



# Friends

of FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK  
and GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL  
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE  
**Issue No: 104 June 2017**

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

## **Velindre - Plans for a new hospital on the meadows**

### **Brief outline of the Friends fight to save the meadows**

The first threat to the meadows was in 1990 in the City's Draft Local Plan. Although within the Local Nature Reserve (LNR), part of the area we know as the meadows was owned by Whitchurch Hospital (then Cardiff Community Health Trust). They applied for permission for a development which included the meadows and Whitchurch Hospital site. Over many years, various plans and amendments to plans have been put forward and considered by Planning Committees, the full Council and even at a Public Inquiry. The loss of the meadows area and the plan to build was of huge concern - but despite a lot of opposition, planning permission to build houses was given in 1995. The Friends' focus was initially to fight to keep the meadows free from building and later, to retain as much of the meadows as possible.

In 1998, Ted Edwards, then Chairman of the Friends of Forest Farm, wrote in our newsletter "Over long years of negotiation the Friends have come to the conclusion that, by hook or crook, this site will be developed, so we have to get the best compromise we can." Then in 1999, Whitchurch Hospital appealed against the decision of the Council to refuse planning permission for housing. This went as far as a Public Inquiry - and the appeal was allowed i.e. planning permission was given for housing on the Whitchurch Hospital site including the meadows. Ted wrote " This is a very disappointing result when one considers that the last plan turned down by the Planning department saved 4.6 hectares of the meadows for the Reserve and was the culmination of nine years work by the Friends." ( *i.e. after the appeal, less of the meadows was saved than that negotiated by the Friends before*).

So you can see that the battle for saving even part of the meadows has been long and hard fought - particularly by the previous committee when the loss of the meadows became a reality. In more recent years the present committee has actively fought the 5 year extensions of that planning permission with the support of members of the Friends, other local interested residents, local Councillors and our MP/AM. Reports and updates of opposition to various developments - but mostly about the meadows - have been included in one third of our newsletters over the 26 years since the Friends formed. They have consistently urged members to voice their opposition. The articles in the newsletters were 'a drop in the ocean' compared to the time and effort given to the Committees' actions. Sadly, all that effort to oppose the Whitchurch hospital development for housing was unsuccessful.

### **Current position**

Once again we are faced with plans for the loss of the major part of the meadows to building. This is a real sadness for us. As we all know, the current plans are for a new cancer centre for Velindre NHS Trust. All previous proposals for the site were for housing; the number of houses planned has varied over the years and left a small portion of the meadows at the top end of the site untouched by potential development. The Friends always were strongly against a housing development, and we really were not confident that the number of houses on the plan would not be increased, or indeed that the development would not extend to the whole site over a number of years.

*(continued on page 11)*

Editorial

Hello Friends! It's still Spring (well Springwatch was on TV this week so it must be). It's a season associated with lots of activity and there certainly has been - both on the Reserve and with the Friends group.

The BIG issue for us is of course the proposal for a new cancer centre for Velindre NHS Trust on that part of the meadows owned by Whitchurch Hospital (Cardiff and Vale University Health Board). Velindre are consulting on their proposals for a new hospital there. As you see we have briefly outlined our involvement in the history of this long battle over the meadows and our initial stance, but await the detailed plans once a contract has been awarded. Although building has been 'on the cards' for many years, it is still an extremely sad time. We must and will do everything we can to engage constructively to minimise the impact on the environment. I hope we can count on your support through the Friends or as individuals (or both) in this endeavour..

To happier matters. The Ranger service has been very active; clearing and repairing the 'old' pond, wood art has appeared and a willow tunnel (pp 3,8). Volunteers helped with some of this and many other tasks around the Reserve - like repairs to the hide door, clearing debris from middle lock and putting wood chippings round the base of the trees in the orchard. The Dawn Chorus walk, Foods of the Forest and the Summer Wildlife Festival organised by the **Rangers** were very successful. There are too many individuals to name for thanks but I can mention **Elaine** for stepping in to lead the walks (p4), **John** for another update on the Mary Gillham project (p5) and **Emily** (p9) for her article about the orchard and **Albyn** for his reports on the Dawn Chorus and Foods of the Forest (pp6, 10). All much appreciated and I hope you enjoy reading them.

Feedback is always good - either to me or the committee and you are very welcome at a volunteering event or on a walk or at one of the events listed (pp11,12).

**Sheila Austin**

**Betty's Birders - now the 6 Survivors**

For many years a group known as " Betty's Birders " would meet for walks at Forest Farm and have coffee mornings where they raised money which they donated to Forest Farm. Betty passed away several years ago but there are 6 that still meet up and raise money.

We have just received a donation of £200 from them, which is amazing. It has been agreed to use this to pay for a display wall in the Warden's Centre.

On behalf of the Committee and all the Friends, I would like to thank them for this and all the past donations over the years.

**John Harding (Chairman )**

Summer holidays?  
We don't stop  
 Come and join us for  
 Nature walks - 3rd Saturday  
 Volunteering - 2nd Sunday  
 Both start at 10.00 a.m. Meet at the  
 Wardens Centre , Forest Farm Rd.  
 Whitchurch Cardiff CF14 7JJ

Deadline for articles for next newsletter - 10th August 2017			
See back page for contact details			
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## Reserve Report

by **Paul Pinnell - Ranger**

It is Spring again (11th May as I write this). Spring and Autumn are my favourite times - Spring because nature is awake and coming to life - all the insects bees, wasps and butterflies are all hungry from their winter sleep (that is the way, sleep through all at the cold and harsh weather!) They look for the spring flowers such as bluebells and primroses which are common at Forest Farm and gives them the food boost they need to get started.

As I have said before there is a lot of work going on around Forest Farm which the public see, but what you don't see is the work behind the scenes. On that note, I would like to thank all the Rangers for stepping in for me when I was off sick for 10 weeks and light duties due to an operation on both hands. Also I would like to thank the Friends of Forest Farm volunteers as work-wise, it has been a great help! I would like to thank Nic as she is putting a lot of effort into getting grants and it shows on the Reserve.

Sadly, I need to ask all the Friends to keep an eye out as there are a group of youths who are smoking cannabis(?), damaging the hides, pulling down fences, kicking the door through, and leaving mess and rubbish and old drug bags. If you see anything suspicious, *please do not confront them but do phone the police, get an incident number and pass it on to a Ranger or member of the Friends committee.* We need to record everything so we can go to the police and be a nice nuisance! This is our Nature Reserve; we need to band together - so please keep your eyes open.

There are several new features on the Reserve. By the pond near the Wardens Centre there are wooden carvings of a caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly\* (see below right) and the newly dug out 'old' pond (opposite the farm buildings) will be a dragonfly sculpture\*(see page 8). There is also a living willow tunnel near the car park! (photo left).



Construction of a willow tunnel by Innovate Trust's Greendays project. under the direction of Clare Revera - Out To Learn Willow  
Photo: Paul Pinnell

'Buglife' have moved into some rooms near the farmhouse and the have helped us with wildflower seeds and enablinh a Ranger to go on a bee identification course. Thanks to them and Plant life. They are a great bunch of people with great knowledge - and a pleasure to work with!

I would like to finish this article by thanking the Friends of Forest Farm. Once again they have bought bird seed for birds large and small - their numbers would surely deplete without this help.



Photo of the damage:  
Jon Wallis



Right - Martin and John's repairs on the Friends May volunteering event.  
Photo: Albyn Austin



The Wood Art Works butterfly in place by the 'new' pond. Photo: Albyn Austin

**Nature Walks - March and May**  
**Forest Farm Nature Reserve**  
**by Elaine Olsen**

**March** - The Group met as usual at the Wardens' Hut at 10am, a few familiar faces as well as many new ones, including the youngest, to my knowledge, at a year and a half, in an admittedly robust buggy, thus demonstrating the accessibility of the walk to all!

At the Wardens' Centre we were rewarded with a pair of bullfinches, along with numerous blue and great tits, robins, sparrow and dunnocks. At the foot bridge over the Taff to Radyr train station, we saw 3 kingfishers, albeit briefly, a first for some delighted newbies. We also saw a trio of goosanders, 2 female and one male, a pair of dippers, a swan (notable this high up the river) and a grey wagtail. Heading past the allotments, we saw a pair of tree creepers doing what tree creepers do (walk up the tree trunk and then drop back down in flight and recommence its walk up) and a pair of chiff chaffs.



Egret at Forest Farm  
Photo: Cliff Woodhead

At the first bird hide a reed bunting was sighted, plus numerous other little brown jobs which were too quick for the purposes of identification, however the cacophony of song indicated black caps, wrens and song thrushes among others. At the second bird hide we saw a nuthatch and were then delighted to see a moorhen with its tiny young. While at the canal, we saw moorhens with even tinier young - 6 in one brood.

An egret was sighted at the far side of the meadow while several herons flew over at various points in our amble, bluebells were at their best, and a further 3 tree creepers were seen at close range.

A delightful morning!

**May** - There were only 7 of us including a 15 year old boy who had very good eyesight and was good at identification.

We saw several swallows, martins and swifts, demonstrating that summer must have surely arrived. While the cacophony of sound evidenced many birds, prolific flora made it quite a struggle to catch sight of blackcaps, long-tailed tits and reed warblers among others. We were lucky enough to get a lovely view of a song thrush, accompanied by a chiff chaff on an electricity cable, both competing to serenade us. On the river we saw a couple of teenage ducklings, grey wagtails, dipper, and kingfishers, albeit fleetingly! Walking along the canal feeder, we managed to get very close to a heron silently fishing.

And again, in the hide, we had a wonderful view of a heron staring intently in the reeds. Moorhens and their young attended the pond, while a female duck became very friendly, joining us in the hide to beg for food, unfortunately none of us could provide even a crumb! Later, someone more thoughtful had left food on a gatepost so we had great views of tits, ducks and robins feeding.

While the bluebells were looking rather bedraggled, buttercups, stinking iris, herb robert & purple vetch among others brightened up our way.

On leaving the bird hide, 3 recently minted rabbits scampered out of our path, and a wren put on a solo performance just for us. On making our way back along the feeder a pale grey mink was spotted languishing on a fallen log. We must get up earlier next time, and **perhaps we will see an otter!**



Wren at Forest Farm  
Photo: Tony Fisher

*(Many thanks to Elaine for leading the walks and for these lovely reports. If anyone else can volunteer to lead a walk occasionally, (report not compulsory!), we would be delighted and do get in touch. Ed)*

## June 2017 Newsletter

Avid readers of this newsletter may well recall that in the December issue we featured an item supplied to us by SEWBRc's "**Mary Gillham Archive Project**". This was a list entitled, "Plants listed on the Reserve and Hospital Fields between the Railway Cutting and Long Wood in September 1991" (i.e. 25 years prior to that edition).

As well as the flora, Mary and colleagues recorded **birds and mammal life found at the same site in 1991**.

### Birds:

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
Acipiter nisus	Sparrowhawk	Alauda arvensis	Skylark
Anthus pratensis	Meadow pipit	Apus apus	Swift
Ardea cinerea	Grey Heron	Buteo buteo	Buzzard
Carduelis carduelis	Goldfinch	Columba palumbus	Woodpigeon
Corvus monedula	Jackdaw	Cuculus canorus	Cuckoo
Delichon urbicum	House Martin	Erithacus rubicula	Robin
Falco tinnunculus	Falcon	Fringilla coelebs	Chaffinch
Garrulus glandarius	Jay	Hirundo rustica	Swallow
Linaria cannabina	Linnet	Motacilla alba	Pied wagtail
Phoenicurus phoenicurus	Redstart	Phylloscopus collybita	Chiffchaff
Phylloscopus trochilus	Willow Warbler	Pica pica	Magpie
Pica viridis	Green Woodpecker	Prunella modularis	Dunnock
Streptopelia decaocto	Collared Dove	Strix aluco	Tawny Owl
Sturnus vulgaris	Starling	Sylvia atricapilla	Blackcap
Sylvia communis	Whitethroat	Troglodytes troglodytes	Wren
Turdus iliacus	Redwing	Turdus merula	Blackbird
Turdus philomelos	Song Thrush	Turdus pilaris	Fieldfare
Turdus viscivorus	Mistle Thrush		

### Mammals

Apodemus sylvaticus	Wood Mouse	Clethrionomys glareolus	Bank Vole
Erinaceus europaeus	West European Hedgehog	Meles meles	Eurasian Badger
Microtus agrestis	Field Vole	Mustela erminea	Stoat
Mustela nivalis	Weasel	Sciurus carolensis	Eastern Grey Squirrel
Sorex araneus	Common Shrew	Vulpes vulpes	Red Fox

If you are interested in seeing them, approximately 700 species recorded by Mary and friends at Forest Farm can be downloaded from:

<https://marygillhamarchiveproject.com/2017/05/02/walking-in-the-footsteps-of-mary-may-forest-farm-cardiff/>

Progress on the **Mary Gillham Archive Project** : volunteers have, between them, succeeded in:

***Transcribing 11,500+ slides from Wales and internationally***

***Entering 100,000+ wildlife records***

Work on the two-year project began in February 2016 and continues until February 2018 so, if you can find the time and have the inclination to assist with the tasks being undertaken, there's still opportunity for volunteers to join us – either in our Cardiff office or from home. Contact Al Reeve on [alan.reeve@sewbrec.org.uk](mailto:alan.reeve@sewbrec.org.uk) or 07961516587 to find out more.

***John Wilkins (Volunteer)***

***(My thanks once again to John for his article and I would encourage anyone who can to give it a go and join the volunteers in this great project. It would be interesting to know how many of these plants and mammals are still on the Reserve. Ed)***

## Foods of the Forest May 10<sup>th</sup> 2017

This event, which is organised twice a year by the Ranger Service, was extremely popular this year. About 40 of us gathered to commence our early evening walk around the Reserve led by Community Ranger Raj. As well as talking about edible plants, he gave us some background to the Reserve as many people had never visited before.

On the plot set aside for a miniature flower meadow, redampions were flowering and ox-eye daisies about to flower and the tall stems of Sorrel. The young leaves, which look rather like a dock, could be used in salads to give a slightly tart, fruity taste. There were also plantains; their seeds are edible if roasted. Tender young Hawthorn leaves and bramble shoots (stripped of their skin and spines) can also be used in salads as can ash keys, the fruit of the ash tree. Raj said you need to eat these leaves with good quality balsamic vinegar and some olive oil - they livened up the usual tasteless green salads we eat in this country!

Raj pointed out the flowering wild garlic (ransoms) with their white flowers and strong smell that are quite common on the Reserve. They have a much less pungent taste compared to cultivated garlic. The leaves of garlic mustard can also be eaten. Nearby were woodruff with little white florets and multi-pointed leaves which have a vanilla like flavour - their name relates to the Tudor ruff like appearance of the flowers. Young nettle shoots can also be eaten if boiled beforehand.



Wild garlic growing alongside the canal path

Bluebells are not edible, but it was interesting to hear that their roots were once harvested and used to make laundry starch for Tudor period ruffs.

Beyond the Warden's Centre the fertile soil has been banked up to leave the sub-soil exposed. The low level of fertility of this soil means it provides an ideal medium for a bee pollination garden of native wild flowers that would otherwise be outcompeted by grass and other vigorous plants on fertile soil. This garden has been sponsored by the charity "Bug Life".

The pale yellow flowers of the cow slip, a primula family plant, are not edible. The name is a Victorian change to replace the vulgar country name for them due to their habit of growing on cow pats. Dandelions (from the Norman French "dents de lion" - lion's teeth - derived from the numerous points along their leaves) do have edible leaves and flowers. The dried and ground up roots can be used as a substitute for coffee. Beware of eating too much - dandelions were also used by herbalists as a powerful diuretic - hence the old country name for them of "wet-the-bed". A European plant, it has spread to become a worldwide nuisance weed.

Elder flowers can be used to flavour drinks but can also be dipped in tempura batter and cooked in oil to give a delicious dish. Another drink can be made by collecting silver birch sap which is quite sweet and can be fermented with yeast and sugar to produce a fizzy cordial.

Two nuisance plants on the Reserve from Asia are Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam. Raj said the knotweed is edible - just remove the skin and use in a salad. As a child he used to eat the similar Himalayan knotweed with salt and chilli powder as a snack on his way home from school.

Plants growing in shade are often poisonous such as "lords and ladies" or "cuckoo pint" with its brown flower stem and later red berries. Poisonous plants are often dark green. However, many have their uses; the poisonous yew, now the basis of a very successful cancer drug, and the leaves of Comfrey which were used to ease the pain of sprains and promote healing by binding them around the sprained area.

## Foods of the Forest continued

Other inedible plants were used too. The silverweed (like a very low growing strawberry that is found by the Taff Trail) was used to cushion feet in shoes or boots and give them a better smell. It was reputedly introduced by Roman soldiers and is still found near Roman roads and forts.

The humble horsetail (the fossilised remains of ancient ones form most of our coal seams in South Wales) was used for scouring armour and pots. However it is very abrasive and will cut unprotected flesh easily. You need leather gloves when using it.

By now we had returned to the area of the Warden's Centre and we inspected the new wooden sculptures of a butterfly's lifecycle beside the pond - funded by "Bug Life". Raj pointed out the "Mary Gillham" bog garden reminding us she was a very distinguished naturalist who had been the driving force in encouraging the Council to set up a nature reserve at Forest Farm. He had learnt much of his Welsh natural history by helping her to collect specimens for her book on the natural history of the Rhymney Valley.

A mobile phone call informed us that food was ready. Lovely taster samples awaited us; homemade bread with wild garlic soup, followed by nettle spanakopita – a crust-less tart of cooked nettles, onion and feta cheese, followed by mint, lentil and quinoa salad, mixed green salad and a dessert of sweet woodruff pannacotta with dandelion and lemon cookies. There was elder flower cordial to drink. It was as delicious as it sounds! Thank you to Raj for leading the enjoyable and informative stroll and Nic for the lovely food.

**Albyn Austin**



NewLink Wales are providing 2 day free wellbeing training courses.

Its for people who are committed to gaining wellbeing skills, and who want to raise awareness of environmental issues by giving back to their community.

Gain a City and Guilds Personal Development Qualification.

Volunteer in an environment based placement\*.  
Opportunity to engage in a beekeeping experience.

**Contact: Tel 029 2052 9002**  
**volunteering@newlinkwales.org.uk**

*\*Volunteers will be welcome to join  
the Friends of Forest Farm volunteering sessions  
2nd Sunday monthly 10 a.m.*

## Newsletters in Colour

As you know, we have from time to time produced the hard copy of the newsletter in colour (email recipients get it in colour anyway). It always looks so much better to have the photographs in colour!

At the last AGM, the pros and cons of doing this on a regular basis were put to the membership. Basically, as ever, it comes down to cost. It's not just that the costs of the colour editions are higher of course, it's the increase in postage when the subscription has remained at £5 a year per household for very many years. To continue colour editions would take about 66% of your membership fee whereas black and white take up about 40%.

At the AGM it was agreed to produce one colour edition a year and use that to incorporate more of the brilliant photos we have of the Reserve.

**Sheila Austin**

## Reserve Update

Its May already and the Reserve is coming back to life in more ways than one!

Hopefully you have started to notice some of the work that we have been doing on the reserve in recent weeks. Paul has already mentioned the new sculptures showing the life cycle of a butterfly that are by the pond which have been funded by Buglife. This is just the start of some of the projects which are starting to come together to improve the centre area.



*The 'old' pond, now prepared and ready for lining as you see. This is where the Dragonfly sculpture will be.  
Photo: Gareth Stamp*

The old pond in front of the Farm house has at last been rediscovered after years of being over grown and not holding water. A new liner has gone in and the base for the dragonfly sculpture has been put in place (in case anyone is wondering, that is what the strange metal pole is for that has appeared in the middle of the pond). All we need now is the water! Work around the edge will continue to improve this area so please be patient, it will all be worth it in the end!

Further work is continuing to improve the car park and picnic area, combined with signage to help visitors find their way round easier.

Last week saw a large number of volunteers descend on Forest Farm over the week to help us with a number of projects. They came from organisations such as the Welsh Assembly, Lloyds Bank and linked up with some of our regulars from Innovate Trust's Greendays project. 130 volunteers in total worked with us over the week.

We have people counters on order at the moment which will be installed at entrances so we can start to see the picture of the sites use and understand how many people come here. This is all part of building the picture to support larger funding applications. We all know it's a busy, well-loved site but we can't prove it at the moment!!

**Nic Hutchinson (Parks Conservation Officer)**

## Coach trip for the Friends of Forest Farm

**Ross on Wye and  
The International Birds of Prey Centre, Newent**

**Saturday 24th June**

At the time of writing, there are still some spare seats on the coach trip.

So if anyone is interested in further details please read previous newsletter or contact Duncan on Cardiff 20626111 or email him at [duncan3@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:duncan3@hotmail.co.uk).



## The Modern Story of Orchards and Cider Making in Wales

**Emily Underwood-Lee**

Would you like to try some creative writing about the orchard at Forest Farm? Do you have fond memories of an apple tree you used to visit? Do the pears in your garden taste magical?

Then this **free** workshop run at the University of South Wales might be just the thing for you. Over the course of the morning you will get the chance to think about what stories you have to tell, to have a go at some writing exercises, and to learn the basics of sound recording in order to record your own story. By the end of the workshop you will have:

- created a story
- recorded your story
- been introduced to the principles of recording oral histories and stories.

The workshop is suitable for adults at any level of experience; if you have never put pen to paper then this is a great introduction and if you are a published author or oral historian then this workshop will give you a chance to focus your writing on an area you might not before have considered.

The workshop takes place as part of the 'The Heritage of Orchards and Cider Making in Wales', a two year Heritage Lottery funded project being run by the Welsh Perry and Cider Society in collaboration with the George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling at the University of South Wales. The project team are working to create an archive of oral history recordings and digital stories which capture the contemporary tradition of orchards and cider making in Wales *as told by those whose story it is*. The history of cider making in Wales is currently largely untold, by recording these stories they hope to add to the variety of presentations of the place of Wales, its people, and culture.

In addition to the story workshops and oral history collection the team are also supporting the development of 14 community orchards, creating 4 museum orchards of indigenous Welsh cider and perry trees, and DNA testing trees to preserve Wales' dendrological heritage. To date the team have unearthed 22 new Welsh varieties of cider apple and perry pear tree which are native to Wales.

The workshop will be led by Dr Emily Underwood-Lee and Catrin James from the University of South Wales.

To find out more about 'The Modern Story of Orchards and Cider Making in Wales' visit <http://storytelling.research.southwales.ac.uk/heritagecider/>.

To book your free place on the workshop visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-modern-story-of-orchards-and-cider-making-in-wales-story-workshop-tickets-3474777538>.



*Just one of the trees in the orchard at Forest Farm.  
Photo John Harding*

I passed by the Ty Mawr Road end of the canal today and noticed that the 'garden' area entrance to the Reserve is rather overgrown though there were some lovely foxgloves in flower. I'm told as the tree cover increases this should improve but perhaps a bit of weeding is called for. Any volunteers? Ed

### **Dawn Chorus Walk**

The 29<sup>th</sup> April dawned cloudy but still, so ideal conditions for hearing the dawn chorus. 26 of us assembled at 6 a.m. for the walk led by Community Park Ranger Gareth Stamp. We encountered the first bird at the top of a tree near the Wardens' Centre; a Robin. Gareth remembered there had been one in the same place last year and wondered if it was the same one. Conditions were so good that as we walked round the Reserve it was sometimes difficult for us to pick out the rarer birds above the song of some of the commoner ones - but we got better at it as the walk progressed!



Some of the party watching and listening  
Photo: Sheila Austin

Gareth soon showed his extensive knowledge of the subject by the number of birds he recognised from their calls. He said birds sang at different times of the morning and some such as the Blackcap were likely to be mostly finished, even at 6 o'clock as it had been light from just after five. Birds sang to mark out territory and attract a mate, but also have alarm calls and communication calls. Resident birds such as Blackbirds and Sparrows had gone through this stage in March and were now fledging their first brood. We saw a Sparrow with a fledgling that it was still feeding.

Bird calls are varied; the simple but loud chattering call of the Wren or the double note of the Chiffchaff which gives the bird its name. Others are very complex, some even copying the calls of other birds. The Blackcap, a small brown migrant bird with a black patch on the head of the male, has a lovely complex flute-like call that rises and then falls (Gareth's favourite!).

The small brown and inconspicuous members of the warbler family such as the Blackcap and the Garden Warbler all have very complex calls, while some showier birds e.g. the Bullfinch have rather simple calls. The tiny Goldcrest has a very high pitched trill which Gareth heard but many of us couldn't make it out with other birds calling nearby. A Goldcrest appeared and closely inspected the group, giving us an excellent view of this tiny bird which generally lives up in the trees.

Last year we had heard the complex call of the Willow Warbler from one of the hides, but not this year - either they had finished calling that day or hadn't arrived yet on migration. The still conditions meant we heard the calls of a lot of other birds. As well as those already mentioned we heard the Song Thrush, the Mistle Thrush, the Nuthatch, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long Tailed Tit, Dunnock, Wood Pigeon, Chiffchaff, Blackbird, Sparrow, Green Finch and the distinctive yaffle of the Green Woodpecker. By 7.30 the number of calls was reducing and we made our way back to the Warden's Centre where the Friends had laid on tea, coffee or squash and toast, bacon or egg rolls and biscuits. Gareth was able to answer questions as we tucked into our refreshments.

***Albyn Austin***

### **Membership**

401 members!! We are still the largest 'Friends' group in Cardiff especially as the 401 represents households and not all the actual number of people at the addresses. Thank you to all our members for your continuing support.

You may like to know that 14 volunteers deliver approximately 170 newsletters; 50+ are posted to members and over 200 receive a copy by email.

***Pauline Fisher***  
***Membership Secretary***

Having looked at the plans drawn up by Velindre NHS Trust, the Committee feel **on balance, and taking into consideration all that has gone on before**, that this is the least worst option. This plan is using the same area of land as that given permission to build on in 1995 - apart from the access road at the Asda end of the site - this is the first time building on this part of the Reserve has been proposed. (see below)

As with other 'stakeholders' interested in the site, Velindre have shared and discussed their plans at this informal consultation stage with the Committee. Our role has been to find out what the plans were and to put forward our concerns and suggestions to mitigate the environmental impact of a new hospital development in order to protect the Reserve. For example, the access road has been a major concern especially when its route initially was mid way across the land. After consultation with us and others, it now comes in further along the Asda road and runs nearer the top of the railway cutting. Consideration is being given to the environment in the planning and layout, and we feel we need to continue to engage constructively with Velindre to minimise the impact of the development on this environment.

Being sympathetic to the need for a new cancer centre and their focus on a 'better' healing environment does not blind us to the loss we feel for this special piece of land, nor detract from our determination to monitor the progress of this scheme. After the tendering process, the appointed builder will put forward their actual, detailed plans to the Planning Committee and that will be our opportunity to look closely at the proposals and make our comments. This will be from the Committee, (who have had the chance to hear the views of the members) and of course, individual members can and will express their own views via the planning consultation process.

At the time of writing, this pre-planning application has yet to go to the Planning committee. Velindre have announced an extension to this stage of the consultation i.e. until the end of June.

The Friends Group "was formed to contribute in whatever way possible to the protection and development of the Glamorgan Canal Local Nature Reserve and Forest Farm, and to promote the study of flora and fauna in their natural habitat." and we do take this seriously. We will be looking closely at the actual plans once they are available and certainly will formally raise our concerns/objections as and when we feel they are needed.

***The Friends of Forest Farm Committee***

## Events June - mid September 2017

DATE	EVENT
Sun 11th June 10.00 - 13.00	<b>Friends Volunteering Event.</b> ALL WELCOME Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch CF14 7JJ
Sat 17th June 10.00 - 12.30	<b>Nature Ramble.</b> Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see (and hear) the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them.
Sun 18th Jun 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives</b> for children aged 8-12 <b>Pond Dip and Big Bug Hunt, Llanishen Park</b> For more details email Gareth at <a href="mailto:gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk">gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk</a> or phone Community Rangers on 029 2044 5903
Sat 1st July 11.00 - 14.00	<b>Moth and Butterfly Day. Led by the Rangers.</b> find out the differences between moths and butterflies. discover what moths have been caught, then explore for butterflies and day-flying moths. Bring a lunch for a picnic. Wardens Centre Forest Farm CF14 7JJ FREE

## Events June - mid September 2017 cont'd

DATE	EVENT
Sun 9th July 10.00 - 13.00	<b>Friends Volunteering Event.</b> ALL WELCOME Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch CF14 7JJ
Sat 15th July 10.00 - 12.30	<b>Nature Ramble.</b> Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see (and hear) the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them.
Sun 16th Jul 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives</b> for children aged 8-12 <b>Wildflower identification at Hailey Park Meadow</b> For more details email Gareth at <a href="mailto:gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk">gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk</a> or phone Community Rangers on 029 2044 5903
Sat 22nd July 14.00 - 15.30	<b>Dragonfly Discovery at the Glamorgan Canal.</b> Join the Wildlife Rangers and the Friends of Forest Farm for a walk through the Reserve and along the Glamorgan canal and discover the dragon and damselflies that live there. Meet at the Wardens Centre CF14 7JJ. FREE but donations welcome.
Sat 5th Aug 14.00 - 16.00	<b>History and Wildlife of the Glamorgan Canal.</b> A gentle stroll to look at the social and natural history of this fascinating site with the Community Park Rangers. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm. CF14 7JJ. FREE
Sun 13th Aug 10.00 - 13.00	<b>Friends Volunteering Event.</b> ALL WELCOME Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch CF14 7JJ
Sat 19th Aug 10.00 - 12.30	<b>Nature Ramble.</b> Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see (and hear) the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them.
Fri 8th Sept 20.00	<b>Bat Walk.</b> Just bring a torch and wear some sensible clothing and footwear please. Cardiff Park Rangers will bring bat detectors and help you discover the bats feeding around the Reserve. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm. CF14 7JJ
Sun 10th Sept 10.00 - 13.00	<b>Friends Volunteering Event.</b> ALL WELCOME Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch CF14 7JJ
Wed 13th Sept 18.00	<b>Foods of the Forest.</b> Take a pleasant stroll round Forest Farm Reserve and discover some of Mother Nature's tasty treats ethos time of year - then taste some of nature's delicious delicacies. Meet at the Wardens Centre CF14 7JJ. £4.50 per person
Sat 16th Sept 10.00 - 12.30	<b>Nature Ramble.</b> Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see (and hear) the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them.
Sun 17th Sept 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives</b> for children aged 8-12 <b>Wild Poetry at Forest Farm</b> For more details email Gareth at <a href="mailto:gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk">gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk</a> or phone Community Rangers on 029 2044 5903

Published on behalf of The Friends of Forest Farm and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve by Mrs Sheila Austin, 1 Heol Gwrgan, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF14 1PP Tel: 02920 614245 email: [editor@forestfarm.org.uk](mailto:editor@forestfarm.org.uk)

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