

## Staverton Woods Visit – led by Gary Battell resident conservation advisor at Staverton Park

8 May 2016



True passion can engage and inspire action. Gary Battell certainly is passionate about trees, the wildlife they support and the bluebells they shelter. This walk around the private owned Staverton Park was a fabulous opportunity enjoyed by 24 members of the Greenprint Forum and Friends of Ufford Parklands. To fully appreciate it you had to be there – however there some snippets that I picked up to share:

Staverton Park is a 270 acre Special Area for Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Ancient Oak, holly and silver birch are the main species on the high value site, indeed there are over 5200 trees in the park with approx. 4000 ancient oak pollards there, some more than 400 years old. There are phoenix trees, including oaks that have now have birch and holly growing out of them. The native bluebell display was fantastic. Back in the 1300's research shows that it was

very much a place where peasants eked out a living and it is thought the peasants revolt of 1381 may have come here. It has been used for wood in ship building, deer, for pleasure and leisure, for the military and more latterly for wildlife – with the owners even turning down a grant to grub out the trees in the 1960's. Pollarding stopped in the 1900s and much of the management is now left to nature with just occasional work done as necessary because once the pollarding cycle is out of step more damage can be done by restarting it. Slow and careful replanting is also being undertaken to create the veteran trees of the future. It is private land however Gary does show groups around when he has time and give talks on the wood. If people did not get a chance to go and want to attend a future visit of to ask Gary to give a talk please email [deborah.wargate@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.wargate@eastsoffolk.gov.uk) and we will try to arrange a visit for 2017.

### **Books recommended as good reads**

The Cottage in the Forest by Hugh Farmar Published by Hutchinson & Co Ltd Prices vary from approx. £5 to £12 depending on condition.

Gossip from the Forest by Sara Maitland about the connections between forests and fairytales in Northern Europe £4 to £13 depending on condition.

*Woodlands* by Oliver Rackham £5 to £12 depending on condition.

