



THE FRIENDS OF CHARNWOOD FOREST NEWS



Autumn 2014

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.

In 1994
we
planted
Martin's
Wood.
On
9th July
2014, we
went back
...



To the Woods

Toby Manning writes: 33 members visited Martin's and Felicity's Wood on Dean's lane to the north of Beacon Hill. They were guided by Eric Porter of the Woodland Trust, who is addressing the group in the photograph, aided by Tim Adkins, a ranger from Charnwood.

In 1993 the Society, through its members and their friends, raised £12000 towards the purchase of two fields, a total of 12 acres to the south of Dean's Lane. This purchase was in conjunction with the Woodlands Trust and The National Forest, and was to become Martin's Wood. On Saturday 5th March 1994 there was a symbolic planting of the first 50 saplings. The subsequent planting was restricted to small areas to preserve the views of Charnwood Forest and the Trent Valley. On the 3rd August we unveiled the plaque commemorating Sir Andrew Martin.

Felicity's Wood was purchased by The Woodlands Trust and was planted out in 1997. It comprises 22 acres on the north side of Deans Lane and is exactly opposite Martin's Wood. The top of the meadow is unplanted and managed as a meadow but then the land falls steeply away to a small stream known as Wood Brook. The new woods are mainly oak, ash, birch and field maple with willow nearer the stream. There is an outcrop of local forest stone known as Hornstone. There are many interesting plants and wildlife in both woods.

[Another picture is on our website: www.focf.org.uk]

*The heading picture this time:
Enjoying warm May sunshine at Bradgate Park*

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).

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 22nd September **NB: change to original programme:** TALK: THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY, its history in Leicestershire, by Brian Axon

☛ Monday 27th October TALK: "Old Maps of Charnwood Forest" by Keith Ovenden, Leicestershire & Rutland Records Office

☛ Wednesday 12th November MEET THE MEMBERS ANNUAL DINNER. the Grey Lady

2015

☛ Monday 19th January TALK:
ERNEST GIMSON & STONEYWELL
by Ernest Miller

☛ Monday 16th March AGM followed by TALK: RICHARD III & THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH by Richard Knox

☛ Monday 20th April TALK: BEAUMANOR HALL & ENIGMA
by Mark Baldwin

Committee Notes

◆ Our main concern is the need for one or two more active Committee members (see covering note). But we have gradually put together a good programme of events until well into next year.

PLANNING POINTS

◆ The news of approval, against officer recommendations, of 79 houses extending into the Forest at Agar Nook has been received with dismay. But the application for 170 houses in view of the Outwoods at Forest Road has been withdrawn following a vigorous campaign by the South West Loughborough Action Group. Massive security gates 13' 6" high have been approved for Roecliffe Manor.

"I like people who tell me that



something is impossible"

These were the words of Mike Handford who led our walk along the part of the route of the Charnwood Forest Canal near Grace Dieu on 14th May. Since as early as 1959 Mike has been personally involved at the forefront of "achieving the impossible" by getting canals throughout the UK restored from dereliction.

He had been explaining the purpose of the Friends of Charnwood Forest Canal. Initially this would be to investigate and maybe to establish a footpath along the route but ultimately (a long time ahead) to enable boats to cruise the navigation once again. "Impossible", you say. Not according to Mike Handford who is well known in canal restoration circles.

In April, at our indoor meeting, Mike had accompanied his colleague Brian Williams who had given us an interesting talk on the history of the



Canal.

On the walk, supervised by Toby Manning, we were a group of 34, enjoying the warm Spring sunshine. Mike led us along the bed of the original canal where possible (pictured), skirting the Priory ruins and stopping frequently to point out the route of the canal and many features, mostly not obvious to the casual observer. In many places there is no remaining trace to be seen. But the picture above shows our group walking along the original bed of the canal.

At the conclusion a number of members expressed their own interest by signing up to receive more information from Mike. If you would like to know more, contact him at mahandford@gmail.com.

We concluded our walk, many of us partaking of an excellent carvery lunch at The Bulls Head. Thanks to Toby and Mike for a superb morning.

If you would care to take a look at our website - www.focf.org.uk you will see a picture of another lot of "ruins" (not what you might be expecting!).

Our Invitation to Stoneywell

We were first consulted over 2 years ago about the Project to acquire Stoneywell. Recently, Stewart Alcock the National Trust's local Manager invited us to visit, not long before the opening to the public. He and a number of volunteers showed us around on two separate dates (such was the interest). Safe to say that everyone thought that the visits were well worthwhile. Most of us promised we would be back, if not to see Stoneywell complete, then to view the gardens in every season. Or maybe to sample the teas, scones, cakes and ice cream!

As this Newsletter is published, Stoneywell should open imminently. Every visitor needs to book ahead due to the strict limit on numbers. All visits must begin at the Car Park in Whitcrofts Lane. Transport is provided by small minibus to the Cottage. Visit: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/Stoneywell for the current information.

Stoneywell's new Operations Manager, Caroline Taylor, introduces herself:

My name is Caroline, and I am the new Operations Manager for the National Trust at Stoneywell. I have spent the last three years working for the National Trust at Coleridge Cottage, in Somerset, but I am excited to have returned to my childhood home and to be involved in such an inspiring beautiful place.

The cottage rooms, full of character, have been lovingly presented as the Gimson family might have known them in the 1950s. Volunteers have completed their training and the car park is now in use, with the final phase of tree planting and landscaping due to be undertaken in the autumn. But the thing that strikes me most is that, almost every time I look, a different part of the garden seems to be displaying the most vivid colours imaginable: first a true host of golden daffodils; next, a sea of bluebells; and now, plants and trees show deep oranges and bright greens. I almost wonder what will be waiting for me next day!

We are about to open our doors for the first time and, although the team is geared up and is welcoming our visitors, we continue to look for additional volunteers to support us at Stoneywell, particularly over the weekends and in our tearoom.

If this is something you might be interested in, or if you would like more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch: either email: caroline.taylor@nationaltrust.org.uk or call 01332 863822.

Who's Who?

Chairman Dick Howard

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

Membership

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Events vacancy

Web Master Toby Manning ptm@tobymanning.co.uk