



Winter Newsletter

Where is Charnwood Forest? What is it? Why does it matter?

Yes, we have asked this question before but now it has become important and urgent.

The district of "Charnwood Forest" was first identified, officially, in 1932 in the Leicester Regional Planning Report. In 1957 it was put forward to be designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, although this term is no longer used. It was featured in the County Development Plan of 1959. Since then it has appeared in the Leicestershire Structure Plan and, in 2006, in the East Midlands Regional Plan. But, strangely, it has never been defined! Its boundaries have never been established!

So what? Money! If it can be defined then planning responsibilities can be finalized and perhaps this can lead to various grant-aids as well as statutory limitations on development.

The draft Regional Plan envisages new housing of 4875 units around Loughborough. Where they should go, and where they should not go, is exercising the minds of Leicestershire County Council and the councils of Charnwood, Hinckley and N W Leicestershire. They have held two conferences for all interested parties in June and December 2007 with a view to a final report by Autumn 2008. The Friends were represented and took an active part each time.

Not surprisingly, not all parties agreed. The Countryside Agency, Leicestershire C C, National Forest and Local Naturalists could each make a case for the boundaries, dependent on their own interests. Even the British Geological Survey proposed that geology was the paramount factor!

YOU CAN BE INVOLVED! Representations were due to Leicestershire C C by 31 January 2008 and the Friends have broadly supported the map proposed by the district councils. It is very important that our views are heard.

To this end the Friends invited Richard Brown of Charnwood Borough Council to give a presentation on "The Future of Charnwood Forest" to about 80 members and guests on 22nd January. Speak up to safeguard the Forest! Let us hear from you!

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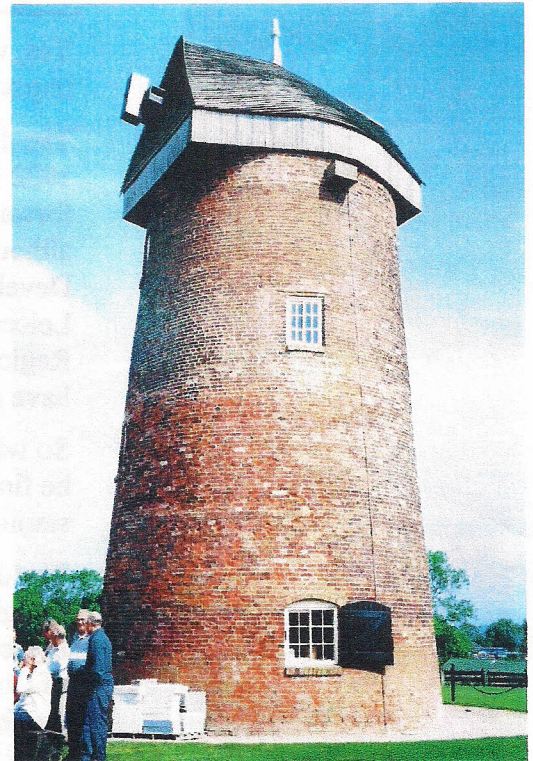
Coming Events

- *AGM and talk-17 March*
- *Evening at Upper Parks Farm-28 May*
- *Morning at Spring Barrow Farm-25 June*
- *Wild life of Watermead Talk-15 September*

Hough Windmill-Swannington



Members had two chances to visit Hough Windmill last June. Both days were fine and we saw every detail of the mill, ably explained by Bill Hale, Trustee.



On October 10 we had a very interesting walk around Ulverscroft Woods, led by Derek Lott, formerly Joint Chairman of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

We found some interesting fungi, but members could not be persuaded to take them home for tea!



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Where should we hold the Dinner this year? Did you like Louis Scott's Restaurant?

What visits would you like? More outdoors or more evening talks?

How can we gain more members? Should we have a website? Could you run one?

Subscriptions are due. Are they too high? Too low?

We need a new Secretary. Could you volunteer? Computer help is available.
