



THE FRIENDS OF CHARNWOOD FOREST NEWS



Happy Christmas and New Year to All
Winter 2013

Website: www.focf.org.uk

Mission Statement: To work towards the preservation of the countryside and local environment of Charnwood Forest Regional Park for the benefit of those who live within it, and for those who visit, and for future generations. We aim to be an effective, informative and influential voluntary organisation.

Dr Julie Attard came to talk to us at our recent meeting, about

... helping to discover CHARNWOOD ROOTS



[Charnwood Roots]

Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust has been awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out its four-year *Charnwood Roots* project and will be inviting local people from communities across the area to get involved.

The project will explore the history of thirty-five towns and villages in and surrounding Charnwood Forest and Loughborough. Starting from the earliest pre-historic settlements and coming right up to the present day, *Charnwood Roots* will use a variety of research techniques to discover more about the history of this fascinating area. Volunteers will have a unique opportunity to contribute to a nationally important research project and investigate their local history with the help of professional historians and archaeologists. Free training will be given and those without any previous experience will be welcomed and encouraged to take part.

The project will be running between August 2013 and July 2017. There will be opportunities for around 400 people to discover the thousands of years of history on their doorstep and develop new skills in using maps and documentary records, archaeological fieldwork, oral history, and surveying and recording historic buildings and landscapes. Public events and activities aimed at families, groups, businesses and local schools will share the new discoveries with the wider community. Anyone who would like find out more or take part in this exciting project is invited contact Dr Julie Attard at charnwoodroots@leicester.ac.uk or 0116 2525946.

TALKS and WALKS

Our activities for you to enjoy

Indoor meetings take place at Woodhouse Eaves Village Hall at 7.30pm, finishing about 9pm followed by refreshments. Your guests and other non-members are welcome at our talks (for whom we make a small charge of £3 at the door).

To assist our preparations and to help you in case of any change to the arrangements, please tell us you are coming (see individual invitations for details).

It's a big help ... thank you.

2014

- ☛ Monday 13th January
TALK: THE FUTURE OF LEICESTERSHIRE QUARRIES by Geoff Mason
- ☛ Monday 17th March
AGM followed by TALK: THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL FOREST by Lynne Richards, Head of Fundraising and External Relations, National Forest Company
Some of the following are provisional and there may be additional items published next time:
- ☛ Thursday 15th May
VISIT: Charnwood Forest Canal
- ☛ Wednesday 18th June
VISIT: Stoneywell
- ☛ Monday 22nd September
TALK: Lady Jane Grey and Bradgate Park by Helen Kessling
- ☛ Monday 20th October
TALK: Old Maps of Charnwood

Could this be you? We are seeking a member (or maybe two working together) to arrange around half a dozen events (speakers and guided walks) a year. Please have a word with the Chairman (details overleaf).

At the top of the page is pictured morning hoar frost at Charnwood Lodge Nature Reserve last December.

Committee Notes

◆ Chairman, Dick Howard, commented, “No member has so far expressed an interest in the roles of Chairman or Events Organiser and I am apprehensive about the future of the Society unless members are willing to take on practical tasks for the Society and join the Committee”.

As a stop-gap, he would “appoint” existing committee members to arrange an event each.

◆ Following representations there had been improvements to the non-Charnwood style of stone wall being erected at Roecliffe Manor; it was now more satisfactory.

◆ It had come to the attention of some members that there was a joint proposal by the National Forest and Leics. County Council for extensive tree planting at Broombriggs Farm. Concern was expressed about the loss of important views and the ability of the thin soils to support afforestation. Enquiries would be made.

◆ Proposals for housing development on charity land at Nanpantan in full view of The Outwoods raised alarm. It could also encourage more adjacent developments. FoCF will object.

◆ It is a big help in both time and cost when we can keep in touch with members via email when that is possible. Membership Secretary, Louise, reported that the slow but steady transfer to email is continuing. Meanwhile the email and postal systems are working satisfactorily alongside each other.

Good Food Here ...

Good food enjoyed in perfect surroundings is something most of us appreciate. This was clearly on offer when FoCF representatives were invited to the “Media Launch” of the new Grey Lady Kitchen and Deli in the centre of Newtown Linford, formerly The Village Restaurant. After we were warmly welcomed we needed little persuasion to do some sampling. The menus for breakfast, lunch and Christmas, or just a snack, look delightful and we welcome this addition to the range of lovely places to eat we have in Charnwood.

But there’s more! Now taking up a large area inside the front door is a sumptuous delicatessen counter offering a superb range of quality foods – bread, meat, cheese and more – plus some

interesting gift ideas. Too much to describe here ... you really should go and see for yourself.

The Grey Lady Deli & Kitchen, 01530 245801

Heritage Lottery Bid Unsuccessful

The County Council’s Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was unsuccessful. The bidding was very competitive, with only nine applications being successful out of a total of twenty four bids. Clearly many will be disappointed. Committee member John Kettle represented FoCF at the outset and we supported the process as much as we could, although it became intensely bureaucratic.

Planners give Stoneywell Green Light

On 12th September the Plans Committee of Charnwood Borough Council granted the necessary approvals to enable the National Trust (NT) to carry out the essential works to enable Stoneywell to be opened to the public. The debate took about 2 hours during which speakers representing all views had the opportunity to amplify their case. A large number of written representations had been made previously.

It was interesting to note that our Society was mentioned several times during the debate – perhaps a reflection on the respected good name we have. As a Society, we had certainly given a lot of time to this proposal (very significant to Charnwood Forest) once we had been consulted on it, way back, early in 2012. At an early stage, the principle was accepted that NT must preserve this significant building and strictly manage the opening of it to Trust members and others. Extensive discussions gave us the confidence that NT would do everything possible to mitigate any effects on the surrounding area. Our Committee members held differing views about proposals for a car park in Whitcroft’s Lane and a great deal of time was spent with the Trust trying to seek an alternative arrangement. In the end there really were no practical alternatives.

Most of the conservation work to the cottage itself is now complete. We have seen a lot of the work currently going on inside. Teams of volunteers are hard at work gardening. The big job of “signing up” the large numbers of keen people offering to volunteer with the various tasks is well underway. Works to the stable block and car park will soon commence.

There is much to do and NT intends to open Stoneywell to visitors in late Spring 2014.

Despite the remaining misgivings about some aspects, our Committee generally feels that Stoneywell will be an asset to the Forest and wishes the project well.

Provisional arrangements are being made for a Friends’ visit on 18th June. More details later.

Who's Who?

Chairman Dick Howard

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Secretary & Newsletter Douglas Maas doug@idnet.com 01530 242534

Membership Louise Gibson louise@the-grey-lady.co.uk

Treasurer Kim Turner 01530 244921

Events vacancy

Web Master Toby Manning ptm@tobymanning.co.uk

Foot Note

Sixty-four members and friends enjoyed each others' company at our superb evening on 13th November - the annual 'Meet the Members Dinner', held this year for the first time at the Grey Lady restaurant. Thanks go especially to Louise for organising our event.

At Chairman Dick Howard's suggestion, a whip-round donation of £285 was made to the Philippines Disaster Emergency Appeal.