



the friends
of Bedgebury
Pinetum



Friends of Bedgebury
Magazine **Issue 3**
Spring/Summer
2014

www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk

Friends of Bedgebury Magazine **Issue 3** Spring/Summer 2014

Welcome	1
Who We Are	2
Editor's Letter	3
An Interview with Roy Lancaster	4
The Plant Hunter: Exploration, Conservation and Science	6
Events and Activities	9
Operational News	12
The Friends, The Forestry Commission and the Bigger Picture	14
Supporting the Friends	15
News	16
Notice Board	17

Cover: Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*
Photograph: Will Rawles

This unbelievably tame Firecrest was found on a Spruce tree in the Pinetum towards the end of July 2013. He delighted Will, myself and another birder all afternoon, continuously displaying his 'fiery' crest and singing his energetic song. It was particularly special because I never managed to locate this individual again, although we did find a family of Firecrests in the same area a month later.

Luke Wallace – Membership and Volunteer Coordinator

Editors: Katherine Jary,
Luke Wallace and Elspeth Hill

Contributing Photographers:
Luke Wallace, Will Rawles,
Daniel Luscombe and James Brett

Contributing Florilegium Artists:
Suzanne Price, Helen Hiorns

Design: Jonathan Turner

Printed on FSC certified paper.

Welcome

Dominic O'Connor Robinson, Bedgebury Manager



From destruction comes new life and we've got life in abundance at Bedgebury this spring and summer.

The rain and wind over winter brought back images of '87. This time the largest tree to succumb to the elements was a great Abies (the classic Christmas tree) planted in the mid 1800s. I always feel sad seeing the passing of such a mighty specimen, however, it always gives me hope seeing the next generation of trees going out from our nursery and this old beast will be taking on a new lease of life in the Gruffalo trail launched this summer. See if you can spot him!

The Gruffalo trail kicks off our fuller-than-ever spring and summer events and activities programme, with something for all the family. Our concert programme will be headlined by Jessie J and Paul Weller and we have children's theatre and family events alongside the trails that are available all year round. On site, Go Ape's new junior course is up and running and, if you're coming for the cycling, you can enjoy the thrill of the upgraded sections on our red trail. On the conservation side we will have hundreds of endangered young trees being planted out in the old forest plots where we're recreating the threatened forest areas of the world.

Anyone going to the play area will see what looks like destruction; not by nature but by our hands as we've coppiced some of the chestnut. It is part of the cycle of life for these trees that we cut on a 20 year rotation, as generations before us have done. The trees will regrow from the stools that remain and over the next couple of years you will be able to watch this area change from a sunny site, full of flowers and a haven for butterflies, back to the canopy of chestnut perfect for dens and play.

And of course none of our work in conservation, events and activities would be possible without the support of our hundreds of volunteers and you, our members. So thank you to each of you. I hope that you'll be able to come to Bedgebury this spring and summer to enjoy the abundance of life.



the friends of Bedgebury Pinetum

Charity no. 1113325

'Supporting the work of the National Pinetum'

The Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum Magazine

This magazine is produced twice a year by the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum charity. It aims to inform our members about upcoming projects and events. It is also an opportunity to share with you the wonders and stories of Bedgebury.

Patron

HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO

Trustees

Mr M Kerr

Mr K E Noakes

Mrs D Smytherman MEB

Mr P Jenks

Mrs R Mayhew

Mrs E Hill

Staff information and contact details

Friends' Manager

Katherine Jary

Staff members

Luke Wallace

Isobel Lobo

Sharon Booth

General enquiries

01580 879842

friends@bedgeburypinetum.org.uk

Membership enquiries

membership@bedgeburypinetum.org.uk

Volunteering enquiries

volunteering@bedgeburypinetum.org.uk

www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk



Forestry Commission
England

INFORMATION

Site opening times

March	8.00 - 18.00
April	8.00 - 19.00
May	8.00-20.00
June	8.00-20.00
July	8.00-20.00
August	8.00-20.00

Office opening times

March	9.30-16.30
April	9.30-16.30
May	9.30-16.30
June	9.30-16.30
July	9.30-16.30
August	9.30-16.30

General enquiries

01580 879820

bedgebury@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

www.forestry.gsi.gov.uk/bedgebury

Staff information

Bedgebury Manager

Dominic O'Connor Robinson

Operations Manager

John Allen

Recreation Manager

Mark Clixby

Learning Manager

Cath Weeks

Dendrologist

Daniel Luscombe

Bedgebury National Pinetum is cared for by the Forestry Commission.

www.forestry.gov.uk

Editor's Letter

Luke Wallace, Membership
and Volunteer Coordinator



*'And laughter, learnt of friends, and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.'*

The Soldier by Rupert Brooke

This epitomises what the Pinetum means to me during the spring and summer months. On a warm summer's day, lying on a grassy bank in Dallimore Valley, watching the clouds floating over the tops of the conifers, my heart is at peace and I feel like I am in Brooke's English heaven.

In this edition of the Bedgebury Spring/Summer magazine, we ask Gardener's Question Time regular and accomplished botanist, Roy Lancaster, about what the National Pinetum means to him (pages 4-5). We also gain a fascinating insight in to his life among trees, which has included many trips abroad in search of botanical specimens.

Roy belongs to a bigger collective of 'plant hunters'; namely those who have studied and collected flora throughout the world. This happens to be the focus of Tunbridge Wells Museum's forthcoming exhibition from April 11th to July 13th. The curator of

this exhibition, Nathaniel Hepburn, tells us how the exhibition documents the science of plant hunting, with a look behind the scenes at Bedgebury, and why it features some of the Bedgebury Florilegium's exquisite botanical art (pages 6-8).

As the season gathers pace, a plethora of fantastic events and activities unfolds at Bedgebury. For those whose children enjoyed the Stick Man Trail over the winter period, we have some exciting news. There will be a Gruffalo lurking in the Pinetum! Not only will there be a bespoke trail to enthuse your little ones, there will be a superb carved Gruffalo statue for them to marvel at (pages 9-11).

As many of you may have noticed, the Chestnut woodland around the shipwreck play area has changed dramatically. John Allen (Bedgebury Operations Manager) explains why felling large areas of trees in the forest is a necessary forestry practice (pages 12-13). It is surprising how quickly coppiced woodland will regenerate! John also outlines the new areas in which our brilliant volunteer force will undertake work this summer.

Lastly, we explore the role of the Friends charity at Bedgebury (pages 14-15) and update you on other exciting spring and summer activities, as well as sharing important updates, changes and general Bedgebury news (pages 16-17).

Whilst there is plenty going on at Bedgebury in the coming months, there are always beautiful and quiet areas waiting to be discovered where you can get away from it all. You may even find a rare conifer or two. Whatever your preference, why not exploit Bedgebury to its full potential this summer!

An interview with Roy Lancaster



Roy Lancaster is best known as a presenter of *Gardeners' World* and *Gardeners' Question Time*, but he also sits on Bedgebury's 'Arborea Advisory Committee', providing support to our staff on all things tree related. Here he tells us what he loves about Bedgebury and some of his adventures in his career with trees.

Why did you choose a career dedicated to trees?

I have an interest in all plants but trees figure larger in my life and my conscience because of their greater impact on both the natural and the garden landscape. They also have a spiritual presence in that you normally look up to appreciate their height and beauty. I became aware of trees and appreciated their many facets early in my life – often when climbing them! They provided a form of escapism and security.

What do you like most about Bedgebury?

The conifers. Nowhere else in Britain can you see so many different kinds in one place nor better appreciate their huge variety of form and foliage and their impact both individually and collectively.

Do you have a favourite conifer species?

Metasequoia glyptostroboides for its all year round ornamental merit of spring and summer foliage, autumn leaf colour and its rich, reddish bark especially in winter. Add to this its tall, straight, spire-like crown and its buttressed base and its reliability and durability as an individual specimen, informal group or formal avenue in most soils and situations. The story of its discovery and its ancestry is a great bonus. Together with *Ginkgo biloba*, the perfect tree for children to know.

Metasequoia glyptostroboides...
together with *Ginkgo biloba*, the
perfect tree for children to know.

What do you think the value of Bedgebury is in a global context?

First of all is its scientific and educational value as a conifer haven (or heaven) where examples from the world's temperate regions can be scientifically

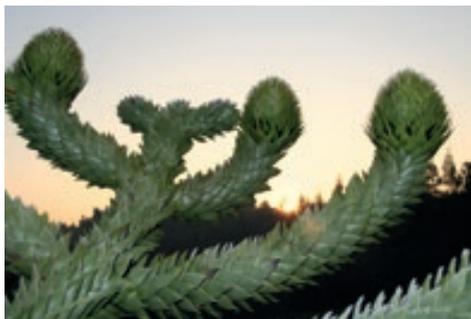
studied and investigated or simply admired. I find it amazing that within minutes of leaving the car park you can pass conifers as familiar as Scot's pine and Norway spruce (the traditional Christmas tree) and find yourself among Dawn redwoods, Monkey puzzles, swamp cypresses and to crown it all *Cathaya argyrophylla* which was once described and introduced to me by a Chinese professor in Beijing as the "Panda of the plant world".

Cathaya argyrophylla... once described and introduced to me by a Chinese professor in Beijing as the "Panda of the plant world".

To have a collection of this stature devoted and dedicated to growing, displaying, conserving, researching, propagating, disseminating and sharing with the public as well as the scientific and horticultural community, represents a great service to the world at large. That said, it astonishes me that this great source of knowledge and endeavour should have to rely on a mere handful of skilled and gifted staff supported by dedicated volunteers.



Cathaya argyrophylla



Araucaria araucana

What has been the most exciting adventure in your career with trees?

I have had many memorable tree experiences including walking through, camping and sleeping beneath *Rhododendron arboreum* in the Nepal Himalaya in 1971. My first sighting of the famous Chinese Dove Tree *Davidia involucrata* on Mount Omei in Sichuan in 1980 had me singing, while a walk in the Andes of Chile through a temperate rain forest of *Nothofagus dombeyi*, fire trees *Embothrium coccineum* ending with Monkey puzzles *Araucaria araucana* takes some beating.

What advice would you give to those interested in following in your footsteps?

I believe that, like charity, the search for knowledge should begin at home. I spent years from age 15 exploring the countryside around my home in Lancashire searching for plants and studying their habitats before gradually widening my horizon and travels and building on this early experience. Of course, some opportunities come but once and I needed no second asking when, in 1970 I was invited to join a plant hunting expedition to Nepal. The experience was life changing.

The Plant Hunter: Exploration, Conservation and Science

Nathaniel Hepburn



What links the Olympic Velodrome, rolls of toilet paper, a bottle of Bombay Sapphire and a powerful drug to slow the progress of cancer?

All will be revealed in a new exhibition opening at Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery exploring the work that happens behind-the-scenes at Bedgebury Pinetum and the Forestry Commission. This exhibition traces the journey from the original plant hunting expeditions through to the scientific and commercial discoveries, enabled by them, at the laboratories of the Plant Research Centre.

Thousands of visitors come through the gates of Bedgebury every year; some to climb on Go Ape, others to photograph the landscape, walk with family, explore the cycle tracks or take grandchildren on mini-beasting adventures. Yet how many of these people really consider why the trees ended up in the Kent Weald and what purpose they serve?

A Swamp Cypress from the swamps of south eastern USA, a Monkey Puzzle from the highest mountains of the Andes and the Giant Redwoods from California all occupying the same sheltered spot minutes away from the A21 where traffic thunders past on its way from London to the south coast.

The Plant Hunter: Exploration, Conservation and Science, which runs from 11th April – 13th July in Tunbridge Wells, is a multi-discipline exhibition bringing together film, photography, archive objects from the museum

collection as well as artefacts collected by Bedgebury experts and works of art created at the Pinetum. Visitors will be able to see footage shot by the Bedgebury plant experts on their latest expedition to Korea with colleagues from Kew Garden's Millenium Seed Bank.

Interviews with Bedgebury staff past and present help dispel the perceived romance of historical expeditions and show the nitty gritty problems of visas, political unrest and sorting seeds on the floor of a hotel room. Visitors to the exhibition will also be able to take part in hands on experiments such as those undertaken daily by the Forestry Commission researchers; identifying different conifers, recording the age of trees and sorting through X-rays to isolate healthy seeds for germination and destroy those which are bug-infested or rotten.

Interviews help dispel the perceived romance of historical expeditions and show the nitty gritty problems of visas, political unrest and sorting seeds on the floor of a hotel room.



Pinus edulis
seed X-ray

The exhibition doesn't just celebrate the science of forestry but, through a series of newly commissioned photographs by world-renowned photographer Edward Parker, visitors to the exhibition will see the conifers through a different light as the seasons, light and weather change the landscape of Bedgebury Pinetum. Bridging the gap between art and science will be the display of an extensive body of fine drawings undertaken at the Pinetum by the Bedgebury Florilegium.

Even in an age of instant digital photography, high fidelity scanners and powerful magnifying glasses, botanical drawing is still used by many plant experts to aid their identification of a tree. Within a single page of a botanical drawing the artist can capture the full height of a tree and the tiny details of a seed; they can show the tree in all

seasons and differentiate between a pine cone from a healthy tree and that of a water-deprived tree. The botanical drawings of the Florilegium condense every aspect of the life of one of Bedgebury's trees in a single drawing.



Collecting seeds

The collection of conifers held at Bedgebury is one of the most important in the world. Here, incredibly rare trees are propagated from collected seed and nurtured into large trees which can be used to repopulate lost forests. This exhibition allows visitors to go behind the scenes to see the work of the Plant Hunters as they travel across the world and return home to transform their carefully stored, labelled and analysed seeds into trees for visitors to Bedgebury to enjoy but also for varied and extensive conservation and scientific uses.

For more information and for details of related events being run by the Tunbridge Wells museum during the exhibition, please visit www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org



Tsuga heterophylla
by Helen Hiorns

Events and Activities

For more information on any of the events listed, please contact either:

Bedgebury Visitor Services Information Office on 01580 879820 or visit www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury

The Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum on 01580 879842 or visit www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk

Event & Activities may be subject to alteration. We recommend that you ring either of the above numbers before visiting.



Dot's Guide to the Pinetum

23rd April, 4th May, 21st May and 11th June

Join Dot Smytherman BEM on a guided tour of the Pinetum, conducted in her own inimitable style. Dot is our longest serving volunteer and knows Bedgebury intimately. The guided walk takes a sideways look at the Pinetum, combining some of the area's little-known features with humorous story-telling. Each walk will start at 11am and last approximately an hour and a half. It will be free of charge, although donations are welcome. Please call 01580 879842 or email friends@bedgeburypinetum.org.uk to book your place.

April 2014

8th to 11th April

Drop in Easter Event – Spring Trail

With its ponds, trees and grassy banks, Bedgebury offers a home to many creatures. How many will you be able to spot? Families can follow the easy, self-guiding Spring Trail to find the activity boxes before returning to the classroom where children can make an Easter nest and complete it with a chocolate egg to take home. Cost £3 per child (plus admission fee per car). All ages. Booking is not required for this event. Drop in between 10.00am and 3.00pm.



Beginning 11th April

Gruffalo Activity Trail

After the amazing success of Stick Man, Forestry Commission England and Bedgebury launches a new trail built around Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's hugely popular Gruffalo story. Families are invited into the deep dark wood at Bedgebury where they can join Mouse, along with other characters from the stories, on a trail that will lead children through the trees with adventure and intrigue, learning about woods and forests as they go.

Text copyright © Julia Donaldson, 2008. Illustration copyright © Axel Scheffler 2008. Reproduced with the permission of Alison Green Books An imprint of Scholastic Ltd.

28th April to 5th May

Walkies Week

As part of the Forestry Commission's new campaign, Walkies!, which aims to encourage more owners to take their dog for a day out in the forest and reminds them to do so responsibly, the nation's dogs and their owners will be asked to walk a total of 180 million miles during the week from 28th April to 5th May. For more information contact us or visit www.forestry.gov.uk/dogs

May 2014

17th May

George's Marvellous Medicine by Roald Dahl, adapted by David Wood

Illyria* returns to Bedgebury with yet another Roald Dahl classic full of (literally) larger-than-life characters, plenty to join in with, and just a twist of malicious fun which is guaranteed to send you through the roof! Tickets (including booking fee) are priced at £9.50 for children (ages 2-15) and £12.50 for adults and will be available via the Forestry Commission box office online at <http://boxoffice.forestry.gov.uk> or on 03000 680400.

29th May

Bedgebury BioBlitz

Bedgebury BioBlitz is a fabulous outdoor, family event where expert naturalists and members of the public work together to do a fast and intensive survey of all forms of life in our beautiful Pinetum. It's a race to find as many different species of plants, birds, insects, mammals, and everything else as possible in 24 hours! Everything you find is recorded for national databases that monitor our wildlife – citizen science in action! You will be able to get involved in all kinds of exciting activities and learn how to find and identify the wildlife on your doorstep. From bug hunting to bat detectors and bird watching – there will be something for everyone to get involved with and no expertise is necessary!

June 2014

7th June

Gruffalo's 15th birthday celebrations

Oh help! Oh no! It's a Gruffalo! The Forestry Commission have teamed up with The Gruffalo to help celebrate his 15th anniversary... You and your friends are invited to sign up and receive a free birthday party picnic pack and join Gruffalo for party celebrations at Bedgebury! Sign up at www.forestry.gov.uk/Gruffalo to be the first to hear about our celebrations. And keep your eyes peeled... a giant wooden sculpture of the Gruffalo will be hidden somewhere in the Pinetum!

7th June

Rat Race

Rat Race Trailblazer returns to Bedgebury. Visit www.ratrace.com/events/trailblazer.aspx for further details and to register.



20th and 21st June

Jessie J and Paul Weller in concert

Jessie J will be performing here at Bedgebury on Friday 20th June and Paul Weller will perform on Saturday 21st June as part of the Forestry Commission Forest Live concerts.

July 2014

12th July

Discover the Dragons

The Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum introduce you to the wonderful dragonflies and damselflies of Bedgebury in the form of a presentation and guided walk. For more information visit our website www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk



29th July

Robin Hood Traditional, adapted by Oliver Gray

Illyria* returns to Bedgebury for the second time this year, with a production adapted from the earliest Robin Hood ballads pre-dating Chaucer – which makes it as authentic as Robin Hood legends come! The play is written in fast-moving, easy-to-follow verse, and introduces all the well-loved characters such as Little John, Friar Tuck, Maid Marian and King Richard. It is a collection of tales featuring camaraderie, swashbuckling action, and riotous comedy. First performed in 2007, it remains one of Illyria's most popular ever titles. Tickets (including booking fee) are priced at £9.50 for children (ages 2-15) and £12.50 for adults and will be available via the Forestry Commission box office online at <http://boxoffice.forestry.gov.uk> or on 03000 680400



29th July and 5th August **Hands On Nature**

Have fun and get hands-on with nature in this touchy-feely day for young children. Bedgebury is home to many animals, large and small, that are able to make their homes in our beautiful Pinetum. The day starts off with a mini-beast hunt, and is followed by a short walk where we hope to find dragonflies and damselflies darting over the ponds and camouflaged caterpillars. We will look at how colour and camouflage are important in nature and then the children can make a bright dragonfly to take home. Cost £6 per child 10.00am – 12.00pm. Ages 5+ years. Booking essential, numbers limited. Pre-book your place for free car admission for the day in the main car park.

31st July, 12th, 21st and 26th August **Drop in Summer Trail**

Drop in and pick up a plant collectors bag, then follow the self-guiding summer trail to collect cones and leaves from the forest floor and learn about the Pinetum. Wooden activity boxes are laid out along the trail for the children to find. Bring your collection back and try some drawing or make a collage to take home. Cost £3 per child (plus admission fee per car). All ages. Booking is not required for this event. Drop in between 10.00am and 3.00pm.

August 2014

7th and 28th August

Native American Trail

Come and discover our North American trees. Bedgebury Pinetum collects conifers from all over the world to help save them from extinction. Many of our mature trees would have been known to Native Americans as they gathered food and hunted in the vast forests. Try some face painting and make a feather headdress to take home. Cost £6 per child 10.00am – 12.00pm. All ages. Booking essential, numbers limited. Pre-book your place for free car admission for the day in the main car park.

14th and 19th August

Meet a Modern Day Plant Hunter

Bedgebury staff go all over the world collecting conifer seeds. Come and meet one of them to find out how they get the best seeds to bring back to Bedgebury to try and ensure the survival of rare species. They'll show how they climb trees and you will have a chance to ask them about their work. Cost £6 per child 10.00am – 12.00pm. All ages. Booking essential, numbers limited. Pre-book your place for free car admission for the day in the main car park.



26th to 31st August **Living Symphonies**

A partnership between Sound and Music, the national agency for new music, and Forestry Commission England has been awarded support through Arts Council England's Strategic Touring Fund to create a remarkable new way for audiences to explore forests with their ears as well as their eyes. Composed and realised by artists Daniel Jones and James Bulley, 'Living Symphonies' is a musical composition which grows like a real forest ecosystem. The piece portrays the thriving activity of the forest's wildlife, plants and atmospheric conditions, creating a never-ending symphony heard amongst the forest itself. This promises to be a truly unique experience. For more information visit www.livingsymphonies.com

Please note, children must be accompanied by an adult during all events listed.

*Illyria is an Equity Outdoor Touring Guidelines compliant company.

Operational News

John Allen, Operations Manager



Since joining Bedgebury in August 2013 I have established three main priorities; reinforcing the Forestry Commission's Health and Safety policies on site, engaging volunteers and conducting contractor and operational team works on the estate.

The recent bad weather has meant that we have had to try to concentrate on all three of these tasks simultaneously. A recent site survey identified various trees and areas needing attention with these works being undertaken by a combination of the dedicated operations team, our very hard working volunteer force and outside contractors. Over the coming months several larger trees, including a large Sitka Spruce at the bottom of Hills Avenue, will be removed because of safety concerns. The timber from these trees will be recycled on site to produce wood chips for a variety of uses. We will be planting approximately 300 new trees in the spring.

We will be planting approximately 300 new trees in the spring.



The root mass of one of the larger casualties of the recent bad weather

Many of you will have seen the coppicing works around the play trail from the Shipwreck to the Spiders' Web. This work was essential not only because the ground had become extremely compacted due to its popularity as a den building site for the children but also that the work had been programmed into our ongoing 20 year rotation plan. The coppiced material has been used for fencing and to power the woodfuel boiler that supplies heat and hot water to the visitor centre. At the same time the rides (paths) round the Spiders' Web and Go-Ape have been widened to allow



Coppicing around the play trail

other areas of shelter building to naturally emerge as well as to lighten the area to promote the regeneration of more ground flora.

The sheer volume of rainfall on the site over the last couple of months has also forced us to start clearing ditch lines. In the late summer/early autumn of 2014 pinch points in the drainage network will be repaired and renewed. This should alleviate the torrents of water that have been seen on the rides and footpaths recently.

Over the coming months, the operational volunteer working parties will be tackling the Walled Garden, the National Yew Collection and the Gloryhole. The Sunday Group, the Wednesday Wild Crew and the Tree Labelling Team have undertaken much valuable work on site in recent months, including clearing the pond and scrub area near the boardwalk, weeding, mulching and tidying areas of Dallimore Valley and labelling large sections of the Pinetum. A big 'Thank You' should go to all our volunteers for their unfailing hard work and dedication despite sometimes appalling conditions.

A big 'Thank You' should go to all our volunteers for their unfailing hard work and dedication despite sometimes appalling conditions.

The operations teams will now start to implement a sward management plan so that we can achieve the right balance between wildlife, ecology and amenity. The plan involves cutting grass short in high-use areas, annual cuts of medium-use areas and bi-annual cuts of less visited areas. This will allow us to develop a mosaic of grass and heath habitats across the site which will support the wonderfully diverse species that we currently host, as well as smartening the site for visitors.

In 2014 we will also deliver the yearly section tasks that allow us to manage the collection on a five-year cycle; taking out old specimens, developing new planting in the Plots area, replacing fencing, stump grinding and generally improving the visitor experience on site.

Visit www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk/pinetum to find out more about the Pinetum tree collection.

The Friends, the Forestry Commission and the Bigger Picture

Why does the Friends charity exist?
Why does the Forestry Commission
manage an internationally important
tree collection? And ultimately, why
does it matter?

Bedgebury is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission, which links all its work to a 'triple bottom line' of economic, social and environmental objectives. That means the national conifer collection at Bedgebury is managed for a range of purposes, such as to support the conservation of conifers, to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, to improve people's understanding of trees and the environment, to be a research site for the trial of future forestry timber species – and so the list goes on...! Many of these aims, however, cannot be achieved by one organisation alone, so the Forestry Commission works with partners locally and internationally to deliver these aspirations. These partners include everyone from the Millennium Seed Bank to the Boars Bike Club and Sport England to Flora and Fauna. Within this mix of partner organisations sit the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum.

The Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum were established in 1993 to help Bedgebury deliver its potential in engaging people in the world of trees and the environment, and to financially support its activities.

The charity has grown a lot since then but its fundamental objectives have not changed. There are people that the Forestry Commission cannot reach or engage with and funding to deliver the numerous aims and objectives that they cannot access – and that is why the Friends exist.

Of course, we still only exist because of you, our members and individual donors. Through your Friends membership fees and donations, we are able to work with the Forestry Commission to manage the National Pinetum for wildlife, the economy and for the enjoyment of the public. This includes Pinetum maintenance and tree operations, seed collecting trips for new and interesting specimens, play furniture and much more. Either directly or indirectly, all of your money goes towards projects on site. This is why Bedgebury continues to be one of the leading visitor attractions in the south east and on the cutting edge of conifer conservation internationally. Therefore, being a Friend helps wildlife, people, and the economy right on your doorstep.

Thank you for your support.

In the next issue we'll tell you a bit more about how our work at Bedgebury fits into the international picture of conifer conservation.

The Friends would like to increase the number of individuals on the Board of Trustees. We have space for between 3 and 5 candidates depending on background and experience. If you are passionate about Bedgebury and feel that you could help take the Friends forward we would be delighted to hear from you. If you are interested please contact Katherine Jary at katherine@bedgeburypinetum.org.uk by 30 April 2014.



Supporting the Friends

Through your Friends' membership fees and donations, we are able to support the Forestry Commission in the management of the National Pinetum, the most complete collection of conifers in the world. This work includes Pinetum maintenance and tree operations, seed collecting trips for new and interesting specimens, recreation, education, interpretation and much more.

Do you think you will visit us more than 6 times in a year? Membership offers great value access to the Pinetum and forest every day of the year*.

Becoming a member or renewing an existing membership is quick and easy. You can do this on site, on the phone and, brand new for 2014, via our website. Some of you will be interested in the tree collection, for others it might be the forest cycle trails, the Go Ape course or just a quiet walk that draws you to Bedgebury. Whatever the reason, your support is valuable to the future of Bedgebury. Please remember that membership covers your car, not you, so you are free to share Bedgebury with your family and friends! For more information on the benefits of Friends' membership please visit our website or contact us as detailed below.

* Except Christmas Day

Bedgebury – a gift for all seasons.

Buying a gift membership for friends, family or loved ones is a gift that keeps on giving! If the recipient has an interest in the natural world not only will they have access to an internationally important tree collection but they will be able to access a range of other wonderful botanical gardens, such as Kew and Westonbirt, for free. Perhaps they want to stay fit and enjoy the challenging mountain bike trails? Or maybe they have children who need wearing out in our extensive forest play area? One of the unique features of Bedgebury is that there is ample foliage, space and freedom all year around so it always a joyous place for your friends and family at any time of year.

Considering the Pinetum? Want to leave a gift that will help us look after, protect and develop the National Pinetum and its tree collection into the future...?

Making a donation to or leaving money to the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum in your will can be a direct and wonderful way of making sure your memories of Bedgebury can live on forever by supporting the work we do in the National Pinetum. Please visit our website for more information on how to how to make an investment in the future of Bedgebury with a donation or legacy.

Ring us on 01892 879842,
e-mail us at:
membership@bedgeburypinetum.or.uk
or visit us online at:
www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk
for more information on how to support the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum.

News

Luke Wallace, Friends Membership and Volunteer Coordinator

Planting the seeds of diplomacy

Our partners at Edinburgh's Royal Botanical Gardens and Oxford University Botanical Gardens have recently given Bedgebury the seeds of several rare and endangered conifers. The batch of seeds contains species like the endemic Japanese Umbrella Pine and the endangered Japanese Bush Spruce. It will now be up to Dan (our dendrologist) and Philip (our propagator) to grow these species from the seed and plant them within the Pinetum in approximately 3 years' time.



Japanese Umbrella Pine

A new direction for orienteering

Orienteering remains a popular and exciting activity for many people and by Spring this year we will have re-launched our orienteering activities with revised maps, brand new way markers and new and exciting routes. We offer several different levels of orienteering difficulty so anyone can get involved. Please ask in the Visitor Information Office, ring 01580 879820 or to find out more visit www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury



Dominic Robinson and representatives of DNBK

Blossoming in to maturity

Towards the end of March and the beginning of April, our 111 Japanese Cherry Trees will reach their peak blossom time. The trees, donated by the Japanese martial arts organisation Dai Nippon Butoku Kai (DNBK) to mark the 111 year anniversary from the signing of the Anglo-Japanese alliance treaty, were planted last year and line the path behind the visitor centre. We expect the Cherry Tree Avenue to look spectacular this spring!

BEM for Dot Smytherman

Earlier this year, Mrs Dot Smytherman, one of our trustees, was recognised in the New Year's Honours for her contribution in the community of Wadhurst and at Bedgebury. Not only is Dot one of our longest serving volunteers but she is also one of the founding members of the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum. Dot's tireless hard work and altruistic outlook on life has touched many and been instrumental in the development of Friends activity and support in Bedgebury.

Notice board

Online Friends

It is now possible to renew your Friends membership online. Visit our website, www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk and click on [Membership/Become a Member](#). It is an easy and quick process that you can do in the comfort of your own home which will ensure you remain free to visit the site all year round.

No rest on the Sabbath!

From Sunday, 9th March there will be a permanent operational volunteering group every week at the same time, from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Activities will still involve a mixture of coppicing, weeding specimens and scrub removal (with the occasional bonfire of course!). Visit our website and click on [Volunteering](#) for more information. New volunteers are always welcome!

Discover new benefits

The Discovery Pass is soon to provide even more to members at Bedgebury. The Discovery Pass currently allows members to obtain discounts on a range of activities and services on and off site. From April this year, the Discovery Pass will entitle you to join loyalty schemes operated by the Pineatery and Quench*. Visit the membership pages of our website for more information on these and other membership benefits.

*Subject to terms and conditions



Doggie doo's and don'ts...

On behalf of all the staff at Bedgebury we would like to thank the responsible dog owners who keep their dogs on leads in the Pinetum, car park, the Visitor Centre and around the play areas and who pick up after them. With the spring and summer fast approaching and with plenty of younger visitors on site all week it is especially important to keep dogs under control and these areas "mess" free! While dogs must be kept on leads in certain areas, there are miles of footpaths for your dog to enjoy off the lead in the wider forest.

Look out for the Forestry Commission's new campaign Walkies!, which will be launched at Crufts on 7th March, Walkies Week which will be running from 28th April to 5th May and the Forestry Commission's new publication the Ruff Guides to the Forest. For more information contact us or visit www.forestry.gov.uk/dogs

*Cedrus by
Suzanne Price*





Dale Hill

Dale Hill Hotel
and Golf Club
Ticehurst
Wadhurst
East Sussex

dalehill.co.uk



The Friends and Staff of Bedgebury are very grateful to Dale Hill for sponsoring the printing of this magazine and for their on-going support of our work.