



*Friends of*

Thetford Forest Park

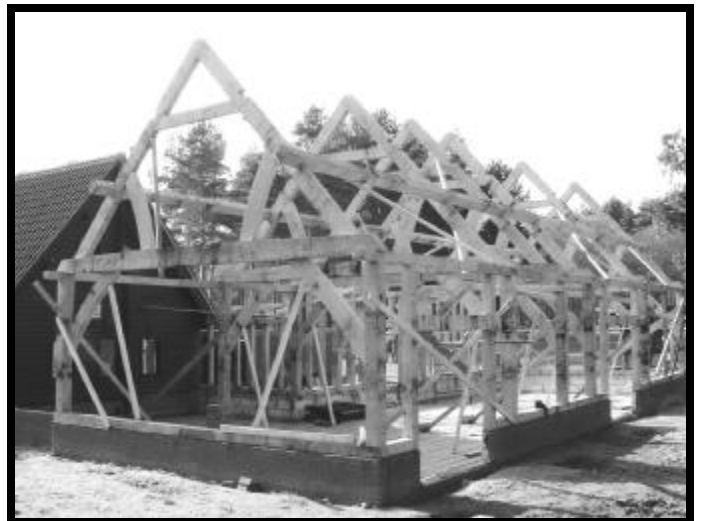
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The Secretary, F.O.T.F.P., 2 Peacock Chase, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0XL - 01953 601105

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### High Lodge Phase II is go!

After many months planning, the construction of Phase II of the project is underway, having started at the end of last year. As the pictures below show, by mid February the green oak frame was in place and the shape of the new building was plain to see.



The pictures were taken on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February, when obviously no construction workers were around and we were given permission to enter the safety-fenced area. Please do not attempt to get this close to buildings as the area is fenced off for very good reasons.

On the day High Lodge was very busy as it turned out to be a very fine weekend (although a bit cold...) and many people were taking advantage of the nice weather. The wagon and horse were kept busy by those who preferred a less strenuous way of seeing the forest in Winter, but with the mountain-bike race going on there were also many 2 wheeled visitors.

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### SUBSCRIPTION TIME !!

Following on from the last newsletter, it is now time for those subscriptions to be paid, and we would ask that you pay the £6.00 per family as soon as possible – it makes our administration so much simpler (and more cost effective) if we don't have to chase for the money. As usual the subscriptions should be sent to our Treasurer

**Mrs. M. Marshall, Coney Cottage, Lynford Cross, Thetford IP26 5ET**

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## STANTA VISIT

We have now been given a firm date by the Ministry of Defence of Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June, and once again we have been allowed an all day visit. The visit this time will cover some the areas we were unable to get to on the last occasion, and will include a stop for lunch. We will also be accompanied by a bird expert and it is also hoped that a MOD forestry person will be with us. The coach will be leaving from Santon Downham Forest Office car park at 10 o'clock and will be returning at approx. 5 o'clock. Although there is no charge from the MOD, we will have to hire the coach and driver for the day, and to cover this cost we will have to ask that a fee of **£6.00 per person be paid in advance**. There is obviously a limit on the number of people we can accommodate on the coach, and in fairness to all we will have to operate a first come, first served system for those seats with paid up members getting preference.

Those of you that have been before will know what a rewarding day it is, so we look forward to seeing you there.

Requests for tickets should be sent to the Secretary at 2, Peacock Chase Wymondham NR18 0XL together **with your cheque made payable to The Friends, your membership number and a return address**.

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## SPRING THOUGHTS – Courtesy of a Forest Worker

As Winter's damp icy fingers release their grip on the countryside, the hard earth turns into gentle growth and the late afternoon light lengthens under a pale but ripening sun. Spring, laughing at winter's overcoats, gives hints of lighter footsteps and of new beginnings. Bird feeders give way to nesting boxes, dormant gardens wake from their slumber. A time for seeds, a hope for life renewed.

Nature's aches & pains soothed by the prospect of the gradual warming of the air.

Daffodils, the heralds of spring announce their presence in a golden fanfare and rabbits and hares appear from nowhere in the Easter fields. Summers visiting birds such as the Chiff Chaff and Blackcaps are to be seen. Deer graze contentedly but alert and squirrels follow their frisky fancy.

And all around, Treebeard, the shepherd of the forest murmurs encouragement to the supple birch, the mighty oak and the steadfast elm and lime, urging them to bud and leaf.

A quickening of the heart beat. A time to stand and hope. Owing little to any human hand.

A masterpiece indeed.

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## CAR PARKING AT HIGH LODGE

Together with this newsletter you should receive a copy of an application form for a season ticket for use at High Lodge, and other local forest car parks. For those of you that are unaware being a member of the Friends means that you can obtain a discount of £2.50 on the normal price by simply quoting your membership number on the form, and a simple bit of maths shows that is nearly half your membership fee saved, and by using the 10% discount ticket you will also receive means that in the next 12 months you could easily save yourself the other half – So yet another reason to re join!

It is also worth reminding you that if you know someone else that has not joined, but still want to park they can apply for a season ticket and Friends membership at the same time on the same form, and still benefit from the same saving.

With all the exciting happenings at High Lodge for this year we hope you will want to visit even more, so a season ticket makes a lot of sense – it's just the same as paying for 4 or 5 visits individually, not a lot in 12 months is it...

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## **MILDENHALL WARREN LODGE PROJECT**

It is with enormous relief that we can finally announce that our grant applications for the restoration of the warren lodge at Mildenhall have been approved. It seems so long ago that the project was begun, and the for amount of red tape that Anne Mason has had to negotiate to get this far she deserves all our grateful thanks.

The total amount available to us is £49,200 from the following grant bodies, to whom we are indebted for their foresight in assisting with the restoration project:

<b>FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>£ 5,000</b>
<b>ENGLISH HERITAGE</b>	<b>£21,700</b>
<b>HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND</b>	<b>£22,500</b>

The local architect involved with us from the start is Philip Orchard of The Whitworth & Co. Partnership of Bury St. Edmunds, to whom we extend our thanks for 'selling' the technical side of our project to those that needed persuasion that it was feasible.

As we have mentioned before much of this funding is reliant on us proving community involvement, so we will be looking for help in that direction shortly – in other words watch this space for news on how YOU can help.

Prior to the actual commencement of work there is still a bit of sorting out to do as we have only received the final confirmation today (2<sup>nd</sup> April) and the tenders for the actual work have to be put out. Obviously as work progresses we will keep you updated, and once we have a finishing date it is our intention to have a public opening ceremony to which all are invited.

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## **Forester's Log - Spring 2002**

There really is so much going on at High Lodge that I don't know where to start.

You will find with this newsletter various leaflets from Forest Enterprise

- Our new Flyer – soon also to be available in German, Dutch and French
- Leaflet about the Sculpture Trail which was mentioned in the last Foresters Log
- What's On – exciting summer events
- Jools Holland flyer
- Pulp flyer
- Go Ape flyer – our new attraction for this season (as if the new building wasn't enough)

Another popular attraction recently has been the Ranger Club. This monthly club for 6-12 year olds is being funded and supported by you, 'The Friends'. Fifteen youngsters had a really fun day. Mammal traps had been set prior to the event and the children were able to see the animals, which had been caught; 3 bank voles and 1 wood mouse, all of which were then released safely back into their habitat. After a drawing session and some lunch, owl pellets were dissected and the bones of shrews, voles and mice were found.

The club is so popular that a second set of dates have been organised to allow more children to attend. The next club will be in April and will focus in on Birds and Bats. For more details and booking contact the Forest District Office on 01842 810271

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## **CONSERVATION GROUP**

Yet another successful mornings work was undertaken on Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup>. On this occasion our leader, Nick Gibbons, had designed a work programme centred on clearing some of the superfluous growth in the immediate vicinity of the Warren Lodge at Mildenhall, in readiness for the actual restoration work to the building and the construction of the public walk to it. Once again we were blessed with pleasant weather, and pictures were taken of the work as a permanent record of 'community involvement' as mentioned in the previous article on Mildenhall.

Once the project is underway, and indeed has been completed, there will be a need for occasional work parties to keep the paths clear and the view unobstructed- it is amazing how quickly and thickly the undergrowth, bracken and gorse re-appears if left unchecked. The dates for such days will be publicised and we would appreciate as much help as possible as it is a very labour intensive task, and the more hands that are available the better !!

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## **THE FRIENDS – THE YEARS AHEAD**

Being subscription time, perhaps some of you are wondering exactly what the Friends do and why you should renew (or join if you are reading someone else's newsletter). In our constitution, which was approved at our inaugural meeting of October 24<sup>th</sup> 1995, two main objectives were listed:

- 2.a. To increase knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of Thetford Forest Park and
- 2.b. To encourage the involvement of the community with Thetford Forest Park.

Over the last 6 years we feel we have done much towards these aims, and would like to take this opportunity to list just some of the projects and events that your committee has organized on your behalf.

- Ø Halloween Story Telling.
- Ø Evening and daytime walks with various local experts.
- Ø Annual birthday parties.
- Ø Presentation from local wildlife photographer.
- Ø Visits to the Battle Area.
- Ø The funding of the second oak sculpture at High Lodge.
- Ø The funding of the restoration to the Warren Lodge at Mildenhall.
- Ø The funding and installation of the benches along the all ability trails.
- Ø Regular newsletters such as this one.
- Ø Conservation Projects

None of the above would be possible without the dedication of the committee, nor indeed would any of it be worthwhile without you the members benefiting from our endeavours. It is with this in mind that we ask the following questions – In order for us to see our way ahead, we need to know what you the membership would like to see us do. The objectives written into the constitution are suitably wide ranging and could cover many ideas; we just need to hear them!

If you could perhaps spend a few moments answering these few questions it might give us on the committee an insight into your views on the Friends group:

- 1) How often do you visit the Forest?
- 2) Would you recommend a visit to the Forest to others in your family who do not live locally?
- 3) Would you recommend a visit to the Forest to your associates, either local or distant?
- 4) Do you feel the 'Friends' are achieving their aims?
- 5) Is there anything more you feel the Friends Committee should be doing – bearing in mind the size of the group, our income and the fact that all of us do this is our spare time.

Please return your answers to the Secretary, either by mail, phone or e-mail ([david@goodrum.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:david@goodrum.freeserve.co.uk)) or for the really brave how about presenting them in person at a committee meeting – our members are always welcome to attend the committee meetings, not just the AGM.

With the announcement of the success of the Mildenhall Warren Lodge project, it is clear that we must be doing something right, but we cannot rest on our laurels and must move forward.

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