



Friends of
Thetford Forest Park

MARCH 2008

NEWSLETTER No. 43

E-mail: info@fotfp.org.uk
Secretary Tel: 01953 601105

Another year of Friends has passed and we look forward to another successful year. To this end we invite you to join us for the coming 12 months.

Due to changes within FC it has been necessary to rework the benefits package offered, so please see the article on page 2, which gives all the details, together with the new application form.

We thank all those members that come along and help at the Conservation & Lynford Arboretum meetings – full details and the schedules are available on our website www.fotfp.org.uk

Please help keep our administration costs down by renewing promptly,

Thank you.

Friends Trip To Bedgebury Arboretum Saturday 12th April 2008

Friends' members have the wonderful opportunity of visiting Bedgebury Pinetum as guests of The Forestry Commission. Chris Reynolds, the Curator who gave us the brilliant talk at the AGM last October, has invited us and will personally show us round the site.

Bedgebury Pinetum, near Cranbrook in Kent, was established in 1923 and now forms the oldest and largest collection of temperate conifers anywhere in the world. The site is ideal, being a combination of marshy areas with drier ridges in a valley. At first, it was run jointly by the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and the Forestry Commission, but in 1965 the latter became sole owners.

In Spring, the Pinetum is exceptionally beautiful, with the vibrant colours of rhododendrons and azaleas reflected in the waters of the lake and the birdsong of the returning migrant birds.

The trip is open to all our members and there will be a charge of £12 per head to cover the hire cost of the coach and driver.

Food can either be taken with you, or bought at the facilities on site. We will be leaving at 08:00 from Santon Downham car-park, returning back there for 18:00.

There are limited places available, so please complete as soon as possible then return the slip on page 3 to the Treasurer at the address shown.

REMINDER TIME – Membership subscriptions are due on the 31st March for the next 12 months. The charge is only £ 9.00 and will entitle you to all the benefits listed overleaf. Please use the reply slip enclosed to simplify the admin process, Thank you.

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

Membership

April approaches and with it the renewal of Friends' membership fee which was raised at the AGM to £9.00 per household.

Benefits for the year 2008-2009 are: -

- 25% off Season Ticket to High Lodge Forest Centre
- 10% off shop & catering purchases over £5.00
- 10% off hire of Oak Lodge/booked functions
- 10% off Halloween bookings (booking fee applies)

The Halloween tickets must be booked in advance and early booking is strongly recommended.

There is a chance for members of Friends to steward at the concerts at High Lodge in June & July this year; the offer includes two free tickets to a concert of your choice. The places are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Contact Sheila Hume on 01953 457520 or mandsu@supanet.com for details.

High Lodge is now designated as a separate profit centre and as a consequence the Forestry Commission has withdrawn the 'two free tickets to Santa' offer. FOTFP and the FC have been in discussions over the membership package and we both believe that we have agreed a very valuable and beneficial package.

Friends' members will be paying just £30 for a season ticket for 2008/09 being a 25% discount on the full price paid by non-members.

Your continued support of Friends will enable further projects to be undertaken in the forest for the benefit of all visitors. An additional adult size bicycle suitable for the use by those with disabilities has been purchased and will be available for hire through Bike Art from March. The Lynford Arboretum Group has been equipped with tools and their efforts can now be seen by everyone.

To renew your membership please complete and return the enclosed form to the address shown.

Thank you for your continued support

Sheila Hume (Membership Secretary)

Forest Lunches at High lodge Visitor Centre

High Lodge are planning a series of Forest Lunches during this year. The next one will be on Wednesday 23rd April. The cost £10 per head and places must be booked at least one week in advance through FC Santon Downham Office on 01842 816000

The Menu.

Home-made Sausage Casserole served with creamy mashed potato.

Vegetarian option: - Vegetable and 3 Bean Casserole served with warm crusty rolls and butter

Home-made Vanilla ice cream with Butterscotch sauce and home-made shortbread

Selection of Local Cheeses served with crackers, celery, grapes and home-made chutney

Tea or coffee



Friends' is delighted to welcome two new corporate members who joined as a result of the article in the last newsletter. They are **SPC Printers** in Thetford and **Lakenheath Forklift Training**. The support of our corporate members enables us to undertake specific projects within the Forest Park such as the revamp of the Goshawk Trail at Mayday, on the Brandon - Bury St Edmunds Road. In return, they receive a range of benefits and have the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping the environment.

All our existing corporate members will receive details of their concert tickets offer at the beginning of March but in the meantime, it is not too late for others to join for 2008/09.

Member Name & address:

Please supply tickets at £12.00 per head. Total enclosed: £

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

Lynford Arboretum: Our first year

Late in February 2007, twenty-seven people attended the inaugural meeting of the Lynford Arboretum Group, of these half went on to become regular participants. From this small beginning the group has slowly grown in strength, now approaching the original figure and has contributed close to six hundred hours of effort.

Meeting initially one Sunday and, at the start, one Wednesday morning a month things have progressed to additional mid-week gatherings, sometimes followed by lunch in a local hostelry.

So what has been happening? At first, despite planning and careful direction from on high, things appeared somewhat confusing. The arboretum seemed enormous, but as time has passed its size appears to have diminished, but of course it hasn't. Initial efforts were concentrated on bring over-sized shrubs back into some sort of order especially where they impinged on hard pathways, this however is always dependant on the seasonal bird population and location.

Late summer in 2007 saw a concentrated effort on the clearance of what was to become the Hamamelis (Witch Hazel) Glade; after a number of weekend and midweek sessions the site was ready for planting. This task was successfully completed by Christmas leaving everyone thinking it would take time before there was anything to show for all the effort. Not so; one brave specimen proceeded to put on a splendid display of bright lemon yellow flowers, but little perfume. Others followed suit though in a more muted way, however they indicated what is to come.

Running parallel to all this physical activity has been much behind-the-scenes preparatory work concerned with planning, equipment, tools, health and safety, identifying training needs and general administration, all entailing numerous meetings.

And what of the coming year? Already thoughts are turning to next winter's planting programme, this time the subject will be Cornus (Dogwood) with the intention of bring more colour to the arboretum during the darker period of the year. Shrub pruning will continue according to the season and a start will be made on the restoration of the Salix (Willow) demonstration plot, also construction of sections of 'Wheat Fen' type walkways to the streamside path in an effort to reduce the 'poaching' of the path's surface.

With the foundation already in place, March will see the arrival of a portable building that is being manufactured in the North East of England; this is to be known as the "Friends Lodge". The Lodge will give the group a home from which to work, it will also allow for a diversification of activities; **Already planned are two short walks, both on Sunday mornings in May, as part of the Tree Council's 'Walk in the Woods' month. These take place on the 4th and 25th at 10.30, home in time for lunch so please join us, oh yes and they are free.**

Coming over the horizon are changes to everyone's train of thought in the shape of the Forestry Commission's 'National Arboreta Collection Policy', which is part of a much larger effort to combat climate change. The implications for the arboretum group are as yet, unclear.

Finally, my sincere thanks to all those who have given unstintingly of their time to the arboretum, for the support of the Friends Committee and to the FC's staff for their advice, help and forbearance.

Michael Hume

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 showing a subject of e-mail newsletter and we will add you to the growing list. Thank you.