetland area.

Jon Wallis.

Sunday Volunteer sessions are usually monthly from 10am to 12 noon, and are advertised on FoFF Facebook and in our newsletter when possible.

Come and join us if you can!



**Coed
Caerdydd**

Opposite the Farmhouse at the end of Forest Farm Road, is the tree nursery for Coed Caerdydd, a tree-planting programme running throughout Cardiff. Their goal is to increase the number of trees, supporting the city's 'One Planet Climate Change Strategy'.

It is led by Chloe Jenkins and Chris Engels for Cardiff Council and aims to:

- Protect our current and new trees against climate impacts and diseases
- Plant new trees in the right places for nature and communities
- Raise awareness about the importance of trees
- Provide opportunities for everyone to help make Cardiff a greener and healthier place to live.
- Train and work with communities

Early this year, 16,000 trees were planted, throughout Cardiff. Forest Farm already has a programme of tree-planting and so has not gained new trees specifically from the Coed Caerdydd project, but it is an ideal site for the project's nursery. Here, new saplings have been nurtured and prepared and there are now 4,000 ready for planting this Winter. New areas suitable for tree planting are being agreed with landowners, volunteers, and community based organisations, including 20 schools. Another exciting aspect, is the plan to develop new Orchards, for example in Bute Park, to replace some of the trees that were vandalised there last year.

The intention is to make sure that the trees planted survive into the future, so that their impact is sustained. This will help to combat and replace future loss of existing trees through disease, and other causes both natural and un-natural. Tree planting is taking place in every part of the city throughout the next decade, and at present is still in its pilot phase, which will continue until summer 2023. By working with communities to plant new trees and care for existing woodlands, the aim is to increase coverage across the city from 18.9% to 25%.

Volunteers are warmly welcomed to the project - 750 people have already taken part. It is possible for individual households to apply for up to 5 free trees.

To know more about Coed Caerdydd or to get involved visit: [What is Coed Caerdydd? - Outdoor Cardiff](#), join their [facebook group](#), or email coedcaerdyddproject@cardiff.gov.uk.

HONEY BEES AT FOREST FARM



Tucked away in the corner of the orchard Cardiff Vale & Valleys Beekeeping Association keep five colonies of honey bees. These were left to Cardiff Council by the family of Peter Roberts, the original beekeeper who kept bees at site.

The club, took over the care of the bees in 2019. We provided new hives, they range from traditional Cedar to plastic. The plan was to use the site as a training apiary, using different styles of hives to show new beekeepers various options.

before the hives explode with new bees during the summer.

Annually, we hold a beekeeping training course in spring time,



During the year we need to inspect the bees every 7 to 10 days, checking for any issues, like diseases or losing a queen. Every so often a swarm appears in the orchard, which is the bees' way of reproducing and spreading their genes.



Forest Farm is an ideal site for the bees, with all the wild flower meadows in the area. Technically it could sustain up to twenty colonies. However, Honey Bees are very efficient, and twenty hives would outstrip the resources which are also needed for other pollinating insects.

Did you know that during the life of a worker bee she will produce only $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of honey? Every drop is valuable!

Hopefully, by August the bees will have some surplus honey which we are able to harvest. We must ensure that they have enough honey left in store to keep them going through the winter months.

We managed to have a display at the open days in June and October, where we were able to have some live bees in an observation hive. Visitors were able to find/spot the queen, and to buy some honey from the hives.



If you couldn't make it to the open days, but would like some honey from Forest Farm, just phone and we can arrange to meet there when I next inspect the bees.

If you're interested in keeping bees, and or doing a beekeeping course, (they get booked really quickly) contact us via our web site:

www.cardiffbeekeepers.co.uk

Nick, Forest Farm Apiary Manager

Tel 07949 969530

GREEN WOODPECKERS (*Picus viridis*)

One of the star attractions at Forest Farm this summer has been the family of Green woodpeckers. We thought that you might like to see some of the wonderful photographs taken locally and also have a bit of information about this fascinating bird.



Cliff Woodhead

LOOKS LIKE

The Green woodpecker is unmistakable. Its wings are dark green, with a paler breast and a yellow rump that is evident in flight. The cheeks are black with a prominent red cap on top. Males have a red streak below their cheeks, but females do not. Photograph shows a male. Green woodpeckers are the largest of the three breeding-woodpecker species found in the UK.

CALL SOUND

Green woodpeckers are very vocal and have a recognisable loud, laughing call known as a 'yaffle', which is often the only way you know a green woodpecker is nearby, as they tend to be quite wary birds. If lucky you could also hear their song, which is a series of slightly accelerating 'klü' sounds.

FOOD

Ants, ants and more ants. The Green woodpecker's diet is

dominated by ants. It catches the insects by probing the ground with its powerful beak and sucking them up with its long, sticky tongue. A Green woodpecker's tongue is so long that it coils behind its skull in order to fit inside its head. They will eat other invertebrates, pine seeds and fruit, but usually only in the winter when ants become increasingly hard to find.

Colin Harvey



FOUND WHERE

In the British Isles, they are resident all-year-round and can be observed in most parts, apart from the northern parts of the Scottish Highlands & Islands, and all of Ireland.

The species requires trees for nesting, but open ground for catching ants. Open areas close to woodland are ideal green-woodpecker habitat. The birds will also visit parks and gardens provided there are trees nearby.



Sarah Hopkins

RELATIONSHIPS

Although green woodpeckers often pair for life, they are antisocial outside of the breeding season and will spend most of the year living alone. The two halves of a pair may roost near to each other during the winter, but they will not re-establish their pair bond until March. This is achieved through the use of loud calls, and a period of courtship.

NESTING

Green woodpeckers prefer to nest in the holes of old deciduous trees, located near to feeding grounds with ants and caterpillars. It is commonplace for Green woodpeckers to hollow out and extract the insides within a circumference of 60mm x 75mm of a rotting trunk, the inside of which is dug to a depth of 400mm. This hole can last as long as 10 years.



Cliff Woodhead

BREEDING

They mainly nest in live trees and will often use the same tree each year. Green woodpeckers begin their breeding process late on in April. They typically only have one brood of four to six eggs (figures vary slightly) and usually lay their eggs in May. The incubation period lasts around 19 days before fledging after approximately 25 days.

On fledging, each parent usually takes half of the young, quite a common occurrence in birds, and shows them where to feed. It is at this time of year when they may be brought to garden lawns to feed. Green woodpeckers are sedentary, rarely moving far from their nesting site. Young birds disperse from their natal grounds in the autumn.

THREATS AND CONSERVATION

The Green woodpecker population is doing well and is thought to have doubled since the 1970s. The RSPB estimate some 52,000 breeding pairs in the UK. More recently, however, the populations in south-western England and west Wales have fallen. Further afield, they have declined in much of Europe because of the loss of nesting sites, through the loss of mature woodland and destruction of heath land.

SOURCES:

https://www.garden-birds.co.uk/birds/green_woodpecker.html

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/green-woodpecker/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/animals/birds/green-woodpecker/>

<https://www.discoverwildlife.com/animal-facts/birds/facts-about-green-woodpecker/>

<https://voice.gardenbird.co.uk/all-about-the-green-woodpecker/#>

HEDGEHOGS: LEND A HELPING HAND

Looking through the wonderful photographs on the Forest Farm's associated Facebook pages, we couldn't find a single picture of a Hedgehog! What has happened to this iconic little British mammal, such a popular character in so many children's books, and once so commonly seen?

We appear to have lost over half our hedgehogs from our countryside since the millennium alone and have lost a third from our towns and cities, although this decline in urban areas appears to be slowing.

Hedgehogs are one of our most loved animals, but Autumn is a critical time for them. So here's a little bit of information and some tips on how we can help them out.



HEDGEHOGS ARE FOUND WHERE?

Only one species lives in the UK - the European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). Hedgehogs are found right across the UK. They live in both Town: gardens, parks and cemeteries and Country: hedgerows, woodlands and grasslands. Really hedgehogs are just as happy in rural or urban locations.

Gardens (and lots of them) provide the perfect habitat. Gardens provide hedgehogs with a plentiful supply of food, plus potential nest sites

for breeding, resting and hibernation. Urban areas have become a stronghold for hedgehogs in recent years.

WHAT WILD HEDGEHOGS EAT: THE GARDENERS FRIEND

Hedgehogs mainly eat creepy crawlies, although they are generalists and will feed on a wide range of things. The most important invertebrates in their diet are worms, beetles, slugs, caterpillars, earwigs and millipedes. If you want hedgehogs, you need plenty of creepy crawlies! These are attracted by planting a variety of different plants and creating habitats such as log piles.

BREEDING AND BABIES

Hedgehogs on average live for 2-5 years in the wild. They reach maturity in their second year of life, and after this can breed every year until death. They reproduce between April and September, but the period of greatest activity, **‘the rut’**, occurs in May and June in Britain. During the breeding season amorous hedgehogs can be seen (and heard!!) circling each other with snorts and grunts.

Baby hedgehogs are called hoglets. Hedgehogs usually give birth in June and July, though the hoglet season can begin in early spring and stretch until autumn. The average litter size is four or five young, sometimes up to seven. However, they usually only wean two or three successfully. The mother is liable to desert or even eat hoglets if she is disturbed. Young hedgehogs will leave the nest at around three to four weeks old to go on foraging trips with their mother. After around ten days of foraging the young will wander off on their own.

HIBERNATION

Many animals have adapted to cope with the harsh conditions of winter, but hedgehogs truly hibernate, along with bats and dormice. Depending on the weather and their body condition, they enter a state of torpor from October/ November to March/April, lowering their body temperature and slowing their metabolism. Hedgehogs must feed intensively and be in great condition before hibernating if they are to last the winter.

In hibernation the hedgehog’s fuel supply comes from fat stores it has built up over the summer. Eating enough before hibernation is vital and this is when **supplementary feeding** can prove important. If they hibernate when underweight they will not survive. Any disturbance during hibernation can be extremely dangerous, as hedgehogs use up their precious energy reserves if they become active again.



Hedgehog in autumn nest:
W Carter, Wikipedia

HEDGEHOGS ARE IN TROUBLE

In the 1950s it was estimated there were 36.5 million hedgehogs in Britain, (probably an overestimate). In 1995, there were an estimated 1,550,000 in Great Britain (Wales 140,000). There is strong evidence that numbers have been declining since then. There are now thought to be fewer than 1 million hedgehogs left in the UK.

HOW TO HELP

To save the hedgehog we need to work together with neighbours to make the small changes that will make a big difference. No single garden or green space can help hedgehogs in isolation, but if they are linked together hedgehogs can then thrive.

Create Hedgehog Highways: Hedgehogs need to roam far and wide in search of food, mates and nesting sites. Get together with your neighbours to cut a 13cm x 13cm hole in your fence or dig a channel beneath garden boundaries to connect your gardens.

Avoid the use of pesticides: Ditch the slug pellets and avoid pesticides. Hedgehogs are natural “pest” controllers and need a plentiful and varied supply of invertebrate prey to stay healthy.

Make water safe: Hedgehogs are great swimmers but can struggle to climb out of steep-sided ponds, many drown. Provide a ramp or make shallow areas at the edge so they can scramble out.

Provide nesting sites: Log and leaf piles, wilderness areas and purpose-built hedgehog homes make great places for hedgehogs to nest and hibernate. Fallen leaves also make the perfect nesting material, so don't clear all of these away.

Grow a wide variety of plants: Attract natural hedgehog food by keeping your garden diverse with a wide variety of habitats e.g. ponds, log piles, hedges, and a wide range of plant types. Let your grass grow a bit wild and leave some leaf litter, these are important homes for their prey.

Be aware of dangers: Check for hidden hedgehogs before lighting bonfires, strimming and mowing the lawn. Keep plant netting, tennis nets and household rubbish above ground level to prevent entanglement.

SOURCES & MORE INFORMATION:

WILD ABOUT GARDENS <https://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk>

THE BRITISH HEDGEHOG PRESERVATION SOCIETY <https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk>

HEDGEHOGSTREET <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org>

WIKIPEDIA https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_hedgehog

HEDGEHOG HELPLINE <http://hedgehoghelplinecymru.org.uk>

FRIENDS OF FOREST FARM OPEN DAY

Bee-keepers, craft stalls, apple pressing, nature hunts, pond-dipping, photo exhibition, refreshments, plenty of sunshine (between the showers and rainbows!), and lots of people. A great day for all. We hope you were able to get there, but if not make sure you come next year!

The natural first port of call was the Warden's Hut, where a fabulous photographic exhibition produced by Wildlife of Forest Farm showing the natural treasures to be found on the reserve could be marvelled at whilst having refreshments and a chat with friends.



Onto the Old Dairy, to find the craft stalls, provided by talented local people selling their wares. Elegant carved bowls, bell pulls, stools, Christmas tree stands and coat hangers from Cardiff and District Woodwork Club. Colourful knitted toys, hats, gloves, scarves and much more invited purchases to benefit City Hospice, also beautifully knitted Christmas items, or natural-dyed hats and gloves made from hand-spun local sheep's wool. Beautiful cards painted by Pat Rayfield, who lived well with Alzheimer's, with proceeds going towards a new Art Club for people with this disease.

Returning to the Orchard, visitors (and children) were able to take part in the popular Pond-dipping led magnificently by the rangers. The water levels in the pond had been restored thanks to recent rain, and enthusiastic dips of the nets into the water and weeds took place. Once emptied into trays all sorts of interesting wild-life was revealed - species of Dragonfly larvae, Great Diving Beetles, young Newts still sporting their tadpole tails, Water Boatmen, snails and so much more. A rich watery world to be enjoyed!

The Wildlife Trust for South and West Wales once more provided an interesting stall, complete with Albino Badger, skulls, feely boxes, and quiz trail. Next another popular event - the apple

pressing. Apples from the many different varieties of trees in the Orchard had been gathered. These were chopped, mulched and put through a juicer, with passing children roped in to give a hand with the pressing! The result was many jugs full of different apple juices, all delicious and all slightly different from each other.

There was no charge for the day, but we still raised £180 toward conservation work on the reserve and gained a few new members. Welcome! Thank you to all the Friends who worked so hard to make the day such a success, to the rangers, and to everyone who came along to enjoy and support it.



The Winter Talks Programme is back! Read on!

We're really pleased to let you know that the Winter Talks programme is back. All talks will be in Ararat Community Hall, Whitchurch Common, on Wednesdays, from 7 until 8pm, with doors open from 6.30.

19 October	The history and re-opening of the Rhondda Tunnel	Tony Moon
16 November 2022	Beekeeping as a Hobby	Nick Mensikov
18 January 2023	Cyfarthfa Castle and the Crawshay	Christopher Parry
15 February 2023	Nantgarw China Works, past and present	Charles Fountain
15 March 2023	Geology of Cardiff, particularly the North	Andy Kendall
19 April 2023 Followed by the AGM. NOTE EARLY TALK START TIME 6.45 PM.	The story of Insole Court and the family who made it	John Prior, in costume!

If you have any queries about any of the talks please contact **Duncan on 07870362607.**

COMING EVENTS AT FOREST FARM

All events meet at the Warden's Hut, Forest Farm Rd, CF14 7JH
and last from 10am-12/12.30 unless otherwise stated.

15 October	Nature Walk	Pauline Fisher
13 November 10AM – 3PM	Volunteers: Orchard pruning marathon	Jon Wallis Come when you like and for as long as you like. Bring your own lunch. Hot drinks provided
19 November	Nature Walk	Pauline Fisher
20 November	Cardiff Wildlife Detectives: Build a Home for a Bat	Wardens (see link below*)
17 December	Nature Walk	Sheila Austin
21 January	Nature Walk	Naomi Brightmore

More events or details, including further volunteering events will be posted on our website,
so please remember to visit at www.forestfarm.org.uk

* <https://www.outdoorcardiff.com/parks/cardiff-wildlife-detectives>

* LOOK OUT FOR THE 2023 FOREST FARM CALENDARS

These are in progress and when available will be
advertised
on the FoFF website and facebook page.

Please send your contributions for the next edition to the editors by **31
December 2022**. Thank you!

For more information about Friends of Forest Farm or to join see our website:
www.forestfarm.org.uk

Also on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/forestfarmuk/>

The editors wish to state that all views expressed by contributors are their own, as is the
responsibility for them.

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