

**JULY 2004
NEWSLETTER 31**



Friends of

Thetford Forest Park

WITH THANKS TO ALL OF OUR CURRENT CORPORATE MEMBERS:
FIBROTHETFORD **JENNER PRINT**
PEARSONS THETFORD **THETFORD GARDEN CENTRE**
MAY GURNEY

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WCP

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Begun in 1963 as Whitworth and Hall and attaining its present form in 1985, The Whitworth Co-Partnership has an established reputation for a range of architectural and building surveying projects. Boniface Associates was set up in 1993 and has an established reputation in general and building surveying. The practices merged on 1 January 2000. Both practices specialise in work to historic buildings, amongst other projects, and the merger produces what is probably the most experienced group of independent conservation specialists in East Anglia and the Northern Home Counties.

The practice provides a combination of different skills across the spectrum of architectural and surveying work. Clients are offered a service combining energy, experience and a high level of professionalism and personal attention.

We seek to maintain high professional standards in all the work we do and give our clients value for money through the quality of our service.

With offices in Bury St Edmunds and Harlow, we serve clients throughout East Anglia, the Midlands, London and the Home Counties.

**Welcome to the latest issue of the
FOTFP newsletter, which is kindly
sponsored by Whitworth's. They have a
long association with the Friends
through the Mildenhall Warren Lodge
restoration project.**

Having mentioned Mildenhall Warren Lodge already, and to continue on that theme, we now have a report on this years' open day:

It was gloriously sunny for the second Open Day at Mildenhall Warren Lodge when visitors had the opportunity to go inside the lodge itself and view displays about its history as well as enjoying the circular walk.

From the opening time of 11am we had a constant flow of visitors and estimate the total to be one hundred. An 'I - Spy' Quiz proved to be popular with the children and the winning entry was Bethan Crossley's who lives at Barton Mills; she has been sent a book token. It was a pleasure to see and talk to several Friends' members and to show them what the £50 000 grant money from English Heritage, The Heritage Lottery Fund and Forest Heath District Council had achieved.

A highlight was meeting someone who had lived and worked at High Lodge Farm, near to the warren lodge, from the age of fourteen. Now in his eighties, he walked up the hill and spent over an hour telling us about the three working horses and then how he drove the first tractor to be used there; the sugar beet, barley and asparagus grown on the fields made from the former warren, and the flower crops of gladioli and scabious which were sent by train to Covent Garden Market. He recalled the gamekeeper who reared pheasants at the lodge itself, and how he had his lunch breaks there in rough weather, although he thought that he sheltered in the lean-to, rather than in the original part of the building.

The Open Day was shared with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Rex Graham Military Orchid Reserve on the south-east corner of the former warren and many visitors took the opportunity to visit both sites.

Friends' had the support of Peter Rawlinson from the Forestry Commission so we would like to thank him for giving up his bank holiday ! I would also like to say a personal 'thank you' to all the committee members who came to help, not only on the day itself but also on the weekend before when we tidied up the site and the route of the walk. One of the committee, Basil Edwards, made a video recording of the day and I'm sure it will reflect the interest and enjoyment of everyone who came to see this very special building and experience the beautiful walk through Mildenhall Woods.

Anne Mason.

Our Projects for 2004

You may remember that the proceeds from last years St. George's Day event were allocated for use to help fund some equipment for the less able bodied users of the Forest. After much research and thought we have decided to obtain some special bicycles to be used around High Lodge. The background work is now complete and the applications are being processed, and we hope to have a result before the onset of Winter, so that the equipment is in place for 2005 season.

We are also intending to construct a new wildlife hide near Mayday Farm, and once again the grant applications are underway with a view to completing the project before next year.

It may seem to you that both these projects are a long way off, but unfortunately we are not in a position to fund them from your subscriptions and thus we have to wait until the projects are approved and funded externally which is a long and slow business, however as we know from the success of the Mildenhall Warren Lodge it is worth it in the end!

Conservation Group

Since the last newsletter we have met regularly, and so far this year we have been involved in clearance work for the new bat hibernaculum, and installing a replacement seat and improving the view at 'Mac's Seat' near Santon Downham. We are ever grateful to our team leader, Nick Gibbons, for without his organisation and never ending supply of equipment we would not be achieving nearly so much. Details of the dates and tasks can be found on the website, or by contacting the Secretary and we are always happy to see new faces (and pairs of helping hands....)

Music in the forest

Once again this year the Forestry Commission has put on a selection of concerts, and the first two have already taken place and we were able to put up a display in the F.C. 'Fun In The Forest' Marquee. We have the same agreement for the next two (The Sugababes and The Fun Lovin' Criminals), so we will have the chance to meet many of the younger visitors on these occasions.

New Totems

New Totems rise from Breckland soil
From sand and shale with hints of oil
From Forest green where once was earth
And rabbit warrens giving birth

Pure white the chalk and black the flint
With crystal seams that catch the glint
Of summer sun enriched by dew
And Carrstone with its autumn hue

From hidden depths beneath this sand
The history of this special land
Of ages past, of Ice and Snow
Mammoths downed by fatal blow

Such hunting is our heritage
Until such acts our Lords enrage
When at a stroke the lawyers pen
Says world is now, forget the then

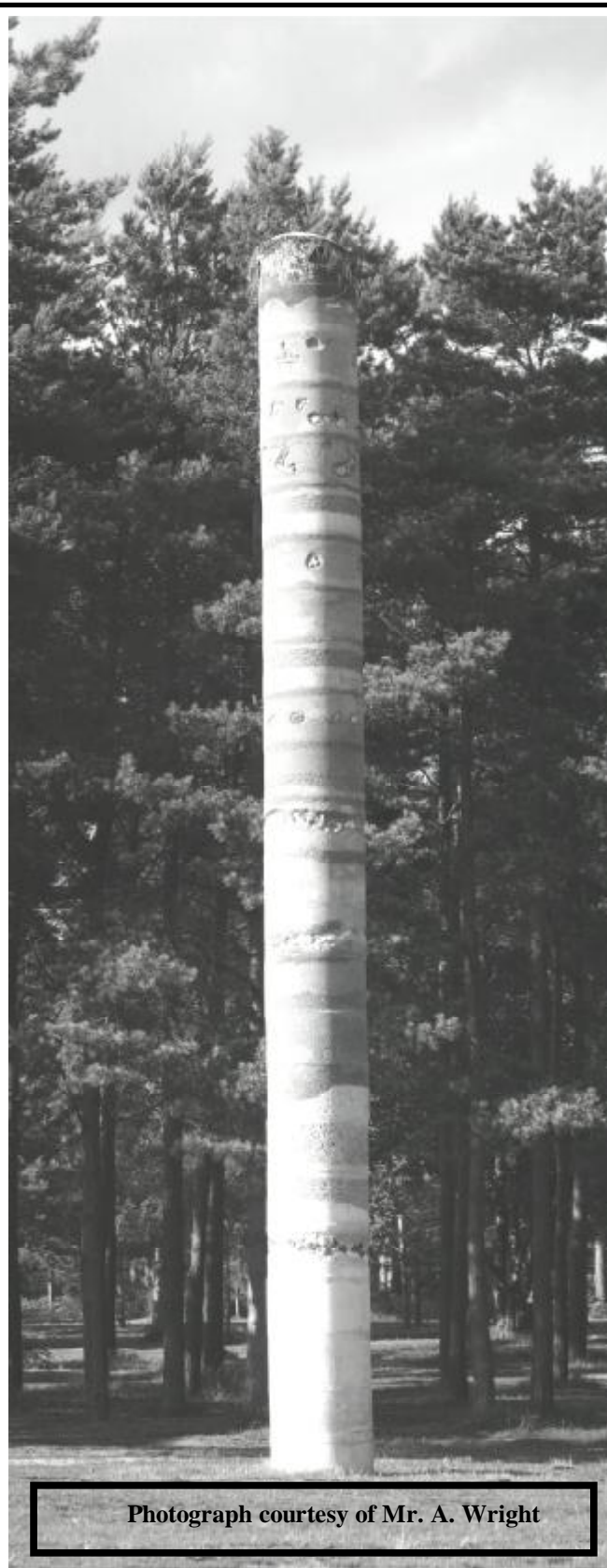
Copper wires, inverted roots
Peaty soil devoid of shoots,
Ancient bones and hidden eyes
Complete the sense of pure surprise

Twelve ton mast now faced with flints
Hidden toroids, millstone glints,
The sculptress has that special skill
Creates the time for standing still

© Robert Kybird 2004

Those of you that have visited the High Lodge Visitor Centre can not failed to have noticed the new sculpture by Julienne Dolphin Wilding. Its full title is **Core Sample, Matrix Revealed** and some further detail is contained in the article on page 6.

The sculpture currently stands alone, but it is hoped to have some information easily available shortly. The artist has, at the moment, specifically declined the idea of an information panel beside the sculpture, preferring the artwork to stand on its own merits.



Photograph courtesy of Mr. A. Wright

What's About in Thetford Forest

Wildlife to look out for, in and around the forest, this time of year. Good Luck!

Pine hawk-moth caterpillars
Hummingbird hawk-moths
Elephant hawk-moths and caterpillars

Hornets

Ruby-tailed wasps
Green tiger beetles
Glow worms

Common lizards
Adders
Grass Snakes

Stonechat

Nightjar

Woodlark

Buzzards

Lapwing



Visit from The Sandlings

Some of you may be aware that Forest area controlled from Santon Downham also includes the Sandlings Forests near Ipswich. They now have their own 'Friends' group, and it was our pleasure to invite their committee to come up High Lodge on Saturday 3rd July to spend the day with us. We took them on a walk around the forest during the morning, and then proceeded to Mildenhall Warren Lodge for the afternoon. They are in the process of obtaining a grant to improve the visitor facilities at the Sandlings, so it was an opportunity to show them the results of our successes, and explain how we went about getting funding for the tree sculptures, the seats and the restoration of the Warren Lodge.

www.fotfp.org.uk

The website continues to be improved and updated on a regular basis, and it is now possible to download previous issues of the newsletters in addition to viewing listings of our activities. Those of you that have book marked the page in the past may need to update this due to the change of name by our ISP from Freeserve to Wannado. Our website address remains the same at <http://www.fotfp.org.uk>, but we use Wannado to host the site. Currently they are operating a re direction service, but this cannot be guaranteed to be in place for many months, so if you book marked the old underlying address it's best to update it to <http://www.fotfp.org.uk>.

F.O.T.F.P. A G M 2004

The date for this year's Annual General Meeting is 14th October and once again we will be holding it at High Lodge Visitor Centre. As in previous years there will be a presentation after the meeting, and this time we have secured Mr Trevor Banham who is the Wildlife Officer at the Forestry Offices at Santon Downham.

To ensure we are able to seat and supply refreshments for everyone who wants to attend, we will once again be asking you to let us know if you are coming. As the date is still some way off, we will be sending out an invitation slip nearer the time.

Those of our members that have been with us for some time will have noticed that your committee has remained much the same for some years now, and whilst this had not led to any lack of interest or effort from those at the helm, it is perhaps time to consider new ideas, particularly in the area of member recruitment. We would therefore ask that between now and the AGM you actively consider whether YOU would like to join the

committee in any capacity. The only constitutional rules regarding joining as committee members is that you must be a paid up member and cannot be a full time Forestry Commission Employee (to avoid any conflict of interest(s)). Current committee members are spread over a fairly wide area of East Anglia, so if transport to meetings is stopping you, talk to us – We're sure we could sort something out on a casual basis.

High Lodge Visitor Centre

Whilst everyone likes a hot and sunny summer, especially one that lasts as long as last year, there is a downside to the lack of rain and once again this year it looks like that the grass area around the Visitor Centre is not as green and verdant as we would all like to see.

Please be assured that it is not a lack of maintenance, or care, it is simply that the only way to completely cure the problem is to relay the entire area having first dealt with the underlying problem (previous farm building foundations just below the surface). This is not a task to be undertaken lightly, not least as it would mean very restricted access to the site, which is not the way to encourage the public to visit!! The F.C. Engineering departments are looking to see if there is any other way to improve the look and longevity of the grass, but it is a slow ongoing process, and there is no point in making the situation worse.

Within the last 12 months there has been a substantial change in the way the space is laid out, which has increased the available area considerably which in itself should mean there is less wear on the central area, certainly on the evidence of the first two concerts which saw almost 10,000 people making use of the field over the two days, the increase and re design of the space has been a success.

Forest Closures

We thought it would be useful for you 'The Friends' to have some indication from the Forestry Commission of which areas of the forest are likely to be inaccessible in any period of time. This is quite a complex issue as there are many activities going on within the Forest and many factors at work which affect the timing and the extent of the operations going on. Having said that, the areas where Forest Operations are going on in the next 3 months and therefore the areas where routes may be closed and access denied are in the **Lynford area**, and **possibly Mildenhall**, disruption will also be evident in **Hockham** and then **Harling** while we are clear felling in those areas. We hope that this information is helpful, and would be grateful for any feedback on the usefulness and accuracy of this information.

FORESTERS LOG

The summer is well underway and we have already had one very successful weekend of concerts with our largest audience to date a sell out of 6000 tickets for Paul Weller and another very successful evening the day before with Bryan Ferry. For any of you who think that popular classics is more up your street, a real treat was to be had with the Bryan Ferry's support band Duel. They are an 'up and coming' pair of very talented young violinists, personally I hope that we will see and hear them in the Forest again.

As I write this I am preparing for our drama weekend with already almost 200 tickets sold for Shakespeare's The Tempest and things also looking good for 'Johnny Thunder and the Trousers of Destiny' on Sunday 11th July, (a family show with an environmental message). All I am hoping for is the sunshine!! But if you have missed any of this do not despair!! At the end of July we have another Concert weekend. Sugababes is a well-known band with a young following, and their concert in the forest on 31st July is proving extremely popular and is almost a sell-out.

Our last concert on this season will be the Fun Lovin' Criminals, this band is not quite so well known but with their individuals blend of jazz, funk, blues and rock coupled with their reputation for humour and excellent audience interaction it is going to be a night in the forest not to be missed.

And looking ahead, you can expect to see the next What's On at the end of August with information on, among other things, another Beer Festival in early September and, hopefully a puppet show for the October half term along with other Hallowe'en and autumnal events.

Frances Evershed – F.C.

Care In The Forest

Although very pleasant the hot weather always brings an increased risk of fire, and we would remind all users of the forest to both take great care and report any problems they see as quickly as possible – The sooner a small fire is tackled the less chance of it turning into a substantial blaze. It only takes a few minutes of a real blaze to damage a tree that's been growing for 30-40 years, and to replace it will take just as long, so depriving the local wildlife of a habitat and us of a place to visit. If you do have to report an incident, please try to be as specific as possible with regard to the location, thus enabling the services to attend as quickly as possible. One of the best ways to do this is to take note of the block number painted on the corner trees of each plantation; these are unique and are easily referenced by the authorities.

Core Sample, Matrix Revealed

Those of you who have visited High Lodge Visitor Centre since late March will have noticed a tall structure close by. This unparalleled work of art is designed to represent an accurate picture of a core sample taken to a depth of 13 metres. The various colours and strata are an authentic depiction of the layers found beneath the soil at the High Lodge site.

This geological core sample – matrix revealed was the result of a bid for a sculpture at High Lodge and the courtyard between the centre and the Bike Art to be landscaped. The main funding source for this project came from the (now defunct) Rural Arts Lottery programme, Arts Council England, Forest Heath District Council, Suffolk County Council and May Gurney Civil Engineers.

Several artists were interviewed, and Julienne Dolphin-Wilding was selected, not least because she was keen on the environment, is a Woodland Warden and uses a great deal of re cycled wood in all her work.

The Stratigraphy of the core sample is as follows, from the base up:

- Ø Soft Chalk
- Ø Flint layer in chalk rubble
- Ø Rough and smooth black flint in chalk sand mix
- Ø Wall stone flint in pipe clay
- Ø Pale yellowish brown chalk sand, stoney high level gravel
- Ø Upper crust flint in strong brown sandy loam
- Ø Chalk flour and chalk-sand drift
- Ø Toppings flint in pale yellowish brown loamy sand
- Ø Deer skulls and antlers in pale yellowish brown loamy sand
- Ø Brown slightly humus sands
- Ø Strong brown sandy loam, rabbit burrows and roots.

So next time you visit High Lodge, take some time to study the core (all 13 metres and 25 tonnes of it). Apart from the artist herself, the very size of the sculpture meant many people were involved in its assembly and we are grateful to all involved in this fine addition to the scenery at High Lodge.