



Friends of

Thetford Forest Park

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

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

This issue of the Newsletter is kindly sponsored by:

**HUNNYBUN & SONS
SOLICITORS**

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During 2004 Hunnybun & Sons are celebrating their Bicentenary.

In fact, the records of the Law Society indicate that Hunnybun & Sons have been in existence as Legal Practitioners in the Huntingdon Area since at least 1804. During that time, despite a number of approaches from larger firms of solicitors wishing to merge with us, we have adhered to our belief in our own independence and integrity and believe that only by maintaining these qualities can a firm offer truly impartial advice.

We have also wished to maintain our image as true "Family Solicitors". For many years our clients have included members of the farming community and local businesses and it remains our opinion that a modern legal practice should still combine technological aids with a friendly and informal solicitor/client relationship.

Areas of work undertaken by us include domestic and commercial Conveyancing, Probate, Employment and Commercial Law.

We are grateful for the opportunity provided to us by the Friends of Thetford Forest to introduce ourselves to you.

BICYCLE PROJECT UPDATE

Once in a while it is a pleasure to report success, and now is such an occasion. After months of tedious paper work, many 'phone calls, a journey to Huntingdon to see a solicitor and another to a bicycle manufacturer situated way out in the Fens (yes there is one) the project reached a climax on the 30th October last with a degree of fanfare and some merriment.

With financial assistance from Awards for All and the local Network Fund we have been able to purchase seven bikes of various sizes and types suitable for use by people of all ages who labour with some form of challenge in their lives.

This, we hope, will enable them to enjoy the Forest in a new way (with assistance where necessary), in the company of their family and friends.

The seven bicycles chosen were displayed at High Lodge for the public and the media's scrutiny, this for the second time and again they generated much interest. The Friends have entered into an agreement with Bike Art, the cycle hire business based at High lodge, to administer the hire, maintenance, repair and importantly, insurance, of the bicycles on our behalf.

Whilst those involved can now breathe a sigh of relief, all should be aware that this is not the end of the matter, the project is to be regularly monitored, also officialdom is looking on with some interest; the government wants us all to be more active for the sake of our health, need more be said?

My sincere thanks to all who helped bring this project to a successful conclusion, mostly ladies I must add and especially my long suffering wife. **M.Hume**

FORESTERS LOG

CHRISTMAS at HIGH LODGE this year will be sensational!!

A visit to MR and MRS CLAUS in their workshop will give you the best Santa experience for miles around. They can be visited at weekends from Saturday 4th Dec and during the school holiday until 23rd December. School visits can also be arranged. *'Enter the enchanted snow-covered forest and find your way to the frosty woodland glade. The woodland elves will help you discover Santa's workshop, where he and Mrs Claus are busy making Christmas presents'*. Our wide variety of forest **Xmas Trees** and associated decorations will be on sale from 29th Nov.

All sorts of other festivities are to be found at High Lodge; **Christmas meal nights, parties, 70s and 80s disco nights, lunches, senior citizen's events, a craft day**. Or you could hire High Lodge or Oak Lodge for your own private event.

The highlight of our Christmas will be the **FESTIVE FUN IN THE FOREST** weekend. On 11th and 12th December from 10am to 4pm, as well as being able to buy your tree, decorations and gifts at High Lodge, and visiting Santa, you will be entertained by **clowns, storytellers, live seasonal music and traditional dancers**. The weekend is organised in association with **Weeting 21** and they will provide **craft stalls, children's fair ground rides, a dog show** (Sat. only), **Alpacas** (Sat only) and much more.

A CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER.

For more details of these events, please contact 01842 810271.

HIBERNACULUM IN THE FOREST

On Tuesday 7th September the new hibernaculum was officially unveiled in the forest. Television crews from Anglia Tonight and BBC Look East were in attendance, as this 95 metre, underground structure was opened.

With thanks to Nick Gibbons, Conservation Officer for the Forestry Commission, the site has been especially designed for bats to hibernate safely for the winter months. The project has been funded by Forest Heath District Council, the Environment Agency, Suffolk County Council, Wren and the Forestry Commission, who provided £40,000 for the development. There is an interpretation board situated near the site, and the project will become part of the educational programme, promoted by the Forestry Commission with schools and local youth groups. The Norfolk Bat Group helped the Forestry Commission to choose the location, and advised on the construction work. They will also be monitoring the site.

The new hibernaculum is sited on a stretch of land where bats regularly hunt for food. It offers quiet conditions as well as suitable temperature and humidity controls. There are ten species of bat in Thetford Forest, which include Daubentons, Barbastelle, Natterers, and the Brown Long-Eared.

The structure is ideal for these species, which spend the winter months hibernating in underground locations. The bats often co-exist with the Herald Moth, which has already been sited at the hibernaculum. This is a good indication the bats may well soon follow, as the conditions are suitable for both species. Most of the bats will spend winter tucked into various crevices, and can lower their body temperature to that of their surroundings which is normally 2 –4 degrees C.

During the summer months there will be controlled visits to the hibernaculum, and details regarding access to the location can be obtained by ringing the Santon Downham office on 01842 810271 **Annie Swann.**

A FEW WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

Once the summer had passed, we had a little time to reflect on our achievements over the last few months in preparation for this years AGM (held on Thursday 14th October). The meeting was publicised by means of an invitation sent to all our members, and a popup notice on the website. We were pleased to see a reasonable number of members turn up at the meeting, especially as we had to pass a couple of constitutional amendments to satisfy the legal side of our bike project (see the later article). The meeting itself closed with a highly entertaining talk from Trevor Banham of the Forestry Commission on the subject of Deer In The Forest.

To relate all the minutes of the meeting here would be rather boring, but for the record we can tell you that all the current Committee members and officers of The Friends were re elected to the Committee to serve for 2004/2005. The amendments to the constitution were passed on the basis that only one objection was recorded.

The financial side of the Friends remains in the black, but obviously we would remind everyone that the core of our income is from subscriptions, so please remember to renew next year and consider the idea that was sent out with the latest 'Whats On Guide'.

FOREST CLOSURES OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

This is to give you, the forest users, some idea of the areas of the Forest which our harvesting teams are working in the near future. Harvesting teams have to use large and heavy machinery and for the safety of the public using the forest, it is often best to close certain areas or to divert the trails to allow work to proceed.

Between now and Christmas, they will be working in the Lynford block (thinning), Harling block (clear fell), also Swaffham (clear fell) and one block at Croxton (also clear fell).

After Christmas work will continue, but mainly in the Swaffham area. Any feedback on the usefulness or accuracy of this information would be gratefully received.

Frances Evershed
Community Engagement Manager
Forestry Commission (East Anglia Forest District)
Tel: 01842 816036

CONSERVATION GROUP NEWS

Even with our team leader away on a well-deserved holiday, the group has still managed to participate in our regular Sunday morning work parties. Looking back over the last 12 months it is amazing the varied nature of the tasks we undertake, and we are glad to have seen a few new faces recently. Any one who fancies coming along to see what we do is very welcome – the next date is Sunday 14th November, when we will be tree planting on the Santon Downham nature reserve, so come dressed suitably !!

We will all be meeting in the Forestry Office car park at 9 o'clock. If you are not sure of where this is, please contact the secretary.

Just to prove it's not all hard work – a picture of some of the Conservation group enjoying the fruits of their labours – a new seat installed above Santon Downham earlier in the year, which offers a magnificent view across the valley below.

Nick Mike Sally Sheila
Dave Gerda Anja



