Friends

of FOREST FARM COUNTRY PARK
and GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Issue No: 87 **March 2013**

website: www.forestfarm.org.uk

A Post-Christmas Walk

The start of this year's walk on 13th January. A fine day as you can see.

Warden, Paul Davies operated the pump; then the walk was led by Martin Chamberlain. Hailey Park was first, viewing the new bridge, which is not quite finished. The walk then continued around part of Forest Farm Nature Reserve.

Finally, a welcome cuppa at the Wardens' Centre, Forest Farm Road.

Melingriffith Water Pump, Ty Mawr Rd. Cardiff



Photo by Duncan Hockridge

Ranger Spring Watch at Forest Farm
31st May - 2nd June 2013

Join the Rangers and our other partners at the Wardens Centre in a three day festival of spring. Get close to and see some of the great wildlife that Cardiff has to offer on your doorstep.

Various activities e.g. walks, talks and educational displays in the Centre. Light refreshments will be available

Full details will be advertised at a later date.

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Editorial ***Sheila Austin***

Hello Friends. Let us hope the worst of the winter is behind us; it has left its mark with plenty to do on the Reserve. But its worth it, isn't it? The variety of birds seen on the Reserve (p2-4) and the pleasure they give is so much appreciated - and it is pretty special to be listed as a 'top attraction' (P10).

We really are are indebted to our volunteers (new faces always welcome!) and the Rangers for their efforts, for the reports in this newsletter, the walks, and for the behind the scenes work to manage, raise the profile and secure funding and equipment for the Reserve. Our evening talks (see p9), summer trip p5), links with other groups - be it the Forum or Orchard Cardiff (p8) all help and keep us going!

We look forward to Spring and hope you can make it to the AGM on 17th April.

Deadline for next edition 8th May

See back page for contact details

Membership

Since the last newsletter in December, 12 new members have joined us! A warm welcome to you and thanks to them and all our members for your support.

Membership is currently 305 and 1 group

Those who join or renew their membership by **Paypal** will receive a reminder via their Paypal account 12 months from the date of joining. You can opt for Paypal if you wish, information is on the website.

Pauline Fisher
Membership Secretary

(The previous highest membership was 299 members in 2006/7. Ed)

Friends Forum Meetings

We thought you may not be aware - and might be interested to know - that the above meeting is held quarterly for Committee representatives of all the Friends groups in Cardiff. Sheila, Martin and I attended the January meeting.

Did you know there are 19 such groups in Cardiff? They vary in size and the types of green spaces they represent. Friends of Forest Farm are fortunate to have a high membership; some groups have less than 10 members. The Friends Forum comes together with the Rangers and Wardens and Nicola Hutchinson, Parks Conservation Officer. The Chair is shared around the Friends groups and the minutes taken by Chris Powell (who some of you will know) - former Conservation Officer and now retired. We all report on the progress, or otherwise, of recent work undertaken and proposed in each park area.

Not all Friends groups are able to be present at every meeting, but all can send in a report and there is now a quarterly newsletter which will help with networking between the groups. Also, the Rangers have a face book page 'Wild About Cardiff' which is informative for sharing sightings and to advertise events.

It is very interesting to hear the work done and the specialities, plant and animal, that can be found at the different sites. We are so fortunate to have these green oases and without the enthusiasm of the members, much would be lost.

Not all groups have a web site but can be contacted through nhutchinson@cardiff.gov.uk or post to Park Services, Wedal Rd, Cardiff CF14 3QX

Rosemary Waters

Reserve Report

Paul Davies, Park Ranger

We have had a period of high rainfall and snow in the last few weeks and this has led to an increased amount of tree damage not only on the Reserve but throughout Cardiff. The wet snow has caused a lot of branches to snap off too, so this has added to the workload.

The Community Rangers have again been helping with work in the Wetlands and they are planning to install some kingfisher nest boxes in the area.

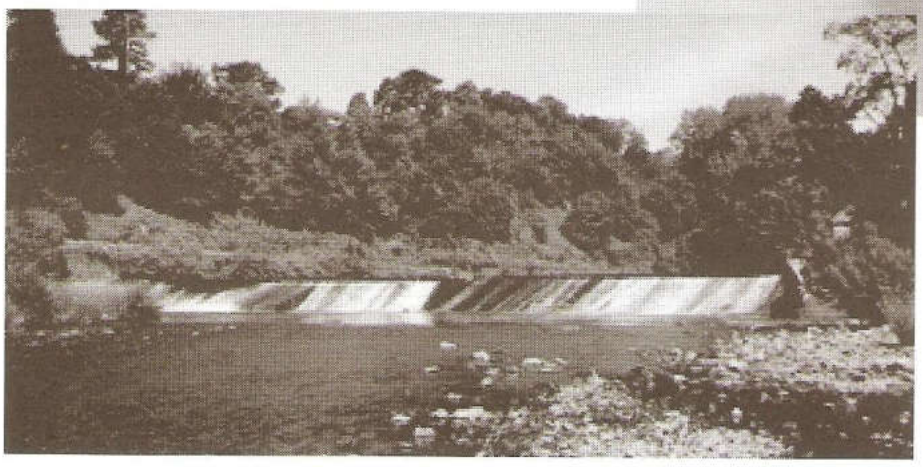
We are currently looking for a supply of barley straw to put in the three main ponds.This reduces the level of algae in the water - wheat straw does not have the same effect.

From the first pond, a family of kingfishers (one male, one female and a juvenile) was seen with the adult regurgitating a bolus of bones/fish matter. There was also a reported sighting from one of the hides of a lesser spotted woodpecker.

The heronry overlooking the grounds of Coryton House has been active recently. A couple in the bird hide spotted approximately 20 circling overhead this week!



Finally, an otter was seen in the feeder towards Radyr weir but it is not known whether it was a male or female.



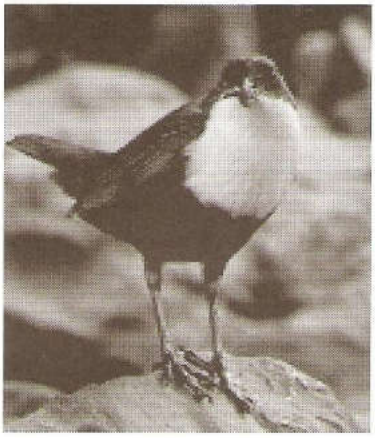
p.s. Selective felling of an area within Forest Ganol has been carried out by the Rangers and Biodiversity Team to open up the canopy and encourage ... diversity and an uneven aged tree population.

Two hawfinch seen over Forest Ganol too!!

Nature Walks on Forest Farm
November 2012 - February 2013

Stella Wells

"Dull November brings the blast
Then the leaves are whirling fast"



Well November was certainly a dull month and we had drizzle for much of the walk, but this didn't deter the 20 or so people who turned up. We were treated to prolonged views of the dipper (bronwen y dwr) and a kingfisher. It was great to see a song thrush which is a rare treat for some of us. Other species braving the weather were dunnocks, mallard, bull finches, jays, herons and the various members of the tit family. Lovely views of the handsome nuthatch and robin helped to brighten our morning.



"Chill December brings the sleet
Blazing fire and Christmas treat"

A dry morning and an escape from the yule tide preparations. The highlight of the walk was time spent in the hide watching a kingfisher posing for binoculars and cameras. Even I managed to get a halfway decent photograph! Again we saw the dipper and a little grebe as well as the usual birds.

"January brings the snow
Makes our feet and fingers glow"

Yes, we had snow this month and it was fairly deep and crisp on the day of the walk. I managed to get there by train, though crossing the bridge was a bit precarious! I was correct in thinking that no one would be daft enough to turn up. Anyway, the show must go on.

The first bird I spotted was a sparrow hawk flying over the visitor centre frightening off some of the smaller birds. The redwings in the field seemed untroubled by it as they searched for food. I sat in the hide with my flask of



coffee but the only bird to show was a moorhen. Just as I thought it was time to move, a robin and a blackbird joined me in the hide as if sensing that I was feeling a bit lonely.



"February brings the rain
Thaws the frozen lakes again"

This month fourteen joined me for our ramble around the site. We were blessed with misty sunshine and it felt quite mild. Great, long tailed, blue and coal tits were actively searching for food. Dunnocks, robins and chaffinches were also abundant.



Three statuesque herons stood motionless in a field and we enjoyed wonderful views of six snipe from the hide. A pair of teal were also on the pond, the male's plumage looking stunning in the sunshine. Small flocks of goldfinches perched at the top of trees, bringing on a case of twitchers' neck, and good views were had of male and female reed buntings near the Visitor Centre.

The promise of spring in the form of celandines and snowdrops added to the enjoyable morning. I look forward to March and the 'rustle of spring'.

Unless otherwise stated, all the photos in this edition are from a cd of 'Forest Farm Original Pictures As supplied by Members' - most of which are not attributed to the photographer. They are not from these walks or necessarily taken at this time of year. Ed)

FRIENDS OF FOREST FARM

COACH TRIP TO SLIMBRIDGE W.W.T. ON SATURDAY 15th JUNE 2013

8.30 am. The coach will arrive and park in the lay by in front of Bethany Baptist Church in Heol Llanishen Fach, Rhiwbina. Cars can be parked by arrangement in the rear Church car park or in the side road opposite the lay by.
8.45 am. The coach will depart and travel to entrance of the Deri Inn car park.
8.50 am. The coach will pick up at the Deri Inn. It will then travel along Heol Y Deri to the lay-by in front of Canolfan Beulah.
8.55 am. The coach will pick up Canolfan Beulah and then travel via the Monico lights, to Penlline Road, outside Whitchurch High School.
9.05 am. The coach will pick up at the School and then travel northwards to the bus stop opposite the Holly Bush at Coryton.
9.15 am. The coach will pick up at the Holly Bush and travel direct to SLIMBRIDGE.
10.30 am. We arrive at the SLIMBRIDGE WETLAND CENTRE which is situated right alongside the Severn Estuary.

During the day the following options will be available for you at this 800 acre site.

At 11.00am there is a 1 hour guided tour for all visitors.
At **11.30am** we have arranged for the first 25 people who book to have a private guided tour. At **11.30am and 3pm** there is an Otter talk. At 2.15pm there will be the Toad Hall talk on amphibians and their habits, you will even be able to hold some of them. Shelduck and Mute Swans should be appearing on site. As you walk around the grounds and visit the hides you will be able to spot wading birds, dragonflies, grass snakes, hares, and wetland mammals.

Enjoy fabulous meals and snacks at the Water's Edge restaurant and see the fantastic view of the flock of Caribbean flamingos. Visit the art gallery & gift shop.

4.45 pm. We shall depart from SLIMBRIDGE and travel back direct to our Whitchurch and Rhiwbina pick up locations. We expect to be back around 6pm.

If you would like to come on this trip please complete the tear off slip below and send it, together with your **cheque made out to The Friends of Forest Farm**, to Mr. D.Hockridge at 5, Clos Cromwell, Rhiwbina, Cardiff. CF14 6QN, **together with a STAMPED, self-addressed envelope, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Should you have any queries please contact Duncan by telephone (Cardiff 20626111) or email (duncan3@hotmail.co.uk). Everyone is welcome to join us on this trip. You do not have to be a Member of Friends.

You will receive a confirmation of your booking, with your seat numbers.

See opposite page for the booking slip

Sightings on 13th Jan

I am happy to pass on the delight of one of the 'Friends' at sightings of various birds whilst on the Reserve on 13th January. Roger Hampton rang me to pass on his absolute pleasure in seeing a kingfisher catching a fish on the canal, not only that but then he also saw a buzzard on the ground near the new allotment plot and finally 2 male and 3 female goosanders on the Taff.





On several visits to the Reserve recently and chatting with people, various walkers have reported seeing kingfisher - they give such pleasure. Also, on joining the Whitchurch WI on their birdwalk recently, we spotted a little grebe in winter plumage - also on the canal. A first for me at Forest Farm and I was glad of more learned companions identifying it there and then.

Sheila Austin

Please tear off slip below **Please tear off slip below**

.....

SLIMBRIDGE Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust - SATURDAY 15th JUNE 2013

Name ..... **Address** .....

..... **Post Code** .....

Tele ..... **Email**.....

Please book me the following places for this coach trip

..... No. Adult/s on coach at £13 = £ .....
..... No. Children (under 12) on coach at £1 = £ .....
..... No. Adults/s Slimbridge entry fee at £9 (WWT membersFREE) = £ .....
..... No. Adult/s over 65 years/students/unemployed entry fee £7 = £ .....
..... No. Children Slimbridge entry fee at £5 = £ .....

I enclose cheque payable to Friends of Forest Farm for a total of = £.....

I /we wish to be picked up at Bethany**, the Deri**, Canolfan Beulah**, the High School** the Holly Bush**. ****Please circle desired pick up location**5**

Please list the names and addresses of persons, other than yourself, who you are booking for, on the reverse of this form.

Please remember to enclose a stamped S.A.E. for confirmation.

Footpaths At Forest Farm

The almost continuous rain over the last year has had a major impact on the footpaths throughout the Reserve. In the top meadow, we have had to close a footpath due erosion and the state of the surface. We will be laying a new woodchip surface and redirecting some footpaths to give them a chance to recover.

The footpaths around the canal and Reserve will require re-laying with new stone chipping etc and we will undertake these repairs when we have volunteer days throughout the spring and summer. We undertake these tasks so that we will not be disturbing the wildlife at this important time.

We have taken photographs of the footpaths during high rainfall so we can concentrate our resources on the worst areas. This is important as we want to keep the Reserve open to all - especially those with mobility issues.

If you can help us with these projects please come along to our volunteering events usually the second Sunday of each month.

Martin Chamberlain

'Friends'

Volunteering Days

usually
2nd Sunday monthly
10.00 a.m. to 12.30 approx

Meet at the Wardens Centre
Forest Farm Road

10th March

14th April

12th May

9th June

Check out the day's activity on the website
www.forestfarm.org.uk

or call Martin on
07952926145

This photo of the top meadow was taken by Martin late January 2013



A Talk by Jenny Howell

This was the January talk missed off the programme so I am indebted to John for the following article. Ed)

How many of us have an apple tree in our back garden, a blackberry bush in the back lane or seen a pear tree in an open space? There are thousands of fruits and vegetables going to waste in the City. The hope is to organise a City-wide harvest to make the most of this produce and put it to good use. It is not just in people's back gardens but parks and plots of land dotted throughout the the city.

That's the beauty of nature; seeds get dropped in back lanes and disused plots, fruit trees are very hardy and will grow in some unusual places.

A community harvest will provide fruit for school projects and fresh fruit for community projects, such as the "Apple Day" run last year in Riverside. There was little fruit about last year but children and parents came to Clare Gardens and managed to make apple juice.

Nobody likes to see a harvest going to waste and it is a great way of promoting eating more fruit and making sure all those unwanted apples don't end up rotting away.

Speaking to Jenny after the talk, we discussed having an Apple Day at Forest Farm which would be in October on a different week-end to that of Riverside.

Many thanks to Jenny and all the work she puts into the projects.

John Harding

(For those interested in knowing more about this project, you can look on the web www.orchardcardiff.org.uk where you can take part in a fruit tree survey, view their map, the facebook page or find other links)

'Orchard Cardiff'

A pruning demonstration.

Following on from the talk to the Friends, I mentioned it on my CFFOURTEEN UPDATE email service. This resulted in an enquiry from Hugh Payne, a resident in Pantmawr, Rhiwbina who kindly offered the use of his rear garden for a pruning demonstration. I contacted Jenny who arranged to bring along her friend and local expert Aisling.

9 turned up including the other Friends Committee Members John Harding and Pauline Fisher. We had a very informative demonstration followed by a good 'hands on' session with the secateurs and saws.

Not wanting to waste this opportunity, 6 of us went on to our orchard at Forest Farm where Aisling gave us another 90 min. demonstration, helping us to prune 6 of the trees. We will continue the pruning as and when we can.

One important point we were given was that now it is recommended to provide mulch to the trees - by cutting away a 2ft. radius of turf from around each tree, then laying some cardboard on top of the cleared area, replacing the turfs back on top of the cardboard *with the turf facing downwards*.
We all enjoyed our time on this project and are now looking to maybe having an APPLE DAY at the Wardens Centre on Saturday 14th October. At that time we will be hoping to bring a large apple press from Victoria Park - anyone can bring apples and take away their own juice.

Watch this space for further details. Please send an e-mail or letter now to register your interest.

Duncan Hockridge

Cardiff and District RSPB Group
Conservation Group

Doing Something Positive

Our last visit to the Reserve in November 2012 was rained off completely, something that does not often happen to us. It was a month of rain ... any chance of making a final check and cleaning the nest boxes was out of the question, only one other person turned out to brave the elements, that was Paul H.

January 2013 ... After a week of snow, the prospect of doing any work on the Reserve seemed fairly slim, then the 'Big Thaw' came to our rescue. After heavy rain in the evening Saturday morning greeted us with a bright and clear sky - hardly any snow covering the ground. We tackled a job that had needed to be done for a long time. Twice a year we check our nest boxes, the problem with doing this task was that we need to battle through thick undergrowth in some places - not all that easy with a ladder and tools etc. The morning task went smoothly, we now have a clear corridor through the thicket. Only a small turn out though not surprising considering the weather. Paul Pinnell, one of the Wardens on the Reserve, will be joining our regular work parties to bring his expertise to the group.

****

Conservation work will be held on the coming Saturday mornings 10:30 to 12:30p.m. at Forest Farm, Longwood Drive, Whitchurch.

March 30th	Clearing undergrowth/checking for dumped rubbish Middle entrance
April 27th	Cutting first flush of knotweed Middle entrance
May 25th	Wildflower and nest box survey Middle entrance

****

The group works for a few hours during the morning roughly once a month. it is not particularly strenuous work, similar to an active gardener (you work to your own level) If you feel you would like to get involved --- just turn up or better still, give me a ring.

***Hugh Harrison* 029 20704889**

Wednesday
20th March 7.30p.m.
Whitchurch Community Centre

Evening talk by Nicola Hutchinson, Cardiff Parks Dept "My role in the Reserve's management and its future."

Both Nicola and Alec work closely with the *Friends* for the benefit of the Reserve. Both should be excellent evenings! You're very welcome.

Don't forget the A.G.M. and evening talk on ***Photography and Wildlife by Alec Stewart Ranger, Cardiff Parks Dept.***

Wednesday 17th April 7.30p.m.
Whitchurch Community Centre

A Top Attraction !!

Matt (our webmaster) was recently notified of the following

Hello,

My name is Caz and I've been doing some work with Visit Wales lately, helping them put together some city guides for their site. The guides were created largely via contributions from top local bloggers, who offered their favourite picks in different categories.

I wanted to let you know that Forest Farm was featured as one of the top attractions in Cardiff. We've included some info and a link over to your site on the guide, which you can have a look at here:http://www.visitwales.co.uk/short-breaks/city-breaks/cardiff/If you are able to share the link to the guide via your website/Facebook/Twitter etc. that would be fantastic, hopefully helping us to bring more people to Cardiff and Forest Farm. Let me know if you have any questions.

Many thanks, Caz

Caroline AdlingtonDigital

Apology

September 2012 edition: I got the wrong attribution to the excellent photo of the bittern on P11. It was Grahame Clarke. Sorry.

I must also apologise to Stella Wells for omitting her name from her report in the December edition and to you all for omitting the January evening talk on Cardiff Orchard from Events. Fortunately, through the wonders of the web, email and the usual posters, we managed to get a reasonable audience for our speaker; see and the report on P8.

Sheila Austin

EVENTS - MARCH to JUNE 2013

Date	Event
Sunday 10th March 10.00 - 12.30 approx	**Friends Volunteering Event.** Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. See website or ring Martin for details (07952926145)
Saturday 16th March 10.00 - 12.30	**Monthly Nature Walk around the Reserve with the RSPB.** Meet Stella at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch
Wednesday 20th March **19.30**	**Evening Talk "My role in the Reserve's management and its Future" Nicola Hutchinson** Parks Conservation Officer, Cardiff Parks Dept. at Whitchurch Community Centre, Ty'n y Pwll Rd Whitchurch.
Saturday 30th March 10.30 - 12.30	**Volunteering Event - Cardiff Conservation Group.** Clearing undergrowth/checking for dumped rubbish. Meet at Longwood Drive Whitchurch. see P9 for details
Saturday 30th March 10.00 - 12.00	***Wildlife Watch Club - for children aged 8 - 12 years. Easter Activities.*** Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd. Whitchurch. Contact Kevin or Gareth on 02920 445903; email: communityparkrangers@cardiff.gov.uk

EVENTS - MARCH to JUNE 2013 cont'd

Date	Event
Sunday 14th April 10.00 - 12.3 approx	*Friends* **Volunteering Event.** Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. See website or ring Martin for details (07952926145)
Wednesday 17th April 19.30	**AGM followed by Evening Talk on Photograpy and Wildlife by Alec Stewart,** Ranger, Cardiff Parks Dept. at Whitchurch Community Centre, Ty'n y Pwll Rd Whitchurch.
Saturday 20th April 10.00 - 12.30	**Monthly Nature Walk around the Reserve with the RSPB.** Meet Stella at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch
Saturday 27th April 10.30 - 12.30	**Volunteering Event - Cardiff Conservation Group.** Cutting first flush of knotweed. Meet at Longwood Drive Whitchurch. see P9 for details
Saturday 27th April 10.00 - 12.00	***Wildlife Watch Club - for children aged 8 - 12 years. Continuing work on the herb garden.*** Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd. Whitchurch. Contact Kevin or Gareth on 02920 445903; email: communityparkrangers@cardiff.gov.uk
Sunday 12th May 10.00 - 12.30 approx	*Friends* **Volunteering Event.** Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. See website or ring Martin for details (07952926145)
Wednesday 15th May 18.00	**Foods of the Forest.** A stroll around Forest Farm, then a tasting session of some delicious delicacies. £3 per person. ALL CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT. Wardens Centre, forest Farm Rd.
Saturday 18th May 10.00 - 12.00	**Monthly Nature Walk around the Reserve with the RSPB.** Meet Stella at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch
Saturday 25th May 10.00 - 12.00	***Wildlife Watch Club - for children aged 8 - 12 years. Junior photography workshop***. Please bring a camera if you have one Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Rd. Whitchurch. Contact Kevin or Gareth on 02920 445903; email: communityparkrangers@cardiff.gov.uk
Saturday 25th May 10.30 - 12.00	**Volunteering Event - Cardiff Conservation Group.** Wildflower and nestbox survey. Meet at Longwood Drive Whitchurch. see P 9. for details
Sunday 26th May 10.30	Spring wildlife and " The Railway to Nowhere".Natural history/industrial history walk through the former farmland and remains of the Cardiff Railway - now important wildlife habitats at **Forest Farm** LNR. Meet Chris James at the Wardens Centre. Refreshments will be provided by Friends of Forest Farm.
Sunday 9th June 10.00 - 12.30 approx	*Friends* **Volunteering Event.** Meet at the Wardens Centre Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch. See website or ring Martin for details (07952926145)

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 email: sheila@forestfarm.org.uk
The Editor wishes to state that all views expressed by contributors are their own, as is the responsibility for them.

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