

Amman Valley Wildlife Update Number 22 (September 2021)



**MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU**



**INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU**

We had a lovely evening
bat walk earlier this month
and thanks again to
everyone for coming along.



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We recorded three species of bat during the walk including Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and one of the UK's largest bats the Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*).



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Out of the 18 species of bat in the UK
Only two species hang upside down.
They are the Greater Horseshoe
(*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and
the Lesser Horseshoe
(*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) bats.

Lesser Horseshoe bat

All other species of bat, including this Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) wedge themselves into small gaps and crevices.



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They might look big when flying, but most bats including this Common Pipistrelle are tiny. This is an adult female carrying her young.



Please do not handle bats. You need a license, and it can be harmful to the bat.

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Common Pipistrelles are our most common species of bat. You can often find their droppings scattered in attics, on walls or on cars. They are small and black and crumble to dust when touched. This is because bats only feed on invertebrate prey, so their droppings are made up of the dry exoskeletons of the invertebrates.





There is no better habitat for bats than old trees and woodlands. Lots of cracks and crevices provide great places to roost for many species of bat and the habitat also supports lots of invertebrate prey.

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Deadwood is a rare habitat these days. It is very important for all sorts of invertebrates and fungi.

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This is an old chunk of Beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*) that I drilled holes in and put out in the garden. It attracted lots of solitary bees and is now decaying to provide nourishment for fungi and other invertebrates.



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Over the next few months (and thanks to the Brecon Beacons National Park) we will be installing 200 bat roost boxes throughout the Amman Valley.

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As well as bats, we also aim to install 19 purpose-built Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) boxes in the valley.

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Barn Owls need long grassy habitats to hunt for mice and voles. Their nest is often in outbuildings or old trees. If you know anyone who has this sort of habitat close by, and might like a barn owl box installed, please do get in touch. Thank you.



Earlier this month, Lizzie managed to walk way up the mountain to the source of the River Amman. From there you can see the works at East Pit in the distance.





Wildlife is so very precious and comes in many shapes and sizes. This tiny little wasp, approximately 3mm long is perhaps one of the rarest animals found in the Amman Valley. It's the parasitoid wasp *Cotesia bignelli* and the reason why it is so rare is because the only host species of the wasp is the marsh fritillary butterfly. So, if the butterfly is rare, this wasp is much rarer.

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In the garden this month you may notice other parasitoid wasps which are much more common. This is the caterpillar of the Large White butterfly (*Pieris brassicae*).

The silk cocoons to the right are the parasitoid wasp larvae of *Cotesia glomerata*.



The larvae eat away at the caterpillar from the inside and then emerge from to form these cocoons and transform into adult wasps. If you grow cabbages, or nasturtiums in the garden look out for these cocoons close by.

Keep an eye out also for hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) in the garden over the next month. Before hibernating, hedgehogs need to put on enough weight to survive the winter.

Feeding them in the garden can make a real difference.



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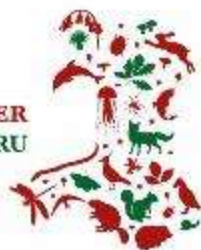
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If you do feed hedgehogs, please make sure you use special hedgehog food, or wet and meaty cat /dog food.

No fish, No bread, No mealworms, No milk.

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To help us find out more about Hedgehogs and other wildlife and habitats in the Amman Valley, please complete our garden wildlife survey.

Thank you.

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Whilst gardening over autumn, you may come across a Palmate Newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*), like this one that John Driver found in his garden. Newts only really need ponds in spring to breed. Once out of the water they enter a 'terrestrial' phase and look quite different. If you find a newt out of water, please leave it be and do not put it in a pond. When in this form they are not suited to the aquatic environment.

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This is the more
typical view of a
Palmate Newt.



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Moths found in the garden
this month include.....



Frosted Orange



Anomalous



Green-brindled Crescent



Peach Blossom



Lychnis



Pink-barred Sallow

New Species to the Amman Valley.

This is the very rare Clifden Nonpareil moth (*Catocala fraxini*) that turned up in our moth trap earlier this month.



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There are only four or five other records for the moth for the whole of Carmarthenshire.

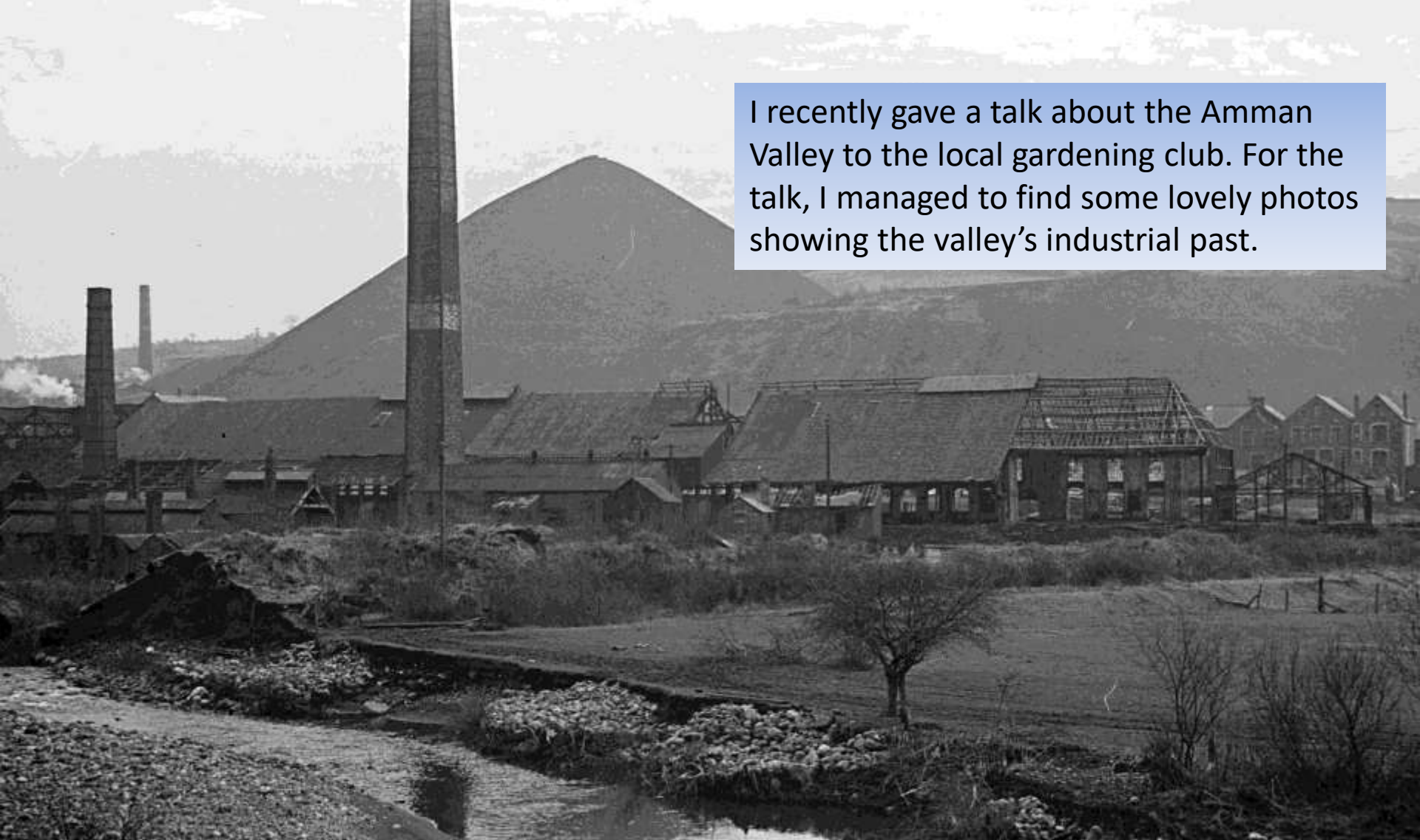
As well as being rare, the moth is also huge, and one of the largest in the UK.

The Clifden Nonpareil is a migratory species that travels here most autumns from the continent.

Normally there are only a handful of records each year for the moth.



I recently gave a talk about the Amman Valley to the local gardening club. For the talk, I managed to find some lovely photos showing the valley's industrial past.



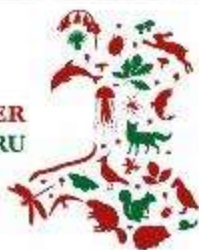
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Thanks again for all your feedback
and your wildlife records and stories.
If you haven't done so already, please
do fill in the garden wildlife survey.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=DQSIkWdsW0yxEjajBLZtrQAAAAAAAAAAAAAO_QVOe45UOE3RUNKVlkWODJaT1hSRE00SkEwQjJPMY4u

Any queries, please feel free
to get in touch and please
keep sending in your photos
and wildlife records – they are
very much appreciated.

Thank You
Rob
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