



# FRIENDS

OF FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK  
AND GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL  
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Issue 42

December 2001

## Editor's Forum

by Ken Patterson

*Once again the Festive Season is fast approaching. Despite the current gloomy news, I'm sure that good morale will prevail, enabling us all to celebrate the occasion with family and friends each in our own way.*

*On behalf of the Committee, Robin Sotheby and contributors I send Very Best Wishes to all our members at this time.*

## From a letter from

*Annette and Dave Lockwood*

Due to Foot and Mouth, illness and holidays we haven't been up to Forest Farm for about twelve months, and we've really missed it.

We hope to start walking as soon as I am able to. Winter is nearly as favourite a time as Spring for us.

We enjoy all the articles in the Newsletter. I am enjoying the Melingriffith articles. How I wish my father was alive now; he would have been able to tell so much about it. He was ninety one and a half years old when he

died five years ago, and he worked there on the crane amongst other things, and was a brilliant engineer. I can remember Dad talking about a pump (would it be?) he built in a cut off the Canal, that gave the Lock Keeper electric power in his cottage. I wish I'd listened more carefully and could remember more.

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**H**alf-term meant the Phoenix Group was out and about on the Longwood Drive section of the Reserve. We had two tasks to tackle – putting up Nest Boxes and cleaning existing boxes. Also to make a start on clearing what used to be the Meadow area, and has now become an overgrown bramble patch due to lack of mowing. Both jobs got under way – the group splitting into two working parties.

Scrub clearing was soon progressing well, as also did putting up nest boxes. The task was slightly hindered by dense undergrowth – mainly young saplings. Unfortunately the rain set in by mid-morning, so we called it a day.

Our next meeting on the 24th of November should allow us to complete these jobs.

Hugh Harrison

T-shirts Polos Sweatshirts ... with Friends of Forest Farm logo.

Good quality

Raglan sleeve Price: £16.50

Children's: £10.75

Pauline Linck

029-2061 7012

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership for the current year stands at 221 Family and 2 Group members.

Membership forms are available for any friends or relatives of members wishing to join the 'Friends'.

N.J.Gale 029-2091 5665

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## Reserve News

by **Mike Wiley**  
**Countryside Warden**

In the last Friends' Newsletter I ended my article by saying that I was looking forward to a nice warm and dry Autumn. Well, it's certainly been warm. I am writing this article on November 5th, and it's a beautiful sunny day. Butterflies, especially the **Red Admiral**, and Dragonflies are still to be seen flitting about the Reserve, making the most of this Indian Summer. At home, our Daffodil bulbs are already starting to push up out of the soil, and many flowers are still in bloom. They say that winters are starting later and finishing earlier. I wonder what the cost of this will be, as there is always a price to pay. Let's hope it's not too high.



I have received several interesting bird sightings recently from nature reserve users. Among them was one of a **Bittern** seen on October 22nd on the High School Old Boys' rugby pitch which backs onto the Reserve. This bird was seen standing with several Herons on one of the pitches.



Another was of a **Honey Buzzard** seen flying over the Reserve on Sunday October 28th, possibly travelling through on its migration route to Africa, where it over-winters. This is not an easy bird to identify but certain characteristics, like the long tail, smallish head and long wings, give it a certain 'jizz'. Unfortunately I was not able to see them myself. I would be grateful to receive any unusual bird sightings you have from the Nature Reserve.



This Autumn our Watch Group will be taking part in the second national **Dormouse** survey. (The first was back in 1993). As last time, it has been organised by English Nature and its Welsh counterpart CCW (Countryside Council for Wales). The main aims are ...

- To raise public awareness.
- To highlight the plight of this rare little animal.
- To gather information about the number of dormice in Britain.

If anyone would like to take part in the survey they should contact CCW.

### RSPB



### WILDLIFE EXPLORERS

Unfortunately, since the beginning of September the number of our regular members has dropped from fourteen to seven.

Despite this we have had some very good and varied evenings, including an excellent illustrated talk from the Glamorgan Badger Group.

Any children aged 7 – 12 who are interested in joining our group – please give me a ring.

We meet in Whitchurch every fortnight on a Wednesday evening – term time only.

**Sue Walters** (Registered Leader)

**2075 1760**

## FOOTPATHS AND INFORMATION BOARDS

**M**ike Wiley, in his report in the last Newsletter, mentioned that the Friends had undertaken to fund the work on the footpaths; the estimated cost would be about £1000.

To help meet this cost it was decided to go for outside funding.

The Principality Building Society operates a Partnership Awards scheme which is designed to provide grants to projects that serve the diverse communities within Wales.

Since the purpose of the work was to make the L.N.R. accessible to wheelchair and pushchair users, thus allowing ALL the opportunity of enjoying the peace and beauty of this haven in a busy city, it was felt that we were serving the community. We therefore put in a request for £500 – the friends contributing the rest.

We were delighted to receive a letter informing us that our entry had been successful and we had been awarded £500. We are eagerly waiting for the cheque because the bills have arrived and need to be paid.

We are very grateful to the P.B.S. for the very generous award which will help pay for the work which was carried out by an average of seven volunteers over five days; they were supervised and very ably assisted by the Countryside Wardens.



Also in the last Newsletter, Ken Patterson expressed a wish to see more signs and information boards at strategic spots.

We have put up signs at the five entrances, at a cost of nearly £500 each; three have been vandalised, for which the repairs have cost £300.

I don't think that should deter us from putting up more information boards – something on the following lines.

- At the South entrance a board on the green with the history of the Melingriffith Tinplate Works which, with its supplier the Pentyrch Iron Works, employed 1500, some of whom are around today. The iron bridge has one of its side rails curved, the other straight. Why?
- A bit further up Sunnybank cottages, one of the first block of flats in Wales built to house the workers at the Works. Was it two rooms per family originally (someone must know).
- Then Sheepbane Woods, looking like a mediaeval swamp but full of interest.
- Forest Lock. There were stables and a café, where the bargee could have a cup of tea while awaiting his turn to pass through the lock.
- Further up, two cottages, where in 1956 I bought cabbage plants, but there is no trace of them now – except a box hedge.

If people would write down what they remember of these places we could bring the places to life and make it full of interest to go hand in hand with the natural beauty of the Flora and Fauna.

Is there anyone who has the enthusiasm to take on this project?

E.O.Edwards

### GUIDED WALK and INDOOR MEETING

**Winter Birds of Forest Farm**      Sunday December 16th 10 a.m.      Led by **Mike Wiley and Chris James.**

Meet at the **Warden's Centre, Forest Farm Road.**      Bring binoculars if possible.      Free      3 km      2 hours

**Through the camera lens of a Cardiff City Tour Guide**      Wednesday 13th February 2002      7.30 p.m.

Illustrated guide around Cardiff by **Mr Arthur Bowen** showing the beauty of Cardiff  
and also giving an insight on the reactions of visitors on their first visit to the Capital of Wales.

**Tabernacle Church Hall, Merthyr Road, Whitchurch.**

### RSPB / FRIENDS WALK

This 'Walk' on the first Saturday of every month continues to be as popular as ever, with an average of fifteen turning out. There is a steady turnover, so we see a goodly number of members during the year.

Last year we recorded 63 species. One notable absence was the Kestrel – the first time since our records started. The new Reedbeds are drawing in the Warblers and Buntings to nest, while the feeding station is attracting a good number of birds over the Winter.

The thirty to forty **Snipe** on the left hand scrape arouse a lot of interest, while the **Kingfisher** is nearly always around. We comment on every bird we see so that any newcomer is soon able to identify our local birds..

It is a very leisurely and informal stroll on level ground, so do join us and enjoy the fresh air and a chat.

E.O.Edwards

### Season's Greetings

Though everything looks dark and grey  
As winter travels on its way  
Let's look for berries red and bright  
And stars that shine crisp clear at night.  
As friends are sought with chat and cheer,  
Season's Greetings now and for New Year.

Ken Patterson

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