



# **CARDIFF NATURALISTS' SOCIETY**

Founded 1867

**NEWSLETTER No. 126**

**September 2022**

Charity No. 1092496

## **LIST OF OFFICERS 2022**

### **President**

Position vacant

### **Secretary**

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### **Treasurer**

Rhian Kendall

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### **Membership Secretary**

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### **Indoor Meetings Secretary**

Hilary Wicks

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### **Field Meetings Coordinator**

Position vacant

### **Newsletter Editor**

Stephen Nottingham

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### **Also on Council**

Mary Salter, Gill Barter, Marie Makepeace, Stephen Howe, Patrizia Donovan



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

[www.facebook.com/groups/CardiffNaturalists](http://www.facebook.com/groups/CardiffNaturalists)

Twitter: @CardiffNats

<http://cardiffnaturalists.blogspot.com>

*Cover photo: Dragonfly in garden pond by Mary Salter.*

## **Outdoor meetings**

### **Cwm Colhuw**

**Saturday 8 October 2022, 10.30 am**

**Organised by Gill Barter**

At this time of year the main flowering season will of course be over, but we may still expect to find something of interest - perhaps grassland fungi or a range of shrubs with berries. We can be sure of interesting seascapes and skiescapes.

Meet at the Cwm Colhuw beach car park, SS956674, South West of Llantwit Major. There is a cafe there but bring lunch if you prefer not to rely on it. There are toilets at the car park. This will be a morning visit with the possibility of extension into the afternoon, depending on the weather and the wishes of the group. We might walk westwards along the coast towards Tresilian Bay or even drive to another venue for the afternoon.

Bring waterproofs, strong footwear and water to drink. There are some steep paths but we will take these slowly or find a way to avoid them. It would be helpful to know whom to expect so ideally please email [gillianbarter@gmail.com](mailto:gillianbarter@gmail.com) and also say if you need a lift or can offer one. Look at the Cardiff Naturalists' website for any additional information nearer the time.

(Low tide on the day will be around 1.15 pm.)

### **Cardiff New Year Birdwatch**

**Sunday 8 January 2023**

This is a provisional date — look out for emails and updates on social media for confirmation and the meeting date and time.

## **Indoor meetings**

We hope to restart indoor meetings either later this year or from January 2023. The meeting rooms we usually use are at Cardiff University.

Upcoming meetings will include:

AGM

Volcanoes and gardening focusing on the La Palma eruption  
Andy Kendal.

**Look out for all the latest information and additions  
to the programme via social media or on our website/  
blog:  
[http://cardiffnaturalists.blogspot.co.uk/p/  
programme.html](http://cardiffnaturalists.blogspot.co.uk/p/programme.html)**

## **Wildlife Trust online talks**

CNS members have been invited to join the online talks organised by the Cardiff Branch of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW) during Autumn 2022.

The topics of these meetings will be:

- Strengthening Biodiversity in Cardiff. This will include contributions from the Local Nature Partnership, Coed Caerdydd and WTSWW.
- The future of sustainable land management and farming in Wales - this will focus on the implications of the Welsh Government's proposals for the arrangements post-Brexit.
- What is the Wildlife Trust movement nationally and locally contributing to tackling the climate emergency?
- Protecting and strengthening Marsh Fritillary Butterflies in South Wales.

These meetings start 7.30 pm, unless otherwise stated.

Further details and access links to these meetings will be sent in CNS member emails.

# **Howardian Local Nature Reserve: 11 June 2022**

## **Andy Kendall**

This event was what now is called a “bioblitz”, an event we used to call a nature study day or a nature survey either of which I find more descriptive because to me the term bioblitz sounds like you are trying to destroy nature rather than identify, study and learn from it. The only similarity in my mind in the term is that you do intend to use overwhelming forces to achieve your goal.

So, it was nice to find about 25 people joining us at the entrance to the reserve which is next to the David Lloyd gym just off Ipswich Road. Many people reading this will be aware of the reserve, but just in case, a detailed history is given on their website at <http://www.howardianlnr.org.uk/history.html> which includes the following summary:

*“In 1973 Cardiff City Council asked the Natural History Society of Howardian High School if it would like to manage 6 acres of scrub/grass/woodland, adjacent to the school, as a nature reserve, thus began 17 years of involvement by the pupils with the Reserve until the schools closure in 1990. During this time the Reserve was gradually extended to 32 acres. Much of the Howardian Local Nature Reserve site was a disused domestic rubbish tip.” and*

*“The Friends' Group was formed in 1989, by an enthusiastic group of local residents who work with Cardiff County Council to further improve the Reserve. Works continue today to develop Howardian Local Nature Reserve for its wildlife interest and public enjoyment.”*

I first did a walk rather than a formal survey around the reserve back in 1993 which was according to my records for the day “Dull, Warm Breezy” we had a fairly limited list with 42 species of plants, 6 species of insects and I noted only a single bird (Kestrel) these limited numbers are more to do with my limited knowledge than the richness of the site as has been proven in more recent and systematic visits.

In 1999, we did 2 visits in June and July with Martin Doe & Jerry Norwood of the Friends Group helping us and we significantly increased the number of species that we had seen. Jay and Song Thrush amongst the birds and Tadpoles in the pond amongst other things.

It was not until 2019 that I visited again on a formal walk and that was written up in Newsletter 117 (<https://cardiffnaturalists.org.uk/pdf/newsletters/cnsnewsletter117.pdf>) at the end of which I noted the following:

“This has meant that the number of plants and animals we have on our species list for the site (<http://cardiffnaturalists.org.uk/pdf/listings/howardian.pdf>) has gone up to 144 which to be fair is still a lot less than the 214 that the Friends Group have on their well identified and photographed listing on their website: <http://www.howardianlnr.org.uk/fauna-common.html>. However, we were invited back to see if we can increase both lists next year and we are considering having a few walks across the season to spot early, summer and later plants and animals.”

We all remember what happened with plans for spring and summer 2020!

So, roll on to 2022 when we were properly unlocked and able to move around safe in the knowledge that most of us were triple jabbed and were only likely to be slightly ill if we caught the dreaded Covid-19. We met up on the day as mentioned on a sunny, but breezy day and set off on an anti-clockwise wander around the site (<http://www.howardianlnr.org.uk/aerial.html>).

Many of the Friends Group were with us again, including Roy Bailey Wood who was orchid spotting for us (as he had been in 2019). Once again, we did an anti-clockwise loop starting with a lot of hedgerow plants and the main types of trees in the reserve.

We were asked to focus efforts on invertebrates if we could as this was an area the Friends Group felt were unreported, and we were lucky to have Rob and Linda Nottage along who are very capable in this area and were able to put a name to many of the things that were spotted.

Galls were good to look at because they do not move (unlike some very fast moving flying insects), and sights included *Andricus kollari* (Marble Gall) and *Andricus lignicola* (Cola Nut gall) and on a similar but unrelated vein *Cameraria ohridella* (Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner). We managed to record a few interesting flies including *Arge cyanocrocea* (Bramble Sawfly) and *Eristalis pertinax* (Tapered Drone Fly). Given the breezy nature of the day, flying insects were often moving too fast for a good look, but in some of the glades we spotted a good selection of butterflies and moths including *Celypha lacunana* (Common Marble moth), *Gonepteryx rhamni* (Brimstone), and that foe of every gardener *Pieris brassicae* (Cabbage or Large White). One type of insect not moving were the *Yponomeuta cagnagella* (Spindle Ermine moth) which had decimated the leaves of the trees which were draped with their webs.

We also added a number of birds from previous visits including *Troglodites troglodites* (Wren) and *Sylvia atricapilla* (Blackcap) and a new group we recorded were the snails *Hygromia cinctella* (Girdled Snail), *Monacha cantiana* (Kentish Snail) and *Succinta putris* (Amber Snail).



Although we had been asked to focus on the invertebrates it was inevitable that with a good number of eyes looking at things, we also spotted some new plants for the CNS list (although most the Friends Group already knew about). Some I noted we had added were *Carex hirta* (Hairy Sedge), *Dactylis glomerata* (Cock's-foot), *Geranium lucidum* (Shining Crane's-bill), *Salix fragilis* (Crack Willow) and *Tilia vulgata* (Common Lime).

So, on the day we ended up with 12 Bird Species, 1 fungus, 42 insects, 3 snails, 93 plants and took the site to the 4<sup>th</sup> most diverse site in the sets of CNS records which I have been keeping on our survey days. This is the list of sites with over 200 species:

Location	Count of Species
Coryton Roundabout	280
Lamby Lake and New Road Field	244
Grangemore Park	244
<b>Howardian Local Nature Reserve</b>	<b>222</b>
Llanishen/Lisvane Reservoirs	220
Cwm Noffydd	214

A new updated list for this site is available on the CNS website at <https://cardiffnaturalists.org.uk/pdf/listings/howardian.pdf>



Spindle Ermine moth webs with a large amount of frass in the webs (presumably from all the leaves that have been eaten).



Common Spotted/Marsh Hybrid orchids amongst the ox-eye daisies.



Peacock butterfly caterpillars on stinging nettles.

Howardian Local Nature Reserve photos pp 10-11 by Andy Kendall.



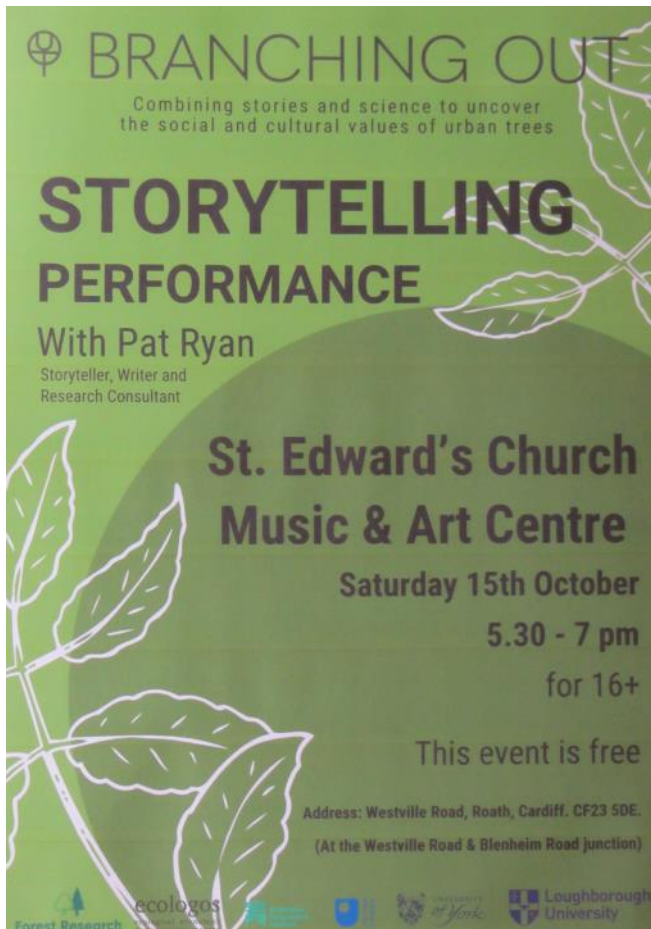
*Howardian Local Nature Reserve photos by Barbara Brown.*



## **Branching Out**

The Branching Out research project aims to develop new ways of mapping, predicting, and communicating social and cultural values to support the robust, evidence-based decision-making and management of UK Treescapescapes: <https://www.uktreescapescapes.org/projects/branching-out/>

The project is evaluating the social and cultural values of urban trees in Cardiff, Milton Keynes, and York. It is using storytelling and citizen science to bring new voices into the discourse around trees, and to co-produce knowledge for a sustainable future. As part of this, Professional Storyteller Pat Ryan will be giving a performance for adults in Roath on Saturday 15 October; drawing on tree-related folktales, legend and myths.

A green poster for the 'Branching Out' project. At the top, a small tree icon is next to the title 'BRANCHING OUT' in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. Below the title, in smaller white text, is the subtitle 'Combining stories and science to uncover the social and cultural values of urban trees'. The main title 'STORYTELLING PERFORMANCE' is in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters. Below this, 'With Pat Ryan' is written in white, followed by 'Storyteller, Writer and Research Consultant' in smaller white text. The venue 'St. Edward's Church Music & Art Centre' is in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters. Below the venue, the date and time 'Saturday 15th October 5.30 - 7 pm' are in white, followed by 'for 16+'. The text 'This event is free' is in white. At the bottom, the address 'Address: Westville Road, Roath, Cardiff. CF23 5DE. (At the Westville Road & Blenheim Road junction)' is in white. The bottom of the poster features logos for 'Forest Research', 'ecologos', 'University of York', and 'Loughborough University'. The background is a solid green color with white line art of tree branches and leaves.

## Coastal wild flowers

Photos by Linda Morris



Wild Flowers from the coast path on Barry Island. From top left clockwise: White Campion sp., Fennel, Fleabane, Wild Carrot, Common Rest-harrow, Greater Knapweed, Lady's Bedstraw, Mallow sp., Tansy, Lesser Knapweed, Field Bindweed, Teasel, & Sea Lavender in the middle.



*Garden butterflies by Mary Salter.*

## **Cardiff named a ‘Tree City of the World’**

The ‘Tree Cities of the world’ programme was founded by the US-based global non-profit conservation and education organisation the Arbor Day Foundation, to recognise the planting of trees and the creation of green urban spaces.

Cardiff is the first Welsh city to be named a ‘Tree City of the World’, in recognition of Cardiff Council's Coed Caerdydd tree-planting programme which aims to increase tree canopy cover in the city to 25% by 2030.

In its first 6-month planting season, the programme has:

- planted 16,000 trees across eight hectares of land (the equivalent of approximately 11.2 football pitches) with a further 4,000 trees planted as part of the council’s mainstream annual planting programme.
- worked with over 750 volunteers.
- planted one kilometre of native hedgerow.
- planted two sites with fruit and nut trees to create community orchards.
- planted five ‘wet woodland’ sites and six verges/streets.
- donated 750 trees to schools, community groups and residents.

Source:

<https://www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/releases/c25/29268.html>

Further information on The Arbor Day Foundation:

[Www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)





*Sallow kitten moth and Black arches by Phill Blanning (more photos from Phill's garden light trap can be found on Cardiff Naturalists' Society page on Facebook).*

## **Ancient Woods of South East Wales**

Oliver Rackham, the renowned expert on historic trees and ancient woodlands, was in the process of writing a book about the Ancient Woods of South-East Wales when he died in 2015.

Paula Keen of the Woodland Trust was tasked with finishing this book, which was published in July 2022. A number of Cardiff Naturalists' Society members attended an online talk by Paula Keen earlier this year, in which she described the process of its completion and a taster of its contents.

After Rackham's untimely death, unfinished manuscripts came to light, including the chapters for this book. It includes places he studied across a thirty-year period.

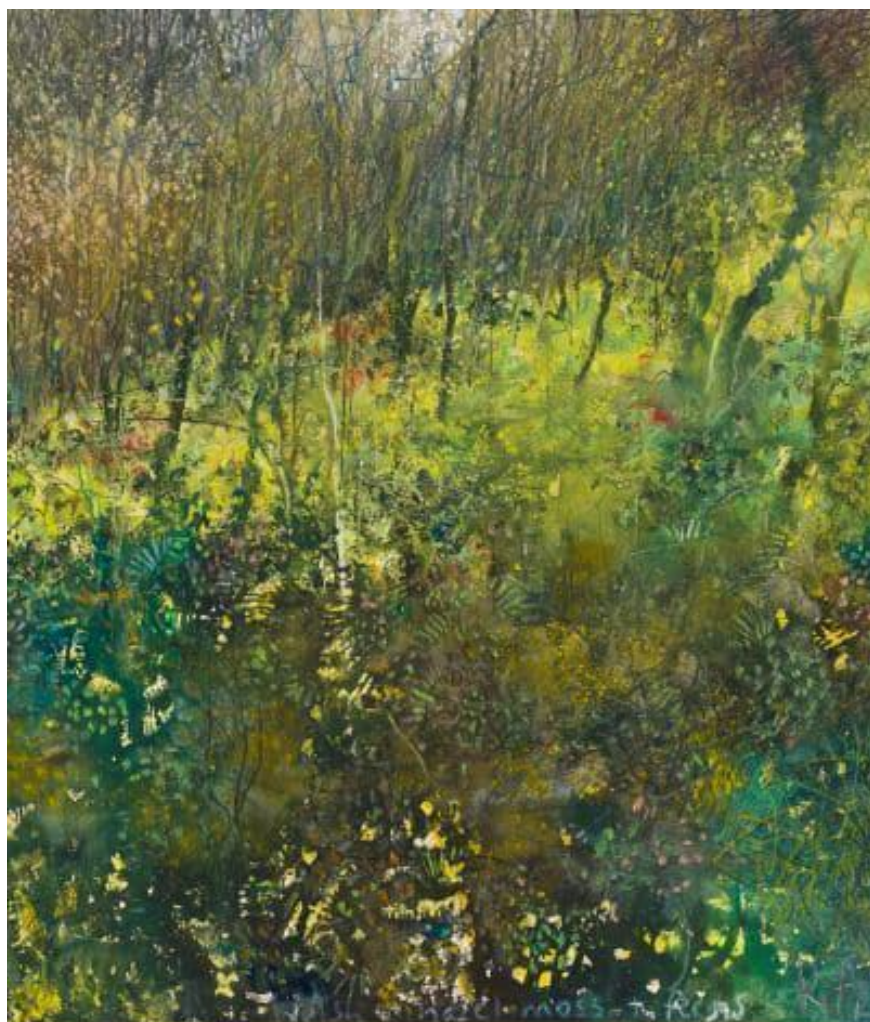
The book takes a chronological approach to describe the ancient woods of south-east Wales, focusing on rich woodland landscapes, and the geology, history and flora of many individual woods. It explains how these special places have altered or been altered, and how they may change in the future.

Oliver Rackham was drawn to the oddities and mysteries of trees and landscapes, such as bell-pits, a dwarf oak wood, towering gnarled beeches, and the rare Tintern spurge.

The book is published by Little Toller, in collaboration with The Woodland Trust.

### **Publisher's Biography:**

Oliver Rackham (1939-2015) was the pre-eminent botanist of his generation, whose work focused on trees, woodland and landscape. He was the author of many books including 'The History of the Countryside'. His books 'The Ash Tree' and 'The Ancient Woods of the Helford River' are both published by Little Toller in the Oliver Rackham Library.



THE ANCIENT WOODS OF  
**SOUTH-EAST WALES**

OLIVER RACKHAM

## **Cardiff Naturalists' Society: Charles Lapworth, Charles Darwin & David Attenborough connections**

**Andy Kendall**

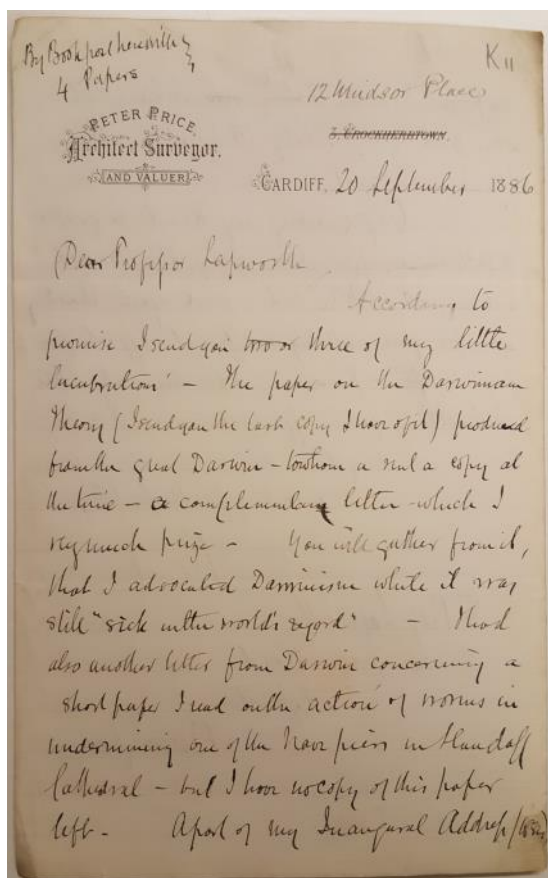
I doubt that anyone reading this has not heard of Charles Darwin, but many of our members will not be aware of Charles Lapworth FRS FGS (20 September 1842 – 13 March 1920). He was a headteacher and an English geologist who pioneered faunal analysis using index fossils and identified the Ordovician period of which we have a large amount in Wales. He became the first Professor of Geology at the University of Birmingham.

It was in the papers of Charles Lapworth than an interesting link to Darwin has recently been re-discovered. In March 2022, I was contacted by Rachel Brown of the Lapworth Museum which is attached to Birmingham University (<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/lapworth-museum/index.aspx>) and she thanked me for the webpage I created about Peter Price the 12<sup>th</sup> President of CNS (<https://cardiffnaturalists.org.uk/htmlfiles/150th-10.htm>) which she had found informative when reading letters sent from him to Lapworth.

Rachel Brown tells us that:

“In August 2021 an Archives Revealed funded project began at the Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham, to catalogue the Charles Lapworth archive collection, which is believed to be the most complete record of any natural historian other than Charles Darwin and the most complete of any UK geologist. Rachel Brown, the Lapworth Project Archivist, is chronicling the project progress and sharing highlights from the collection in a series of blogs, the first of which gives an introduction to Lapworth, his archive and the project. The project blog can be found here, <https://lapworthmuseum.wordpress.com/>, and will be highlighted alongside other archive content on the Museum's Twitter and Facebook pages (@LapworthMuseum).”

So how does Darwin feature? Rachel kindly provided a set of scans of the letters from Price. Rhian [Kendall] kindly went through them and transcribed the spidery text into a form that I was able to read (she's better at that, having practised calligraphy and forms of handwriting). Items or spaces underlined we have not decided a clear transcription of, suggestions are welcomed. The original scans and full transcriptions will be available from the presidential page for Peter Price on the CNS website (link on previous page).



Scan of a letter from Peter Price to Charles Lapworth.  
Copyright Lapworth Museum, used with permission.

Transcribed letter from Peter Price to Charles Lapworth:

<header>

By Book post herewith 4 papers

Peter Price Architect, Surveyor and Valuer

12 Windsor place (3, Crockherbtown crossed out)

20th Sept 1886

</header>

Dear Professor Lapworth

According to promise I sent you two or three of my little lucubrations – the paper on the Darwinian Theory (I send you the last copy I took of it) produced from the great Darwin – to whom a \_\_\_\_\_ Copy at the time – a complimentary letter – which I very much prize – you will gather from it that I advocated Darwinism while it was still “sick in the worlds beyond”

I had also another letter from Darwin concerning a short paper I read in the action of worms in undermining one of the nave piers in Llandaff Cathedral – but a have no copy of this paper left – A part of my Inaugral Address/1884 was printed in the Midland Naturalist thro’ the influence of Mr Hughes your Borough Treasurer whom I am sorry I failed to meet during my visit to Birmingham.

... <continues>

To Prof C Lapworth

46 George Road

Edgebaston

Birmingham

In a later letter Peter Price clarifies:

18th Oct 1886

My dear Prof Lapworth

I saw your Morton for half an hour last night – it appears that at present he is engaged upon the Severn Tunnel work – about 30 miles away from Cardiff – hence my difficulty in finding him

I feel flattered by your compliments about my Darwinian paper and I should feel honoured of your acceptance of a copy – I did not accurately explain myself in saying it was the last copy. I should have said it was the last of the copies published separately – I have one or two copies bound in the Cardiff Naturalists Annual Report.

I \_\_\_\_\_ that the Midland Institute \_\_\_\_\_ published was what that part of my Inaugural Address which deals with Darwin & Spencer – of which I sent you a copy it was published just about January 1885 I think.

... <continues>



As to his comments about Darwinism. Peter Price made this fascinating comment in his presidential address published in the CNS transactions dated 1884 for 1883 (not 5 as he remembered):

Soon after the establishment of the society I prepared a paper on Darwinism; but, at the earnest request of some of the members, I withdrew it, as it was feared that the advocacy of such a daring inroad upon current beliefs would peril the existence of our young society. Since then we have had the satisfaction of hearing Darwinism acknowledged and advocated by one of our most eminent lecturers—himself a minister of the Gospel, and even from the pulpit of St. John's. What a remarkable change in 16 years! There are many indications which go to show that this theory, like so many others, received at first with mingled derision and alarm, will eventually become one of the common-places of ordinary belief.

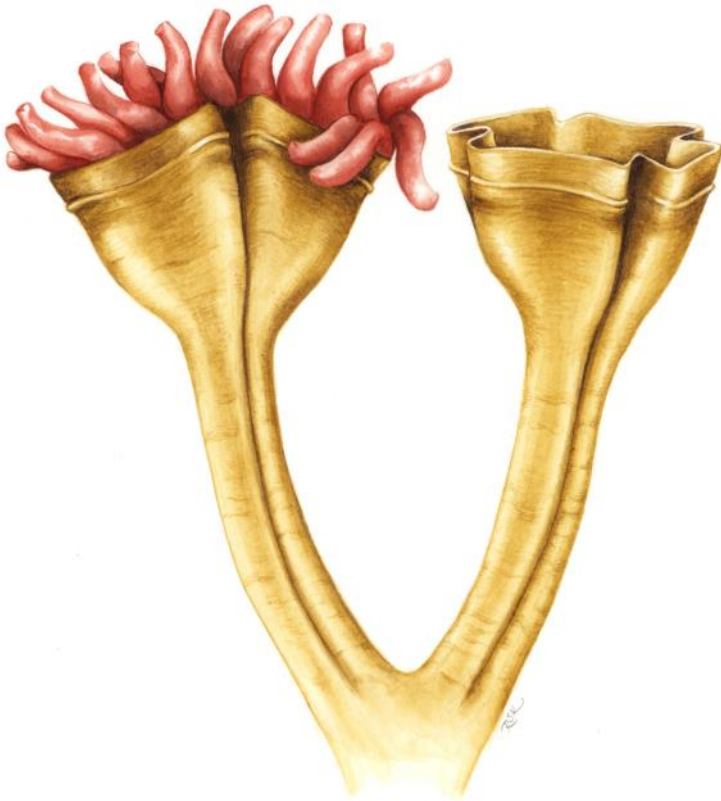
This makes reference to our 23rd President, the Reverend Canon Chas James Thompson (<https://www.cardiffnaturalists.org.uk/htmlfiles/150th-28.htm>).

I have not as yet identified where (if anywhere) Peter Price's letters went and whether that letter from Charles Darwin is still in existence. However this is all in all, a fascinating link, so how does Sir David Attenborough come into this?

As noted, this all started with an email from the Lapworth Museum this year, but there was an earlier CNS link with that museum.

A few years ago Rhian was asked by one of her British Geological Survey colleagues to help him with the interpretation of sections of Precambrian fossils from Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire which had been plaster casted after an extensive cleaning exercise. Her part was to create a drawn representation of the fossils and then as scientific study progressed to use her skills as an artist to create a life reconstruction showing how this ancient creature would have looked.

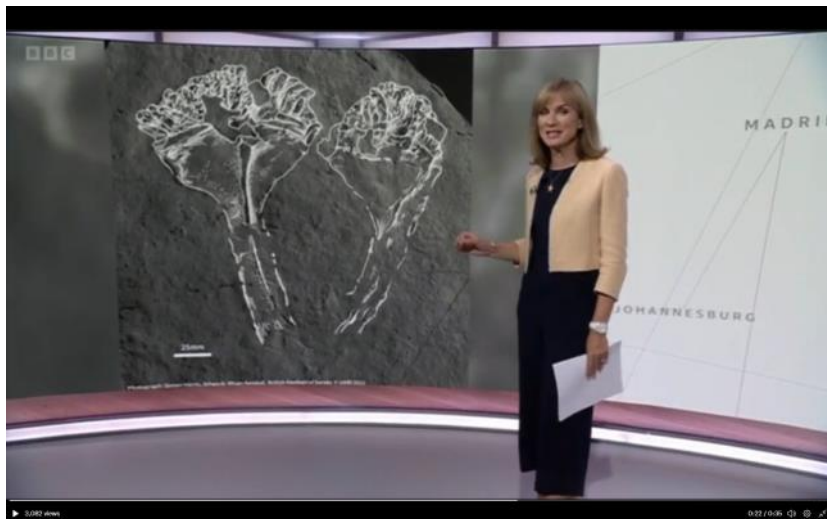




*Image copyright: Simon Harris/Rhian Kendall/BGS/UKRI*

*This drawing is of a 20 cm-tall fossil that is around 560-million years old and considered the earliest known animal predator, an ancestor of Cnidaria (today's jellyfish, corals and anemones).*

That original drawn representation is on display in the Lapworth Museum in Birmingham and on that slab there is an “as yet unnamed” fossil. This has now been fully studied and has been named *Auroralumina attenboroughii* after Sir David Attenborough. It was featured on the BBC news and website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-62291954>



As Sir David Attenborough related:

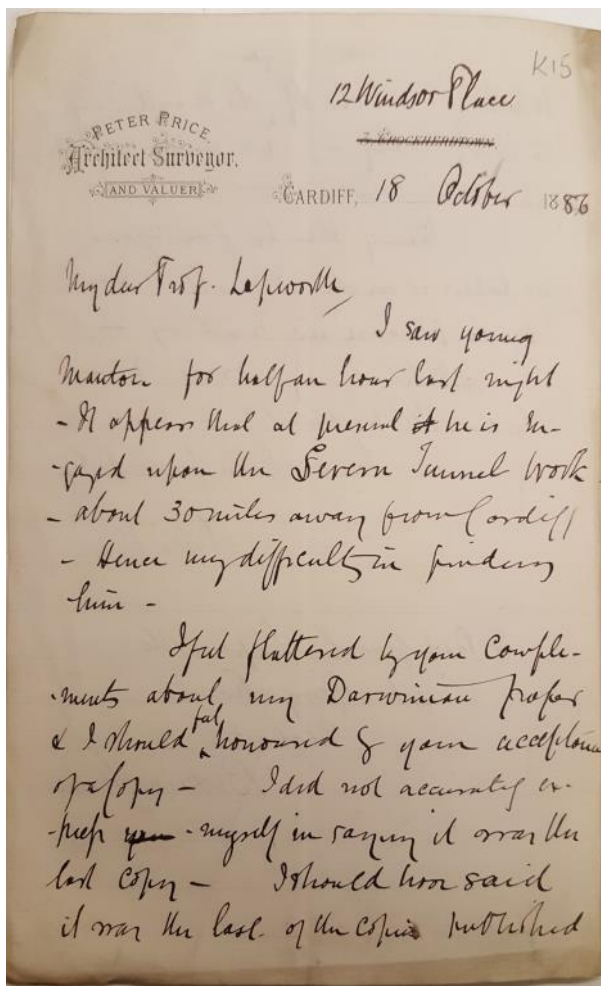
*"When I was at school in Leicester, I was an ardent fossil-hunter.*

*The rocks in which Auroralumina has now been discovered were then considered to be so ancient that they dated from long before life began on the planet. So I never looked for fossils there.*

*A few years later, a boy from my old school found one and proved the experts wrong. He was rewarded by his name being given to his discovery. Now I have - almost - caught up with him and I am truly delighted."*

The formal technical paper is available at:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-022-01807-x>



Scan of a letter from Peter Price to Charles Lapworth.  
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**Deadline for submissions to next newsletter:  
Tuesday 2 January 2023**



*The 'Salmon Runs' near Dinas Powys. Photo by Stephen Nottingham*

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