

## Chair's report April 2011

This is the third year of my term as chair and once again it has been action-packed with many positive outcomes. There have been difficult decisions to make and one less happy event plus the looming impact of cuts in the coming financial years. In spite of this committee has once again engaged in a variety of tasks on your behalf and put in many hours of work.

The application for a licence at the Lodge took up much time arousing public comment and debate but was it finally granted. An appeal was withdrawn and subsequent use of the Lodge does not seem to have made any negative impact on the wood. We do of course need to be sure that when the lease expires in 2018 that the council do not try to use the building and garden for purposes which exclude the local community or let it out purely for commercial gain.

Sadly in February there was a serious random attack in the wood on a longstanding member of FQW. The police were quickly able to arrest the subject and are confident they have the right person. These events are very rare and it is heartening to see the wood being used by the public as much as ever with adults and their children enjoying activities such as dog-walking, exercise walks, climbing trees, playing games and building log houses.

The Frogpool is now completed and has been planted thanks to the work of Rebecca Turpin of the charity Froglife, grants from the Biffa Trust and Haringey council. The removal of the old concrete eyesore means that this central point of the wood is now so much more attractive as you approach it from the many paths which meet there. The money also enabled us to excavate two smaller ponds in naturally damp areas.

The excavation of the pond led to small Victorian archaeological finds, such as glassware and earthenware pots, and revealed an earlier man-made pond under the paddling pool. Soil excavations by a team from the City of London and Hendon Archaeological Society, led by FQW members Mike Hacker and David Warren, removed core samples of soil which are now being analysed. These should reveal very interesting results and tell us much about the plants which grew in this area up to 3000 years ago.

The recent coppiced area has yielded a rich emerging flora which has delighted David Bevan and given him new additions for his on-going work on the flora of the wood. The Flora was launched last April and has been widely acclaimed. It is rewarding for us to have enabled this to be completed and I know that David's time was given very generously. We hope the Invertebrate Survey we have commissioned will be ready soon and look forward to the findings. Edward Milner has already indicated that the result, particularly in the coppiced area, is interesting. It is good to know that we are contributing to the Biodiversity Targets both locally and nationally.

This year we have hosted our Tenth Anniversary party and shown the exhibition of our work over twenty years, in the Lodge café. As a result of this work we have produced a booklet on FQW and the history of the woods, which records many memories. I must give thanks to committee members Rebecca Dowman, Jane Warren, Sue Smith and Alison Watson for their work in producing all these anniversary events and the booklet.  
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**We have also continued our guided walks in spring and autumn and held public meeting on the subjects of BTCV's work and mini- management tasks necessary for deeper ecological knowledge of the wood. We have supported outside events such as the Heritage Day in Highgate Wood, and the Alexandra Palace Spring Watch Day and many members have helped man stalls at these events. I believe that all this activity has led to our steady membership at around 200 households and here we should thank Alison Watson for her tireless work in membership records and the newsletter production.**

**Our new Management Plan is finally finished and we have already started working to implement its recommendations which provide a work plan over ten years. We have to thank Sarah Graham - Brown and David Warren for work in checking and improving the many drafts and Ian Holt, Conservation Officer for his advice. It will be available on the Haringey Council website with a link from FQW website.**

**Financial cuts have been made in many areas of the council's budget and these will have a direct impact on Queen's Wood. Ironically since we receive less help anyway than formal parks we may suffer less. However this last year we have had new notice boards, new interpretation boards, and new finger sign posts. This is the kind of thing that will be cut in the future now that the Neighbourhood Management grant has been withdrawn by the government. Our treasurer John Dorken has guided us with wise advice since we were formally set up and dealt with the varied sources and uses of our funds efficiently.**

**The Parks Recreation Services budget has been cut by 50% and this will impact on the Hygiene Team which empties litter and dog bins and collects large dumped rubbish in the woods. BTCV's staff have been cut and this will affect our extra volunteer support. Safety issues such as dangerous branches or pollution should continue to be a priority and we can expect a helpful response there. Thanks here to Michael Johns who had attended the Haringey Friends Forum meetings on our behalf to bring us increasingly pessimistic news on the cuts.**

**Any further improvements to the wood for the next few years will have to be funded by external grants. To help with this we hope to qualify for the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard certification (UKWAS) issued by the Forestry Commission and Ian Holt will help us with this application.**

**Finally I would like to thank Sue Smith for her contribution to the committee work and we are glad that she has been able to see the Frogpool completed before her departure from London. We also welcomed Iain Loasby to the committee this year and his arboricultural expertise has been helpful with the work groups. We have also received help from outside the committee in monitoring bins, and dumped rubbish, updating the website and delivering the newsletter. All this support means we can look forward to the future with optimism in spite of the financial situation.**

**Lucy Roots Chair. April 2011**

