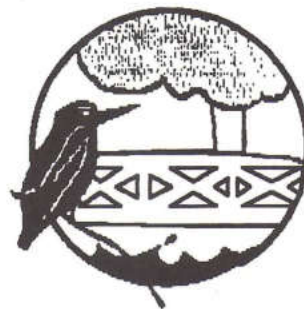


FRIENDS OF FOREST FARM



and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve

EDITOR'S FORUM

Just when we thought that a period of calm was settling on the Country Park we find more challenges ahead. Battles may have been won, but the war of attrition continues. Once more into the breach, dear Friends!

By way of explanation, this Newsletter features an article by our Secretary on the subject of Health Authority plans for the area which should concern us all.

I am grateful to all our contributors for their interesting items, and to Robin Sotheby for layout.

Please do not hesitate to write to me on any subject relating to the Friends which interests or concerns you. We now have 193 members, our Membership Secretary informs us.

See you all at the Woodland Fayre at Forest Farm on the 21st November.

WOODLAND FAYRE

The second Woodland Fayre will take place at Forest Farm on

SUNDAY 21st NOVEMBER 1993.

This year's show is expected to be on similar lines to last year's and will involve

Demonstrations of Traditional Woodland Crafts

and

Uses of Locally Grown Welsh Timber.

The Show should attract more demonstrators this year. Special features include

Ron Coles on his **Shire Horse**

which will be used to transport timber around the farm and to the Saw Mill. The mill will be used to cut up local timber for sale to wood turners, carvers and anybody wanting to use timber for their particular skill.

N.R.A. intend to be at the show to construct an

Otter Holt

and produce a display on this exciting animal which is now returning to the River Taff.

**The Friends will have a stand,
and look forward to seeing you.**

Chris Powell
Leisure & Amenities

MEMBERSHIP enquiries to Mr Tom Colston
15 Coed Arian, Whitchurch, CARDIFF CF4 2ND
Tel: (0222) 624606

"WHITCHURCH GREEN" - A NEW URBAN VILLAGE ?

A new "urban village" with its own identity, separate from Whitchurch village, appears to be the conceptual aspiration of the **Health Authority's** planning consultants when the Hospital is decommissioned. To quote "creating a single identity for the site - a new place - a new community - "Whitchurch Green" - within North Cardiff". It would be accessed via a new roundabout on Park Road; this would also serve the Health Stores and possibly a new central kitchen for cook-chill meals.

Under this proposal, Health would retain Velindre Hospital and some extra land on either side, facing Velindre Road. One of the maps allocates land nearest the Library for "regional services - e.g. medium security psychiatric unit". On the other side of Velindre Hospital the land is earmarked for "the new Whitchurch Hospital". All of these would be accessed from Velindre Road.

So far, only the Meadows have been declared surplus, and the present detailed planning proposal only relates to that part of the estate.

The intention is to build low density houses (4/6 per acre) on 5.7 acres on the narrow strip between **Longwood Site of Special Scientific Interest** and the Railway cutting Nature Reserve. Courtyard housing (10 units per acre) on 6.1 acres, and on 1.4 acres 30 units of Residential Apartments in blocks 3/4 storeys high. This part of the estate would provide some 124 housing units for the new "Whitchurch Green" village. The work could commence as soon as planning consent is obtained.

How do we know all this? Fortunately, your Executive Committee had sight of the four (3 large and glossy) documents submitted by Health to the Public Inquiry Planning Inspector, setting out their objection to City Council's refusal to allocate the land for housing. We also had sight of the Council's "Rebuttal Evidence", and were pleased to note that they had taken on board most of the arguments we have been making during the last year. **Dr Mary Gillham's** supplementary scientific statement was used by the Council in its entirety.

At the very last minute we were told we could submit written comments on the Health proposals, and we did so. In fairness, the Consultants acknowledged the importance of a threat to the SSSI and Reserve, and attempted to put forward proposals to mitigate the danger. The thrust of our submission was that it would be impossible adequately to mitigate against the impact of residential accommodation on the site. We also put forward proposals of how the Meadows could be developed if they had been part of the Reserve.

We now await the findings of the Inspector.

Dennis Davies

GARDEN BIRDWATCH

Having committed ourselves to feeding wild birds throughout the summer, we have become part of the largest "bird reserve" in the country.

If it were possible to have the results of all the birds visiting these gardens no doubt we would be astounded at the variety of species that find a reason to visit our gardens.

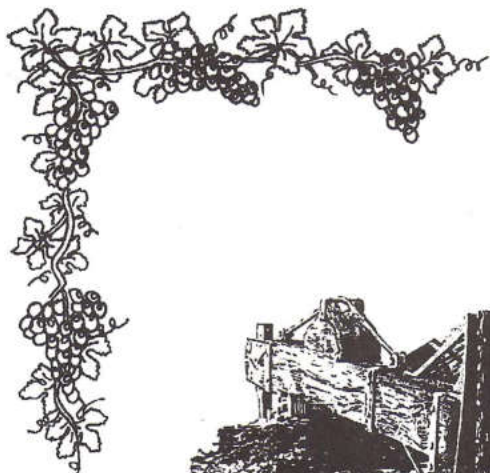
Goldfinches call in to my garden and ignore the food but usually drink from the bird bath. They feed on the spare land alongside, which at present has not been built on. There are numerous wild plants, trees and shrubs that have grown up in the last five or six years. Seeds and insects on them attract the migratory birds - a **Whinchat** on 31st August, two **Chiffchaffs** on 21st September and a **Willow Warbler** on 28th September. Birds actually visiting my garden have increased in number, mainly **House Sparrows** and **Starlings**, as expected, but there has been a slight increase in the numbers of most species.



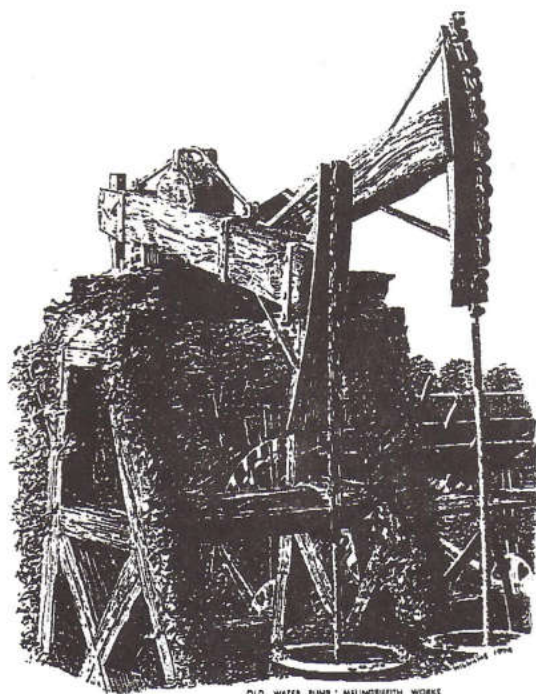
Chiffchaff on Nettles

The total number of species this year by August is 28 - about the same number for earlier years. This includes a very short visit from a **Treecreeper** on 25th August (a first for the garden) and a **Woodpigeon**, which did not visit at all in 1992. A **Willow Warbler** was seen on 30th August and a **Sparrowhawk** flew through the garden on 21st September.

R.J. Williams



MELINGRIFFITH WATER PUMP



OLD WATER PUMP : MELINGRIFFITH WORKS

The advent of the millenium should spur enthusiasm to see the Melingriffith Water Pump back in working order.

It was built in 1806 as a consequence of litigation between the Melingriffith Tinplate Company and the Glamorganshire Canal Company over the availability of water reserves during dry spells. A sum of £600 was made available by the Tin Plate works to lift water back into the canal after its power had initially been used through the rolling mills, turbines or water-wheels.

Oxford House Industrial Archaeology Society initially embarked on the preservation of the water-wheel some 20 years ago, in October 1974. At first the project was perceived as a rescue operation preventing it from collapse. It then entered a conservation stage, securing the site and water supply; and, finally, the construction.

The last major stage is to return it to working order. Above all, this requires dedicated people who wish to see the pump and water-wheel turning again.

Working parties will recommence on site on Sunday mornings at 10.00. For further details contact: Roger John on Cardiff 843992.

INDOOR MEETINGS PROGRAMME

A series of illustrated talks to be held in
BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH HALL, PENLLINE ROAD, WHITCHURCH

1993

WEDNESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER AT 7.30 PM

"THE GLAMORGAN CANAL"

BY MR E.O.EDWARDS

1994

WEDNESDAY 26TH JANUARY AT 7.30 PM

"BIRDS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR"

BY DR W.A.VENABLES

WEDNESDAY 16TH MARCH AT 7.30 PM

"THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BATS"

BY MISS J.A.GARNER

WEDNESDAY 20TH APRIL AT 7.30 PM

"THE LOWER TAFF VALLEY"

DR MARY GILLHAM

THIS TALK WILL BE FOLLOWED BY THE AGM.

Tea and biscuits are available at the end of each meeting.

Chris James
Programme Secretary



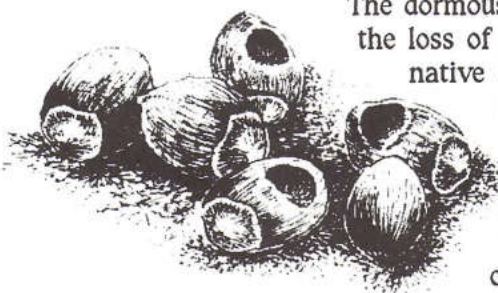
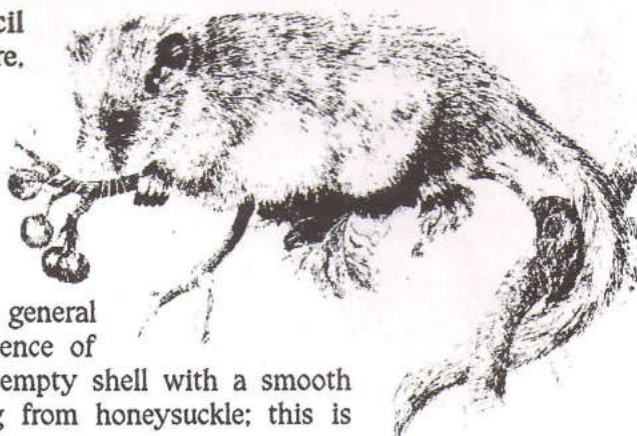
NATIONAL DORMOUSE WEEK

Various organisations, including the Countryside Council for Wales and its English counterpart, English Nature, are organising a National Dormouse Week from

27th October to 3rd November.

The aims of this event are to raise public awareness about the plight of the dormouse, and to gather information about the number of dormice in Britain.

During this week the professional and members of the general public will be hunting for clues which reveal the presence of dormice, such as hollowed out hazel nuts (look for an empty shell with a smooth spherical hole without teethmarks), and bark stripping from honeysuckle; this is used to line their nests.



The dormouse is confined in Britain to Southern England and Wales and, due to the loss of habitat, i.e. old hazel coppice, is becoming quite rare. It is our only native hibernating rodent and measures about 14cm, half of which is a bushy tail. This is slightly smaller than the house mouse. The fur is yellow-red with white on its chest, throat and feet. The dormouse is a very agile climber and lives in the shrub layer of woodland edges, where it will travel from bush to bush. It is mostly nocturnal, starting to feed at dusk. Its food consists mainly of seeds - especially hazel nuts - and soft fruit supplemented with insects and the occasional bird's egg.

The summer nest of the dormouse consists of a small ball of leaves, bark, grasses and moss, usually a few feet above the ground in a shrub. Its overwintering nest, however, will be at ground level in the base of coppice or slightly underground. The dormouse can live around four years, but nearly half of this time is spent sleeping. It was made famous by Lewis Carroll's Mad Hatter's Tea Party - and even there it was asleep for most of the time!

Our Watch Group will be searching the Reserve for clues indicating the presence of dormice. If you would like to join in the hunt in areas you may think promising, i.e. old hazel coppice, contact the Countryside Council for Wales at 43/44 The Parade, Roath, Cardiff CF2 3UH for more information.



P.S. Don't worry if this newsletter reaches you after the official Week; the search will continue throughout the winter and will end in the spring of 1994.

Mike Wiley

DRAGONFLIES

Three new species of dragonfly have been recorded on the Nature Reserve this year, making a total of 17 recorded species. The new species are:

The four-spot chaser *Libellula depressa*. The common blue damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*. The southern hawkers *Aeshna cyanea*.

The proliferation of dragonfly numbers on the Reserve results from thoughtful and careful management of both the aquatic and terrestrial habitats on the Reserve. Dragonfly diversity in an area is a good indicator of an unpolluted environment.

Chris James

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