Friends of Forest Farm

SPRING 2025 135

"She turned to the sunlight
And shook her yellow head,
And whispered to her neighbour:
"Winter is dead."

— A.A. Milne, When We Were Very Young



For many of us, Spring is our favourite time of year, with it's freshness and beauty, the sense of renewal and new hope as Winter slips away; a time for new plans and projects. Hopefully the photos will give you a flavour of this new season.

For the Friends some of our existing projects are nearing completion. The interpretation display panels to go into the bird hides are now completed after much work and with contributions from many folk. Do go and have a look. The campaigning to remove the tree planting in "The Bowl' area appears to have been successful, although the trees will not be physically moved until the end of the year, when the current growing season is over.



Future plans: we are hoping that a project to restore the Dragonfly Pond near to the farm buildings, to be partly funded by the Friends, can be initiated soon. Plans are also well in hand for significant restoration work on the canal itself, commencing towards the end of 2025. Additionally the bird hide ponds will be dredged and repaired in the Autumn (more information in a later edition). So, a busy year ahead. Please consider giving us a hand if you can to keep The Friends and Forest Farm working and thriving.



Naomi and Paul

MY FAVOURITE PHOTOGRAPH



This is an image I took from Hide two a few years ago. It is a juvenile European Green Woodpecker.

Its' parents had been helping it forage for food in front of the hide over a period of many hours – showing it how to use its beak to dig into an anthill located nearby. Ants form a large part of most Green Woodpecker diets and they use their strong beak to dig into ant colonies. It rarely 'drums' on trees like other woodpecker species. It is a very shy bird, more often heard rather than seen, which is why it was unusual for them to be seen so close up.

The vegetation at the time this photo was taken was quite high in front of the hide, and for most of the time, the bird kept below the ridge line of the vegetation which was very frustrating for me trying to capture a shot.

Every so often, though, it would pop its head up to keep a look out for danger and by being very patient with my camera all set up I took a multitude of images every time it popped up. This is known as "burst mode" where up to 10 images per second are taken by the camera.

A lot of the images are not really useable for a variety of reasons but one or two turn out to be good enough to circulate. This is one of my favourites.

The settings of the camera have thrown the front and rear section of the photograph out of focus and the shot concentrates on the head of the bird. Different settings would have resulted both front and rear to be more in focus which would detract from the bird's head. The "out of focus" setting draws you into the image of the bird's head.

Anthony Matthews

We will bring you the RANGERS' REPORT in our next edition.

However we thought that you might like to create your own wetland reserve at home. A wildlife pond is one of the single best features for attracting new wildlife to the garden. It is thought that some amphibians, such as frogs, are now more common in garden ponds than in the countryside.

Even a small pond can be home to an interesting range of wildlife, including damsel and dragonflies, frogs and newts.

Any pond can become a feeding ground for birds, hedgehogs and bats – the best natural garden pest controllers! Your pond does not need to be big. A washing-up bowl, a large plant pot, or a disused sink could all be repurposed as ponds, providing you make sure creatures can get in and out.

Think big, start small!



Now watch and wait! Wildlife will come to your pond of its own accord. Don't introduce frogs, fish, or even water from another pond as this can spread disease.

For more information go to https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-pond
and https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-create-mini-pond

Adapted from the excellent website of The Wildlife Trusts. https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/

FOREST FARM NATURE WALKS

January Nature Walk

I was delighted to welcome four new people on our walk in January; the youngest was aged 6, and happily notified me of the birds he spotted which he knew.

It was a cold and grey day, not one to hang about too long, but it was dry. Setting off as usual from the Wardens Centre, we were already a bit spread out by the time I reached the bridge over the feeder – and just missed a **Kingfisher**! Our next sightings were **Nuthatch, Robin** and **Blackbird**. In fact, there were lots of Robins about and they were all in full song it seemed. We also heard a **Woodpecker**, but sadly, did not see it.



At the second hide we saw quite a lot of birds. One **Little Egret** was there, beautifully white with its long black beak. The pond was very still and its reflection was really clear. When I have seen them before, they have been very, very still in the water and then catch their prey suddenly, with their long beak. Today, it was stirring up water with its feet to flush out hidden food. Their diet is mainly fish, but amphibians, small reptiles, mammals and birds are also eaten, as well as crustaceans, molluscs, insects, spiders and worms. It was in that vicinity that we also saw **Chaffinch, Dunnock, all the Tits** and **Magpies**.

In all we saw 20 different birds from **Crows** to **Siskins**, **Woodpigeons** to **Goldcrest**, **Mallards** to a single **Reed Bunting** and a **Wren**.



It was great to see some **Snowdrops** with their flowers poking through the leaf litter and the different lichens on the branches along the canal. I was also struck by the **Ivy** growing on branches fallen across the canal. I knew it was of great value to wildlife, but have since looked up a bit more information. Its nectar, pollen and the berries (rich in fat) are a crucial source of food for invertebrates, birds and mammals during winter. Ivy is loved by birds including **Song thrush, Mistle thrush, Redwing, Blackbird** and **Blackcap.**

Ivy also provides shelter for insects, birds, bats and other small mammals. It is also particularly important to many insects before they go into hibernation. Insects such as bees, hoverflies and wasps forage on the nectar and pollen and it's an important food plant for some butterfly and moth larvae such as **Holly Blue**, **Small Dusty Wave**, and **Swallow-tailed Moth**. Rare insects, including the **Golden Hoverfly**, are attracted to the flowers.
As I said earlier, it was not a day to linger too long, so we made our way back to the wardens Centre for about 12 noon, cold but happy.

March Nature Walk

I was absolutely delighted to take round a group of 16 people. After months of low turn-out, it was amazing to see so many people assembled outside the Wardens' Centre. Eleven were new to the walk, and some of those new to the Reserve. Perhaps it was the sunshine which encouraged them along!

In order to show the new visitors what Forest Farm has to offer, we started by visiting the Orchard and pond – all very quiet. I was disappointed to see that a section of the chrysalis, one of the 2 remaining sculptures of the 3 stages in the life of a butterfly, had broken off; possibly this was just decay.



As we set off, the **Sparrows** were very active around the nest boxes at the barn near the Wardens' Centre. There was a lot of birdsong; a **Song Thrush** and **Dunnock** were identified. On the Taff we saw a **Mallard** and the **White Duck**. From Radyr bridge, looking North, we almost immediately spotted a **Heron** upstream just by the riverbank, then a bit nearer to us, a **Grey Wagtail**, and a **Goosander –** which was often disappearing from view as it dived down into the river**.** Moving on past the allotments to the bridge over the Feeder, there was a **Wren, Robin** and **Great Tit**.

We continued on, visiting the hides – sadly, no Egret or Kingfisher today. But we did see more **Song Thrush**, **Mallard** and **Moorhen**, all the **Tits**, **Bullfinch, Pigeon** and **Magpi**e; also a **Jay,** four **Nuthatch** and a **Buzzard** flying overhead. So, 21 different birds in all.

As to plants, I am sure someone more knowledgeable than me would have spotted more, but I am confident that we saw Catkins, probably Hazel, early **Lords and Ladies** which are of course, poisonous, (also known by a large number of other names including Cuckoo Pint and Wild Arum), **Wild Garlic** aka Ramsons (Latin name: (Allium ursinum). This has a pungent smell in early spring which pervades the woodland. Its white starry flowers appear early, so it is important for the bees and other insects which pollinate them. The bulbs are also a source of food for wild boars – not that we have any on the Reserve! **Water lily** plants were showing under the water in the Canal. There were lots of lovely **Primroses** about, and some of the newly planted **Daffodils** in flower.



There was a definitely an air of Spring, with the birdsong, plants – and the weather! A very enjoyable morning. Do come and join us:

3rd Saturday monthly, 10am.
Meet outside the Wardens Centre, Forest Farm Rd. CF14 7JH

Sheila Austin

WINTER TALKS 2025

RSPB Newport Wetlands

In February, a good audience gathered. The subject was Newport Wetlands with Mike Skelton, a long-term RSPB volunteer.

The RSPB is a charity for the conservation of birds and nature and it is part of the international system for bird protection. It's role can be summarised as 1) Protecting species and habitats; 2) Influencing government and business; 3) Education and inspiring the next generation.



In 1889, Emily Williamson created the Society for the Protection of Birds with one core aim – to fight a current fashion for feathers and exotic plumes that was driving many birds towards extinction. Her all-women movement was born out of frustration that the male-only British Ornithologists Union was not acting on the issue. Recognising that in order to protect one species it is essential to protect all the others plus their habitats. The RSPB has grown considerably and it now owns 222 reserves across the UK.

The mission of the RSPB is to protect and restore Habitats, with a strong remit to educate and inspire. Newport Wetlands, which it manages, is an excellent place for this to be enacted. The wide variety of habitats at the site makes it possible to protect many species – birds, plants, shore-life, insects and other small invertebrates.



It has been described as 'Nature arising from the ashes'. It was established as a direct consequence of the loss of the Cardiff Bay mudflats, an area important for migrant birds and other wildlife, largely destroyed by the Cardiff Bay development, The developers, were required by law to create another site (mitigation) and the mouth of the River Usk, near Newport, was chosen. The site was the old dumping ground for waste (Ash) from the local coal-fired power station, which had operated there for many decades. The ash wasteland (5 metres deep) was removed and re-engineered, developing new lagoons and reed beds alongside existing mudflats. It created a varied habitat of grassland, salt marsh, freshwater and saline lagoons, ready to welcome winter migratory birds and other wildlife. Engineering took place from1998 onwards and in 2008 the Visitor Centre was opened.

Newport Wetlands is a lovely location for a day out at any time of year, with visiting wetland birds in winter, summer migrants, wildflower meadows full of insects in summer, rare orchids and butterflies, and recently the recognition as a hotspot for Dragonflies. Mike showed pictures of some of the 'Star species' that you might be lucky enough to see:

Breeding Otters, Starling murmurations throughout the winter,
Cuckoo, Curlews and Lapwing, Bittern,

Bearded Tits (breeding), Marsh Harrier,







Shrill Carder Bee – extremely rare, only found here and in Somerset, Kent and Essex

Like Forest Farm, it's a wonderful place for an early morning visit to hear the dawn chorus in the spring. In summer, you might see at least five different Orchids, Swifts, Swallows and Martins, Hobbies, over twenty species of Butterflies, Dragon and Damselflies. A moth-trap is set up regularly and over 2,500 species have been identified. In autumn the Starlings begin their murmuration and then the winter migrants arrive.

Newport Wetlands can be found at NP18 2BZ, along West Nash Road, Newport and entry is free.
https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are
https://www.rspb.org.uk/days-out/reserves/newport-wetlands

The Welsh Beaver Project

In **March** Alicia Leow-Dyke, Project Officer for the Welsh Beaver Project, spoke about plans to reintroduce European Beavers to Wales. The star exhibit was a stuffed beaver!

Beavers are surprisingly large – about the size of a Labrador. Beavers are herbivores, eating all manner of vegetation, but in winter they survive on bark. As they can't climb well, they fell trees to eat the tender bark on twigs. This coppices their favourite trees, willow and birch; the stumps sprout tender shoots which they can eat later.

They pair for life and can have two or three young (kits) every year. The young stay with the parents for about two years, though some may stay longer as part of a family unit. In the wild, life expectancy is about ten years but in captivity one lived to be twenty-one. Beavers are semi-aquatic, with webbed rear feet and a large paddle tail. They rarely move more than 20m from water. They have small eyes and poor eyesight but a very good sense of smell. Their main enemies in the wild were wolves, bears and badgers, but today it's people and domestic dogs.

Each family unit has its own territory, which they scent mark and see off any trespassing beavers. The size of the territory depends on the available food supply, namely trees and water weed. Typically, a family needs three kilometres of river bank but this varies considerably.

They are partially nocturnal, but are also active in the late evening and early dawn.

They construct lodges of mud and sticks containing various chambers, with several entrances, all underwater. They construct dams to provide still water deep enough to swim in and to cover the entrances to their lodges, so avoiding predators. They don't build dams across rivers, but across small streams which have shallow water. Beaver dams are not water tight but just slow the flow of water. They can be up to 100 metres long, but are often only half a metre high,

Beavers were once found all over Europe and Asia as far as China, and once numbered about 100 million. However, they were hunted for their fur, meat and scent glands; with teeth and claws used for jewellery. By the end of 19th century there were only about 1200 left.

They can have a big environmental impact. Extra wetland attracts other species including plants, frogs, newts and insects, which in turn attract birds and mammals. Dead tree trunks also encourage wildlife such as beetles and fungi.

Reintroduction: Beavers were reintroduced into Bavaria in the 1960s. The Germans now have a lot of experience in living with beavers, with widely published research. They confirmed significant ecological and environmental gains from their presence.

Beavers have been reintroduced into many countries in Europe, so they are now quite widespread. Some North American beavers were released in Finland and Western Russia. They are similar to the European type, but the two species do not interbreed.

In the UK, beavers became extinct in the 1500s. For many years there have been beavers in private zoos and wildlife parks. They were first illegally reintroduced into the wild in Scotland in the 1970s. Further reintroductions occurred in Scotland and in 2019 they were granted legal protection.

In England there was a trial reintroduction in Kent in 2001, with a subsequent favourable report. In 2014 wild beavers were found in Devon; with a study report in 2020 that resulted in them being allowed to remain. Beavers have now been released elsewhere in the UK and in 2022 were given protected status in England. In 2025 a licence was granted to reintroduce them into Dorset.



WALES: In 2005 the Welsh Beaver Project was set up. Feasibility studies were produced and suitable habitats identified. Public consultations began, with the emphasis on minimising possible adverse effects. In 2021 a licence was granted for an initial release on the Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve beside the River Dyfi near Machynlleth. It is owned by the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust.

They have opened up the willow canopy and created three lakes with a six-foot-high lodge, only accessible by boat, in the centre of the release site. The hope is that wild introduction will be permitted. Beavers are very adaptable animals and once they become used to humans they can be easily observed.

In 2024 the Welsh government stated support for managed reintroduction. Meanwhile, beavers have appeared elsewhere on the Dyfi and have spread up the River Wye into Wales. The Welsh government is looking at legislation for a managed reintroduction and legal beaver protection. It is hoped that further beavers maybe officially released later this year.

For more information go to https://www.wtwales.org/welsh-beaver-project

The Reservoir Action Group 2001-24 - Saving Lisvane and Llanishen Reservoirs

In **April,** Richard Cowie spoke about the 23 year long campaign to save the Lisvane and Llanishen reservoirs from housing development. Richard was involved in the campaign since it began. He was vice-chair for 11 years and chair for 10 years.

Richard explained the history of the site. Victorian Cardiff saw rapid population growth due to industrialisation. Just 1870 people in 1801, but 142,000 by 1891. This created infrastructure overload and poor living conditions, with inadequate and overcrowded housing, open sewers, drinking water coming from limited wells and the river Taff often contaminated by sewage. Waterborne diseases were common, with deadly cholera outbreaks in 1832 and 1849. Only in 1854 was it realised that cholera was spread by contaminated water. Health Boards were created, and clean water and sanitation were identified as essential to public wellbeing.

Initially, in 1852, 'The Cardiff Waterworks Company' took water from the River Ely. This supply was soon inadequate. The next scheme was the creation of the 20 acre Lisvane reservoir which opened in 1865. It was fed by local streams with a capacity of 60 million gallons. The water was run through filter beds downstream from the reservoir, and then into Cardiff.

Population growth continued and yet more water was needed. In 1879 the council bought out the Water Works Company and increased capacity from the existing supplies. But still more was needed. In 1881 the Borough Engineer, John Williams proposed the **Taf Fawr System**. This was the creation of three reservoirs along the upper valley of the River Taff in the Brecon Beacons. The water would flow into a new holding reservoir at Llanishen, next to the Lisvane. This project was enormously expensive, but was finally agreed on as the only viable solution.

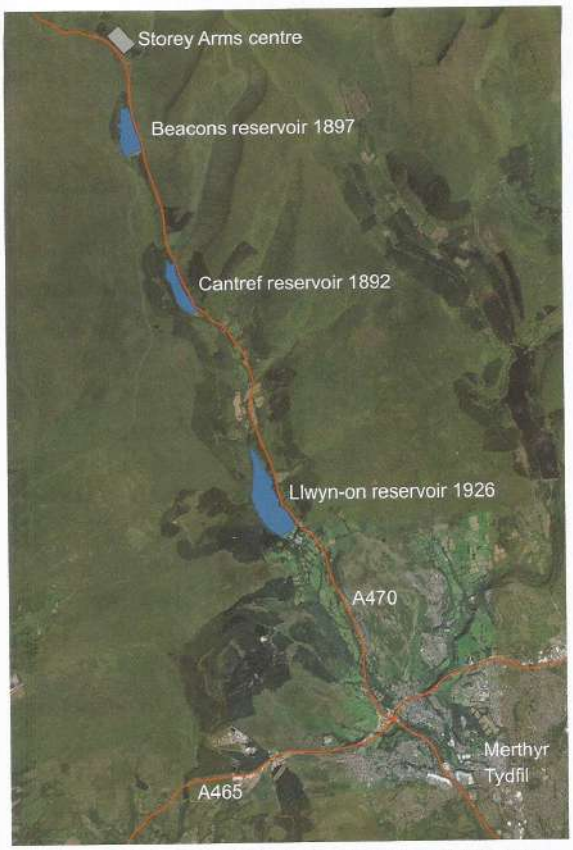


Figure 1.5. The three reservoirs in the Taf Fawr valley of the Brecon Beacons, which together with Llanishen reservoir make up the Taf Fawr Scheme. Background image from Google Earth © Maxar Technologies 2023.

The Llanishen reservoir was rapidly built by 1886. In the Brecon Beacons, the middle reservoir, Cantref, opened in 1892, the upper Beacons reservoir opened in 1897 and the lower Llwyn-On reservoir opened in 1926. A 32 mile pipeline connected these reservoirs to Llanishen. The scheme was highly successful and was Cardiff's main water supply until the 1960's.

Increasing water shortages in the 1950's resulted in a new reservoir being built at Llandegfedd near Pontypool which opened fully in 1965 and by-passed Llanishen. The Beacon reservoirs were initially kept as a back-up supply, but by the early 1970s the system was redundant and the Llanishen reservoir had recreational use only.

From 1974 the reservoirs became the property of the Welsh Water Authority. This was privatised in 1989, renaming itself Hyder. In 2000 it was taken over by the US Western Power Distribution. Western Power was mainly interested in the electricity supply side of the business. The water and sewerage element was sold to Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water in 2000. However Western Power retained the rights to repurchase certain sites for residential development.

In 2001 rumours began that there were plans to build houses on Llanishen reservoir. Ted Thurgood, organised a meeting to set up an action group to save the reservoirs that attracted 600 people. In 2002 Western Power applied for planning permission to drain the reservoir and build 346 houses on the site. The 'Save Our Reservoirs'

action group soon had 1200 members and was well publicised. In 2004 Western Power bought the reservoir for four million pounds.

Following a search for rare species of nature it was found that reservoir embankments homed 28 species of the very rare Wax Cap fungi. It was identified as one of the best sites in Europe for these fungi. Consequently in 2006 the site was designated a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). Western Power attempted to legally overturn the designation, but failed. They revised their plans multiple times, but were rejected at the three planning enquiries.

The 3 Beacon reservoirs were listed by CADW as structures of historical importance because of their role in Cardiff's history. In 2009 the Action Group successfully persuaded CADW to include the Llanishen reservoir, it being part of the overall Cardiff plan. The surroundings which support the structures were also listed, so the reservoir had to contain water. Western Power went to the High Court to overturn the listing, but again failed. The plans were appealed to the Welsh Government and again rejected.



Figure 7.2. A selection of waxcaps photographed at Llanishen reservoir. From left to right: (top row) meadow waxcap (Hygrocybe pratensis); scarlet waxcap (H. coccinea); (middle row) crimson waxcap (H. punicea); parrot waxcap (Gliophorus psittacinus); golden waxcap (H. chlorophana); (bottom row) blackening waxcap; (H. conica); heath waxcap (G. Laetus).

In 2013 Western Power sold both reservoirs to Celsa Steel for £1 and abandoned their housing plans, having spent millions on legal fees. Celsa used Lisvane reservoir to supply water to their steelworks at East Moors. Celsa, though sympathetic, had no money or resources to restore Llanishen reservoir. Then In 2016 they agreed with Welsh Water on a 999-year lease of the reservoir and renovation began. In 2023 the reservoir was refilled and a new visitor centre opened on 31st July 2023 with public access. Their work completed, the Reservoir Action Group was disbanded on 24th October 2024.

Richard Cowie has written a book with more information about the struggle to save the reservoirs: 'Save Our Reservoirs'. ISBN 978-1-3999-5911-7 Gomer Press 2023, £14.50.

Friends of Cardiff Reservoirs. The group was set up in 2021 as a natural successor to The Reservoir Action Group. https://www.friendsofcardiffreservoirs.org/

Albyn Austin/ Paul Brightmore

Planning is currently underway for the next season of Winter Talks. If you have ideas for subjects and speakers please let us know.

TREES IN THE BOWL UPDATE SPRING 2025

A year ago tree saplings were planted extensively in 'The Bowl', in the Northern Meadow, as part of the Velindre Hospital development, in order to provide a suitable habitat for Dormice. This is a meadow area that the Friends and Rangers had maintained for many years. We have campaigned ever since to have the trees removed and the meadow restored.



In January, it was confirmed that Velindre would make application to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to amend the European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) based on the Council's proposal of removing and replacing a line of Cherry Laurel shrub in Forest Farm.

There was some delay, but it was confirmed in February that Velindre had submitted the application to allow removal of the planting in the Bowl.

On 17 April, we were told that:

'Following submission of the application to amend the EPSL, NRW has responded positively to the proposed removal of the Cherry Laurel shrubs and replacement with native planting but it has some queries. The Council will be helping with these, as it affects the authority's land and hopefully once addressed the amendment will be approved.

Presuming approval can be obtained soon, we will make a decision on whether we remove the whips in the Bowl immediately or seek to preserve them by leaving them until the winter when they can be planted elsewhere.'

The story continues, but it is now looking very likely that the trees will be removed this year. We will continue our campaign and will keep you updated on progress.

Naomi Brightmore

HELP

Can you help us? Do you love Forest Farm? Do you have a little time to spare and skills to share? Would you like to make a difference for your local community?

Friends of Forest Farm is here to support, safeguard and celebrate the wonders of Forest Farm reserve and canal and right now we need your help.

Your committee needs some new blood to bring fresh ideas, extra energy and additional input. In particular we need someone to fill the role of Treasurer. Our current treasurer retired at the AGM in April and we need to fill his place. Without a Treasurer, the organisation can't function for long. It is an important job, but not particularly onerous. We can provide a little 'job description' when you contact us.

If being on the committee isn't for you, then you can still help the Friends in many other ways – helping to organise and publicise events, assisting at Open Days, updating the website and creating publicity, writing articles for the newsletter, etc

If you can help, or just want to learn more about what it involves, PLEASE get in touch now: editor@forestfarm.org.uk

VOLUNTEER REPORT: WINTER 2025

It's the end of **January**, and a wetter, greyer morning would be hard to find. Alec must have been hoping that no-one would turn up to volunteer on 26 January; if so, he was sorely disappointed!



Eight people arrived, keen as ever to make a difference on Forest Farm. The challenge was to build a habitat 'hedge' at the entrance to the Scout field to rival the one built recently by Cardiff Rivers Group (CRG).

We set off in the rain to the track leading to the bird-hides and the canal. There, we cut down the tall upright stems of the existing hedging, to be re-used for our new habitat hedge. First, stakes were created from the thicker stems, then forced into the ground by a truly gigantic hammer. Thank goodness for young strength to wield it!



It's surprising how much difference eight people can make, and also that a good time was had by all despite the weather! More upright stems were cut and then carried to the Scout field. Here they were laid between the stakes to create an attractive fence-like 'hedge',that would also be a good wildlife habitat.

The intention is to make the Scout field, which lies within the SSSI, into a Nature Conservation area where dogs will be on leads, and visitors encouraged not to trample the ground. In recent years, rangers and volunteers have done a great deal of work in this field to remove less welcome vegetation such as Bramble, Bracken and Himalayan balsam, enabling a wider variety of spring and summer flowers to flourish. Restricting access in this small way will enable the benefits of this work to be felt by insects, birds, and animals, and will also enhance enjoyment for all Nature-lovers who visit the Reserve.



Although the new 'hedge' isn't quite finished, it will be added to later. We felt justly proud of the work we had achieved together. (I recently walked in the Scout field, in late April, and was delighted to see the wonderful display of Red Campion growing there – another reward for all the hard work in the area.)

It was a beautiful Spring-like morning on 9 **February** and the volunteers turned out in crowds – twenty people of all age-groups!

We walked, past the beautiful bank of Snowdrops, from the Warden's hut towards the canal. On the way, we were delighted to be shown by Alec, the the artificial banks the

rangers are creating for the local Kingfishers to nest in. This would be a wonderful achievement for Forest Farm, especially since the Kingfisher is probably our most popular and well-known bird.

We arrived at the Conservation field next to the bird hide. This area, between the path, the wetlands and the canal, is not open to the public for conservation reasons. Our aim was to remove as much Bramble as possible, so that other plants, particularly the Spring flowers, have a chance to thrive. Bramble is actually a great plant for all kinds of wildlife. Every part of it is used, the dense thorny branches for shelter, pollen for insects, and berries for small mammals and birds, not to mention humans. However, it is vigorous and will dominate if left unchecked, and so we had to cut down and remove it from the area near to the canal. It was hard work, and painful, but twenty people make a lot of difference in a short space of time!

9 **March** dawned bright and sunny and we set off, past a bank full of beautiful Spring flowers, to the main junction path to the canal and the hides. Those with strong backs and arms began the task of scraping the surface mud and debris from the path. This will enable the rangers to put down new surface gravel on the busy pathway. A large area was cleared in readiness.



The rest of us cleared and tidied up the area surrounding the pathway leading to Hide 1. This was done gently and with care so that the new growth underneath would not be damaged. Under the old growth and Brambles we were able to uncover some intriguing Shelf-fungi and Scarlet Elf Cups which had survived the Winter. There was lots of new growth coming up too, such as Harts tongue fern, Lords and Ladies, Celandines, Violets and other Spring flowers.



Afterwards, a collection of fallen/ cut logs and branches were gathered into a wood pile. This will make a welcome shelter for many invertebrates, and small mammals including Hedgehogs; Hedgehogs are still present at the Reserve, but in smaller numbers than in the past, and are rarely seen due to their shy night-time habits.

The final session of this period was on Easter Saturday, 19 **April.** Unfortunately, due to the poor weather, the planned project which involved the building of an Otter holt, had to be postponed. This will now take place at the next volunteer session on **Sunday 25 May**; we hope you can join us for this exciting project

Naomi Brightmore

COMING EVENTS AT FOREST FARM

Saturday Nature Walks & Sunday Volunteering: meet at the Warden's Hut, Forest Farm CF14 7JH, from 10am to 12.00
Winter talk events take place at Ararat Community rooms, CF14 1PT, at 7.15pm

17 May	Nature Walk	Sheila Austin
17-18 May	Gardening for Wildlife	Ranger Event
25 May	Volunteering	Alec
15 June	Volunteering	Alec
22 June	Moth Morning at Forest Farm	Ranger Event
21 June	Nature Walk	Sheila Austin
5 July	Meadow week event	Ranger Event
19 July	Nature Walk	Sheila Austin
23 July	Seed collecting event – Forest Farm Conservation Centre	Ranger Event
27 July	Volunteering	Alec
16 August	Nature Walk	Sheila
24 August	Volunteering	Alec
14 September	Volunteering	Alec
20 September	Nature Walk	Sheila Austin
4 October	Friends: Forest Farm Open Day	
15 October	Winter Talk: Red Kite Conservation.	Alan Oliver
8 November	Industrial Archaeology	Ranger Event

For current information about events check our website or Facebook pages.
Wildlife Detectives: meet on the 3rd Sunday of every month (excluding August). Please book on https://www.outdoorcardiff.com/parks/cardiff-wildlife-detectives/
Ranger Event bookings required: https://www.outdoorcardiff.com/events/

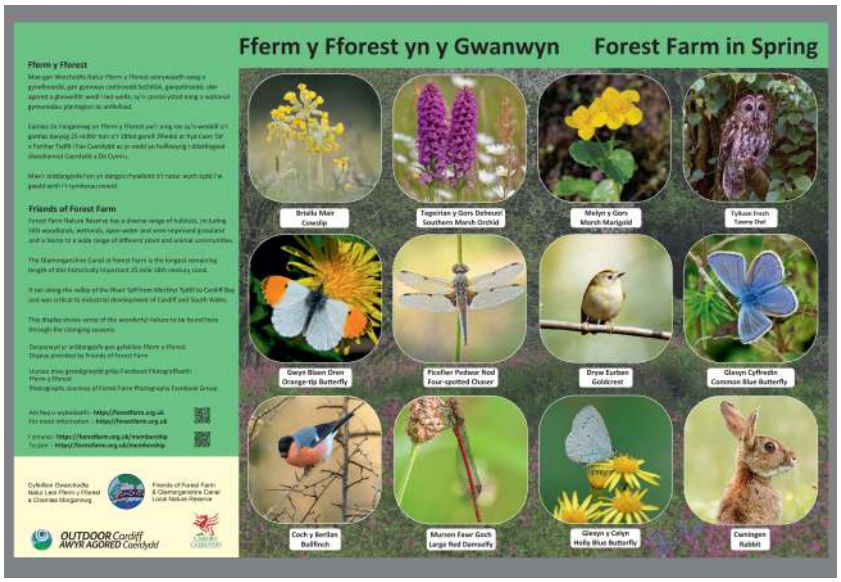
For more information about Friends of Forest Farm: www.forestfarm.org.uk
Also on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/forestfarmuk/

The editors advise that all views expressed by contributors are their own.

Published on behalf of The Friends of Forest Farm and Glamorganshire Canal Nature Reserve by Paul and Naomi Brightmore. CONTACT: **Email** editor@forestfarm.org.uk

Printed by: Serol, Print Unit 13, Milland Road Industrial Estate, Neath, SA11 1NJ

THE DISPLAY PANELS ARE HERE AT LAST!



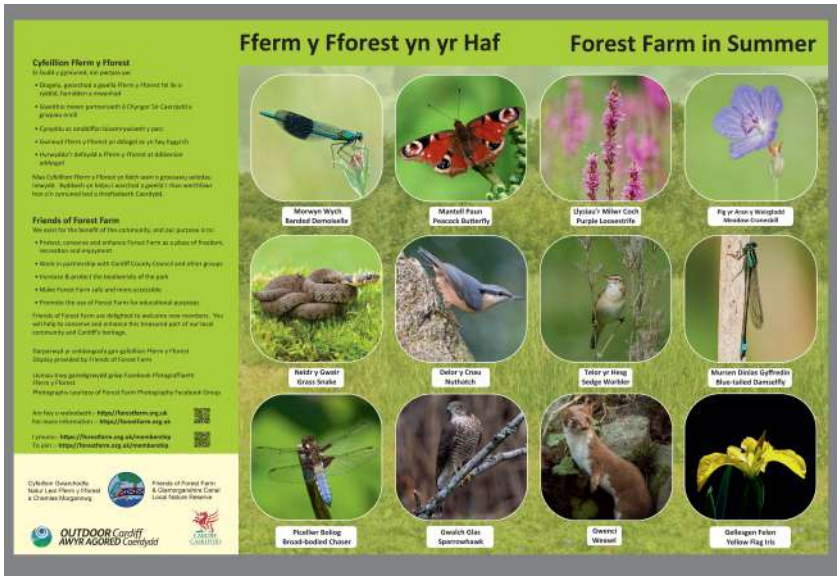
If you've been in the two bird hides recently we hope that you have seen and enjoyed the new display panels designed and provided by the Friends. It has been a long and bumpy journey, but at last they are ready, and what a difference they make inside the rather austere hides!

Two years ago three committee members, Paul, Naomi and Sheila began to work with Alec to make this happen. We decided on four panels, one for each of the annual seasons. We then selected the iconic species of flora and fauna that are typically seen at Forest Farm in each season. It was quite a job to decide which to choose!

Next, we had to source the beautiful photographs shot at Forest Farm. We used a mixture selected from the Forest Farm Photography Group Facebook page, plus those taken by Alec who is also a keen wildlife photographer. The photographers were all approached for permission to use their photos (which they all generously gave) and also to provide the high resolution copies necessary for enlargement. The panels are approximately one by one and a half metres in size and each contains 12 photos, so each individual picture is about A4 in size when printed.

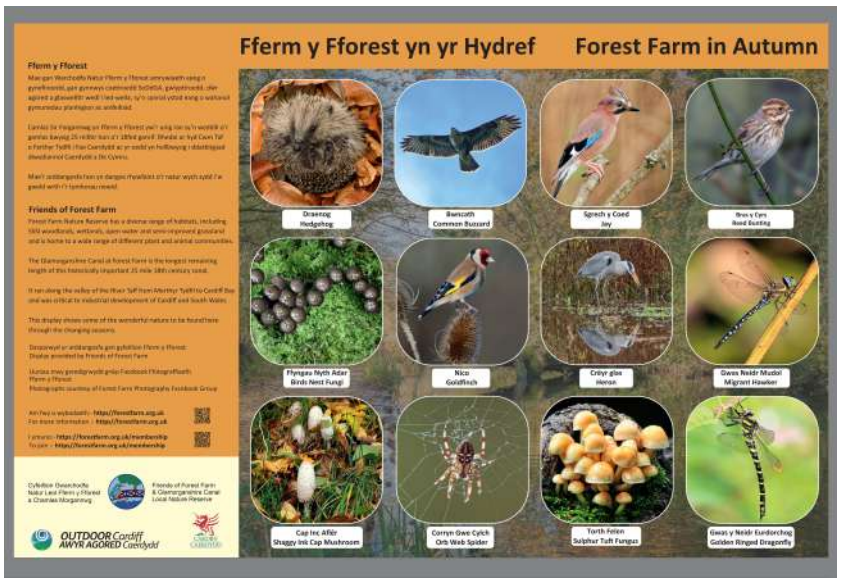
Text was included to briefly tell visitors about Forest Farm reserve. It also explains about the Friends and enables readers to get more information and to join us. We are very grateful to those providing the Welsh translation (who wish to remain anonymous). Diolch.

Signs Express were chosen to print and manufacture the panels. They are designed to be robust and as vandal-proof as possible. We think the finished products by Signs Express are truly excellent and hope you agree. Thank you Signs Express!



We had much input from Cardiff Council staff along the way, including design, translation and installation. In particular, a huge input from Alec throughout the two years. We want to particularly thank him for all his help and support; we think he's as relieved as we are that the project is now completed. Thank you so much Alec!

We want to sincerely thank all of the other photographers whose photos are featured:



•Adrian Dixon – Winter: Snipe, Summer: Sparrowhawk

•The late Andre Van de Sande – Autumn: Reed Bunting, Autumn: background

•Cliff Woodhead – Winter: Blackthorn blossom, Spring: background, Summer: Peacock butterfly

•Colin Harvey – Autumn: Shaggy Inkcap

•Dawn Withers – Autumn: Sulphur Tuft Fungi

•Fiona Christina – Summer: Weasel

- Frank Sengpiel – Winter: Frog, Summer: Broad-bodied Chaser, Spring: Orange-tip butterfly, Spring: Large Red Damselfly
- Heather Fowle – Autumn: Buzzard
- Iestyn Dallimore – Spring: Goldcrest
- Kerry Williams – Winter: Fox
- Mark Ann Wright – Autumn: Migrant Hawker Dragonfly
- Martin Agg – Summer: Yellow Iris
- Mike Brownhill – Spring: Bullfinch, Spring: Rabbit
- Steve FfPhotos – Summer: Blue-tailed Damselfly, Spring: Common Blue butterfly, Spring: Holly Blue butterfly



We are sorry indeed that we couldn't fit in more photos – there are so many fantastic ones! We hope that we have given all the credits that are due and have attributed everything correctly, but if we've missed anyone PLEASE let us know so that we can acknowledge you in the next issue, with our apologies. If your photos weren't selected we hope you're not disappointed. We love looking through the Facebook pages to choose photos for the Newsletter. Thank you Photographers!

We plan to come back to the individual panels in later editions and to provide more detailed information about some of the beautiful wildlife here on our doorstep.

Naomi & Paul Brightmore