

The Friends of Epping Forest Newsletter



<http://members.aol.com/friendsef/foef.htm>

November 2001

Dear Friend,

Elsewhere in the Newsletter Ken relates the days gone by story of the public spirited action by George Burney who early in 1878 brought about the forceable removal of fences in the Forest. By an interesting coincidence the Autumn 2001 magazine of Open Spaces Society carries a report of a current success in the constant struggle against the inappropriate fencing on common and public open spaces.

The case concerns the 1,645 acre Blackstone Edge Common near Rochdale in Lancashire. Fencing was erected in 1998 some of which was subsequently removed by Rochdale Borough Council. This led to the holding of a public enquiry. The report of the inspector and the decision of the Secretary of State Margaret Beckett appeared recently.

This states that 'there is an existing benefit from the common in terms of its landscape value as an open area, the unimpeded access it offers for air and various forms of recreation, and its ecological and heritage interest.

The Secretary of State further notes and accepts that a fence would detract from the openness of the Common in both a physical and psychological sense, that the accessibility of the open land would be reduced and that whilst additional gates could be provided, this would not provide the answer given the scale of the fence proposed. She rejected the application.

Coupled with the decision a year or two ago, following a public enquiry, to reject plans to fence Chobham Common, this decision could be helpful if the matter of fencing Epping Forest again emerges.



Membership Success

At the last AGM an appeal was made to members to try to recruit another member or two. It is important to keep up our membership numbers because, apart from the income, it enables us to speak and act as representatives of a sizeable group.

It is pleasing to report that since April there have been 101 new members. We'll soon have a waiting list for those hoping to join! Just joking folks, many thanks for the efforts and keep it up.

Ed.

In this issue

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|----|
| <i>The Natural Aspect</i> | 2 | <i>A Living World for</i> | | <i>Gypsy Moth Update</i> | 11 |
| <i>Thames Chase</i> | 2 | <i>Living Woods</i> | 7 | <i>Prosecutions for</i> | |
| <i>Millennium Wood</i> | 2 | <i>Hawkwood Estate, Chingford</i> | 8 | <i>Bye-law Offences</i> | 11 |
| <i>Bedford & Burney</i> | 3 | <i>Bricks, Tiles and Flower Pots</i> | 8 | <i>Autumn</i> | 11 |
| <i>The Epping or Easter Hunt</i> | 4 | <i>The Model Yacht pond</i> | 10 | <i>Walk Reports</i> | 12 |
| <i>Horse Riding in the Forest</i> | 5 | <i>Buzzards</i> | 10 | <i>Dates for your Diary</i> | 13 |
| <i>The Newsletter by E-mail</i> | 6 | <i>Member's Letters</i> | 10 | <i>F of EF Committee Members</i> | 14 |
| <i>Northern Gateway Access</i> | | <i>Clifford Warren Pyne</i> | 11 | <i>In Memoriam</i> | 14 |
| <i>Route (NGAR)</i> | 6 | | | | |

Please send all letters to the Secretary and Editor:
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The Natural Aspect

Another year is slipping away. I hardly remember the summer now and by the time you get this Newsletter it will be the end of autumn - the tide of the year will be ebbing fast. Euthanasia will be stripping most trees of their foliage, nutrients will have drained back from the leaves and the residual chemicals have provided a colourful curfew for the year. A thin layer of cork-like cells on the end of each leaf stalk will have fulfilled its function of sealing off the leaf from the tree and, no doubt, a breath of wind, the extra weight of a heavy dew or frost will have completed the drama. The trees will be virtually bare. But the biology of autumn should not be regarded with too much sadness and melancholy - mellow and fruitful maybe - but continuity in one form or another is the object of it all. Next years fruiting buds are already formed and to some extent will determine the supply of fruits and seeds for the winter of 2002/2003 - frosts next spring permitting.

This last season has had its warm spells but I suppose it is the rain as well that has produced such luxuriant growth this year. The terminal shoots on the branches of many trees have produced more than double the growth of some years. The maple hedge along the footpath beyond my garden - 'slashed' last autumn by the farmer - has more than 2 feet (60cm.) of growth on all the side shoots in the 3 months of the growing season. But although the fruits and seeds of some trees are prolific, others have not had such good crops. I think it was the late start and the cold and wet spells in the spring that accounted for such uneven fertilisation. However the high humidity has meant a good display of fungi this year. I have seen even greater numbers of people with plastic bags searching the Beech woods than in previous years. Strictly speaking this is breaking the byelaws, especially where there is a commercial intent.

One day at the end of September the rear end of a snake disappeared into the grass near Rushey Plain, but a fine freshly 'sloughed' skin nearby showed that it was a 39 inch (almost a metre) long Grass Snake. By now the Forest reptiles, Grass Snakes, Adders, Lizards and Slow-worms will be moving deep into underground hibernation quarters. Amphibians - frogs, toads and newts, and, Hedgehogs, bats and some species of adult butterflies will be hibernating too. Some butterflies will survive the winter as a chrysalis, others as eggs. The life span of many adult creatures however will have ended. Shrews and moles live relatively short lives, usually dying in the autumn of the year in which they bred. Adult grasshoppers and dragonflies are mostly dead, only their eggs or, in the case of dragonflies, the nymphs (which is a combined larval-pupal stage) are surviving. The nymphs of damselflies and dragonflies are now living under water and will provide the adults for next summer (or two or three summers hence for the larger species).



*Dragonfly nymph - hinged lower jaw extended
to seize tadpole*

Grasshopper eggs, now in the ground, will hatch and the nymphs grow up during next summer. Most wasp and bee colonies (except honey-bees) will die off and their queens leave to find safe hibernation spots until a warm sunny day next March.

In other words although some individual creatures die off, autumn is really a time of preparation to survive the winter in order to carry on next year. It is just that it all seems to get faster and faster each year!

Ken Hoy

Thames Chase: More New Woods

We are, as a society, members of the Council for the Protection of Rural Essex. This year their Annual General Meeting was held at Broadfields Farm, the HQ of Thames Chase.

Thames Chase is our local version of the twelve urban fringe forests set up in the early 1990s to help provide conurbations with easily accessible green spaces.

The defined area of Thames Chase runs to around 26,000 acres and the present objective is that a third of this area will eventually become woodland. I personally hope that this will be exceeded, although I don't expect to see this happen myself!

Thames Chase is not of course as yet another Epping Forest, it hasn't for example got the completely open access that is such an important part of our Forest. It is a patchwork of newly developed woodlands, most with public access but interspersed with farmland, quarries, country parks and bits of industry, and of course roads (including the M25). As the years go by it will hopefully be possible to link together and extend the open access areas to give a real sense of freedom.

In the current year, 230 hectares (around 600 acres) have been planted up mostly on land degraded by gravel digging or land-fill.

Broadfields Farm is near Upminster and has an interesting range of buildings, including an information facility. It's open to the public and well worth a visit, especially as a prelude to a tour around Thames Chase itself to see the plantings.

Peg and I were particularly interested because one wet and rainy day in early 1995 we went with children and grandchildren to take part in a planting exercise at Broadfields Farm. We were delighted to see a really nice little wood developing there and some of our trees were over six foot tall.

Harry Bitten

Millennium Wood

As members will know this is being developed on Forest 'buffer' land at Coopersale fields next to the Lower Forest.

There has been three previous plantings by the Friends and by the two schools involved in the project, Oakhill Primary and Coopersale and Theydon Garnon Primary.

In June this year I visited the site to check on progress - previous visits had shown there were plenty of little treelets coming up, only to discover lawn-like condition on the two fields. Unfortunately, due to a mishap a local farmer had taken a silage crop off the site causing considerable disquiet! However, suitable explanations were sent to the two schools by the Conservators and these were accepted.

On the 4th October this year both schools visited the site - some 50 children were involved - and had a great time with a plentiful supply of acorns. Staff at the Warren had made a number of hardboard sheets painted with representations of pollards. The children were invited to throw their collected acorns through holes in the boards which had different scores associated with them. On achieving a stipulated score the marksmen, sorry markspersons, were rewarded with sweets. Periodically the targets were moved so that different areas received a tranche of acorns.



I wouldn't claim that this was a very scientific exercise but, hopefully, it will work. Likewise the sweets distribution system was rather hit and miss, it's not really the thing to reward only winners, but in some mysterious way every child seemed to have a handful of sweets. I suppose they've got their own way of working things out!

On the following Sunday the Friends did their planting. The turnout was pretty poor, probably due to the early morning being extremely wet. In fact, while we were doing the planting the sun shone and it was warm and pleasant. Happily the staff of the two schools are very keen to continue supporting the project and this year we received excellent support from the participating Warren staff. Despite the unwanted cutting there are quite a few saplings (coppiced) beginning to show their heads above the now longish grass.

Many thanks to all those who took part.

Harry Bitten

Bedford & Burney

In past Newsletters I have several times mentioned **John T. Bedford**, who on the 25th May 1871 proposed in the Court of Common Council (the governing body of the Corporation of London) the following resolution:

'That a Committee be appointed to seek a conference with Her Majesty's ministers, to ascertain on what terms and conditions the Corporation can secure to the people, for purposes of health and public recreation, those parts of Epping Forest that have not been enclosed with the assent of the Crown or by legal authority.'

The motion was passed unanimously and was the beginning of the City's involvement in the fight to 'save' the Forest. Deputy John T. Bedford, from then on, was heavily involved in the seven-year legal fight against the

Lords of the Manor's and others who were trying to disafforest and enclose the Forest. He was later Chairman of the Corporation's Epping Forest Committee during the crucial period of arbitration in which some one thousand illegally enclosed acres were 'won back' (and the rights 'bought out' by the Corporation) to become Forest again. The Bedford Oak was named after him.

George Burney had business interests in Limehouse but was a local freeholder and a Commoner. He was Chairman of the Epping Forest Preservation Society, and was also prominent in The Commons Preservation Society (now the Open Spaces Society) He was several times involved in legal actions through which he incurred financial loss. This fact was later recognised by the Corporation of London and he was compensated. However most decisive was his 'direct action' on 16th January 1878 when he organised a large body of men to break down fences around enclosures that had some years before been declared illegal - but about which no action had been taken to enforce the law. In fact a Parliamentary Commission was currently proposing that the illegal enclosures should be allowed to remain enclosed! His action was quite crucial in timing, received widespread local approval, no action was taken against him and Parliament passed the Epping Forest Act seven months later.

John Bedford writes of George Burney as follows:

'Mr George Burney... indignant at the fact that, although the fences that he so much abhorred had been condemned as illegal, they still remained standing, conceived and carried out the bold idea of taking the law into his own hands, so to say.'

As an appreciation of what George Burney achieved on that day, John Bedford wrote the following parody upon Scott's 'Lochinvar'.

The Modern Lochinvar

*O, Gallant George Burney's come out of the west,
To claim his true rights in the People's Forest;
And, save hammer and saw, he weapon had none,
He rode all unarm'd; but he rode not alone,
For eighty good fellows, some old and some young,
Have come at the call of George Burney the Bold.*

*They stay'd not for drink and they stay'd not for fun,
They crossed the bright greensward where road there
was none;*

*And, when they alighted at Borwich's red gate,
They at once set to work before it got late,
For Lords and grantees, as George Burney saw,
Had kept up their fences despite of the law.*

*So boldly they entered with hammer and saw,
And down went the fences condemned by the law
Then spake two policemen who came from Old Ford,
(For the poor craven grantees said never a word)
"O, come ye to buy this enclosure for gold,
Or to pull down the fences, George Burney the Bold?"*

*"The great Corporation a long suit have tried,
Law rolls like a river but ebbs like its tide,
And now I have come with these good friends of mine-
Who shall have a good dinner and plenty of wine -
To show the grantees they had better by far
Submit to the verdict according to law."*

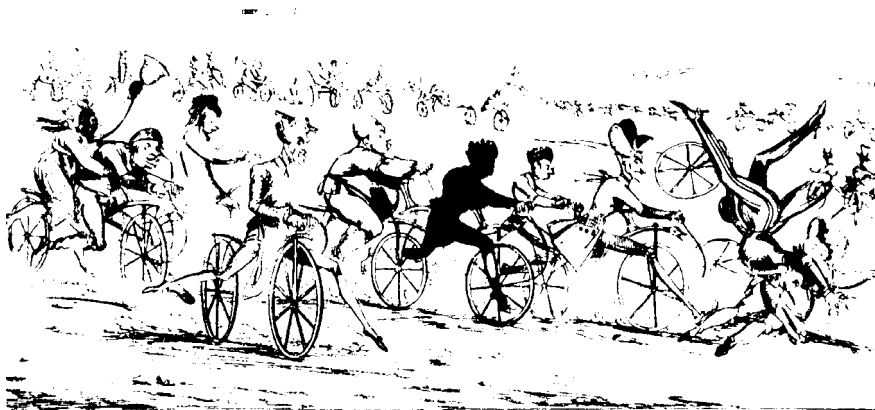
So at it they went, these good men and true,
 And, as their own long coats, the Bobbies looked blue;
 And so sharp were their saws, and their arms were so strong,
 That to fell all the fences did not take them long.
 So three miles of fences were felled in one day,
 And with three ringing cheers they went home on their way.

There was cursing and swearing when up rose the sun,
 And this bold deed was seen that George Burney had done;
 And Borwick's loud tongue waxed louder and louder,
 And his wrath rose as fast as the famed baking powder.
 So daring a deed and so fearless of gold,
 Have you e'er heard of man like George Burney the Bold?

Between the time when the City of London became involved in May, 1871 and the end of the Arbitration proceedings in 1882 when 5.531 acres of 'the waste' became Epping Forest, many people contributed in various ways to what was seen as "the great cause". Few however can have played a more significant role than John T Bedford and George Burney.

Ken Hoy

The Epping or Easter Hunt - more



The Epping Hunt or Hobbies in an Uproar - Published by T Tagg, 1819

Verderer Richard Morris's recently published book, *W.Chapman Waller, Loughton's Historian* refers to Waller's articles in old copies of *The Essex Naturalist* and particularly to some research he did into the origins of the Epping Hunt.

Having mentioned an old newspaper clipping about the Epping Hunt in the last Newsletter, I thought the following might be of interest.

Waller's interest was aroused when in 1894 he was sent a copy of a 'Memorandum as to the right of the Citizens of London to hunt in its vicinity, including Epping Forest'.

The Memorandum was a collection of documents, purporting to show that the City of London had ancient rights to hunt in Epping Forest, this the Corporation had submitted to the Epping Forest Commission in 1871 as evidence in the legal battle to 'save' the Forest. However Waller, agreeing with W.R.Fisher, concludes that the evidence, in spite of the well-known local tradition of the Epping or Easter Hunt, was not convincing. Translations of many old documents were included.

The earliest document mentioned is Saxon and it refers to the Manor of Hergan (Harrow), establishing that the citizens of London are allowed to hunt deer and other game on the lands of Archbishop Lanfranc but only by his leave.

Then in 1101 a charter by Henry I *confirming* to the citizens of London their sporting rights in Chiltern, Middx, and Surrey. Later this is reconfirmed by his grandson Henry II, and Richard I, John, and Henry III. But, no mention of Essex.

In the *Hundred Rolls* of 1275 a jury of inquisition listed the animals that the citizens may 'run with their dogs'. They were hares, foxes, rabbits and wild cats that may be hunted as far as to the bridge of Stanes, to the gate of the park of Enfield and to Waltham Holy Cross. As evidence given before the Commission, this document was also challenged as not including the Forest of Waltham and not mentioning deer.

In 1460 during the reign of Henry VI a dispute is recorded between the City and the Abbot of Stratford who had forbidden the 'Common Hunt' (this is the name of the holder of an Office - Huntsman) to hunt upon his lands there. Then in 1465 two citizens 'indicted for venison' taken in the Forest of Waltham were defended at law at the City's expense! Certainly this implies that the City considered it had, or was trying to establish, some rights to hunt in the Forest.

During the 16th Century there are several references to the huntsman called the 'Common Hunt' being provided with 'meate and drynke' in the Lord Mayor's house and receiving 4s wages and one livery gown.

In 1598 it was submitted that the Mayor and other members of the Corporation hunted at Havering and other places in the Forest of Waltham. In objection it was claimed this referred to a wood belonging to the City. (Waltham Forest then included Hainault Forest which belonged to the King, it was 'the Kings Wood'. The Lords of the Manors owned the 'soil' of the Epping Forest section and the King had only hunting rights over it).

In the 17th Century there are references to the house of 'Mr Common Hunt', its repair and the housing of his hounds. How much his allowances should be is also referred to and whether or not the hounds should be kept at his personal expense.

In 1807 the Corporation abolished the office of 'Common Hunt'.

Earlier in 1705, the Lord of the Manor of Loughton, John Wroth, committed the Lord Mayor's huntsman to custody for hunting the City's hounds in the Forest; the City challenged this but no record is provided of the outcome.

Finally in the Minutes of Evidence taken before a Select Committee in 1863, Verderer Lieut.Colonel George Palmer (after whom Palmer's Bridge is named) said that to his knowledge for over fifty years the Lord Mayor and Aldermen had exercised the right of hunting and killing a stag in the Forest once a year.

Apart from this final piece, the evidence produced does not seem to have been very convincing. However there was a strong local belief that the right of the citizens of London to hunt in the Forest had existed for centuries.

In a Forest guidebook published in the early 1880's the author 'H.E.' writes the following:

'The "spirit of the times"...found expression in the act of favour of Henry III to the citizens of London when, in 1226 he granted them the privilege of hunting once a year at Easter, within a circuit of twenty miles of the City, in the Forests of Stanway (Staines), Hainault, and others. In old times, for centuries, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen were present at the Easter Hunt, and exercised their right of chase and "free warren", in "solemn guise"; in other words, they proceeded: - "*To hunt the deer with hound and horn.*" The historian Strype mentions, among the amusements of Londoners, "riding on horseback and hunting with my lord mayor's hounds, when the common hunt goes out." The custom has been duly ridiculed, like every good thing, by a cynical ballad writer on 'London Customs':

*Next once a year into Essex a-hunting they go;
To see 'em pass along, O, 'tis a most pretty show!
Through Cheapside and Fenchurch street, and so to
Aldgate pump,
Each man with 's spurs in 's horse's sides, and his
back-sword across his rump.
'My lord he takes a staff in hand to beat the bushes
o'er;
I must confess it was a work he'd ne'er done before.
A creature bounceth from a bush, which made them
all to laugh;
My lord he cried, "A hare! a hare!" but it proved an
Essex calf!*

At the Epping Hunt, from the east and north of London an outpouring took place. Every old horse that the dogs had not already eaten was relieved for a day and pushed into the field. Among the bold riders of the metropolis... Whitechapel furnished numerous contingents on the eventful day and the rough riders of Tothill-fields were known from year to year. The spot where the deer was let out, in the presence of the million, was Fairmead Bottom (Chingford-Fairmead, i.e. Chingford Plain) below Queen Elizabeth's Lodge.'

It seems then that the Easter Hunt, attended by officials and citizens of the City of London had long been a traditional event whether legally recognised or not. But with a growing population large numbers of the populace were treating the event as a great spectacle and public holiday. Although the event was still supported by local publicans it seems it began to be regarded by 'respectable folk' as an undesirable happening attended by the 'rabble of London.'

Hence, whilst the City of London was arguing its case in court (judgement was delivered in November 1874), this newspaper comment of 1874 can now be seen in context and has more significance:

'...duller travestie was never witnessed. A rival Easter Hunt was provided by a neighbouring publican, but was a still more ludicrous failure. The 'hunt' was on Easter Monday, 1874, was even worse than that of 1873.

The real Epping Hunt is a thing of the past, and it is time the parody was suppressed'.

Refs: The Epping Hunt by William Chapman Waller, Essex Naturalist, 1894
William Chapman Waller (1850 - 1917)
Loughton's Historian by Richard Morris, 2001

Ken Hoy

Horse Riding in the Forest

In the car-park of the old Wake Arms early in 1968 - after viewing damage caused by horse riding in the Forest, Sir William Addison suggested that an organisation was needed to represent all users of the Forest. Consequently a week or two later the Friends of Epping Forest was formed.

Later in 1968 we were called to a meeting with the Eastern Sports Council, the Conservators and other Forest users. Following an investigation of the problems of damage caused by horse riding, the Eastern Sports Council produced a report in which they said they were "satisfied that excessive damage to the floor of the Forest is occurring through increased use by riding interests". The Report recommended the licensing of horse riding in the Forest - that was in 1968!

In 1971, after much argument and various pressures that it would create a national precedent the proposals to introduce regulations were dropped.

In 1984, as increasing damage to the Forest was continuing, FoEF conducted a survey of major forests throughout the country. We discovered that far from creating a precedent we were lagging behind! Out of 30 forests, 28 also had problems and had to introduce measures to control horse riding.

In 1989 the 'Epping Forest Various Powers Bill - 1989' was going through the Houses of Parliament. Into this Bill were included proposals for the Regulation of Horse Riding. The Bill was passed and became law.

Proposed Byelaws were 'put out' for public consultation, amended and put out again. This whole procedure was then repeated yet again and again. And, they have still to be approved by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. (DEFRA). Consequently twelve years after Parliamentary approval and 33 years after the Sports Council's recommendation a scheme to regulate horse riding in the Forest has yet to be introduced.

Accordingly we wrote the following letter to The Under-Secretary of State (DEFRA):

'We are an organisation with some 1,600 individual and family memberships.

Our members are concerned that it is twelve years since Parliament granted powers to the City of London to regulate horse riding in Epping Forest (City of London - Various Powers - Bill 1989). Vested interests in the form of horse riding establishments and organisations have objected to all attempts by the Conservators to propose reasonable byelaws, despite the fact that the majority of public opinion supports the Conservators in their endeavours.

It is not widely known that Epping Forest is the only Forest in the U.K. that does not control horse riding in ways similar to those that are proposed by the Corporation of London. The Forest is also alone in allowing the degree of unrestricted 'free-range' riding that riders enjoy.

It is the Forest that has by far, the greatest number of riders using the facilities that it freely provides. Horse-boxes come to the Forest from many miles away.

Unfortunately horse riding is the only legitimate use of the Forest that causes such damage that it

adversely affects the use and enjoyment of the Forest by all other users. This has been a matter of public concern and complaint for several decades.

As a local organisation we are not alone in our support of the Conservators proposals. In the past we have written joint letters of support with thirteen other organisations. These organisations together have represented more than 7,000 local people.

We suggest that the Conservators have consistently endeavoured to produce reasonable byelaws but these have met with objections intended to cause delay after delay to the introduction of the proposed scheme.

(The Chairman of the Horse Rider's Association has recently boasted in the local newspaper, of their achievement in delaying for years the implementation of the scheme).

Whilst this letter is one of support for the Conservators proposals, it is certainly one of strong objection to the fact that the intentions of Parliament have been frustrated for so long.

We most earnestly and respectfully ask that you bear our views in mind in considering the validity of the objections to the proposals.'

To bring this report right up to date we have just received a reply from DEFRA saying '...your comments have been noted and will be taken into account...etc.'

P.S. To our horse riding members I would say - I believe that many of you accept that the Byelaws currently proposed are reasonable and indeed that there is a need to solve this long-standing problem. But I hope that it is also generally realised how lucky we all are to be able to enjoy such a unique area as Epping Forest not only for its

beauty and quiet tranquillity, but for the access that we all have to it. Furthermore, its unique qualities for horse riders extend to the comparatively unrestricted access that they have been able to enjoy until now and will still be able to enjoy under the proposals.

Ken Hoy

The Newsletter by E-mail

The Newsletter is now available by E-mail. If you wish to receive your Newsletter in this way please send your request to the Hon Membership Sec. at:

seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk

Northern Gateway Access Route (NGAR)

This is a road proposed by Enfield Council, that would form a link between the so-call north/south road otherwise known as Mollison Avenue, and the new road from Junction 26 on the M25 to Highbridge Street, Waltham Abbey via Sewardstone Road and the former Royal Ordinance Factory site called Dowding Road.

Enfield has been concerned for some years about the heavy traffic flows on Bullsmore Lane and the A10/M25 Junction 25. However it has to be said that this congestion has not been helped by the considerable traffic impact resulting from the planning consents given by Enfield Council for major industrial and commercial developments along the A10 and Mollison Avenue. The construction of Dowding Road has provided a fine opportunity for Enfield, assuming that NGAR is approved to switch a good proportion of its traffic, including HGVs, onto 'our' side of the Lea Valley.

FOREST SUPPER – NOVEMBER 23rd 2001

Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green (7.30 for 8pm)

The caterers for our Supper this year are again the Magpies Nest of Bell Common, Epping. They have offered us a cold meat and cold salmon platter or vegetarian alternative and four salads followed by a choice of two sweets and coffee at a reasonable price. We will supply wine and glasses; plates and cutlery.

There will be the usual quizzes, goods for sale including new Christmas cards, mugs, greetings cards, and sweatshirts and fleeces, and of course good company. We have invited local M.P.s, Verderers, Chairman and Deputy of the E.F. & O.S. Cttee, the Supt. of EF, the Chairman of L.G.B.C. and C.P.R. Essex and many others connected with the management of E.F. Hopefully there will be opportunities to meet and chat with them and other Friends.

regard the Forest Supper as our annual social event and we don't aim to make a profit. However, the income derived from the raffle makes the difference between profit and loss. You all made a wonderful contribution last year, so please help us to bridge the gap once again.

Tickets are once again £11 the same as last year, despite higher costs of food, wine and hall hire. Last year there was such a magnificent response to the raffle that we actually made a profit, so we pin our hopes on a repeat performance! It will again be a **ticket only** event. Tickets will be issued on a first come first accepted basis. As in previous years we expect the demand to be high and suggest that requests are submitted as soon as possible, and before Sat Nov 17th. Please complete the booking form **on the back page of the newsletter** and send with your payment and **s.a.e.** to:

Hazel and David Shukla

**(who have again agreed to take on this task) at:
6 Knighton Drive, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0NY**

If you can, please donate a gift for the RAFFLE. We

REMEMBER – ADMISSION BY TICKETS ONLY

Our fear is that the consequent overloading of Junction 26 and especially Woodricken Hill will result in serious rat-running along Parklands Road through Upshire, Claypit Hill across High Beach and Avey Lane and Mott Street through to the Robin Hood Roundabout. Daws Hill, already experiencing additional traffic possibly resulting from the building of Dowding Road, will doubtless receive a further load if NGAR is built.

All this additional traffic would have effect on the wildlife and bio-diversity of Epping Forest. Furthermore, it would negate the efforts currently being made by the Conservators, in discussion with Essex County Council, and local councils, to promote a strategy aimed at reducing harmful traffic flows through the Forest.

Essex County Council, Epping Forest District Council, the Conservators, and the Council for the Protection of Rural Essex (local group) are all objectors, as are the Friends.

A public enquiry into the proposal is currently being held at Innova Park, Mollison Avenue, Enfield and we expect to give evidence towards the end of November.

Our case is not likely to be helped by Mayor Livingstone's London Plan which envisages the Lea Valley as being part of a corridor of communication all the way to Stansted Airport. Also planned for the valley are housing and commercial developments. Sounds like more grief for the future!

Harry Bitten

A Living World for Living Woods

It is the long hot summer of 2101, exactly a hundred years from now. You are walking through a Woodland Trust wood somewhere in southern England. At first glance it all seems very familiar: there are plenty of trees around. Look more closely, however, and the English oak is nowhere to be seen, wiped out by a new strain of oak wilt disease imported from North America halfway through the 21st century. The beech, so evocative of the Chilterns and other woodland downs, has vanished too.

Along dried-tip stream beds, the alders are no longer regenerating because of persistent droughts. Large bare patches, visible on the valley sides, show where water shortages have killed other sensitive trees. Reversing a century-old policy of planting native broadleaved trees, the Trust is resorting to hardy non-native conifers in an attempt to stabilise the soils and shade out the vigorous Japanese knotweed that has filled the available space.

The wood is strangely quiet for the time of year as well. Warblers and other migratory birds have been unable to make their way across the Sahara, now dramatically increased in size. Frogs and toads, notoriously sensitive to climate change have disappeared from the woodland pools. Where once the rides and glades would have been full of multi-coloured butterflies, now there is only a handful of meadow browns to be seen. Plants once synonymous with ancient woodland - bluebells, for example - are nothing more than a distant memory.

Dramatic it may be, but this nightmare scenario envisaged in a hard-hitting Woodland Trust report on climate change published last spring, may not be so far from the truth. Even without the added stress of climate change, half of the UK's ancient woods were lost in the 20th century, mainly due to clearance (or agriculture, conversion to conifer plantations and development pressures. The English elm central to the UK's woods for millennia virtually disappeared a decade ago as a result of Dutch elm disease. Where it survives at all, it is an

understorey shrub, unable to reach maturity because of the virulence of the fungus. This is exactly the fate that could lie in wait for other, apparently robust species such as the oak.

It is now official: the world is heating up. Last January the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued its strongest ever warnings about the reality of the situation. 'An increasing body of evidence gives a collective picture of a warming world and other changes in the climate system ... Emissions of greenhouse gases and aerosols due to human activities continue to alter the atmosphere in ways that are expected to affect the climate ... There is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities ... Human influences will continue to change atmospheric composition throughout the 21st century.'

More than 160 governments who signed up to the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 agree. Many are outraged by the cavalier attitude of George W. Bush who, on entering the White House earlier this year announced that the United States would be turning its back on Kyoto and pulling out of the only international agreement to stop global warming - this despite the fact that the US on its own produces a quarter of the world's greenhouse gases.

But although climate change is here, and it is here to stay, we can do something about it. If we are to minimize its effects on our wildlife, however, we need to take urgent action now. That means doing what we can to reduce the source of the problem - by cutting emissions of greenhouse gases - and it means putting the UK's woodland habitats on to a more sustainable footing.

It is time to move beyond the concept of protecting special sites and start to work with others at a landscape scale. We do not have the luxury of being able to set aside substantial areas of natural forest, because they no longer exist. Our best shot will be to protect, restore and extend ancient woods to create large, self-sustaining wooded landscapes, buffered by complementary habitats such as scrub and heathland and less-intensive forms of agriculture. We need to take a holistic approach and manage woods within the context of other surrounding land uses. In order to be most effective, this action should be targeted at areas where the largest proportion of ancient woodland survives - the Weald, for example, the Chilterns, the Wye Valley, South Cumbria, the York Moors, the South Wales valleys, Argyll and Speyside because these are the places likely to see the greatest benefit.

'It's always hard facing up to the truth,' says Richard Smithers, the Trust's UK conservation adviser, 'It's always much easier to shuffle things under the carpet - the response of President Bush is testament to that. But we can't keep hiding our heads in the sand - the climate is changing too fast now. It is people who are the root cause; it is people who must find ways of making amends. It will undoubtedly mean big decisions for governments and for all of us as individuals. But the longer we leave it the bigger the problems will be and the less likely it is that we'll be able to turn the supertanker around or enable life to cope. We need to create a living world for living woods and that's what the Woodland Trust is trying to do. To read the Trust's report on climate change, *A Midsummer Night's Nightmare?* visit:

www.woodland-trust.org.uk

Article reprinted from Broadleaf - the magazine of the Woodland Trust, Autumn 2001

Action stations

Everyone can do something to help the UK'S woods in the face of climate change. Read the list below and decide what you can do to make a difference.

Government

- Set up a cross-departmental Cabinet committee on climate change
- Increase funding for research
- Push for further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to reduce intensity of land use
- Target grants to areas with a high proportion of ancient woodland
- Maintain and increase incentives for new woodland creation and restoration in priority areas
- Strengthen planning legislation to protect ancient woodland
- Embrace new landscape-scale approaches to conservation planning, especially focusing on how woodland and other habitats can help one another

Landowners

- Reduce the intensity of land use and extend native woodland

Non-governmental organisations

- Campaign for adaptive strategies and contribute to their development
- Work in partnership with one another at a landscape level

Individuals

- Start making changes to your everyday life: buy a smaller car, for example, and use it only when absolutely necessary. Visit www.doingyourbit.org.uk for more information
- Take part in the Trust's phenology project.

Hawkwood Estate, Chingford

The following comments have been received from our member David Boote who is also Secretary of the Waltham Forest Civic Society.

Between Yardley Hill and Pole Hill in a quiet valley is the most westerly part of Epping Forest. The Hawkwood estate and farm was created there in the middle of the 19th century. In 1876 the City of London bought the farmland and added it to Epping Forest. In 1937, just after Lawrence of Arabia had sold his land at Pole Hill to prevent it being covered with houses, the widow of the owner of Hawkwood House also wanted the rest of the estate preserved as an open space and as a memorial to King George V. She gave it, for that purpose, to Chingford Council for the people of the district. The Council, although it accepted the terms of the gift, found the house useful as a temporary accommodation for the Chingford County High School.

During the 1930's the fields of north Chingford were covered with new houses and the Yardley Primary School was built down the hill from Hawkwood House. In 1949 the House was bought by Essex County Council with the idea of building a school there, but the House was demolished in 1951. In 1965 the land, which had been included in the 'Green Belt', was transferred to the newly created London Borough of Waltham Forest. The Hawkwood School for the Deaf was built on part of the site.

At the end the 1970's the Borough of Waltham Forest created a plant nursery on a further large acreage of the site - this was considered compatible with the Green Belt status of the land. By 1980 the remaining piece of land had been opened as a small nature reserve and Field Study

Centre for the Secondary children of the Borough - following the establishment of a Centre for the Primary children at Suntrap in 1967.

Now in 2001 - the Field Study/Environmental Studies Centre is to be moved to the Suntrap Site next year and there are rumours about the future of the School for the Deaf and the plant nursery (although denied by the Borough). There are further rumours that the Borough is looking at the possibility of 'alternative' uses of the site. The residents in the surrounding area are concerned as, I understand, are the Friends of Epping Forest, who will remind the Borough that the land has Green Belt status and was given to the people of Chingford to use as an open space!

Ken Hoy

Bricks, Tiles and Flower Pots

I am interested in finding out about the past use of the local clays etc. in the Forest District, for bricks, tiles and earthenware products and write the following observations to see whether others can add more information.

Mr Ron James of Buckhurst Hill has supplied me with a mass of material about brick making that has made me realise that the little I thought I knew was only partly correct and the whole matter is much more complex.

I had believed (correctly I think) that generally speaking there were two main sources of local material used in the past. The 'Claygate' deposit which lies on top of the 'London Clay' and the so-called 'Brickearth' which I believe was found, in our area, mainly in the Roding Valley and Lea Valley. But to assume that the former produced red bricks and the latter yellow, stock bricks is not quite correct as it is not as simple as that!

For example, although there are bricks known as 'stocks' and 'reds' terms have changed and are used sometimes loosely. The word 'stock' seems to derive originally from the block or stock upon which the mould of the handmade brick is fitted. In that sense I believe local bricks were all 'hand-made'. Also the expression 'brickearth' to the brickmaker can be any basic material used at the start of the process, whereas 'brickearth' to the geologist has a very definite meaning.

In our area, 'brickearth' (geologically) is material deposited originally as Thames river gravel terraces that has been washed out again by river floodwaters, 'sorted' and re-deposited as a silt, usually on top of another terrace. This would have occurred at times of flood resulting from the 'melt-waters' at the end of the last ice-age. Thus these deposits are found along river valleys.

I will use the term as referring to such geological deposits in the Lea and Roding valleys. Although now exhausted, it was a large 'brickearth' deposit in Ilford that become famous in late Victorian times for providing so many prehistoric animal remains.

Searching my mind and memory for local brickfields I recall the following information (correct or incorrect) - can anyone add to it?

In the Lea valley - do I remember brickfields at Ponders End years ago? If so they were almost certainly using the 'brick-earth' deposits. I am sure there was also a pottery and brickworks in Foley Lane, Walthamstow - presumably the source again being 'brickearth'.

The brickfields in the Roding Valley used deposits of 'brickearth'. There was a small brickfield on the north edge

of Wanstead Flats and higher up the valley larger works in Woodford and Buckhurst Hill. In the brickfield at Lower Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill I remember seeing the production of yellow 'stock' bricks.

I understand colour in bricks is determined by several factors. Firstly the chemical content of the 'earth' or clay used; particularly the iron and chalk or lime content - or a variation of different salts, for instance a small increase in the amount of magnesia will produce a yellow tint. Secondly by the sand used during the process and lastly by the degree of heat to which the brick is subjected - usually by its position in the clamp or kiln.

Different clays contain varying amounts of sand, iron, chalk or salts and apart from affecting the colour, will also affect the durability, resistance to pressure or fracture and the ease of cutting etc. These different qualities, and therefore uses, are also determined by the burning or firing process.

However, during the period when bricks were being made in our area the process was one of relatively small scale hand-moulding. The clay/earth was usually dug in the autumn, deposited in layers with the other materials and left to weather during the winter frosts. In the spring it was mixed, tempered (kneaded) and finally in the summer moulded into bricks, dried out and then burned. During the drying process it obviously needed protection from rain as this took place in the open.



A Stock Brick Kiln

'Green' bricks were packed as tight as possible before Kiln was lit

Apart from the small site on Wanstead Flats I believe all of the other sites in Epping Forest - judging by the Geological Survey Maps - derived their material from the 'Claygate' beds. These Claygate beds, form the hills and steep valleys of the Forest, were laid down on top of the London Clay in shallower (instead of deep) marine conditions and consist of layers of sands and clay which, in the Epping Forest area, have a maximum depth of some 60 feet. The sand seams increase towards the top of the deposit. Claypits in the central and northern parts of the Forest were dug into the Claygate slopes, for instance the pit at Oakhill, Theydon. But we should not confuse pits dug for clay (bricks and tiles) with the small pits usually dug at a slightly higher level for sand or gravel (used mainly for repairing local roads) . These are in the 'Bagshot' sand and 'The Pebble Bed' deposits that rest on top of the

Claygate layer and thus cap some of the high parts of the Forest .

However, the following places - significantly mostly associated with 'hills' - are all sites where I presume the Claygate beds were exploited for brick making: - Pole Hill and in the past the adjoining brickfield to the southwest, York Hill (Loughton) and scattered diggings in the nearby forest, Claypit Hill (High Beach), Oakhill (Theydon Bois) and the Lower Forest -Wintry Wood (Epping).

The extensive workings in the 17th and 18th centuries near Oakhill (Woodford) are also, as indicated by the map, Claygate in origin.

I assume the clay from the Claygate beds made the 'soft-red' bricks (e.g. the brickfield near Pole Hill) used extensively for houses in Chingford, Loughton and Buckhurst Hill. I remember the original crushed red-brick surface of the 'Red Path' and being told that it was waste that came from the Pole Hill brick works. Currently the surface of the path is grey 'scalpings'.

I believe the London Clay was not usually considered suitable for brick-making being 'too heavy and rank' although it was sometimes used for making drain pipes. (*Memoirs of Geol. Survey, sheet 257, 1925*). However, confusion is caused by a reference in 1962 (*Geol. Survey, London & Thames Valley*), to brickmaking from 'London Clay' when 'London clay was used extensively, particularly the loamy top called the Claygate beds!' The same Survey book makes the following interesting comment: '*Until about 1835 the bricks used in London were stock-bricks made from dustbin refuse and road sweepings mixed with clay and largely burnt by their own combustible contents. Later stock-bricks came to be made of London clay (Claygate beds?) and chalk mixed with coal dust*'.

Other publications at the turn of the century mention the addition of 'soil' and household waste to the ingredients. Presumably this means sewage sediments and sifted domestic rubbish. This would supply the combustible material when the brick is burnt.

An interesting 'aside'; many of the front garden walls of houses, usually built between the wars, (WW 1 & 2), in parts of Woodford and Buckhurst Hill are made from rejected brick waste where the process has 'gone wrong' and the over-fired bricks have literally melted. I assume the origin, since

the material appears to be yellow bricks, is the brick-works in Buckhurst Hill (Lower Queens Road) and Woodford (bottom of Broadmead - now built over - and nearby Ray Lodge).

Can anyone tell me whether the earthenware flowerpot industry along Wood Green Lane, Upshire, used a source in the Lea Valley - i.e. 'brickearth'? Or, did they use a very local source of Claygate material? Ron Ellis tells me they used material transported on a little railway from a source very close to the pottery - which I suppose could have been either material.

Does anyone know of any sources of local information, or, can anyone add to or correct any of the above material?

Ken Hoy

The Model Yacht pond

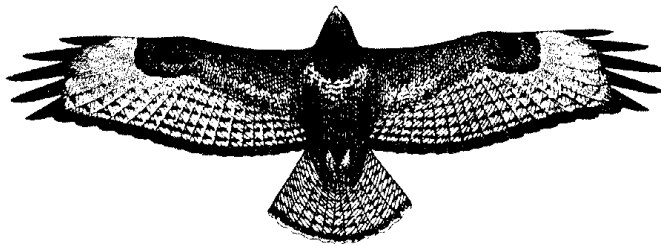
This lies in the south west of Wanstead Flats alongside Dames Road. Such ponds were very popular in the first part of the last century. There was a very well used pond in Victoria Park where I used to sail my model yacht.

Unfortunately, the pond on Wanstead Flats was damaged some years ago during cleaning and has failed to retain water since. Local people have been pressing for something to be done about it and in 1997 the Conservators mounted an exhibition and consultation to decide what kind of pond was desired, yacht pond or conservation pond.

In the event, the voting was for a conservation pond and on 6th October another consultation was held to guide the Conservators as regards the actual design. There were three options on offer (a) the cheapest was straight-sided, (b) curved sides and islands, and (c) wavy sides with little peninsulas and islands. The latter, the most expensive, is on the face of it the best for wild life having potentially more varied habitats. However, it has a more complicated design and is more open to vandalism. We think option (b) would seem to be a better compromise solution. The outcome is awaited.

Harry Bitten

Buzzards



Soaring

Would you know a Buzzard if you saw one flying high over your garden or the Forest. Buzzards used to be much more common but loss of habitat and intensive gamekeeping in the past has meant that for decades they were restricted to the hilly West Country, Wales and the North. In recent years they have begun to increase and spread into eastern and southern England. A large broad winged bird of prey that loves to gain height by circling and soaring on thermal up-currents of air, their apparent size is sometimes deceptive - varying of course with the height at which they are flying. The Common Buzzard is resident in the UK so you could see one at any time, although seasonal wanderings make autumn and spring sighting more likely, especially the juvenile birds. The great news is that in the last few years they have bred in SW Essex - the first time in Essex for many decades.

Since they like rising air currents they have often been seen using the hills of the eastern side of the Lea Valley for seasonal movements. Alice Hibbert-Ware was a well-known local ornithologist, who lived in the first half of the last century, in the cottage at the top of Gilwell Lane. (Her research for the old M of Agriculture showed that the Little Owl's diet was beneficial to the countryside and it should be protected). There are records from her of Buzzards in the 1920's and 30's moving along the Lea Valley Hills. Recent occurrences show that wandering or locally migrating birds are still using the area.

How nice to be able to provide good news about our birds! However, don't forget the importance this winter of feeding your garden birds - **regularly**.

Ken Hoy

Member's Letters

16th Feb 2001 (Apologies - post from Australia doesn't take that long - we ran out of space in March and July!)

Thought you might be interested in the enclosed newspaper article, which appeared in our local paper The Port Macquarie news. It was a week before Christmas that the event took place.

I always remember my mother telling me whenever my mates and I were going for an adventure in Epping Forest. Do not stand under a tree if there is a storm. I never saw a storm whilst in the forest, I only imagined that lightning would strike a branch and that all I thought would happen was that the branch would come crashing down. I never ever thought I would see a lightning bolt destroy a tree with such force.

We always get homesick when we get your wonderful newsletter. I often wonder if the young children of today still have a love for the forest that I have always had.

When I look back I realise just how much of a journey it was for us to Chingford Mount. We never had a car so we had to go by bus from Leyton tube station to the Crooked Billet and change buses. Mum of course was carrying two shopping bags with our sandwiches plus a small stove that worked by, I think, a paraffin block plus milk kettle and jam jars for the blackberries. I was always amazed at the large number of buses and people that went to Epping Forest on a Sunday.

Michael Schooley (New South Wales)

Article below reproduced from *The Port Macquarie News*:

Storm leaves trail of mayhem

The might of nature in the form of a crashing thunderbolt visited Michael Schooley's front yard on Tuesday leaving disarray within a 150m radius.

The enormous explosion saw Michael running to the front of his Lake Cathie home on Tuesday afternoon to find the remnants of a tree strewn across his lawn and that of several neighbours.

'I saw a puff of smoke, a bright light and heard an explosion,' Michael said. An explosion that sent pots crashing off his shed shelf, a kitchen clock flying off the wall and a bang that was heard 2km away.

'The last time I felt something like that was during the Blitz on the East End of London,' he recalled.

The victim of the sky's anger was a 50-foot Turpentine tree that grew across the road from Michael in his neighbour's yard.

The tree had stood about 80-feet tall and what remains now lies broken and twisted on the green grass. The rest can be found in the form of shards from small twigs to 6 to 8 foot pieces of trunk.

'It was an incredible thing, it shot the branch right out of the bark,' Michael said.

A few hours before the blow out Michael said to his wife Irene, who isn't a fan of storms, that everything would be fine as it always is.

He thought twice about saying that again upon the aftermath of this storm. Shards of the broken tree fell only metres from their house and both consider themselves lucky that they flew no further.

Phone lines were cut for two days and a neighbor's computer chips were blown out.

Power surge cords are no match against a lightning bolt, Michael was told by a Telstra employee, always pull the plugs out of the socket. Lucky for their one-day old computer, they did.

Exchange Land, Wanstead Park

I would like to say how much I appreciate the wild plants, flowers and grasses that were a continual delight through the year on the ex-Sewage Farm land adjacent to the Riding School. I do hope that no one will try to change or 'clear up' the area in a misguided effort to make it more accessible to those who want to walk in high heels! The only reservation I have is that rosettes of ragwort are too numerous for comfort. I hope its rapid proliferation will not drive out the more delicate plants. Anyway, this is just a thank you note to you and all other people who try to ensure natural habitats and to let you know that the wildlife 'residents' are appreciative!

Ida Thorne, Aldersbrook Riding School

Clifford Warren Pyne

Sadly I must report the death on 5th October of Clifford after a long illness. Clifford was a friend of many people through his wide interests - he was a 'Friend' from the very earliest days, 30 years ago, and served on our Committee for many years as Vice-Chairman. His integrity, incisive thinking, presence and humour was greatly valued throughout many years of service to the Forest.

Recently our Committee recalled how Clifford would interject into a chattering discussion, "Mr Chairman, we have yet to reach a decision about that previous item!" ...he was invariably right! Or, the occasions when we had been discussing something for ten minutes or so and Clifford would again interrupt with a quiet, "Mr Chairman, where *is* this place?"...we were never sure whether he actually knew and was asking of behalf of a new member or not! With his dry humour he so often emphasised the crucial point that was about to be missed.

He sometimes represented us at Public Inquiries and the occasion that we all recall with so much pleasure was when Clifford was being cross-examined by a 'smart-alec' barrister. The self-important lawyer rose with such drama and began, after a complicated preamble, 'Mr Pyne... when you said in your evidence...blah blah etc., did you not really mean... blah blah blah etc etc... and does this not imply that ...blah blah blah etc.etc. Clifford gave the 'clever' question a moment's quiet thought and then delivered the solemn and devastating reply, "No!" ... And the Inquiry dissolved into roars of laughter. That was so typically Clifford and is how we remember him. Many will sadly miss him. We send our condolences and very best wishes to Margaret and the family.

Ken Hoy

Gypsy Moth Update

After a non indigenous Gypsy Moth was discovered in the Walpole Road area of South Woodford, the Conservators have been regularly looking for eggs and setting pheromone traps for flying males. In 1995 they trapped four in Walthamstow Forest and 37 elsewhere in the vicinity. Numbers have gradually declined over the years until in 2001 just one male was trapped north of the original area at Woodford County High School. They will continue to set traps, especially further north of Walthamstow Forest.

Ed.

Prosecutions for Bye-law Offences

Between April and September there have been five prosecutions; for driving a motorbike on forest land and obstructing a Keeper; fly tipping garden refuse; disorderly conduct and obstructing a forest keeper; changing engine

oil in a forest car park; and carrying a rifle and hunting squirrels. Fines ranged from £60 to £400.

Twenty-nine warning letters were sent for: driving a motorbike, moped or scooter; building ramps; dog out of control; collecting fungi; fly-tipping; accessing islands unlawfully; and fishing in the close season.

When I was chatting to staff at our Millennium Wood planting, they said keepers were at that moment out trying to track down a reported firearm incident in the Forest. These activities can be dangerous to the general peaceful users of the Forest as well as additional work for keepers. So, if you see any of the above offences you should contact (very discreetly where firearms are involved!) the Warren Headquarters on 020 8532 1010. This number is regularly checked by Keepers for messages, even at the weekend.

Ed.

Autumn

For years the Woodland Trust has been asking us, the public, to record the first signs of Spring. Not just the first cuckoo but when leaves first show on various trees, when flowers and butterflies are first seen, and when other Summer migrating birds arrive.

This year they are now asking for Autumn records. They think that changing weather patterns are delaying and shortening Autumn. Migrant birds, such as tree pippits, reed warblers, swallows and swifts are delaying departure; leaf and colour and fall was several days later in 2000 than in 1999; field fare and redwings arrived later.

This could have an unwelcome effect on wildlife; birds that feed on rose hips depend on an early frost to make them edible; early leaf cover on oaks could overshadow later leafing beeches; insects depending on fallen leaves may not survive the delay and thus the food chain is broken.

If you would like to take part in this exercise a recording form is available from the Woodland Trust on 0500 959 554 or by logging on to www.phenology.org.uk

To Autumn (by John Keats)

*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run
To bend with **apples** the moss'd cottage-trees
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd and plump the **hazel** shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more
And still more, later **flowers** for the **bees**
Until they think warm days will never cease
For summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.*

This year there are reports of bumper crops of apples – 'best quality of Cox's for 25 years'; sloes in Epping Forest had their usual patchy germination but where they exist they are a lovely plump size; and has anyone seen such an abundant honeysuckle in the Forest (presumably as a result of milder and wetter than usual Autumn, Winter and Spring); hazelnuts have benefited from warmer Autumns (but in some areas this is offset by increasing numbers of grey squirrels!); lack of frosts have allowed garden flowers and vegetables to continue later which is good news for honey bees that have been weakened by the varroa parasite.

Ed.

Walk Reports

Saturday 18th August 2001

A circular walk taking in the delightful riverside village of Fyfield and the two churches village of Willingale.

This 2½ hour walk passes Fyfield church, which has a central tower built in the 12th century and the picturesque Fyfield mill. It continues on the 'Essex Way' to Willingale. The two churches here, belong to the different parishes of Willingale Doe and Willingale Spain, from which there are magnificent views across the Roding valley.

We returned to Fyfield along the river Roding, where waterlilies and dragonflies were seen and enjoyed a very good lunch at the Black Bull P.H.

Bill Dexter

17th Centenary Walk

This took place on 24th September and was a fairly successful event. There were 55 participants at the start near Manor Park including the Superintendent and senior staff from the Warren, all four Verderers and Alderman John Stuttard, who recently joined the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee.

We headed off to the first stop at the Model Yacht Pond, where Superintendent Jeremy Wisenfeld explained the problems of water retention and announced that a further public consultation about a solution would take place shortly at Cann Hall School.

There was a further short stop by the lime tree avenue in Bush Wood, where Verderer Peter Adams spoke about the area and drew attention to the attractions of unpollarded hornbeams!

I intended that the walk should go past the giant sweet chestnut trees but missed them I'm afraid – no one's perfect!

At the Green Man Roundabout we picked up Harry Cohen, local MP and some others and proceeded via a short stop at the Gypsy Smith memorial to the County Hotel in Oak Hill. By this time the numbers had swelled to 80 plus and once again the Hotel very kindly supplied us all with tea, coffee and soft drinks, all free of charge. Additionally we made very heavy demands on the loos.

Our President Lord Murray has written to the hotel on the participants' behalf expressing our gratitude.

Thereafter we followed the well-used route along the Sale, Highams Park, Woodford Golf Course, and Whitehall Plain to Butler's Retreat via the native English Black Poplar. The intention was to walk straight past the tree while noting



EF & OS Chairman John Bird welcoming Harry and all the walkers

it but Ian Cox was collared by some participants and plied with questions about it. This led to delays and a temporary fragmentation of the walking column into three groups. However I think that most people re-coagulated into a single entity and we pushed on through the woods alongside Cuckoo Brook and thence to The Owl at Lippits Hill for a well-earned lunch stop.

Some joined here and some left and around 90 plus headed off over Fairmead to pick up the horse ride over Hill Wood and then via Paul's Nursery Green to High Beach. We halted briefly at the 'big view' along the Verderer's Ride to ponder over the extensive views, shortly to be further disfigured by the erection of the Sainsbury's enormous distribution centre and later possibly by the Northern Gateway Access Road, about which a public enquiry is currently (in October) taking place.

Forest keepers held up the traffic to let us cross Woodredon Hill (A121) and we proceeded via the farm lane and the Green Lane into St. Thomas' Quarters where, en route to the London Gates of Copped Hall, we halted at a massive beech coppard (a tree probably coppiced for many years and then subsequently pollarded). Ian Cox was pressed into service to comment on the tree which is a truly magnificent organism. It could, he thought, be perhaps 7-800 years old!

After crossing the M25 bridge we avoided passing Copped Hall itself and took advantage of the privilege granted by the Superintendent to walk across the home park which normally is not open to public access. I personally hope that consideration will be given to opening this area to public access. There is no intention to plough the fields concerned so I can't see that any significant damage would be caused.

The only thing is that to enjoy the full benefits of such an area it is best not to have walked 15 miles beforehand!

As it was the long grass and the rutted nature of some of the terrain posed a bit of a challenge. Even if the go-ahead were given for public access I can't see the home park being overrun by hordes of walkers!

Even more challenging was the sloping field of industrial hemp leading to the Ladderstile on the Epping Road.

After walking over Bell Common John Bird, the Chairman of the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee, who had walked with us for a good part of the way, welcomed and congratulated the finishers. The weather was a bit drizzly at times but it was quite warm and I think everyone enjoyed it. I know I did.

Hope to see you all again on the 18th event next September.

Harry Bitten

Dates for your Diary

November 17th Saturday 10-30 am. A 2-3 hr. walk past the Millennium Wood site and around Gernon Bushes and Ongar Park Wood. Meet at Stonard's Hill Car Park. Travelling north through Epping, take the right turn, Stonard's Hill, opposite the Memorial on Epping Green. The Recreation Ground Car Park is a short distance on the left.

Leader: Harry Bitten, GR 465 024

November 23rd. Friday 7-30 pm: Forest Supper, Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green.

December 16th Sunday 10-30 am: Christmas Walk, from Earls Path Car Park (by the pond between the Robin Hood & Loughton) – followed by mince pies & a drink.

Leader: Ken Hoy, GR 416 968

2002 Walks

January 25th Friday 10.30 a.m.: A walk around St.Thomas's

Walks last about 2 hours, unless otherwise stated. Please come suitably dressed for the weather and Forest conditions. Public transport can sometimes be a problem on these walks. If you have such a problem please ring 020 8529 8594 for help.

Other dates

Epping Forest Information and Museum Service

11th Nov – Walk. Meet at Jack's Hill car park.

Leader Tricia Moxey.

15th Nov – Walk. Meet at entrance gates of Copped Hall. Leader Michael Collins.

1st Nov – Lecture by Dr D Vere – 'A Woodland in Constant Change'

9th Dec – Walk followed by hot drink and mince pie. Meet in car park of EF Information Centre.

Further details 020 8508 0028

Epping Forest Field Centre

17th Nov – Microscopic Pond Life

17 – 18th Nov – Identifying Trees in Winter

Further details On 020 8508 7714

Essex Wildlife Trust (EF Local Group)

Sunday 18 November: Walk around Copped Hall.

Meet: entry by Crown Hill entrance, NOT the Epping entrance at 10:45 am. (£1.00 per person)

Quarters to take a look at the giant beech coppard. Meet in the Lodge Road car-park. Travelling north-east on the Epping New Road (B1393) the c/p is the first turning on the left past Wake Arms roundabout.

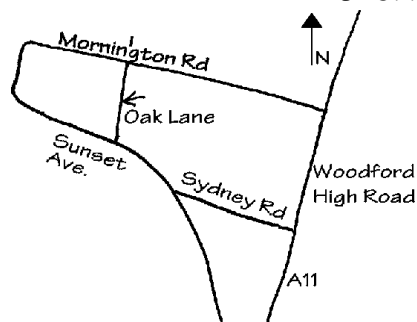
Leader: Harry Bitten. GR 431 999

February 22nd Friday 10.30 a.m.: A walk to take a look at some of the Conservation Volunteers work in the Rushey & Sunshine Plains area. Meet in the main car-park at High Beach near to Carl's tea-hut.

Leader: Derek Meakin E.F.C.V. GR 412 987

March 22nd Friday 1 p.m.: Woodford's Heathlands. Meet in Oak Lane off Mornington Road, Woodford Green.

Leader: Peter Adams Verderer of Epping Forest GR 399 928



April 25th Thursday 2 p.m.: A walk around Hill Wood & Fairmead & Suntrap Plains. Meet at Fairmead Bottom car park.

Leader: Irene Buchan. GR 408 968

Thursday 29 November 2001: EPPING FOREST during the past 60 years. Ken Hoy, long associated with Epping Forest, will share some of his enthusiasm and knowledge of the wildlife of the Forest over the years. Loughton Methodist Church Hall at 8:00 pm

Thursday 31 January 2002: Roding Valley Nature Reserve-Past, present and future. Jenny Filby and Warden Paul Cook will provide snapshots of the reserve, then and now, looking at both history and natural history. Meet: Loughton Methodist Church Hall at 8:00 pm

EF Conservation Volunteers

Sunday Nov 18th – Lodge Road Bog

Sunday Nov 25th – Gilbert's Slade

Sunday Dec 2nd – Wormleyton Pits (nr Theydon Bois)

Sunday Dec 16th – Christmas Task at Hatgate Plain

Thursday Dec 27th – Special post Christmas Task!

Sunday Dec 30th – Walthamstow Forest

Sunday Jan 6th – Conservation Path

Sunday Jan 20th – Epping Thicks

Wednesday Jan 23rd – Long Running

Sunday Jan 27th – Lords Bushes

Further details on: 020 8505 4876

CHRISTMAS CARDS OF EPPING FOREST



We have this season's Christmas cards that depict six different attractive Winter scenes of Epping Forest.

They are available in packs of 12 cards (2 of each view) at £3.50 per pack. You will be able to purchase the cards at the Forest Supper on Friday 23rd November or arrange to pick up supplies by phoning Seymour Moss, on 020 8529 0620, at 47 Long Deacon Road, Chingford, E4 6EG, or, Peg Bitten, 020 8529 8594.

If you wish packs to be sent by post please send a cheque for £4.00 per pack to Seymour made payable to F of EF.

F of EF Committee Members

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Peggy Bitten (Sec.) | Chingford | 020 8529 8594 |
| Harry Bitten | as above | |
| Irene Buchan | Chingford | 020 8529 6423 |
| John Buchan | as above | |
| Bill Dexter | Chingford | 020 8529 1427 |
| Robin Gaine | Chingford | 020 8529 8890 |
| Jim Gimson | S. Woodford | 020 8989 3282 |
| Ken Hoy (Chairman) | Pleshey | 01245 231 839 |
| Robert Levene | Snaresbrook | 020 8989 0884 |
| Sue McKinley (Dep.-Chair) | Upshire | 01992 712014 |
| Derek Meakin | Chigwell | 020 8500 1571 |
| Judy Miller | Buckhurst Hill | 020 8504 8271 |
| Seymour Moss (Memb. Sec.) | Chingford | 020 8529 0620 |
| Peter Read | Chingford | 020 8524 1659 |
| Tony Sheppard (Treas.) | Woodford Grn | 020 8504 8288 |

In Memoriam

From time to time we received donations made in memory of members who have died. And two such were made in recent months; for Albert Cotton and Bernard Higginson.

Enfield residents, Shirley and Albert Cotton, became life-members of the Friends many years ago and have been regular supporters of our activities. Shirley made a generous donation to us in his memory.

We have also received donations (one from New Zealand) in memory of Bernard Higginson of Woodford Green. He and his wife Vera are life-members and were regular attenders at the Forest Supper.

We are very grateful for these thoughtful donations and we send our best wishes to both families.

Ed.

Forest Supper Booking Form

Please provide ticket(s) for the 2001 Forest Supper @ £11.00 each (please list all names below):

Number of vegetarians, if any..... I would like, if possible, to be seated with: -----

Name ----- Telephone No. -----

Address -----

I enclose my payment for £..... **TOGETHER WITH STAMPED, SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.**
(cheques/postal orders should be made payable to the Friends of Epping Forest)

Please return completed application form before Saturday 17th November to:
Hazel and David Shukla, 6 Knighton Drive, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0NY

Don't forget to bring your ticket – there's a prize for the winning ticket number.