

# FRIENDS

of FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK  
and GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL  
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

NEWSLETTER  
31  
FEBRUARY 1991

## Editor's Forum

Greetings!

It came to mind to look back on the history of the Friends of Forest Farm for those members who have joined recently.



Almost eight years have passed since our launch meeting, which took place on the 14th March 1990 at Bethel Chapel vestry and brought in thirty nine families as members who expressed enthusiasm for the project.

The Steering Committee was established at a Forest Farm meeting on the 28th March. Those who still remain are Mr Ted Edwards, Mr Dennis Davies and myself. The Technical Advisors, who are still with us as members, were Dr Mary Gilham and Mrs Mairead Sutherland; Mr Mike Wiley was always ready with support. The Committee were fortunate with replacements, who have done sterling work since to progress the development of the Country Park.

We regret that our "Two for the price of One" "Countryside on your Doorstep" offer cannot continue. This is due to the Council's dates of issue being out of sequence with our Newsletter.

Postal deliveries also are not possible. However, the County Council inform me that the next issue in March should be available for your collection from many Libraries, Sports Centres and the County Hall. Information may be obtained by phone:

Cardiff 873186

Ken Patterson

## WHITCHURCH HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

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### MEMBERSHIP

The final Family Membership numbers for the current session has reached **236** – the highest since the formation of the **FRIENDS** in 1990. Thank you all for your continued support.

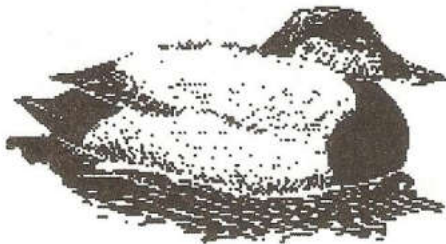
Our new year (1999/2000) will shortly be on us. A Membership Renewal slip can be found on the A.G.M. notice enclosed with your Newsletter. Once again we have kept the annual subscription at **£3** for Family membership and **£5** for Firms and Societies.

Noel Gale (Membership Secretary)

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# RESERVE NEWS

As the **WETLANDS** continue to mature and diversify they become even more interesting. This winter the ponds held birds such as ...

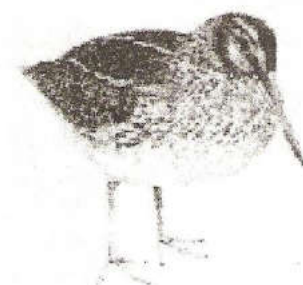
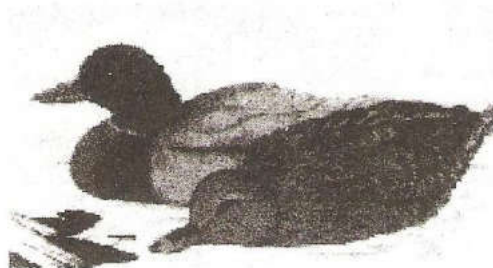


◆ A male **Pochard**. This is a very handsome diving duck with a red head and a silver/grey body. It needs deeper water to enable it to feed.

◆ A few **Teal**, a very much smaller dabbling duck.

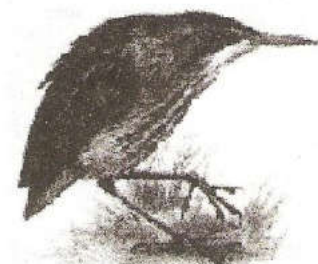


◆ Flocks of over fifty **Mallard**, the males sporting their bright breeding plumage and already jostling over females.



◆ The shallower scrapes showed good numbers of **Snipe**, up to twenty four at one time. The snipe is a very cryptic wader, and extremely well camouflaged. These birds are said to be *crepuscular* – i.e. they feed mainly at dawn or dusk, preferring to lie up during hours of daylight. You can approach them to within a few feet before they take to the air and zig-zag away. If you can see twenty four of these waders, I would estimate that up to a hundred would be in residence.

◆ The best unconfirmed sighting came just before Christmas from one of our voluntary wardens, **Nigel Proffit**. He and his wife had been sitting in one of the observation hides overlooking the Wetlands, when they saw a large brown bird emerge from the vegetation on one of the scrapes. As soon as Nigel got his binoculars on it, he knew it was a **Bittern**.



These very secretive birds move about during the hours of darkness. This one must have been passing through when it saw the water's reflection and came down.

(continued on **page 3**)

**A**lthough the vast majority of visitors to the Reserve are responsible and take their litter home, some inconsiderate people continue to treat the Reserve as a rubbish bin.

On **Sunday 28th March 1999** a Litter Pick will take place at Forest Farm to remove those annual weeds –

**SPRING CLEAN  
at  
FOREST FARM**

Crispus Packus, Drinks Canus and the perennial problem, Bigus Macus.

This will get the Reserve ready for the many people who visit and enjoy the Reserve during the Spring and Summer. This is not strenuous work and will take no more than three hours. Meet at the Warden's Centre at **10 a.m.** where all equipment will be provided.

For more information please contact **Martin Chamberlain** on **01222-691421** or via my EMAIL : [martin.chamberlain@virgin.net](mailto:martin.chamberlain@virgin.net).



## RSPB PHOENIX

**A** start was made in November with the rebuilding of the flight of steps that leads from the east end of **Longwood** Drive down to canal level in the middle portion of the Reserve.

The three periods of work to date have completed a piece of lead-in path and twenty seven steps. There remain fourteen or fifteen steps to be rebuilt over the next couple of months. Slight changes in alignment, and an extra step here and there, will make the flight much easier to negotiate – especially for the less nimble among us.

In early January, **nest boxes** were checked, and cleaned where necessary. Four boxes were missing, and will be replaced.

Hugh Harrison and Pauline Linck

## NEW VIEWING AREA

The new viewing area alongside the old hide has been a great success. Mike and Paul are to be congratulated on designing and constructing this new amenity. Anyone who wants a quick look and does not want to go into the hide is catered for, and they can bring their dogs with them.

An added bonus is the height of the viewing aperture, which allows a much better view of the left hand scrape where the **Snipe** are feeding.

E.O.E.Edwards

**(RESERVE NEWS continued from page 2)**

These beautiful birds are now very scarce, due largely to the destruction of their preferred reedbed habitat. It goes to show that, if you get the habitat right, you never know what may turn up.

Meanwhile, our **Watch Group** have been busy constructing twenty nesting boxes to replace old and damaged ones. The voluntary wardens will be putting these up before the Spring.

**Mike Wiley** (Countryside Warden)

## WHITCHURCH HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

**I**n December of last year the Planning Committee again rejected the latest plan submitted by the **Cardiff Community Health Trust** and, if this is ratified by the full Council, then it will result in a **Public Enquiry** starting in February.

This means that we are back where we started in June 1995, because the plan that is to be the subject of the appeal is Plan No. 1. In this plan, 3.8 acres of the Hospital Meadows would become part of the Reserve; one hundred houses would be built on the rest.

Over the last four years we have negotiated and argued through to Plan No. 5, in which the Reserve would have 11 acres, and approximately forty houses would have been built on the widest part of the meadows near the public path from Hollybush and extend 150 yards into the meadows, leaving approximately 400 yards as it is.

This compromise we were prepared to accept, rather than risk losing all of it at a Public Appeal, but we will have to abide by the decision of the Council.

Initially we will supply the Legal Department of the Council with all the information that we used during our appeal against Plan No. 1, and also inform them of the progress made over the last four years. After that we will have to wait and see how things develop, and act accordingly.

E. O. Edwards

PS. The first Plan was amended and resubmitted in 1996 under the same number, so there is some doubt as to which plan we will be opposing. At this stage we have to concentrate on the first plan.

Our **INDOOR PROGRAMME** continues in

**Tabernacle Church Hall, Merthyr Road, Whitchurch at 7.30 pm with ...**

**WEDNESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY**

An illustrated talk on the **Flat Holm Project** by **Mr Kevin Hogan B.Sc.**

**WEDNESDAY 14TH APRIL**

The **Glamorgan Canal and Nature Reserve** by **Mr Ted Edwards.**

This meeting will be followed by the **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the ...

**FRIENDS of FOREST FARM and  
GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL LOCAL NATURE RESERVE**

Thanks to Robin Sotheby for the layout of this Newsletter.

Published on behalf of the Friends of Forest Farm and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve by

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