



JANUARY 2003
NEWSLETTER 26

Friends of

Thetford Forest Park

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

Opening words from the editor

By the time you receive this Christmas will have been and gone, and we will be well into a new year. 2002 was year of big changes at the High Lodge Centre and this year many more people will benefit from the increased range of activities and facilities on offer. To those of you that have not managed to get along to see those changes for one reason or another, we would recommend a trip out to see for yourself how much more is on offer in your Forest.

Being well into a new year also brings to mind that subscriptions will soon be due (they now run from April to March), and as usual we would ask that you renew as soon as you are able so that we do not have to waste our limited resources on sending out reminders. The amount due is still only £6.00 per family, but this year of course we have a new Membership Secretary, Mrs. Sheila Hume, to whom all subs should be sent to at: 33 Elizabeth Close, Lark's Rise, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 1QJ

Those of you that attended the AGM in November will already know the 2003 Committee, but for the record your officials are:

Chair: Mrs Anne Mason

Secretary: Mr. David Goodrum

Treasurer: Mrs. Sheila Hume

Membership: Mrs. Sheila Hume

Other Committee Members: Mr. Basil Edwards, Mrs. Sally Goodrum, Ms. Jo Horstead, Mr. John Carr, Mr. John Shew, Mr. Michael Hume

Mildenhall Warren Lodge – an update

Since the last newsletter the work has been completed by Butlers of Sawston, who although being very experienced at working on historic buildings, this was their first Warren.

The actual work took slightly longer than planned although this also meant that Forest Enterprise were able to complete the car park, being their 'in kind contribution' to the scheme. We are very grateful to them for this work, as it would have made a serious dent in our funds if we would have had to find that sort of money.

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During the course of the work there were weekly site meetings, attended by Trudi Hughes of English Heritage and David Aldridge of The Heritage Lottery Fund. There was also careful monitoring of the mortar samples and all the stages of the repair by Philip Orchard, our architect, and Mr. Butler himself.

Now the work is finished we are starting to plan the event to celebrate the completion of the whole project. If anyone has any suggestions for someone to perform the 'opening ceremony' please let us know. We are sure the media will attend, and would hope to see many of our members and anyone else that has helped us along the way with this project. Further details will follow in the next newsletter when we have finalised the plans and the date.

Another one of our Corporate Members is pleased to be associated with the Friends



The Friends go electronic!

Finally we have taken the plunge and set up our own web site, which we hope contains the information you need and want from us, and will hopefully encourage others to join us.

Any suggestions for further additions are always welcome and best sent from the e-mail link on the site, so please take a few minutes and visit us at **www.fotfp.org.uk**. The site was composed to be accessible to most types of browser, but should you have difficulty in viewing the site or its content, please let us know. With the availability of 'instant updates' it does give us the opportunity to give out information more often than is possible with a printed newsletter, however we are aware not everyone has access to the internet and the newsletter will continue to be the primary source of information and news.

The Environment Panel

Once again Anne Mason was your representative at the November 4th meeting held at High Lodge in the newly extended restaurant area, which everyone was impressed with. Before the meeting started two new members (Roger Goulding – Conservation Officer, and Paul Hill representing the cycling interests in the park) were welcomed onto the Panel by Mike Taylor, from Forest Enterprise.

Steve Rothera of English nature gave an update on the heathland re-generation programme and Anne Mason reported on the Warren Lodge restoration at Mildenhall. This was followed by a report from Nick Gibbons on the three latest Forest Design Plans, which define harvesting, conservation, wildlife and archaeological aspects for specific areas. The main focus of the meeting however was on the future plans for the High Lodge site itself, and in particular with reference to the proposed education building and its design and layout. There was much discussion on the way forward to achieve the best possible facilities for schools, adult education courses and corporate events. The funding for the project has already been secured by Forest Enterprise.

Next on the agenda was a report from Anne Embury (Forest Enterprise) who reported that funding had also been secured from the rural arts lottery fund to commission a feature for the High Lodge courtyard.

Even from this abridged report, it should be clear that there are many exciting projects around at the moment and we are grateful for Anne Mason sparing the time to attend these meetings, which enables us to keep you up to date on the future plans of Forest Enterprise.

Conservation Group

The group continues to grow in numbers, but as always we welcome anybody else along to the days, even if only for part of the morning. The dates for the next 3 events are detailed below. On the relevant page of the website there are maps to show the location of the more remote sites.

Hockham Hills and Holes	Sunday Jan 26 th	0900
Hockham Hills and Holes	Sunday Mar 2 nd	0900
High Lodge Centre	Sunday April 13 th	0900

The first two dates are to clear some more pingos to encourage the re introduction of the pool-frog to the area, the third is to clear scrub from around the area of some the bat boxes where it is possibly hindering the access of the bats.

It is also hoped to arrange a walk around the Hills and Holes pingos during the summer as this is not an area normally seen by the public and it is very different to other parts of the forest.

St. George's Day Celebration

On Saturday the 26th April 2003 we will be celebrating England's Patron Saint with an action packed day at the High Lodge Visitor Centre.

This event, which starts at 11 o'clock, will commence with the rescue of the Fair Damsel after the eternal struggle between the opposing forces of the ugly and the smelly.

Following this light hearted altercation the 'Damsel', Carol Bundock of BBC Look East will open the proceedings. These will include Horse Logging, Timber Conversion (from the log into a square bulk without using a saw), Clay Lump and Wattle and Daub, Story Teller, The High Lodge Mint, Morris Dancing, history of building in East Anglia with a display by and information by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group, Jousting, talks on the history of the Rose given by Mr. John Beales of Peter Beales Roses.

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There will be lots of other activities for children and a chance for the adults to peruse regionally produced foods and drinks. There will be a small gift presented to all those who attend in costume. This event is kindly sponsored by the Thetford Garden Centre and supported by Urban Forestry and Peter Beales Roses.

As always we are looking for help on the day, BUT, with a difference: a one off, no- strings-attached basis. If you are interested please contact Mike Hume on 01952 457520 or mandsu@supanet.com

FORESTERS LOG (Or Celebrations, Chefs and Concerts)

Celebrations

Before you are all allowed to completely forget about Christmas, I wanted to extend my warmest congratulations to all those Friends and others who may read this, who helped at the Xmas Extravaganza either by roasting chestnuts, helping with Children's Crafts or in any other way. Despite the lack of electricity at around lunchtime, which made the toilets inoperable and the Centre rather dark, a lot of people had a very enjoyable day out with much pre-Christmas fun. I would particularly like to congratulate our three local schools Forest School Brandon, Norwich Road Thetford and Thetford Grammar School for their seasonal music. In total £193.12 was collected mainly from programme sales and roast chestnut sales, which was shared between Tree Aid and Gatehouse.

Chefs

Hot on the heels of our new Centre manager at High Lodge, Julie Ward, we are about to employ a Chef, Wendy Norton. She has many years experience of cooking locally and will be responsible, not only for the day to day food served at High Lodge but also our monthly themed evenings and other special events.

Next themed evenings:

Fri 14th Feb Valentines Evening, Fri 7th March New Zealand Evening

See you there. Don't forget we are now fully licensed.

Concerts

Well, I know it feels a bit early and cold for outside concerts but tickets will be on sale within the next few weeks for

Fri 13th June Status Quo

Sat 14th June Jools Holland and his Rhythm and Blues Orchestra

Fri 25th July The Beach Boys

Sat 26th July Courtney Pine

The Status Quo and Jools Holland concerts are part of a nationwide forest tour of 5 destinations. The Beach Boys are just coming to give us 'Good Vibrations' and to tell us 'Why fools fall in love' and Courtney Pine is sure to produce some of the best Jazz that this summer will have to offer.

See you all there

Frances

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