



**Dear Friend,**

## CATTLE GRAZING IN EPPING FOREST

That is the title of a consultation document of future management to be issued by the Corporation of London early in November.

There is to be a three-months period ending 31 January 2006 during which the public may respond with their views, having first of course obtained a copy of the document by telephoning 020 8508 0028 or email: [epping.forest@corpoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:epping.forest@corpoflondon.gov.uk)

**We urge all our members to obtain a copy of the document and respond to it.**

As well as the views of the Corporation on the subject, the document contains the brief views of other bodies, including the Friends and an individual commoner, who were invited to make submissions.

The Friends will of course be forwarding our full comments on the document to the Corporation within the consultation period but we also wish to put our views to our members before you submit your own views.

We realise that some members responded to the call in our last Newsletter – before full details of the proposals were known – but we urge them to return to the subject after having read our comments below.

As we have already said, we are not opposed to the grazing of commoners' cattle as such but we do have serious misgivings as to the consequences of



the extent of the expansion of grazing indicated in the document. Perhaps the most revealing section indicative of the Conservators' intentions is on the final page of the text which declares that in

the very long term, commoners grazing could be "re-established across the Forest from Wanstead to Epping". "This would require a significant increase in cattle numbers back to earlier levels."

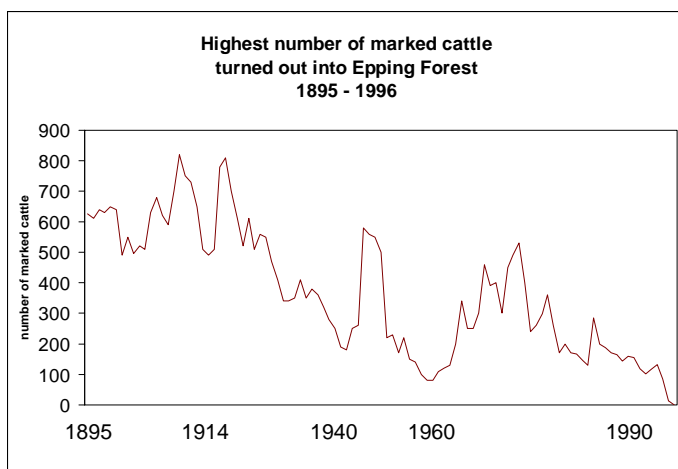
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The document states that this process could take ten to twenty-five years! It is extraordinary that this time period should be declared to be 'very long term'. In forest terms it's the blink of an eyelid!

But what does "cattle numbers back to earlier levels" mean? We are not even given an indication. In 1895 there were 627 cattle on the Forest (after the 1878 Act a few commoners/graziers turned out large numbers of cattle, see Addison's *Portrait of Epping Forest*, page 129). In 1939 there were 189, in 1974 there were 299, subsequently the numbers dwindled, averaging about 170 in the 1980s and declined further until in 1996 the BSE epidemic stopped grazing altogether. Which of the earlier levels is the target? We are not told.



*This graph shows the fluctuations in the number of marked cattle grazing in Epping Forest. The figures have been obtained from the Superintendent's Annual Reports which record the number of animals marked on each of the four marking days. The highest figure for each year was used to prepare this graph. (Tricia Moxey)*

Of course the steady reduction in the numbers of cattle on the Forest reflects the parallel reduction in the number of commoners/graziers turning out cattle on the Forest (in 2005 there can only be a handful!), and the virtual total change in the Forest hinterland since the passing of the 1878 Act.

In the 1800s when all the present suburbs were small villages, farms – including dairy farms supplying the London market – surrounded the Forest. Grazing was then a legitimate economic activity and was an important aspect of life for the poor cottagers who kept a cow or two on the Forest and who are in any case now excluded since they do not own the half-an-acre necessary for commoner status.

Forest grazing, perhaps not in a very organised way, probably does go back a thousand or more years as the document says. But did it loom quite as large in importance in shaping the Forest landscape and the wildlife as is claimed?

From distant times to comparatively recently the major function of the decreasing stock of woodland was as a source of firewood and timber. After the 12<sup>th</sup> century the area was part of the Royal Hunting Forest and strict laws were in place to protect the King's deer. Over-grazing by commoners' cattle was not tolerated as this affected the pasturage (vert) and therefore the deer.

In 1086 the Domesday Book records that in all the then Forest parishes, from Harlow to Thameside and from Romford and Ilford to Waltham Abbey and Walthamstow, there were only 212 cattle. Many of these would be grazed locally and on the Thames, Lea and Roding water meadows. The small number remaining grazing on the Forest

area, which was much larger then than now, would hardly have made much of an impact on the Forest landscape or wildlife diversity.

The document itself gives no details of the number of cattle released annually onto the Forest. Even a few 'snapshot figures' for the many centuries between Domesday and 1878 might have been illuminating. When critical and far reaching and

long term proposals for management changes are considered, the public, we believe, are entitled to be given facts on which to base their comments.

The document purports to suggest that the Conservators have some sort of legal obligation under the 1878 Act to so manage the Forest as to encourage commoners/graziers to turn out their cattle on the Forest. This is not so. The Act merely states that "All rights of common of pasture and of common of mast or pannage for swine on or over Epping Forest, as they exist at the passing of this Act, shall continue without prejudice, nevertheless to the provisions of this Act".

In relation to the motivation behind the saving of the Forest, the document exaggerates the importance of grazing and skirts carefully around – indeed does not mention at all – the real impetus behind the passing of the Epping Forest Act 1878. The objectives of the Corporation of London, The

Commons Preservation Society and other bodies and individuals representing the nascent environmental movement was not to preserve commoners grazing rights but to preserve historic forest and valued open space for the recreation of the public. Of course it was the Willingales fight for lopping rights that helped to trigger of the action to save the Forest.

It is worth recalling, that in the 1960s, when there were only 8-10 commoners/graziers the cattle were causing some problems by straying off the Forest in search of better grazing off private gardens. Apart from resentment by residents there was the hazard caused by mixing with traffic, even then on the much less busy roads.

The Conservators sought to alleviate the problem by asking that cattle be kept north of Chingford and to encourage them to stay there by improving the pasture by fertilising the grasslands. Yardley Hill, Fairmead, Almshouse Plain, Chingford Plain and Honey Lane Quarters all received this treatment.

Despite this, problems continued and moreover in a succession of wet winters the open areas of the Forest became seriously 'poached' by cattle, and in 1975 the Conservators took powers to halt winter grazing which resulted in them paying compensation to the commoners/graziers for loss of rights.

At that time, in order to come to terms with the difficulties caused by free-ranging cattle needing to cope with heavy and fast moving traffic, the Conservators considered the tethering of cattle and folding within light fencing or full time herding, no mention being made of fencing the Forest itself. In the event the problem was solved by the fact that over the years the number of commoner/graziers reduced, as did cattle numbers until 1996 and BSE brought an end to grazing altogether.

Although in ideal circumstances, before the invention of the motor car, cattle grazing in moderation would be a desirable feature of the Forest scene, at present with the requirement of miles of permanent and temporary electric fencing and other measures, the minuses outweigh the plusses in our view.

We have agreed that grazing in the Forest goes back a long way, but we submit that it only, by and large, took place on the open grassy areas that still exist on much the same scale on the same locations as today. Cattle tend to eat grass rather than scrub. The picture we have is of a Forest where cottagers and farmers/commoners kept a single cow or a small herd on a grassy glade

adjacent to their cottage or farm. Many were in need of regular milking!

When the Conservators took over the Forest in 1878 they found that much of the woodland was densely packed with spindly and misshapen pollarded trees and that had grown that way despite the presence of cattle on the Forest. So much so that they embarked on a vigorous programme of pollard, tree and scrub clearance and created paths, rides and glades so that the public could enjoy their new space for recreation.

Over subsequent years the cattle predictably and happily continued to graze the open grassy areas and sundry gardens. However, despite the presence of many cattle (over 600 in 1895) this did not prevent the re-growth of vegetation in the woodland.

Opposed as we are to fencing the entire Forest, we take with equal seriousness the apparent intention in the document to create a wood pasture system over the whole Forest. In order to graze and keep open perhaps 4000 acres of wood pasture a huge number of cattle would be required. This seems impractical to us and even if achieved would create something more like a cattle ranch than a unique forest and something very different from what we have known and enjoyed and which in all probability never existed.

Legislation now requires that cattle be taken off the Forest from November to April. Where would this vast number of cattle spend the winter? Large parts of the buffer land at Copped Hall and Warlies have been used over the last few winters to accommodate the modest sized 'conservation' herd of English longhorns.

However, the single farm payment scheme, which is applied to those areas, has recently decreed even this low concentration of animals is too much to sustain the ground in agriculturally and environmentally acceptable conditions and so 26 of the herd of 52 will be moved into farm-barn accommodation. **There appears no way that these methods could cope with many hundreds of cattle.**

Those who have walked over the bufferland in question will know how uneven and uncomfortable it is for pedestrians on account of the poached and dried sward caused by winter grazing. Ironically the Conservators have thrown open these areas to public access on foot. How many people will be ready to use these areas when they are so unpleasant to walk on and also contain herds of large animals sometimes including bulls.

Cattle can be and sometimes are dangerous and not all cattle on the bufferland are of the so-called placid English longhorn variety. When 'spooked' by dogs even these can just charge off in all directions to the danger of anyone who happens to be in the way. There have already been incidents of this kind and the Conservators should not just brush this matter aside, it is a real potential danger. Much has been made recently by the Conservators to improve access to a wider range of the public. These will be largely urban dwellers unused to mixing in unfamiliar circumstances with large animals, not the rural dwellers of centuries past. The measures under discussion will not improve access for more people, but circumscribe it.

It is acknowledged in the document that the containment in safety of such large numbers of animals would present problems. Speeding and heavy traffic is of course the crux of the matter and reference is made to discussions with Essex County Council on the production of a Forest transport strategy. This would be highly desirable but the chance of achieving anything significant is, in our view, negligible. Traffic speeds would need to be reduced to 20mph or less in order to make main forest roads without fences usable by both cattle and vehicles.

In circumstances where under the East of England Plan half-a-million houses are planned for the region, including the development of North Weald Airfield and a major expansion of Harlow southwards, there will be a huge increase of traffic on Forest roads. There is no chance in our view, of a 20mph speed limit even being considered.

The only alternative, permanent fencing on main roads, would remove any possibility of road speed limitation by Essex County Council. Thus penning-in the cattle by such fencing would result in increased danger to smaller animals including deer and birds. The present fence alongside the A104 has not prevented deer from being killed by speeding traffic. To fence in the entire main road network would first increase deer-road-kill and then have the effect of deterring deer from penetrating the Forest altogether.

Under "Learning the Lesson" the document cites the New Forest, Malvern Hills and Ashdown Forest as examples of open spaces where all potential solutions (presumably to the grazing problem!) have been used. All of these places are completely different from our Forest. The New Forest is more than ten times as big and has a

rural hinterland, Ashdown Forest is much the same size as Epping but has a rural setting and itself surrounds a similar sized area that is largely rural. Malvern Hills is a much smaller area and while it has the town of Gt Malvern to the north, elsewhere it abuts onto open country. None of them has the same level of public usage as Epping or is embedded within a vast urban population.

The Friends Constitution demands that we seek to see that the provisions of the Epping Forest Act 1878 are upheld, one of those is that the Forest should be open and unenclosed for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

In the Wanstead Flats Integrated Site Management Plan and on various information boards in the Forest, it is stated that in pursuing the principal of inter-commonage the Corporation argued that there were no physical boundaries to grazing and that commoners' cattle had always been free to wander from one part of the Forest to another. Any installation of permanent fencing to all main roads in the Forest clearly constitutes a barrier and therefore we oppose such a development as being against the letter and spirit of the Act.

The measures necessary in order to cope with free-ranging cattle; permanent fencing (we calculate some 45 kilometres), grids, electric fencing, contractors to clear huge areas of woodland, payments to commoners/ graziers, out-pasturing in winter, would seem to be enormously expensive. We believe it would be more economical to achieve the object of a diverse biological future for the Forest by the means of strimming, selective shrub and herbage removal, ground scraping etc. which would sit more happily with a publicly accessible open space.

Measures should also be pursued to encourage more fallow deer and rabbits to move south through the Forest, this would bring about more natural grazing.

The Forest is more than a nature reserve with cattle grazing thrown in. People appreciate it for many reasons including its mystery. Even though one is never more than a few hundred metres from a road it still has a feel of remoteness and escape that would be totally lost were it to be turned into wood pasture, viz grassland with scattered trees. *Question: Would woodland regenerate under such conditions?* Overall pasture woodland treatment would create the impression of a farm or cattle ranch.

The Forest can be entered and left anywhere, there are no barriers and this is a priceless benefit also enjoyed at Hampstead Heath similarly unfenced and, incidentally, with no cattle; it is owned and managed by the Corporation.

Fences, grids, gates, stiles etc., especially in a heavily grazed farmed-landscape, all bear subliminal ownership and 'keep out' messages, that do not sit with the expansive and generous provisions of the Act and the intentions of the Corporation when they became conservators of the Forest.

The questionnaire in the Consultative document asks "Do you wish to see grazing re-established across further areas of the Forest?" This dodges the real question, which is, do you want to see grazing (and fencing) over the whole Forest.

The control measures question is unrealistic. Grazing over the whole Forest cannot be brought about just by slower road speeds, road signs, minor road closures, electric fencing or cattle grids. Permanent fencing of all the main roads will be necessary.

Cattle are seen by some people as an attractive feature and in modest numbers they have their value but the Conservators' proposals constitute too high a price.

## KEY ISSUES

We regard the grazing and consequent wood pasture proposals as constituting a dramatic far reaching development in Forest Management, that if implemented would bring about enormous changes in the Forest scene.

We urge you to consider these key issues:

**A:** The **extent** of grazing proposed, not just its management is crucial! The impact of a small herd on one site is very different to perhaps more than a thousand animals across the entire Forest necessitating more than 45 kilometres of fencing.

**B:** The **impact** of grazing on landscape, Forest management, biodiversity and visitors.

A Forest intensively grazed will mean a Forest with significant tree depletion without an understorey of shrubs and limited regeneration. Where will our future Forest trees come from?

A Forest intensively grazed will be more open with views of cars, houses and activities penetrating the very depths of the Forest. It could be more accessible; people and dogs and traffic noise will penetrate all areas of the Forest,

threatening any Forest wildlife through disturbance and loss of habitat. In an area of a large and increasing population, the natural aspect will be severely damaged.

A fenced Forest becomes a farmed landscape. In earlier times, fencing would not have been required. Now grazing requires fencing.

**C:** The **Context** of the Forest should be taken into account. Given that there are millions of people within half-an-hour, opening up the Forest could lead to an abused landscape, visually and ecologically a poor quality 'urban park' rather than the unique nature of the Forest today.

**D:** The **Historic Validity** for the extension of grazing needs assessment. Whilst grazing has been part of the Forest's history we do not know the extent of grazing. Was it ever a savannah, intensively grazed throughout and, even if it were, is that right for today?

**E: Fencing and Legality.** The Epping Forest Act 1878 states that the Forest should be kept open and unenclosed for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. The Conservators have always had powers to make inclosures for management purposes and in 1977 the extent was defined as 100 acres at any one time to **enable the cattle to be excluded so that the enclosed area would recover from overgrazing.**

It is clear from this that fencing in the whole Forest was never contemplated. This in our view would be against the letter and spirit of the Act.

Landowners and managers are urged by the Countryside Agency not to use electric fencing in areas used by the public (and especially children).

Permanent fences and electric fences impose limitations on public access both directly and indirectly by giving the appearance of private ownership.



*Gate in electric fence*

**F: Winter Grazing.** To increase the cattle herd to the level required to graze the whole Forest could invoke the 'law of unintended consequences'. There could very easily be an extended period of heavy rains such as experienced many times before. The Forest floor would be seriously damaged and the cattle would need to be removed. To the bufferland? Impossible. Elsewhere? Where?

Cattle have to be taken off the Forest in the winter. The enormous number of cattle that would be required to graze the Forest could not in our view be accommodated on the bufferland without causing a massive and unacceptable 'poaching' problem to the detriment of pedestrian access to the bufferland. There are in any case limitations imposed under the Single Farm Payments Scheme (see *text*).

**G: Wildlife and Biodiversity.** We have not seen, neither have we been shown, any substantive evidence of the level of improvement claimed in these matters following the reintroduction of grazing. The impact of grazing on biodiversity needs careful and objective assessment. Species would change, there would be some winners and some losers. Such a dramatic change in management as contemplated would bring about completely unforeseen consequences. These possibilities do not appear to have been assessed.

**H: Need for Careful Consideration.** All these questions underscore the need for a measured approach based on a realistic assessment of the Forest's, and its users, (i.e. the public's) needs now and in the foreseeable future. We are dismayed that the Consultation document seems to be designed to extract a simple **yes** from the public in respect of the expansion of grazing without describing all that that entails.

Having obtained such an endorsement the Conservators would feel enabled to proceed with their plans unfettered by the need for further consultation.

Landscapes change over time, the needs of the community around the Forest change and wider changes impact on the Forest, e.g. climate change. Government is seeking "a resilient landscape" and we need to be sure that the Forest created in 2005 stands the test of time and is not an ill conceived response to 'fashion' undertaken with little regard to the Forest's history, its wildlife, landscape and people.

**I: Costs.** These are on the face of things not the public's concern since at the time of the passing of the Act in 1878 the Corporation undertook to provide the necessary funds for the management of the Forest.

However the costs of so doing have escalated enormously since then which must presumably give some cause for concern. The provision of both permanent and temporary fences, cattle grids, transportation of animals, costs of contractors tree and scrub clearance, financial accommodation with commoners/graziers etc. have recurrent as well as capital cost implications.

Money spent one way cannot be spent another! Are the priorities right?

**FofEF committee**

## THE NATURAL ASPECT

As this Newsletter is a little later than usual the autumn colours of the Forest's trees will have mostly finished when you read this. As I write the early colour changes such as the golden yellows of the birches and hornbeams and the even brighter yellows and pinks of the maple trees have already begun to show. The Field Maple occurs more frequently where there is a trace of chalk in the soil. This is the influence of the 'Chalky Boulder Clay' left behind after the ice age that once covered parts of the Forest ridge. This influence shows in the hedgerows of the countryside to the north and west of the Forest – the Forest green lanes and 'buffer lands' are particularly colourful with the yellows, reds, pinks and purples of the Maple, Blackthorn, Spindle, Guelder Rose, Wild Cherry and



*The plum-like fruit of the blackthorn is the sloe.*

Dogwood. And this year, the sloes are quite plentiful in places... for 'sloe gin'

**Sloe Gin:** Take a half-empty bottle of gin (or half fill 2 empty bottles from one full bottle?) Dissolve 6-8 teaspoons of sugar in each according to taste... wash the sloes with warm water (to remove the waxy 'bloom') and prick them several times... drop them into the gin until the bottle/s are full (at least 30-40 sloes per bottle depending on size of the sloes). Secure the top of the bottle and resist opening it for some 8 weeks, turning the bottle occasionally...

A harsh winter has been predicted. If this in fact happens your bird table is going to be crucial. Garden feeding of birds is clearly important... I have frequently noticed, when in the Forest in winter, that few birds may be seen in the woodland until you approach the edge of the Forest and then, where it adjoins houses and gardens birds are quite suddenly found to be numerous.

Several common birds have very clear food preferences – almost obsessions.

We all know about the tit family and peanuts (never provide salted ones?) and Greenfinches too, but Greenfinches also love sunflower seeds, as do the tits. It is worth planting a few sunflower seeds in a corner next spring in order to have some giant flower heads to hang up in the subsequent winter.

Goldfinches love to feed on thistle and teasel seeds. Sow some teasels too - if you have the space in your garden – this will attract Goldfinches. I grew some teasels this year that attracted many butterflies when their purple flowers were showing in July and a few days ago a small party of Goldfinches spent twenty minutes, in bright sunshine, sitting on the teasel heads extracting and eating the seeds.

Mistle Thrushes, and their thrush family relatives, are certainly addicted to the red berries of the Yew tree and also, somewhat earlier, to the orange berries of the Rowan or Mountain Ash. Of course the Mistle Thrush has been awarded its name because of its obsession with mistletoe berries. In the spring Bullfinches - unfortunately - favour our fruit tree buds, but in winter I have noticed, in the years when the Forest has been covered deeply in snow, that one of the few birds that are able to stay feeding in the woodland, are Bullfinches. They will survive eating dried-up blackberry seeds!

Obviously a very comfortable form of bird-watching is provided by bird-tables and feeders. Then it is the adaptability of many species that is so interesting. The various 'squirrel-proof-nut-cage' feeders often require some learning ability from the birds. Quite often it is easy to see regular visitors going straight in to feed on the nuts, while a strange newcomer will make several futile attempts before a successful one. Nut feeders are more widely provided in gardens now and of course as a result more species of birds have begun to use them. In recent winters I have seen Robins, Chaffinches, and House Sparrows literally learning, hesitatingly at first, to use the feeders. It is only in recent years that the little Long-tailed Tits have begun coming for peanuts

I know many people have the Greater Spotted Woodpecker coming to their feeders... and this too has only happened in the last decade or so. In my garden rapid adaptability was displayed in July when I saw a juvenile Greater-spotted Woodpecker feeding on the Tit's peanut holder. It had learned that habit within a few weeks of leaving the nest. The juvenile birds can be recognised because, unlike the adults, they have a bright red stripe along the top of the head – adults have red under the tail, but only the adult male has a square red patch on the back of his neck.

If we do get a cold winter... feeding your birds is important. But don't put out too much at any one time. Left-overs at night will encourage rats. The important times for the birds are in the early morning and then the early afternoon... so that they can stoke up before dusk and another cold night?

What about feeding the birds and the risk of 'Bird-flu'?

Certainly we should always maintain a high standard of cleanliness at our bird-baths and bird-tables – regular scrubbing with a mild disinfectant and then rinsing – but this, I believe, is because there is always a greater danger of salmonelle poisoning than any other potential threat... so far, I suppose one must add?

If we do get a snowy winter – don't forget to take your camera as Peg is getting short of Xmas card pictures. But remember, the sunshine will 'light-up' a snow picture, whereas a snow scene without the sun is usually 'flat' and uninteresting. Remember also, shoot towards the light (with the sun behind a tree trunk?). Good luck.

**Ken Hoy**



*Unveiling the plaque: (L-R) Keith Willingale, Ken Hoy, Danielle Willingale, Loughton Mayor Mike Wardle and Town Councillor Chris Pond*

## THOMAS WILLINGALE



On the 30<sup>th</sup> July, the Willingale Family Society held its Annual General Meeting at St John's Church Hall, Loughton and a plaque was unveiled commemorating Thomas and what he and his relatives did to begin the battle to save Epping Forest 140 years ago. The Willingale Society consists of members who are descendants of Thomas and his three brothers... they number several hundreds.

Part of a report from the *West Essex Gazette*, 25th August, follows:

*"The man who saved Epping Forest was commemorated at St John's Church, Loughton, at a ceremony attended by family members and local figures.*

*Thomas Willingale lived in the town during the reign of Queen Victoria, and was a key figure in bringing about the 1878 Epping Forest Act, which handed control of the forest to the Corporation of London.*

*The joint venture from the Willingale family and Loughton Town Council was attended by more than 60 people,*

*some of whom had travelled from as far away as Cheshire.*

*They came together officially to unveil a plaque honouring Mr Willingale for the work he did to stop the forest being built over.*

*Family members were joined by representatives from the Higgins family, 'who are descendants of Thomas' wife, together with Loughton mayor Mike Wardle and town councillor Chris Pond.*

*Mr Wardle gave a welcome speech which was followed by presentations from Mr Pond on the history of Epping Forest and Ken Hoy from the Friends of Epping Forest, who spoke about Thomas Willingale's life.*

Chris Pond spoke about the local background and social history of Loughton in the 1860's.

The family members were interested to know whether their ancestor, Tom, was a hero or rogue ?

Ken Hoy, spoke about the Forest customs at that time and the events in 1865 and 1866 that involved Tom Willingale and his son and two nephews.

Ken said that no doubt the Willingales and to a greater or lesser extent, others, augmented their livelihood as commoners in various ways. He mentioned that his grandfather, who was a butcher in Woodford Green, had spoken of Willingale and received venison from him to supply (to order) some of the 'big houses' in Woodford!

Undoubtedly in the past the Forest had supplied local folk with more than lopped wood and grazing. But, in the 1850's commoners from Theydon Bois

had spent time in the debtors prison after unsuccessfully challenging the Lord of the Manor who was denying them their lopping rights. Tom Willingale and his family bravely did the same thing just a few years later. The younger family members refused to pay a fine of 2 shillings & 6 pence and costs & damages of 11 shillings for lopping wood... saying "they would do the seven days" hard labour. They were acting defiantly and on principle - convinced they were right. They had strong local support and we know the rest of the story.

It has been claimed that Tom Willingale enclosed land from the Forest with a 'rolling hedge' around his garden... was this not the same as the Lord of the Manor of Loughton enclosing Forest land? Ken concluded by saying he thought there was not just a quantitative difference but a qualitative difference between a few square yards and one thousand three hundred acres.

Therefore he thought that the Willingale and Higgins family members present could be justifiably proud of their ancestors and their actions.

*The Chairman of the Willingale Society, Keith Willingale, owns a vineyard in Wiltshire, and had especially for the occasion, bottled a prize-winning white wine.*

*The Friends of Epping Forest decided it was appropriate to recognise retiring Verderer Dr. Eric Dormer's service to Epping Forest by presenting him with some of 'The Epping Loppers' wine...the label included pictures of 'the Willingales'.*

## 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**

## WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

*(Taken from Chelmsford & Central Essex Group RSPB Newsletter)*

I know from the telephone calls I receive that many of you are seriously concerned about the welfare of the birds and animals that you meet in your gardens and in the countryside, and that you often need help to deal with the situations you meet.

I have prepared a list of people who can give you help and advice. I hope you will find it useful.

**Dead Birds:** If you find a bird that has recently died and which is in good condition, pop it into a plastic bag, put it in the deep freeze and telephone Kim MacDonald on 01621 850123 in work time. He will pick it up and, as a taxidermist, use it for educational purposes.

**Injured Birds:** Although the RSPCA will help (tel: 0870 555 999) they cannot guarantee to respond urgently. My advice is to take the bird to your local vet in surgery hours. He/she will treat it free of charge.

**Illegal Treatment of Birds:** If you come across illegal bird trapping, bird shooting or egg stealing, contact your local Wildlife Liaison Officer through your local Police station.

**Racing Pigeons:** If you find a pigeon (whether alive, injured or dead) with rings on its legs, one of which is a metal ring covered in coloured plastic, note the number and telephone Alan Feering of the Royal Pigeon Racing Association on 01452 713529.

**Birds of Prey:** Report or any injured or lost bird of prey to Kim MacDonald on 01621 850123, or Epping Forest Hawk and Owl Sanctuary on 01277 899925/07957 980775.

**Badgers:** It is very important that road-killed badgers are collected. If you see one, note its position and telephone Don Hunford on 01268 792385. He can also advise on badger problems.

If you see what could be the destruction of a badger set, contact your Wildlife Liaison Officer through your local Police station.

**Bats:** These fascinating creatures are protected by law. If you find any dead or injured bats or would like advice on bats which may be living in your house or outbuildings, telephone John Dobson 07913 348691.

If you have any difficulty with any of these telephone numbers, or with the service given to you or if you have any information that may improve the service I am trying to offer, do please ring me on 01621 892045.

*Mike Logan Wood,  
Group Leader*

## STRIDES FOR CHANGE

THIS SUMMER CPRE Essex and Friends of Epping Forest joined forces on a sun-drenched walk from Chingford to Theydon Bois to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Britain's Green Belts and to highlight threats to the region.

The Epping Forest District had been earmarked as a site for more than 18,000 new houses, a number that was reduced by a third after Friends and other local bodies amassed 13,000 signatures for a petition they presented to Parliament. However, the new figure of 11,000 proposed homes is still too high, and could ruin outlying Green Belt land.

CPRE member Harry Bitten led the walk, which wound through fields that offered clear views of land that has become steadily more urbanised beyond the Green Belt, illustrating the threat from continued development.



The 70 walkers who took part finished their journey at Theydon Bois Village Hall, where CPRE branch chairman, Terry Callaghan spoke of the need to safeguard the area from development. He went on to advise the hundred-strong crowd to protest against Government plans whenever possible - particularly in writing - and outlined plans for future walks that would keep the issue alive.



*Wanstead Flats or Wanstead Heath?*

## WANSTEAD FLATS I S P

We have commented upon the Wanstead Flats Integrated Site Plan

- although this public consultation of this plan pre-empts the major public consultation on 'Grazing' over the forest as a whole that is pending.

Generally we think that insufficient information has been supplied to the public to make informed judgments... for instance how extensive is the grazing and how widespread is the necessary fencing?

We believe that Wanstead flats is an area of the Forest mostly concerned with public recreation, both formal and informal. Perhaps more so than any other part of the Forest.

We expressed concern that if widespread cattle grazing were to return to the Flats permanent fencing of all the roads would be required. This we found unacceptable as it would change the whole open aspect of the landscape, and would be restrictive of traditional public access. We also believe it would be of dubious legality.

We also felt that cattle grazing itself was inappropriate in this highly popular and heavily used area. Furthermore we think electric fencing is intimidating to people walking with dogs, family parties and most forms of informal recreation and therefore restricts access.

Since the area of the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) is tiny compared with the remaining area that is over 90% of the whole, we consider public recreational use to be of prime importance and thus we think the management policies should not depend on cattle grazing.

We also feel that to change the locally well known name, Wanstead Flats, to any other long forgotten name is unnecessary and quite inappropriate.

## SWAINES GREEN IS SECURE

(From Friends of Swaines Green Autumn Newsletter)



As you will probably know, after a fight for many years, we have achieved one of our principal aims. The four fields of Swaines Green have been purchased from Mr Stevens, the owner, who is known to have had half an eye on their potential development.

Three of the fields are now owned by the Corporation of London, while Lovelocks is owned by Epping Town Council. Covenants are being entered on the land ensuring that they remain as a nature reserve and/or open pasture.

The total price of the entire parcel of land was £145,000 which was made up of £25,000 from the Friends of Swaines Green, £35,000 from Epping Town Council and £85,000 from the Corporation of London who raised some of the money by means of a grant from English Heritage.

However, the purchase of the land was only possible thanks to the key role played by the Friends of Swaines Green and especially all the people who

contributed so generously to the fund we launched to buy the Green. Without this enthusiasm and the community events we organised, it is highly unlikely that the Corporation would have come on board in such a positive way. The committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to this fund and made possible this wonderful outcome.

It has been agreed that all four fields will be managed as one site in conjunction with Countrycare and that the Friends of Swaines Green will be involved in the management and we will have a key role to play in the maintenance of the Green.

In many ways this is the best possible outcome with the fields owned by bodies that have been established by statute and which have a degree of permanence, while the covenants ensure that the land remains in its present state.

To commemorate this important occasion, when for the first time in the best part of a thousand years these fields are guaranteed as a reserve for wildlife and as a public amenity, it was decided that the committee would hold a small reception on the Green.

This was also a useful exercise in promoting the existence and importance of the Green and we were pleased to receive the Mayor of Epping, Councillor Brian Rolfe, the Superintendent of Epping Forest as well as several Verderers and the Chairman of the Corporation's Open Spaces Committee.



*Lady Plomer's Palace on the summit of Hawke's Bill, Epping Forest*

## LADY PLOMER'S PALACE

FofEF member Valerie Wales of Oxford sent this to us having come across it locally and asked if we could trace Lady Plomer and the whereabouts of her Palace. We consulted around and Verderer Richard Morris drew our attention to *The Forest in Walthamstow and Chingford* published Chingford Historical Society. On p.22 it states "Bruce Cork in his guide to Chingford 1907, included a copy of an old engraving dated 1797 entitled 'Lady Plomer's Palace' but unfortunately omitted to tell who the lady was or anything of her story". The Chapman and Andre map of 1777 names Pole Hill as Hawk Hill. Does anyone know any more?

**Ed**



# FLOODING OF COBBINS VALLEY



Unfold a map of N.E. London and the long green sliver that is Epping Forest leaps off the page: no-one could mistake its importance to the well-being of this quarter of the Metropolis. Equally obvious are the pressures on the Forest imposed by the urban development to its south, east and west. As we can no longer be complacent about the security of the Green Belt, the open countryside to the north, the safety-valve of the Forest, becomes all the more precious. In the patchwork of farmland and woodland bounded by Waltham Abbey, Broadley Common, Epping Green and the M25, it is possible to walk all day without using a public road. On 14th October, 21 Friends of Epping Forest confined themselves to the Cobbins Brook Valley, walking mostly on land acquired by the Corporation of London in 1986 as a buffer for the Forest and to provide a tranquil wildlife reservoir.

The valley has had more than its fair share of development scares in the last 35 years; golf courses; a road from the M25 to Harlow; the expansion of Harlow itself; the commercial pressures of being near two motorways and its appearance in a Sunday newspaper supplement, some 30 years ago, as one of 7 possible sites for a reservoir to cure the south-east's water shortage. The flooding of the Cobbins Valley never came about but understandably, a planning application earlier this year to build a dam across the Cobbins Brook, albeit for different reasons, aroused old fears and suspicions. Under the original scheme, much of our walk would have been under deep water. The present scheme, on a smaller scale, is designed to alleviate the occasional flash-flooding

which occurs in the Green Man area of Waltham Abbey by controlling the Cobbins Brook and allowing it to flood the fields around Brookmeadow and Fernhall Woods. Walking over Warlies Estate also gave us a chance to experience two innovations since our last Buffer-land walk: the Open Access policy for walkers and the horse-riding circuit. Entering Warlies Estate via the Temple Field confirmed our anxieties. Horses and pedestrians sharing the same narrow access is not a good idea - and this was during the dry spell. Once through the gate we were able to stride out across the fields. The black cattle did not show much interest in us and although one tends to use the old pathways (they were created for logical reasons after all), we agreed that knowing that one is not restricted in a wide open space gives a pleasant feeling of release.

We crossed the Cobbins Brook by the downstream bridge taking us into the plantation of mixed species which is now about 15 years old and has established well in spite of the attention of deer in its early stages. Field maples and dogwoods had coloured up particularly well and a fine crop of rose hips helped to brighten a slightly overcast day. By circuiting the plantation, pausing to take in the panoramic view from the top of the field and making our way back to the upstream bridge, we crossed the access route for construction vehicles and one end of the proposed dam. We walked through Brookmeadow wood, described in the scheme as "of county-wide importance" and along its edge to try to imagine the dam curving around

the edge of the wood and the Borrow-pit area which would turn the space between Brookmeadow Wood and Fernhall Wood into a seasonal wetland. Fernhall Wood itself is described as "locally important woodland ... which may benefit from increased flooding."

The final outward stage of the walk took us to the Cobbinsend Bridge where a backwater would be created and the farm access road raised. This is EEC designated historic landscape: small fields with ancient hedgerows which have been sensitively farmed by one family for many years. This is fallow deer and barn owl country and in spite of the electricity pylons, it has a timeless quality. The scheme creates a small pond which is sculpted to encourage water voles and the 60 metres of removed ancient hedge are replaced but the access to the site is along narrow lanes with vulnerable verges (mostly belonging to the Corporation) and the construction period for this site is one to two months.

Unfortunately, any circular walk from Upshire Village results in an uphill climb but we were consoled by a fine crop of late blackberries and brief glimpses of fallow and muntjac deer. Also plenty to debate: the scheme would cost approximately 20 mature trees and 60 metres of important hedgerow and put approximately 20 further trees at risk of damage or decline. There would be a net loss of about 100 metres of natural river channel, replaced by culvert and engineered channel. The disturbance during construction would last about a year. The scheme would create a new pond and three new seasonal wetland areas, with interpretation boards. Fifty nest boxes would be installed in and around Brookmeadow Wood and approximately 50 bat-roosting boxes. Cobbinsend could be considered as a translocation site for water voles.

The application has been in the planning process since the Spring and can be viewed in the Planning Offices at Epping (as it is outside the 3 week public objection period it is a good idea to ring the dept. before you go to make sure a copy is available). Allow plenty of time - there's lots to read! Then explore the valley yourself and let us know your thoughts.

**Sue McKinley**

## Stop Press 1/11/05

*EFDC saw a clear and pressing need for this dam and have therefore granted planning approval. Work is due to commence in Spring 2007. Comments are still welcome from interested parties!*

# TRAFALGAR WOOD PLANTING: WHERE WERE YOU?

The seed (acorn) collection exercise on 9 October was a disappointment because in order to collect acorns there needs to be acorns to collect! Unfortunatley, in the vicinity of Chingford Plain there weren't any. It was providential that so few Friends turned up; about half-a-dozen in fact!

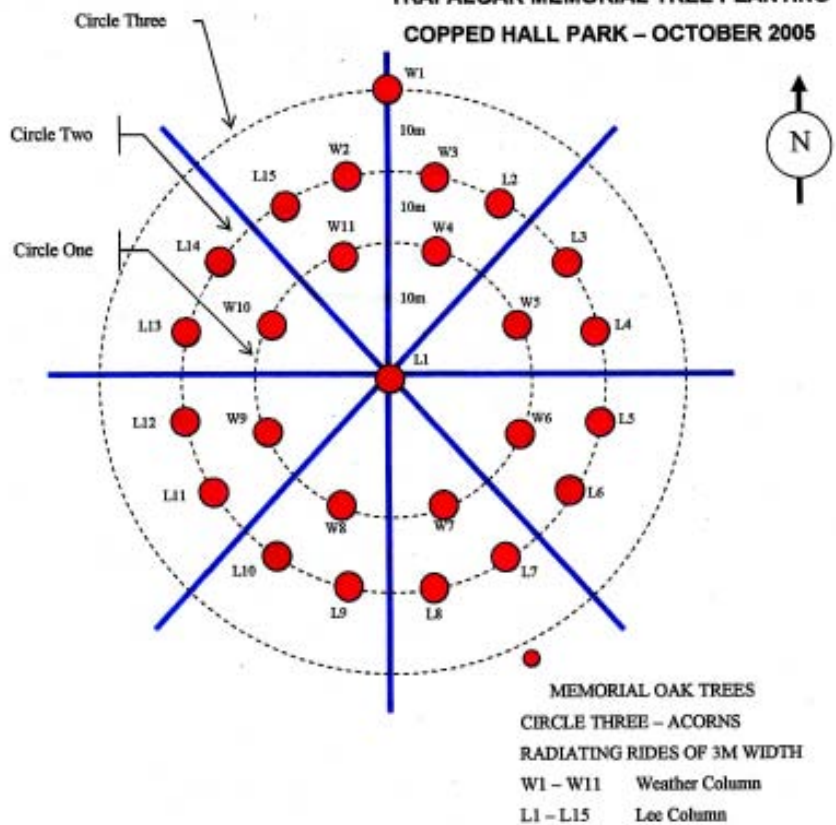
However, through a variety of means, quite a good quantity of acorns were assembled ready for planting on 11 October but alas, once again, very few members turned up, four! not counting members of the committee.

This was a pity because it was hoped to demonstrate our practical support for Epping Forest projects and also you missed a very pleasant few hours.

In order to get the Wood off to a good start the Conservators wanted to plant a number of sizable trees and since this was to be an expensive undertaking the Friends agreed to provide £1000 towards the cost of hiring the necessary specialist equipment.

In the week prior to the acorn planting, a contractor removed trees of 2-3 metres height from Trueloves and replanted them on the site of the new wood. Imagine the spade-digger digging up a tree in Trueloves, trundling up the road to Copped Hall, planting it and then returning to Trueloves for the next tree -26 times. The 26 trees were planted, one for every ship-of-the-line, and all the trees were given a ship's name - Victory,

## TRAFALGAR MEMORIAL TREE PLANTING COPPED HALL PARK - OCTOBER 2005



British Line of Battle			
Weather Column		Lee Column	
1. <i>Victory</i>	7. <i>Britannia</i>	1. <i>Royal Sovereign</i>	9. <i>Revenge</i>
2. <i>Temeraire</i>	8. <i>Ajax</i>	2. <i>Bellisle</i>	10. <i>Swiftsure</i>
3. <i>Neptune</i>	9. <i>Orion</i>	3. <i>Colossus</i>	11. <i>Defence</i>
4. <i>Leviathan</i>	10. <i>Minotaur</i>	4. <i>Mars</i>	12. <i>Thunderer</i>
5. <i>Conqueror</i>	11. <i>Spartiate</i>	5. <i>Tonnant</i>	13. <i>Defiance</i>
6. <i>Agamemnon</i>		6. <i>Bellerophon</i>	14. <i>Prince</i>
		7. <i>Achille</i>	15. <i>Dreadnought</i>
		8. <i>Polyphemus</i>	





Agamemnon, Temeraire etc. Planting was done in a circular pattern, and together with the outer circle of planted acorns this will be the core of the new wood. Further oak and hawthorn planting will take place next year.

The Chairman, Mrs Christine Cohen, and Deputy Chairman and several members, including the Verderers, of the City's Epping Forest and Commons Committee and the Director of Open Spaces were present. Children from the Ivy Chimneys' Primary School built up the numbers and brought the average age down a bit.

Ken presented the cheque to Mrs Cohen after which we got to work planting the acorns, after which we demolished an excellent lunch provided by the Conservators. The very pleasant event was excellently organised by John Holtom for the Conservators, and the weather co-operated with a lovely late summer's day on the day, followed by heavy rain the following day - just right for newly planted trees and acorns.

**Harry**

## GOLDFISH IN FOREST PONDS

Mike Shadrack writes in the Ilford & District Aquarist & Pondkeepers Society



Last week in the rain I drove past the forest pond at the top of Palmeston Road, Buckhurst Hill. It's actually at the junction of Church Road and High Road, Buckhurst Hill. I noticed a group of Forest Keepers had virtually covered the whole pond with a huge seine net. I would have stopped but it was pouring with rain and they were obviously in the early stages of the operation. I returned half an hour later. They had gathered the net to one side of the pond and put it up on stakes driven into the pond floor, so that the bottom of the net was still under water, and the two of them, in waist high waders, were sorting fish. The net was teeming with fish. Goldfish! The keepers said that all of the forest ponds were full of goldfish and that the entire operation was designed to clear out these interlopers. Apparently the goldfish interbred with the local carp and reduce and undermine the carp population. **Many of the fish in the net were goldfish x carp hybrids. There were also tench and proper carp. No sticklebacks and little else. The tench and carp were being transferred to Connaught Waters.**

The keepers also said that the ponds had very high nitrate levels because too many people were feeding to much bread to too few ducks. Whilst watching the operation we talked fish. Forest keepers are very concerned that what they call 'White Capped Minnows' and what we call 'Golden Minnows' might get into Forest ponds. They are not endemic, breed like Cichlids and are aggressive, especially when breeding. Keepers fear that they will decimate local fish stocks. The sale of these minnows is now banned but I know that they are several populations in the Society.

So the message from the Forest Keepers is. Please don't put goldfish or Koi in Forest ponds. Do not dispose of Golden Minnows in any open water and don't feed the ducks. We are responsible fishkeepers and as such we need to spread this word.

**Footnote:** Should you hear of anyone who wishes to dispose of goldfish or other coldwater species we could possibly arrange collection.

**Len Smith, IDAPS Soc.**

## HIMALAYAN BALSAM

*I am a member of FoEF, and great fan of the newsletter, and have recently become aware of an as yet small problem that to the best of my knowledge has not been mentioned. I was recently chatting to one of the organisers of the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers, who said he was arranging clearance of a large patch of Himalayan balsam adjacent to Loughton Brook north of Baldwin's pond. Apparently this fast-spreading weed is a big problem elsewhere in the country. We were chatting near*

*the pond and he showed me examples of the weed, which can be pulled up quite easily as it has shallow roots. It propagates itself by 'exploding' its seed head. If simply thrown aside when pulled up it can then do no harm.*

*Since talking to this chap, I have spotted the weed in a number of different locations, for example at the Baldwins Hill end of the Clay Ride, and on the green opposite the top of the clay ride. It seems to me that FoEF members, if alerted, and told what to watch out for, could help by yanking out this menace.*

**E-mail from Steve Short**



*Himalayan balsam  
(Policeman's helmet)*

## NEWSLETTER DELIVERIES BY HAND

Many thanks to all our Newsletter deliverers - you do a magnificent job and save us lots of money - nearly half of our membership receives hand delivered Newsletters.

We have a few gaps and wonder if there is anyone who can help in the following areas:

1. Beech Hall Rd/Oakhill Close E4
2. Colchester Rd/Forest Drive E10
3. Wood St/Woodford New Rd E17

If you can help, please contact our distribution-in-chief Jim Gimson on: 020 8989 3282

## WALK REPORT

25 June 2005

*Dear Sir, I don't know your name; who you are, or why I am writing to you, as I have nothing to say, except that I am locked up in a mad-house. Your's faithfully...*

So wrote John Clare (1793-1864) one of Epping Forest's most celebrated poets, after he rose from obscurity to oblivion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, suffering from the effects of mental depression that perhaps many of life's discarded celebrities are known to wrestle with even today.

But Clare was luckier in his rehabilitation than most, for whereas the standard treatment for most of his contemporaries was at 'Bedlam', London's notorious mental illness institute that lent its name to unsupervised chaos, he was invited to recuperate, and compose (some of his more famous poems), by the owner of Lippitts Hill Lodge, a large country house turned sanatorium set in tranquil gardens in the rural and quiet surroundings of High Beach; in Epping Forest.

150 years later the 'Friends' annual **midsummer's eve walk** received another invitation to visit Lippitts Hill Lodge from the current owner; not only the house and gardens but more tantalisingly the almost legendary catacombs spiralling down into the earth within its grounds.

The fine weather held for the 47 of us who met at Hornbeam Lane at 7.30pm as advertised, and, itineraries handed out, we took a short stroll through Bury Wood where we were ushered into the grounds by some large electric gates at the foot of Church Road opposite Whitehouse Plain and met by

the owner who escorted the adventurous youngsters among us (i.e. all of us) down into the vaulted stone chambers.

Resurfacing into the sunlight, we were then treated to a trip around the gardens and lakes to take in more exotic trees, plants, and wildlife (literally hundreds of each) than there is space here to write up properly - enough to say that it certainly inspired Clare in his day; and those who questioned the expense, reason or purpose of the Victorian folly should refer to Clare's letter above.

Leaving Lippitts Hill Lodge, we skirted the round Thicket onto Almshouse Plain, and along the Mian Ride into Chingford Plain, where Phil Murfin, the local forest keeper, had assured me only the night before by telephone that the long-horn cattle were grazing (not!) anyway two follies in one day was a consolation and enabled us to pick up lost time diverting back along the Bury Wood ride to our starting point at 9.30pm as schedule - nice one Phil.

**Peter Read**

16 July 2005

Flowers of grasslands were the theme of this walk and Tricia Moxey explained that such habitats on London Clay were not necessarily species rich. Nonetheless the group of 22 members saw over 35 different wild flowers and met some of the English Long horned cattle, which during the summer wander about the grasslands returning each evening to a corral on Fairmead Plain. There was a good range of insects feeding on the nectar provided by thistles including skipper butterflies.

## CENTENARY WALK

25 September 2005

As we drove to Wanstead Flats, heavy rain was falling and the weather forecast was that a band of rain would cross the south-east with better weather after lunch.

Verderers Davies, Morris and Adams, and the Mayor of Epping, members of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, Jez Dagley (Conservation Officer) and 70 others were at the start. I briefly introduced my successor as leader of the walk, Mike Whiteley. This year was my last as leader after 21 years.

Amazingly, as we crossed the Flats, the rain stopped, the clouds rolled away and we had brilliant weather for the rest of the day. We picked up quite a few more at the Green Man Roundabout

and again on Leyton Flats. Then, on to Gilberts Slade where the Conservation Volunteers were working and we took a short break to hear an account of what they were up to. After the Waterworks Roundabout we paused at the Gipsy Smith monument and then on to the County Hotel, who again generously provided free refreshments for 100 plus walkers. Many thanks to them.

The count on leaving the County Hotel was 117. Across Highams Park and Woodford Golf Course and Whitehall Plain, where we split into two groups, one deviating to look at the English native black poplar, both groups meeting up at Butler's Retreat.

More people joined us there than left us and so 130 people set off across Chingford Plain into Bury Wood, where Jez gave us a short talk at the pollarded area. Then on past the Butcher's Broom to Almshouse Plain and The Owl. The pub let us down badly. Despite having told them and given them written details, no arrangements had been made and walkers had to wait ages for food and that made us late.

Round the caravan-site footpath to Suntrap where Ken spoke about Matthew Allen and about the work of Suntrap. Onward via Fairmead, Hill Wood and Paul's Nursery Green to High Beach, and then on the Verderer's Ride to the Big View, where Verderer Morris spoke and on to Woodredon Hill where keepers saw us across the busy road.

Ian Cox, former Epping Forest Head Forester, spoke about Japanese elms and then some more at the giant coppard in St. Thomas' Quarters. At the junction of Lodge Road and Crown Hill, concealed in the bushes, a largish group of people were cooking around an open fire. The keepers told them to put it out! Through Warren Wood and onto the Holly Hedge Field - which was fairly ankle-breaking after 'poaching' by cattle - and then over the Epping Road, once again with the Keepers' help, to Epping Thicks.

The end at Bell Common, at about the scheduled time, was signalled by a talk by former Superintendent John Besent and photographs by a man from the Harlow Star. We were delighted that the Superintendent Jeremy Wisenfeld was about to join us at The Owl and was with us to end.

We had a near record number of participants, which was fine for me and a good welcome to Mike Whiteley.

**Cheers, Harry**

## EPPING NEW ROAD FAILS SAFETY AUDIT

The County Highways Safety Audit of the Epping New Road Cycle Lane Scheme recommends the removal of the cycle lanes and changes to the buildouts, islands and improved lighting at Warren Wood. The total cost of this scheme was £292,807. The County Council has no budget for the cost of the recommended corrections.

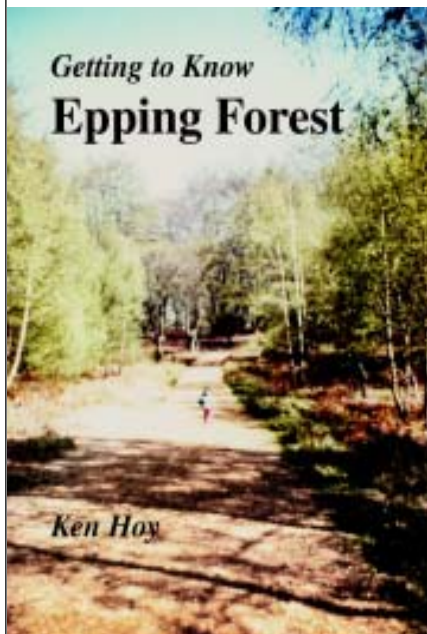
*NB The Friends think the existing layout is best for cyclists, why change it?*



*A104 outside Warren Wood public house*

### *Getting to Know* **EPPING FOREST**

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



Copies are available from Seymour Moss on 020 8529 0620  
£6-00 to members  
(£7-00 inc. p&p).

## FofEF DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Forest Supper**  
**November 24th, Thursday**  
**Sir James Hawkey Hall, Broomhill Rd, off Broadmead Road, Woodford green. 7.30 for 8.00.**

**Walks**  
**November 6th Sunday 10.30 a.m.**  
**Rushes, Rifles and Rabbits.**

Meet at the Rushey Plain car park, on the east of the Wake Road, to the north of the tea hut at High Beach. It is the first car park on the right after passing the entrance to the Epping Forest Information Centre. It is approximately 30 mins walk from Loughton Station.

**Leader : Judy Adams**  
**GR 414 985**

**December 11th Sunday 1.30 pm.**  
**Christmas Cheer.**

A walk from High Beach along the Epping Forest ridge to pick up any hint of winter sun. Then back to the Information Centre for some warming wine and mince pies. Meet in the Information Centre car park, behind the King's Oak PH.

**Leader: Harry Bitten**  
**GR 412 982**

**January 21st Saturday 1.30pm.**  
**Looking for the Lost Pond.**

A winter's walk from Earl's Path Pond along the Green Ride via the "Found Pond"! to Baldwin's Pond. Meet at the Earl's Path Pond car park, which is on the road to Loughton from the Robin Hood roundabout on the Epping New Road A 104. Loughton Station is about 15 minutes walk away.

**Leader : Gareth Browne**  
**GR 416 966**

**February 16th Thursday 1.30 pm.**  
**Discover Walthamstow Forest.**

A walk to explore Gilbert's Slade, Canada Plain and Mill Plain.. Meet in the car park on Snaresbrook Road A1007, which runs east/west from the Eagle PH on the Woodford High Road to the Woodford New Road.

**Leader: Robert Levene**  
**GR 396 891**

March 16th Thursday 10.30 a.m. A leisurely circular walk from Chingford Station through Bury Wood for coffee at the Owl P.H.

**Leader: Irene Buchan**  
**GR 393 946**

See separate sheet for the 2006 walks programme

## OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Epping Forest Visitor Centre**  
For details of walks and Christmas activities'phone 020 8508 0028

**British Naturalists' Association**  
**Epping Forest Branch**

Saturday 5th  
ALL-DAY  
Autumn tints at Court Hill  
MEET: Car Park adjacent to Plume of Feathers PH at 9:30am Buses 20,167  
MEMBERS' CARS  
PUB LUNCH  
LeaderS: Pat & Ron Andrews

**Epping Forest Field Centre**  
For details on Field Centre courses:  
Tel: 020 8502 8500 or  
e-mail: enquiries.ef@field-studies.council.org

**EF Conservation Volunteers**  
We meet at The Warren at 9:30

Tues 15 Nov – TBA  
Sun 20 Nov – Gilbert Slade  
Sun 27 Nov – Copley Plain  
Sun 4 Dec – Three Planks Ride  
Sun 11 Dec – Wellington Hill  
Sun 18 Dec – Broadstrod Rises  
Tues 27 Dec – Rushey Plain  
Mon 2 Jan – Walthamstow Forest  
Sun 8 Jan – Barn Hoppit  
Tues 17 Jan – TBA  
Sun 22 Jan – Wellington Hill Bog  
Sun 29 Jan – Great Monk Wood

For further information please email efcv2@yahoo.co.uk or contact Peter Lyons on 020 529 3060

**Essex Wildlife Trust**

**Thu 17 Nov** Lecture on Nature Photography in Parks by Daniel Bridges. Donations £2.00 appreciated. 8.00 pm in the Methodist Church Hall, Loughton.

**Sun 15 Jan** Guided Walk in the Lea Valley to look for Birds. Leaders: Norman Kemp and Tricia Moxey. 10.30am in the main car park at Fishers Green, Holyfield Rd, Waltham Abbey. **For more information telephone Tricia Moxey on (01277) 364522**

**Suntrap**

Church Road, High Beach  
Friends of Suntrap Winter BBQ, Bonfire and Lantern Making  
3.00pm Sat 26th Nov

Entry by ticket only, price £2  
Contact Suntrap on 020 8508 0611 before 14th Nov to reserve yours  
Bring a jam jar for lantern making.

# CHRISTMAS CARDS OF EPPING FOREST



We now have this season's Christmas cards that depict six different attractive Winter scenes of Epping Forest . They are available in packs of 12 cards (2 of each view) at £3.60 per pack. You will be able to purchase the cards at the Forest Supper on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> 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 £4.60 (£3.60 plus 1.00p p+p) per pack to Mrs P Bitten, 9 Frederica Road, Chingford, E4 7AL.

## SPECIAL REQUEST

A harsh winter has been predicted this year and if we do get a snowy winter – don't forget to take your camera as we are getting short of Xmas card pictures. But remember, the sunshine will 'light-up' a snow picture, whereas a snow scene without the sun is usually 'flat' and uninteresting. Remember also, shoot towards the light (with the sun behind a tree trunk?). Good luck.

**See you at the Forest Supper  
Peggy**

## F of EF E-MAIL AND WEB ADDRESSES

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

## ITEMS FOR SALE

We have a stock of lots of sale items, which will be at the Forest Supper.

Mugs £4, Pens 50p - £1

Greetings Cards £2.50  
pack of 5 (L) or 8 (S)

Christmas Cards (pack of 12)  
£3.60, Tree Poster £1

Torch Key Rings £2, Fridge Magnets £2, Metal Lapel Badges £2, Spy Scopes £3.50, Fleeces from £15, Sweat Shirts from £15, Caps £5, Tea Towels £3  
Epping Forest Maps £1.50,  
Getting to Know Epping Forest £6.95, Short Walks in Epping Forest £2.40

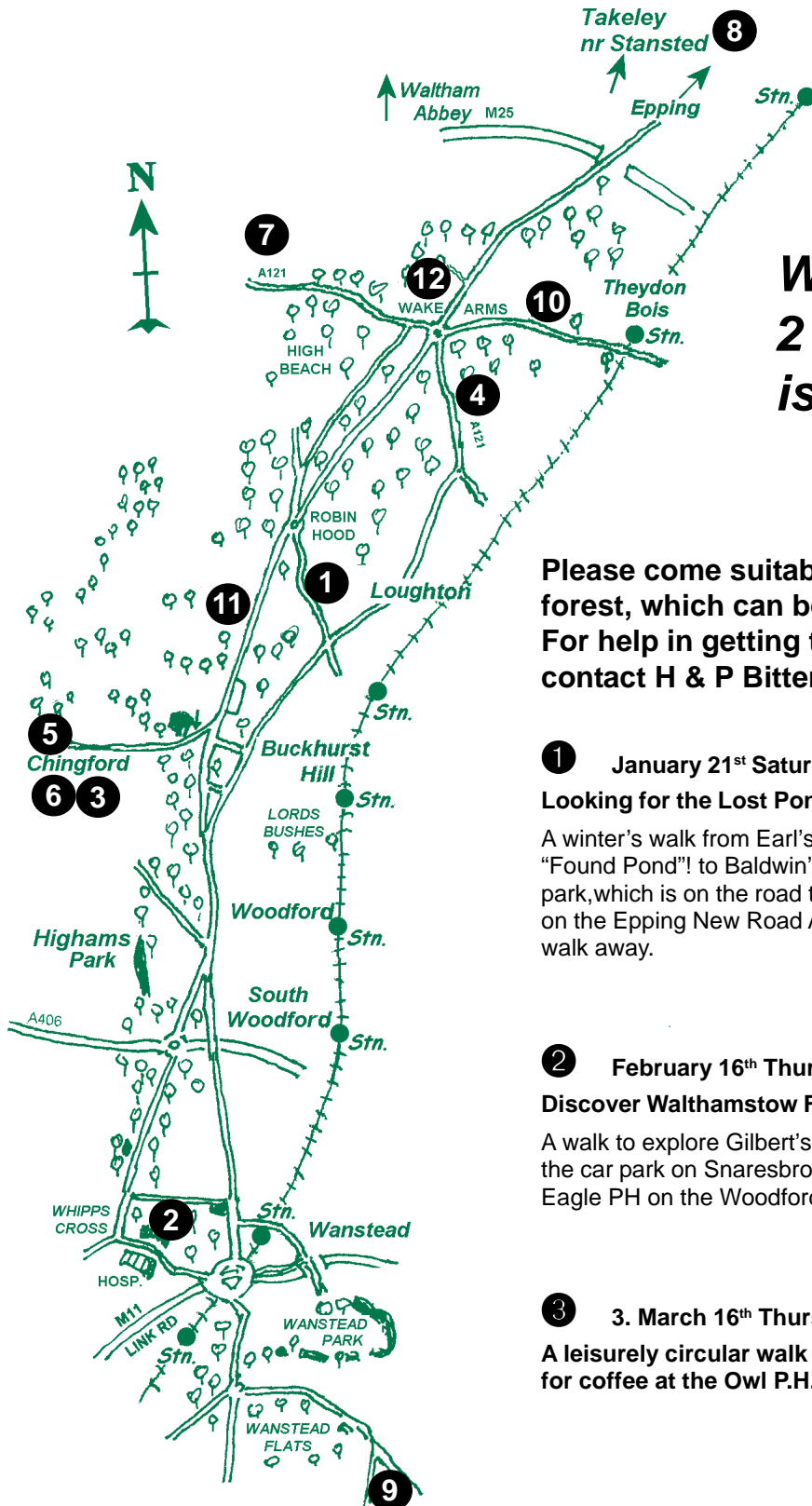
## E-MAILING LIST

To enable us to contact members with any urgent news in the four months gap between Newsletters, we thought it might be a useful if members with e-mail addresses who would like to be included on our e-mailing list should send their e-mail address to S Moss at [seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk) Be assured that these addresses will not be passed to anyone else by us and will only be used to contact members with any urgent news such as the developments of the East of England Plan which effect the Forest or events organised by the Friends. This will not effect you option to receive paper copies of the FofEF Newsletter.

## CURRENT FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Judy Adams	Loughton	020 8418 0730	Ken Hoy (Chairman)	High Easter	012 4523 1839
Peggy Bitten (Sec.)	Chingford	020 8529 8594	Robert Levene	Snaresbrook	020 8989 0884
Harry Bitten	Chingford	020 8529 8594	Sue McKinley (Vice-Chair)	Upshire	019 9271 2014
Gareth Browne	Bayford Herts	01992 511 152	Derek Meakin	Chigwell	020 8500 1571
Irene Buchan	Chingford	020 8529 6423	Seymour Moss (Memb. Sec.)	Chingford	020 8529 0620
Alan Curran	Buckhurst Hill	020 8504 8720	Tricia Moxey	Chipping Ongar	01277 364 522
Bill Dexter	Chingford	020 8529 1427	Peter Read	Chingford	020 8524 1659
Jim Gimson	S. Woodford	020 8989 3282	Tony Sheppard (Treas.)	Woodford Grn	020 8504 8288

# Join in these walks with The Friends of Epping Forest



**Walks last about  
2 hours and there  
is no charge!**

**Please come suitably dressed for walking in the forest, which can be very wet and muddy. For help in getting to the meeting points please contact H & P Bitten on 020 8529 8594.**

**1** January 21<sup>st</sup> Saturday 1.30pm.

**Looking for the Lost Pond.**

A winter's walk from Earl's Path Pond along the Green Ride via the "Found Pond"! to Baldwin's Pond. Meet at the Earl's Path Pond car park, which is on the road to Loughton from the Robin Hood roundabout on the Epping New Road A 104. Loughton Station is about 15 minutes walk away.

*Leader : Gareth Browne  
GR 416 966*

**2** February 16<sup>th</sup> Thursday 1.30 pm.

**Discover Walthamstow Forest.**

A walk to explore Gilbert's Slade, Canada Plain and Mill Plain.. Meet in the car park on Snaresbrook Road A1007, which runs east/west from the Eagle PH on the Woodford High Road to the Woodford New Road.

*Leader: Robert Levene  
GR 396 891*

**3** 3. March 16<sup>th</sup> Thursday 10.30 a.m.

**A leisurely circular walk from Chingford Station through Bury Wood for coffee at the Owl P.H.**

*Leader: Irene Buchan  
GR 393 946*

**4** April 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 10.30 a.m.  
**Around the Loughton Brook.**

Meet in Broadstrod car-park halfway along the A121 on the left between the Wake Arms roundabout and Loughton.

**Leader: Verderer Peter Adams**  
**GR 429 986**

**5** May 19<sup>th</sup> Friday 9.30 a.m.

**An away day walk along the Thames** from Hadleigh to Leigh-on-Sea for cockles and mussels [ alternatives available ]. Meet in Bury Road car-park, Chingford .The idea is to condense into as few cars as possible for about an hours drive to Hadleigh Castle Country Park . Return to Chingford about 4pm. Alternatively meet at H.C.C.P.Car Park at 10.45 am.

**Leader: Harry Bitten**  
**GR 394 952**

**6** June 24<sup>th</sup> Saturday 7.30pm

**A Midsummer evening walk around Chingford woods and fields.**

Meet in Hornbeam Lane, which is 10 to 15 minutes walk or 3 mins drive from Chingford Station along Bury Rd, and is the first turning on the right just before the houses.

**Leader: Peter Read**  
**GR 393 957**

**7** July 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday 2.00 pm.

**A walk around Upshire.**

Meet in Upshire Village Hall car park ( please park tidily at the far end). Upshire is 1.25 miles along Crown Hill, which is the turning off the Epping New Road just north of the WakeArms roundabout westwards to wards Waltham Abbey. The Village Hall is just opposite the church, where there's a tea and cake sale, waiting for us at the end of the walk!

**Leader: Sue McKinley**  
**GR 417 011**

**8** August 16<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 10.30am. Hatfield Forest.

A walk around another ancient forest in Essex. Take the M11 to junction 8 at Stansted and take the old A120 eastwards towards Takeley and Great Dunmow. Turn southwards along the second turning on the right (signposted to Hatfield Forest).The carpark is ¾ mile along on the right; parking is free for members of the National Trust.

**Leader: Bill Dexter**  
**GR (OS map 167) 548 202**

**8** August 16<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 10.30am. Hatfield Forest.

A walk around another ancient forest in Essex. Take the M11 to junction 8 at Stansted and take the old A120 eastwards towards Takeley and Great Dunmow. Turn southwards along the second turning on the right (signposted to Hatfield Forest).The carpark is ¾ mile along on the right; parking is free for members of the National Trust.

**Leader: Bill Dexter**  
**GR (OS map 167) 548 202**

**9** September 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday 9am – 5.30 pm.  
**Centenary Walk.**

A day's walk through Epping Forest from Wanstead Flats in the south to Epping in the north. Lots of stopping points with chances to join (or leave). Lunch stop at a P.H. Details nearer the time from Mike Whiteley 020 8524 2737.

**Leader: Mike Whiteley**  
**(F.O.E.F.& Ramblers Assoc.)**  
**GR 419 860**

**10** October 19<sup>th</sup> Thursday 1.30pm  
**Natural Recycling.**

Find out how the fungi keep the Forest in good heart. Meet in Jack's Hill car park (north) - halfway between Wake Arms roundabout and Theydon Bois on B172.

**Leader Tricia Moxey**  
**GR 435 996**

**11** November 10<sup>th</sup> Friday 10.30am.  
**Autumn colours.**

A leisurely walk around Fairmead Bottom. Meet in the carpark on Fairmead Road ,which runs parallel to the A104 Epping New Road. Turn west at the Robin Hood roundabout; left at the first tea-hut and then downhill to the carpark on the right.

**Leader: Ken Hoy**  
**GR 408 967**

**12** December 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday 1pm.  
**Christmas Cheer!**

A winter's walk along tracks to Copped Hall and return to the carpark for wine and mince-pies. Meet in the car-park on Lodge Road which is the first on the left on the B1393 north of the Wake Arms roundabout by the bus-stop.

**Leader: Harry Bitten**  
**GR 998 431**