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# FRIENDS of FOREST FARM and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve

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NEWSLETTER No 8, CHRISTMAS 1991

## EDITOR'S FORUM.

Welcome to a bumper Christmas issue - compared with the previous one! This is due to the enthusiasm of our contributors and the cooperation of Robin Sotheby, Cllr Vic Riley and our distributors. To distract you from the TV we have included a Crossword; no prizes, but think of the satisfaction in meeting the challenge!

### LOCAL PLAN HOUSING PROPOSAL THROWN OUT !

The City Council's Planning & Development Committee has rejected the Planning Officer's proposal to allocate the hospital meadow for housing - 180 units. Our campaign had massive support: our Petition with 5440 signatures, and a large number of individual letters of protest. We spoke with one voice - naturalist groups, tenants' associations, politicians, political parties and, most important of all, the "man in the street".

This was a very big battle to win but it is not the end of the war. We can only win when the meadows are in the ownership of the City Council and form part of the Reserve. The Executive Committee will be exploring ways of promoting such a development. Your views on the subject or ideas on how it could be achieved ... letters to the Editor, please.

### Membership Secretary.

Mrs Stephanie Crocker regrets that due to circumstances she is unable to continue. The new membership secretary is Ms Esther Jennings, 5 Alfreda Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF4 2EH (Tel: 0222 625021).

### Education Sub-Committee

The education sub-committee is now making a start on preparing resource material. The first packs will be on: the Reserve through the seasons, pond-life, the history of the area and the geography. More people are needed, so please come along to the next meeting, or ring me if you are interested. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 21st, 1992 at 7.30 pm at 32 Heol Don.

Esther Jennings (Tel. 625021)

*Seasons  
Greetings  
to you all ...*

*From the Executive Committee*

*and your Editor.*



## The Glamorganshire Canal 1951 - 1991

(conclusion)

E.O.Edwards

Forest Farm, which is adjacent to the Canal, was bought by the City Council in 1980, and the Nature Reserve Warden, Mr Mike Wiley, has his office alongside the farm buildings. There are about 6 voluntary wardens who help to keep an eye on the Reserve and help the public in any way possible. There is room for more volunteers, so pick up the phone and have a word with Mr Wiley on 612213 if you are interested. The Watch group meets in the Warden's building. It is the junior wing of the county wildlife trusts for children of 6 - 16 years of age (approximately); they hold indoor and outdoor meetings monthly. Last year they made and erected 30 nestboxes, most of which were occupied by grateful tenants very quickly; this year they have repeated the work but using bat boxes this time. I wonder if the bats will be grateful?

Forest Farm has been renovated as a residential volunteer and conservation training centre and has been leased by the City Council to B.T.C.V. (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers), a national conservation organisation and a charity. Its main purpose is to promote and carry out practical conservation work, and it does this by means of volunteers, singly or in groups.

It is also the base for the Forest of Cardiff project, which is a joint project with B.T.C.V. and six other bodies, to promote and carry out urban forestry in Cardiff. There is also a training centre, run by Conservation Practice Ltd (B.T.C.V.'s training and trading subsidiary), working within the Government's

Employment Training Scheme, training people in conservation and related practical skills. For information on any of the above, please contact Mr Chris Small on 626660.

At the southern end of the Reserve, beyond the housing estate, erected on the site of the old Malingriffith works, is the Water Pump Lift Engine. This consists of an undershot waterwheel driving two pumps, and it was used to pump water, which had been used to drive the water wheels inside the works, into the Canal. Erected in 1806 and allowed to fall into disrepair after the works closed in 1939, it was rescued and renovated by the Oxford House Industrial Archaeology Society, Risca, who have been working on it for the past 15 years and hope to have it in working order soon. For information, ring Mr Roger John on Cardiff 843992.

At the upper end of the Reserve, an addition has been made with the inclusion of the old railway cutting running from Coryton to meet with the Canal at Longwood Drive. This is being coppiced (i.e. cut on a periodic rotation) in order to encourage small-scale diversity, and the bird population there is on the increase. 1)

A leak in the bed of the Canal above Forest Lock has been utilised to create two new lakes on the west side of the Canal, with the overflow returning to the Canal below the Lock.

Even though the Canal no longer carries out its original function, this section of it is very much alive, and needs to be guarded and protected so that the fauna and flora and Homo sapiens can all enjoy it together.

## Proposed Country Park

The consultants undertaking the feasibility study have met some of the Committee members. We made the following points:-

1. The Park should include the hospital meadows, the flood plain & Radyr Wood.
2. It must be retained as an area of open countryside where visitors can enjoy peace and quiet, and where wild life will flourish.
3. There are areas of significant industrial and historical interest: Water Pump, Canal, Locks, riverside Industrial Remains. These should be restored in a manner which is in sympathy with the overall objective.
4. Make the Park accessible to the public including disabled persons.
5. Promote the educational aspect, e.g. educational packs for schools, interpretation centre and possibly a museum.
6. A Forest Farm building is already used for the Craft Fair, etc. An area could be allocated for one-off use by reputable organisations, e.g. scouts, caravan club, but accessed from Longwood Drive.

Dennis Davies

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

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## 'Another Winter's Tale'



Time was suspended between dusk and dark. Resplendent in winter garments the Reserve was silhouetted, deep brown touched with gold from the setting sun. Underfoot, the crack of brittle twig betrayed the presence of creatures urgently seeking the remnants of sustenance in their path. Bird song had now lost its cadence in the chill, dank air.

A mist floated lightly between branch and shrub, settling with feather touch, layer upon layer, on the ground beneath. A glimmer of light stroked the mirror of still water broken by an occasional ripple. Its occupants were not yet ready for sleep's respite.

Nearby, a hedgehog snuffled through the leaves, and a dog fox gave a repeated triple yelp before loping to its den.

The denizens of the reserve had no difficulty accepting nature's cycle of events. As the day was ending for some, the night would bring the life force of activity for others.

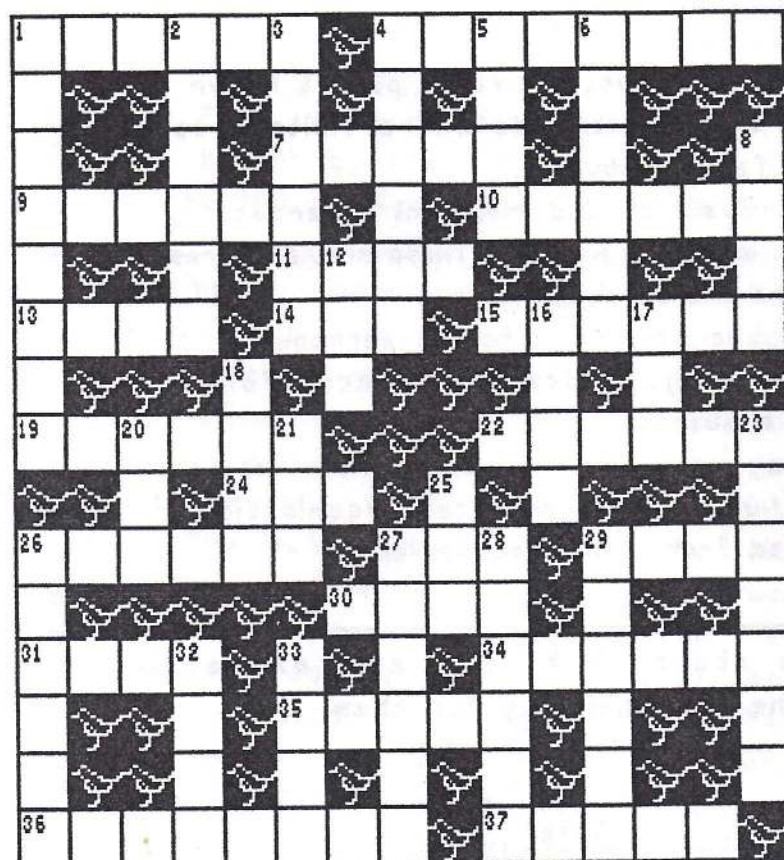
But this was an evening with a difference about which the Reserve had no realisation.

It was Christmas Eve.

Ken Patterson.



# Natural History Christmas Crossword - by Mike Wiley



## ACROSS

1. Divine humour ! (6)
4. Melville's mammal (4,4)
- 7,26ac. Can sometimes get this (5)
9. Shortened lantern - half a trophy (6)
10. Salar (6)
11. Desire in Eden (4)
13. Morse gets warm (4)
14. Churchyard tree ? (3)
15. Bird in lent (6)
19. Sprout perhaps (2,4)
22. Wily young scout (3,3)
24. Place to grouse about (3)
26. White diver ! (6)
27. Made from 2 down (3)
29. Cuts of rabbit (4)
30. March off quickly (4)
31. Search about underground (4)
34. Spike the lawn. (6)
35. The lepidoptera of Fleet St. (5)
36. Nice barn for moths (8)
37. Horse, or medicinal, maybe (5)

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23. Little of 32 down (7)
  25. Night container (3)
  26. Crow maybe (6)
  27. Set in his ways (6) problem (6)
  28. Torment the "senor" - a prickly
  29. Butcher bird (6)
  32. Rent review (4)
  33. Mint's no balm to this animal (4)

## DOWN

1. Large bird ! (5,3)
2. One who weeps (6)
3. Thunder god visits the big apple (6)
4. Fungi to drive me wild ! (6)
5. Darlings in May (4)
6. Wader (6)
8. Tang with a bite (4)
12. Shelter about for fish (3)
16. Smooth metal ! (4)
17.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of "New Countryside Council for Wales" (1,1,1)
18. Underground spy (4)
20. Trap set by Gordon ! (3)
21. Damp politician (3)

(Solution in next issue)

Published on behalf of Friends of Forest Farm and Glamorganshire Canal  
Local Nature Reserve by Mr Ken Patterson, 12 Manor Court, Whitchurch,  
Cardiff CF4 1BJ (0222 - 627077)