

Welcome to the first issue of DyFRA NEWS whose aim is to update you on the progress we have made over the summer and to highlight some emerging issues.

Since many of you may not have heard of us we will also take the liberty of explaining what we do.

Dymock Forest Rural Action was set up during 2011 in response to a number of developments in Kempley in particular, but its remit is far wider. The major spur was the Government's failed attempt to sell off the public forests. Following the July publication of the Independent Forestry Panel's report of the Commission of Forests we are awaiting the Government's response (see below).

DyFRA is a network of individuals and organisations, many of whom have professional experience in the conservation and heritage sector. All of us are committed to action to maintain the environment in which we live, work and play.

So, we welcome you to the world of DyFRA, home for all those who wish to protect and enhance the wonderful landscape we are so lucky to inhabit. Happy Christmas and a sustainable New Year.

### **Update on DyFRA activities and projects**

The management of natural habitats has struggled with the unpredictable climate of 2012, as have farmers and gardeners alike.

**DyFRA Quiz:** Saturday 19th January 2013, Kempley Village Hall from 7.30

What do you recall of 2012? Test your memory of the Olympics and Diamond Jubilee. Food provided in keeping with the occasion - just bring some 'performance enhancing' drink! 4 per team (max) only £10 per head. Book now on 01531 890332 or e: [dyfradaffs@gn.apc.org](mailto:dyfradaffs@gn.apc.org) . All proceeds to support DyFRA activities.

### **DyFRA meets the Forestry Commission**

Our first and what may well be our best initiative is to develop a strong relationship with the Forestry Commission. We met with them on 4th December and they are clearly keen to work with us in a number of areas:

- Improving access and amenity at Queens Wood car park,
- A better, bigger and more engaging notice board,
- Coordination of volunteers as Wardens and path inspectors,
- Co-operative projects,
- AND under discussion for DyFRA to clear brush and crown wood from harvested areas - serious ecological and revenue (for our work) prospects here
- To look at educational opportunities.

### **Daffodils and wildflower meadows**

The annual task of mowing the Daffodil verges and small wildflower meadows has been hampered by the wet weather of July and August. Many summer meadows were only cut late in August, using lightweight mowers in the damp(!) meadows, with removal of the hay mulch proving impossible.

### **Want to help?**

Volunteers are sought this month to pot on daffodil bulbs for sale next March; and mowing tasks with the Daffodil Mower, a powerful brushcutter for removing bramble, tough grasses and clearing footpaths. Available for hire at £15. Contact Chris Bligh 01531 890332 [dyfradaffs@gn.apc.org](mailto:dyfradaffs@gn.apc.org)

### **Timber gleaning**

Dymock Forest Rural Action had its first timber gleaning event on May 3rd, creating a dead hedge habitat from the cut branches left by contractors extracting oak at Queens Wood car park since which there has been NO opportunity to get back on dry ground to remove the remaining timber.

This clearance of the forest floor will benefit the daffodils, bluebells and windflowers (wood anemone), along the temporary FC path from the Queens Wood car park via the Daffodil Way past Knapp Farm buildings and its avenue of mature perry trees, and into Kempley at its southern tip.

### **Acorns**

On a positive note the harvest of sessile oak acorns from the 1870 seed stand of trees at Shaw Common and Oxenhall Wood has ensured that there are potentially 500,000 new saplings of local provenance available for planting in the Dean, and across Europe, in 2015/16

Like everyone in the Forest we have deep concerns over the latest threat to native Ash trees, and imported saplings. That concern is heightened by the laissez faire response from the new Environment Minister. Along with the recent badger debacle we hope this is not going to turn into a shambles that wreaks yet more damage on the rural community reliant on a sustainable working landscape. DEFRA is likely to present its proposals for managing the Public Forest Estate early in 2013.

### **[Forest report calls for woodland expansion](#)**

From the Wildlife Trust magazine: 'Eighteen months after the furore over the future of the Public Forest Estate, the Independent Forestry Panel (IFP) has published its report. It calls on Government to start valuing woodland ecosystems and to reward their management, improvement and expansion to benefit people, wildlife and economy. It also considers the future of the Forestry Commission. The recommendations – and the Government's reaction – will shape the future of forestry and woodland policy in England. The Government will respond in 2013. The Wildlife Trusts broadly support the IFPs recommendations, but they want firm commitments to protect, restore and reconnect woodlands as a part of a national ecological network.'

### **ASH dieback – [How to spot ash dieback disease](#)**

With dire warnings about a fungal disease which threatens to devastate Britain's 80 million ash

trees. Simon Bateman from the Woodland Trust explains how to check whether your local trees have been affected

### **New cycle paths**

Three new cycle routes are planned, a DyFRA cycling map will be ready by March, thanks to Barbara Davis and Tony Williams.

### **Kempley Species lists**

We have 10 or more data sets recording species, maps and plant distribution, which are ready for online inclusion. The mapping work already achieved on the [Kempley Tardis](#) website is to be extended by March 2013 to include the Natural and Social History of the wild daffodils, a traditional feature for over 30 yrs of Daffodil Weekend Walks and Teas - primarily at Kempley, Oxenhall and Dymock.

We also wish to collate data on cider orchards - old and new on meteorological recordings, bird ringing and migratory flocks. All manner of geographical and social research can now be revealed by a study of the archives that have been assimilated.