



CARDIFF NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Founded 1867

NEWSLETTER No. 138

September 2026

Charity No. 1092496

#

LIST OF OFFICERS 2025/2026

President

Mike Dean

mike@deanlisvane.co.uk

Secretary

Position vacant

secretary@cardiffnaturalists.org.uk

Treasurer

Rhian Kendall

treasurer@cardiffnaturalists.org.uk

Membership Secretary

Elizabeth Morgan

membership@cardiffnaturalists.org.uk

Indoor Meetings Secretary

Position vacant

indoor@cardiffnaturalists.org.uk

Field Meetings Coordinator

Position vacant

Newsletter Editor

Stephen Nottingham

stephen@cardiffnaturalists.org.uk

Also on Council

Gill Barter, Patrizia Donovan

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

<http://cardiffnaturalists.blogspot.com>

www.facebook.com/groups/CardiffNaturalists

Cover: Puffin on Skomer island. Photo by Stephen Nottingham.

President's Report

Mike Dean

Our 158th AGM is to be held on Monday, September 28th 2026 at 7:00 pm at our usual venue of the Ararat Centre. The room is available from 6.30 and we will be there from this time and provide tea and coffee which we hope will become a regular feature. It would be great to see those of you who can make the earlier time, as this will offer an opportunity for members to interact and get to know each other better. We need to vacate the room at 8:30 pm, according to the booking conditions, so, unfortunately, there is no opportunity to linger for long after the talk. So, why not come a bit earlier and say hello?

In two years, the Society will be celebrating 160 years, a proud and illustrious achievement, but one we should not be taking for granted. The Society needs your help and support going forward. If the Cardiff Naturalists are to be still active on their 160th anniversary, we need more members and, in particular, younger members with positive and innovative suggestions for its future in a challenging and rapidly changing natural environment. So, can I urge you all to try to recruit friends, relatives and acquaintances to possibly come along to some of our events and if they feel it appropriate, join the society.

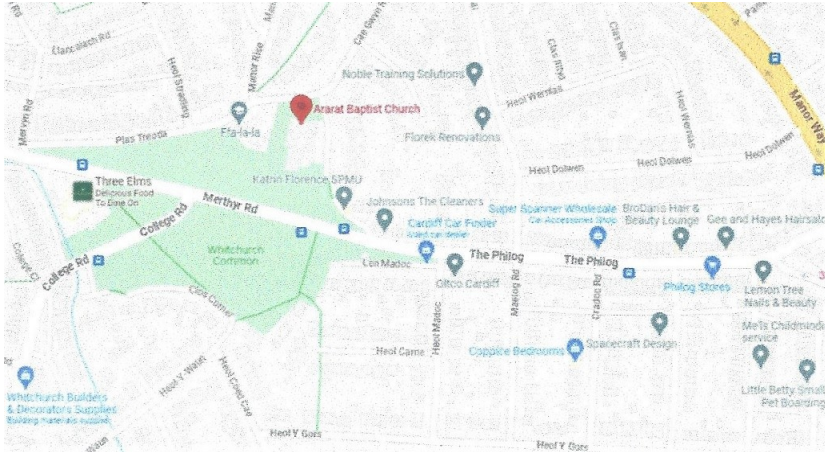
Equally, it is imperative that we fill some of the vacancies on Council. It only meets about 3 or a maximum of 4 times a year and it means that the work of running the society can be shared out. It is a team effort and if you join you will not be lumbered with a task without the support of others. If you have any doubts, you could use the slot prior to the start of the formal meeting to ask any questions of the existing council members. Please give it your thought and volunteer. We would value your input and suggestions on places to visit, activities to be involved in, so that the Society remains vibrant and forward looking.

I hope to see you on the 28th!

Meetings Programme

Indoor Meetings are held at Ararat Community Centre, next to Ararat Baptist Church: Plas Treoda, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF14 1PT.

Meetings start at 6:30pm with a chat and coffee/tea, with talks starting at 7pm and concluding by 8.30pm.



Indoor Meetings

Monday 28 September 2026

Annual General Meeting,

The AGM will be followed by a talk:

Linda Nottage – “A Butterfly Summer”

:

Monday 26 October 2026

Alan Oliver: Red Kite Conservation

Monday 23 November 2026

Jon Gower: Birdland

A rearranged talk. Jon Gower, a journalist, author and lifelong birder will talk about 50 years of change in British bird life. For his recent book 'Birdland: A Journey Around Britain on the Wing' he visited some of the best places in Britain to watch birds, searching for iconic and elusive species. As well as being a celebration of birds, the book is also a call to arms to defend them in the face of biodiversity decline and the challenges of climate change.

Monday 14 December 2026

Xmas Special.

Monday 25 January 2027

Rob Parry: a talk about the Marsh Fritillary

Monday 22 February 2027

Members' Evening.

Several short talks from CNS members.

Monday 22 March 2027

Speaker tbc

Monday 26 April 2027

Speaker tbc

Outdoor Meetings

Saturday 9 January 2027

Cardiff New Year's Birdwatch

Led by Rob & Linda Nottage. Meet 10am Wild Gardens Road, Roath Park, Cardiff.

Wednesday 9 September 2026

Dyffryn Gardens National Trust

St Nicholas, Vale of Glamorgan, CF5 6FZ.

Meet 11 am at the visitors' entrance.

A guided tour of the gardens with head gardener Colette Barnes, lasting about an hour, including highlights of the garden and the diversity of wildlife to be found there. Then you can explore the gardens at your leisure. There is a café, and also a second-hand book shop.



Look out for the latest information and additions to the meeting programmes in emails to members, on social media, and on our website:

<http://cardiffnaturalists.blogspot.co.uk/p/programme.html>

East Glamorgan Bird Conference: Saturday 24 October 2026

Cardiff Naturalists' Society will have a stall, and Andy Kendall will give a presentation on the pioneering bird photography of Morrey Salmon, at the joint Glamorgan Bird Club (GBC) and British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) conference. The event will be held on Saturday 24th October at Sport Wales, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff CF11 9SW, from 9.30am to 4:30 pm.

The wide-ranging programme encompasses many aspects of birdwatching and conservation. Representatives of the BTO will promote their upcoming national bird atlas, due to be launched in 2027. Registration opens from 9:15 am on the day. Entry tickets are available from the BTO at £20 (£10 for concessions e.g. students) via their website [<https://www.bto.org/our-work/events/glamorgan-bird-club-and-bto-conference>].

Teas and coffees will be provided during the breaks. Lunch can be purchased in the cafeteria on the top floor.

For further information on Colonel H. Morrey Salmon and the Morrey Salmon Project:

<https://cardiffnaturalists.org.uk/htmlfiles/150th-05.htm>

<https://museum.wales/blog/2869/Preserving-a-legacy-the-photographic-work-of-Harry-Morrey-Salmon/>

=====

Deadline for submissions to next newsletter:

Monday 4 January 2027

Monks Wood Field Trip

June 2nd 2026

A small but enthusiastic CNS group met our leader, Stephen, for a tour of this community woodland near Wick in the Vale of Glamorgan. Heavy rain the previous day may have deterred some but luckily we stayed dry. Arranged by Andy, it was a new venue for most although Rob & I had visited many times. Stephen explained that Coed Cymru (Woodland Trust) had planted the site as one of their "Woodlands for the New Millennium". We were fortunate to have as an additional guide, Jan, who has known & volunteered at the Reserve from its earliest days together with her late husband from whom the charity acquired the plot. There is a fine new seat as a memorial to him.

A wide variety of native trees were planted. A major setback occurred when a local breeder of "gypsy" horses ran out of pasture/fodder for his herd and broke down the gate to release 40 starving animals into the plantation which they duly trashed. Evidence of this stunting is still visible in the growth structure of some trees but otherwise they have done well.

Local volunteers meet regularly to maintain the paths & flowery rides. They have added a community orchard & osier plot to harvest willow wands for basketry. A bughouse, bird & bat boxes are valuable additions although the introduction of Spanish (garden) bluebells was unwise.

We were impressed by the variety of trees & plentiful birdsong as well as the colourful rides with abundant yellow rattle, meadow buttercups, both red & white clovers plus a hybrid swarm of marsh/spotted orchids and a few skyscraper foxgloves. The cool cloudy conditions were not especially conducive for butterflies but we spotted Brimstone, Small & Green-veined Whites, Common Blue, Painted Lady and several Speckled Woods. Hoverflies included *Merodon equestris* (Narcissus bulb fly) and *Volucella bombylans* another bumblebee mimic. Bees, beetles, bugs & bush-crickets were among the other insects identified. Rob & I were sorry to have missed a public moth-trapping event which had recently been held there.

After the tour some of us made use of the splendid roundhouse shelter to eat our picnic and were shown trail-cam footage of mammals such as foxes recorded on the reserve.

Stephen & Jan were thanked for introducing CNS to this little gem which is freely open to the public & has a right of way passing through it.

Linda Nottage



Monk Wood Field Trip – photos Linda Nottage

Dock bug



Early bumblebee on orchid



Narcissus bulb fly (a hoverfly)



Memorial seat



Monks Wood Field Trip – photos Linda Nottage

Speckled Wood butterfly



Dark bush-cricket nymph



Hendy Nature Reserve

20th June 2026

A lovely walk guided by Mark Johnson a local wildlife photographer and the person who does the Nature roundups for the group on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HendyNatureTrail>. If you want to see many of his excellent photographs, I highly recommend looking at that page. You do not need to have a Facebook account to look at the pictures, only if you want to comment or like the images. Mark specialises in bird photography, so those pictures are especially worth looking at.

We were a small, but distinguished group on the day, which was perfect weather being warm, but not the heatwave that we have had since that date.

We started near the pond which has unhelpfully been populated with discarded goldfish with an overview of how the site was developed from a former cricket pitch that was often unusable because of flooding into this site which is teeming with wildlife. It was only opened officially in 2020 but has many hallmarks of a more developed nature reserve thanks to the hard work of the dedicated team of volunteers, in fact some woodland management needs to take place where some vigorous trees are growing. There is a plan to move the goldfish from the reserve pond into a dedicated raised pond within the community garden which will make them easier for children to see and mean that they are restricted from being able to escape into the wild if there was a flood across the site. This seemed very sensible to us.

Our path was around the edge of the site on a very well-made path, veering off to look under some small astroturf carpets that have been placed to provide shelters for reptiles, we were lucky enough to find 3 slow worms (*Anguis fragilis*) under one of them. At another spot (not under a carpet) we were lucky to spot a Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*). As well as the reptiles we were lucky to find some very small Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*), sadly they were moving a bit too quickly for a photograph.

Pond and slow worms at Hendy. Photos Andy Kendall



On the southern edge of the site you can look over fields along the Loughor estuary which were told included a leech farm (<https://www.biopharm-leeches.com/>). This wetland area clearly helps with the movement of wildlife in and out of the small reserve

Given such a nice day the insects were flying strongly, but it was quite nice to be able to see new generations of Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*) which looked like a very recent emergence still trying it's wings, and an Emperor Moth (*Saturnia pavonia*) caterpillar. It's worth noting that there are some non-native trees and shrubs around the site, mostly from the days when this was a cricket pitch, but also from some guerilla gardening. They don't detract from the native plants in the main reserve, but the team are keeping an eye on them. We finished our walk at a second pond/wetland scrape that is close to the cafe

As Noted above, next to the site is a community garden project where there are some raised beds and a small polytunnel which is fenced off from the reserve, but you can access through a couple of gates.

Also adjacent to the site is an excellent café <https://www.facebook.com/canolfangwillicentre> where you can sit on the balcony and admire the view across the reserve. I would highly recommend it as a suitable stopping place should you need one having come from the west. It's a lot nicer than the motorway services and only about a 1-minute drive from Junction 48 of the motorway. It does not have a petrol station, but it does have charging points

Andy Kendall

Common Lizard, Common Darter dragonfly, and Emperor Moth Caterpillar (p 16) at Hendy. Photos by Andy Kendall.





[@shenstone.me.uk](https://shenstone.me.uk)

Vapourer Moth, *Xyphosia molarca* mating pair, CNS group by pond, and swollen-thighed beetle. Additional photos from Hendry Nature Reserve (pp 16-17) by Linda Nottage.





Record-breaking year for seabirds on Skomer Island

The Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales (WTSWW) has announced that 2026 has been another record-breaking year for seabirds on Skomer Island, off the coast of Pembrokeshire. In this year's annual count, 52,019 Puffins were recorded, beating the previous record of 43,626 set in 2025. The Trust links the success in breeding rate and overwinter adult survival with the absence of rats and other predators, and the abundance of food (especially sand eels) in the wider area.

Surveys show it has also been another good year for Manx Shearwater. With a population of around 350,000 breeding pairs, Skomer hosts the over half the world's population of this species.

Skomer has long-standing links with Cardiff Naturalists' Society. In 1905, two-time CNS President J.J. Neale took out a 10-year lease on the island to study its bird life, publishing many of his findings in the Society's transactions. This led to the establishment of Skomer as a nature reserve to protect the island's birds.

His friend, Robert Drane, a founding member of Cardiff Naturalists' Society, also made important contributions to the study of the island's wildlife, in particular discovering that the Skomer Vole (*Myodes glareolus skomerensis*) was a different sub-species of the Bank Vole (*Myodes glareolus*) to that found on the mainland.

Ref: <https://www.welshwildlife.org/news/another-record-breaking-year-skomer-what-it-takes-count-52019-puffins>

For further information see the Presidents' pages on the CNS website: <https://cardiffnaturalists.org.uk/htmlfiles/150th-01.htm>





Meadow Pipet on Skomer. Photo by Stephen Nottingham

PRINTED BY GLAMORGAN VOLUNTARY SERVICES (GVS)

Published by the Cardiff Naturalists' Society © 2026

In contributing to the Cardiff Naturalists' Society Newsletter you agree to grant us a royalty-free, non-exclusive licence to publish and otherwise use the material through web as well as print publishing worldwide. This will be in the format of a pdf copy of the newsletter unless otherwise agreed with you. And may include the publishing of the material by the National Library of Wales who have requested permission to do so and are prohibited from altering the material in any way.

See the **Newsletter Terms and Conditions on the Cardiff Naturalists' Society website** for the full terms of conditions. It's important to note, however, that you still own the copyright to everything you contribute to CNS Newsletter and that if your images and/or text is accepted, we will endeavor to publish your name alongside it in the Newsletter and/or website wherever it is used.