



Friends

of FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK
and GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Issue No: 113 September 2019

website: www.forestfarm.org.uk

Postcode: CF14 7JJ

Hides on the Reserve

We are very grateful indeed to those who have shown their support in practical and financial ways in response to the fire that devastated the Llyn Brwynog hide on the Reserve on 10th August.

Like you, we are angry, sad, and so disappointed that time and money spent maintaining the hides over the years is wasted.

We are determined to replace it as soon as possible. On 15th August, members of your Committee met with the Manager and Rangers directly responsible for the Reserve to discuss ways forward. All options are being explored, including costs of course. We are meeting again in 2 weeks to discuss the options.

Our preference is to replace it with a more fire proof structure, possibly metal, and they're not actually cheap. Then there is the cost of a proper foundation and concrete base, etc. We also need access for the disabled. We really want to replace both hides, since the existing second hide is in poor condition and also vulnerable to the same fate.



Photo: Jon Wallis

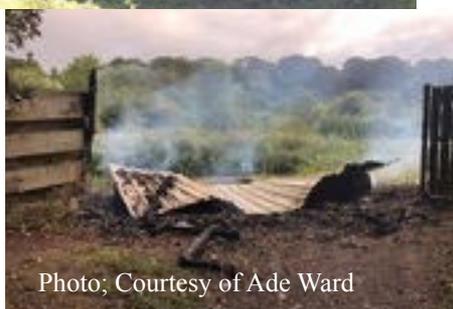


Photo: Courtesy of Ade Ward

The 'before' picture (left) was taken after yet another volunteer effort to maintain the hide, and was finished in May this year.

I expect you will have seen in the local press and on Social media the result of the fire that utterly destroyed one of the bird hides on the Reserve. It appears to have been arson.

The Council have a notice ready for the entrance to the hide to explain the position.

Independently from the Friends Committee, Cllr Mike Phillips set up

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/FriendsOfForestFarm

Funds raised at the time of going to press, was £1910.

Now, some *very good news!* **£60,000** grant from the **Network Rail Greater West Programme.**

Biodiversity boost for Forest Farm

Biodiversity is getting a boost at Forest Farm following a successful bid for funding that will see a range of habitats at the popular nature reserve enhanced and restored.

Read all about it! Page 10



Friends of Forest Farm Open Day - Saturday October 5th



FREE. Lots of fun and activities,

10.00 - 16.00

for **all** the family, including pond dipping, apple pressing and willow craft.

Refreshments available. Parking.

Look out for posters on site, in libraries and further information on our Facebook page.

Editorial.

Hello Friends, and welcome, especially to new members - I hope this edition gives you a flavour of what goes on at Forest Farm. It is very sad that one of the first issues you hear about is the result of vandalism and arson. We are not giving in. We hope you are all encouraged by the wealth of support which shows how much the Reserve is loved and enjoyed by so many.

The Reserve is used for very many activities, school visits, bat walks, bird watching, photography, nature rambles, volunteering and special events like our Open Day on 5th October. and Foods of the Forest (11th September). Do look at our Events (pp11/12)

The articles, photos and talks demonstrate the great variety the Reserve has to offer (Ranger's report pp 3/4) and the level of maintenance and support it needs to maintain its biodiversity. The 60k grant (see p10 for the detail) is truly a welcome boost - and an encouragement to the Rangers and Friends and volunteers.

I have included an article (pp 6/7) about walking in Forest Farm in the 1970's - pre the Friends group - an interesting insight to 50 years ago!

Thanks, as ever to all our volunteers and contributors - where would we be without you? Special thanks to Committee member Duncan Hockridge for all the coach trips for us. Some of the Committee have served for more than 20 years, so it's great that Anthony Matthews wants to join us. Does anyone else want to? You'd be more than welcome and can come on a trial basis if you wish. There is always plenty to do ...

Sheila Austin

Evening Talks

Don't forget that we have our winter evening talks coming up; November, January, March and then a shorter one at the AGM in April.

The first is:

**"The Glamorgan Swift Project"
by Alan Rosney**

Wednesday, November 20th at 7.30p.m.

**at Ararat Centre for the Community,
Whitchurch CA14 1PT**

ALL WELCOME

Whitchurch and Rhiwbina Festivals

Sadly, this year, the Committee didn't have enough people free to come with our stand to either the Rhiwbina Festival or the Whitchurch and Tongwynlais Festival.

We have done this for several years in order to publicise the Friends and the Forest Farm Country Park and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve - to give it its full title! It is still surprising that some local people do not know about it.

Apologies if you were looking in vain for us!

Deadline for articles for next newsletter - 8th Nov 2019

See back page for contact details

Contents	Page	Contents	Page
Ranger's Report	3/4	Cardiff Cross Rail/House sparrows/ Velindre	9
Summer Coach trip/s	4/5	60K grant to boost biodiversity/ July Nature Walk	10
Walk in Forest Farm - report form 1970's	6/7	BBQ/New Committee member	11
Volunteering	8	Events	11/12

Reserve Report June to August 2019

By Ranger Alec Stewart

I am not going to mention anything about recent events with the hide and instead will focus on all the good things that have happened since the last report.

June seems a long way away now, but my last report ended with me looking forward to the Open Day. Well it came and went, with great weather and plenty of people attending and experiencing what Forest Farm has to offer. The day was enjoyable and very rewarding. This was only possible by the hard work put in from everyone in the organising and running of the event. My thanks go to all the Rangers and volunteers who helped and a special thank you to the Friends who helped with the organising, and of course who ran and staffed the now famous 'pop up Café.' A lot of hard work which really made the day a success.

Work wise around the Reserve it is a time for keeping paths clear, and general maintenance of fences etc. Anything that does not infringe on the wildlife, as this is the time to enjoy the Reserve and marvel at the diversity of plants, invertebrates, birds and mammals that call this place home. Work was carried out in the feeder canal by the Cardiff Rivers Group to remove rubbish, cut back some encroaching scrub and remove balsam. Also, the 'Scout Field' had its usual visit from groups such as Greening Our City and the Forest Farm volunteers along with some foreign exchange students from Italy and Sweden. This was to keep the **Balsam** and **Bracken** under control.

One of the biggest jobs has been carried out by a contractor Rob Thomas, who has installed new fencing on all our meadows we use for cattle grazing. This has been made possible due to a grant which was funded by Network Rail. We had to remove the cattle due to someone cutting the fences and the cattle escaping. This has led to problems managing the meadows correctly. Hopefully, we will now be able to reinstate grazing and keep our meadows in good condition to encourage plant and wildlife diversity. Extra gates have been added for equipment access as we now have strips around the edge of the meadows which will be allowed to grow without being grazed. These strips will be managed on a rotational cutting regime to

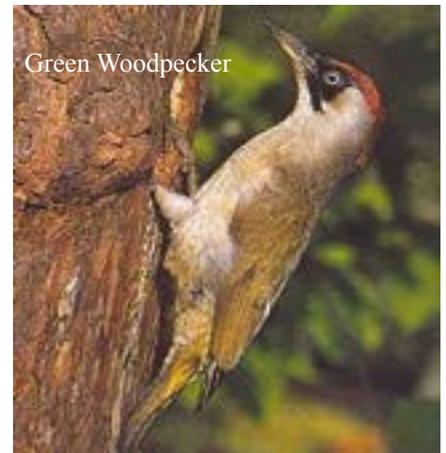
encourage and increase the bio-diversity of our meadow areas. Also, as part of this funding we arranged a pollinator recorder training course delivered by Liam from Buglife. More of these training initiatives will be arranged as part of the Network Rail funding programme.

The annual volunteer BBQ went really well this year with very good weather and a very generous donation of meat from the local butcher Martin Player. This went down very well (literally) with over 50 people attending.

On the wildlife side of things plenty has been happening. The **Swallows** fledged 3 young, **Reed Warblers** were seen carrying food to the nest in the reeds and a family of **Green Woodpeckers** were stars for a while in front of the second hide. The **Kingfishers** came back with juveniles through June and put on a good display from both hides. They have subsequently gone quiet and I think they may be rearing a second brood so we may see more youngsters around soon.

Of special note, **Ivy Broomscape** was seen near the pond behind the Wardens' Centre; it is locally scarce and we think is only one of two sites in Cardiff. Also, seen and photographed by Alan Cripps, a **Keeled Skimmer Dragonfly** (photo next page) - a rare occurrence for us on this site.

Continued on P4



Green Woodpecker



Ivy Broomrape
Photo: Gareth Stamp

Along Parish Road, we had 15 **Broad Leaved Helleborine** flowering and also along the canal towpath, a single **Solomon's Seal** put in an appearance. There was also **Bee Orchid** on the Longwood side, with **Common Spotted Orchids** all over the Reserve and our first **Marsh Orchid** showing up in the scrape area to the left from the second hide. The weather has suited many plants with a rich and luxuriant growth everywhere particularly along and in the canal with the bankside and emergent vegetation doing really well.



Keeled Skimmer Dragonfly
Photo; Alan Cripps

This is good news in encouraging the many invertebrates that use these plants for food or shelter. Indeed, we had good numbers of **Beautiful Demoiselle** which need the emergent vegetation to lay its eggs into. Of course, encouraging the bottom of the food chain leads to more diversity throughout the rest of the chain and the bigger more visible apex predators such as **Herons, Kingfisher and Otter** all benefit from the availability of prey.

I think that is about all for now, its pouring with rain as I write so time to put my waterproofs on and check all the watercourses drains and ditches. Its feeling like autumn already!

Our Visit to the National Botanic Garden of Wales

July 6th 2019

A cloudy, warm summer's day to enjoy an outing to Llanarthne.

I knew it would be a well organised coach trip as Duncan's are always reliable. You must also be



prepared for some testing of the grey cells with a quiz, and jaw exercise as the bag of sweets is passed around en- route Our journey was pleasant and we arrived in good time.

Margaret Thomas and I just slowly walked up toward Middleton Hall enjoying the variety and profusion of colours and shapes in the beds of flowers. Watching the children playing with the water stream which cascades through the walkway always makes me smile.

An Antiques Fair was taking place that day with many stalls of various antiques and collectables which made for some distractions. We made our way to Principality Hall. From there is a panoramic view of the Twyi valley and the folly, Paxton's Tower. The footings of part of the main house, Middleton Hall, built for William Paxton, and destroyed by fire in 1931, are clearly visible

I am always keen to visit the Apothecary Hall as it is something of a trip down memory lane for me. There are some items among the collection donated from my father's pharmacy.

Lunchtime and our food order was delivered to us in cardboard boxes with wooden cutlery, which were all compostable - quite impressive - but needed a technique to eat.

Wandering through the impressive domed glass house, the walled garden and the butterfly house all contributed to the day's enjoyment. Then we had quite a climb up to the new Birds of Prey Centre. We watched a Kestrel, Long Eared Owl, 3 Kites, 2 red and 1 black and a wonderful Golden Eagle put through their routines, and a fly past over our heads.

After a cup of tea and some Bara Brith, we were ready for our homeward journey when an extensive list of raffle prizes was drawn for the lucky travellers - and a prize for the winner of the quiz awarded.



First trip - 22 June 2019.
Both photos taken by Duncan.

All these events are so well arranged by Duncan and proceeds contribute to the funds for Friends of Forest Farm to enable the committee and volunteers to carry out essential maintenance and enhance this gem of a green space for us all to continue to enjoy.

The day was more poignant as Duncan announced it would be the last annual trip he would arrange. The first was in 2004 (see below); each year it is part of the Rhiwbina Festival Programme.

I know all of us who have travelled to the various and interesting destinations would like to thank him

and say how much we have enjoyed and appreciated his hard work,
A hard act to follow - who will take up the challenge?

Rosemary Waters

(I am very grateful to Rosemary for this lovely report. I only asked for it this week! Ed)

From Duncan Hockridge

I have lost count of the total number of trips I have done. I think that it all started in 2004 when we went to the Wetlands at Llanelli, so it will have been every year since. I am attaching that group photo which I always take. I can see Mary Gillham on the far left of the second row.



I am usually always missing from these photos, being the photographer, but I see I am in this one as well. It must have been the coach driver who took it.

During the last 15 years, we have also included our trips as part of the Rhiwbina Festival programme.

This year will definitely be my last organised trip, so as ever I am hoping that someone else will take over. I am of course available to give advice to whoever takes over

(That will be 19 trips (Duncan has arranged 2 in the last 2 years as the have been so popular). They have been organised for the Friends of

The Friends of Forest Farm Summer trip - 2004!
It was the first trip organised by Duncan Hockridge and was to Llanelli Wetlands. Duncan is actually in this photo (far right) and we recognise Mary Gillham (2nd row far left). Do you recognise anyone else?

Forest Farm - and others and have always been meticulously planned as Rosemary said. I am sure I say this on behalf of all the Friends who have so enjoyed these trips, a huge thank you to Duncan. Yes, he is 'a hard act to follow' but it would be great if next year Duncan was there as a passenger! Ed)

Taken from "4 Nature Walks in Glamorgan" by THE GLAMORGAN COUNTY NATURALISTS' TRUST
Walk 3 Glamorganshire Canal Nature Reserve, Cardiff

(Article submitted by John Harding. (Text in italics is ours). Probably printed in the early 1970's, if anyone knows the exact date could you let us know?)

Ordnance Survey one inch sheet 154.
Distance: about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile each way.

Travelling north from Cardiff on A470 cross the Eastern Avenue-Western Avenue by-pass at a large junction. Immediately after this, fork left down Manor Way (A4054) through Whitchurch. Velindre Road runs off to the left beside a hospital. Cars can be parked in Velindre Road where houses stop, or drive on taking right fork and turning right into road alongside the "feeder", park on roadside near the bridge.

Walk northward along the towpath between the Glamorgan Canal and the Melingriffith Feeder.

The Glamorgan Canal, completed in 1794, was constructed to provide improved transport for iron ore, coal and limestone, which was previously carried overland by cart or packhorse. It was twenty-five miles long, stretching from Cyfarthfa near Merthyr to the mouth of the River Taff, and benefitted the iron and coal industry of the Taff Valley at a critical stage in its development, contributing to the rise of Cardiff as a port. Traffic rapidly increased until the coming of the railway in 1840/41. For some time, the canal continued to serve as a useful supplement during industrial expansion but, by the 1890's was little used upstream from Pontypridd. When Cardiff Corporation purchased the canal in 1943, the carrying business was closed down, and today almost the only section holding water is that between the Melingriffith Works and the Cardiff to Merthyr road near Tongwlnlais.

This quiet backwater is now managed as a nature reserve by Cardiff City Parks Department, and it provides a sanctuary for birds and a haven for wild plants, including some rare aquatic species. The freshwater habitat is also valuable to students of the invertebrate fauna. We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation of the Parks Department in the preparation of these notes.

Part 1. Melingriffith Feeder A few yards north of the feeder bridge, the towpath proceeds over a footbridge at the point where the canal enters the Melingriffith Feeder. The effects of man-made pollution can be clearly seen: the Feeder, like the River Taff, is almost black in colour, light is not able to penetrate, and the water is devoid of any but microscopic aquatic plants. This is due to the great quantity of suspended solids, coal and other industrial matter that has been discharged into the water, and the absence of sufficient oxygen. If you watch carefully on a warm day you may see bubbles of gas bursting at the surface. This is hydrogen sulphide with some methane and indicates that anaerobic bacteria (they don't need oxygen) are breaking down organic sludge on the bed.

The canal, on the other hand, supports an extensive growth of algae and aquatic flowering plants, particularly in places where plenty of light penetrates below the surface. This shows that the water contains the nutrients and oxygen necessary for their growth.

The provision of a fresh supply is aided by the slight slope of the canal bed which leads to continuous circulation of the water. While walking along, you may be able to identify water forget-me-not, Canadian pondweed and water starwort, and see the free-floating lesser duckweed on the surface, with its single root taking nutrients from the water.

Along the bank between the feeder and the canal, you may see the rather exotic looking Himalayan Balsam with its spurred pink flowers looking very much like a policeman's helmet, which is its common name.

2. In this part of the canal, plant growth is slightly inhibited by the shade cast by trees overhanging the eastern bank. Fallen debris from the trees has built up on the canal bed and on it grows one of Britain's few freshwater sponges, *Spongilla lacustris*, either in flat lobes or with finger-like branches. Although this is an animal it looks green because minute plants grow inside it.

3. A few hundred yards along before coming to rustic seat on the left hand side, there is an alder copse in an area which is under water in winter, and retains its swampy character even in summer. The alder is well adapted to this type of habitat. The wet ground under the trees is dominated by stands of yellow flag iris, sedges and flote grass, while the drier margins support (cont'd next page)

golden saxifrage, hemlock, water dropwort, marsh woundwort, marsh marigold and wood bitter cress.

Trees on the opposite bank of the canal look as if they are covered by lianas, but the long stems are traveller's joy, which is spreading out over the canopy of the trees. Traveller's joy, seen only on lime rich soils, has fluffy fruits and is sometimes called old man's beard.

On the sides of the canal, is a belt of narrow-leaved water parsnip and branched bur-reed, while in the middle are colonies of yellow water-lilies, associated with water starwort and narrow-leaved pondweed. Lesser duckweed and a rare liverwort called *Riccia fluitans* float on the surface while algae such as *Spyrogyra* occur under water.

On the wooded bank and further up beyond Forest Lock, you can see how sedge and trees such as alder and willow will gradually invade the canal from the edge if not controlled, and tend to dry it out.

4. Forest Lock (now only a weir). Here spiked milfoil, with some Canadian pondweed and stonewort become important. Towards the sides of the canal, water plantain and bur-reed grow in shallow water. Arrowhead is easily recognised by the characteristic leaf shapes with seasonal variation; the young leaves produced in spring are soft strap-shaped structures well adapted to life under water. Those produced next usually have oval and lie along the surface or produce just above. Finally the typical arrowhead shaped leaves emerge into the air.

At Forest Lock there is a choice of routes. Either cross the canal and return through Long Wood (paragraph 7 and 8). Or continue along the towpath to Middle Lock and return the same way (paragraph 5 and 6). The wood path may be muddy and slippery and is steep in places; the towpath is even, with overhanging vegetation.

5. Beyond the lock the towpath bank is walled and maintained, but the opposite bank is obscured by vegetation (willows, dogwood, guelder rose) encroaching on the canal. Look out for moorhens skulking among the plants at the edge and kingfishers in overhanging branches. *Towards Middle Lock, the water generally changes colour to a cloudy yellow. This is probably due to silt, washed from roadworks above Long Wood, which takes a long time to move downstream and accelerates the silting up of the canal.*

On the bank beside the towpath grow gipsywort, with narrowly dissected leaves below the water-level and broad, rather nettle-like ones above, as well as specimens of meadowsweet, purple loosestrife and woody nightshade. Damsel flies and dragonflies hawk their prey over the water, settling occasionally.

Looking up the canal, you will detect Castell Coch between the trees on the eastern side of the gorge that carries the River Taff through the limestone hills which form a rim to the South Wales coalfield.

6. Middle Lock This Lock has been walled in two places, but normally the water flows about an inch deep over the wall. Several moss species, ivy, the trailing ivy-leaved toadflax (with its mauve flowers) and the hart's tongue fern, have established themselves on the wall. On the side of the canal bed are some plants of hemlock water dropwort, gipsywort and water plantain.

Further up, near the remains of an old railway line, road construction will alter part of the canal and further pollution from silt may occur.

7. East of Forest Lock, the path crosses an old field, which is being invaded by bracken, bramble, red campion and other herbs, All these tend to increase when grazing and trampling cease.

8. Long Wood In this woodland, situated on a steep bluff, beech, ash, oak and several other tree species form a high canopy and in its shade grow saplings of holly, ash sycamore, elm, alder and hazel. Growth of shrubs, bramble, honeysuckle and young trees, is particularly vigorous under holes in the canopy made where trees have fallen. On the ground, in spring before the canopy casts full shade, bluebells, wild garlic and primroses are prominent among tufted hair grass and the wood melick. Springs at the foot of the bluff make the ground near the canal swampy and water-tolerant. Trees grow there.

Look out for tree-creepers, great spotted woodpeckers and other birds. These are typical of deciduous woodland in which dead, rotting and fallen trees are left as they would be in a natural wood.

Volunteering on the Reserve - Jon Wallis

9th June 2019

Around 40 volunteers from the combined forces of Friends of Forest Farm and Cardiff Rivers Group spent Sunday morning clearing trees and blockages from the Melingriffith Feeder, building dead hedges along the edge, and pulling up Himalayan balsam from the banks.

Removing trees and blockages from the feeder helps to increase the light (which encourages a wider range of plant life) and restore the flow (which improves water quality).



Care is taken to leave habitat that might be used by the otter that's now known to visit the feeder and nearby canal. (Spraints and other evidence of its presence have been found in the past week or so.)

Sadly, the habitat management work was slowed down by the need to remove some of the staggering amount of rubbish that's still in the feeder, despite several litter-picking events over the past few years. No fewer than 26 bags of rubbish (mostly drinks cans and bottles) were collected — and this was on an event that wasn't even focused on litter-picking!

The dead hedging will help to preserve sections of the feeder's edge that are becoming badly eroded (which can then lead to trees growing on the bank falling into the feeder).

Over time, pulling up Himalayan balsam will both stop it growing along the feeder (where it completely crowds out everything else) and prevent it spreading elsewhere. It can take several years of repeated pulling, but it can be beaten — areas where it's been removed over the past couple of years are now much clearer.

Lots more photos in the Cardiff Rivers Group Flickr album at <https://www.flickr.com/.../cardiffri.../albums/72157709003762587>



July

Eight volunteers spent the morning clearing overgrowing plants and trees from the bridle paths along the Melingriffith feeder and Taff Trail. Some volunteers also took the opportunity to pull up some Himalayan balsam along the way.

Aside from the satisfaction of a job well done, their reward came in form of a very tangy homemade lemon drizzle cake (thanks Eszter!).



Photos from Jon and Eszter)

(A huge thank you for all your hard work. It looks fun though doesn't it?)

Cardiff Cross Rail

Members may have seen recent news articles concerning Cardiff Council plans for improving transport in our ever growing city.

One of their plans is to build a circle line between Coryton and Radyr. This has been a long term project for the Council which now has been placed within an overall strategy for the city.

Unfortunately, the Council leaders decided not to share their plans with us before publishing their document and one month later have not replied to our request for more information.

What does this mean for Forest Farm?

The railway cutting is part of the Reserve and if the Coryton line was extended all the trees would have to be removed for the overhead electrical power supply. Access to the cutting would obviously cease.

Also planned is a Park and Ride at junction 32 of the M4. We do not know where this is to be located but I have noticed surveying marks between Longwood drive and the M4.

We also do not know where the two railway lines will join and how they will cross the River Taff.

As soon as we know what is planned we will keep you updated.

Martin Chamberlain
Secretary

House Sparrows by Rosemary Waters

I hope this year that I have helped in increasing the population of house sparrows, which sadly, like many species, are in decline.

I have lived in the bungalow in North Cardiff for nearly 19 years and very infrequently seen a house sparrow on the feeders. This year, however, I have had a small 'flock' visiting. There are 2 squirrel proof feeders which I fill with a mixture of sunflower hearts, dried mealworms, crushed peanuts and suet nibbles.

These little attractive brown birds have been very territorial, discouraging visits from the tit family that regularly come. Some wood pigeons, blackbird families, a song thrush, robin, dunnocks and even a little mouse have been grateful for the discarded contents on the grass while the sparrows search out their favourites.

Now it is quiet, they have all gone. I presume the broods have all fledged and they are foraging elsewhere.

Top of my Christmas list will be a sparrow community nesting box which I hope will encourage them to return next year.

Have you been thinking?

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, in March 2020, it's 30 years since the Friends were formed!

One idea is to publish a booklet on the history of the Friends (which would be sold to raise money). **Please let me know what you think?*** If we are going to do it, we need to get going.

I am sure lots of you long standing members have memories and photographs, so get the 'little grey cells' working! Newer members could maybe contribute why they joined, what their impressions were, and their ideas for the future.

Sheila Austin

*My contact details are at the foot of P12.

New Velindre Cancer Centre

The team working on the building of the new Velindre Cancer Centre has concluded discussions with Asda on the detail of access to the new site.

The team continues to work with the Welsh Government on the business case and on a plan to engage with the public further.

Chris Lines

Velindre - Communications and Engagement Consultant

Biodiversity boost for Forest Farm

(continued from front page)

Woodland, scrub, ponds, wetlands, orchard, hedgerow and grassland at the site will all benefit from a £60,000 grant from the Network Rail Greater West Programme, a biodiversity offsetting scheme that supports the delivery of habitat, planting and enhancement projects on third party land.

Working with partner organisations Buglife and Plantlife, the project also includes plans to survey the site and train a pool of volunteers to assist with future surveys so that the impact of the work on the flora and fauna found at the site can be measured.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Cllr Peter Bradbury, said: "Protecting and enhancing Cardiff's green space is one of our key priorities and the work that will be carried out as a result of this funding will have a really positive impact on the diverse range of habitats at Forest Farm, as well as improving the recreational value and visitor experience at the site."

Environmental Manager for Network Rail, Emmanuel Deschamps, said: "It is fantastic to be able to support this project which will boost a range of habitats at this much-loved nature reserve. Projects like this are invaluable and help to maintain and improve green spaces for the benefit of people and wildlife."

The Forest Farm site provides an important connectivity corridor, linking in with B-Lines (a Wales-wide connectivity corridor for pollinators and other wildlife) meaning the benefits for biodiversity generated by the project could reach beyond the borders of the 59.68 hectare site.

(My sincere thanks to Jan and Elaine for agreeing to lead the walk as I was on holiday. Elaine kindly did this report which I requested a few weeks after the event. Ed)

Nature Walk July Forest Farm Nature Reserve

by Elaine Olsen

As we set off, to the left of the Warden's hut, we startled a Green Woodpecker out of the gardens (which were showing a lovely display of Cornflowers, Red Campion and Comfrey, among other wild flowers). Above the Taff at Radyr footbridge, there was a handful of Swallows and Swifts though their numbers seem to diminish year on year. **

There was a Heron on the canal and we got a lovely (close) view of it. Many bold baby Rabbits were seen at the bird hide among the Buttercups (see right).

We also saw some rather tame scruffy Great Tits (probably young) at the hide by the Wardens' Centre, then at the side of the path by Forest Farm allotments, we got a good view of two young Song Thrushes rustling in the undergrowth. The meadow along the path by the allotment towards the feeder was in full flower. There was ripe fruit on trees by the second allotment, sadly I had forgotten my step ladder!

Finally, the ever elusive Kingfisher crossed the Taff as I was walking home.

*(** Our first evening talk is on Swifts - November 20th 7.30 p.m. See Events. Ed)*



BBQ

On July 10th, as a 'thank you', the Rangers hosted a barbecue given by the Council at Forest Farm Nature Reserve for the **Friends Forum** (representatives of all the Friends groups in Cardiff) and other volunteers. There were also representatives there from the **RSPB, Buglife** and **Innovate Trust**.

This year, the meat for the barbecue was donated by **Martin Player, a Whitchurch butcher**. The Rangers cooked and Nicola Hutchinson, their Manager (also Conservation Officer) had prepared the salads and desserts. All the food was delicious and much appreciated. Special thanks to Martin Player for his very kind contribution.

About 59 people were there and we were very fortunate to have lovely, dry and sunny weather for a very enjoyable evening.

Last but definitely not least!

Well, we had some good news about the grant, but the Committee also had some good news last week.

We are delighted that **Anthony Matthews** has offered to join the Friend of Forest Farm Committee. We look forward to working with him to continue to try to meet the objectives outlined in our Constitution.

It seems timely to mention three of those objectives:

"To protect conserve and enhance Forest Farm Country Park as a place of freedom, recreation and enjoyment for the long-term benefit of all sections of the community.

To increase & protect the biodiversity of the park

To make it safe and more accessible to all parts of the community."

Apart from the immediate issue of the hide/s, the Friends of Forest Farm have major ongoing 'challenges'; the new Velindre Cancer Centre (which looks as though some progress *might* have been made with Asda) and the Canal. The latter has hardly been mentioned in the newsletter in recent years, but it is still a live issue with the Committee.

If you want to join Anthony and us on the Committee, do get in touch. We'd love to hear from you!

Sheila Austin

Events September - December 2019

DATE	EVENT
SEPTEMBER	
Sun 8th Sep 10.00 - 13.00	Friends Volunteering Event. ALL WELCOME. Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre, Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ
Wed 11th Sep 18.00	Foods of the Forest. Take a pleasant stroll around Forest Farm Country Park with the Community Park Rangers and discover the tasty treats Mother Nature has in store at this time of year. Round off the walk by tasting some of the delicious delicacies. Meet at the Warden Centre, Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 7JJ. £4.50 per person. Wheelchair accessible
Sun 15th Sep 10.00 - 12.00	Cardiff Wildlife Detectives for children aged 8-12. Photography workshop at Forest Farm. For more details email Gareth at gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk or phone Community Rangers on 029 2044 5903
Sat 21st Sep 10.00 - 12.30	Nature Ramble. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them ALL WELCOME.

Events September - December 2019 continued

DATE	EVENT
OCTOBER	
Sat 5th Oct 10.30 - 3.30	Friends of Forest Farm Open Day! FREE. Fun for all the family. lots of activities. Refreshments available. Parking and toilets. More details later on Facebook/posters ALL WELCOME.
Sun 13th Oct 10.00 - 13.00	Friends Volunteering Event. ALL WELCOME. Details will be on our our Facebook page or Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre, Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ
Sat 19th Oct 10.00 - 12.30	Nature Ramble. Cardiff and District RSPB local group have it in their programme for this day. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them ALL WELCOME.
Sun 20th Oct 13.00 - 15.00	Cardiff Wildlife Detectives for children aged 8-12. Fungal foray at Cathays Cemetery. For more details email Gareth at gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk or phone Community Rangers on 029 2044 5903
NOVEMBER	
Sun 10th Nov 10.00 - 13.00	Friends Volunteering Event. ALL WELCOME. Details will be on our our Facebook page or Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre, Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ
Sun 10th Nov 13.00 - 15.00	Autumn Art Attack at Forest Farm. Create a piece of Autumn art from leaves, nuts and berries to take home - autumn pictures and mobiles are favourites. All children must be accompanied by an adult. £1.50 per child. Meet at the Wardens Centre, Forest Farm Rd CF14 & JJ
Sat 16th Nov 10.00 - 12.30	Nature Ramble. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them ALL WELCOME.
Sun 17th Nov 10.00 - 12.00	Cardiff Wildlife Detectives for children aged 8-12. Create your own wild art and music at Forest Farm. For more details email Gareth at gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk or phone Community Rangers on 029 2044 5903
Wed 20th tNov 19.30	The 'Friends' evening talk. "The Glamorgan Swift Project" by Alan Rosney. At Ararat Centre for the Community, Whitchurch, CF14 1PT. Refreshments available. ALL WELCOME.
DECEMBER	
Sun 8th Dec 10.00 - 13.00	Friends Volunteering Event. ALL WELCOME. Details will be on our our Facebook page or Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre, Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ
Sun 15th Dec 10.00 - 12.00	Cardiff Wildlife Detectives for children aged 8-12. Conservation task at Forest Farm, followed by hot chocolate. For more details email Gareth at gstamp@cardiff.gov.uk or phone Community Rangers on 029 2044 5903
Sat 21st Dec 10.00 - 12.30	Forget about Christmas for a couple of hours. Come along for a Nature Ramble. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ for a gentle ramble around the Reserve to see the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them. ALL WELCOME.

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