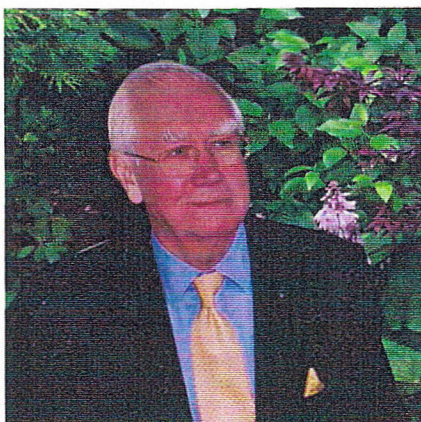




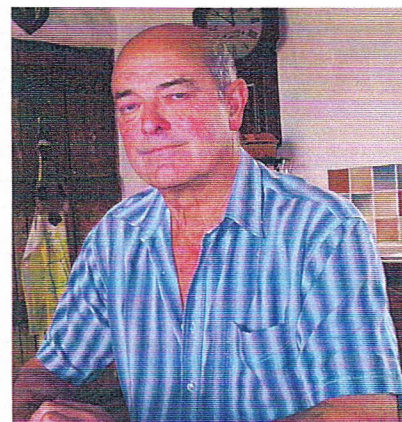
A new Chairman for FOCF

Peter Bertram, who has been Chairman since the society was founded in 1986, will retire at the Annual General Meeting. He hopes to continue as a member of the Committee and to edit this Newsletter.



Peter Bertram

He will be succeeded by Dick Burrows who was a founder member of the society and a long term committeeman.



Dick Burrows

Mrs Maureen Cooper's Legacy

Mrs Maureen Cooper, a long-time member of the Friends of Charnwood Forest, died in 2004.

Mrs Cooper (nee Black) came from Anstey and lived there and at Glenfield nearly all her life. Latterly she was resident at Hinds Sisters Home at Cropston, (where Dick Burrows is a trustee,) before moving to Sheffield to live with her niece in 2003.

Mrs Cooper was widowed early but retained a great interest in all around her. She

was Secretary at Alderman Newton's School for a number of years.

Mrs Cooper left a legacy to the Friends of Charnwood Forest and this has been used to plant a stand of 50 native trees at Martin's Wood, which was purchased by the Friends and given to The Woodland Trust.

A plaque has been erected there bearing the inscription "In loving memory of Maureen Cooper who loved this place".

Happily remembered by us all.

Inside this issue:

A New Chairman	1
Treasures Rediscovered in Charnwood Forest	2
Accounts for 2004	2
Annual Biodiversity Lecture	2
Leicestershire Nature Conservation Forum	3
What's in a name? Copt Oak	3
Changes to the Common Agricultural Policy	3

Coming Events

- AGM & Colin Green-March 21st
- Swithland Hall-May 11th
- Rainbows Hospice Garden-June 13th
- Stuart Pearson-September 12th
- Ms Jan Dawson-October 17th
- Meet the Members Dinner-November 23rd

Income & Expenditure Account 2004

Income		Expenditure	
Postcard Sales	£ 106	Meeting Expenses	£423
Subscriptions	£1156	Annual Dinner	£1214
Annual Dinner Fees	£1170	Postcards	£370
Excess of Expenditure over Income	£ 366	Administration, Newsletter etc	£791
TOTAL	£2798	TOTAL	£2798

Annual Charnwood Biodiversity Lecture

The Annual Charnwood Borough Council Biodiversity Lecture will be given by Dr Lois Child of Loughborough University. In addition, Alex Marsh, Survey Officer with the Council, will be reporting on the recent survey of Japanese Knotweed carried out in Charnwood.

The talk will be held at Loughborough Town Hall's Victoria Room on Tuesday 15 March at 7.00 p.m. Places are limited so please notify the Secretary as soon as possible if you would like to attend or book online at francoise.scire@charnwood.gov.uk

*Japanese Knotweed -
scourge of the
countryside*

Treasures Rediscovered in Charnwood Forest

75 members and visitors turned out at our January meeting to hear, and see, what Brian Kimberley had discovered, or rediscovered, as he prefers to call it. We were given a fascinating insight into a whole range of coins from pre Roman times to Elizabeth the First. The earliest coins all depicted slightly dismembered horses, reminiscent of the White Horse of Uffington, which was carved at about the same time. 5th Legion Roman coins had been found in a field in Cropston, and not far away, a find of national importance, now known as the Thurstaston Hoard. This cache

contained both Danish and Saxon coins and an almost unique Thor's Hammer. The collection can be seen in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, but Thor's Hammer is currently on loan to The Charnwood Museum.

Brian's hobby has been the disciplined use of metal detecting; his countless hours of finding buried waste interspersed with incredible historic treasures. You will not be surprised to know that only the vaguest locations were given.

Leicestershire Nature Conservation Forum

During the Open Forum session, following the presentations given at County Hall on 1st November last year, Mr Peter Gamble, the well-known naturalist and long-time member and committeeman of Friends of Charnwood Forest, gave a list of nearly forty plants that had become extinct in the county in recent years and stressed the need for our rarest species to be regularly monitored. He also suggested the need for some of our most threatened species to be propagated by seed or cuttings to reinforce depleted populations.

Mr Gamble has produced a very thought provoking discussion paper setting out some of the reasons why we should consider boosting populations of our rarest plants.

- Many species have a history of hundreds or thousands of years and it would be wrong to lose them without

making strenuous efforts at preservation.

- Some plants are essential to invertebrate species and their loss could bring about the disappearance of other organisms.
- Rare species may play an important role in the designation of a site, and their loss could hamper English Nature in finding justification.
- Once lost, any future re-introduction would need plants from outside Leicestershire. It would seem much more desirable to increase our own local genetic stock while it still survives.

A full list of rare and endangered species would take too much space here but can be obtained from Peter Gamble.

What's in a name? Copt Oak-village or tree ?

In 1855 a great oak tree at Copt Oak was blown down in a gale. Nothing extraordinary about that you may think, but this great oak had been planted to mark the centre of Charnwood Forest. The tree was reported as having been 2000 years old and at the end of its life 20 feet high and 24 feet in girth.

There is some debate as to whether this was the original tree, or son, or grandson of the original. Only exceptionally do oak trees exceed 500 years and the oldest in Bradgate Park are only about 400 years old. But certainly this was a special tree to have a village named

after it.

Copt Oak is one of very few villages named after a single tree. As Copt Oak was known as the centre of Charnwood Forest the Swanmore Court was held here underneath the great oak which stood just behind the graveyard of St Peter's Church. The church was built in 1837, just 18 years before the tree was blown down.

The word copt, or copest, derives from the Anglo Saxon word cop, meaning top or cap. So when next you drive through Copt Oak remember that this was the centre of Charnwood Forest, and also one of its highest points.

Changes to the countryside and CAP

You may have read about reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and wondered how we may be affected. Current policies reward farmers for such matters as number of beef cattle, breeding ewes, arable crops and various products. Environmental matters are dealt with by separate schemes.

Starting this year, agriculture will be supported by a payment per hectare. Farmers will receive payment for land management rather than cropping or stocking policy. We can expect to see some novel crops as market forces guide farming, rather than subsidies.

Under the new scheme all landowners receive the same basic payment per hectare but this is enhanced according to

environmental management. This must be good news for Charnwood Forest!

GEACS (Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions) includes protection of stone walls, permanent pasture, rights of way etc.; new rules on set-aside, organic farming, soil protection and elimination of overgrazing. Elimination of hedge trimming in spring and summer must be good news for all wildlife as does reward for two metres of uncultivated field margins. The higher the level of environmental management, the higher the payment.

The benefits will be to wildlife conservation, the environment, the landscape, natural resources and public access.

Postcards are selling! Use them to spread the word

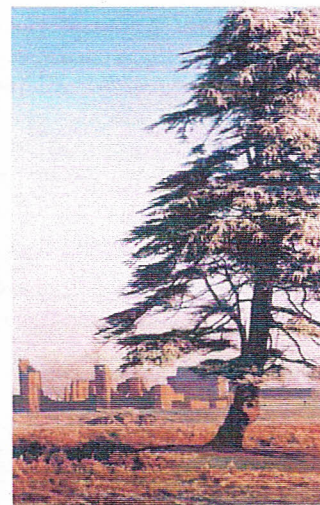
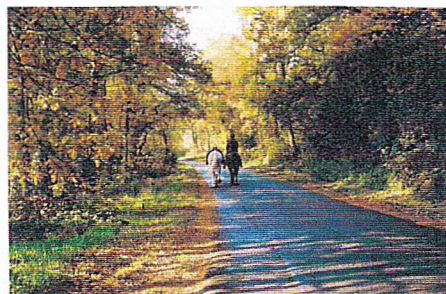
FRIENDS OF CHARNWOOD FOREST

Polly Bott's Lane, Ulverscroft

Hon Secretary, Dick Howard
Townhead Farm
Leicester Road
Markfield
Leics LE67 9RE

Phone: 01530 245373

Keep the Forest for ever!



Ruins of Bradgate

Kate Burrows, wife of incoming Chairman Dick Burrows, is a talented artist. Each year Kate selects one of her paintings for use as a personal Christmas card.

Here is a watercolour of Causeway Lane, Cropston in 1890 which she used for her Christmas card in 2004.

Do you think this could be a Friends of Charnwood Forest card in 2005?

Subscriptions are now due and should be sent to:

Miss Kim Turner

Hon Treasurer

Friends of Charnwood Forest

Poultney Farm

Priory Lane

Ulverscroft, Markfield

Leics LE67 9PA

