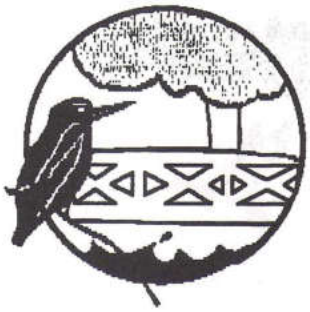
FRIENDS OF FOREST FARM



and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve

EDITOR'S FORUM

Greetings, old, new and potential members of the 'Friends' on the occasion of the 14th edition of the Newsletter!
With a growing membership and sound support, the 'Friends' can proudly survey the progressive realisation of our main objectives.
It may be of interest to re-state them as expressed in our first Newsletter of March 1990 ...

* To contribute, in whatever way possible, to protecting and developing in a suburban setting this area of countryside as a valuable amenity.
* To promote the **Nature Reserve** for the observation and study of flora and fauna in their natural habitat.

We trust our purpose will enhance the enjoyment and quality of life for an increasing number of members of the public in the vicinity and beyond.
Sincere thanks to all contributors and to Robin Sotheby and Cllr Neil Salmon for their assistance towards the Newsletter's production.

FOREST FARM WATCH CLUB

Our club for young naturalists.

Learn about wildlife and nature conservation ...

Making plaster casts of animal tracks, and learning to identify them ... tree and wildflower painting ... insect safari ... pond dipping ... dinosaur footprints ... just some of the things we have done in the past.

We meet once a month on **Saturday Mornings, 10–12 am** at the **Warden Centre, Forest farm.**

For more information contact ...

Mike Wiley Tel. 0222 **612213** (daytime)
796152 (evenings)
Chris James **611342** (evenings)

A CLEANER TAFF

Looking down at the river from Radyr foot-bridge, the improvement in the quality of the water is obvious. Stay long enough, and you will enjoy watching the fish and, occasionally an angler upstream! Congratulations, National Rivers Authority!
Sadly, after the winter floods in particular, the picture is spoilt by the garbage on the river bank. A complaint from one of our members prompted the Executive Committee to decide to take up the matter with the N.R.A.
Have you any views about this? If so, why not write or telephone the National Rivers Authority, St Mellons Business Park, CARDIFF CF3 0LT (Cardiff 770088)

Dennis Davies

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FOREST FARM COUNTRY CRAFT FAIR – 20th JUNE

This year will be the **6th Craft Fair** to be held at Forest Farm. The show was set up to provide an opportunity for the City Dweller to experience traditional country crafts and to meet members of the various conservation groups operating in the Cardiff area.
The **Craft Fair** is an event which provides an opportunity for raising the profile of the **Country Park** with a wider section of the community.
Support is necessary to sustain this important wildlife resource and its attractive landscape. **Forest Farm** has an important educational role in explaining the value of conservation and the need for active participation by young and old.
It is important also to enjoy the countryside. We hope that the **Craft Fair** on the **20th June** will give joy to all, with its range of interests from traditional celtic music and dance to displays of beautiful objects by local craftsmen and women.

Chris Powell

MEMBERSHIP

The number of paid-up members at the time of writing is **142**. This is somewhat less than reported in the last Newsletter, but there are quite a number of **Friends** who have not yet renewed their membership for 1993-94. If you are one of these, I hope you will let me have your contribution as soon as possible. Hopefully we shall pass the 200 mark in the next few months.

Tom Colston

MEMBERSHIP enquiries to **Mr Tom Colston**
15 Coed Arian, Whitchurch, CARDIFF, CF4 2ND
Tel: (0222) **624606**

THE "VISITABLE" HIDE!

Well done, Chris Powell, Mike Wiley and others for making sure that the **'Lockley Hide'** can be reached by wheelchair users and, with greater ease, by those who do not enjoy climbing steps or jumping up and down stiles! The Hide itself has a wide door and, inside there is a viewing position constructed to accept wheelchairs.

Wheelchairs and pushchairs can now get on to the towpath via the ramp, travel along to the first gate (which will now be left open) and follow the newly-laid path along the feeder (noting the new weir) to the entrance path to the Hide. Although this route is now barrier-free, users need to be careful on parts of the towpath because of the camber and slippages.

We are about to discuss the next stage, which will be to make it possible to carry on along the feeder path, join the old Parish road for a short distance and then rejoin the towpath near the Lock.

Dennis Davies

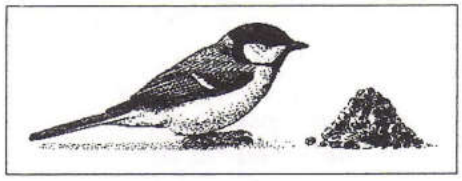
NEST BOX SURVEY

Howard Davies and I had a taste of the rain forests during the last week in May as we struggled through the tangled undergrowth on the Reserve to carry out the annual check of the Nest Boxes, and to record the contents. Howard discovered how easy it was to go round in circles, when he kept arriving back at Box Number 12! But the count went on, and the tally at the moment is:

GREAT TIT 154 BLUE TIT 168

This is a definite increase for the Great Tit on last year, but the Blue Tits are trailing a bit. The final count will appear in the next issue.

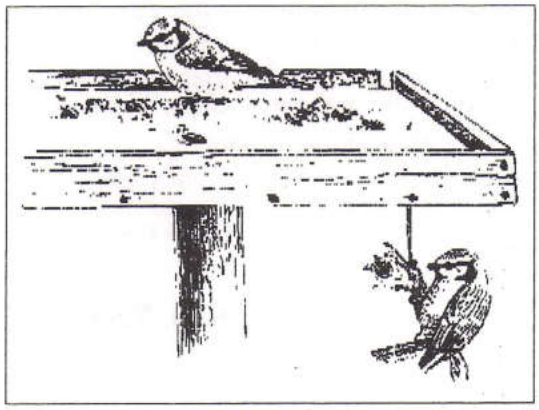
E.O.Edwards



BIRD TABLE

During the winter full use was made of the **Bird Table** and **Sqirrel-proof Nut Hoppe** One nut hopper was stolen early on, but otherwise no damage was done. Feeding was stopped towards the end of April, and soon afterwards the Bird Table disappeared ... Mindless vandalism on somebody's part ... but it does mean a re-think of how to replace it next year.

E.O.Edwards



GARDEN BIRDWATCH

Despite the poor weather this Spring, the local birds have already produced young. The first juvenile seen in our garden was a **Robin** on April 14th, paying at least three visits. Another was noted on April 25th which, looking older may have been the earlier one.

A female **Blackbird** was noted collecting nest material from March 16th, followed by hectic feeding journeys by both male and female adults during April. On May 2nd we had our first view of the juvenile Blackbirds in the garden being fed by the male adult. By May 6th there were three juveniles being fed.

Following on from these, the **House Sparrows** and **Starlings** have not been idle, and they are now bringing their offspring into the garden.

Migrants have been scarce, with a **Chiffchaff** spending a short time in and around the garden on April 4th, a female **Reed Bunting** in a neighbour's tree on April 29th and the first local **House Martin** on May 12th.

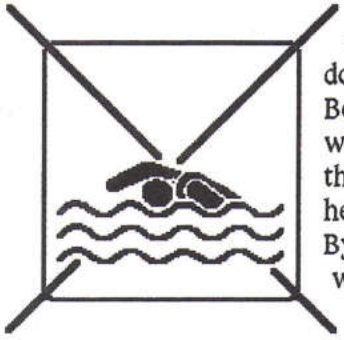
As expected, the number of species visiting the garden has dropped from 10 to 12 daily in April to 7 to 9 daily in May. **Siskin**, **Chaffinch**, **Dunnock** and **Great Tit** are the main absentees.

For the next month or so, then, expect to see more juvenile birds, especially **Blue Tit**, **Great Tit** and **Blackbird**. However, keep a look out for other lone migrants, who will start to make their way south. From July onwards the numbers should increase, so let us hope they choose to visit our gardens!

R.J.Williams

THE POND DIP

We met at Forest Farm on a lovely spring evening. Chris James, Nigel Harris and I were to lead a guided Pond Dip as part of the **Leisure & Amenities Guided Walks** programme. The car park was filling, and by the appointed hour a good crowd had gathered. Our numbers were swelled to 60 at the last minute by the arrival of a Sherpa van full of Boy Scouts. It was soon decided that the farm Pond, although quite large, was too small for our group; so the Pond Dip was quickly changed to a Canal Dip! We started quietly enough with everybody catching pond snails. (They must be getting *'net lag'* with all the recent schools pond dips!) Soon shouts were going up, "I've caught a fish!" These were sticklebacks - common to the Canal. Our trays were filling fast with things like **Freshwater Shrimp**, **Water Louse**, **Caddis Fly** larvae, **Ramshorn Snail**, **Common Newt** and a male **Palmate Newt**. The latter can be identified by its webbed hind feet and a filament at the end of its tail. One small lad asked me to identify something moving in his net. When told that it was a **Damselfly Nymph**, all he said was, "Yes, but what is it?"



I was standing at one end of the long line of dippers when two youths on mountain bikes, sporting all the latest cycling regalia, came bearing down on us. I stepped out, blocking the towpath and causing them to brake. Before I had time to point out the 'No Cycling' byelaw the youth nearest me, whilst trying to dismount, lost his footing and fell headlong into the canal - the children cheering him on! He emerged covered in weed and very wet. On helping him out I inquired whether he had caught anything.

By this time the midges were starting to bite, and we ended the evening with everyone having caught something - but I pulled the biggest one out!

M.Wiley

R.S.P.B. / 'FRIENDS' MONTHLY WALK

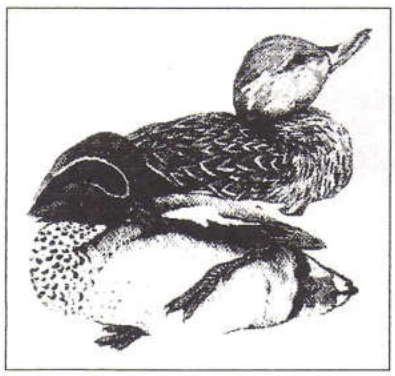
The nesting season is with us once again, and during June we will see a lot of activity, with young being fed; juveniles are already flying about. The abundant foliage will make it difficult to see the birds, but the noise and bustle will be very much in evidence and, since the young tend to stay in the same place to be fed, there will be a lot to see.

Sixty six bird species have been sighted since last October, including three new ones for the Reserve: **Teal**, **Common Sandpiper** and **Canada Geese**, the last two on the new lake. Incidently, we are proposing to name the lake, **'LLYN Y GAMLAS'** (Canal Lake), and the suggestion has been put forward to call the new hide **'LOCKLEY HIDE'** in memory of this famous naturalist, born and bred in Whitchurch, and who spent his youth studying wildlife on, what is now, the Reserve.

The **Little Owl** is back in residence.

E.O.Edwards





McDONALDS DRIVE-THRU RESTAURANT

A **Planning Application** has been submitted for development of a **'Drive-thru Restaurant Facility'** at **Asda Supermarket** Car Park at Coryton. This is the elevated car park on the right as you drive in; it backs on to the **Glamorganshire Canal Nature Reserve** boundary.

Councillor Riley drew this to our attention and asked for our comments. We listed our objections, i.e. noise, artificial lighting, anti-social behaviour from users, generation of litter, etc. These, together with concern expressed by the Director of Leisure & Amenities resulted in the Planning Department asking McDonalds to address the issues raised, and to indicate how they would resolve them, before their application is put before the Planning Development Committee.

We will be watching developments very closely during the coming month.

E.O.Edwards

WHAT ARE PARKS, COUNTRY PARKS AND NATURE RESERVES?

PARK This is land set aside purely for the enjoyment of 'Homo Sapiens' - clean, hard pathways bordered by flower beds of all shapes and sizes with as many colours as possible; trees, shrubs and plants gathered from all over the world and laid out to please the eye and give pleasure. Exotic trees and shrubs line artificial ponds and lakes, where pinioned wildfowl fight for scraps thrown by children out for a stroll in **The Park**. Wild flowers and wildlife are not encouraged.

COUNTRY PARK This is a large area set aside to allow people to visit the coast and countryside without the risk of trespass. Nature trails are set out to take visitors on a self-guided tour of **The Park**, in the hope that participants will gain an insight into the Flora and Fauna that make up the area. Various activities are allowed in designated areas, such as picnic and barbecue places, and play areas for children. Regular and active management is carried out, but every effort is made to keep **The Park** in its natural state.

NATURE RESERVE This is an area set aside to allow the Flora and Fauna within it to flourish undisturbed. People are allowed in as privileged visitors, to gain an insight and to marvel at nature in all its diverse forms. The well-being of the natural life is paramount; every effort must be made to keep interference to a minimum. Management consists of protecting **The Reserve** and its wildlife from human intrusion; guiding visitors; surveying the birds and other wildlife and undertaking physical work, both to maintain, improve or create the habitats and to keep fences, buildings, ditches, etc. in good repair.
It is a secret place where we are allowed to peep in and see wonderful things, once we have learned what to look for - hence the **Walks** where one can learn to look and listen.

Here at **Forest Farm** we have a **Nature Reserve** within a **Country Park**. We must be very careful that the activities in the Country Park do not spill over into the Reserve, and thereby destroy its natural balance. No introduced flora or fauna are allowed on the Reserve, and the boundary must be clearly marked so that **The Public** will **Know** when they are entering the Reserve - which will be accessible via well-defined and properly marked trails.
Please match your behaviour to the area you are in. Thank you.



E.O.Edwards

NEW ARRIVALS AT FOREST FARM

The **two foals** we were expecting from our mares at Forest Farm have now been born. **"GEM"**, our Clydesdale mare had a colt foal on May 2nd and **"SEB"**, our Black Mare (herself born in Whitchurch) had a colt foal last Thursday. The foals are by the thoroughbred stallion **"SWEET SANTO"**, and look as if they will follow their father's dark colouring.
Although we would have preferred filly foals, it is good to know that they have arrived safely. There is now no need to go to and fro in the small hours to see that all is well.
Another addition we have to the horses is a **Grey Shire** called **"MOSS"**. He is only three years old, and very placid. Moss has come from a farm in the New Forest, where he has just been broken to work. Hopefully, in the near future we will be able to use him for work around Forest Farm; but first we must get some horse-drawn implements for him to pull. Surely, working in this way will be more pleasant than with a noisy tractor!

R. and A.Coles

OUTDOOR EVENTS

Anyone interested in the programme of Outdoor Events, please contact our Programme Secretary, **Mr Chris James**, 90 Bishops Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff (Tel: 0222 **611342**)



INDOOR EVENTS

Held in **Bethel Baptist Church Hall**, Penlline Road, Whitchurch, beginning on **Wednesday 17th November** at **7.30** pm, with **"THE GLAMORGAN CANAL"** by **Mr E.O.Edwards.**

Published on behalf of Friends of Forest Farm and Glamorganshire Canal Local Nature Reserve
by **Mr Ken Patterson, 12 Manor Court, Whitchurch CARDIFF CF4 1BJ** Tel: (0222) **627077**
The Editor wishes to state that all views expressed by contributors are their own, as is the responsibility for them.