



ASHDOWN FOREST VOLUNTEERS NEWSLETTER

Dear Volunteers..

Issue 7, November 2009

Ho Ho Ho and a Very Merry Christmas!! I really can't believe I just said that particularly as I am writing this in October and it's warm and sunny outside! 2009 has sped by and what a brilliant season we have had with visitor numbers and sales up - give yourselves a huge pat on the back and make sure you come to the Christmas Party (see back page) and raise a glass to celebrate our success! I really hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and if anyone has any groovy ideas for content or a catchy new name please let me know! - *Tracy*

WHAT'S NEW & WHAT'S ON?

Ashdown Forest Wood Turners - are back by very popular demand! They will be setting up shop on 27th November and will be using a block of trestle tables set out in the centre of the upstairs exhibition and a smaller table in the lower exhibition area. There will be the usual week-end demonstrations and hopefully plenty of pre-Christmas sales!

The New Pooh Book - the new Winnie the Pooh book 'Return to Hundred Acre Wood' written by David Benedictus, and illustrated by Mark Burgess, was launched in London on October 5th. Copies are available and sales have been brisk!

Fungi Day - always a popular event! This year it was held on 29th October and there were 135 visitors, many of whom stayed for hours! Pictures will be in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Airman's Grave - a short ceremony will take place again this year, usual time and place.

Brain Stormin' Mornin' - Thursday 18th February at 11.00 in the Education Barn. Please bring your diaries and lots of ideas about the events we can stage, for young and old, through 2010. We will provide the cake and drinks - but if you should feel moved to bake a gorgeous something we won't stop you!



Q. Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

A. Because he had low 'elf' esteem.

Q. How do Snowmen travel around?

A. By riding an icicle.

Q. What happens if you eat Christmas decorations?

A. You get tinsel-itis.

OTHER EVENTS

CONSERVATION GROUP

Last Sunday of the month. Meet at the Forest Centre car-park at 10.15 for 10.30 start - see website for details.

KNIT 'N' NATTER



The group has been very quiet recently so we will be re-launching very soon as 'Knit n Natter'!! Meet at the Forest Centre on the 1st Tuesday of the month from 19.00 - till 21.00! Bring a torch!

For up to date information on what's on visit our website or subscribe to the e-mail news service on

www.ashdownforest.org/news



TALES FROM THE TILL



The Till - apart from a few bar codes requiring updating the till has been on its best behaviour right though the summer! When taking cheque or credit cards payments please remember to make sure you press the appropriate button on the till - it makes life easier at the end of the week to identify non-cash sales. Please keep your eyes peeled for foreign coinage as quite a few are appearing in the till at the moment. I use them as dummies in the collection box to entice donations!

Stock - as we are now entering the winter period we should not need much more in the way of stock for the Barn. I will keep books and maps stocked to a minimum but will not be ordering anything new. If you should come across items at other visitor centres or shops that you think would be suitable for us next season please let me know. By the time you are reading this we should have our knitting packs on sale. These have been made up from the Hebridean wool shorn on the shearing day, the patterns are lovely and I hope they will sell really well.

Training Record Keeping - please make sure you let me have a copy of your completed training sheets for our records and that you get, and wear, your Information Volunteer badges! Let me know if you would like to have an attractive green Forest sweatshirt.

Barn Shifts - a big thank you to everyone for rallying round and filling the slots through October. It has been a very worthwhile experiment. Perhaps, weather forecast permitting we could open the Barn in March rather than in April and carry on through until the end of October 2010? It would be great to open am/pm through the school holidays - do you think we could manage to do that?

Wood for Sale

Over the last few weeks probationers, undertaking their community service with Sussex Probation Services (Crawley), have been busy cutting and bagging logs. These are now for sale in the Information Barn at £4.00 per bag and are to be found under the displays. We have more stored outside. The probationers will continue to work on the logs for a few weeks to come and hopefully there will be enough available to allow sales throughout the winter. The probationers have also been working, with a great deal of input from the Rangers, right across the Forest working on, amongst other things, cutting rhododendron and removing old fencing from the Vachery boundary.

Wood Permits 2009/2010 (aka estovers, commoner's rights!)

There has already been a huge interest in wood permits with 55+ phone calls and e-mails to the office in just two weeks. As you are sometimes asked about this I thought an explanation would be useful! There will be some wood available to cut this year. There is a wood list and anyone wanting wood should contact the office (phone or e-mail) giving their name, address, telephone numbers and/or e-mail address. The Ranger will arrange a site meeting to mark up trees and explain what needs to be done. A copy of the applicant's insurance certificate (showing personal liability cover anywhere in the UK) must be provided. Wood must be removed from the Forest by 31 March. Commoners have priority to wood - so there is no guarantee that non-commoners will get any. Commoners need to be proactive and apply to the office early as there is no guarantee wood will be left in February /March! Applicants need to be aware that wood cut this year will need to be stacked and seasoned - it may not be suitable for burning immediately. Full details are available on the home page of the website.





Christmas Trees

At this time of year we start looking for suitable Christmas trees. Last year, you may remember, many of the suitable sized trees were suffering from a weird yellowing of the needles that made the trees look ragged. They were really not fit to sell! Unfortunately this year many of trees are in a similar condition but the hunt is on for good specimens.

Goodbye & Hello

We were really sad to receive a letter from Gill King, one of our long-standing volunteers, saying she was retiring from the Information Barn. Gill, often with husband Barry in tow, has been a great stalwart over the years and will be very much missed by all of us in the office - hopefully she won't be a stranger in the future and will continue coming along to our get-togethers! Also recently retired is David Allen, another long-standing member of the Information Barn team and we hope he too will keep in touch with us in the future! We are also sadly saying good-bye to Anne Milne who is moving to beautiful Devon! Anne is planning on volunteering for Exmoor National Park! We wish her well in her new home! On a brighter note - welcome back Gwen Place! Gwen has returned after a long bout of illness so it's great to see her back behind the till!

Riding Permits

As the summer has come to an end we will now only be issuing Winter Riding Permits. These run from 31 September 2009 to 31 March 2010. The badges are the same colour - yellow for adults and red for children. Application forms can be downloaded from www.ashdonforest.org/downloads

Riders who purchased an annual ticket who do not wish to ride over the winter can return their badges (no later than 1st November) and receive a partial

refund. To do this they need to come to the office with their badge and we will write them a cheque.



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