



*Friends of*  
Thetford Forest Park

# AUGUST 2007

NEWSLETTER No. 41

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Welcome to the latest news from the Friends. Unfortunately after a very pleasant start to the year, the 'summer' so far has meant the Forest is very green – but rather damp underfoot... However this does not seem to have stopped the visitors, and hopefully the rest of the season will be rather drier, although of course this means an increased fire risk so please be careful when the sun does finally appear !

All the concerts were a great success (and almost all were totally rain free), and the FC have asked that **w**e pass on their thanks to those who came along and helped with the stewarding. It would be impossible to run these large events without such help, and no doubt next year will see the same request going out to you all.

The Editor.

The Friends are very sorry to lose Jo Horstead from the committee. She resigned at the July meeting but for the most exciting of reasons; she and her partner are taking a year or so out to tour Britain and to visit the many wild and beautiful places in and around our islands.

She has helped Friends in many ways since our formation, not least with her quizzes and contributions to the newsletter; in arranging lectures and events and using her knowledge of wildlife and habitats to help us plan projects.

We shall all miss her but send her our very best wishes for a wonderfully happy and adventurous year and our thanks for all she has done for Friends.

## Forthcoming Events at High Lodge Forest Centre

### **Halloween 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> October.**

Walk the Terror Trail, hunt for treats in the haunted lodge and beware witches, ghosts and things that go bump in the forest.

Advance booking starts on the **3<sup>rd</sup> September**, and your Friends membership entitles you to a 10% discount. This is always a popular event and early booking is recommended.

### **Christmas 2007, daily from 1<sup>st</sup> December**

Visit Santa in his woodland hideaway, a world full of wonderment, a seasonal adventure for the whole family

Advance booking starts on the **15<sup>th</sup> October**, and your Friends membership entitles you to **a** free off-peak visit for 2 children. All visits must be booked in advance and spaces are snapped up fast.

### **Conservation Group**

We meet every third Sunday in the month – If you want to know what we are doing and where to meet, we now operate an e-mail list. To be added please contact the secretary as above.

**The Secretary, FOTFP, 2 Peacock Chase, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0XL**

## **Lynford, the latest!**

Six months have elapsed since the formation of the Arboretum Group and change is becoming apparent. Membership is still on the small side; however 'warm body' recruiting is beginning to bear fruit with casual visitors showing interest in the project. We have even recruited new Friends members while working in the Arboretum.

Until early June members were bringing their own tools to work with but with a generous grant from the committee of Friends, the group is now able to commence purchasing its own tools. The next consideration is the secure storage of tools close to the site. To this end the Forestry Commission has submitted an application for planning consent for a small building, to the Breckland District Council; we wait with baited breath.

Over the summer months work will concentrate on clearing tree cages of rank grasses and, where possible, removing the cages altogether which will improve the overall appearance of the arboretum.

An interesting element in the project is the surveying and ascertaining the height of all the trees in the arboretum, a mammoth task, for which the FC have provided some small, simple but intriguing items of equipment.

The programme of work for the coming autumn and winter is now under consideration this hopefully will include the start of work on the Hamamelis Glade, though to accomplish this there is a real need for more workers, how about it?

By the end of August the programme for the period from September 07 to December 08 will be published, if you would like a copy email Mike Hume through the Friends website.

## **An Archaeological Opportunity for Friends**

Thetford Forest Park has some of the best archaeological remains of medieval warrens and Friends now has the opportunity to help uncover another of these lodges, that of Brandon.

With the help of Suffolk County Council archaeologist, Colin Pendleton, we will spend some time in the early Spring at the site, clearing away vegetation to see what is left of the building for which documentary records exist from the 1320s. More details will follow in the next newsletter as to how you could get involved.

## **A G M – THURSDAY OCTOBER 11<sup>th</sup>**

This year's meeting is being held at Oak Lodge and will take place from 7 o'clock. We will start with a small buffet, followed by the meeting proper at 7:30 . We have then arranged for a talk by Mr. Chris Reynolds, Curator of Bedgbury Pinetum that promises to be very interesting.

**There will also now be vacancies on the committee – Applications welcome.**

To enable us to arrange the food and seating, please complete the reply slip below.

Name.....Membership Number.....

I/We require.....seats for the FOTFP AGM on October 11<sup>th</sup> . Please return this slip to:

**Freepost RRAT - JZSA - AYUG Friends of Thetford Forest Park 33 Elizabeth Close  
Attleborough NR17 1QJ**

### **Mildenhall Warren Lodge - A Second Chance to Visit**

Forest Heath District Council has asked us if we'd like to take part in the Heritage Open Day on 8th September and have the Warren Lodge open from 11am to 4pm. We are delighted to do this, especially as our open day on Spring Bank Holiday Monday was rather a 'wash-out'.

It should have been a sunny day  
As now it is the end of May.  
Instead, the wind did bend the pines  
And blow the rain in slanting lines.

Undaunted, Friends of Forest Park  
Went to the warren, near the Lark.  
There stood the lodge, so stark and cold  
Full of the secrets its stones do hold.

The intrepid group, they tried to smile,  
Under umbrellas, for a while,  
But visitors there were but few -  
Only the one, not even two !

Though sad to leave the lodge alone  
The Friends decided to go home  
But special thanks are due to all  
Who braved the cold for duty's call

Please take this opportunity to come and see the medieval warren lodge and also to visit the other historic buildings nearby which are open over this one weekend in the year.

Details for Mildenhall Warren Lodge from Anne Mason and for the heritage open days in the Mildenhall area from Forest Heath District Council Tel 01638 719000 or from their own website <http://www.forest-heath.gov.uk>

### **Breckland's Architecture**

Some Friends' members may recall that we have had a winter lecture as a joint meeting with the Breckland Society for the past two years. The Society has just completed a survey of the vernacular architecture of the Brecks and has published a report about it, available free of charge from Anne Mason.

In addition, there is an exhibition about the architecture of the Brecks which will be at the Ancient House Museum from Thursday 26th July until Monday 10th September. The museum is in a Tudor merchant's house dating back to the 1490s and is full of interest. Telephone 01842 752599 for opening times or look at the website [www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk)

The exhibition is also going to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings Conservation Fair in St Nicholas' Chapel, King's Lynn on 15th September, 10am to 5pm. There will be demonstrations of traditional building skills as part of the day's events, including how to build with flint, one of the materials that were widely used in Breckland. Admission is free so please come to this event that includes guided walks of historic Lynn, talks by specialist in building conservation and the closing address by Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage.

**Further details from Anne Mason Tel 01760 755685.**

## **Biking in the forest**

Those that visit the forest regularly cannot have failed to notice the number of bikes in use, both by families and the MTB fraternity. It was with this in mind that earlier this year a new group was set up to improve the trails and routes around the forest. Going under the name TIMBER and with the co-operation of FC great progress has been made and plans are in place to put Thetford Forest back on the map within the mountain biking arena. More details are available on the website [www.timbermtb.org](http://www.timbermtb.org) . Those of you that use the 'red' route will have seen a number of large piles of stone at various points, and these will be used to repair the worn out and muddy sections so the entire route is put back into shape.

We realise that not everyone is a fan of bikes in the forest and the construction of specific routes should keep walkers and bikers safely apart, however we welcome comments from anyone on either side on this subject.

Running alongside these plans are our own to purchase another specialised bike for the less able which will be available to hire from Bike Art at High Lodge – You may remember we obtained a number of different types for children, this one is intended for use by adults. We had hoped that it would arrive for the summer, but unfortunately they are built to order and the lead-time was longer than we anticipated, however we expect it to be delivered very shortly.

## **Treasurer's Report**

The membership numbers for the current year have increased to just over 700 with 5 corporate members and 7 honorary members. The increase in membership is due mainly to the very generous package offered to Friends of Thetford Park by the Forestry Commission. Meetings are due to start shortly to look at the admission package and benefits for the year 2008-2009

A review of the amount that has to be paid to cover the costs of the newsletter, stationery, postage and other expenses has been undertaken by your committee and due to the sharp rise particularly in postage we feel it is appropriate to seek an increase in the cost of membership at the AGM. The last increase was approved at the October AGM 2003 and came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004

Part of each membership is ploughed back into facilities for the general public, such as the repairs to the hide at High Lodge, a donation towards the development of Santa's workshop and the new bicycle for disabled adults which will be available from Bike Art, hopefully, by the beginning of October. A grant to the education department at High lodge is in the process of being finalised.

Without an increase in the membership fee, the amount that Friends can put towards such projects will be limited, and we would be hard pushed to fulfil the terms of our constitution –

**To increase knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of Thetford Forest Park. and**

**To encourage the involvement of the community with Thetford Forest Park.**

Sheila Hume (Treasurer)

Finally – If any of our new members would like us to save paper & postage by having their newsletters by e-mailed in future, please send an e mail to [membership@fotfp.org.uk](mailto:membership@fotfp.org.uk) showing a subject of e-mail newsletter and we will add you to the growing list. Thank you.