

Mrs Barbara Bassett

Mrs Barbara Bassett was a founder member of Friends of Charnwood Forest from its inception in 1986. Since then she has been a tireless worker for the society in many ways. Barbara was Honorary Treasurer for several years and a constant support for the committee. She now feels that she must retire but will remain a member of the society and a staunch supporter.

She and her husband Frank have been responsible for organizing the drinks and nibbles at our meetings since the beginning and we hope they will continue.

As a small thank you for all her efforts, Barbara was presented with a beautiful painting of the River Lin in Bradgate Park, at our recent visit to Poultney Farm.



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Coming Events

- *Meet the Members Dinner-November 22*
- *Wildflower Meadows of Leicestershire-January 22*
- *Annual General Meeting-March 26*
- *The Abbeys and Priors of the Charnwood-March 26*

The summer's talks and visits

Wednesday 24th May saw a large party exploring Charnwood Lodge National Nature Reserve. The weather was damp but not too inclement for a happy morning.

Not usually open to the public, this was a fascinating glimpse of a site with many unusual plants. The ground was often rough and boggy but all our members negotiated it safely. The abandoned house and garden gave a picture of a lifestyle difficult to keep up today. Many thanks to Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust.



Wednesday 7th June saw much better weather for our visit to Poultny Farm, home to our Treasurer, Kim Turner, and her father Keith. This was much easier walking and we all enjoyed the open ground and the paths around the lake.

Some of the farm is controlled by 'English Nature'. This is because two areas have been designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a mixed blessing since Keith is not his own master. The morning concluded with drinks and the presentation to Barbara Bassett.

On Monday 11th September we moved back indoors for Tony Squires' talk on the Historic Parks and Gardens of Leicestershire. Together with Leonard Cantor, Tony has published a book of the same title which is well worth reading. Did you know that there were 52 medieval parks in Leicestershire and 13 more in Rutland? Many of them have disappeared but Tony showed us where today's landscape still reveals their outlines.

Finally, on October 16th, Pat Stanley, an enthusiast if ever there was one, talked to us about Robert Bakewell and the Longhorn Breed of Cattle. Robert Bakewell, a great agricultural pioneer, is internationally famous but do we pay enough heed to our local hero?

The National Forest-Heritage in the Making

The LANDshapes (TM) Project has now completed a wonderful new book, covering The National Forest in all its aspects. Its six main sections cover The Early Days; Trees, Woodlands and Parks; Land and Agriculture; Buildings and Settlements; Industry and Transport and Changing Lives and Landscapes.

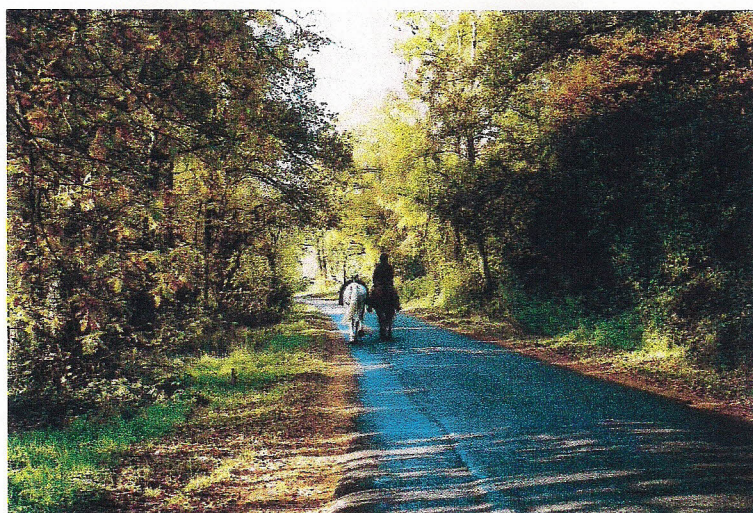
Magnificently illustrated, it gives an account of The National Forest from the arrival of man, through roman and medieval times to the present day. The Forest of Charnwood is extensively covered, in all its aspects.

The National Forest is a unique vision. Still "work in progress" but with a remarkable achievement-landscapes transformed, lives enriched, a local economy revitalized.

Impossible accurately to summarise, this glorious book is a must for every member.

£16.99 see www.landshapes.org

The National Forest is a vast new forest in the making



Our Secretary still has stocks of our FOCF postcards. Buy them at the dinner.

There are a few places left at Louis Scott's on 22nd November.

CPRE Leicestershire 70th Anniversary Design Awards Winner

In June, on behalf of FOCF, I submitted the development at 55-69 Main Street, Markfield for a design award. This is the first time that CPRE Leicestershire has sponsored a countrywide award, and celebrates the branch's 70th year. Its objective was to encourage the sustainable use of land and other natural resources through sensitively designed buildings.

This cluster of new houses was constructed on the site of the old Varipak factory by J A Ball (New Homes) Ltd. The 16 terrace houses are built of local stone and their design is in keeping with adjacent houses, and reflect the local character. The assessors awarded the scheme first prize.

J A Ball (New Homes) received a plaque and certificate from Sir Max Hastings, President CPRE, at the Guildhall, Leicester on 12th October.

If you are passing through Markfield, drive along Main Street and see what you think.

Dick Howard



Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Leicestershire

Leicestershire County Council has circulated a draft plan for consultation. The main proposals include:

- Planning: developers are expected to maximize the potential for access by walking and cycling.
- Access: removal of barriers to access to those who have mobility problems
- Health: encouragement of a largely sedentary population to walk and ride.
- Opportunity: provision of walking and riding opportunities to as many people as possible, particularly to the young and those with mobility problems.

*Broadening access to the countryside for all,
particularly the young or immobile*

You may wonder whether we need more footpaths as many are seldom walked. Users are of many types and physical barriers, mainly stiles, often cross Rights of Way. Part of the plan will be the introduction of more gates, to improve accessibility. Farmers may object!

The full report runs to 123 pages. You can obtain a copy from County Hall (or you can borrow mine!)

Dick Howard

Changes in Committee

Our Chairman, Dick Burrows, has retired from farming and has moved permanently, with his wife Kate, to live in Norfolk. He feels that he is unlikely to be able to continue as Chairman though he intends to remain a keen member of Friends of Charnwood Forest. We expect new arrangements to be proposed at the AGM.

Our hardworking Secretary, Dick Howard, is to become, next year, President of his Rotary Club. That will be pleasant but onerous and time consuming. He would like therefore to hand over the secretaryship to a suitable volunteer after the AGM. The essentials are good administrative skills and availability for about five committee meetings and six talks and walks with correspondence on an ad hoc basis. If you could help with this, please get in touch with Dick or any member of the committee.

We welcome to the committee Ben Wheeler, a long term member and for forty years a Forest resident. He has retired from the printing industry and is very keen to support all our activities.

FRIENDS OF CHARNWOOD FOREST

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Our Treasurer, Kim Turner, hostess at Poultney Farm, with members on our visit in June

Farewell to Mrs Vera Kirk (or rather her Rambling Notes)

Mrs Vera Kirk has been a member of Friends of Charnwood Forest for many years. She is a very regular attender at our meetings and particularly our walks. She has herself given talks to us and remains highly active in spite of her 90+ years.

For the last 27 years her Rambling Notes have appeared in the Loughborough Echo and have given us all interest and pleasure. She has often included our walks in her articles.

Now they will appear no more. The Echo (of which Mrs Kirk's late husband Les was chief reporter) has decided that it can no longer give her space and summarily closed her column.

We greatly regret this and shall miss her articles. We hope that she will remain a member and we look forward to seeing her at our walks and talks.

Mrs Kirk is pictured at Poultney Farm.

