



Friends of

Thetford Forest Park

WITH THANKS TO ALL OF OUR CURRENT CORPORATE MEMBERS:

E P R THETFORD

JENNER

PRINT

PEARSONS THETFORD

THETFORD GARDEN CENTRE

MAY GURNEY

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HOMES

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

Friday May 12th saw a number of invited guests arrive at Mayday car park to celebrate the completion and re opening of the trail and a visit to the bird viewing screens we have installed along the route, achieved with the help of funds from our Corporate Members and the labour of the Conservation group for all but the major felling / clearing tasks.



The trail was opened by Nick Gibbons, recently retired FC Conservation officer, who then led us on a guided walk around the new trail, stopping off at various places including the new screen, before returning to the start for well deserved picnic.

Please take the time to come and have a look – the walk is easy to follow, suitable for most people and there's lots to see on the way around.

Membership report

The membership of Friends of Thetford Forest Park stands currently (end of May 2006) at 379. This is comprised of 154 new members, 213 renewals together with 6 corporate and 6 honorary members. This is a healthy membership figure and with it comes a healthy financial position.

There have, however, been a number of glitches in the administration of the membership scheme. These, it is hoped, have been sorted out and I must take this opportunity to apologise to those members who have been inconvenienced.

When membership is taken out through the Forestry Commission's season ticket scheme, the Friends membership secretary should receive details soon afterwards. Unfortunately, in some instances, this has not been the case; there have been delays in forwarding information, or it has not been forwarded at all and in a number of instances the information was incorrect. This has led to much wasted time and frustration for every one.

The database with which we work is based on information received from the Forestry Commission and in their defence it must be said they can only work with the information they receive. Examination of the records from year to year appears to show fluctuations in the composition of households; two people one year, one the next, then back to two. We all know that relationships do break down, people 'pass on', so please be clear as to whom the membership is for when applying.

If you have any queries about membership please contact me either by telephone on 01953 457520, or by e-mail to the following address: mandsu@supanet.com

Sheila Hume – Membership Secretary

SUMMER TEASER!

Spring brings everything to life. Summer gives you time and long evenings to enjoy them. All the answers are summer based. Scramble the letters highlighted in the boxes to find a sight of summer as you sit by a river with a cold beer or glass of white wine in your hand!

A Wimbledon Treat- _____ □
Strawberries, red currants & raspberries are- _____ □
Sticky not for cleaning between teeth- _____ □
Rosy butterflies running ships- _____ □
Summer Solstice (shorter later)- _____ □
A Regal Race meeting- _____ □
Sweet combs made by these- _____ □
Sounds like I yell for a cool treat- □ _____
The Breckland "Churr" Brigade (a bird)- _____ □
Grand designs on the beach- □ _____
.....And the living is easy- _____ □

ANSWER: _____

For all the answers – see page 3

FOTFP Birthday Event

This year we are holding an informal picnic on the lawn outside Oak Lodge on Saturday 24th June from 12 o'clock. It's open to all our members, just turn up and come and see us any time during the afternoon. Weather permitting we'll have a display of our recent work, and we look forward to hearing any idea's you may have for future projects or minor works that need to be done around the forest.

Conservation Group

With the ongoing success of the conservation group, we have decided to meet on a regular basis on the third Sunday of each month. The retirement of Nick Gibbons from FC has led to a change of leadership for us, and we now have Rachel Riley (also from the FC conservation department) to lead us on the events. We are always looking for new recruits, so if you would like to be notified of upcoming meeting points and the work involved, please drop an email to us, and you will be added to the list.

Having said we meet on a Sunday, the next meeting will actually take place at High Lodge on Saturday 24th June where will be discussing some of our ideas for High Lodge with FC prior to work starting. Although we are an independent group, as all our work takes place on FC land we have to follow the proper channels to ensure all work is safely and correctly carried out.

The tasks we carry out are many and varied and so suit people of all ages and abilities, so don't think all the work is heavy or technical – we all just learn as we go along.

We would like to record our thanks to Nick for the past few years of his leadership and it was a fitting end for him to open the Goshawk Trail for us as it is proof positive what can be achieved by a small group such as ours.

Mildenhall Warren Lodge Open Day

Bank Holiday Monday 29th May dawned bright and clear, but unfortunately the weather was not kind to us again this year and we suffered rain and strong winds on and off all day. However this did not stop almost 80 visitors to the site on the only day in the year when the lodge is opened up to the public, and we got to meet many members, potential new members and just interested people who made the walk up to see us.

It is gratifying to see the repairs to the building still holding up and yet again during the clearance of the area for the day we discovered a few more items of interest – this year it was a handle for the well, some more bed fittings and other iron works almost certainly that had originally come from the building.

A short while ago the site was inspected by some experts to judge the success of the restoration and we are pleased to report that all the work we funded has held up and is good for another year without attention.

Those of our newer members may not be aware that this project was run by the Friends and as part of the terms of the grants, we are required to open the lodge once a year to the public – you might have missed this year but there's always next year – Once again it will be the late May Bank Holiday Monday.

At the local County Agricultural Shows

The Forestry Commission continued the traditional of being represented at the major county shows with a marquee at The Suffolk Show this year. The theme was 'The Wildlife of the Forest' and included the creation of a Heathland bank; silhouettes of forest birds suspended from the roof of the marquee and a stunning display by the Wildlife Rangers of deer in and around the various parts of the East Anglia Forest District.

Our counterpart in the coastal area of Suffolk, 'Friends of the Sandlings Forest', was there on both days with a display about its work and achievements.

Despite the very un-seasonal weather, with very cold temperatures and rain and wind, we were very busy answering questions and telling people about the forest and its attractions. The quizzes such as a word search and naming the birds proved very popular and there was usually no spare places at the table for mask and badge -making. It was lovely to meet two members of FOTFP there.

The Forestry Commission will also be at the Norfolk Show on 28th and 29th June so please come and see us in The Countryside Area of the Showground. The green banners will guide you to the marquee!

Both Shows are an excellent way to reach the wider public and to promote the forest and the Friends' groups and I always enjoy being there.

Anne Mason.

The Quiz Answers

Strawberries and cream
Summer fruits
Candy floss
Red admirals
The longest day
Royal Ascot
Honey bees
Ice cream
Nightjars
Sand castles
Summertime

DAMSELFLIES



A few questions for you:

About ten years ago, Friends sent out a questionnaire to try and find out what our members thought. It's about time we asked you again! Please take the time to read and complete it, and then return it to us in the envelope provided to the Freepost address – That way it doesn't cost you anything.

We really need to know what you think so we can plan for the future. In particular, an exciting potential project is on the horizon for Lynford Arboretum. Not much is known yet but for us to decide on our level of commitment, if any, we need to know how many volunteers we could call upon to help us.

The work would be similar to that carried out by the conservation group, but aimed specifically at Lynford. Of course, you don't have to wait for Lynford to give us your valuable help; the conservation group meets regularly (about once a month) throughout the year and always welcomes new recruits!

Past Projects:

Whilst preparing the questionnaire it gave us a chance to reflect on the past and in doing so it occurred to us that some of our newer members may be unaware of the background to previous projects, so it seemed appropriate to give a very brief run down:

The Little Ouse River walk – Runs from Brandon to Thetford along the River, and we helped with the marker discs and posts.

High Lodge wild life hide pond & deer wallow. Built by the Conservation Group members with materials supplied by the Forestry Commission to encourage wildlife to visit the immediate area.

The oak tree sculpture at High Lodge. We obtained lottery funding to pay for Ben Platt Mills to carve the second oak tree sculpture.

The three sets of benches at High Lodge, Lynford & St. Helen's . We obtained funding and sourcing 12 benches sited along the all ability trails with the forest area, and continue with the maintenance of them.

Mildenhall Warren Lodge restoration. A substantial grant was gained from numerous sources to enable the repair of the fabric of this unique structure.

The management of pingoes at Hills and Holes for a species re introduction. The conservation group assisted FC in the preparation of parts of the area prior to the commencement of the ongoing project.

Involvement with the new Bat Hibernacula. The conservation group visited the site on numerous occasions to assist with clearance and checking work. Obviously the actual construction was undertaken by contractors able to work underground, but we were involved with the entrance and exit areas. The conservation group has also undertaken a major clearance project at the older High Lodge Hibernacula.

Mobility Cycles. We obtained funding for the purchase of 7 specially adapted cycles to allow disabled adults and children to still experience the experience of cycling within the forest. The cycles are maintained and hired out on our behalf by Paul Hill at High Lodge and are in great demand throughout the year, not just the Summer!!

Species-specific habitat management. The conservation group has undertaken a number of projects such a wild flowers seeding at Cranwich, scrub clearance at Mayday, Santon Downham & St. Helens and have planted a number of trees around the forest to encourage various different species of birds or mammals to flourish.

Refurbishment of the Mayday Goshawk Trail / bird viewing screen. Our latest project which has only just finished as you will have seen on page one of this issue.

As you can see our work is varied, but never the less has a common theme – all our projects are rooted within the forest and are aimed at providing a better environment either for the wildlife or for visitors to the Forest.

If you want more information on any of the above, please visit our website, or in the case of the older projects just drop us a line,

FORESTERS LOG

The sun has eventually shown its face and summer is just about with us.

As I write this, the team is busily preparing for the forthcoming weekend's sell-out concerts by UB40 and EMBRACE. If you were disappointed not to get tickets for these, there are still tickets available for PET SHOP BOYS and JAMIE CULLUM, on 21st and 22nd July so do ring if you haven't yet booked.

For those with more classical taste I can offer 'The Scottish Play' (Shakespeare's MACBETH) on Wednesday 2nd August and A MIDSUMMERNIGHT'S DREAM at Rendlesham between 16th and 27th August.

For tickets and details ring 01842 814612 for concerts and Macbeth, or 01473 288886 for the Dream.

Do look again at your What's On for details of the many children's events taking place during the summer holidays.

They could try 'Poisons and Prickles', 'Rock-in Reptiles' or show their artistic talents at T-shirt Painting.

For those of you with even younger children, we are now running a successful toddler group (for 2-4 year olds) at High Lodge – our very own 'BABES IN THE WOOD' - ring 01842 816031 for more information.

Do come down to the woods and enjoy yourselves this summer. The forest has so much to offer!

One more thing have you looked at our web site www.forestry.gov.uk recently? We are frequently updating and trying to improve it both locally and nationally. Any comments on its structure, content, accessibility will be gratefully received.

Thanks, Frances (FC) 01842 816036