



# Friends

of FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK  
and GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL  
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

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

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**Wishing you all**

## **A Very Happy Christmas**

Let's start this edition with something seasonal.

Right is a wintry photograph of the Forest Farm 'giant' on the Reserve, adjacent to the car park at the top end of Forest Farm Rd.

Below is an article we published in December 2000 written by the then Countryside Warden, Mike Wiley.



A seasonal photo of the Forest Farm 'giant'. It was actually taken in March this year.

Photo: John Harding



**The  
Holly  
and  
the Ivy**



In the depths of winter when nearly all the trees and shrubs had lost their leaves, the HOLLY and the IVY would stand alone. These plants have long been associated with magical properties.

Branches of holly and ivy would be cut on Christmas Eve, intertwined, and placed inside and outside the house (usually over the entrance), as is still the custom in some houses today. These decorations would protect the inhabitants over the Christmas period and would be taken down without fail on Christmas Eve - to leave them up would bring ill luck! Sometimes, cups fashioned out of wood would be used, and drinks taken from them as cures for various ailments.

Another plant associated with Christmas is the MISTLETOE, an evergreen semi-parasitic plant. It is usually to be found growing on poplar or apple trees. It is a plant with strong pagan and Druid connections and, when found growing on an oak tree (which is rare), it was gathered with great ceremony by the light of a full moon using a gold dagger. The oak tree from which it was taken was then much revered.

Like the holly and the ivy, the mistletoe was believed to have mystical connections, and was used as protection against evil. Mistletoe was also thought to be a cure for the heart - not altogether wrongly, as it does contain properties for reducing high blood pressure. It was also thought to be an aphrodisiac, and a fertility drug - hence the custom of kissing under the mistletoe!

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

Dear Members,

Where has the year gone? We are already into the Christmas season (in the retail sector anyway) and on the Reserve autumn is almost at an end.

It's been a busy Autumn, not least because of our **Open Day** in October. Read all about it" as the say, on pp 9-10. It's great seeing new people there and I hope that means we increase the support we need for the interest in and protection of this very special Reserve. Not many cities have such an area.

Talking of 'special', we had a rare visitor from Siberia earlier this month - a **yellow browed warbler** and young Tate Lloyd managed to get a picture!

Reports from **Alec Stewart** our Ranger (P3), our Nature Walks (thanks to **Elaine Olsen** for her article P5), show there is plenty to see at this time of year. Volunteers continue to make a magnificent contribution to the routine maintenance and management of the Reserve. As Alec says, the Rangers could not manage without them.

Autumn brought the 'Foods of the Forest' treat (P7) and thanks to Albyn for that article, and it's the start of the evening talks, Do come if you can. The November talk from Plant Life was excellent and there will be a report on it in the next edition... talking of which, its the 2019 *16 page colour edition* (P8).

Last but not least of the contents in this edition, we have a few Committee 'business' matters (P4) in this edition which I hope you will read and respond to.

This is an opportunity for me to thank everyone for their support for the Friends; volunteers, members, not forgetting those who deliver the newsletter and my fellow Committee members, some of whom have 'served' for many years.

*Sheila Austin.*

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*

### Website - apologies

I am sure members will be aware that our website is well out of date. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to access it, due to circumstances beyond our control. Rest assured that we are working on it!

However, we do have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/forestfarmuk/> that we are using to advertise our events — in particular, our monthly volunteering sessions.

### Membership

Membership remains the same; some members have sadly passed away but we have had new members joining via pay pal. A very warm welcome to them.

As you know, everyone who pays their membership via pay pal receives a yearly reminder about their membership - this automatically rolls on if you take no action.

Many other members have elected to have an email version of the newsletter and pay by cheque or cash. They do not get this warning,

If you wish to check, you can contact me on 02920 412586.

Once again thanks to all members for their continued support and I hope you have a happy and healthy festive season.

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

### Deadline for articles for next newsletter - 8th May 2014

See back page for contact details

Contents	Page	Contents	Page
Reserve Report	3	Big Garden Birdwatch	8
'Business' matters	4	Friends Open Day	9/10
Nature Walks	5	Eddie' Smart	10
Friends Volunteer Events	6	Forest Farm Bat Walk	11
Foods of the Forest	7	Events	11/12

## Autumn Reserve Report

Alec Stewart - Ranger

Autumn on the Reserve is always a special time of year filled with colour, light and drama - and always a lot of work. This autumn did not disappoint.

After a very dry summer, the weather changed with a mixture of good, bad and plain dull weather. Early on we ended the late summer with the last of our **bat walks** which was very well attended. Then the hard work started, continuing on the scout field plus the usual **hay raking** of the various meadows. This came to an end and we immediately started on the seasonal **wetland and pond work** to prepare the areas for the coming winter. Everybody got involved from the Friends, the Rivers Group, CCV, Innovate Trust and the rangers and our volunteers. A big thank you to all volunteers who were involved in this and other work on the Forest Farm. It is important and we would not get it completed if it were not for all the help of those involved.

We have had problems this year with the wetland. Due to the dry start to the year and a leak, the wetlands have been very dry! We have endeavoured to fix the leaks, clear channels and pipes and, as I write this, the heavy rain is helping once again to flood the scrapes and ponds and produce a good habitat for our winter visitors.



Collared Earthstar fungus.  
Geastrum triples.

Spotted and photographed by  
eagle-eyed Ranger Gareth Stamp

The wet weather also produced a bumper show of **fungi** on the reserve with lots of species being recorded and an especially nice **Collared Earthstar** found by Gareth Stamp near the car park area. I think this year we have had a particularly good show of autumn colour although now the leaves are falling and it is starting to have that bare winter look.

All the usual wildlife has been spotted with of course the **kingfisher** and **fox** leading the way. Amongst the mixed flocks of **long tailed, blue and great tits. Goldcrest**, our smallest bird, have been seen in good numbers. We were also visited briefly by **a rare Siberian visitor the yellow browed warbler** (<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/yellow-browed-warbler>) which caused some interest from all the birdwatchers.

A male and female **sparrowhawk** have been hunting around the ponds and given some great views to the birders and photographers with a couple of **buzzards** which I think are from this year's broods hanging around as well.

Now the leaves are falling work has been carried out to **coppice** and remove some sycamore understory to allow a little more light in to the woodland floor. Unfortunately, **ash die back**, a fungal disease, has been identified on the reserve and some ash trees will have to be removed. This will happen over the winter period.

The Friends then purchased bulbs such as **bluebell, wood anemones, wild daffodil and snowdrop** which have been planted in these coppiced areas and around the hides and reserve in general.

Well it's time to go; Christmas is on the way - carol service time again!



Photo: Tate Lloyd

We are very lucky to have this photo of a Siberian yellow browed warbler taken on Forest Farm on 10th November. Apparently the light was appalling. I am grateful to my photographer contacts for getting in touch with Tate. Ed

## New Velindre Cancer Centre

We have been in contact with Velindre NHS Trust as they develop their plans for the new hospital after planning permission was granted earlier in the year.

As the newsletter goes to print, myself and John Harding our Chairman have a meeting arranged for the Trust to communicate how far their plans have progressed.

On the same day, we will also be undertaking a site visit to identify on the ground how the plans will be implemented. By continuing our dialogue with the Trust, we hope to ensure that this development has as low an impact on the Reserve as possible.

**Martin Chamberlain**  
**Secretary**

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### **A change in format?**

On Pages 4 and 5, I have done a **2 column** format instead of the usual style. I wondered what you thought about it.

Do you find it easier or more difficult to read?  
Is it a more pleasing layout?

Would you like to change to a 2 column page?

While on the subject of format, what do you think about the **font size or type?**

I currently use Verdana size 10.

Is it too big or too small?

This is size font size 9 - Verdana

My husband is an editor of a railway magazine and they also produce a newsletter. They use

2 column  
Times New Roman - font size 9  
A5 size paper instead of the A4 we use.

Probably most people don't mind about this at all. However, if you do have any views on it, talk to one or one of the Committee or email me:

editor@forestfarm.org.uk

Thanks, **Sheila**.

## A Message from our Chairman

I have been on the Committee of the Friends of Forest Farm now for nearly 19 years, 5 years as Treasurer and coming up to 14 years as Chairman. I now feel it is time to step down and let someone else take over the role as Chairman - or should I say Chairperson.

So at the next A.G.M. in April 2019, I will **not** be putting my name forward for the role of Chairperson, or any other office, but would be quite willing to continue to be on the Committee as an ordinary member.

As we have said before, we are happy for people to come along to our meetings on an informal basis. We would welcome some 'new blood' on the committee (you have to be a member to join the committee).

I will be happy to assist with a gradual 'takeover' and offer whatever help I can.

**John Harding**

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## Our Constitution

Our constitution is the rule book for how the committee operates.

It has remained relatively unchanged since the Friends of Forest Farm were formed in 1990.

The only major change was to make our financial year January to December to enable full accounts to be reported at the AGM in April each year.

In recent years, as new Friends Groups have been formed, they have used a standard Council Constitution.

We are presently reviewing this document and comparing it against our own current constitution with a view of using the standard council constitution in the future.

Any change will require the agreement of the membership and we propose to distribute the draft prior to the next A.G.M. in April 2019 where it will be discussed.

**Martin Chamberlain**  
**Secretary**

**Nature Walks in Forest Farm Nature Reserve**

**October - by Elaine Olsen**

There were about 14 of us altogether and everyone apart from me was a first timer - most unusual.

The very misty start to our walk today seemed to have discouraged the birds. Unusually, when the river is so low and clear, no kingfishers or herons were in evidence on the Taff at Radyr bridge or Weir. Plenty of **ducks** were dabbling, and **cormorants** were flying overhead now and then. A **grey wagtail** was also making its presence known.

Wandering along the bank of the river, no salmon were visible attempting to get upriver today. There was a noisy, mixed flock of **tits** in the tree canopy and among them we heard **gold crests** but foliage was too dense for positive visual identification. A bonus though were the autumn colours reflecting on the river, beautiful reds, oranges and yellows - stunning.

We were joined this morning by members of Cardiff University Ornithological Society, some were quite knowledgeable in the field. Their younger eyes were much more acute, spotting species in the still leafy woodland. We headed past the feeder to the hides. We were told that the kingfisher had made a brief appearance, but we were not lucky enough to spot him.

Feeling sure the canal itself would be more fruitful, we headed in its direction, spotting **robins** and **great tits** en route, which were singing and tweeting merrily enough.

At the canal we met many **ducks** and **moor hens**, (and also an old English sheep dog in gaiters), but kingfishers there were none!

We headed up to the weir, picking out the **call of a nuthatch** on the

way but he kept himself hidden from view. We had a wonderful view of a **mistle thrush** atop a very tall oak and a **wren** was foraging in the undergrowth at the feeder.

On returning to the Wardens Hut we had a look at the orchard and pond where a **nuthatch** was on the feeder.

The walkers dispersed to their various modes of transport and I headed home back across Radyr bridge where my tenacity was finally rewarded. Mr **Kingfisher** was crossing the river with me!

**November - Sheila Austin**

It was a smaller group this time - 7 adults and 2 young children, so we decided to split into two parties and I went with the parents and children; Pauline Fisher accompanied the others.

The weather started off rather damp and quite cold, but it did improve and became sunny later. It was not a day to hang about.

We started off by the hide adjacent to the Wardens Centre. In the short time we were there we saw, **blackbirds**, a **robin**, **blue tits** and **great tits**, a **chaffinch**, a **sparrow** or two and a **pigeon**! From there we went to the pond, the children hoping to see fish, but nothing was stirring.

Walking past the allotments, then the bridge over the feeder, we walked along the path down to the hides (the 3 year old thought it was like a jungle!) Although I had bird seed to put out at various points en route, nothing came to take it. Probably we weren't patient enough!

We **heard buzzards** though as we set off again towards the canal. There, the birds were about and happy to take my offerings. We saw **tits**, **robin** and **sparrow** and also, fleetingly, a **nuthatch**. The children were more interested in the 6 pairs of **mallards** and a couple of **moorhen** in the canal.

I hope they enjoyed themselves and will come again.



Heron poised over the canal.  
Photo: Pauline Fisher

## Friends Volunteer Events September - November 2018

About 12 of us assembled with Ranger Paul on the Sunday 9th **September** to clear ash saplings and brambles growing on the Hospital Fields meadow. The day was dull, but as the morning wore on, the sun came out.

We walked through the Reserve to the meadow while Paul drove the Landrover round with the tools on board. This was a job that the Friends had tackled a few years back but the ash and brambles had regrown. After a safety briefing, we set to work with saws, shears and loppers to clear the ground and stack the accumulated cuttings in piles to be shredded later.

About mid-morning we stopped for a cup of tea or coffee, some biscuits and a natter before resuming work for a bit longer. We had certainly made a dent in the growth but there was still quite a lot left to complete the job. **Albyn Austin**



### October

The rain resulted in a somewhat reduced turn-out for today's volunteer session, but three hardy souls spent the morning planting lots of snowdrops, wood anemones and native bluebells on the 'triangle' at the Forest Farm Rd end of the canal.

Hopefully, there'll be a good show in the coming years.

### Jon Wallis

*(See left for a photo of how the 'triangle' looks mid November. I am looking forward to seeing what comes up in Spring 2019 from this year's and last year's planting. Ed)*

### November

Ten volunteers from the Friends group, plus several university students, spent a gloriously sunny morning (t-shirts in mid-November!) cutting down sycamores in some of the woodland on the nature reserve.

Sycamore is non-native, but now naturalised, having been introduced to Britain either by the Romans or during the 1500s (it's a hotly-debated topic, apparently).



The problem is that sycamore grows quickly, has big leaves and self-seeds prolifically, which means it outcompetes and shades-out other species, and can quickly become over-dominant. So, by removing 'excess' sycamores (saplings and smaller trees), more things get a chance to grow, increasing the biodiversity of the area.

The brush was used to build habitat piles. (John Harding wins the prize for "Neatest Pile"!)

### Jon Wallis

## Foods of the Forest - September 12<sup>th</sup> 2018

About 50 of us gathered at the Warden's Centre to enjoy this autumn treat that has been run in spring and autumn for many years. Wardens Richie and Raj led us out to look at hedgerows near the Warden's Centre to see what could be eaten. **Hawthorn** leaves are edible in salads but best in spring when they are green and fresh. The red berries are also edible, but rather bitter, so can be used to make jam. Though Honeysuckle flowers are edible, the red berries are not. The outer skin of the **Rosehip** is edible but not the seeds and especially not the hairs attached to the seeds. These must not be eaten. The outer skins are again bitter but can be made into a jam or syrup - rich in Vitamin C.

Nearby Forest Farm itself, we were shown the red berries on the **Rowan** or Mountain Ash which are edible but are bitter and best boiled to make jam. **Wild strawberries** were still in flower though most of the blackberries on the brambles had gone over due to our peculiar weather this year. All the nuts had disappeared from a Hazel as well. The tall spikes of **Teasels** were visible. They were once used for carding cloth but Goldfinches adore the seeds so some are grown beside Forest Farm for them.

Walking past the dragonfly pond we spied an apple tree with fallen **apples** and a **horse chestnut** tree with its inedible "Conkers". In the grounds of the old Forest Hall, now the car park, a **walnut** tree was pointed out to us but this year there had been very few nut pods and the birds or squirrels had eaten them. Walnuts rarely reach maturity in the UK as our climate is too cold for them, but pickled walnuts can be made.

Across the road, was a **sweet chestnut** with its long thin leaves and much duller nuts than the horse chestnut, though still hidden in a spiky green outer case.



**Sweet chestnut**  
Castanea sativa  
Photos:wikipedia

Left- [www.aphotoflora.com](http://www.aphotoflora.com)  
Below- [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)



**Horse Chestnut.**  
Aesculus Hippocastanum  
Photos:

Above:- [wag.walking.com](http://wag.walking.com)  
Left:- [northfifeblogspot.com](http://northfifeblogspot.com)



We then made our way to the **orchard** where the various traditional varieties of apple trees are grown – though cooking and cider apples are very tart to eat raw! A **medlar** was also pointed out which has fruit that are a cross between an **apple** and a **pear**. However they have to be stored until they soften when they become very sweet.

**Sloes**, a member of the damson family, were pointed out. They of course can be used to flavour gin but are very bitter to taste. Nearby were some **elderberries** which can be used to make wine, while the flowers can be used to make **elderflower** cordial or elderflower champagne. They can also be coated in tempura batter and deep fat fried. **Acorns** from oaks are also edible; when roasted and ground they can be used as a coffee substitute.

We then made our way back to the Warden's Centre where Nicola had prepared the usual delicious food. There was wild mushroom soup with poppy bread, a flan of goat's cheese, beetroot and walnut, chestnut and tomato loaf, a mixed leaf salad, blackberry cake and chocolate hazelnut truffles with elderflower cordial! As usual recipes were available and despite the numbers there was enough food for all of us. So ended an enjoyable evening.

**Albyn Austin**

## Are you ready to #BigGardenBirdWatch?

26th - 28th January 2019



This January we hope you will join in again with the tens of thousands of Big Garden Birdwatchers planning to take an hour out to relax and enjoy nature.

This much-loved citizen science event is in its 40th year now and the results have shown some striking changes over the years. Without people like you, we wouldn't have this important information, so thank you.

### Take part from 12 December

Go online now to get loads of news, updates and great ideas to get your garden Birdwatch ready. Why not join in the conversation online and tell us how you will #BigGardenBirdWatch.

We do have a pack that you can download online before the weekend. We also have a counting sheet on our website which you can download and use to help you count the birds during the weekend.

We also have a live counter that you can use during your birdwatch and enter your results straight onto your PC / ipad and then when your hour is finished you can click the submit results button.

**[www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch)**

If you want a paper copy of the form, ring the RSPB on 01767 693680 **after** 27th December

### ***Extract from an article from the RSPB website from Adrian Thomas***

The other aspect of preparing for Big Garden Birdwatch is all about hygiene. I don't mind admitting that cleaning out bird feeders is one of my least favourite jobs in the garden, but it has to be done. Only this week, I had a fluffed up Greenfinch grubbing around on the ground under the feeders looking lethargic and out-of-sorts, a sure sign of trichomonosis. It is a fatal disease, and it is transferred via saliva. As it is just one incidence so far, I haven't stopped feeding, but I've moved that feeder to another tree so that any spillage is falling on fresh ground.

But it does mean that it is time to get out the waterproof gloves, a bucket of weak disinfectant and a plunger brush to get the feeders sparkling once more.

*(I have taken this from the RSPB website where there is **lots** more information. Make a note of the dates. Its on for **3 days** (Saturday to Monday) so you I'm sure you can spare an hour for this great survey. Ed)*



### *Friends of Forest Farm - the next newsletter*

Members agreed at the last A.G.M. that we should have one 'bumper' colour edition of the newsletter each year. **For 2019 it is the next edition to be published in March.**

I would welcome **articles** and **photographs** from you. I am sure a lot of you have memories of the area before, and after it was designated a Nature Reserve. Newer members might like to write about what attracts them there, volunteers about about what they have done over many years.

Wouldn't it be great if I had so may contributions I had to hold some over for future editions!

**My deadline is Friday February 8th, contact details on P12**

## The Friends Open Day

6th October 2018

Well, the weather forecast wasn't good - and it was right! Happily though, it improved as the day went on and we got more and more visitors arriving and had another very successful event. We were particularly pleased to see so many young families there, many of whom had not been to the Reserve before.

There was lots to do and see again this year. The **Owls from Festival Park, Ebbw Vale** Owl centre were a great hit. They rely entirely on donations and do such a good job.

For 'hands on' activity there was:

### pond dipping



You can see four nets cast into the pond by enthusiastic youngsters under the watchful eyes of their parents - and the Rangers who always supervise and help with identification.

**pressing** - and tasting the results (you know what I mean, the visitors were tasting - I don't know whether John and Laura had time!)

There is always quite a lot of preparation to do beforehand - from John (our Chairman) putting labels on all the fruit trees in the orchard for people to see, to gathering the apples and getting the equipment ready

All the apples are from our orchard and are all traditional varieties. Some of the trees have been donated (I.e. they have given the Friends money to purchase one of the trees), others have been 'sponsored'. If you are interested in this please get in touch with John Harding.

The RSPB were present with their stand in between the pond and the orchard and reported they too had had a good day. Last but not least, Martin (Secretary) conducted a walk around the Reserve.

What was happening indoors?



### woodworking in the old stable area



Left and below :

Craftsmen from Cardiff and District Woodcraft Club.

The ever popular **willow craft** was with us again thanks to Seren Willow. John and Laura were very busy on the **apple**



continued overleaf

## The Friends Open Day - continued

Diane and Violet were both running stalls with needle craft from natural fleece and woolcraft. There was a good range of their lovely wares for sale which were very suitable for Christmas presents. The knitted items were to raise money for charity.



Cardiff Model engineers had brought along a small model train layout. It was popular last year, so we asked if they would like to come again. As it was opposite the refreshments, it was particularly useful in keeping children (and some adults!) amused while orders were being taken and food and drinks prepared.

Refreshments were available all day and we were busy. Forest Farm Honey was on sale and sold like the veritable "hot cakes". We had extra contributions to our funds from Peter ('the honey man') and Jenny and Steve Turner who, again, gave us a lovely fruit cake with the Forest Farm logo on and some little cakes as well, which were also very popular. Our sincere thanks to them.

As ever, a lot of work goes into organising events such as this. My personal thanks to our Chairman John who bore the brunt of it this year and to Wendy and Pam (wives of Committee members) who help regularly with the food, and finally to a non-committee member Christine who helped us all day!



L to R: Wendy Harding, Jenny Turner and Sheila Austin

We hope you enjoyed the Open Day - see you **5th October 2019!**

**Sheila Austin**

*(All photos by Pam Clarke who dashed around at the the last minute to get a record of the day. Ed)*

*Thanks to Duncan Hockridge for sending this in - he found it on Facebook. It's work (which I have edited for the newsletter) by **Ceri Stennett** (Stan Stennett's son). Ceri was also tracing everything about the people whose names are on the **Whitchurch War Memorial**. It seems appropriate timing with having so recently marked the centenary of the end of the First of last century's World Wars. Ed*

Able Seaman '**Eddie**' **Smart**, RN, died in September 1941 whilst serving as a DEMS (Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships) Gunner on SS Empire Springbuck, a cargo steamer carrying steel and phosphates. It was part of a convoy en route from Cuba via Australia to London. Detached from the convoy, the ship was torpedoed and sunk N.E of Cape Farewell, Greenland with no survivors out of the crew of 39.

Eddie was **born in Whitchurch in 1905** the son of Peter (a railway company labourer from Lydbrook, Gloucestershire) and Charlotte Emily Smart (nee Taylor) who married in Ross, Herefordshire in 1881. Eddie was one of ten children. On the 1911 Census, the family was living at 43, Old Church Road, Whitchurch.

Eddie Smart was married to Violet Irene Andrews of Whitchurch in q4.1926. By 1939 he was living with his wife at **Lock Cottages, Melingriffith, Whitchurch**, working as a tinsplate labourer. They had a daughter, Rhona. His widow died in South Glamorgan in 1993, aged 84.

Memorials: Whitchurch War Memorial. North Left 52. (as H.J.[Eddie] Smart)

### Forest Farm Bat Walk 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018

About 20 of us turned up on a cool evening at the Warden's Centre. Alec and Raj were the Wardens leading the walk. Fortunately, even before we started, a small bat could be seen flitting about near the Warden's Centre which thrilled several children who'd never seen one before. From the frequency of the calls on a bat detector, Alec thought it was probably a Soprano Pipistrelle, one of Britain's commoner bats, though he would need to analyse the calls.

Raj began with a short introduction. Bats are divided into two main types:- those that feed on nectar, pollen and fruit, such as the large fruit bats, and those that feed on insects, or in the case of the tropical vampire bats, mammalian blood. Most of the thirteen hundred or so species are found in the tropics. Britain is near the northern limit for bats and has only 18 species. They all feed on insects and are quite small, the three types of Pipistrelle typically weighing about the same as a twenty pence piece, 5-6g. One of the largest UK bats is the Noctule which is 2½ -3 in (5-7cm) in size and has noisy mating calls in the autumn which people can hear.

Most bat calls are far too high a frequency to be audible to humans. Did you know that many insects can detect the calls and often when they do, just drop straight down to the ground? Some moths can jam bat calls with their own high frequency sounds to prevent the bat catching them.

At this time of year, bats tend to gather together to mate prior to hibernating in a sheltered place, often a crevice in a tree. In the spring, all the mums and their babies often roost together in separate maternity colonies.

I am sure you all know that **bats are a protected species** and must be left undisturbed in the UK, especially when hibernating over winter. Specialist advice must be sought to move them or if found on the ground. If you do have to pick them up, use a towel as they bite and can carry several diseases. There is a Cardiff bat group and a bat rescue service.

Bat detectors were given out so that we could hear the bat's high frequency sound. The call rate increases as they close in on their prey. Frequencies vary from 20 kHz (the maximum we can hear) up to 100 KHz. Noctule bats call at about 25 kHz, while common pipistrelles and Daubenton's bats call at about 45 kHz and Soprano pipistrelles at about 55 kHz.

We set off towards the River Taff. Alec and Raj had powerful lights to shine out across the water to show the bats. There were plenty about, but except possibly for a Noctule, they were all Soprano or Common Pipistrelles. Even down by the Taff we only saw pipistrelles, flying fairly low, but some came very close to us. No Daubenton's bats were seen this year; these fly very low above the water and have been known to even catch small fish.

Unfortunately, it was cold and began to drizzle, so bat activity reduced. We returned to the Warden's Centre after a successful evening with some delighted children (and adults).

*Albyn Austin*

### Events. December 2018 - March 2019

DATE	EVENT
<b>DECEMBER</b>	
Sun 9th Dec 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 Dec 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 the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them. ALL WELCOME.

**DECEMBER continued overleaf**

Events. December 2018 - March 2019 continued

DATE	EVENT
<b>December Cont'd</b>	
Sun 16th Dec 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives for children aged 8-12. Coppicing trees for winter in Forest Farm, followed by hot chocolate.</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
<b>JANUARY</b>	
Sunday 6th Jan 10.00	<b>A Winter Walk around the Reserve.</b> Meet Martin at the Wardens' Centre, Forest Farm Rd, Whitchurch CF14 7JJ. ALL WELCOME.
Sunday 13th Jan 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 16th Jan 19.30	<b>Evening Talk . Subject and speaker TBA. Please look on our Facebook page and watch out for posters nearer the time.</b> Meet at Ararat Centre for the Community, Plas Treoda, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF14 1PT. ALL WELCOME. Tea and biscuits
Sat 19th Jan 10.00 - 12.3	<b>Nature Ramble.</b> 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 Jan 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives for children aged 8-12. Big Family Litter pick around Pentwyn Lake.</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
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	
Sunday 10th Feb 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 16th Feb 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 the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them ALL WELCOME
Sun 17th Feb	<b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives for children aged 8-12. Spotting and identifying wildlife along the Wildlife Explorer Trail in Roath 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
<b>MARCH</b>	
Sun 10th Mar 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Friends Volunteering Event.</b> ALL WELCOME. Contact Martin on 07952 926145. Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd Whitchurch. CF14 7JJ
Sat 16th Mar 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 the wildlife. Bring your binoculars if you have them ALL WELCOME
Sun 17th Mar 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Cardiff Wildlife Detectives for children aged 8-12. Wildlife gardening and making homes for nature 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.