

# The Friends of Epping Forest Newsletter



FofEF web-site - [www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk)

Autumn 2002

## Dear Friend,

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS CAN BE INTERESTING!

Ken's Natural Aspect piece on page 2, as well as referring to Ted Green's talk to us about veteran trees, has an interesting set of observations about bird migration in Spain.

As I write, the Superintendent and the Conservation Officer are visiting the Netherlands to study the cattle grazing of nature reserves there.

I imagine that one of the study

areas visited by Jeremy & Jeremy will be Ooskvaardersplassen. This was created in 1968 in a polder that was originally intended for industry. However an economic downturn, and the fact that meanwhile the area had started to be colonised by a range of birds, persuaded the authorities to reclassify it as a nature reserve. I don't know what its recreational status is.

It runs to 14,000 acres and is therefore over twice as big as our Forest, and having reintroduced cattle, horses and red deer into the reserve

the intention is to manage it on a minimum intervention basis. The area is large enough for the cattle to develop a natural herd structure but I assume that in the absence of large predators some culling is necessary.

There are important bird populations there including 60 pairs of marsh harriers, 30 pairs of bitterns and 60,000 greylag geese. Emboldened by all this, and harking back to Ted Green and his veteran trees, I thought I might add to this 'holiday' issue a little bit about a short visit to the ancient forest



*continued over...*

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Please send all letters to the Secretary and Editor:  
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Mrs P Bitten, 9 Frederica Road, Chingford, E4 7AL  
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*Harry and big tree!*

of Tronçais near Moulins in France. This runs to 27,000 acres and apart from a couple of small hotels has no settlement within its borders. A very detailed map dated 1620 indicates that Tronçais has only shrunk a little since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

It is very largely an oak forest (the Sessile oak, *Quercus petraea*, of which there are only a handful of specimens in Epping Forest), and apart from the resident populations of red and roe deer it has no grazing animals.

Timber crops are taken and a certain amount of thinning appears to be done, so there are open areas throughout where natural regeneration takes place.

At the time of our visit in September the mushroom

season was in full swing, and hundreds of collectors (without permits!) were out with baskets full of ceps and other delicacies.

The forest includes a large grove of oaks planted around 1700 by order of M. Colbert, a minister of Louis XIV, who took an interest in forestry.

Also identified are a number of 'arbres remarquable', many of which escaped 'execution' partly because they marked parish boundaries. Some of these enormous trees are claimed to be over 500-years-old and they are over 20ft in circumference; Bedford's (Grimston's) Oak by comparison is 14ft.

**Editor**

## THE NATURAL ASPECT

Ted Green, who spoke at our AGM three years ago about veteran trees, sent a letter to a recent issue of RSPB Journal 'Birds' in which he writes, "we are beginning to realise that some woodland birds are suffering similar declines (as farmland birds). Where have all the Willow Tits, Hawfinches and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers gone? What is happening to Nuthatches and Marsh Tits?" We might well ask is it worse in Epping Forest? - because for ten, no fifteen years, folk have said to me" why did we see so few or no birds at all on the walk today?"

On a walk from Jack's hill in September it was an hour and a half before we came upon a flock of Great Tits and Blue Tits. I asked if anyone had seen or heard a bird before this - apart from a short burst of a Robin's autumn song. No one had! Whether we consider birds that stay with us throughout the year or summer visitors that go to Africa for the winter, all seem to be affected by this great reduction in bird populations. Even the press has reported the scarcity of Starlings and House Sparrows, in spite of the many Starlings that come to us in winter from Europe.



*Male Hawfinch*



*Hawfinch in flight*

I have not found a satisfying answer anywhere! Drought south of the Sahara, hunters in Mediterranean countries, insecticides, herbicides, slug pellets, modern farming methods, cats or Magpies are blamed - all may contribute, but I do not believe they really constitute the full answer - why are there fewer Nuthatches in Monk Wood!

Living in the open countryside north of the Forest I see more birds in my garden, hedgerows, and fields than in the Forest - and farmland birds are supposed to be threatened.

No doubt they are but as Ted Green says, something has happened to our woodland birds - and I don't think we know what or why!

Have you noticed how slick and smart many of our garden birds are looking at the moment? They have just completed their main moult. I always notice the Robins particularly. My feeding table seems to be on the boundary of at least four Robin territories - Robins are fiercely territorial, even the pairs split up in the winter. Much fighting is occurring in my garden between these Xmas 'symbols of peace and good will'.

Every year on a morning in mid-October I notice a sudden increase in Blackbirds in the garden. Two or three are chasing all the others who are by contrast very tolerant of each other. I am sure this is an overnight arrival of a flight of European immigrants (not via Stansted) being chased by my resident territory holders. Migration occurs twice a year and we hardly notice it. Yes we see the Swifts and Swallows, and hear the Cuckoo (occasionally!). But because our winters are milder, there are winter visitors from Europe of species that appear to be 'with us all the year'. Although some do stay with us throughout the year, others like our Chaffinches, may move south and be replaced by their European cousins.

I had occasion recently to wonder deeply about migration. I have a niece who lives in a remote part of hilly and wooded northern Spain. She invited me to "come and see the eagles migrating". Her house is on the end of a ridge, one of several long hills at about 700 - 800 metres (2,350 - 2,700 ft). The fault-line of ridges connect the hills and mountains south of the Pyrennes to mountains farther to the south. It was amazing. For it must be a narrow corridor of migration. Not only did I see Bee Eaters, Golden Orioles, Pied Flycatchers and a host of Warblers steadily moving southwards, but flocks of Swallows, House Martins, Common and Alpine Swifts, and once a crowd of more than 50 White Storks. The Storks came gliding over the hilltop and then began circling and soaring on a thermal of warm air. They went up and up - almost invisible to the naked eye - until they went into a cloud (how do thermals 'go into' clouds?). Then they came out the side of the cloud, gliding away in unison to the south-west. When some 3 - 4 miles away over the next ridge, they began circling again.

However what excited me most was that for the previous two weeks I had been watching my niece's 'eagles' flying over. In 16 days 800-900 birds had passed overhead. They came in 5's, 10's, 50's and once almost

200. Like the Storks they came gliding low from the ridge to the north and then began soaring in the up-currents of warm air from our hill. However they were not eagles. Apart from a few Black Kites and a Montagu's Harrier all those that I was able identify were Honey Buzzards. They had come from the forests of Scandinavia, Finland, Russia and Germany, migrating via the Pyrennes, to go across the Straits of Gibraltar to Africa - maybe some came from Britain (but less than 40 pairs breed here). Did any readers see the news story at the end of September about the juvenile Honey Buzzard that got lost way out in the Atlantic journeying from Scotland? It was tracked because it was fitted with a radio transmitter. The birds that I saw were part of an estimated 100,000 Honey Buzzards that cross at Gibraltar every autumn. However the cause of my amazement was that during the two weeks every group that soared and glided away, along a corridor less than half a mile wide, did so on almost exactly the same compass bearing of 215. They were still going in the same direction when many miles away and passing out of range of a 25X telescope. One evening a group came over after sunset, circled and dropped down into the wooded gorge at the back of the hill. I was waiting and watching again before sunrise when they rose from the trees, found a thermal (even at that time) and when high enough all began a long glide on exactly 215 degrees! - and they could not have eaten! Many of the birds that I had been able to see closely were juveniles on their first migration!

Sorry, but I thought this anecdotal 'holiday story' might be interesting enough to bear inclusion.

**Ken Hoy**

## TRUELOVES

This is the block of land bounded by Green Lane, Mott Street, Lippett's Hill and Blind Lane acquired by the Conservators some years ago and immediately thereafter taken into the Forest with the indication that it was to be left to develop into woodland.

A few years ago this declared policy was changed and it was announced that in future Trueloves was to be grazed in association with Fernhills, the immediately adjacent piece of Forest land on the other side of Blind Lane.

Fernhills has been fenced and grazed but not Trueloves. Meantime, nature has been at work and a fine spread of young oak trees is now established on the area. In addition, it is now (early October) brilliantly colourful with michaelmas daises and rich in butterflies and insects.

Michaelmas daises are native to North America and are garden escapes in Britain and are therefore to be frowned upon (they have also become established in Central Europe) - but they do look nice!

It looks as though some mowing has taken place on a small part of Trueloves but I think it would be a great shame to turn this wild looking and attractive place back into secondary grassland. Not fencing it would also save a few thousand pounds, I suspect!

Surely a woodland could be designed including scrub areas, wide grassy paths and open glades that would be pleasant for people to visit and could also be beneficial for a range of wildlife.

This would also in time help to screen out Sainsbury's Distribution Centre which is now disfiguring the view to the north.

**Harry Bitten**

## COUNTRycARE

'Countrycare' is Epping Forest District Council's countryside management service, which operates throughout the district's greenbelt countryside, giving advice and information on nature and conservation issues, and undertaking a wide range of community-based activities around Epping Forest.

Although Countrycare organises the materials and equipment for the activities, its main strength is the local volunteers working alongside their staff on various projects, improving footpaths, bridleways, and bridges for us, and the habitat for its wildlife.

If anyone feels fit, or unfit enough to spend a few hours improving their own health and that of our patch of countryside, whilst gaining more knowledge and awareness of it, why not telephone Countrycare on 01992 788203, and have a chat with Paul Hewitt, the Manager.

*Peter Read*

## HAWKWOOD

Another Association the 'Friends' have links with is the 'Friends of Suntrap and Hawkwood Lodge', two environmental school study centres located at High Beach and Hawkwood, Chingford, and drawing on the Forest's environment as their main educational asset.

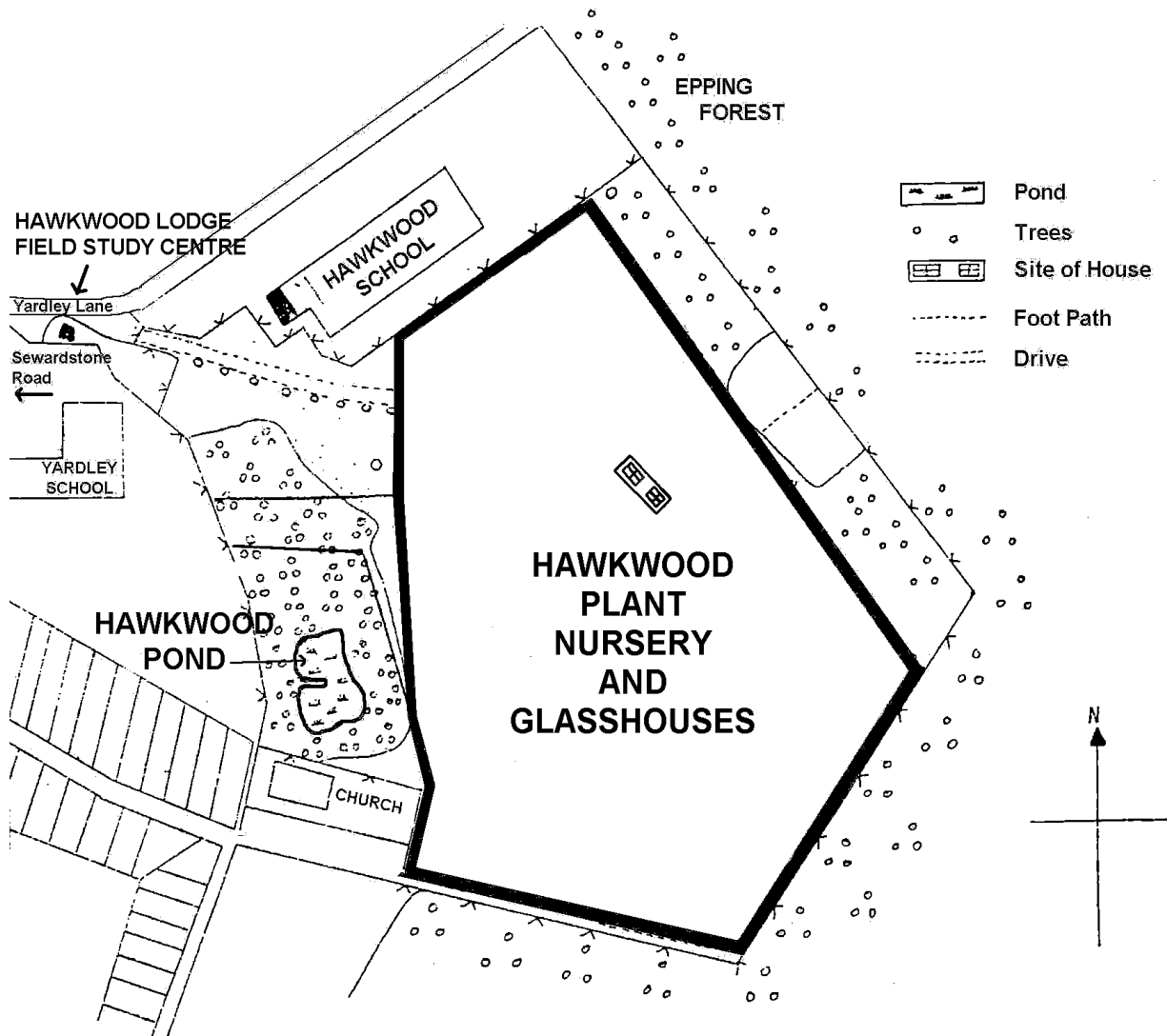
When rumours surfaced that their future was in danger

from educational cuts, an inaugural meeting was held with an agenda to support the staff and centres and to liaise with the public. Nevertheless, a decision was taken to reduce running costs by closing Hawkwood Lodge and concentrating activities at Suntrap, a larger building with more teaching staff.

Hawkward Lodge is the old victorian gatehouse nestling in the valley at the end of Yardley Lane, between Yardley Hill and Pole Hill, guarding the approach-drive to a once imposing mansion called Hawkwood House. The last owner, Mrs Noakes, followed the example of her previous close neighbour T E Lawrence of Pole Hill (and Arabia), and transferred all her land over to Chingford Urban District Council in 1937 under covenant to revert to an open space.

The war came and went and the house, shaken by a long-range flying bomb, lay unoccupied and derelict until its demolition by the Council in 1951. The overgrown grounds, containing a large pond teeming with wildlife was now an established playground for budding naturalists, and despite the educational authority fencing a small portion off it was given in the 1960s for a childrens' special needs school on a northern boundary. Mrs Noakes' covenant largely prevailed.

But then, in 1979 the local authority came back for the rest of it with chainsaws, bulldozers and more fences - they wanted to grow new plants under glass (for local





*Hawkwood House, 1924*

authority planting), in the old gardens where exotic plants, rhododendrons and mature cedars had already stood for 100 years.

They also 'discovered' the pond and wanted to supervise and educate youngsters about its tadpoles, dragonflies, moorhens, grass snakes and greater crested newts, where children had been learning unsupervised for 40 years. They met with resistance, of course, from the residents who funded them but they still fenced it all off.

Now, in 2002, after 20 odd years of local conflict over open access to Mrs Noakes' legacy, the lodge grounds and pond are being vacated by the Education Authority for financial reasons.

But who would take over a site like this? And for what financially viable proposition when it comes with such a contentious 'open space' proviso.

During the 'Friends' mid-summer guided walk last year in Hawkwood, we visited the lodge and grounds partly to promote support for its staff in their uncertain future. The consensus of opinion then, as we left, was what a perfect location it would make for a Forest keeper's lodge with an authoritative eye over the grounds.

In the Superintendent of Epping Forest's overview in his Annual Report to the Corporation of London for 2000 – 2001, he paid tribute to his predecessor's acquisition of buffer land to protect the Forest environs from development pressures. May the policy continue!

*Peter Read*

## **FIRST FOREST FORUM**

The Forest Forum was established as a result of the recent Best Value exercise in the City and forms part of the Public Affairs Strategy with the object of improving the Conservators' communication and consultation with organisations with an interest in the Forest.

Jeremy Wisenfeld, the Superintendent, was in the Chair and Sally Hayns (Public Affairs Manager) was in attendance.

There are expected to be two meetings a year, one in the north of the Forest, the other in the South.

There was a query about the absence, as observers, of the Verderers who are normally thought to represent the interests of the public. Sally Hayns said that they had been consulted but had declined, wishing their own consultation with the local community to be separate and independent of the Conservators Forum. However, they would be asked again.

It would occupy too much of the newsletter to include full minutes of the meeting so here are very brief notes and headings. Anyone wishing to have a sight or copy of the minutes, please contact Peg.

### **Grazing**

There were plans to increase the cattle numbers and over-winter them on buffer land. Plans to graze smaller heathlands and grasslands had been approved. There was some concern that animals had been seen outside the normal area of containment.

Model aeroplane flyers complained about fouling of their landing-strip on Chingford Plain.

### **Traffic**

There was general agreement that there was a need to reduce traffic speed on roads through the Forest.

### **Management Plan Review**

The purpose of the current Five-year Management Plan was outlined and a forthcoming review of the Plan was referred to. A summary was being prepared and would be circulated to all interested parties for comments.

### **Litter**

All present were concerned about this problem. Local authorities are responsible for clearing litter from verges up to 1.8 metres from the roadside. The Corporation is trying to encourage the local authorities to adopt a partnership approach so that the most effective use can be made of available resources.

### **Forest Keepers**

It was suggested that since the Keepers were the frontline of the Conservators interface with the public, it was important that there be more Keepers on foot in the Forest. Moreover, a more observable presence would give many members of the public the confidence to enter and enjoy the Forest, which is what it is there for.

It was explained that at the moment the Keeping staff is now larger than for many years and that there are 16 members. However, given long summer days, sickness and annual leave the Keepers are very thinly spread! (PERHAPS KEEPING SHOULD HAVE A MUCH HIGHER PROFILE IN THE MANAGEMENT PLAN?)

### **Cricket on Wanstead Flats**

The Superintendent outlined proposals to return cricket to the Flats. This has been put forward by the Gujarati Cricket League and Essex County Cricket Club. There will be full public consultation, and if the proposal goes ahead a bid will be made to the Sports Lottery Fund to develop facilities at Harrow Road on the site of the existing changing rooms.

## Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge

There are plans to build a single-storey education museum display area in the courtyard of the coachhouse attached to the Royal Forest Hotel. If approved, external funding could be sort.

## Oral History Project

This project aims to record local people's memories of the Forest as part of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the Epping Forest Act. Volunteers are sort to help carry out interviews. Liaison is maintained with the Epping Forest Museum. **If you can help, or would like further information, contact Heritage Education Officer, Rachael Boddies on 0202 8529 6681.**

On this first occasion, members might find it informative to know the kind of organisation represented at the Forum:

British Motorcyclists Federation  
Buckhurst Hill Parish Council  
Buckhurst Hill Residents Society  
Chigwell Orienteering Club  
Chingford Model Flying Club  
Copped Hall Trust  
Council for the Protection of Rural Essex  
Enfield Model Flying Club  
Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers  
Epping Forest District Council  
Epping Forest Riders Association  
Epping Upland Parish Council  
Friends of Epping Forest  
Lakehouse Lake Project  
Loughton and District Historical Society  
Loughton Town Council  
Royal Epping Forest Golf Club  
Sri Nathji Hindu Whipps Cross Temple  
Theydon Bois Parish Council  
Theydon Bois Rural Preservaton Society  
Waltham Abbey Town Council  
Waltham Forest Access Alliance  
Woodford Green Amenity Group  
Woodford Green Cricket Club  
Woodford Golf Club

**Harry Bitten**

## THE BUCKHURST HILL STEAM TRAMWAY

Many local readers will remember Julie Small. She and her late husband Roger were well known organisers of the activities of the London Natural History Society in the Forest area. Julie now lives near Ashford and in writing to me sends her best wishes to friends. She wrote to pass on interesting information from her brother Frank who is the author of a book 'British Main Line Industrial Engines' - Following the Buckhurst Hill Tramway being mentioned in the last Newsletter, Frank writes:

*It was an experimental track 600 yards long laid in 1873 to test a new idea in cheap tramways. The track consisted of a monorail flanked on either side by baulkes of timber. The driving wheels one on each side of the locomotive ran on these timbers or possibly on just the roadway. The added friction obtained enabled steeper gradients to be tackled than those normally on steel rails. To keep the loco. on the timbers, two grooved wheels were fitted fore and aft and these ran on the monorail.*

*It is not known why Buckhurst Hill was chosen, perhaps a majority shareholder? However it was intended that the*

*system was for Portugal. Whether any running ever took place in Portugal is also not known as the Company failed about a year after construction work started. It is also possible that no locos. ever reached Portugal.*

*Sixteen locos. were built at £1500 each, but were sold to a dealer at £150 each. He then had some or all rebuilt to six coupled locos by Merryweather at Greenwich at a cost of £300 to £400. It is not known who the dealer was, but it could have been the railway contracting company Lucas & Aird. They used some of the rebuilds at Tilbury Docks and for the Hull and Barnsley Railway. Those not rebuilt were scrapped.*

**Frank Jones**

I have heard so many varied scraps of information about the Buckhurst Hill test run that this from an expert source, elaborates and adds to the information given on the walk in Lords Bushes and in the last Newsletter. You may remember mentioned there was the fact that the ship carrying one or more locomotives sank on its way to Portugal.

I also find Frank's speculation about a local shareholder interesting. It coincides in a way with family opinions expressed when I was a child that several shareholders of the Great Eastern Railway Co. (origin of the Central Line from Liverpool Street) lived locally and were the cause of fares being higher on the Woodford line. At the turn of the century (1900-2000) folk living in Woodford Green and wishing to take advantage of cheap 'workman's fares' would go down the Bridle path to Wood Street Station to catch the last 'workman's' train before 8-0 am. Apparently no 'workman's' fares were available on the Woodford Line; an indication of the social class advantage of living in Woodford in those times.

**Ken Hoy**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Old Dears

As I am probably one of the 'old dears' referred to in the July newsletter I was delighted to know I was worthy of a mention in your publication.

I believe that we are increasing in numbers despite an ever spiralling alien environment. Does Harry think we should be culled, and if so would it apply to the male of the species?

**Yours sincerely,**

**Gwen Bourdon (An Old Dear)**

### Epping Forest 'National Park'

When I first travelled abroad, it took me some time to get used to vast areas, many thousands of miles being called 'National Park'. I knew Wanstead Park and thought I was about to go on Safari in Africa in the jungle - not in a park.

Amongst the National Parks I have been fortunate enough to visit is South Luanga which covers the whole of the Eastern Province of Zambia and contains much of the worlds most notable wildlife. Also in Zimbabwe the Whangi National Park, south of the Victoria Falls, is a huge area containing the Big Five Game buffalo, elephant, leopard, lion and rhinoceros. Herds of giraffe are not even included in this list. The Banff National Park in British Columbia contains many of the Rockie Mountains. We in Britain do have the Snowdonia National Park.

National Parks are not fenced in, obvious boundary defined areas but there are rules and they are administered by rural and national Government in the interests of conservation and preservation.

Driving through the Rockies, even there motorised transport is ever increasing and it was surprising and a little disappointing to see wire fencing, albeit a very wide mesh, along the roadside. It was explained that this has been put up along hundreds of miles of road to save the carnage of the wildlife, particularly the elk. When funds are available more are planned together with expensive landscaped underpasses for the smaller animals and the black and grisly bears.

Epping Forest does come into this sort of management. The area is one-eighth of a dot (not sure you can have a part of a dot) on the world map and has the patronage of the wealthy City of London, but it is in great danger of ruination, even eventual extinction, because of its proximity to millions of human animals and their mechanisation.

We must protect where necessary our flora and fauna. An appropriate fence should be erected in vulnerable places. I do not agree with 'growing things' as has been suggested over these fences. In British Columbia they are just posts and wire and do not obstruct the view or ground level. For good or bad a lot of people see Epping Forest only from the High Road and I often wish (when not the driver of course) that there was less high growth and thickness along the sides of the road so that one could see through to more of the picturesque scenes. Let's have more gaps, clear fenced where necessary through which to enjoy the beautiful spectacle of Epping Forest 'National Park'.

*Signed Mary Taylor*

PS – And have a speed limit.

### **The Issue of Fencing**

I read with interest the letter from Robert Levene in the Summer issue of FofEF newsletter. I have to say I am in agreement with all that Mr Levene says in his letter, especially the need to address the real problem, that of traffic and speed.

I live many miles from Epping Forest now but as a child and young person spent many happy days enjoying the freedom the Forest allows and for which it was given to the people of London. As you might imagine that freedom also led to 'me and my mates' getting up to mischief from time-to-time. We soon learnt to avoid being caught with our catapults by the Warden (*Keeper*) - we had to be more subtle and clever, and although we probably did not appreciate it at the time, adopt a bit of lateral thinking. I think the same strategy needs to be applied to the idea of ensuring safety for travellers and cattle for which I guess the fencing is being considered.

There is an argument that by making things safe, paradoxically dangers can be increased as compliance can then take over. Constraining

traffic speed and density through a beautiful part of this Country will allow more people to enjoy and appreciate that beauty and make travellers more aware and perhaps more inclined to take an interest in maintaining the natural Forest habitat.

As to those naughty boys, and their catapults, they loved the Forest and still do.

*Yours sincerely,  
Roy Kerrison (Member of the Friends)*

### **Re Billie Fairfax**

I thought that you might want to know about the passing last week (early July) of one of the characters who contributed much to the Forest community over her 82 years.

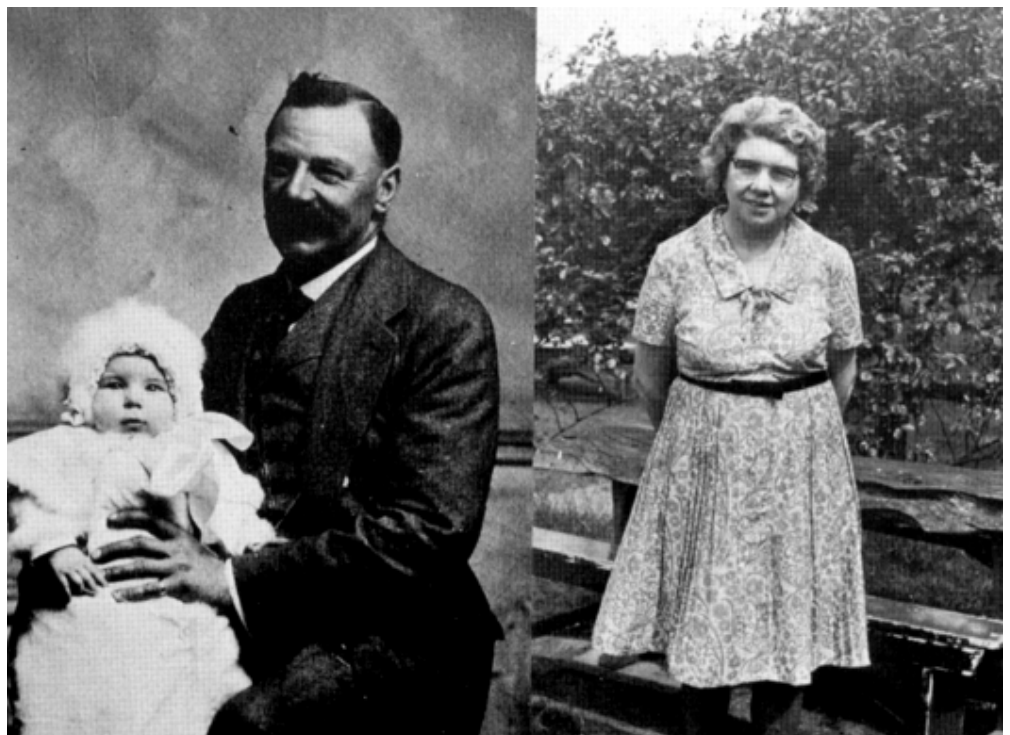
Billie Fairfax (she was christened Dorothy but loathed it) who was the daughter of William Riggs and wife of the late Peter Fairfax, died in Whipps Cross Hospital following a stroke.

As granddaughter of John Riggs, founder of the famous retreats, Billie lived all her life in the Forest and followed on the family tradition by earning a widely respected reputation as a caterer. She was active in many aspects of Forest life whilst also dedicating herself to caring for her husband Peter. For those who remember him, being wheelchair-bound never seemed to hold him back from having fun and trying new things. Billie's life seemed to be as much about keeping him out of trouble as nursing him.

For many years she and Peter lived at Suntrap where they always seemed to have a steady stream of visitors where they kept a happy open house.

In recent years Billie had suffered from debilitating ill health which was the source of incredible frustration. Nevertheless, she continued to make her contribution to the community with what I can only describe as her "gung-ho" approach to new challenges. She will be much missed.

*From Kevin Wyatt-Lown*



*William Riggs and daughter 'Billie'*

*Mrs Dorothy Fairfax (Billie Riggs)*



*Verderer Richard Morris at Sandpit Plain during 18th Centenary Walk*

## 18<sup>th</sup> CENTENARY WALK

**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2002**

On a bright, slightly chilly morning, some 70 walkers started at Manor Park, including three Verderers, the Superintendent, many of The Warren senior staff and two members of the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee. There were some absences due to the clash with the Countryside March in Central London.

We looked at the Jubilee (previously Model Yacht) Pond and Jeremy Wisenfeld spoke briefly about it. Work had recently been completed to restore it as a conservation pond and it was looking a bit bare but clearly with a lot of potential.

We followed the usual route to the County Hotel, Oak Hill, picking up joiners on the way. There was a bit of delay but we were served coffee in a sumptuous room on the first floor littered with comfy sofas and armchairs into which the walkers gratefully sank. It was quite a job to get the show on the footpath again. Grateful thanks to the County Hotel for their generosity for once again supplying us with free drinks and hospitality.

We were somewhat late arriving at Butlers Retreat, Chingford, and pressed on having only a brief glimpse of the cattle that had been specially herded there from Fairmead! The members had swollen to over a hundred by now but for various reasons some fragmentation took place and led to a number of groups making their own way to the Robin Hood, thereby forfeiting official recognition of their participation. Ha, ha! The 'official' group went by way of Fairmead where in the woodland fringes we measured two huge oaks, one being 18ft and the other 20ft in circumference, and then proceeded by way of the **'FENCE'**!

There was a drizzle of rain while we were lunching but I soon brightened up and we pressed on to Loughton Camp where Verderer Peter Adams spoke on this Iron Age feature. Shortly thereafter, Verderer Richard Morris spoke about the clay road and then Blackweir (the Lost) Pond.

We then followed a very attractive route through Great Monk Wood, a minimum intervention area, to Deer Shelter Plain where Keeper Alan Woodgate told us about the area and its management.

The time schedule had slipped so much that a diversion to the Deer Sanctuary was abandoned, and so we continued along the Green Ride pausing at Ambresbury Banks where Peter Adams continued and completed his dissertations on Iron Age forts. I counted over 80 walkers at this point, most of whom were present at the finish at Bell Common.

Suzanne Walker, the Chairman of Council for the Protection of Rural Essex (CPR Essex) welcomed the finishers and briefly spelt out the threat to Essex and the Forest arising from putative major developments, such as the expansion of Stansted Airport.

We had splendid support from The Warren with much transport laid on and we were accompanied throughout the walk by Keepers whose communications equipment would be important in an emergency. Thanks, therefore, to the Superintendent and his staff and to all participants.

***Harry Bitten***

## Letter to EFDC

With Harry's co-operation we recently wrote a letter to the Chairman of Epping Forest District Council. Readers will remember that for a number of years we have been concerned about the urbanisation of areas adjoining the Forest (particularly the western side) and the related traffic pressures. As we are sure the letter will interest members it is printed below:

The Friends of Epping Forest has some 1800 individual members and our aims are to encourage the appreciation and knowledge of the Forest and to support the Conservators in upholding the provisions of the Epping Forest Act 1878. Especially those parts relating to keeping the Forest open and unenclosed for the recreation and enjoyment of the people and preserving as far as possible the natural aspects.

When the Act was framed and the Corporation of the City of London became responsible for the Forest, human and other pressures on it were very much less than they are today. In those days Walthamstow, Leyton, Chingford, Woodford and Loughton were little more than villages (although of course they were in a process of change brought about by the railways). Now, all these districts have more or less coalesced so that the south and east of the Forest is



hemmed in by development. We need hardly mention the enormous traffic load now borne by the Forest roads..

The Conservators have increasingly become conscious of the ensuing threat to the biological and recreational integrity of the Forest and have developed a much appreciated policy of acquiring 'buffer' land to protect it. Thus Copped Hall Park, Warlies, Woodredon and Great Gregories estates now protect much of the north and north-eastern fringes. Of course practically the whole area surrounding the Forest is in the Metropolitan Green Belt and thus should be to some extent protected from untoward development.

Fortunately the Conservators and Epping Forest District Council are aware of the difficulties confronting the Forest and we have noted with approval the establishment of the Liaison Group and the Study that it has initiated, namely the Quality of Life Capital. Hopefully these initiatives will benefit the Forest and the District in due course. But we are aware of the steady erosion of the Metropolitan Green Belt, especially, but not exclusively, on the western flank of the Forest. Accordingly the 'Friends' Committee have asked me to raise some of these problems with you.

1. It is we believe a policy objective of the Planning Department to seek to discourage further development along the Sewardstone Road to prevent a 'ribbon' development linking Chingford and Waltham Abbey. In reality we have a vast Sainsbury's depot shortly to be sending 3000 vehicles on to local roads each day and a huge motel nearing completion, both made possible by the sanctioning of Dowding Road joining J26 of the M25 with Waltham Abbey.
2. Over 400 houses have been built on Waltham Point rather than the 250 originally approved. New housing has been permitted on greenfield sites and nurseries have been allowed to massively expand beyond the point where they are retailing their own products. Glasshouses have grown-up along the Sewardstone Road and also along Parklands Road, Waltham Abbey
3. We believe there is an important lesson to be learnt from the closed-down garden centre-cum-furniture outlet on the 'Crooked Mile' where failure to restrain improper expansion has led to a position where a great many houses are likely to be built on the site.
4. Two houses, one very large and one huge, are currently being built along Mott Street both totally out of scale with the buildings of the area. These are giving rise to expressions locally of horrified disbelief that they could ever have been approved by Epping Forest District Council.
5. A number of riding schools and livery stables are turning buildings permitted as stables and offices into living accommodation. Church Road, High Beach is being transformed by one device or another into virtually continuous development and we await with some trepidation to hear the fate of the Police training facility at Lippitts Hill.
6. Now, with the looming expansion of Stansted Airport and the possibility of the M11 corridor of communication being changed to a corridor of development, something also envisaged in the London Plan, Epping Forest District is bound to come under severe additional development pressure.

In all these circumstances we are concerned that the pressures will lead to even more planning applications that will compromise Epping Forest and it environs as a

matchless recreational, biological and scenic resource for both London and Essex. This priceless open space will become even more important as the years go on and the South-east becomes more 'developed'. May we earnestly urge you and your Council, as guardians of this sensitive area, to redouble efforts to preserve and protect it by vigorous and far-sighted application of the Green Belt planning regulations to all future applications.

**Ken Hoy**

## THE MIGRATION

*The earth is warm and so the harvest comes  
In gluts of apples, pears and plums  
Rich colours in the garden still  
Fill house and church and windowsill  
And in the forest golden bright  
All is busy before the flight  
The small birds flutter here and there  
They know there's little time to spare  
And as they leave the snow geese come  
In skeins from winter's frozen sun  
Glad to find our gentle shore  
They make their nests until once more  
That restless spirit bids them rise  
To fill the pale Spring's beckoning skies  
With outspread wings they fly away  
And little birds return all day  
To city, valley, woods and glen  
Excited to be home again!*

**Cathy Fowke-Hallett**

*The following article has been re-printed from the:  
"The Hedgerow ...a tangle of words from local writers".*

*Available through local libraries and bookshops free of charge. Submission of stories & poems always welcome; contact the Editor, Penny Freeston, 67 Derby Rd. South Woodford. London, E18 2 PY*

## THE HEDGE BY BROOMHILL ROAD, WOODFORD

If you drive down the main road through Woodford Green you cannot fail to notice the open common land and many trees along the road side.

They are a remnant of the ancient Forest of Essex, now known in this area as Epping Forest. The City of London Corporation as Conservators of the Forest owns these green spaces and it was the Corporation that planted the horse chestnut trees in 1892.

Redbridge does not abound in old houses. Hurst House, the white building near the Churchill statue, was erected in c.1714 and is one of the earliest to survive in Woodford, although it was badly damaged by fire in 1936 and much of it is now a reconstruction. However, there are much older features in the district, in some of the trees and hedges that have survived the centuries.

Looking at old maps it is not difficult to recognise field boundaries that still define the line between the back gardens of the houses in one road and another. Perhaps the oldest hedge that is still recognisable is that along the back of the Green at Broomhill Road. When cricket was first played on the Green in 1735 this hedge was already well over 250 years old.

I dare say many of you know how to tell the age of a hedge. The theory is that if you measure a stretch of 30 yards (say 30 adult paces) and count the number of woody species, that is the number of centuries the hedge

has been in existence. Of course, some common sense is needed in selecting a typical section of the hedge - it is much better to check out a number of consecutive lengths and then take an average.

The species in the Broomhill Road hedge, recorded a few years ago, included apple, blackthorn, elder, elm, field maple, hawthorn, laburnum, oak and sycamore, with the addition of an occasional cherry, hazel, holly and horse chestnut. Over all the average was 5.2 species per 30 yard length, making the hedge at least 500 years old. Incidentally, blackberry or bramble and woody climbers like ivy should not be included in the count, and only one side of the hedge is recorded.

Laburnum - and horse chestnut can be said to represent the more recent history of the hedge. However, the fact that field maple and hazel are present would indicate that the hedge was indeed ancient, and could be older than

the 500 years indicated. The fact that bluebells can be seen flowering under the hedge in May also indicates it is an ancient hedgerow, if they are wild and not dumped garden waste.

Recording the species in the hedges of the Debden House camp site near Theydon Bois would suggest an age of 600 years. Without looking for documentary proof it seems very likely that this area was cleared from the forest in the early medieval period so the date is probably accurate.

However there is a hedge near Piercing Hill at Theydon Bois with over 7 species per 30 yard length and it would seem to date from around 1250. Documentary evidence confirms that it is the purlieu hedge recorded as the legal boundary of the forest in 1301. Given the pressure of being so close to human habitation I think it quite likely the Broomhill Road hedge is of a similar age.

Georgina Green

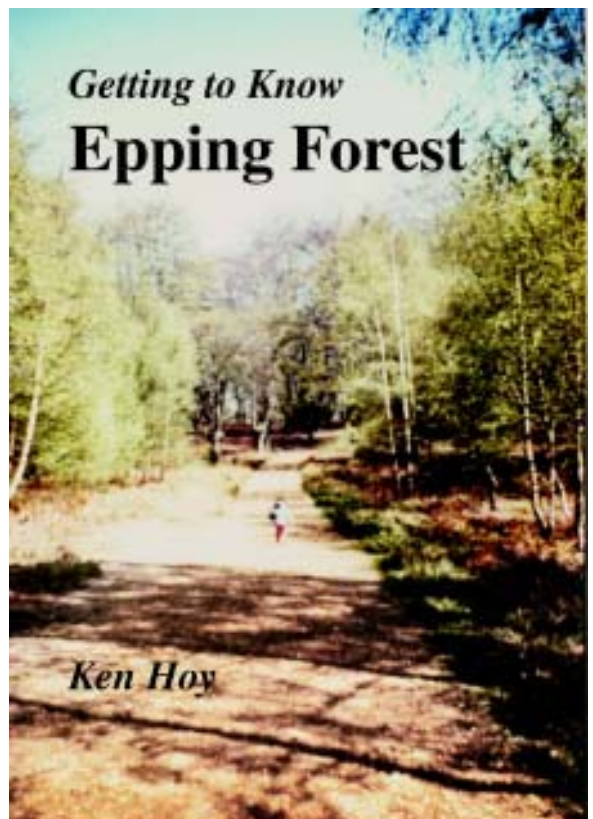
## “GETTING TO KNOW EPPING FOREST”

This is a new book published by the **Friends of Epping Forest** that is also supported by the **Conservators of Epping Forest**. It is based on the articles *‘How Well Do You Know Epping Forest’* that appeared in past Newsletters. Ken Hoy has revised and enlarged the material and the book contains 136 pages including colour and black and white photographs and illustrations.

The book is described as: *‘A book to enrich a trip into Epping Forest with historical and current information about over 200 of the Forest’s woods, plains, streams and tracks. Many of the place-names mentioned are old. Sometimes the origin of the name is known, frequently it is intriguing, but invariably it is worth a visit to discover the changing beauty of the Forest’s landscape - whatever the season. You may find new information about familiar places that you thought you knew or discover quiet unknown spots that you will be encouraged to explore. Maps show the location of most of the places mentioned in the text’.*

**A great christmas present for anyone  
interested in the Forest and it’s history!**

**On sale at the Epping Forest Information Centre,  
High Beach, from Nov 30th 2002**



ISBN 0 9543872 0 1

**Retail price £6.95.**

**Special offer price for FofEF members £6.00!**

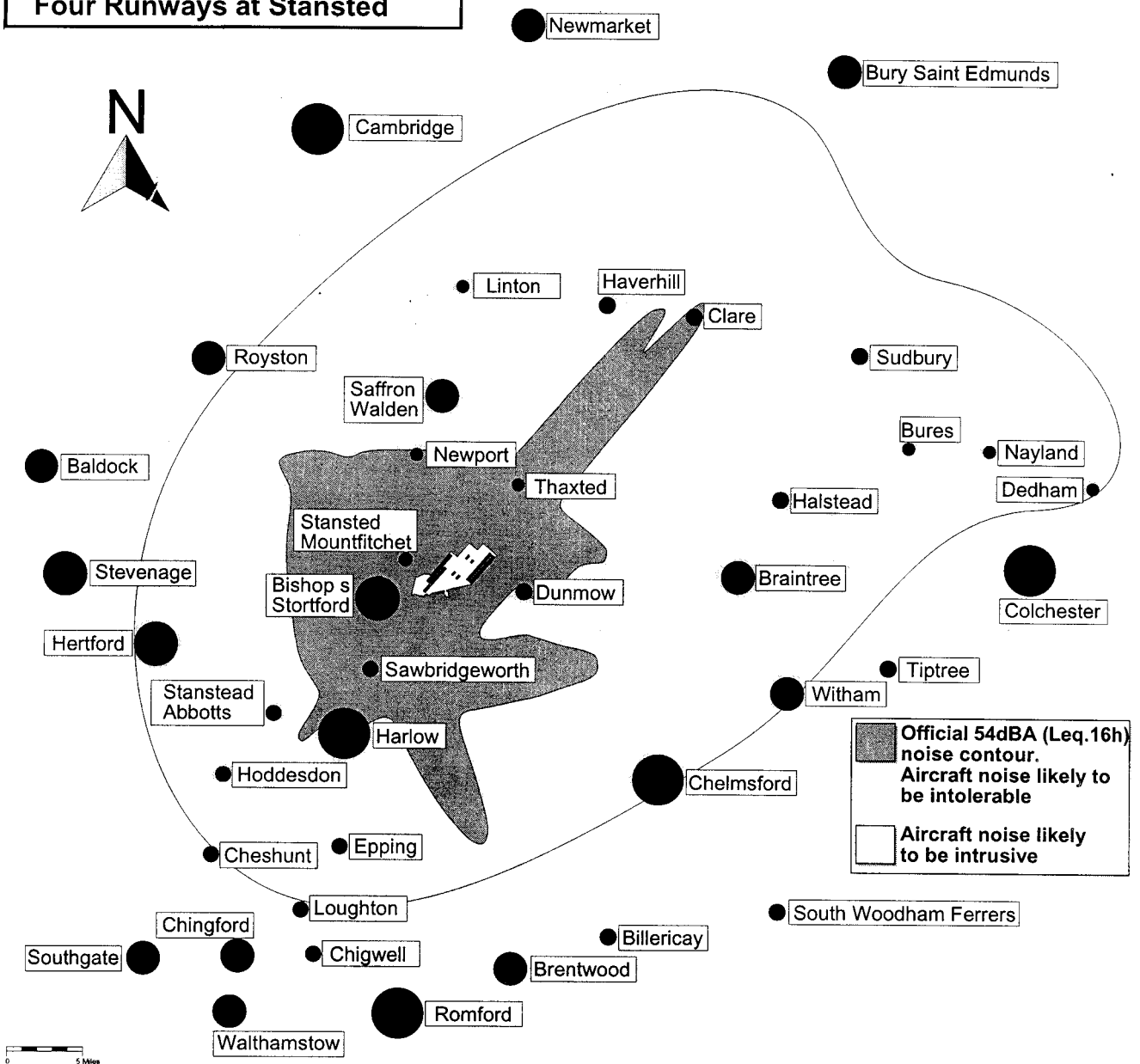
**Get a signed copy at the Forest Supper on November 29th  
or, if you are not coming to the Supper, pick up a signed copy from  
2 High View Close, (off Nursery Rd) Loughton,  
on Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup> between 10-0 am & 1-0 pm.**

**Available after this, at members price, from Seymour Moss at  
47 Long Deacon Road, Chingford, London E4 6EG.  
Tel. 020 8529 0620 or, e-mail seymour@moss40.freeseve.co.uk**

**Cheques payable to: ‘The Friends of Epping Forest’,  
if ordered by post, add £1.00 for postage & packing.**

**(proceeds go to The Friends of Epping Forest)**

## Noise Impact Predictions for Four Runways at Stansted



## EXPANSION OF STANSTED AIRPORT

We have referred briefly to this subject in our letter to Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) as one of the factors likely to affect the Greenbelt countryside of this area. The noise profile associated with a four-runways airport reaches as far south as Loughton and infrastructural activities and increased traffic will be bound to have adverse effect on the Forest. We will be writing to Alistair Darling the Secretary of State to voice our objections.

**Harry Bitten**

## DONATIONS TO FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST 1/4/01 TO 31/3/02

P Ahern, J Andrews, Mr & Mrs Andrews, V & H Anslow, P Atienza, J Bolton, Ms Buckhurst, Mrs Clarke, P Butcher, M Block, B Closs, S Cotton, V Eddy, C Graham, S & B Harris, Miss Hewett, V Higginson, G Just, D Lynch, J Mackinnon, C & S Marshall, L Mazzotti, A McBrayne, Mr Mitchell, A Modesto, J Nicholson, D Oliver, L Powter, Mr & Mrs R Pratt, Mr Rainey, Raven, J Rowsell, K & J Sandford, J Small, V Smith, R & J St John L Tull, S Webb, H Wenzel.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### AUTUMN 2002

**November 23<sup>rd</sup>, Saturday, 10.30am. National Tree Week.** Our annual 'Away from Epping Forest Walk'. This year it will start in Stanstead Abbots on the edge of the Lea Valley north of Roydon. The 5 mile circular route crosses farmland and woods and fords! (the River Ash), then back to Stanstead Abbots via Easneye Wood. Meet in the car park in Stanstead Abbots off the B181 between the railway station and the post office. Main routes to Stanstead Abbots are – **either** A414 (W) from Harlow, then right along the B181 **or** the A10 (N) then B181 to Stanstead Abbots, **or** you can take the scenic route (the B181) from Epping through Epping Green and Roydon to Stanstead Abbots.

**Leader Bill Dexter. GR 384 119**

**November 29<sup>th</sup>, Friday, 8pm – 10.30pm, Forest Supper.** at the Hawkey Hall, Broomhill Road off Broadmead Road, Woodford Green.

**Details in this newsletter. GR 403 921**

**December 15<sup>th</sup>, Sunday, 10.30am. A Christmas Walk in Wanstead Park** followed by wine and mince pies at the Temple, where someone will show us around and tell us a bit about its history. Meet by the entrance gate to Wanstead Park at the end of Warren Road, Wanstead. Leader

**Harry Bitten. GR 414 876**

### 2003

**January 24<sup>th</sup>, Friday, 10.30am. A Circular Winter Walk through Gilbert's Slade and Walthamstow Forest.** Meet in the car park on the A1007 Snaresbrook Road – the road where Eagle Pond is. **Leader Harry Bitten. GR 394 891**

February 21<sup>st</sup>, Friday 10am. A walk through the Millenium Wood at Coopersale and the Lower Forest (a.k.a. Wintery Wood - could be very muddy!). Meet in the recreation Ground car-park in Stonards Hill, Epping. Travelling north through Epping on B1393, then turn right opposite the Green. The car-park is a little way down on the left.

**Leader: Seymour Moss GR 465 025**

**March 27<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 10.30am.** A walk through the beech trees of Loughton Camp and Monk Wood. Meet in the car-park at Earls Parth Road, which is on the road between the Robin Hood PH and Loughton. **Leader: Verderer Richard Morris GR 416 967**

**April 25<sup>th</sup>, Friday, 2pm. Day Return to High Beach!** A walk along the route of 19<sup>th</sup> century railway that might have run across the Forest. Meet at northern end of the Bury Road car park next to Bury Wood. **Leader Edgar Brown. GR 394 951**

## OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Epping Forest Information Centre

For further information, tel: 020 8508 0028

**Sunday 10 November** - An Autumn Amble, a guided walk. Meet at the car park on Piercing Hill, Theydon Bois at 10.30 a.m. (GR. 447 999).

**Wednesday 27 November** - Managing the Forest's Veteran Trees, a guided walk. Meet at the Epping Forest Information Centre, High Beach at 1.30 p.m. (GR 412 982).

**Sunday 1 December** - Tudor Tree Dressing, help us to cover one of the trees at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge with fantastic heraldic shields. 1.00 - 4.00 p.m. (Ages 3 to adult).

**Sunday 8 December** - The Season of Good Cheer, a guided walk. Meet at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, Rangers Road Chingford E4 at 10.30 a.m. (GR 398 947). This walk will be followed by a hot drink and mince pies.

**Sunday 15 December** - Looking for Father Christmas, a walk suitable for all the family. Meet at the Epping Forest Information Centre at 11.00 a.m. Booking essential. Cost £1.50 per child (to include a gift from Father Christmas.)

**Saturday & Sunday 21 & 22 December** - Father Christmas will be in his Grotto at High Beach between 1.00 and 3.30 p.m. Cost £1.50 per child.

**Sunday 12 January** - Knighton Wood in Winter, a guided walk. Meet in the car park at the junction of Knighton Lane and Monkams Lane at 10.30 a.m. (GR 408 935).

**Sunday 19 January** - Deer-Tracks, trails and signs, a day spent looking for deer and signs of their presence. This will include visiting the Forest, Bufferlands and the Deer Sanctuary. Please bring a packed lunch. Meet at the Epping Forest Information Centre at 10.00 am. The walk will finish at approximately 3.00 p.m. Sorry - no dogs allowed on this walk.

**Thursday 6 February** - The Natural Aspect, the Annual Superintendent's Lecture. This will be held in the Sir James Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green at 8.00 p.m. Cost £3.00 to include coffee/tea and biscuits.

**Sunday 9 February** - Highams Park, a guided walk. Meet at the end of Tamworth Avenue, Woodford Green 10.30 a.m. (GR 394 921).

**Saturday 15 February** - Nest Box making Day, come and make a nest box at the Field Centre, High Beach. Materials supplied. 10.00 to 12.00 noon or 1.30 to 3.30 p.m. Donations to Epping Forest Centenary Trust. Booking is essential.

**Thursday 20 February** - Creative Collage, make your own fantastic collage of the Hunting Lodge as it was in Tudor times. Family Activity at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, 1.00 to 4.00 p.m. (Ages 6- 12).

### EF Conservation Volunteers

November 3 - Little Wake Valley Pond East

November 12 - Earl's Path Pond

November 17 - Anniversary Task Sunshine Plain

November 24 - Copped Hall Estate

December 1 - Small Alder Pond

December 15 - Christmas Task Rushey Plain

December 29 - Conservation Path /Long Running

January 5 - Sunshine Plain

January 19 - Barn Hoppit

January 26 - Conservation Path / Long Running

Meet 9.30am for 9.45am at the Warren, the Forest Headquarters on the Epping New Road.

If staying all day you will need food and drink. Wear practical clothing and footwear. If necessary you will be shown how and what to do.

**Lee Valley Regional Park**  
**Sunday 19th January 2003, 8.30am - 5.00pm**  
**Bird Photography Master Class**

Whatever your level of photographic skill, this day course will provide valuable hints & tips on improving your techniques. Led by Dave Cottridge one of the world's leading bird photographers, the course will be a mix of talks and practical photographic sessions in specialist bird hides in the River Lee Country Park. Places strictly limited. Venue: Lee Valley Park Information Centre, Abbey Gardens, Waltham Abbey, Essex, £45.00 per person (includes lunch and refreshments).  
To book, phone: 01992 702200 Places limited.

**West Essex branch of The Ramblers Association**

Sun 22nd Dec, 10.00am. Meet at The Castle, Woodford Green 5 miles approx visiting some smaller woods and part urban.  
Mon 6th Jan, 10.00am. Meet at The Castle, Woodford Green 5 miles approx to Hollow Ponds, Whipps Cross

**F of EF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Judy Adams (co-opted)	Chingford	020 8418 0730
Peggy Bitten (Sec.)	Chingford	020 8529 8594
Harry Bitten	Chingford	020 8529 8594
Irene Buchan	Chingford	020 8529 6423
Alan Curran (co-opted)	Buckhurst Hill	020 8504 8720
Bill Dexter	Chingford	020 8529 1427
Robin Gaine	Chingford	020 8529 8890
Jim Gimson	S. Woodford	020 8989 3282
Ken Hoy (Chairman)	High Easter	01245 231 839
Robert Levene	Snaresbrook	020 8989 0884
Sue McKinley (Dep.-Chair)	Upshire	01992 71 2014
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

**FofEF E-MAIL AND WEB ADDRESSES**

Ken Hoy: [khoy@care4free.net](mailto:khoy@care4free.net)

Membership Secretary (Seymour Moss):  
[seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk)

FofEF web-site: [www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk)  
or <http://members.aol.com/friendsef/foef.htm>

**NOTICES**

**SUPPORT THE FRIENDS** by purchasing goods for sale on our stall at the Forest Supper - Ken's new Book, Fleece jackets, T-shirts, caps, mugs, pens, xmas and greetings cards or contact Seymour Moss on 020 8529 0620.

**REMEMBER:** Members wishing to receive the Newsletter by e-mail should contact Seymour Moss at [seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk)

**FOREST SUPPER – NOVEMBER 29th 2002**  
**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, sweatshirts, fleeces, **Ken's new Book** 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.

**If you can, please donate a gift for the RAFFLE.** We 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 £11 for the 3rd year running, despite higher costs. 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 Saturday Nov 23rd. 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**

**REMEMBER – ADMISSION BY TICKETS ONLY**

# CHRISTMAS CARDS OF EPPING FOREST



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

*They are available in packs of 10 cards (2 of each view) at £3.00 per pack,*

*You will be able to purchase the cards at the Forest Supper on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> 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 £3.55 (£3.00 plus 55p p+p) per pack to Seymour made payable to F of EF.*

## Forest Supper Booking Form

Please provide ..... ticket(s) for the 2002 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 23rd 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.***