

CNS



CARDIFF NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Founded 1867

NEWSLETTER NO 94

June 2012

Charity No 1092496

<http://www.cardiffnaturalists.org.uk>

<http://cardiffnaturalists.blogspot.com/>

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Four-Spotted Chaser (<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>), Karen Francis
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PRESIDENTIAL AMBLINGS

It was good to be able to represent the Society at two important events. The first was at the launch of the exhibition, entitled ‘Inspirational Botanists – Women of Wales’ which marked the contribution of women to botanical science in Wales in the past 200 years. The excellent National Botanic Garden of Wales organised this outstanding celebration of scientific research.

The 13 botanists celebrated in the exhibition, with their specific links to Wales, and Dr Mary Gillham, was one of the botanists honoured. The exhibition featured 13 women either born or educated in Wales, or whose main body of work has been done in this country. Visitors had the chance to read about their lives and see photographs, objects and the images of plants associated with them. The exhibition will tour Wales and also can be viewed at the National Eisteddfod held in the Vale of Glamorgan at Llandow in August.

The Garden Director, Dr Rosie Plummer, said: “Women’s contribution to science has so often been overlooked, therefore it is excellent we are able to show the career paths of amateurs and professionals alike and what can be achieved.”

The latest outing was at our stand at the Unknown Wales conference in the National Museum. We had the first showing of our new display boards. We distributed our summer season programme which included a membership application form. This was the start of our campaign to attract new members by attending public events. Andy had put together a professional display and we engaged with the public to entice them to join us.

Also Andy and I did an interview with the Museum ‘reporter’. So we are now recorded for posterity. We learnt a few lessons and hopefully our next will build on our experiences. The conference was ‘an opportunity to explore the wonders of Welsh Wildlife’ and attracted around 200 people.

Chris Franks

Field Meetings Summer 2012

Please check the website for any late changes to the programme
Mobile on the day only 07847 5600027

Saturday 9th June
Start Time 10am

Whiteford, Gower
All day (packed lunch)

This is a chance to find out about beetles in the company of Steve Bolchover, county recorder for *Coleoptera*. Whiteford is a National Nature Reserve with 400 hectares of sand dune along with beach, salt marsh and former glacial moraine. There are no facilities but there is a small shop in nearby Llanmadoc that does teas and coffees and has a toilet. Park in the car park at Cwm Ivy (Honesty box) SS 435 935. To get there go through Llanmadoc passing the church on your left and shortly after look out for the car park on your right.

Sunday 1st July
Start Time 9.30am

Cowbridge Singingstone
All Day (packed lunch)

A leisurely stroll along the Thaw Valley and over fields of the Millennium Trail to explore midsummer wildlife in the Vale of Glamorgan led by Linda and Rob Nottage. We'll be looking for Nettle-leaved Bellflower, Wild Basil and Musk Mallow and, weather permitting, a range of insects. Some of the 6 mile walk will be on country lanes and there are a number of stiles to be negotiated. Meet in car park behind Cowbridge Town Hall SS997743.

Wednesday 11th July
Start time 6.30pm

Coed-y-Felyn, Lisvane
Evening

Mike Dean is arranging this gentle stroll through the old woodlands of Coed-y-Felyn, Lisvane. The local Ranger will be available to act as a guide, together with representatives of the 'Local Friends Group'. The intention is to meet at the **Heol Cefn Onn Entrance** to the woods **at 6:30 pm**. (The southern end of road (ST 182 830) park on the road but obviously do not block access to any property) The walk will be about 1.5 hours duration with easy walking of 1-2 miles through this 5 hectare site of ancient semi-natural woodland that includes an area of Herb Paris. Then there will be the opportunity to adjourn to the Old School

Community Centre (ST 190 831) for a cup of tea / coffee and a short presentation on the history of the woods and the 'Old Mill', which will be given by representatives of the 'Friends Group'. The timings may be adjusted to accommodate the vagaries of the British weather.

Saturday 18th August

Start time 10am

(NOTE DATE CHANGE)

Leckwith Woods

All day

A chance to find out about slugs and snails in the company of Ben Rowson who is a mollusc specialist at the National Museum of Wales. This will be of interest to both those with little knowledge as well as ecologists and other professionals. We shall meet at Trelai Park and walk through to Leckwith Woods – around 2-3 miles in total. Meet in the car park of Trelai Park in Caerau at ST 145 763.

Editorial

At a recent CNS council meeting which we had to discuss programme, Bruce once again reiterated his intention to stand down as field meetings secretary, a role he has done for 10 years now.

Council agreed that it would be churlish of us to ask him to do any more than the service he has already done for the society and therefore we will be honouring his request to stand down whether we get another volunteer or not and therefore the trips you see to our left may well be the last that we do.

It does not have to be a single person and you do not have to be at every event as we will have leaders, and we will all pull together to help.

We have a number of people in the group who have done this role and can tell you that we are all here to help and that we pull together as a team to make it a non onerous job, but without a focus it's not possible to be organised.

For the good of the society and to help yourselves we do need a new Field Meeting Secretary so please think about it and be willing to say yes when one of us asks.

Deadline for next newsletter 15th August 2012

Ogmore Geology and Landscape

Andy Kendall

Steve Howe laid on perfect weather for 15 of us to enjoy a fabulous walk on a warm day that would have seemed fine in May rather than it being the 25th of February. The walk was to be around the Ogmore headland taking a route inland towards Beacons Down and then back along the coast. Part of the route is covered in Steve's book "Walking the Rocks" published by the SWGA and co-authored with Geraint Owen and Tom Sharpe.

Starting off at the small car park before you get to the headland, we headed in-land up a dry valley and were presented with our first challenge of the day from Steve who wanted to help us understand the landscape through visual study and interpretation rather than just hearing a description from himself.



So when we had worked out the fact it was limestone and therefore the water was now running underground we were then challenged to come up with ideas on why the water had been flowing on the surface at all in order to create this tranquil valley. The answer of course was ice and the valley dated from the ice age when permafrost prevented underground water flows.



We saw the water flowing at one point where it appeared at a covered well part way up the path. The water here was clear and looked fine, although none of us actually tried it for taste.

Moving on from the dry valley we reached the "hilltop" and Steve explained how the land surface here was flat because it



had been a former erosion surface that was then uplifted and was now being incised by new rivers.

Once we reached the coast we were able to see this more clearly with some of the dry valleys cutting through these Jurassic aged rocks clearly visible close to the coast.

From here we made our way towards Ogmore where we were able to look at some of the older rocks here, and we explored the relationship between the Carboniferous rocks that we are standing on in the picture below and the Jurassic aged rocks which Steve is pointing out.

This is a time gap of about 150 Million years and yet it takes a careful eye to pick out the unconformity in this area because the two rock types are visibly similar and there is very little angular unconformity between the overlying and basement rocks.



If you look at the fossils you can see a difference and in one locality bypassed by the main group, but known to Steve and pointed out to me there are some very impressive corals in the rocks. I had never seen these before as in all the walks I had done in Ogmore I had never sought out that single layer of rock.

A very fine day indeed, a real treat of a day and a lesson that even the most familiar place can bring new enjoyment when taken there by an expert.



Spring Walk in Bute Park 18th April 2012

Linda Nottage

I was asked by one of our members – Jane Williams – if I would lead a wildlife walk in Bute Park for the Friends Group there. We settled on a mid-week morning, hoping for fine weather. Heavy overnight rain and black clouds at breakfast-time didn't bode well but in the event we were lucky and set off from the new Education Centre in sunshine with only a light shower before mid-day.

We took a circular route northwards along the riverbank to Blackweir, returning beside the dock feeder canal. The Taff was swollen and brown with abundant floating debris, quite different from my recce the previous Sunday when the river was low and clear.

Despite unpromising conditions, a heron was soon spotted on the far bank and some saw 2 pairs of goosander fly downstream. As usual, mallard were present and a rhythmic creaking sound alerted us to mute swans in flight. A grey wagtail bobbed among the detritus and a dipper flew into the fish pass at Blackweir while the usual lesser black-backed gulls loafed around looking for scraps.

Wildflowers were abundant under the trees – ramsons, lesser celandines, dog's mercury, red campion, wild arum and wood anemones. There were patches of garlic mustard and white deadnettle too as well as a clump of the strange parasitic toothwort. We examined the widespread bluebells and although many were our native species, some were Spanish aliens or hybrids thereof. Speaking of aliens, the ground was carpeted with seedlings of Himalayan balsam which Jane hopes the Friends will try to pull up in the summer before they set seed. Japanese knotweed, another invasive alien, also poses problems.

Birdsong was notable in the riverside trees from robins, wrens, blackbirds, chiffchaffs and blackcaps. A goldcrest afforded close views as it flitted among the bushes and we heard the wheezing calls of greenfinches. Long-tailed, blue, and great tits were spotted as well as a nuthatch, and later a pair of treecreepers spiralled up the soft bark of a Wellingtonia.

The loud ringing call of a green woodpecker was heard only once, near the

feeder canal, although Sunday's visit had also afforded views of its great spotted relative.

We paused to admire a clump of lady's smocks near the start of the canal. An eagle-eyed member of the group noticed the well-camouflaged butterfly clinging to the flowers. The obliging insect, too chilled to fly, allowed close examination and even opened its wings to show the colourful patches which identified it as a male orange-tip. No other insects were in evidence although in Sunday's sunshine I had seen a speckled wood butterfly and common carder bee.



Molehills in various places indicated the widespread presence of these animals but the only mammal we saw was a grey squirrel. Jelly ear on a fallen log was the only fungus we could identify with certainty although other bracket species were present.

We returned to our starting point for a welcome cup of coffee and remarked on how fortunate Cardiff residents are to have such a wonderful wildlife and recreational resource in the heart of the city.



Editors note

Bute Park is a very special place as we all know, and I love to take pictures there as you can see.

For those of you who were there when we had a member of Iolo Williams TV production company visit us and invite us to provide suggestions and ideas for programme content and invited us to take part. We can only say that despite prompting from us, nothing more has been heard. Unfortunately this is often the way with the media.

WILD PEAR

Bruce McDonald

Sometimes we need a bit of a prod to do things slightly differently. A footpath near Wenvoe takes you close to a sizeable copse but I had never bothered to deviate from the path and look at it more closely – not until a new Development Plan scheduled the area for housing and local residents suddenly started getting interested in wildlife in the hope that Dormice and Great-crested Newts were frolicking in the undergrowth.

Immediately, however, one's attention was drawn to some pear-shaped fruit lying on the ground in significant numbers. They were small and as hard as rocks and some sported incisor marks which had clearly failed to penetrate the skin. This was late February by which time most fruit lying on the ground would have been softened by frosts. It was not obvious from which tree or trees the fruit had come – there were no leaves and there were many possible candidates.



Wild Pear Fruit



Wild Pear calyx

Wild Pear, *Pyrus pyraster*, seemed a possibility so how to establish if this was the case? We had planted *Pyrus pyraster* in our 'wild' orchard and the assumption was that this was our native pear just as the Crabapple is our indigenous apple. Various experts were consulted and the consensus was that it was unlikely. There were no recent records of *P. pyraster* in the area and it was thought that varieties of perry pears were also often small and hard. One characteristic suggested is that the wild pear has a persistent calyx. Judge for yourself whether the calyx in the photo is persistent.

But what about the origin of the tree in the UK landscape? Many websites

and books promote the view that the tree was introduced by the Romans or later but no less an authority than Oliver Rackham points to the existence of Wild Pear charcoal in Neolithic excavations. However, others argue that this is not proof that it is native – rather that it was introduced by early farmers and those that are found in the wild would have escaped from cultivation. This makes them archaeophytes – plant species introduced before 1492.



Wild Pear blossom

Research, much of it from Eastern Europe where the trees are more widespread, indicate a high degree of variability in the fruit and leaf structures making it difficult to differentiate from the edible pear. One paper concluded that the fruit were generally more apple-shaped than pear-shaped – again, take a look at the photos.



Spine on Wild Pear

The key differentiator most seem to agree on is the presence of spines on *P. pyrastrer* just as our native crabapple can be identified through its spines. By mid April in the copse two or three trees were displaying pear-like blossom with one trunk conveniently growing horizontally and thereby allowing access to the blossom and topmost branches. And, yes, there were spines as can be seen in the photo – not many but even a few should be diagnostic. Samples of

leaves, blossom and a spine were taken and now form part of the National Herbarium collection.

So is it *P. pyrastrer*? The evidence so far suggests it is probable but experience also suggests the need for caution. Views from readers would be most welcome.

FIELD TRIP TO PARC TREDELERCH

Bruce McDonald

A modest-sized group – well, just 3 of us – gathered at this park off Lamby Way, Cardiff on Saturday 28th of May, to try to add a few species to the lists already compiled by Cardiff Naturalists' members over the last decade or two. Having had some torrential downpours on our last visit in the Autumn we were hoping for better weather this time but the temperature was so low that it immediately scuppered our plans to find some spring insects such as Brimstones or Orange Tips.



Rob and Linda by the river

However with Rob and Linda Nottage on the case we notched up a further 32 species on the day that had not been recorded by Cardiff Nats previously.

Despite the cold (it was around 9 degrees Celsius) about 10 Swallows were patrolling the lake no doubt missing their African winter pastures. Almost immediately a Cetti's Warbler produced our first new species of the day and later we, unusually, had a good view of one. In fact 10 of the day's new species were birds including both Sand and Housemartins.



Marsh Marigold

The great advantage of this park is the variety of different habitats including lake, river, saltmarsh, meadow and thicket. So a good tally of warblers is likely – we had Willow and Reed Warblers and Chiffchaff – but equally ducks and waders can put in an appearance and we had both Tufted Duck and Common Sandpiper.

On the botany front we picked up a selection of plants that would appear commonplace in the Spring but which would be less noticeable later in the year when previous visits had taken place. These included Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris* and Lady's Smock *Cardamine pratensis*.



Insects, predictably, were not in evidence but indirectly an example of the gall Robins Pincushion or Bedeguar Gall showed the presence of *Diplolepis rosae*. From the previous visit we added *Pantilius tunicatus* which had taken a while to identify.

Pantilius tunicatus

Snails were everywhere but particularly favouring the Broad-leaved Docks, *Rumex obtusifolius*, which appeared very large and were clearly enjoying the growing conditions.

The snails were mainly the Kentish Snail, *Monacha cantiana* and both Brown, *Cepaea nemoralis* and White-lipped, *Cepaea hortensis*, Banded snails with a smattering of Garden Snails, *Helix aspersa*. The other relatively common snail was the Strawberry Snail, *Trichia striolata* or now *Trochulus striolatus*. Our grand total has now reached a respectable 292 species.

Editors note

Looking back in the records it was June 2000 that Rhian and I first took a recce trip at the request of Chris Powell of the Parks Development team, to be followed up twice more that year with the wider membership. This was to get a baseline before development of the lake took place and we visited again in 2004 after the work was done.

We were not able to be there on this trip, but the records have been added to our CNS list for the site and we are really happy to see that the site is developing well since the change.

CNS Bird Survey: A Preliminary Report.

Terry Hoy

With only two weeks between closure of the survey and the deadline for this Newsletter a full analysis of the data has not been possible. However, after sorting the results in a simple way some statements of potential interest to members can be made at this juncture. The response to date has been sixteen returns which, allowing for family membership, represents about one third of the society. Thirteen of these came by post and three electronically.

All were providing food for the birds which begs the question of whether this represents the society at large or have we attracted the specific attention of our bird-lovers?

From the distribution of postcodes and garden descriptions another limitation is apparent. Almost all responses concerned mature gardens (14/16) situated in the outskirts of cities (15/16). We do, however, have a good spread of small, medium and large gardens with differing habitats in their vicinities together with a mixture of cats, dogs and squirrels.

A total of thirty five species were recorded with individual reports listing 26,23,19,18,16,14,13,13,12,12,11,9,9,9,8 and 7.

Top bird was the ubiquitous blackbird featuring in all sixteen returns closely followed by blue and great tits (15), house sparrow (14), magpie and robin (13), wood pigeon (12), collared dove and dunnock (11), coal tit (10), jackdaw (9), chaffinch and starling (8), greenfinch and goldfinch (7), gulls (6), carrion crow (5), nuthatch, wren, bullfinch and jay (4), long-tailed tit, great spotted woodpecker and song thrush (3), feral pigeon and buzzard (2) with single reports of pied wagtail, sparrow hawk, mallard, green woodpecker, goldcrest, blackcap, linnet, chiffchaff, pheasant and house martin.

In spite of the limited response one environment appears particularly important to the number of species recorded with three of the top five gardens being adjacent to woodland. None of the lower eleven were adjacent to woodland but eight of these reported woods nearby.

Having set up a spread sheet for this survey further analysis can be contemplated and the exercise would be easy to repeat if requested. Suggestions are more than welcome.

The response rate was somewhat disappointing as it had been assumed that even if members were not 'bird' people, by nature of being in Cardiff Naturalist's, some interest must be presumed to be present. Even a return with a few comments such as I live in a flat but regularly see..... would have been more useful than a nil return.

Many thanks to Linda Morris for preparing the survey and to all of you who responded.

LATE RETURNS ARE STILL WELCOME!

Unknown Wales

Andy Kendall

In the last Newsletter we told you that we had invested in some display stands for use at the Unknown Wales event and at any other events that people thought we should be represented at in a professional manner.

As Chris has already commented we had a good stand and despite not being able to sell the books we took along (some strange rule of the museum's) we did attract a lot of interest and some new members have joined already.

Many thanks to all who helped and welcome to those who have recently joined us. If you would like to borrow the display or suggest an event where we can attract new members please get in touch.

Rhian and Chris manning the stand



SAMPHIRE HOE

Bruce McDonald

You are heading off to France via the cross-channel ferry from Dover and have a few hours to kill. It is early April and you fancy doing a bit of botanising but it is a trifle early in the season. Why not take a look at Samphire Hoe just on the outskirts of Dover and well-signposted off the A20.



This country park at the base of the White Cliffs was in the Channel until the 1980s but when the Channel Tunnel was excavated the challenge was where to put the soil that had been removed – in total some 8.75 million cubic metres of Chalk Marl. Some 5 million was used to create Samphire Hoe, protected by a sea wall and offering a walking circuit of 2 kms. The chalk marl was landscaped and then sown with wildflowers and grasses which already includes Rock Samphire, Vipers Bugloss and Kidney Vetch. Rock Sea-lavender and Nottingham Catchfly provide additional interest but these are for later in the season.



Walk to the western end and alongside the top path you will notice a little gem, Early Spider Orchid, *Ophrys sphegodes*. First one and then another, mainly on the southern side of the path. Can you miss them? In 2011 the count was 7,500. It is a Red Data Book plant and is restricted to Kent, Sussex, Dorset and Hampshire although you could see it on your travels as far away as Corfu. On the Hoe the plants

have been found as high as 45 cms although the ones photographed here were mostly around 10 cms. The tallest on the Hoe have also had up to 17 blooms on the stem.

News and Snippets

A new section for the newsletter which I hope you will all contribute to is this new news and snippets section. We receive a number of short communications via the blog or via email (and indeed letters) and I plan to run some of them here.

Some of the articles will combine the two because I have received some pictures that I think need to be made available for you to look at in more detail than is possible via the small size of the newsletter pages and therefore the first in this section is this fascinating and challenging picture from **Eirian Edwards** who wrote

“I attach a possible photo for the Newsletter. Can you spot 3 Ptarmigan in the attached? Taken in Denali National Park in late August 2006, just as they were going to winter plumage. Don't worry if the image is not good enough - I won't be offended! “

I wasn't and it's a wonderful picture which as you can see to the right here shows the camouflage well, but I can understand if it's a little too much of a challenge so it's available on-line via the CNS blog site at the url below



<http://cardiffnaturalists.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/ptarmigan-in-denali-national-park.html>

The next article in this section comes from **Margaret John** who tells us of a couple of recent sightings

I thought the members might be interested in the photo enclosed. A Raven comes to our garden on the edge of Bridgend every Spring. At one time we had a pond and a Raven used to come down to eat the tadpoles.



We filled in the pond 15 years ago and still a Raven comes at the same time of year and walks around the pond edge. This year I managed to get a photo when it decided to sit on a 27cm diameter bowl in our garden. If its the same Raven its at least 18 years old! Just heard from my neighbour it was on her balcony drinking from a bird-bath today.

By the way, yesterday (8th April) at Parc Slip we found two glow-worm larvae and I did my good deed for the day by taking them from the road and putting them back on the verge.



And Lastly in this section, a note from one of our new members **Karen Francis**

Since retiring last year, I've found time (just) to indulge my interest in natural history and photography. Whilst I'm no great shakes behind the lens, I often take pictures on my walks as an aide-mémoire of the day and last week I started a photo blog. I intend to post photos, mainly of wild flowers in Bute Park, birds at RSPB & WWT outings &c. Just thought I would mention it in case anyone was interested...

<http://butenature.wordpress.com/>

Some **very** nice pictures and I've already subscribed !

Blaenavon, above and below the surface

Andy Kendall

It's almost impossible to find a natural landscape in some parts of South Wales. The one around Pwll Du near Blaenavon is a good example of this,. The landscape is scarred by the evidence of centuries of industrial activity. Rhian led this, our second geological trip of the spring on a fine sunny day with almost perfect weather for exploring the uplands with a few clouds skittering around.

The first section leading off from Keepers Pond covered the Blaen Pig and Canada Tips area above Pwll Du with a walk up into the massive area of slag tips. The area is characterised as an almost 'lunar landscape', of workings with partially vegetated tips across the entire hillside, but within them can be found areas of great interest and even great beauty.



In the 1940s the Canadian Army aided development of opencast mining here which is why they are known as the “Canada Tips”. Opencast coal mining, previously unknown in Britain began in 1941 using machines from the United States and Panama. By 1944, output at the site was 8.65 million tons, almost 5% of Britain's total coal output.



Once the top of the hill had been reached it led across to a small quarry where lunch was taken after admiring sections of fossil trees such as the one to the left that are visible in the Middle Coal Measure sandstones at the top of the sequence

At a number of places within the quarries channel fills can be seen within the rocks showing that we are dealing with a complex sequence of rocks and there are also a number of coal seams intersected at this site, mainly now covered by scree. It is however possible to see the Upper 6 foot, seen as a distinct line of black brash

From the highpoint of the ridge we then headed off down the hillside onto Gilwern Hill and down in the geological sense as well out of the Middle Carboniferous into the Lower.



Gilwern Quarry

Gilwern and Pwll Du quarries are part of the Llanelly Formation of the Carboniferous Limestone. They record a change from predominantly shallow-water marine conditions through a period of changing sea-levels when alternations of marine and non-marine rocks accumulated. Under marine conditions great thicknesses of limestone formed in very shallow (sometimes only metres deep) lime-rich seas. These seas teemed with life; many fossil corals, sea-lillies and brachiopods are found in the rocks of the quarries. Limestones are interbedded with soils and lime crusts (calcretes) which formed on the exposed land surface at times of non-marine conditions, when sea relative level had dropped considerably.

After the quarries Rhian told us of yet another underground marvel because beneath these layers of limestone are others which have significant caves. Ogof Draenen (Cave of Thorns), a once small cave known since the 1970's, but the subject of a cave "dig" by members



of the Morgannwg Caving Club in the early 1990's with a key breakthrough in October 1994 is now 70km+ system.

As it wasn't feasible to take the CNS members into the cave, Rhian had prepared a selection of maps and pictures to describe the system to people so we had a wonderful 10 minutes sitting in the sun whilst she talked to us about it.

Rhian and I surveyed the cave when it was 60m long and were amongst the first people in the new cave. Currently, the cave is the second longest explored in the UK at over 70km and the 31st longest cave in the world.



The cave contains passages of many sizes and chambers as large as St Davids Hall (after which one chamber is known) and has wonderful areas of decorations and of mud formations which are so important to science that cavers tape areas to ensure that they are not trampled on as you can see in one of these pictures.

Another feature are fossil fish spines (*Ctenacanthus major*) which Rhian and I published a paper on in Cave and Karst Science which proved to be useful in exploring the cave because they allowed specific beds of rock to be easily identified by non geologist cavers

All in all a very nice day for a walk in some fantastic scenery and wonderful weather

Pictures by Rhian Kendall and Spenser Drew

Cardiff Naturalists Bioscience Prize 2012

Andy Kendall

For those who were not there on the evening of presentation, we are pleased to be able to tell you that the Cardiff Naturalists' Bioscience prize awarded at Cardiff University in honour of Professor Ursula Henriques has been awarded to Zigmunds Orlovskis. Zigmunds is a student from Latvia, and he is an outstanding recipient of the prize. He was awarded the top mark for his field course report.

Zigmunds went on a freshwater biology field course to France. His project was entitled "Effects of Autochthonous and Allochthonous Primary Production on the Diversity of Invertebrate Feeding Guilds in a River Ecosystem", although he came up with a more user friendly title for the CNS talk!

Zigmunds is very keen on Natural History and has been on a Cardiff Naturalists' outing! which we are very pleased to hear because this prize is intended to encourage the widest possible interest in the natural world and also build a relationship with the student body.



After the presentation he entertained the members with a fascinating presentation with some excellent information, pictures and videos. Once again a real credit to the quality of work that can be produced by a person with real enthusiasm for his subject.

We are proud to be supporting this prize and look forward to 2013 in eager anticipation.

Mary Gillham at the Botanic Gardens

Pictures by Mike Dean and Chris Franks

As reported in prior newsletters and on the blog Dr Gillham was one of the ladies featured in the recent exhibition at the National Botanic Garden of Wales in Carmarthen. Mary was one of the three extant ladies who were able to make the event and was supported by a number of members who were able to accept invitations to the opening event.

Mary receiving due recognition for her lifetimes work in the field of botany on International Women's Day at the National Botanic Gardens of Wales from the Director, Dr Rosie Plummer.

And posing with Mike Dean,



Secretary of the CNS who joined her for the event along with Chris Franks our president.

Most of us know our most illustrious member very well, but for any of our new members who have not yet got to know her Mary has a

long pedigree of welsh studies with a First Class Honours Degree in agriculture in the then University College of Wales, Aberystwyth 1949. PhD from Bangor on the effects of seabirds on the vegetation of islands based on research carried out on the islands off the Pembroke coast.

She then went off lecturing in such places as Exeter and Australia before returning to the then University College, Cardiff: Department of Extra Mural Studies. She has also published a veritable library of excellent books some of which we have for sale via the website.



Bee Fly (*Bombylius major*)
Photographed by Phill Blanning

He commented (in early April) we've had several feeding in the garden during the sunny weather of the last few days

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