



THE FRIENDS OF CHARNWOOD FOREST NEWS



Spring 2015

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.

FULL HOUSE EXPECTED

A Special Occasion KING RICHARD III

Our AGM this year (usually a brief but purposeful event) will be followed by our Speaker, Richard Knox who has been involved in Leicestershire archaeology for 24 years, working in a number of different roles for Leicestershire County Council. Richard first became involved at Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre in 2005, when work started on a survey to find the Battlefield and he led on the reinterpretation of the Heritage Centre on Ambion Hill. Richard is currently involved, along with colleagues, in organising the County's elements of King Richard's reinterment in March.

How do you find a Battlefield?

Following years of academic debate as to the actual location of Bosworth Battlefield, where Richard III lost his crown and his life on 22nd August 1485, Leicestershire County Council embarked on an ambitious landscape survey to try and rediscover this famous lost Battlefield. The illustrated talk will discuss the techniques employed in trying to find a battlefield within hundreds of acres of farmland and shows the intriguing results of the five year Survey, which finished in 2010. Two years later the world's media picked up on the rediscovery of Richard III's grave at the Greyfriars site in Leicester by Leicester University archaeologists and the grisly secrets it revealed. The talk will go through the results of the osteology report which give such vivid clues to Richard's final moments.

Chicken .. or Egg?

The Committee has decided to produce a completely revised Membership leaflet. We hope to enlist the help of existing members to place copies into suitable hands, encouraging them to join. We know we need new blood on the Committee in order to get the various tasks done. **Will one or two of you step forward at the AGM? PLEASE.** If not, then we need new members from whom we might find willing volunteers. Or perhaps both? A case of Chicken and Egg, maybe?

The heading picture this time: Oaks in Charnwood. The Church of Saint James the Greater was consecrated on the same day as the Battle of Waterloo in 1815

"The Bradgate Lectures"

The Bradgate Park Trust presents

"The Archaeology of Bradgate Park"

a talk by Dr Lynden Cooper & Matt Beamish of University of Leicester Archaeological Services:
Wednesday 25th February at Newtown Linford Village Hall. Start time 7pm.

Admission £2 adults/ £1 children, students, OAPs.

Everyone is welcome.

TALKS and WALKS

Our activities for you to enjoy

Individual invitations for each event will be sent to all members by post or email

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)

2015

● **Monday 16th March**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
followed by TALK: *Richard III and the Battle of Bosworth* by Richard Knox

● **Monday 27th April (note date change):**

TALK: *Beaumanor Hall and Enigma* by Dr. Mark Baldwin

● **Wednesday 10th June WALK: *Charnwood Lodge Nature Reserve* with Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust**

● **Monday 14th September tba**

● **Monday 19th October TALK: *The Greys and the Hastings: Two Charnwood Families* by Dave Taylor**

● **Thur 12th November DINNER (provisional)**

"Promotion" for Roecliffe Manor

It is impossible not to notice the massive new walls and gateway being erected at Roecliffe Manor. Together with other concerns, the Committee continues to express doubts about the development being in keeping with the Forest. Especially when we hear that the Manor is to be re-named and promoted to become "Roecliffe Hall". Have you a view? Is that a travesty? Or is it more acceptable, maybe, than the derelict, vandalised property it had become?

Committee Notes

◆ Dick and Linda had attended a Charnwood Forest Regional Park stakeholders' meeting at which they had learned that 3D mapping had identified 750 potential sites of archaeological interest; a Stone Age settlement in Bradgate Park dated 15000-13000 BC; the Forest could be designated a Geo Park, having the oldest fossils in the world; 6 million tonnes of aggregate are exported annually; the National Forest has acquired new land near Groby, adjacent to Martinshaw woods; a new farm walk has been created at Broombriggs; the new Railway Heritage Centre will open soon; the 75-mile National Forest Trail from Woodhouse Eaves to the National Memorial Arboretum has opened. However it was learned that the Charnwood Forest Regional Park administration has no statutory authority.

◆ Extensive discussions took place about how to secure our future, with a dwindling Committee. Some actions were agreed (*see "Chicken .. or Egg?"* overleaf) which it is hoped will increase membership and therefore the potential to strengthen the Committee. Members' willingness to help is vital.

◆ With the steadily reducing numbers of Committee members it was not only important to find new ones but also to ask for volunteers to help with arranging the room for meetings and with refreshments. Members willing to do this would be sought at the next meeting.

◆ Dick had investigated what was happening to the old Severn-Trent building at Cropston. It has subsequently been put on the market.

◆ Membership subscription renewals will be sought soon. It was noted that 17 new individual members and one corporate member had joined in the past year.

◆ It was agreed that the Annual Dinner is always well received and the possibility of changing the venue from time to time was discussed. A provisional date for this year was agreed - 12th November.

PLANNING POINTS - CORE STRATEGY

A further delay to the final Charnwood Borough Core Strategy follows a letter from the Planning Inspector requiring matters of "soundness" to be addressed. Modifications will be made but only following a further six-week period of public consultation.

See www.localplan.charnwood.gov.uk

A PLACE FOR WILDLIFE

Do you know your Corvid from your Bryophyte? Or your Sphagnum from your Lepidoptera?

In future, we should know much more about the wildlife of Charnwood. In the past year, contractors and volunteers have worked hard to transform a derelict part of an old building at Charnwood Lodge Nature Reserve into a reasonably habitable base for a Recording Group to meet. Experts and volunteer learners will be able to meet, share notes and do the recording, following the fieldwork, studying and counting. This kind of work tends to go unnoticed but ultimately it provides us with the knowledge about how well (or badly) our wildlife is doing.

In June, Neil Pilcher, Senior Conservation Officer for Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, will lead us on a walk in Charnwood Lodge Reserve. As well as enjoying the beautiful landscape and some of the visible wildlife, we will also be able to appreciate the tremendous job which our friends at the Wildlife Trust are doing to look after this, and other, large areas of Charnwood Forest. More information next time.

Full House for Ernest

Our January meeting was packed to the back of the Village Hall to hear Ernest Miller relate the Stoneywell story in his own inimitable way. Members, plus many welcome guests, listened intently to the compelling story of the Gimson family and how they lived at Stoneywell from 1899 to 2012 when the National Trust was offered the cottage. The younger brother Ernest Gimson - acknowledged international leader in the arts and crafts movement - had designed this and other cottages in Ulverscroft. The story about how he did this is an enjoyable tale.

We thank Ernest Miller for, once again, sharing his extensive local knowledge with us. To book your visit to Stoneywell (open daily) either phone 01530 248048 or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stoneywell.

Where is Charnwood Forest?

Traditional thinking about what comprises the Forest has perhaps been challenged by the larger boundary created by the new Charnwood Forest Regional Park. Just refer to the map which has been given to all Members.

Maybe Woodhouse Eaves (pictured) is considered the "centre" of the Forest in many ways. But Markfield is just as close geographically to the centre of the Regional Park.

Around the boundary, most of Quorn and Mountsorrel are within the Park. Parts of Loughborough, Shepshed, Thringstone, Whitwick, Coalville and Ratby are also "in". The whole of Anstey, Groby and Thornton are too.

In fact much of the countryside south of Markfield, with its extensive network of footpaths, has a very special rural charm of its own, as well as extensive woodlands, being part of the National Forest. It's peaceful too - very few tourists and day trippers! As a bonus you can even walk all the way around delightful Thornton Reservoir (pictured) which you simply cannot do at Cropston, Swithland, Blackbrook or Groby!



Who's Who?

Chairman Dick Howard

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Secretary Douglas Maas (as below). *Vacancy from AGM 16th March.*

Membership

Linda Thompson lindagthompson1958@gmail.com 01162387715

Treasurer Kim Turner 01530 244921

Events Vacancy

Newsletter Douglas Maas doug@idnet.com 01530 242534

Web Master Toby Manning ptm@tobymanning.co.uk