

## Palm Sunday Walk in the Wychwood Forest

Until recently, the Wychwood Forest was known as the Secret Forest as it was not possible to walk in it. Pressure was put on the owners until a footpath was opened to allow walkers limited access.

### Traditional Right

But on Palm Sunday, tradition allows local people to walk at will and it was pleasing this Sunday on April 9<sup>th</sup> to see plenty of folk out exercising their right to roam. On any Tuesday, Leaffield folk are still allowed to enter to gather as much wood as they can carry in their arms; Wednesday is the turn of Finstock.

Parking in Hatching Lane, Leaffield Annalise and I were a bit daunted to find that the gate allowing access was firmly padlocked and we had to hop over to start our walk. We wandered down through a wide avenue that had been cleared for shoots, but apparently none have been held this year. The six gamekeepers who

were once employed have all gone and the forest will begin to return to its natural state.

We met other walkers, many with their dogs, all were enjoying the fresh air and beautiful sunshine, but all commented on the gates blocking the traditional routes through the forest.



### Heralding Spring

Despite that, we spent two very pleasant hours walking by streams and pools, looking for signs of wildlife. The only sounds to be heard were the birds in the trees, including a woodpecker. We were delighted to see a bright butterfly float by, clearly heralding spring not too far off. Or maybe not, just as we arrived back at the car it began to hail!

So next year on Palm Sunday perhaps you will join the walkers and let Lord Rotherwick know how important it still is that we are allowed access to his forest.

**Christine Halliday**

## Painting that Bus Shelter!

In our last edition we wrongly attributed the painting of the Milton Bus Shelter to Andrew West. In fact it was painted by **Robert Usher and friends** and we are pleased to set the record straight.

Here they are in our photograph enjoying that moment of artistic completion!

