



THE FRIENDS OF CHARNWOOD FOREST NEWS



Autumn 2017

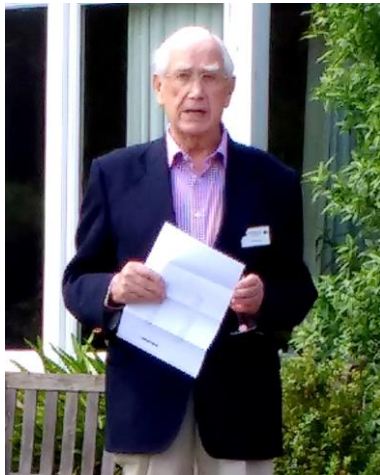
Website: www.focf.org.uk

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.

PETER BERTRAM

Many members will know that Peter died suddenly on 30th July, aged 87. Peter was in at the beginning of the Friends. He was a Founder Member and his enthusiasm, energy and many wise words have helped to ensure that the Friends of Charnwood Forest is the respected and successful group it is today. He will be missed.

In the picture, Peter is speaking to us on the occasion of our 30th anniversary celebration held in June last year at The Brand.



The

heading picture this time:
The exciting Picnic Proms in Bradgate Park in August

TALKS and WALKS

Our activities for you to enjoy
Individual invitations for each event will be sent to 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).

2017

🌟 **Monday 18th September TALK by Pat Neal. Mountsorrel Railway, nature walk and Heritage Centre with café project**

🌟 **Monday 23rd October TALK by Marilyn Palmer: 'Horses to Locomotives: early railway transport in north Leicestershire'**

🌟 **Tuesday 14th November ANNUAL DINNER - being arranged at the Grey Lady**

2018

🌟 **Monday 22nd January TALK by Alan Briggs "Charnwood and its Environs" - geology and topography.**

🌟 **Monday 19th February TALK by Mark Temple: 'Gone with the Wind - Lost Leicestershire Windmills'**

🌟 **Monday 19th March AGM followed by a TALK by Richard Windley, Chairman CPRE Leicestershire. He will lead a discussion about the issues raised nearly 50 years ago.**

🌟 **Monday 23rd April TALK TBA**

Building a rapport with our Alpacas

It was a wet day but spirits were high as about 21 of us met at Scamhazel Farm. We were thoroughly instructed on all things alpaca. We bought some alpaca food and were allocated our animal to match our own temperaments (!) Then we set off on a delightful, but all-too-short, walk through wood and meadow. We returned to the farm, having built up a good rapport with our own animal and, reluctantly said our goodbyes. The occasion concluded with a delightful cream tea. Chairman Paul and friend are pictured, left and more pictures can be found inside.

Nature Walk

The first week of June is the best time of the year to find our native orchids in the Ulverscroft Valley. On a fine sunny morning 30 members of the Friends of Charnwood Forest set off from Poultny Farm on Priory Lane led by Kim Turner. To help us identify the local flora we were



accompanied by Uta Hamzaoui, a conservation officer, and botany expert from the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

The first part of our walk was around Ulverscroft Pool, the source of the River Lin.

The Pool was created by the Earl of Stamford as a fishing lake some 200 years ago by damming up the natural springs. The River Lin flows through Newtown Linford, Bradgate Park and into Cropston Reservoir. It is the shortest river in Leicestershire and home to brown trout and even lamprey.



Amongst the ancient wetlands surrounding the water are many rare species quite unique in the county including Pale Sedge and Flea Sedge.

We strolled towards the SSSI sites which surround and include Herbert's Meadow owned by LRWT. These neutral grasslands contain a rich biodiversity of wildflowers, including three species of orchid. We first saw the reddish pink Fragrant orchid and then the paler common spotted orchid followed by the Heath spotted orchid. It is interesting to think that these fields are exactly as they would have been seen in Medieval times. Other good indicators of old grasslands are Great Burnet, Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil and Devil's-bit Scabious.



This area of Charnwood Forest, with areas of acid soil, is home to Matt-grass which again is unique in Leicestershire.

Our morning walk concluded with some light refreshments kindly provided by our host Kim Turner.

If you are interested in any of the plants mentioned above, or wish to identify any wild flowers you find in



Leicestershire and Rutland go to www.naturespot.org.uk/

Charnwood Forest Heritage Lottery Fund Bid

Thanks largely to DICK HOWARD's input and involvement, we can now see a copy of the final funding bid. For the purpose of this brief Newsletter, your Compiler has selected just one telling paragraph to publish:

3b Explain what need and opportunity your project will address

"No one will protect what they don't care about, and no one will care about what they have never experienced." Sir David Attenborough.

Charnwood Forest is a fascinating and valuable landscape, but this is not recognised. In 2017, Charnwood Borough was named the most average place in Britain. This perception is exemplified by the RSA Heritage Index: of 325 local authority areas in England, the three overlapping Charnwood Forest perform poorly, coming 260th (North West Leicestershire), 284th (Hinckley & Bosworth) and 299th (Charnwood). There is a need to draw together the many disparate parts of the story of Charnwood Forest and make it relevant to residents and visitors. Without this, we will not engage them in exploring and learning about Charnwood. The CFRP has brought together many of the stakeholders in the area and provides an opportunity for strategic co-ordination of the story of Charnwood. Also, the Charnwood Roots project will reach its end this year and its legacy will be built into the LPS. Never before has there been a better opportunity to agree a narrative for Charnwood and express it in a way that is relevant to people and communities in the 21st century.

A 'buzz' down the lane

Were 'our' Bee-eaters in Priory Lane the same ones which had occupied a sand quarry at East Leake until recently? Yes they are! They are a rare sight in this country. They certainly acquired a lot of interest and 'twitching'. Here are a couple of fine pictures taken by our own Linda Thompson when she was chatting with Kim Turner on FoCF membership matters over a cup of coffee. Can you count how many birds in the lower picture?



Perhaps the picture is a bit too small. I counted five but I'm told there were seven. Within an hour of these pictures being taken, the birds had gone, although there was an indication they were still around for a while, perhaps a little further from public gaze.

Bee-eaters - *Merops apiaster* - are mainly to be found in large numbers in Africa and Southern Europe but they occasionally 'overshoot' into North-West Europe (that must be us!). Doug

Taking the Alpacas a walk at Scamhazel Farm



A fascinating new view of Beaumanor Hall

Many of us have visited Beaumanor numerous times for various reasons over the years. But this visit surprised and delighted many, as we delved deep into the cellars, rose the heights into the attics and explored a world outdoors which amazed us. All with the expertise of our two guides who showed us around in two groups for more than two hours, including the history and extensive present day use of the hall. This amazing visit concluded with a cream tea, enjoyed in the former library.



COMMITTEE NOTES

- ◆ From the meeting held on 30th May:
- ◆ Red bus in Bradgate Park has gone. No further information.
- ◆ As the final “chasing” of subscriptions is done, it is regretted that we have to say “Goodbye” to a few members. But it’s good to say “Hello” to some new ones.
- ◆ There is currently a very good programme of talks and events and other ideas are always welcomed and discussed.
- ◆ Action taken on planning issues included the conversion of an agricultural building to residential on Warren Hill; light pollution - for which the Wildlife Trust does not have a policy; proposed development of two dwellings at 293 Bradgate Road Anstey would reduce separation zone between villages, thank you letter received for our support in objecting to an application at Brick Kiln Lane, Shepshed.
- ◆ We would look into the creation of a track off Maplewell Road for which there had been no planning application.
- ◆ Development at Cropston Road, Anstey was altering The Nook.
- ◆ Peter was continuing to do a wonderful job, publicising the Friends’ activities.
- ◆ Agreed to make a donation of £100 towards a survey of spiders at Charnwood Lodge, in recognition of the assistance with the Herbert’s Meadow walk.
- ◆ Congratulations offered to Janie on her appointment to the Chair of CPRE. And, as always, thanks for her hospitality in hosting the meetings of the Committee.



Thank you ...

To the organisers of visits and speakers, those of you who come early and stop late to move all the chairs we sit on at meetings, the providers of refreshments at meetings, the Committee and to all members. The Friends of Charnwood Forest is the thriving group it is today because of you

Who's Who?

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