



## **CARDIFF NATURALISTS' SOCIETY**

Founded 1867

**NEWSLETTER No. 132**

**September 2024**

Charity No. 1092496

## LIST OF OFFICERS 2023/2024

### **President**

Mike Dean

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### **Secretary**

Position vacant

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### **Treasurer**

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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, Patrizia Donovan

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

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

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

*Cover photo: Orchids and other flowers at Rhoose Point, by Linda Morris (See also pages 10-13).*

# President's Ramble

## Mike Dean

One thing I have learnt over the years, is that nothing should surprise us about the British weather. However, I do not remember a summer like this last one! The weather has not been stable for any significant period and the air temperature has been consistently low. Yes, we have had sunny periods, but the sun has only to go behind a cloud and it has been quite cool.

I wonder what effect this is going to have on the wildlife. While this is not a scientific assessment, my impression is that the number of insects is much lower than normal and as they are at the bottom of the food chain, this must have implications to many birds and animals.

When I first joined CNS in the early 2000's Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) was reasonably common and it was not unusual to see the brightly colour caterpillars of the Cinnabar Moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*). We then seemed to have a period when Ragwort was relatively rare which I attributed to the fact that farmers were removing it to protect horses and cattle from eating it when hay was made. This year, Ragwort is very prolific which should bode well for the Cinnabar Moth whose numbers have reputedly dropped by 83% in the last 35 years.

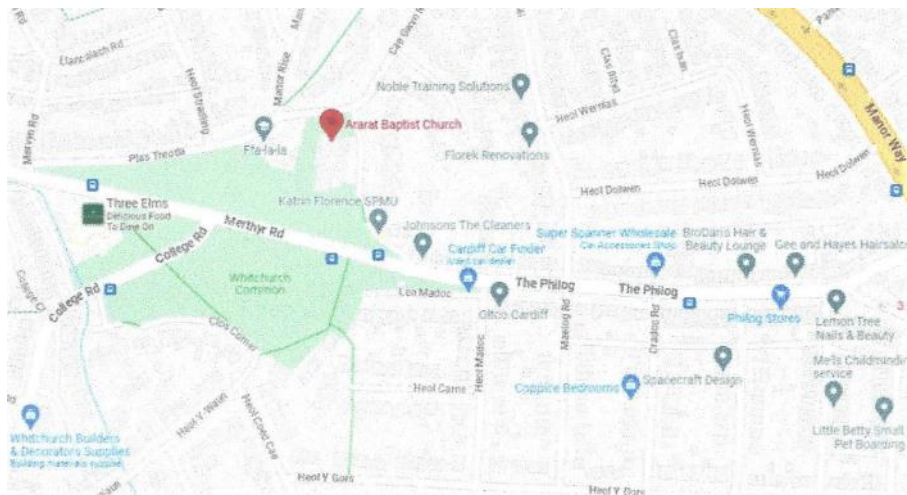
We had two Field Trips, while a further one is planned to look at the geology around Friar's Point on Barry Island with Andy Kendall. The first one was thanks to Linda & Rob Nottage with a very interesting ramble round Rhoose Point, and the second led by Dr Rob Thomas in Coed Ty Llwyd adjacent to Llanishen Reservoir.

The programme for Indoor Meetings up to the New Year of 2025 is included in this Newsletter, starting with the AGM on September 23rd.

**I would like to put in a plea for somebody to take on the role of Secretary, or at least perhaps take on the role of Minute Secretary, which will make life easier for me.**

## Indoor Meetings

Indoor Meetings are held at Ararat Community Centre, next to Ararat Baptist Church: Plas Treoda, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF14 1PT. Meetings start at 7pm and conclude by 8.30pm.



### Monday 23 September 2024

**AGM** followed by presentation by **Liliana Tarrant Snedden**, the winner of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society Bioscience Prize for 2024. This prize is awarded annually to a second-year Cardiff University School of Biosciences student for their outstanding field course work. She will receive her award at this meeting.

Liliana will talk about the effects of barrel sponge (*Xestospongia* spp.) filtration on seawater composition off the coast of Malaysian Borneo (see pp 22-28 of the June 2024 CNS newsletter for her written report).

### Monday 21 October 2024

**Adam Rowe** (SEWBRc) - title to be confirmed.

### **Monday 25 November**

**Andy Kendall:** Chipembebe - The pulse of the Rhino

An exploration of the wildlife and landscapes of northern Zambia and the work of the Chipembebe wildlife conservation education trust.

### **Monday 9 December 2024**

Xmas special.

### **Monday 27 January 2025**

Members' Evening (a series of short talks by CNS members).

Indoor Meetings (speakers TBC) will also be held on the following Mondays in 2025: 24 February, 24 March, and 28 April.

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## **Outdoor Meetings**

### **Coed Nant Bran woodland (near Sennybridge)**

Further details to be announced.

**Geology walk around Friar's Point, Barry Island.** Led by Andy Kendall. This field trip was cancelled on Sunday 8 September due to poor weather. The new date is to be confirmed. Details will be resent via members' emails, and also posted on social media. "To examine the fossiliferous Carboniferous Limestone Supergroup and its relationship to overlying Triassic rocks. We should be able to see some seabirds and coastal flora as well as the geology."

### **New Year's Birdwatch**

Location and date in early January 2025 to be confirmed.

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

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

# The Morrey Salmon Project

**Mike Dean**

The restructuring of the National Museum of Wales (NMW), which involved significant staff redundancies, had a major impact on the Morrey Salmon Project as all work ceased in February 2024.

I am pleased to be able to report that work will recommence on **Friday 4th October 2024**. Caroline Buttler has been appointed as a new co-ordinator on behalf of the NMW, but fortunately many of the familiar faces with whom we have been working are still available so hopefully we will “up to speed” quickly. Of course, this depends on the good will and availability of our volunteer team.

The outstanding work for the volunteers is perceived to be:

- a) Cleaning the last few negatives, about 3 sessions.
- b) Andy Kendall to continue photographing the cleaned negatives.
- c) Rob Nottage to continue checking the Data Base.
- d) Looking through Zoological Records and extracting any useful information which might give an indication of location of any photographs.
- e) Looking through Geoffrey Ingram's diaries and extracting any useful information that similarly might give an indication of location of any photographs.

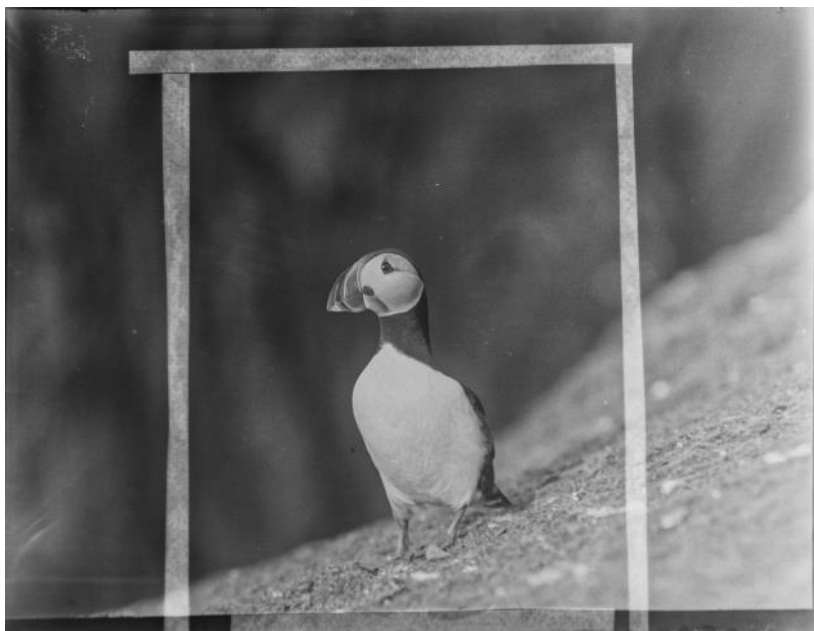
Following this, or even in parallel with this, it is hoped that the Museum will commence their scanning of the negatives and adding them to their database. If this can be achieved, I am hopeful that the project will be largely complete by the Spring of 2025.

For further information on Col. H. Morrey Salmon (1890-1985):  
<https://cardiffnaturalists.org.uk/htmlfiles/150th-05.htm>

For further details on the Morrey Salmon Project see recent posts on:  
<https://cardiffnaturalists.blogspot.com>



*Nesting lapwing, H. Morrey Salmon's first photograph of a nesting bird (1908)*



*Puffin by Morrey Salmon*

## **Field Trip to Coed Ty Llwyd**

**Mike Dean**

A field trip to Coed Ty Llwyd was arranged for the evening of Monday, July 15th at 6:00 pm. Coed Ty Llwyd is the woodland to the north of the access road to the Llanishen Reservoir Visitor Centre. There had been a previous “Open Day” and I am aware several CNS members did attend but it was felt worthwhile arranging a visit specifically for the CNS membership.

However, there was a Yellow Weather warning for July 15th predicting heavy rain. We were then left with a difficult decision whether to cancel the event but given the difficulty in ensuring that everyone received the communication it was decided to continue with the event as there was an indication that the weather could improve in the evening. At 6:00 pm we could not believe our luck as it was dry with even a bit of sun! The vagaries of the British Weather! However, the uncertain conditions meant that attendance was low as people had been deterred by the forecast.

Dr Rob Thomas met us in the car park of the visitor centre. He outlined the background to the woods, which are named after the original farm nearby. In fact, the farmhouse is still on Lisvane Road but heavily altered to create a large family residence. The wood was purchased but is held in trust for the benefit of the Biosciences Department of Cardiff University to provide a site close to the University where student can do field studies. However, it is intended to allow public access to the woods. People will be encouraged to stick to the paths by the use of boardwalks, in what can be a boggy area.

We walked along the perimeter of the wood from the visitor car park to appreciate the range of trees and shrubs within the woodland. Students had put up nest boxes, the majority of which appeared to be in use. Some were fitted with cameras to enable a study to be made of feeding strategies and breeding success rate. We then drove to Chartwell Drive and entered the woods from the public footpath.



Hemp Agrimony was flowering in profusion attracting insects including a Crab Spider. Also, some fruiting Herb Paris was found in the woods. A juvenile Stonechat was also foraging in the hedge row.

Thanks were given to Dr Rob Thomas for acting as our guide and for facilitating the evening event. He has offered the Society a Field Trip to Coed Nant Bran, the other woodland site used by the students. This is near Sennybridge. If you are interested in joining such a field trip let me know and I am sure this can be organised.



*Picture courtesy of Dr Rob Thomas*

## Rhoose Point



*Bee Orchid, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Black and Yellow Longhorn Beetle, and Common Mallow. Photos by Phill Blanning.*

## **Rhose Point**

On 22 June 2024, Linda Nottage led a Cardiff Naturalists' Society meeting to Rhose Point. The group explored various areas of grassland, pools and scrub and saw a variety of birds, insects and flowers, including orchid species. On these pages are a selection of photos taken by CNS members on the trip.



*Slow worms, and CNS members. Photos by Linda and Rob Nottage.*



## Rhoose Point



*Stinking Iris and Speckled Wood butterfly. Photos by Phill Blanning*



*Coastal view and dark bush cricket. Photos by Linda Morris (top) and Phill Blanning.*

## **Grey Phalarope in Barry**

On 25 August 2024, birdwatchers converged on the Knap Lake in Barry to see a small Grey Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*).

This arctic-breeding bird is infrequently seen in Wales, with just 293 recordings noted for the whole of Wales in the decade 2010-2019 in the Welsh Ornithological Society's *The Birds of Wales* (Liverpool University Press, 2021, pp. 196-196), mainly along the coast and particularly following strong westerly winds.

CNS member Phill Blanning was among those birdwatchers, and below is one of his photos.



## **Friends of Nant Fawr 30th Anniversary**

The Friends of Nant Fawr Community Woodlands held a 30th Anniversary celebration on Sunday 7th July 2024. Cardiff Naturalists' Society were invited to attend and have a stall to promote the Society, and this was duly accepted.

The Friends of Nant Fawr are a conservation group which work with Cardiff Council to manage a "green corridor" that runs from just north of Roath Park Lake to the top of Lisvane Reservoir . Here, it then links to Lisvane Footpath 13 to provide a route up to the War Memorial in Lisvane, forming a pleasant "green" route from Lisvane to Roath Park. The route runs through natural woodland and three ancient meadows with differing ecological significance. During the event, Friends of Nant Fawr were presented with their 8th Green Flag Community Award!

The event was held in the old Reservoir Car Park just off Rhydypenau Road with various activities for children to increase their awareness of the natural world. Various groups were also present including the Wildlife Trust and the South Wales Geologist's Association.

We were able to maintain a presence throughout the day with valuable assistance from Andy & Rhian. I am not sure whether we were able to recruit any new members but we were able to raise the profile of the Society and there was considerable interest in the Morrey Salmon Project. We were also able to make several useful contacts for the future.

**Mike Dean**

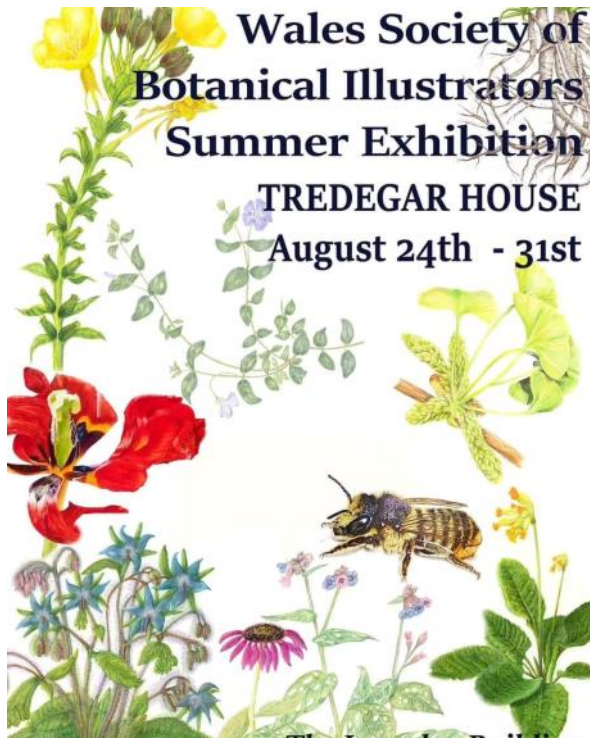


## **Welsh Society of Botanical Illustrators**

Our Treasurer Rhian Kendall has recently joined a group of like-minded illustrators called “The Welsh Society of Botanical Illustrators”.

She writes: We are an enthusiastic group of illustrators ranging from total beginners to accomplished and exhibited artists. We meet regularly at Tredegar House for painting, drawing and socialising sessions.

Every year we hold an exhibition at Tredegar House, the latest was held from the 24th to the 31st of August in the Laundry Training Room. This year we also had an exhibition at Dyrham house in Gloucestershire, and are about to open an exhibition at The Grange University Hospital. This includes paintings of medicinal plants grown in the historic gardens close to the hospital.







*For further information: <https://wsbi.org.uk>*

## Lavernock Point Nature Reserve



Conservation grazing, pyramidal orchids, and the Oak Copse where Purple Hairstreak butterflies thrive.  
Photos by Stephen Nottingham.

## Gwent Levels



On a CNS trip to Magor Marsh in the Gwent Levels last year, we saw the sculpture of The Brinker (see September 2023 newsletter). Here is a photo of another of the Gwent Levels' sculptures. This one represents Lave Net Heritage Fishing. It can be found at Black Rock, where with the rising tide this traditional method of salmon fishing still occurs.

Photo by Stephen Nottingham.

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**Deadline for submissions to the next newsletter:  
Monday 18 December 2024**



*Photo of an owl by Col. H. Morrey Salmon (see pp. 6-7).*

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