

**FRIENDS**  
 OF FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK  
 AND GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL  
 LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

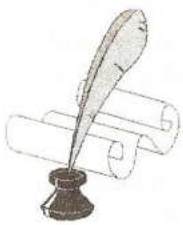
NEWSLETTER  
 35  
 MARCH 2000

*Editor's Forum* BY KEN PATTERSON

A warm welcome to new and old members to this first issue in the Millenium Year!

I am delighted to introduce **Calum MacIntosh** manager of the BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) as a contributor with news of developments at Forest Farm. Representatives from our committee are now participating in a steering group which will help with the way forward.

On a personal note, I am pleased to report a volunteering partnership formed between the **RSVP** (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme) and **BTCV**; posters have been issued. We are looking for mature people who want to get involved with conservation at Forest Farm Conservation Centre. There are many and varied opportunities for retired and senior people to help out and enjoy with the back-up and support of **RSVP** and **BTCV** membership.



Contact or phone:

**RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME**

**CSV HOUSE**  
**WILLIAMS WAY CARDIFF CF10 5DY**  
**CARDIFF 390477** (or myself on **627077**)

Or:

**BRITISH TRUST FOR CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS**

**FOREST FARM**  
**WHITCHURCH CARDIFF CF14 7SH**  
**CARDIFF 626660**

From the Membership Secretary  
 NOEL GALE

The Family / Group Membership numbers for the current season has reached **244** (last year's final figure stood at 237). Thank you all for your continued support.

Our new year (2000/2001) will shortly be on us. A membership renewal slip will be found on the A.G.M. notice enclosed with your Newsletter. Once again we have kept the annual subscription at **£3** for Individual and Family members and **£5** for Firms and Societies.

**8 HEATH PARK DRIVE**  
**HEATH**  
**CARDIFF CF14 3QH**  
**TEL: 02920-756771**

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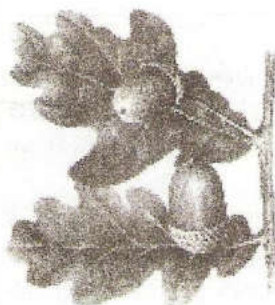
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# Reserve News

By  
**Mike Wiley**  
Countryside Warden

**A**n unfortunate incident occurred on Christmas Day regarding a couple out walking their dog along the canal towpath. The dog somehow managed to get itself stuck in the culvert overflow from the lock. The Fire Brigade were called out but they were unsuccessful in their attempt to rescue it. The dog's body was finally recovered when we broke in through the top of the two hundred-year old culvert using a JCB. The entrance to the culvert has now been fitted with a grille in order to prevent this sort of tragic accident recurring.



Moving on to something more cheerful, at the start of the New Year the **Forest Farm Watch Group** were busy planting a millenium oak. The tree was a splendid specimen, a large standard over three metres high. It can be seen in the middle of the bottom meadow. Alongside the tree a brass plaque was set in the ground to commemorate the planting. As oaks can reach a very old age it may even see in the next millenium. Who knows?

The voluntary wardens were also in action over the New Year giving the Reserve a much needed litter pick – the ASDA superstore and McDonalds contributing much of the rubbish. I have complained to these companies on numerous occasions with little result. Some of the litter consisted of plastic bread wrappers brought along by people bringing bread to feed the birds, then throwing the wrappers thoughtlessly into the hedge. You would think that these caring people would know better.



Recently while carrying out a bird count on the Reserve a large dog **Fox** was seen to be working one of the scrapes. It helped me with my task by putting up 62 **Common Snipe**, two thirds of which had been hidden from view.



Meanwhile the work programme on the Reserve continues with the **Cardiff Conservation Volunteers** coppicing in the railway cutting and removing overhanging branches which are shading the canal. The **BTCV** (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) have been thinning in the plantations. Shortly we hope to commence a de-silting project on the canal, starting in Tongwynlais.. I will keep you informed as to the outcome of this work in the next newsletter.

## Feeding the Birds

**S**adly, some unthinking visitors to the Reserve are using the bench seats for feeding birds. Damp weather produces a soggy mess, and whatever the weather fouling by the birds makes the seats unusable.

Last year the Friends spent an average of £60 per seat upgrading them. There are many visitors to the Reserve who both need or want to use seats – if they are clean.



If you see people putting food on the seats, could you please have a quiet word with them.

Dennis Davies



## Good News at the Farmhouse



**1999** saw the environmental charity **BTCV** begin to develop the Farmhouse and gardens at Forest Farm for the public. The idea was to transform the outdoor areas into an exciting **Conservation Centre**, providing a lively and educational gateway to environmental action, and the **Nature Reserve**. The good news for the year 2000 is a grant to take that further – and we've already started work.

As a landfill site operator (Lamby Way), Cardiff Council pays taxes into a fund for environmental improvements. The local fund is administered by the Prince's Trust Cymru, and is called the **Local Community Environmental Action Fund**. Just before Christmas we heard we had been successful in our grant application.

A steering group is now at work, with representatives from BTCV, Friends of Forest Farm and the Council wardens for the Reserve / Country Park. Together we are planning and monitoring activities. As needed, there is room on the group for specialist local organisations like the Young Ornithologists.

The works planned include:

- disabled / pushchair access footpaths throughout
- more bird and bat boxes
- different boundaries like stone walls and hazel hurdles
- an area for open training days in woodland skills
- more wild flowers for the butterflies and bees
- herb beds to dye fabrics, and for medicinal use – and even ...
- a plan to pump water from the Farm well using solar technology

Everyone can join in the project. Local volunteers are helping out on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, doing anything from gardening to building new footpaths. But we also need help in the office, translation English / Cymraeg, advice on designing information boards and basic things like circulating publicity.

For further details, please come to the Farm, or ring Calum on ... **624900**

Calum MacIntosh

BTCV / Gwarchodwyr Cefn Gwlad



### **New Appointments**

Mr Mike Clark is now Operations Manager, Parks & Burial Services.

Mr Peter Gillard is Head of Service, Highways & Parks

## Small Mammal Investigation

An interesting piece of research taking place on the Reserve is a 'Small Mammal Investigation', carried out by **Richard Dodd**, a final year zoology student at Cardiff University.

Instead of the usual live trapping methods, his technique will be to use short lengths of various diameter open-ended plastic tubes. The tubes will contain lengths of double-sided fabric sticky tape, which will collect a couple of hairs from any mammal as it passes through. The individual hairs will then be matched with hair identification photographs held in a databank at Cardiff University.

A copy of the results of this and the 'Bird Ringing' study (reported in the last Newsletter) will be forwarded to us.

Mike Wiley



### RSPB Phoenix Group

January 2000 saw the group start an outdoor conservation programme.

*Saturday 22nd - a group of us braved the inclement weather and tackled a litter pick on the Longwood Drive section of the Reserve. I lost count of how many black bin bags were filled. A lot of rubbish seems to generate from McDonalds' customers!*

*Sunday 30th - the group was again on the Reserve for the 'Big Garden Birdwatch'. This survey can be undertaken anywhere, as you might not have access to a garden. The highlight of the morning was 17 Snipe seen from one of the hides.*

*Our next Phoenix visit will be on March 18th at Longwood Drive at 10 a.m. The job will be coppicing. If you would like to be involved in some practical work, why not join us? Extra hands are always welcome.*

Hugh Harrison

### Next Meeting

**Wednesday 12th April - 7.30 pm**

There will be a slide-tape show presented by Mr Ken Patterson entitled 'Whitchurch in Living Memory' in Tabernacle Church Hall, Merthyr Road, Whitchurch. It will be followed by the A.G.M.

### MILLENNIUM LITTER PICK

**FOREST FARM**

**9TH APRIL 2000**

As many of our visitors will have noticed, we continue to have problems with litter. It does not help that we have a fast food outlet and a supermarket close to the Reserve whose customers continue to use the Reserve as a rubbish bin.

Whilst this litter does not look very nice to us it is also dangerous for the wildlife we are trying to protect. Therefore, for the fourth year running we have arranged a litter pick starting at 10 a.m. from the Warden's Centre.

The work is not very strenuous and will take between two and three hours. All equipment needed will be supplied. If you or anyone you know is able to help, please come along.

Martin Chamberlain **02920 - 691421**

[Martin.chamberlain@virgin.net](mailto:Martin.chamberlain@virgin.net)

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Published on behalf of the Friends of Forest Farm and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve  
by MR KEN PATTERSON 12 MANOR COURT WHITCHURCH CARDIFF CF14 1BJ TEL: 01222 - 627077