



Dear Friend,

We have been commenting on three linked draft documents produced for the Conservators by a group of consultants. These are called the Heritage Interpretation Plan, the Audience Development Plan and the Access Plan.

The objectives of this exercise are to:

- Identify and celebrate what is special about Epping Forest
- Make local people, visitors and people passing through aware that this is a special place.
- Deepen the understanding and appreciation of people's influences on the Epping Forest landscape.
- Ensure that the Forest is managed in a way that protects and enhances its heritage importance.
- Improve the visitor experience.
- Propose how the interpretation at the Visitor Information Centre, Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and the Temple should be updated.
- Advise on the storage, management and accessibility of the Conservators collection of artefacts and archive material.

- To advise on the most appropriate uses for the Warren House in making it accessible to the local community as a heritage resource.

The upshot of all this is 31 recommendations ranging through mobile exhibitions, subsidised bus service, new interpretation panels, additional tea huts, community focused outreach services, improved leaflets, way-marked trails, Verderers Forum, installation of gateways to mark entrances to Forest, taking the Forest to the people, increasing visitor confidence and most controversially building a new visitor centre on Chingford Plain and closing the Information Centre at High Beach.

This is a whole lot to digest but we are proposing to comment to the conservators on the consultants recommendations.

We are not very happy about many of the proposals which apart from anything else will make heavy management demands on the team at The Warren. However, perhaps our biggest quarrel is with the proposal for a new building on Chingford Plain with a wide range of facilities including refreshments in association with replacing the existing Caddy (Golf) House. The estimated cost of the new building is £1,750,000 with an annual estimated cost of £25,000.

continued over...

GREEN BELT PETITION - This Newsletter is being put together too early to be able to give members the result of the Green Belt Petition exercise. However, the early indications are that things appear to be going very well. We have had quite a few requests for more signature forms, so we have great hopes that a massive response can be reported in the next Newsletter.

Newsflash! 28th Oct 04: over 9000 signatures received so far.

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Take that Mr Prescott and there's more where that came from!

Our view is that Chingford Plain is not the place for a new information centre. Large numbers of people heading for the Forest, no longer come to Chingford bus and train stations. Moreover, pedestrian access to the Caddy House area is difficult and dangerous because of the increasingly busy Bury Road. The Plain and Chingford Woods are largely used by local residents; High Beach is the honey-pot area most used by visitors. The Information Centre there - which they propose be incorporated into the Field Study Centre - is we agree badly signed and could be improved but it is in the **right place**.

The proposal seems to be that all these recommendations, if approved by the Conservators, should be put into one package and made into a grant application for Heritage Lottery Funding amounting to five-and-a-quarter million pounds. If successful there would be a responsibility to provide an additional annual funding of over a quarter-of-a-million pounds, which presumably the City would need to find.

We could certainly suggest other, in our view, better ways to spend an additional annual quarter-of-a-million pounds. For instance, by purchasing more buffer land to counter the gradual deterioration of the western flank of the Forest towards Sewardstone Road.

Editor

NATURAL ASPECT

Ever wondered what has happened to all last summer's insects such as bees, wasps, hover-flies, butterflies, ladybirds, grasshoppers and dragonflies now that winter is coming? Different species have evolved different strategies in order that their species can survive and reappear next spring.

The honey bee colony lives on under natural conditions having provided itself with winter food supplies - honey. Thus most of them survive. That is if they are honey bees that have 'gone wild'. This happens when a swarm finds a hole in a tree rather than a bee-keeper collecting the swarm for his hive. Of course in the case of those colonies in hives, although the bee-keepers have taken most of the honey they make sure the bees have enough 'sugar-water' instead in order to live through the winter. There are a surprising number of honeybee colonies, living wild in Epping Forest trees (see *Centenary Walk picture on page 8*).

In the case of the wild Bumble bees (there are several species), only the queen survives by hibernating until the spring. She is usually the big furry one



Bumble bee

that you see in the garden on a warm day in early spring, hovering around the grass and herbage looking for a suitable hole in which to start a new colony.

This too is what happens with the two species of common wasp. The large fertile queen will leave the nest in your roof and go off to find somewhere safe and frost-free in which to hibernate. These queens are often the cause in autumn of reports such as "the other evening a giant wasp was flying around my living room".

Wasp nests can be removed by the end of November as all the wasps will have died off from cold and starvation - no plums left and no insect or other prey available. Apart from getting into the jam-pot or spoiling our fruit before we can pick it, the wasp is a carnivore and scavenger.

One day in the early 1960's, at the height of the spread of the disease myxomatosis, I came across a dead rabbit in Long Running. It was not, as might be expected, covered with blue-bottle flies but with scores of common wasps, their jaws slicing off the flesh to carry away to feed their young larvae! A few days later the corpse was just fur and bones and a handful of wasps looking for any 'left-overs'. I have heard people say "what's the good of wasps"? Well there is the answer - they are excellent scavengers.

This last summer seems to have been a 'good' year for Hornets, the largest of our wasps. Apart from their larger size they differ by being yellow, black **and** chestnut brown rather than just yellow and black like the familiar wasp. In flight the yellow rear part of the abdomen is very noticeable. Hornets, now quite rare, are rather unnecessarily feared for they are less aggressive than the common wasp. Of course all species get 'angry' if the nest is disturbed or if you stand immediately in the flight path to the nest. Hornets too feed on ripe fruit but they are also predators often catching their prey in flight. I once watched a Hornet on

Almshouse Plain. It was chasing butterflies. Finally it caught a Meadow Brown and whilst still flying snipped off the wings and flew off to its nest with the body. Like the common wasps only the queen survives the winter by hibernating.

Bees and wasps have four wings (two on each side that are hooked together), but hoverflies, although looking like little wasps, are harmless two-winged flies. The brightly coloured stripes on bees and wasps provide themselves with protection by advertising to potential enemies such as birds, "remember! I can sting".

Hoverflies, by copying the wasp and bee markings are gaining some 'protection' by such mimicry. Although the adult hoverfly feeds upon flower nectar its larva feeds voraciously upon aphids (greenfly and blackfly). Sucking them dry and then discarding the empty carcass. A real friend to the gardener.



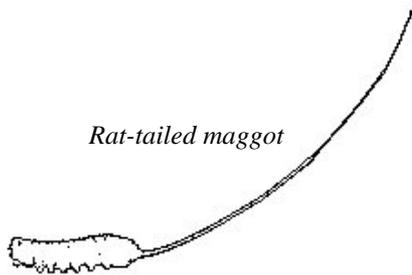
Hoverfly

Most hoverflies survive until the next summer as a pupa (chrysalid) but as there are over 200 different kinds to be found in Britain there is a lot of variation; some survive as scavengers in the nests of bees and wasps, and others, that are sometimes very numerous migrate here from the continent of Europe. But one or two common hoverflies, one sometimes known as a 'dronefly', have larvae that are called rat-tailed maggots. They live where little



Hornet

else can - in heavily polluted water. You may have found one when cleaning out the muddy silt in the bottom of a drain or ditch. They can live there because they have a snorkle, that is longer than their fat white body, and this enables them to breathe air from the surface.



Rat-tailed maggot

Butterflies and moths also vary in the way they survive until spring. Most spend the winter as larvae or pupae either in the ground, attached to, or inside the stems of grass or herbage or under the bark of trees. Most of you will know that a few other species hibernate as adult insects. One family of butterflies in particular adopt this means of surviving - these are the Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock butterflies that you sometimes find behind the curtains of the spare bedroom, or in the garage or shed.

Ladybirds are beetles and there are over 40 species that have been found in Britain. Many of the common species can be identified and are named by the number of spots they show. You will know, if in winter you have opened a little used window and found scores of ladybirds hibernating in the cracks, that they survive until the spring as adult beetles. It is well known of course that their larvae feed on greenfly.

Grasshoppers and Dragonflies are different from most other insects. Instead of a life cycle consisting of four stages - egg, larva, pupa and adult insect - they progress from the larval stage directly into the adult state. The larva is then called a nymph.

Adult grasshoppers lay their eggs in batches in the soil before they die at the end of the summer. In the following spring the young nymph hatches, looking like the adult but without wings. Later in the summer it changes directly into an adult grasshopper.

Dragonflies and damselflies also die off as the cold comes in the autumn. But the females have laid their eggs in the water of ponds and pools. There when the nymph hatches it becomes a fierce underwater predator. Safe from freezing temperatures until the spring when the nymph climbs out of the water and the winged adult emerges directly from the empty 'skin' of the nymph. Most

of the larger dragonflies live as nymphs underwater for more than one year - some for two or three or more years before they climb out and emerge as winged adults.

Ken Hoy



LADYBIRD LADYBIRD FLY AWAY HOME

A new ladybird has arrived in Britain. But not just any ladybird, this is *Harmonia axyridis*, the most invasive ladybird on Earth.

Harmonia axyridis, which is also called the Harlequin ladybird, or the Multi-coloured ladybug, is a deadly threat to a range of insects, including butterflies, lacewings and many other ladybirds.

Introduced from Asia into North America for biocontrol of aphids, the Harlequin has swept across the States, becoming by far the commonest ladybird in less than a quarter of a century since establishing there, and now Canada is seeing a similar spotted tide. In the last decade its catastrophic increase in numbers has threatened endemic North American ladybirds and other aphid predators, many of which are plummeting alarmingly as the Harlequins consume their prey. Despite this unwelcome and well-publicised take-over by the Eastern invaders, Harlequin ladybirds are still sold in continental Europe by biocontrol companies and it now roams across France, Belgium and Holland, with numbers soaring annually.

Now, it is in the UK! On Sunday 19th September, Mr. Ian Wright found an 'odd' ladybird in the garden of the White Lion pub, in Sible Hedingham, Essex. The ladybird was identified by Dr Michael Majerus of the Genetics Department, Cambridge University, an international ladybird expert.

Dr Majerus, who admits to "having an inordinate fondness for ladybirds" said: "This is without doubt the ladybird I have least wanted to see hear. Given its proximity in Holland, I knew it was on its way but I hoped that it wouldn't be so soon. Now many of our ladybirds will be in direct competition with this aggressively invasive species and some will simply not cope."

Dr Majerus urges anyone who finds this ladybird to send it to him in a sealed matchbox or film canister, with precise details on when and where the ladybird was found. Although highly variable in its colour and pattern, none of the forms are easily mistaken for any British ladybird. Some have black spots on orange wing covers; others have big orange or red sports on black wing covers. They are around 6mm to 8mm long and most have a distinctive W or M mark on the area separating their heads from the their wing covers.

"It is critical to monitor this ladybird now, before it gets out of control and starts to annihilate our own British ladybirds," he says.

Send the ladybirds, in clean, dry containers, to: Dr Michael Majerus, Department of Genetics, University of Cambridge, CB2 3EH.

from NFU Countryside web site

MANAGEMENT PLAN

In the July Newsletter we reported that the Management Plan 2004-2010 had been approved by the Epping Forest Committee in May. We commented that we had not been consulted and had not seen a copy of the Plan in any form before its approval.

The Superintendent wrote to us complaining that this was an unfair and untrue comment. A coloured brochure had been issued in February inviting comments and the Forest Forum, to which we had sent representatives, had been an opportunity for comment on the Plan.

We replied to the Superintendent explaining that we had not realised the Brochure and the Forum constituted the 'public consultation' and asked him to consider providing us with an opportunity to make a more serious and informed comment on such detailed documents in the future. We are pleased to say the misunderstandings have been resolved and we are currently commenting upon The Heritage Interpretation Plan and have been invited to comment on the Buffer Land Public Access Consultation

Ken Hoy

THE BIRCH

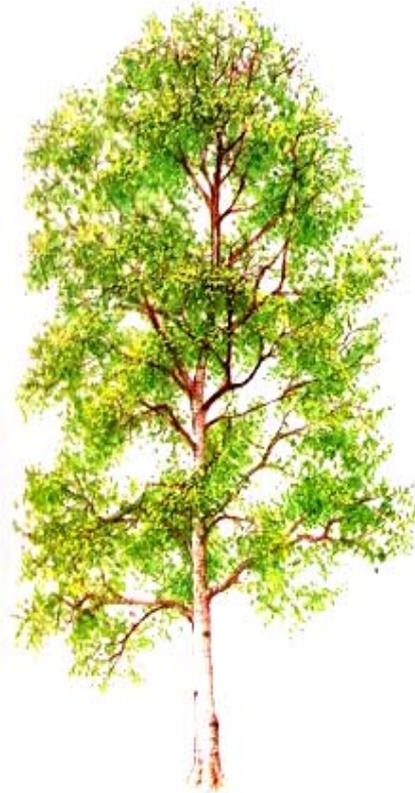
Surely everyone knows the birch tree - with its gracefully drooping branches and white bark scarred with black patches. But there are two kinds in our Forest, the Silver (or Warty) Birch *Betula pendula* and the Downy (or Hairy) Birch *Betula pubescens*.

The Silver Birch tends to predominate on the heavier soils of the southern and central parts of the Forest while the Downy species is found more frequently in the north on the water-logged heathy soils, such as Long Running.

Unfortunately they hybridise! - and there are trees that show the distinguishing features of both species. But even typical individuals at first glance may look similar, however on closer examination the Silver Birch has little warty spots on its otherwise smooth twigs - hence its alternative name. The other species, also well named, has downy or fine hairy buds and twigs. The leaf of the Downy Birch is less triangular, more rounded, and its edge is toothed or serrated more regularly.

Both are very hardy trees, and occur in upland conditions even as far as the Arctic Circle where other trees cannot survive. After the Ice age the Downy Birch was one of the first trees to colonise Britain in the tundra conditions as early as 10,000 years ago. By some 8,000 yrs ago - as the pollen record tells us - the Silver Birch followed accompanied by Scots Pines and willow scrub.

Today following fires, it is birch trees with their light wind-borne seeds, that are



Downy (or Hairy) Birch
Betula pubescens

Silver (or Warty) Birch
Betula pendula

the pioneer colonisers of the bare soil.

A hundred years ago the birch was less common in Epping Forest than it is today. E N Buxton at the end of the Nineteenth century writes of "charming groves" of light green birches **now** (1885) decorating parts of the Forest in springtime. He also comments upon the young birch trees growing around High Beach Church. By the middle of the twentieth century these were stately mature trees. Now however they have

mostly gone as the birch has a short life - 60yrs is mature and 80 is old! Beech trees have taken over instead. In fact, this has functioned just as in forestry plantations, where the birch is often used by foresters as a 'nurse' tree to protect the slower growing (hardwood) trees in their early stages of growth.

Although apparently comparatively uncommon in Epping Forest in the late nineteenth century, by the 1960's and

70's dense thickets of young birches had grown up quite suddenly, in places such as Long Running, Deer Shelter Plain, and Sunshine Plain. Almost certainly this was the result of reduced browsing by rabbits and deer due to a sudden drop in their populations which occurred as Myxomatosis infected rabbits and increasing numbers of car accidents involved the death of deer (ave. 13 per year in the mid-60's) and deer tended to leave the Forest. Fires and management eventually cleared most of those young birch thickets. Today birch seedlings still tend to colonise the heathlands and usually appear quickly if the death



Long Running 1976: dense thickets of birch after fires



or fall of a beech creates a sunny hole in the canopy of otherwise closed woodland. To the extent that it is current management policy to maintain the open plains and heathland, and, to open-up woodland areas, the birch tree is an invasive tree that is either pulled by hand or a chemical treatment applied to the cut stumps.

Birch trees are very vulnerable to the 'birch bracket fungus' (*Polyporus betulinus*) - this after its first appearance on the trunk of the tree quickly kills it. A more friendly (symbiotic - mutually advantageous) relationship is maintained between the birch tree and the Fly Agaric fungus (*Amanita muscaria*) - the so-called 'magic mushroom'. This attractive - scarlet with white spots - fungus exchanges nutrients in the soil with the microscopic roots of the tree. Many other fungi have such a relationship with trees, but the occurrence of the Fly Agaric under birch trees is one of the most obvious and well known.

In the autumn the birch is one of the first trees to 'turn' colour as the leaves quickly assume a subtle deep golden yellow shade. During the autumn and winter the dormant male catkins, are already present waiting for the following spring, and together with the twigs themselves, give distant birches that distinctive misty red-purple

tint that helps to make the Forest's winter landscape so attractive.

In the spring, certainly by mid-April, as the birch leaf-buds begin to break open the catkins also open. The pollen from the long 'lamb's-tail' type male catkins is wind-borne, and like the oak, beech and hornbeam, both 'male' and 'female' catkins are to be found on the same tree. The birch canopy is thin and dappled sunlight easily penetrates mature birch woodland enabling grass, bracken and heather to grow beneath the trees.

Particularly in Scandinavia the birch is used for furniture, veneers and especially for plywood. But here, as some of you may know from scout and guide days, small strips of birch bark enable you to 'show-off' by lighting a fire with one match! Some of you may also have tasted birch wine, made from the sugary spring sap? Whilst in Scotland in the days of Highland poverty the birch provided structural timber, fuel, bedding and of course the besom broom. I believe birch wood was/is also used for smoking hams, herrings and haddocks.

Perhaps we should also remember its old punitive use in 'birching'!

And, remember our school geography books that told us how the native North Americans made canoes using birch bark - however this was a different species, the Canadian Paper Birch, *Betula papyrifera*, sometimes even called the 'Canoe Birch'.

So give birch trees a second look next time you are in the Forest.

Ken Hoy

WANSTEAD FESTIVAL SEPTEMBER 19TH

The FofEF stall was set up at 9.30 on Christchurch Green, Wanstead by Jim Gimson and myself ready for the 11.00 opening.

This area adjoins the part of green now owned by a private developer following the unsuccessful attempts a few years ago by The Wanstead Society, London Borough of Redbridge, The Corporation of London and many others to buy this "Evergreen Site" to keep it as Green Space. The developer failed to get planning permission, but what a shame to have a section of The Green on the High Road fenced off and neglected, waiting we presume for the next unitary borough plan and future planning challenges in a few years time.

The day after a windy start then turned sunny and the crowds soon arrived also attracted by The French Market on Wanstead High street. Our stall was joined by volunteer Ann Quade as we started to get busy. Soon Robin & George Gaine arrived to help and we were busy handing out information about Epping Forest. It is always surprising to find so many people who do not know what is on their doorstep.

We were about to talk to many existing members and knowledgeable concerned local people who remaining interested in the Forest. We were pleased to welcome 9 new members during the day.

Jim & I "escaped" for a few minutes to visit the 18c brick GAZEBO located behind a 1960's modern house in The Avenue. Formerly part of Grove House that used to occupy such an important place in Wanstead, this listed remnant was open to the public as part of London Open House day, located in the surprisingly large back garden, it had been restored in part by English Heritage and with its grotto, had superb example of brickwork not normally seen.

Returning to Christchurch Green, Bill Dexter & Irene Buchan arrived to help on the ever busy stall, now accompanied by live music and a very pleasant atmosphere of people wandering around and generally enjoying themselves.

The Wanstead Business Partnership (particularly Jeffery Edelman) and London Borough of Redbridge (particularly Scott) had really organised everything very well and we were pleased during the day to welcome to the stall The Mayor & Mayoress as well as many local councillors.

Interestingly there was a clear demand for us to include in our walks program, a buggy walk (OK prams walk for those who still use the old name) so that young parents could include the younger generation - our future members - Peggy take note please when planning our 2005 walks program.

As we started to take down the stall having sold over £250 of books and gifts, one or two people who had taken part some sections in the days Centenary walk arrived and we wondered who was more worn out, those that had walked the length of the Forest (15 miles+) or those that had volunteered to man the stall!

Robert Levene

WALK REPORTS

June - Peter Read

The annual **midsummer evening's walk** has always enjoyed good weather; and Saturday June 19th was no exception this year, as around 40 or so of us who turned up at Hombeam lane, acknowledged in their casual dress, as we set off at 7.30 for Yate's Meadow just north of Hawkwood, Chingford.

Largely ignored by an equal number of young rabbits running about in the field around us, we passed through the kissing-gate and climbed to the ridge of the meadow where we strolled alongside Gilwell Lane for ten minutes or so taking in a magnificent view of London's western skyline over Alexandra Palace into Middlesex, reflected in the waters of the Girling, and King George reservoirs immediately below.

Passing through the hedge into Yardley Hill, we had a brief look back over Bury Wood and Hawkwood, before walking through the canopied path, and out into the glade and viewpoint, recently restored by the Conservators on the summit of Yardley Hill.

It is worth recalling during these autumn months, that in midsummer, the sun is still up in the west, and shines down on London's usual silhouette more from the north, flashing reflections of glass, copper, and steel, from the landmark rooftops of Canaries Wharf, the London Eye, St Paul's dome, and the new Gherkin's spiralling superstructure, for that brief period only, over Epping forest.

Spreading out down Yardley Hill to the brook was also a novel experience, offered by the Conservators, since their recent scrub-cutting operations, - assisted by Verderer Michael Davies' s English longhorn cattle, - opened up a walking area once restricted to an ankle-breaking roughshod path/ride.

Over the brook and up through Daisy plain, we regrouped under the hornbeams on the slopes of Hawkwood and looked down on the old Victorian mansion grounds to the pond we had advertised to visit; - had the gate not been welded shut; (apologies)

Continuing up the northern slope of Pole Hill, - (derived from St Pauls Hill) - and skirting the undulations of the old clay pits, we passed through a clearing on the crest to see; framed

between two stone obelisks; perhaps the best panoramic view over Greater London and its eastern prospect, sweeping from the Dome into Kent, via Dartford bridge.

The original focus point was Greenwich, from where the Astronomer Royal determined this site in 1824 as true north along the meridian line of longitude zero, dividing the eastern and western hemispheres, and from where all time and space has since been measured. And there on the granite obelisk was a bronze plaque commemorating the astronomer who erected it there. The Reverend Pond.

A pity then, that he chose the wrong time at the wrong place, as evidenced by the second concrete 'trig' pillar subsequently sited more accurately in 1824 by the Royal Ordnance Surveyors, 19 feet to the east.

This forest land was then occupied and owned by many private smallholders, and our group heard of the threat to it from encroaching housing developers in the early 1900s generating local resentment, until the scholar and adventurer T E Lawrence came here and sought out each plot owner, struggling for 4 years, from 1919 to 1923, negotiating, and buying-up strategic parcels of land totaling 18 acres, (including the developers' foothold) which consolidated, represented a valuable building; - or heritage site.

Lawrence chose heritage, and subsequently transferred Pole Hill back to its moral administrators, the Conservators of Epping Forest, and in doing so, concluded an ideal that had finally eluded him in Arabia.

The Conservators, by coincidence, have been consulting the public this year regarding their '**Epping Forest Heritage Interpretation' Project**, and for the record, there was no need for interpretation from our group, as we wound our way home, over who merited a plaque on Pole Hill.

August - Iris Newbery

Back in March, I was surprised when Peggy asked me to lead a walk from the Cornmill meadow car park to look for Dragonflies, as I don't consider myself an expert on the subject. However, I agreed and the date was set. On that date about ten of us met at Cornmill meadows on a scorching hot day, with temperatures in the low 80's.

The path down to the Cornmill stream

took us through a good expanse of ragwort, fleabane and thistles, all good nectar plants for butterflies, where we soon saw Green veined white, Gatekeeper and Meadow brown butterflies. Also among the flowers were White-legged Damselflies, Common blue and Blue-tailed Damselflies.

Moving on to the Commill stream and from the bridge crossing it, amongst the reeds we saw both male and female Banded Demoiselles. Walking alongside the stream we soon met the male Emperor Dragonfly patrolling his territory, and the Brown Hawker, distinguished by its amber coloured wings. After walking for a few yards along the stream, we went back beside the Old River Lea where plenty more male and female Banded Demoiselles were flying. Another Emperor Dragonfly, patrolling a different stretch of river, and more Brown Hawkets were to be seen.

Abundant Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and white butterflies were flying, plus one Comma and one Holly blue butterfly put in an appearance. The butterfly species count, though, was very poor.

As we made our way further round the meadow towards Waltham Abbey, several Common and Ruddy Darters were seen, one or two Large red Damselflies and a couple of Migrant Hawkets, but I was disappointed not to see Red-eyed Damselflies.

The bird-watchers with us pointed out a Heron and Lapwing on the pools in the middle of the meadow. These pools were fenced in and had a notice saying 'no entry'. Other Dragonfly species breeding in pools would no doubt have been seen there.

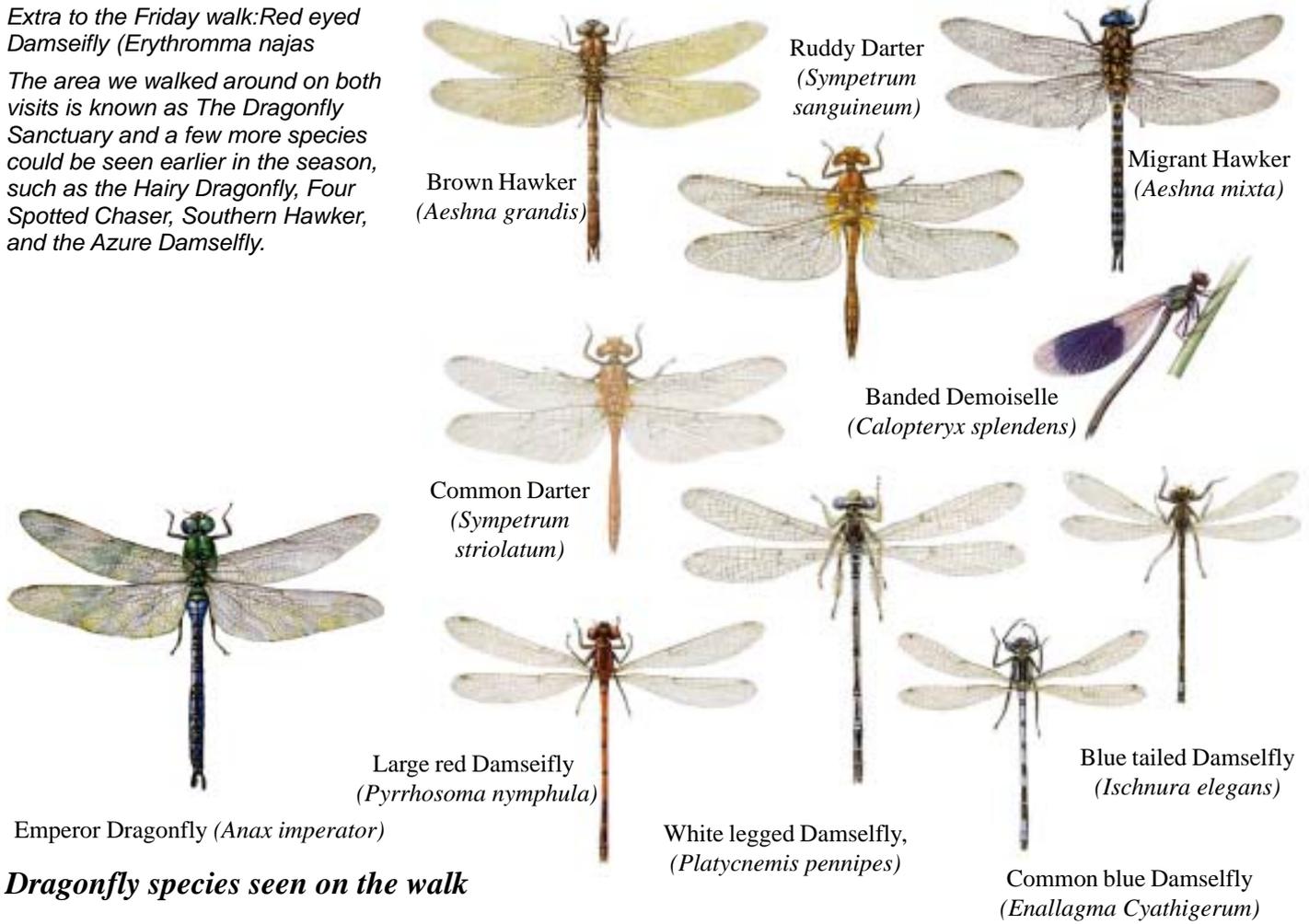
We then crossed the bridge at the Waltham Abbey end of the Cornmill stream and walked back to the car park in the very welcome shade of trees.

The following day, I received a telephone call from a couple who thought the walk was due to take place on Saturday. I agreed to go again to the meadows with them, and was very surprised to see another member of F.o.E.F. who had also misread the programme.

On this visit we were lucky to see several Red-eyed Damselflies, also Ruddy and Common Darters egg-laying., but no Comma or Holly blue butterflies were seen.

Extra to the Friday walk: Red eyed Damselfly (*Erythromma najas*)

The area we walked around on both visits is known as The Dragonfly Sanctuary and a few more species could be seen earlier in the season, such as the Hairy Dragonfly, Four Spotted Chaser, Southern Hawker, and the Azure Damselfly.



Dragonfly species seen on the walk

Walk 15th October.

This was supposed to be led by Ken but having listened to the weather forecast, he immediately went sick with a bad foot and nominated me to do it.

Thus it was that 12 of us gathered at Jack's Hill car-park in a thin drizzle. Hoping that things might improve a little, we headed off along the Green Ride and then turned left into the woods to Ambresbury Banks. We circled round the bank and wondered at all the effort that must have gone into the construction.



Pizzle Pits

Next stop was the Pizzle Pits and the origin of the name was discussed with due reverence and decorum. With great care we managed to avoid the virtually ceaseless traffic on the Epping New Road and cross to the gate to the Holly Hedge field now of course part of the Forest.

At this point I mentioned that I thought that the rain was easing a little – what an idiot – by the time we reached Warren Wood it was teeming. We sloshed through the wood noting numerous deer slots as we went.

After going through Copped Hall London Gates, I had intended to go into St. Thomas's Quarters to the great beech coppard but we were all so wet that this plan looked much less attractive than we started. So we just waded along Lodge Road, along the horse-ride across the B1393, round the Long Running and back to the cars. Gurgle gurgle as Corporal Jones would say.

Harry Bitten

CENTENARY WALK 2004

We were lucky with the weather. The 18th & 20th of September were both wet, but the 19th was cool, nice and bright – perfect.

The Verderers, Superintendent, Alderman John Barker and other worthies were at the start and we reminded the 70 starters that the day was the commencement of the implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000, the so-called Right to Roam legislation.

We briefly visited the Jubilee Pond which looked in good shape and Superintendent Jeremy Wisenfeld said a few words about it.

Verderer Peter Adams spoke briefly about the Lime Avenue in Bush Wood and we pressed on to the Green Man Roundabout where 20 joined. We crossed Leyton Flats and on to Gilbert Slade and the Waterworks Roundabout. The County Hotel coped with the multitude of around a hundred, including London Mayor candidates, Steven Norris, and his young son, Harry, who was a regular on the walk when he was MP for Epping but who has lapsed a bit since. Many thanks to the County Hotel for their generous support for this event.

We took the western side (for a change) of Highams Park Lake to Woodford Golf Course noting the difficulty of crossing Chingford Lane and then on to Whitehall Lane. A brief look at the Forest's English black poplar and a pause at Butler's Retreat.

Here we were joined by Waltham Forest Mayor, Michael Lewis, and his wife and Mrs Newman, member of the Open Spaces Committee, and others. 120 proceeded across Chingford Plain and through Bury Wood to Cuckoo Pits and the Green Ride. At Fairmead, Verderer Richard Morris spoke about Forest Lodge that stood on the site.

After lunch at the Robin Hood, where there were joiners and leavers, we arrived at Loughton Camp where Peter Adams spoke about its history. After a deviation to the Lost (Blackweir) Pond we continued along the Green Ride over Goldings Hill and over the Furze Ground to Debden Camp Site, noting that the Forest floor around was bare of fallen timber which had clearly been used to feed camp fires!



Big beech, Green Ride

We looked at the deer in the Sanctuary and the Superintendent spoke about it. After crossing Jack's Hill we turned uphill and rejoined the Green Ride. At the big beech on the left we noted that the wild honey bee colony that used live there had been replaced by hornets.



Heading for Loughton Camp

On arrival at Bell Common we waved goodbye and departed. Many had completed the whole walk – how many I don't know but included our granddaughter Katie and her friend Claudia who both did about double the distance! Because perhaps I was particularly looking out for them this time I noticed a great many folk not connected with the Centenary Walk using the Forest throughout the whole route.

Harry Bitten

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

The article concerning predator control in the Forest brought back many happy memories of a time when I used to control the grey squirrels in a large ornamental garden which had many rare exotic specimens of plants brought back from the jungles of the Amazon and the far east.

No matter how exotic the plants were the squirrels found them equally tasty and inviting. We were not allowed to trap so the control had to be done with the gun which coupled with my two whippets proved to be very effective. However, what to do with the many squirrels brought to justice?

At that time the Forestry Commission in Wales was also having severe problems with their squirrels and were trapping many hundreds. They consequently recommended the American way of dealing with them; in the States they are deemed a luxury food product and the Commission set about giving away Squirrel pies to forest visitors. I decided that I would have a go at this so set about experimenting with different recipes.

The most difficult aspect is skinning the little beasts as their coats are very thick and luxuriant. But the meat is beautifully fat free and on a large squirrel there is, surprisingly, a lot of it. Made into a pie, or a casserole, the meat is very succulent and tender. I often used to mix it with rabbit or pheasant, or both, and my friends who used to imbibe with me were none the wiser!

I do not wish to enter into the argument as to whether magpies reduce the songbird population (I have my own opinion) but would mention that I read a very interesting article in 'Deer' magazine, the journal of the British Deer Society, about magpie control carried out in a deer park.

Evidently the magpies were attacking the antlers of the deer when they were in velvet and causing them to become misshapen and deformed. The owners of the park asked a vet to advise and he recommended that Larson traps be used to reduce the numbers of magpies.

This was duly carried out over the next year resulting with a massive reduction of magpie numbers. Consequently the deer starting producing their normal, un-deformed

'heads' once again. The Vet, who had written the article, also noted that with the reduction of magpie numbers the songbird population bloomed noticeably the following spring.

Adrian J Liddle

Members may have read the articles in the Newsletter by Ken Hoy and myself about the High Beach Railway, proposed in the late 19th century but never built. I wonder if anyone can help on a matter of its fairly recent history? The only bit of the railway actually to be constructed beyond Chingford Station was a short length of embankment reaching out to Station Road, facing Forest Approach. Up to the time the Chingford Line was electrified, the tracks on this embankment enabled steam locomotives to draw forward from their trains before running round. Coal and water supplies were also available there. The embankment was removed in 1968 and the bus station (replacing the turning point formerly at the Royal Forest Hotel) built on its site.

Has anyone a photograph of the Chingford Station area showing the embankment? If so, I would be extremely grateful if I could be allowed to make a copy of it. I can be contacted via the Editor or by phoning me on 01992-718103.

Edgar Brown

HORSE RIDERS PROTEST

At the time of writing we understand that on 30th October, horseriders are planning to organise a protest ride on Daws Hill/Bury Road. This is being done to draw attention to the near impossible conditions confronting riders (and also walkers) on that route. The traffic there has increased enormously over recent years along this narrow twisting road, so much so that the single-decker bus service along there has been withdrawn.

POND AID FOR FROGS

FROGS in need can be helped by the Corporation of London's own pond doctor.

The pond doctor is available to visit your garden pond for free to give advice on conservation and how to create safe habitats to encourage frogs, toads, newts and other wildlife to your garden

For more information call Froglife on 01986 873 733 or visit www.froglife.org.

EXTENSION OF OPEN HORSE-RIDING TO THE CHINGFORD WOODS

We became aware earlier this year that the area of the Forest designated for unrestricted summer horse-riding had been extended southward to Rangers Road/Bury Road. So if you came face-to-face with a horse on one of the narrow paths in that area, it was there legitimately.

We wrote to the Superintendent to enquire why this relaxation had taken place and without prior announcement or consultation.

The Superintendent replied that a review of the policy on free-range riding is due in 2006 in the Rides Review Report. The level of horse-riding has declined over the years and it was desired to test whether an extension to free-range riding would cause ecological and other problems.

This summer's extension is on a trial basis and if it has no perceived disadvantages, will continue for a full summer's test in 2005, with a view to a considered recommendation in the Rides Review Report.

A further reason for the change is stated to be that it will benefit the management of grazing, by allowing the herdsman more freedom in respect of the siting of temporary electric-fenced areas. With regard to this aspect we have pointed out that the recent Countryside Agency Country Code advises landowners and managers to avoid using electric fencing close to where people visit, particularly along narrow paths and at the height of a child.

The Superintendent has indicated that stakeholders will be consulted about the trial extension in due course.

If members have any views as the result of this trial we would be interested to hear them.



ACCESS TO THE BUFFER LAND

We, and many others, have been consulted by the Conservators about our views on their proposal for improving public access to the Buffer Land. The three areas proposed for the possible open public access on foot are:

Warlies Park

Open access on all Warlies Park with the exception of the small wood south of the pond, the Osier Bed and the cricket pitch area ceded to Uphshire village.

Woodredon

Open access on foot over the whole of the Estate north of the M25.

Copped Hall Park

Open access on foot over the area south of the east/west Estate Road except the small wood in the south-west corner to the east of the track to Copped Hall.

We took the view that Warlies particularly and Woodredon were fairly well covered by public footpaths and that in these circumstances to open the areas to public access would not create any additional serious problems. We are therefore in favour of open access.

However, we believe that there would be great value in the access being managed in the same way as it is in the Lee Valley Park, by mowing routes, not necessarily on the lines of public footpaths, which the majority of visitors would use.

In terms of the needs of the ground-nesting birds and the deer population we recognise that dogs could cause problems. Accordingly we have proposed that they should be controlled, especially at nesting and fawning times, and should be excluded totally from Fernhall Wood and Oxleys Wood.

The bridle-ways on Woodredon are often heavily poached and difficult for walkers, so the opportunity to circumvent these by using the fields would be very useful.

Riders we thought were not happy with the sections along the M25 and we suggest that the notion of a permissive horse ride form the Motorway bridge across the field to Sergeant's Green Lane might be explored.

As regards Copped Hall Park, we felt that open access on foot would be valuable so that walkers could go direct from the ladder-stile path to the Selvage crossing the Hall Track. Nevertheless, we suspect that some family groups etc. might be put off by the presence of grazing cattle.

We could see no viable route for a new permissive horse ride although we indicated that we would be very ready to consider any proposals in any of the three areas.

Please send letters for inclusion in the next Newsletter to the Secretary and Editor:

**Mrs P Bitten,
9 Frederica Road,
Chingford, E4 7AL**

Editor

SNOW SCENES

As a hard winter is supposed to be coming (?) make sure you take some snowy pictures for us to use as Christmas cards! Remember a couple points about photographing in snow conditions. Don't bother to take photographs unless there is sunshine to make them sparkle - otherwise snow pictures turn out very flat and dull.

Also 'shoot' with the sun to the left or right or even ahead - into the sun, with the sun blocked out by a tree trunk or your hand etc. Get out early before the sun has had a chance to melt the fine tracery showing on the twigs. Good luck.

"See you all at the FofEF Forest Supper, Ed"

EXHIBITION AT GUILDHALL ART GALLERY

Julian Perry, Testament: The Epping Forest Paintings

8th Sept - 21 Nov 2004



V-2 Bomb Crater in Snow

The Gallery's next exhibition, in collaboration with Austin Desmond Fine Art, is a collection of more than thirty paintings by Julian Perry which reveal the extraordinary history of Epping Forest; and form a testament both to its rich and varied past and to its continuing significance for the future.

Julian Perry has an established reputation for his enigmatic East London landscapes: Testament is a two year Arts Council-supported project that reveals strange and astonishing features of the forest, both historical and contemporary. The exhibition conveys the punctuation marks throughout history that have shaped its landscape, from Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries to the 1878 Act that transferred the forest to the Corporation of London and ensured its protection forever.

FofEF

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Forest Supper

November 25th, Thursday

Forest Supper at Sir James Hawkey Hall, Broomhill Rd, off Broadmead Road, Woodford green. 7.30 for 8.00.

Walks

November 7th, Sunday 10.30am. An autumn walk around Copped Hall and the Warren Plantation.

Meet in Ravener's farmyard, Copthall Green, Upshire. Travelling north on the B1393 Epping New Road, take the first turning on the left after the Wake Arms roundabout (ignoring the entrance to the closed-off Lodge Road). Follow the road (Crown Hill) for approx. three-quarters of a mile towards Upshire. Ravener's Farm is on the right just after passing under the M25.

**Leader: Ian Cox
(EF Forester & Head of Works)
GR 424 007**

December 16th, Thursday 1.30pm.

Take a break from shopping and join us in a winter's walk around the Hollow Ponds, followed by wine and mince pies. Meet in the car park on the south side of Snaresbrook Road, A1107, which is the road running west- east between Woodford New Road, A104, and the Woodford High Road, A11, just north of the Whipps Cross roundabout.

**Leader: Robert Levene
GR 395 891**

2005

January 13th Thursday 1.30 p.m

A walk from Palmers Bridge to Connaught Water and the Cuckoo Pits. The nearest car-parking is at Fairmead Bottom car-park. Travelling north on the Epping New Road, turn left at the Robin Hood P.H. and left again by the green tea-hut. The car-park is 5mins down the hill on the right. To get to the start of the walk at Palmers Bridge walk southwards down Fairmead Road for 5-10 minutes.

**Leader: Verderer Peter Adams,
GR 408 957**

Feb 12th, Saturday 10.30am.

A winter walk round the Wanstead Park ponds and along the Roding and Aldersbrook. Meet at the Warren Road entrance to Wanstead Park. If travelling by car from the Green Man Roundabout take Bush Road; straight ahead at the traffic

lights into Overton Drive; follow to the end and turn right into Warren Road. It is approx. 10 minutes walk from Wanstead Underground Station.

**Leader: Harry Bitten
GR 414 877**

March 18th, Friday 10am. A spring walk through the Coopersale Fields and the Lower Forest and maybe as far as Gernom Bushes. Meet in the Stonnards Hill Recreation Ground car park. Travelling north through Epping, Stonnards Hill is a turning on the right opposite Lindsey Street by the triangular green. Epping Station is about 15 minutes walk away.

**Leaders: Pat and Ron Andrews
GR 465 024**

OTHER

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

EF Conservation Volunteers

We meet at the Warren at 9.30, off Warren Hill in Loughton, and we aim to leave promptly at 9.45. Wear sturdy working clothes and boots, and carry waterproofs. Hard hats and gloves are provided when necessary, as are waders for pond tasks. Bring food and drink if you are staying all day. We usually return to the Warren at about 3.30.

Sunday November 7th, Walthamstow Forest, Day set aside for BTCV tree felling course.

Tuesday November 9th, *Lost Pond*. Creating haloes around some of the beeches to protect the tree roots.

Sunday November 21st, *Chingford Golf Course Pond*. Removal of reeds to open up the water for Great Crested Newts.

Sunday November 28, *Strawberry Hill*. Further sycamore clearance continued from previous tasks.

Sunday December 5th, *Sunshine Plain*, Birch clearance on the plain to assist the heathland restoration.

Sunday December 12th, *Long Running*, Birch clearance.

Sunday December 14th, Pole Hill. Completion of blackthorn clearance from boundary edge.

Sunday December 19th, *Rushey Plain*. Birch clearance & creating haloes around veteran oak trees.

2005

Sunday January 2nd, *Conservation Path*. Birch clearance opposite Lodge Road.

Tuesday January 11th, *Fairmead*



Church Road, High Beach

**Friends' of Suntrap
Winter BBQ Bonfire
and
Lantern Making
3.00pm Sat 27th Nov**

Entry by ticket only, price £5
Contact Suntrap on 020 8508 0611
before 8th Nov to reserve yours

Bring a jam jar for lantern making

Registered Charity No: 1102119

Bottom. Birch clearance along the ditch line to complete the work on this particular project.

Sunday January 16th, *Clay Ride*. Birch & scrub clearance to open up path from Baldwins Hill and help heather re-growth.

Sunday January 23rd, *Copley Plain*. Remove and/or coppice willow along ditch line and also remove birch from banks of ditch.

Sunday January 30th, *Sunshine Plain*. Continuing task of 5th December.

Sunday February 6th, *Gernon Bushes*. Interesting work on EWT Reserve near Epping.

For more info contact Peter Lyons
020 8529 3060

Essex Wildlife Trust

**Epping Forest Local Group
Thursday 18 November 2004
BIRDS AND THEIR EPIC
JOURNEYS**

Focussing on the Roding Valley Nature Reserve, with much of the research carried out on this site, Anthony Harbutt will share their journeys, all without petrol or diesel, with us!

Meet: Methodist Church Hall,
Loughton High Road at 8:00 pm

Wednesday 1 December

FROM BOMBS TO BUTTERCUPS

The fully illustrated talk on the Roding Valley Nature Reserve by Jenny Filby and Paul Cook. A special public performance.

Meet: St Stephens Hall, Buckhurst Way, Buckhurst Hill at 7:15 pm for 7:30 pm. Tea, coffee and sales goods (for Christmas).

Sunday 23 January 2005

HAINAULT FOREST DISCOVERY

Your chance to explore another 'part' of Epping Forest. Joint with the BNA. Meet: Camelot Public House at 10:30 am.

Watch out for the Lee Valley Bird Fair - in February 2005

EF Field Centre Courses

For further details or to make a booking please call 020 8502 8500

EF Information Centre

Literary Footsteps, Sunday 14 November 10.30a.m. - 12.30p.m. A guided walk led by Sophie Lillington exploring the Forest haunts of Alfred Tennyson, John Clare, William Morris, D. H. Lawrence and others. Meet in the carpark opposite Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, Rangers Rd. E4. (GR 397 947)

Friday 19th November 7.30p.m. - 10.00p.m. A Walk by *Moonlight*

A night-time walk led by Forest Operations Manager Ian Cox. Starting at The Forest Gate pub at Bell Common (CR 451 012) the walk will cross Great Gregories over to

Long Running, Ambresbury Banks and return to Bell Common in time for last orders!

Christmas Recorders from Scratch

Sunday 5 December 1.00p.m. - 3.30p.m. An open event for children and their families who'd like the fun of playing recorders together in the wonderful historic setting of Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge.

Sunday 12 December 10-30am - 12.30pm. Christmas in the Forest. A guided walk in the High Beach area followed by a hot drink and mincepies. Meet at the Information Centre, High Beach. (GR 413982)

Looking for Father Christmas Sunday 12 December 11.00a.m. - 3.00p.m. A self-guided trail through the Forest leading to Father Christmas in his grotto. Cost £2.50 per child including a gift. Start at the Epping Forest Information Centre, High Beach. *Drop in anytime between 11.00a.m. and 3.00p.m.* All children must be accompanied.

Sunday 16 Jan and 13th Feb 10.00am - 2.00pm

Deer Walk, A guided walk led by Forest Keeper Michael Collins. This walk will last for approximately four hours and will concentrate on looking for signs and sightings of the Forest's deer in the Forest, Copped Hall Park and the Peer Sanctuary. Due to the popularity of last year's walk, we shall be holding two of these walks, one on 16 January and one on 13 February - numbers will be limited to 40 persons each walk. Start at the

Copped Hall Gates, Crown Hill, Upshire (GR 430 005). Please bring a packed lunch. Booking essential, please telephone 020 8508 0028. Sorry, no dogs allowed on this walk.

Thursday 3 February at 8.00

The Superintendent's Annual Lecture: The Bucolic Forest.

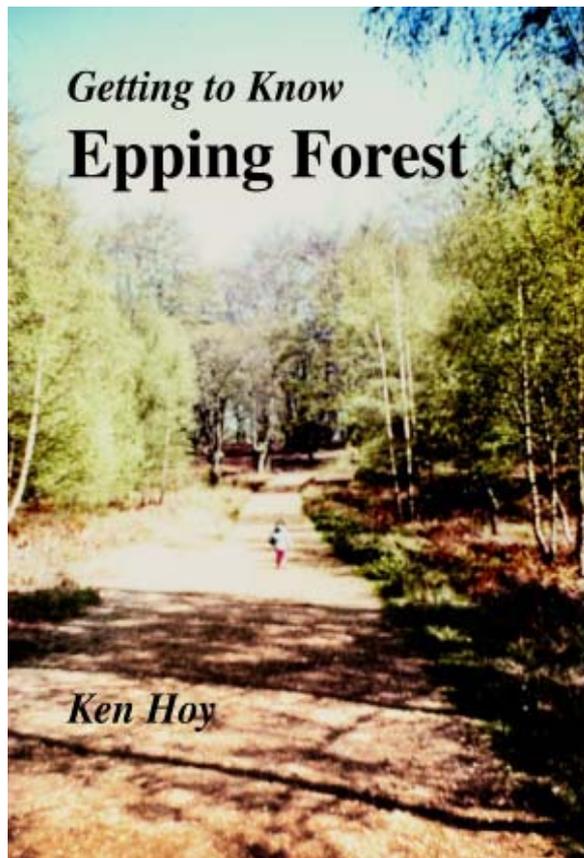
At the Roding Valley Hall. Jeremy Wisenfeld gives an insight into the pastoral heritage and modern day conservation of Epping Forest. Tickets £2.00. For further details please telephone 020 8508 0028.

Sunday 13 March 10.30am- 2.30pm. Off the Beaten Track. *A guided walk led by Clare Eastwood along some of the less well known trails around the Oak Hill area.* Meet at Jacks Hill Car Park. (GR 435 995)

Sunday 27 March & Monday 28 March 11.00a.m.- 3.00pm. Follow a Family Easter Trail. Join in any time between 1100a.m. and 3.00p.m.

A self guided trail round High Beach in search of Easter Clues, starting at the information Centre. £2.00 per child - come and solve the clues and win a prize!

For other children's activities please contact Information Centre on 020 8508 0028.



Getting to Know **EPPING FOREST**

Ken's recent book that names and describes the history of over 200 Forest place names

Copies are still available and will be on sale at the Forest Supper or from Seymour Moss on 020 8529 0620 £6-00 to members (£7-00 p&p).

Otherwise available at the Epping Forest Information Centre, High Beach and in several local bookshops (£6-95).

**IT MAKES AN EXCELLENT
CHRISTMAS PRESENT**

ITEMS FOR SALE

We now have a stock of lots of new sale items, which will be on sale at the Forest Supper and would make excellent Christmas presents.

| | |
|---|----------|
| Mugs | £4 |
| Pens | 50p - £1 |
| Greetings Cards (pack of 5 (L) or 8 (S)) | £2.50 |
| Christmas Cards (pack of 10) | £3 |
| Tree Poster | £1 |
| Torch Key Rings | £2 |
| Fridge Magnets | £2 |
| Metal Lapel Badges | £2 |
| Spy Scopes (Monocular) | £3.50 |
| Fleeces | from £15 |
| Sweat Shirts | from £15 |
| Caps | £5 |
| Tea Towels | £3 |
| Epping Forest Maps | £1.50 |
| Books: | |
| Getting to Know Epping Forest | £6.95 |
| Short Walks in Epping Forest | £2.40 |

FofEF NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL

All new members who supply an e-mail address are initially sent a printed Newsletter and Membership Card.

The membership secretary then sends a test message to verify your e-mail address and provide information, on how obtain *Adobe Acrobat Reader* (required to 'read' the Newsletter) and the problems encountered with "hotmail". If any member who has requested their Newsletter by e-mail and finds it subsequently arrives by other methods, please contact "seymour@moss40.freemove.co.uk" giving their name and address and e-mail address.

Existing members wishing to receive the Newsletter by e-mail should also contact Seymour Moss at: seymour@moss40.freemove.co.uk.

Please send your request by e-mail to ensure we get your correct address.

F of EF E-MAIL AND WEB ADDRESSES

Ken Hoy: kenhoy@care4free.net

Membership Secretary (Seymour Moss):
seymour@moss40.freemove.co.uk

FofEF web-site: www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk

FOREST SUPPER – NOVEMBER 25th 2004

Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green (7.30 for 8pm)

The caterers for our Supper this year are again the Magpies Nest of Bell Common, Epping. We have a menu of cold ham and salmon with potatoes and salads. Usual choice of two sweets, followed by coffee. We will supply wine and glasses; plates and cutlery.

There will be the usual quizzes, goods for sale including new Christmas cards, mugs, new greetings cards, sweatshirts, fleeces, **Ken's 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.

We are keeping the price of tickets at £13.50. 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 20th. 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 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.

REMEMBER – ADMISSION BY TICKETS ONLY

CHRISTMAS CARDS OF EPPING FOREST



We now have this season's Christmas cards that depict five different attractive Winter scenes of Epping Forest (3 pictured above). 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 Thursday 25th November or arrange to pick up supplies by phoning Peg Bitten, 020 8529 8594.

If you wish packs to be sent by post please send a cheque made payable to F of EF for £4.05 (£3.00 plus 1.05p p+p) per pack to Mrs P Bitten, 9 Frederica Road, Chingford, E4 7AL.

Forest Supper Booking Form

Please provide ticket(s) for the 2004 Forest Supper @ £13.50 each (please list all names below):

.....

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

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 20th 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.**