



Friends of

Thetford Forest Park

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

The Editors' Opening Words

Having had such a dismal start to the year, with the weather and Foot & Mouth combining to make life difficult in the Forest, it was gratifying to see such large numbers of people about as soon as the sun came out again, making us of all the facilities, especially those at High Lodge. This year both the concerts (the Levellers & Jools Holland) took place without the rain making an appearance, and we had our display board out and distributed many leaflets amongst the crowds. It was nice to actually meet with some of our members, and talk to them about the Warren Lodge project and the pictures on the board.

The Warren Lodge Project

We finally have some good news on the progress of the grant applications for Mildenhall Warren Lodge. On the 9th August we received confirmation from English Heritage that they were going to make us an offer for a grant in excess of £21,000. Hopefully this will encourage the Heritage Lottery Fund to now come up with the rest (about another £ 21000) and enable work to commence. In some ways the delay has not actually made any difference to the physical work, as we would not have been allowed on site until the F.M.D. restrictions were lifted, but nevertheless it looks like being Spring 2002 before any serious work can start. Unfortunately we cannot start anything until all the grants are in place, as to do so would jeopardise our position with most of the award makers. We have also received offers of help from other local sources, and once everything is in place you will receive an update on the project – either in a newsletter or a separate posting.

The news of the award actually came on the day of the last committee meeting, so we have already thanked Anne Mason for her extreme patience with officialdom, and the amount of work she has personally put into this project, but I'm sure our members would like to add their thanks also.

Once the work has commenced, we have made a commitment to community involvement and so if anyone would like to assist in anyway please drop us a line so that we can draw up some work parties – many hands make light work so the more varied tasks we can cover the better

***THE FRIENDS OF THETFORD FOREST PARK 2001 AGM ATTENDANCE RETURN SLIP
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE A SAY IN THE RUNNING OF THE GROUP
PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION***



The Informative and Important Bit

In an attempt to attract more of you to our AGM, we have changed the venue to High Lodge itself and arranged for buffet and a talk by Mr Giles Brockman of Forest Enterprise.

He is a District Forester (Forestry Management) and has a very wide knowledge of all matters pertaining to the Forest, both here and in his previous posts further north.

We are aware that AGM's can be rather uninteresting in themselves but we do need our members there to have their input – we cannot survive on only our own ideas, and without someone helping us we can't always get it right when planning events etc., so please make the effort to come along and meet us on **Thursday 18th October**. Those of you who have already been to any of the evening events at High Lodge will be aware of the high standard of catering available, and for those that have not you are in for a treat.

The schedule for the evening is **7 pm start** with the buffet, followed by the actual **AGM at 7.45** and finishing with the talk by Giles.

One of the items on the AGM agenda is of course the election of the committee, and although all current members have indicated a willingness to stand again, nominations are invited for others to join us. No previous experience is required, although an interest in any particular area of the Forest would obviously help. Our current Chair has notified the committee of his intention to stand down from that post, although he is still able to be on the committee as an ordinary member.

Another important item on the agenda is the intention to alter our membership year to coincide with that of the F.E. financial year, which will greatly simplify the accountancy side of things, in particular the combined car parking and membership offer. The change will not affect current members whose membership expires on December 31st of this year – they will simply get the first 3 months of 2002 for free!

Obviously being only a committee we have to be guided by our members' views on any major changes to the running of the F.O.T.F.P., so we do need to hear from you – if you are unable to attend but wish to make a point at the meeting this can be done by post. All you need to do is drop a line to the Secretary and the matter will be added to the any other business item on the agenda.

I do apologise if this article seems a little heavy going, but the whole purpose of the Friends group is to represent you, the ordinary members, and to do this effectively we really do need your help.

So that we can organise the food, seating etc. for the AGM we need to know how many of you are attending this year, so if you intend coming please complete and return the slip below, by the 9th of October, to the Secretary at:

**No. 2, Peacock Chase, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0X or
e-mail to david@goodrum.freeeserve.co.uk**

Alternatively you can of course ring 01953 601105 , but please also do so by the 9th October.

Name.....Membership No.....

Address.....
.....

I shall be attending the 2001 Friends AGM at High Lodge, and require

Seat(s)

In an effort to bring The Friends to the attention of the visitors to High Lodge, the display board has been used at some point during most weekends and it has to be said that, except when it was raining, there was always someone looking at it or talking to which ever committee member was 'on duty'. This has generated a small number of new members so far and seems more suitable than the static display in the restaurant at High Lodge, where people have in the past had to bother the shop staff for information on the Friends, rather than one of us.

Although it seems way off, we are again arranging to be at the Xmas event at High Lodge during December, so there is another chance to come along and meet us and hear what we have planned for 2002. With all the changes coming at High Lodge we are sure it will be a good year for the forest users, but as with all things new it needs someone to keep an eye on the progress, and that's where we come in. If you have any questions, reservations or special needs please contact us and we will put your case to Forest Enterprise.

For those of you who were booked on the trip into the Battle Area that was cancelled due to the FMD problem, we have now been advised by the M.O.D. that they have reluctantly cancelled all public visits for 2001. All bookings have been carried over to 2002, and they are trying to match the requested days/dates as closely as possible. Once we have been allocated our slot, we will of course let you know and we will begin the seat booking process again.

During a recent committee meeting the subject of next year's other events was broached and, after a fairly long discussion we have decided to try and arrange a number of smaller events, in conjunction with Forest Enterprises' own resources, covering a wide range of interests. These will be made public in another newsletter, but just to give you an idea of what we are considering these are some of the suggestions made during the meeting:

A 'safari' type journey, either early morning or late evening.

A walk with one of the many varied specialists available – birds, wild life, plant life, fungi, conservation etc.

A visit to see the Forest at Work

A visit to see the Fun side of the Forest.

A journey to some of the further reaches of the area covered by Forest Enterprise from Santon – this includes such places as North Norfolk, Dunwich, Hatfield and Epping.

Also under consideration is the inclusion of a voucher with the first newsletter after the new subscriptions fall due, which will enable members to benefit from a reduction in the price of some of the 'What's on Event's organised by F.E. during 2002. The terms of any such offer are of course subject to the agreement of F.E. themselves, and will be limited to a set number of tickets.

The Conservation Bit

The next dates for the Conservation group are:

Sunday 18th November 0900 High Lodge - Putting up some more bat boxes.

Sunday 20th January 0900 High Lodge –Putting up some more bat boxes at a different plantation.

The Quiz Bit

This issue for a change (again) a few cryptic clues – none are easy but all the answers are very closely related to the forest around Thetford!

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| 1) Distress call for twitchers? | 2) Astound – with the top off ! |
| 3) Sounds like a dribble – surely not? | 4) Odd Plane re-arranged for a watery place? |
| 5) Golden Anniversary amongst the trees | 6) River that you're 'up with' ? |
| 7) The McGregor's waste away with grief. | 8) The order is – Move the boat forward, darling |

The answers are to be found overleaf – but don't cheat too soon

Well, I have to admit that it seems a long time since the last Foresters Log, but at the end of this summer we have as much to look forward to as we have had to look back on.

You will find with this newsletter the Autumn-Winter 2001/02 Whats On Leaflet, and what a fantastic programme it is, there's something for everyone. So, whether you are inquisitive, investigative, adventurous, energetic, artistic, superstitious, or hungry(!) or just want to come and have fun and relax, there will be something for you. Book well in advance to make sure of your place, as many events book up very quickly.

While you are in the forest take a look at High Lodge. Slowly but surely it will start to look rather different with the building of phase 2 about to begin. The new parts of the building will incorporate an increased restaurant area, a larger kitchen, more toilets and improved facilities for cyclists. The existing hire side will be expanded to include a shop selling both cycles and accessories. As I write this the first 'spade' of earth is about to be removed. An artists' impression of the new centre is on display on the wall in the existing restaurant at High Lodge. This is a very exciting development and we are all looking forward to the great improvements in visitor facilities.

While all the planning for this has been going on, Andy Frost, the creator of our play sculptures, has been hard at work building a spider and a rabbit to join the squirrel (still lost in the maze!). By the end of September we can expect to also see a woodlark, and a fowarder (a machine used in harvesting) will appear during October. All of these are close to High Lodge and are waiting to be climbed on.

Last but not least why not come to one of our Farmers Markets? The first two were a great success, and a third is planned to coincide with the Christmas Extravaganza on December 16th. The markets consist of many local producers selling their own produce of a very high quality, some of which is also organically produced, and we all like good food don't we? See you there.

Frances Evershed – Forest Enterprise.

Yes – the quiz answers already.....

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|-----------------|--------------|
| 1) May Day | 2) Maze |
| 3) Little Ouse | 4) Dale Pond |
| 5) Jubilee Wood | 6) The Lark |
| 7) Scot's Pine | 8) Roe Deer |

The editor is indebted to Jo Horstead for this selection – you may or may not be glad to know that there are at least another 3 issues worth still on file !!

Nature Notes from the Forest – By Jo Horstead, Brandon Country Park

What a strange year it has been for wildlife. With the forest being shut for several weeks due to Foot & Mouth, the animals were soon getting used to the idea of there being no people about. On several occasions I saw deer wandering contentedly amongst the picnic tables outside the visitor centre, and the squirrels were more relaxed and carefree than ever. Fortunately the park was re opened before the birds, encouraged by the lack of people and cars, had begun to nest in the most inappropriate places.

The summer months and long evenings were a mixture of rain and hot humid days resulting in lush vegetation which showed the wide variety of shades of green in the forest at its best. This growth has required constant attentions, but one plus point – no scorched lawn at Brandon this year! The vivid Vipers Bugloss has been spectacular this year, an arable weed; it thrives in open sandy soils where herbicides and fertilisers have not been used.

That elusive Breckland bird, the Nightjar, put on its' churning performance for those who ventured out in search of it on a summer's evening. Woodlarks have been sighted, and Hobbies regularly seen. Another sighting has been of the Stonechats in young forestry plantations – usually sitting on top of bushes. The strange reports of luminous lights at night are only the female glow-worms, and once they have mated the glow dims out!!

That's all for this issue – more next time.