



*Friends of*  
Thetford Forest Park

# NOVEMBER 2007

NEWSLETTER No. 42

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2007 has been a very busy one for the Friends, and as it rapidly draws to a close it seems appropriate that I take this opportunity to thank all the committee members for their enthusiastic efforts in all aspects of the group.

Both the Lynford Arboretum and Conservation groups have achieved a lot this past year, but equally without the support of many members who have joined in, all the tasks would have been much harder, and taken much longer to complete without their help.

We have also had a lot of dialogue with the Forestry Commission over a wide range of issues, all of which affect the way this Forest can best serve the community and we thank them for letting us be so involved.  
The Editor.

At the 2007 AGM held in October, the following members agreed to serve on the committee for another term:

Anne Mason – **Chair**  
Dave Goodrum – **Secretary**  
Sheila Hume – **Treasurer & Membership**  
Michael Hume  
Patience Parker  
Alan Spidy  
Annie Swann  
John Shew

We also welcome 3 new members to the committee:

Ted Simmons  
Janet Simmons  
Judy English

## Conservation Group – Meeting December 16<sup>th</sup> 2007

The group will be at High Lodge from 9:30 am onwards and invite you to come and join us and make a bird feeder that can be taken away to use in your garden. All materials will be supplied and the design is such that it can be made very simply and is ideal for children, all we would ask is that parents / guardians stay with them whilst making their feeder.

In view of the success of the day we spent earlier in the year making bird boxes, we look forward to meeting many of you on the day. We will be under cover so you should stay dry, at least whilst with us!

We will also be giving information on the other tasks we undertake on our regular Sunday outings into the forest, and how to come along and help in 2008 if this appeals to you. There is no charge but for insurance purposes it is mandatory to be a member of FOTFP to take part in the conservation group event.

Many thanks to those of you who responded to the request last time to help with the process of getting the newsletter out to our 700+ members – your help is much appreciated.

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

## **More Corporate Members Sought!**

The Friends of Thetford Forest Park has a core group of very loyal corporate members: EPR Thetford; May Gurney; Omar Homes; Pearsons and Thetford Garden Centre. Their support enables us to finance projects within the Forest Park such as the recent re-vamp of the Goshawk Trail at Mayday and improvements to the wildlife hide at High Lodge Forest Centre.

In return for an annual subscription of £250.00, each corporate member receives a range of benefits: two complimentary tickets with hospitality for any one of the summer concerts at High Lodge and a further ten tickets at a discount of 10%; four complimentary season tickets for use by any employee and a discount card for purchases over £5.00 at the shop and restaurant.

In addition, corporate members are given a certificate to demonstrate their commitment to the environment and receive free publicity in our newsletters and on our website.

I'd now like to ask to all our 'household' members of Friends to help in recruiting more corporate members. Perhaps you work for a firm that might like to join or have contacts with businesses or companies who would be keen to be involved.

All you have to do is to give me names and then I can make personal contact and send out our corporate membership package to the firms suggested - though if you would like to act as a 'go-between' that would be even more helpful!

Our current aim is to have 12 corporate members, one for each year that FTFP has been in existence. Please help us to achieve that aim!

Thank you,  
Anne Mason  
Tel 01760 755685 [anne@providence28.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:anne@providence28.fsnet.co.uk)

## **Lynford and the "Season of Mellow Fruitfulness".**

Having been there at the right time, in other words beaten the birds, we were able to sample the delights of the Black Mulberry (*Morus nigra*) tree, a true delight. Another pleasure came in the appearance, from a wilderness of nettles and bracken, of the gently curving sweep of the new Hamamelis Glade (soon to be planted); with the autumn sun shine streaming through the bronze leaves of the surrounding Beech trees, a sight, I think, which would have prompted Wordsworth to take up his pen.

And now back to reality; membership of the group is now on the twenty mark, there is, however, still room for more people to volunteer to enjoy the delights of this tranquil place. The group is reaching a watershed with the provision, by the end of this financial year, of a permanent base of operations. This will enable it to undertake more than just gardening jobs; though 'Gardening' will take on a whole new roll in the next two to three years with the arrival of numerous scientific specimens which will require nurturing. Lynford Arboretum has since its inception been a place of scientific significance, yes a little 'down at heel' of late, something now being reversed. However, prompted by world events it is set to play a small, but not insignificant, part in the search for trees, which can cope with changing climate. The arboretum group are not scientists, just people committed to providing practical help when and how, they can. Soon the need to inform the public will take on greater significance, so now is the time to search for innovative ideas in how we do this; no dirt under the finger nails here. With a permanent base the group can start, in earnest, the recording of what nature is up too and then displaying the information. The gardening side of the project will remain of prime importance, but new challenges lie ahead.

As nature goes into an apparent dormant period, close scrutiny reveals the promise of the spring to come; something appreciated by John Keats as he mused on the fruitfulness of the season, so it is with Lynford.

## **A G M News**

This years AGM at Oak Lodge was well attended and alongside the election of the committee as already mentioned, there was a discussion on the membership fee. The need to cover the costs involved was reviewed and resulted in a motion to increase the membership fee for the next year to £9.00 which was passed unanimously. None of this goes to the committee, all whom give their time and effort on a voluntary basis, but we do need sufficient income to cover the administration costs and to fund our various projects. We hope all our members appreciate the need for the increase, which we feel, still puts the fee at an affordable level, especially in view of the possible benefits that are on offer.

## **Partnership in action**

I am sure that many of you as members of the Friends of Thetford Forest Park have noted recently, on your visits to the forest that among the many hundreds of thousands of pine trees that exist in Thetford Forest Park autumn has finally taken hold on their deciduous cousins. This year's colourful display is later than expected due to the warm spring and wet summer; nevertheless it is a spectacle and one that is constantly changing.

Change and adaptation was one of the underlying themes of the guest speaker at this year's Friends of Thetford Forest Park annual general meeting, where I was delighted to meet a number of you in Oak Lodge at High Lodge Forest Centre. Following the official business of the Friends, Chris Reynolds curator of the National Pine collection at the arboretum at Bedgebury in Kent gave a inspiring talk on the work that he and his team do all around the world in collecting the seeds of rare and endangered species of pine for the Millennium Seed Bank and for propagation and growing trials around the UK at Forestry Commission sites like ours here in the East of England. He illustrated his talk with some stunning photography from his travel across the globe, and brought with him some of the results of this work at Bedgebury. Pines trees from around the world, some twenty examples in all, grown from seed in the UK. Some of those young saplings will soon be planted at the arboretum at Lynford because of the work you and other members of the Friends are currently doing there.

Chris's story was about co-operation and partnership working with forestry and government organisations in every corner of the world. The Forestry Commission and the Friends of Thetford Forest Park are working together to mutual benefit as partners also; each has something to offer the other. Staff at the Forestry Commission have the expertise and skill to advise on activities being undertaken by the Friends as volunteers. These volunteers then work on various projects of conservation and restoration across Thetford Forest Park that they have identified as important. The Lynford working party, led by Friends committee member Mike Hume, is a fine example of partnership working. Mike's team of 15+ have been working with guidance and training from Giles Drake-Brockman, District Forester, usually at weekends and whatever the weather, to clear large areas of undergrowth to uncover the hidden secrets of the arboretum and to open up space for future tree planting. This is a Friends driven project, which has attracted the recognition of the curator of the National Pine collection for the work that has been achieved, who in turn has promised trees from the nursery to the group for planting in the newly created spaces next year, thus preserving a declining species.

Being a member of the Friends of Thetford Forest Park is more than just having access to High Lodge Forest Centre, it says something about you and the values you place on the conservation, preservation and restoration of our forests. If you're not already involved in a project and would like to be, then why not contact the membership secretary who will put you in touch with one of the working groups.

Jim Lyon  
Forest Management Director.

## **Brandon Warren Lodge**

In the last newsletter, we mentioned the possibility of doing some clearance work on the site of Brandon Warren Lodge. There is documentary evidence for the existence of a lodge from the thirteenth century and the site was occupied at least until the end of the nineteenth. Thick mounds of blackberry, gorse and other plants make it impossible to gauge how much might remain in terms of walls and foundations.

Colin Pendleton of Suffolk County Council's Archaeology Unit is keen for Friends to clear the site under his supervision but before we can start, the Forestry Commission has to carry out a wildlife survey. This will take place in the early spring with the emphasis on looking for hibernating reptiles and then the bird-nesting season will prohibit any work.

Realistically, it will probably be August or September before we can clear the site so more details of dates and times will follow as soon as we have them.

## **Forester's Log Autumn 07**

Halloween is over and hopefully the pumpkin lanterns will keep the witches and ghosts away for another year.

But.....Christmas is coming.

Don't miss the chance to visit to Santa in his Forest Hideaway. Take a walk through the magical glade and play games with the Santa's Elves. All children will be given a Christmas stocking including a real miniature Christmas Tree but don't leave your booking too late especially if you are hoping to take advantage of the discounted tickets available for Friends at the beginning of December.

We are taking bookings for Christmas parties at High Lodge – lunchtime or evening on a selection of dates from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> December. All the dishes are 'home' made and food is locally sourced where possible. There will be a Buffet Menu at £15.50 per head and a Christmas Meal Menu at £26.95 per head. Senior Citizen's Christmas Party meals are available at £12.50 per head on 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December. For more details and menu options see [www.forestry.gov.uk/thetfordforestpark](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/thetfordforestpark) and follow the links or telephone 01842 814612 for Santa or 01842 816028 for meals.

And then after Christmas.....

Why not work yourself back to fitness with a bike ride. Events are available for booking on 26<sup>th</sup> December (Explorers) and 1<sup>st</sup> January (Beginners). See website on What's On for details. Bookings on 01842 810090.

Clearfelling is taking place in the forest close to Mundford. The affected areas are close to Fire Routes 40, 41, 36, and 24. Clearfelling is also taking place in Kings Forest but this is a considerable distance from the Car Park. In the Brandon Country Park area thinning is taking place south of Fire Route 4. Walkers may hear the activity but this work is taking place on leasehold land and therefore will not prevent recreational activity.

**Please observe and act on all warning signs!**

Enjoy the forest and have a very Happy Christmas  
From Frances and all the Forest Team

Finally:-If any of our new members would like us to save paper & postage by having their newsletters by e-mail 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.