

# The Friends of Epping Forest

# Newsletter

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

Autumn 2007

## Dear Friend,

At the time of writing we are awaiting the final word from the Government in respect of the much debated and criticised East of England Plan. This will probably ratify the proposal to commence a massive house building programme of over 1/2 million new units by 2021. At the current Bournemouth conference Gordon Brown has promised/threatened to increase the number of new build 'ecotowns' from 5 to 10. The Eastern Region might be lucky enough to get one or even two of these! Doubtless they would be counted as an extra bonus additional to the half million plus already predicted! There is no way this number of housing units plus associated infrastructure can be built without major encroachment on the Green Belt let alone the wider countryside.

The process has, in fact, already begun in this area. Going north along Sewardstone Road, as the Yardley Hill estate and Waltham Forest ends the Green Belt and Epping Forest /District starts. At that point there were two

houses, The Limes and White House and approximately 13 acres of land the latter occupied for some years by kennels housing greyhounds from Walthamstow dog track. This use stopped many years ago and the wooden kennels had virtually ceased to exist.

Planning permissions were sought over the years for housing development and quarantine kennels but these were always turned down on Green belt grounds as being inimical to Epping Forest District Council's policy of resisting development that might result

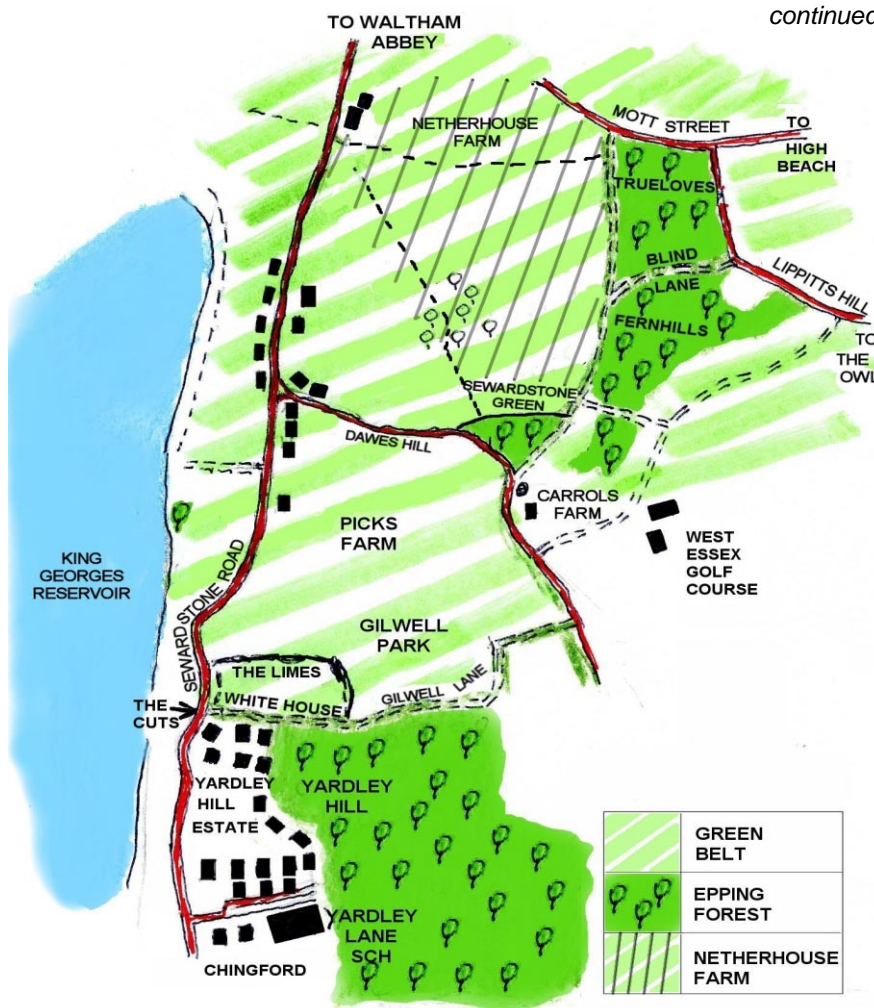
in the joining up of Chingford and Waltham Abbey. The Conservators of Epping Forest have always been supportive of these policies and have looked for ways of acquiring the 13 acres and adding them to the Forest which abuts the site at the southern side at the Cuts (a Forest track and Bridleway). In John Besent's time as Superintendent he indicated the Forest's interest to the Solicitors of the Owners.

All Councils including Epping Forest, are under pressure to include an element of 'affordable' housing in all

*continued...*

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**Don't forget your tickets for the Forest Supper - see page 8!**

Please send all letters to the Secretary and Editor: Mrs P Bitten, 9 Frederica Road, Chingford, E4 7AL  
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 Views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Friends of Epping Forest Committee.

new developments but at the same time EFDC is under pressure from developers, residents and potential residents not to include 'affordable' homes within executive style detached houses developments! EFDC is in consequence way behind its target/ quota of 'affordable homes provision. When therefore a planning application was made in respect of the Limes and White House for 120 or thereabouts 'affordable' homes the EFDVC Development Committee jumped at the chance of advancing towards their target and granted permission despite their own planners recommending rejection!

One can see EFDC's point! The site is in the extreme south west corner of the District and wont impinge on the middle class generality of residents. But it will on the residents of the Yardley Hill Estate and Waltham Forest! The children from the new development will doubtless want to attend Waltham Forest's Yardley Lane school adding to the overcrowding!

Waltham Forest Council (and the Friends and CPRE local group) protested to the Government Office for the Eastern Region that the application should be called-in by the Minister for examination by public enquiry, as being against the Local Plan and on Green Belt, increased traffic on Sewardstone Road and other grounds mentioned above. Early indications were that the Minister was in fact minded to call-in the application. Unfortunately there was a Government re-shuffle and new Minister indicated that the policy was, where possible, to leave such decisions to the local government. Despite subsequent representations there is no indication that EFDC is prepared to change its mind. Let us hope that the building of 'affordable' homes on the Limes and White House site doesn't trigger-off a spate of similar applications among those holding land along Sewardstone Road. I wouldn't bet on it!

Meanwhile further north along Sewardstone Road the 140 or so acres of Netherhouse Farm has just changed hands. The Conservators were interested in acquiring this site, which on the eastern and southern side flanks Forest land at Green Lane including Trueloves and Fernhills and Sewardstone Green but alas it didn't happen. We don't know who the new owner is , but one suspects that he/she wont be thinking in terms of farming it. Rumour is that plans for a golf course and and hotel might be on the way!

**Ed.**

## WINDOW FRAME DRAMAS



In the Newsletter last summer I recounted a drama that occurred in a few seconds in the corner of a window. I witnessed a fly become entangled in a web, then killed by the spider. However the spider was then, suddenly taken by a Great Tit to become a courtship gift to the Great Tit's mate.

This summer two equally dramatic events occurred. As before a large spider was sitting on an orb web across a neighbouring window. Although Blue and Great Tits regularly hunted along the eaves and windows, this spider seemed to have escaped - so far! However it was a Common Wasp that hovered momentarily in front of the web, deliberately stung the spider, then neatly plucked it from the web and flew off with the victim to become food for the wasp larvae in the wasp nest.

A few weeks later part of another web appeared across the opposite corner of the window and there sat another spider guarding a silken cocoon of eggs. Again a wasp appeared, but this spider immediately dropped away. The wasp then broke open the cocoon and during the next five minutes consumed the spider's eggs one by one.

Throughout the summer a queen wasp will be laying eggs from which larvae hatch. Th larva are fed by the returning foraging wasps. In turn the larvae provide these adult wasps with a sweet liquid food. But by September the queen will stop laying and when the nest contains no more larvae the wasps must find food for themselves... with this wasp it was spider eggs! However when the frosts come, all will die except the queen who goes off to hibernate.

Again, these are dramas that occur regularly in the natural world but we are rarely lucky enough to see them actually happen.

**Ken Hoy**

## WALKS PROGRAMME 2009!

As most members know we run a walks program which seems a popular activity for our members & friends.

At present most of the walks are led by a few regular people and we are looking to expand our band of walk leaders.

Would you be prepared to lead a walk (or maybe two?) for us during 2009?

All of our walks should be about two hours in duration and to ensure that we cover the length and diversity of the Forest over the course of a year we need people who will be willing to lead walks throughout the different seasons, on different days of the week, at different times and which will start from various different locations within Epping Forest.

I hope that you will be able and willing to help us in this way, and would ask if you could to ring me on: 020 8989 0884 or email: [robertlevene@hotmail.com](mailto:robertlevene@hotmail.com)

Thank you for your help and support.

See page 10 for 2008 programme of walks.

**Robert Levene**



## EVENTS STALL

As many members will know we have a display stand and stall that we erect on certain local fairs and events and we are looking at the best way of doing this in the future. The events we always attend are the Forest Festival, Chingford Village Festival, The Friend's AGM and Forest Supper and normally Wanstead Festival.

At present we have been relying on certain committee members who have physically kept and moved the display, stand, stall, stock etc... in their individual homes and taken them to each event. For various reasons this is no longer a system that is working and we are looking to change this for next year.

We fortunately now have a storage facility where we have been able to consolidate all these items but now need someone, or several people who are prepared to collect and erect and then at the end of the event dismantle and return these items to our storeroom which is in Herman Hill, Wanstead, E11. All of the items will fit into 2 standard cars or a single estate or larger car. This is a voluntary situation, but the Friend's would contribute towards petrol costs etc...

We are fortunate that for most events we have enough volunteers from our members to fully man the stalls, but you can never have too much of a good thing and occasionally we have had to abandon events because on a particular day there weren't enough people available, so if you would like to help on any of the stalls please ring Robert Levene on: 020 8989 0884 or Peggy Bitten on: 020 8529 8594, but the key help we need is with setting up the stalls a maximum of 6 times a year, but even if you could only help once or twice a year that would be a help.

**Robert**

## OUR YOUNGEST MEMBER?

On 8th August 2007 a new membership application was already in the minds of committee member Robert Levene & his wife Fay, when Mitzy Fay arrived weighing in at 7lb 15oz. A new life membership form has already therefore been received by Seymour Moss our membership Secretary. Robert being our Gift Aid officer did of course complete the gift aid form.

If all our members were as quick to sign up their children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren, the long term membership & finances of The Friends would be secure. What better present could they receive!

## THE NATURAL ASPECT

I hope our readership will not mind if I emphasise once again, what we see as the Conservator's long term intention of changing the Forest as we know it.

Our Newsletter has a wider circulation than just our membership - although you are of course the major part. It is important that the potential threats to the future Forest do not materialise 'by stealth' because folk are unaware or do not understand what is really intended.

As most people know the phrase 'The Natural Aspect' has some significance because it was used in the Epping Forest Act 1878: ... "The natural aspect must be preserved as far as possible" it said. However the interpretation of what the writers of the Act meant by using those words has been argued about ever since 1878.

Human use of the Forest throughout history makes it far from truly 'natural' and thus the phrase has usually been regarded as a loose, even meaningless, expression when referring to the Forest... and the intention of the writers in using the words has tended to be ignored. Any possible interpretation of the meaning has therefore been avoided.

But maybe we should ask what those Victorian conservationists, who 'saved' the Forest for us, had in mind; how did they see it; why did they think it should be saved?

How did the writers of the 1870's and 1880's, who knew and loved the Forest regard the place. Besides Edward North Buxton, who is often quoted, there were others who wrote about the Forest. One such person was the historian and antiquarian, Edward Walford who published a considerable and quite widely researched work in 1883, 'Greater London'. In it he devotes a lot of space to Epping Forest.

Clearly, since he mentions it several times, all those who valued the Forest then did so first and foremost because they saw it as "a place of recreation for the use and enjoyment of the people" - with its 'natural aspect' preserved.

What was it about the Forest that they valued ?...

He quoted several other writers of the time.

One writer in those 1870-80's, Mr Thorne in his *Environs of London* writes about, 'that portion of the Forest lying to the north of High Beach and stretching away to the Wake Arms. He tells us:

"Here you may explore a bit of wild forest, guided by a winding road and keeping the high road well to your right. Rough and broken and in parts open, elsewhere thick with pollard oaks and hornbeams, and an ever varying undergrowth of hollies, thorns and sloes, rose bushes, sweet briars and brambles... its sunny glades and gentle undulations reveal, as you wander on, a thousand peeps of sylvan loveliness. Deep moist dells, banks of fern, furze and heaths, tempt your imagination at every turn..."

Or, from Weldon's, *Guide to Epping Forest*:

"The trees of the Beech Wood, perhaps not so venerable as the famous Burnham Beeches, with their enormous girth of trunk, their gnarled and twisted roots, and rugged limbs; but the beeches here have the advantage of being all un-lopped, well grown and expansive, and many of them gigantic in stature; they are not the stunted and mutilated giants as at Burnham Beeches, but send out their limbs to the full extent of their natural growth and beauty".

And again, Weldon's *Guide to Epping Forest*:

"Nothing can be more delightful than a ramble through the beech woods on a hot summer day. The shadows are so cool and deep; the belts of golden light that lie across the greensward at every opening among the trees are so bright and sunny; the far stretching vistas so mysterious and seductive to the imagination; and the trunks and branches of the beeches so smooth, round and well filled, and so covered with heavy masses of beautiful transparent foliage, that you feel as if in an enchanted place"

He is obviously describing the high beech woods of Monks Wood and the many other areas north of the Robin Hood or High Beach. Areas where still today people love to walk in the shade of the tall canopy, absorb the mystery, feel the history – and are equally 'enchanted'.

This is part of what the Victorians saw as 'the natural aspect' of Epping Forest and what visitors today might describe as 'being in the depths of Epping Forest'. Or where, in the oak and hornbeam woods with their holly thickets, the Forest is appreciated because an unexpected scene is always waiting just around the corner of a twisting path. As Weldon says "so mysterious and seductive to the imagination"

I would strongly suggest that this Victorian image of 'Epping Forest' is what today's visitors, who love the Forest just as much, also have as their image of what they expect 'a forest' – Epping Forest – to look like.

The Victorian prejudice against 'the mutilated pollards' is perhaps not now felt so strongly and today is more acceptable for limited historic and ecological reasons... but if changing vast areas of the woodland and calling it 'wood-pasture' is the intention of the Management Plan, as the recently published maps suggest, then this is not what the public who use the Forest want... and they are being disingenuously deceived. And, calling it 'pasture woodland' does not change the intentions of management.

Photographs of how wood-pasture or pasture-woodland is expected to look have been shown to us (see picture) Sometimes called 'savannah woodland' – it is an open form of woodland that may not ever have existed in Epping Forest with its pollarded thickets and grassy plains and heaths. Those pollard thickets of the past have now become high canopy woodland. The concept of 'open grazed woodland' is frequently admired as it exists in Hatfield Forest and parts of the New Forest.

But we already have a beautiful Epping Forest – why try to change it?

Ah, they say, but it is constantly changing naturally, becoming overgrown and the public cannot access it – this is not true, but is still

used as an argument. However, clearing it by human hand (using machinery) to create 'wood-pasture' will only create un-natural conditions that nature will quickly begin to change back, first to thicket and eventually to high woodland again. Hundreds of cows could not stop that process in the past!

So why worry, you say?... Because that natural process of 'recovery' will take more than a 100 years ... and we already have a beautiful varied forest. A forest that is still 'mysterious, enchanted and seductive to the imagination'

Do we want it changed? – I don't ! Largely left alone small clearings will continue to develop naturally – as they have done in the past. The policies of past Superintendents of 'management without appearing to manage' has on the whole been successful in maintaining that 'natural aspect'.

The Conservator's current and future plans, made clear in the recently published 'Epping Forest Management Plan Summary 2010', show that their intentions are to undertake "Pasture Woodland Restoration" on a wide scale. 'Restoring' the Forest to a preconceived concept in areas where it has not existed for two or three hundred years (e.g. Monks Wood) – if indeed it ever existed. To carry out these plans they intend to fence permanently the main roads around the several thousand hectares of the remaining forest. This will be done "phase by phase" while most forest users are unaware of these – no longer 'proposals' – but stated intentions.

There has been no public discussion or informed debate of the plan as a whole or any assessment of what has already been put into operation.

I have just returned from visiting old friends in Wisconsin, one of America's well wooded States. Their woods, beautiful as they are, cannot compare with our Epping Forest, tiny fragment though it is. But a fragment that, I am more than ever convinced, must not be 'gardenized' into something else according to an ecologically fashionable idea of what it might have been at some particular historic time in the past... fenced and signposted as a 'politically correct' country park.

It is time for the Epping Forest Conservators – as Verderer Peter Adams' article was titled in the last Newsletter – to, "**Stop and think!**"

**Ken Hoy**



*Two views of the Cuckoo Brook area of re-pollarding (restoration of wood pasture)*





## BIRDS AND PEANUTS

Members may remember that some years ago we were given permission to place a bird feeding station at the Epping Forest Information Centre at High Beach. Our hope was that if this project was successful the Conservators might consider installing similar facilities at such sheltered sites as the Temple, The Warren, Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and perhaps on parts of the buffer land.

The Lea Valley Regional Park, the RSPB and many Wildlife Trust sites have such facilities and very popular they are with birds and visitors and of course there is the strong possibility that there is a build-up of bird numbers and perhaps even a species enrichment.

Next time you are in the High Beach area pop into the Centre and look through the window at the feeding station. I have recently seen chaffinches, great, blue and coal tits, goldfinches, greenfinches, nuthatches, woodpeckers etc. There is a little note indicating that the facility was provided and is supported by the Friends.

Members might be interested to know that premium peanuts, sunflower hearts and niger seed are consumed on a massive scale costing the Friends something around £400 a year. This could be going up because the cost of peanuts is increasing dramatically since they are said to be currently much in demand for biofuel.

As far as I know similar feeding stations have not yet been installed in other Forest locations.



## MORE ABOUT THE FOREST ALMOST 100 YEARS AGO

The memories of Arthur Gliddon have reminded me of a man, friend of my father, who I met in the late 1920's, when I was 5 years old. He lived in a tarred and boarded cottage surrounded by an open area full of buttercups at the top of Horn Lane, Woodford near where, before WW2, Horn Lane joined Broadmead and Grosvenor Gardens.

He was (as I remember) a jolly, rosy cheeked, rather tubby old man who gave me sixpence (a lot then – no wonder I remember!)

Many years later I questioned my father about the old man – Joe Roote – who my father, as a boy, had 'helped' with the cattle at the end of the 19th century.

From my notes of the conversation (in 1967) I see that Joe Roote was a commoner of Epping Forest who had 14 cows and a local milk-round. He grazed the cattle on Woodford Green and on 'the Common', now the Woodford Golf Course. Father in his youth, had helped Joe drive the cattle. One of his comments was, "McKenzie's men came and branded them with hot tar melted in a frying-pan - Joe paid one guinea a year"

He also said, "all cattle were pounded if they were unmarked or strayed onto the main roads". I remember a pound opposite St Aubyns School, Woodford, in the 1930's

Besides Joe Roote, he said there were other commoners who had small numbers of cattle and some also had small milk rounds. There was "Harry Saunders of Chingford Hatch, Joe Hemmings on the corner of Montault Road, Woodford Green and Mr Johnson of Peel Road, South Woodford, who had a few milking cows and a milk round... and 'Tubby' Robinson of Oak Hill, Woodford".

"Mr Johnson sold milk for a penny-halfpenny a pint at his little store or tuppence a pint at your door" (into your own jug).

This was how, in the last decade of the 19th and the first 2 or 3 decades of the 20th century, a few commoners grazed small numbers of milking cows on the local greens and plains on the edge of the growing urban areas – as they needed to be milked twice a day they could not stray very far.

**Ken Hoy**

## LIFE IN EPPING FOREST

*Epping Forest is the place for me,  
An area rich with beautiful trees  
That grace the land, its very grand.  
You can walk through the paths  
And under the branches that hang low  
To find a moment of silence, a moment of peace  
In the shadows below.  
The ground is rich with nature's spoil,  
The birds and the bee's, oh how they do toil.  
The squirrels and foxes are having fun, There  
are hidden places for them to run.  
Now Autumn's here,  
the leaves have turned to shades of gold  
Bringing bright light across the trees of old  
And as the leaves begin to fall  
You can hear the crunch beneath your feet,  
It really is a special treat.  
Epping Forest certainly, has lots of style,  
So come and visit from across the mile*  
**Barbara Masser**

## BOROUGH OVER THE BORDER: LIFE IN WEST HAM 1895-1915

This is the title of an interesting new book by Friends member Pat Francis, just published by East London History Society at £8.40.

To quote from the first Chapter "On a dreary expanse of marshland bordering the river Thames, at the end of the nineteenth century a handful of villages was transformed with uncontrollable speed, into a neglected impoverished agglomeration of cheap housing and polluting factories. There the people fought, some for a measure of dignity and prosperity, some for the bare means of existence. They fought against central government and amongst themselves. They shared, despite every setback, the civic pride prevalent in late Victorian England. They even enjoyed themselves. Their lives are worth remembering."

Pat Francis's very readable book explores the many and varied social and economic strands that contribute to an understanding of the struggles confronting the population in the early years of the newly established borough.

The book is available from Philip Merrick, ELHS, 42 Campbell Road, Bow, London E3 4DT (020 8524 9002) and the Bargain Bookshop, Station Road, Chingford (020 8980 5672).

## LETTERS

In response to our request for criticism and comment on our activities etc.

I received a very thoughtful and frank letter from an elderly, long time member, Arthur Gliddon. Many of the points Arthur raised, had already arisen from our own self-examination, but he strongly made some points about the Newsletter not being 'newsy' enough and even boring and too technical. I assured him we would take note of the points he had raised.

However in view of his long association with the Forest, I asked if he would kindly write about his memories of Epping Forest 'between the Wars' – here is his story... it illustrates the way in which 'London's Forest' was so important to folk who lived near to the Metropolis in those days.

Arthur's Story:

*"I was born in Clapton in 1912 – of course just before the first World War 1914-1918.*

*Then men were de-mobbed in 1919-20 and really for the bulk of the population 'things' didn't settle down until 1922 and outdoor leisure was barely taken. Football was the only sport that drew the crowds. In 1926, I think it was at the age of 13, I went to Millfields Road and saw Clapton Orient play Newcastle in the Cup. How many attended? A staggering 72,000. So what recollections do I have of the Forest between the Wars?*

*Well, I think it was in 1921, I was eight then, when the whole of the Gliddon family decided to have a picnic in Epping Forest. There was my Grandmother, one Aunt, three Uncles, my Father and Mother, my two sisters and myself - 10 in all.*

*For nearly a week beforehand all the paraphernalia was gathered together and everyone was allocated to carrying certain items - my Grandma and Aunt Emma excluded. In those days everything was taken, right up to the kitchen sink. Chairs for Grandma and Emma, tablecloths & napkins, the best china, cups and saucers carefully wrapped and placed in a suitcase, a canteen of cutlery saw daylight, the kettle, teapots, jams etc and enough food to feed an army - not forgetting several glass bottles to collect water at Jubilee Retreat, a couple of bricks and a wire grill. You name it - it was available. What a sight we must have been as we trundled along to Clapton Station for the train to Chingford. I well*



*Hoe Street Station c 1930 - on Arthur's way to Chingford Station*



*Horse drawn 'Brakes' near Royal Forest Hotel - used until 1930's*

*remember that for all of us to get on the train with all our goods we would have to travel in three compartments... and I was to go with Uncle Sid.*

*At Chingford our first port of call was the Jubilee Retreat where we filled up the bottles with water (a few years later we could only get water there by means of a 'backhander' so I was told). We continued up the 'hill' and settled on a clearing overlooking the King George V Reservoir - only one then and very few houses -*

*I suppose it was in the Gilwell Park area (Yardley Hill?).*

*The rugs were laid out and the chairs erected for Grandma and Aunt Emma.*

*My sisters and I were sent off to collect firewood, whilst one of my Uncles cut out a turf and the two bricks and grill were put in place. The fire was lit and the kettle soon boiled for a cup of tea. We even had tongs for the lump sugar.*

*We hardly saw a soul all day and on our way back to the Station my Uncles made a visit to the Coconut shies and Hoopla stalls, still at Jubilee Retreat, with no success.*

*The weather on this occasion was good and it became an annual event that continued until Grandma died (aged 68).*

*What other recollections do I have of the Forest in those days?... after school from the bus stop (at Clapton)*

*Continued on page 11*



## THE GREAT STORM: OCTOBER 15TH 1987

On this October night twenty years ago occurred the Great Storm, with wind speeds exceeding 100 mph, that resulted in the deaths of nearly twenty people and the 'devastation' of woodlands throughout south east England. The built environment suffered considerable structural damage, conservatories, lean-tos and garden fences being particularly affected.

The 'experts' said that the Storm was a once every three hundred years event although another similar intensity storm struck the area in January 1990 (or was it 1991?).

In fact the Great Storm had a fairly uneven impact upon woodlands, the general emphasis being that the older the woodland/trees the less the damage. Staverton Park in Suffolk a very ancient assemblage of many hollow and apparently crumbling trees was virtually undamaged while nearby Rendlesham Forest composed of newish plantations was practically flattened! In contrast an extensive shelterbelt woodland of middle aged beeches but standing in an exposed situation on Newmarket Heath suffered severely with many trees uprooted.

Epping Forest had a moderate amount of damage. Some trees, particularly beeches which tend to be shallow rooted, toppled over creating detritus strewn new glades. There was much national media driven gnashing of teeth and wringing of hands at the irreparable loss of millions of trees. However the Conservators took a rational and realistic attitude and refused to get swept away into rash cleaning-up operations. They looked

upon the Storm as a form of natural management, an attitude with which the Friends agreed and we've got the Newsletter to prove it!

Most of the felled Forest beeches with the action of mosses, fungi and the weather, have long since returned to the earth and the former newly created glades have filled with young trees.

Will we have to wait nearly 300 years for a repeat performance?



*Butlers Retreat after The Storm*



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## Forest Supper Booking Form

Please provide ----- ticket(s) @ £16.00 each (please list all names below) for the 2007 Forest Supper to be held on the 29th November at Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green:

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

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

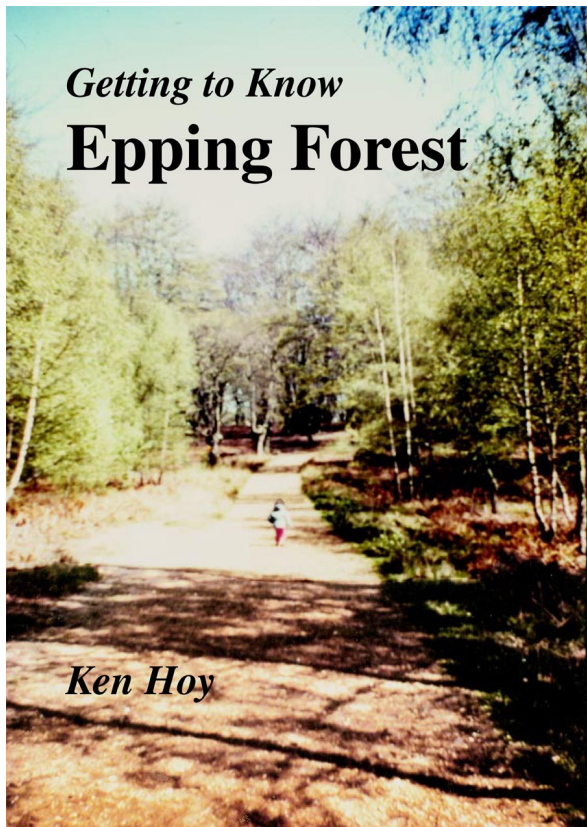
Address -----  
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I enclose my payment for £----- (cheques/postal orders should be made payable to the Friends of Epping Forest)

**PLEASE ENCLOSE A STAMPED, SELF ADDRESSED, ENVELOPE!**

Please return completed application form before Tuesday 14th 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.**



*Getting to Know*  
**Epping Forest**

*Ken Hoy*

*Getting to Know*  
**EPPING FOREST**

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

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

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

**FOREST SUPPER**  
**Thursday, November 29th 2007**  
**Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green (7.30 for 8pm)**

Alan Beere has catered for the Forest Supper for the last two years and as everyone seemed to be happy with the food, we are repeating the arrangements for this year. The menu will include cold meat and poached salmon with a vegetarian alternative. Also there will be new potatoes and the usual selection of salads. Then there will be a choice of two deserts, followed by coffee.

We will supply the usual unlimited wine and soft drinks. There will be Harry's quizzes, goods for sale including greetings cards and books. And of course we hope for good company— we have invited local M.P.s, Verderers, Chairman and Deputy and Members of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, the Superintendent of Epping Forest, the Chairmen of the London green Belt Council and Campaign for the Protection of Essex and many

others connected with the management of the Forest. Hopefully there will be opportunities to meet and chat with them and other Friends.

I'm afraid we have had to put up the price of tickets this year from £15 to £16. We managed to hold the price to £15 for the last two years but costs have gone up including the rent of the Hawkey Hall.

**It is a ticket only** event and we normally sell out fairly quickly so you should apply a.s.a.p. and certainly by **Tuesday 20th November**. Larger tables can now seat up to 12 people.

If you can, please donate a gift for the **raffle**. There is always a very generous response from you all and we do depend on the extra income raised on the night via the raffle to make the difference between loss and profit.

Please complete the booking form in this newsletter and send with your payment and **S.A.E.** to: **Hazel and David Shukla at: 6 Knighton Drive, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0NY**

**REMEMBER – ADMISSION BY TICKETS ONLY**



**5** April 20, Sunday, 10.30am – 12.30pm

**Spring in Wanstead Park** – Explore this Historic area. Meet at: Warren Road, Wanstead (at Park's Entrance). Cross at the George Wanstead to St Mary's Avenue and then left into Overton Drive and then right at junction with Warren Road.

*Leader: Tricia Moxey GR 414 876*

**6** May 12, Monday, 6.30pm – 7.30pm

**A Jog in The Forest NEW EVENT - BE IN AT THE START!** Meet at Orion Harriers Changing Rooms which are between The Royal Forest Hotel & The Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge, Chingford. Run to suit all levels of ability from beginners to experienced runners!

*Leader: Roddy MacLennan  
(in conjunction with Orion Harriers) GR 399 948*

**7** May 24, Saturday, 2.00pm – 4.00pm

**'Day Return to High Beach'** Meet at Bury Road Car Park, Chingford Discover the Route of the Proposed 19th Century Railway Line from Chingford to High Beach.

*Leader: 'Bare Foot Walker' Edgar Brown  
(walking bare footed is optional – you are welcome to wear shoes if you wish!). GR 394 951*

**8** June 6, Friday, 10.30am – 12.30pm

**Theydon Bois and The Gregories.**

Meet at: Lower Car Park on Jack's Hill (**not** where there is a car park on both sides of the road). Take A121 for Theydon Bois from Wake Arms roundabout.

*Leader: Harry Bitten GR 439 996*

**9** June 21, Saturday, 7.00pm – 9.00pm

**Mid-Summer's Evening Walk** for views over the Forest (**NEW – well-behaved dogs, on leads, are welcome!**) Meet at: Hornbeam Lane, 1st right on Bury Road when coming from Chingford Station.

*Leader: Peter Read GR 393 957*

**10** July 10, Thursday, 10.30am – 1.30pm

**A NEW OPPORTUNITY** to learn about orienteering (if you wish to take part in the orienteering just bring your own compass). or just enjoy the guided walk. Explore Hainault Forest, followed by optional pub lunch (well-behaved dogs, on leads, welcome). Meet at "telephone box car park" opposite Chigwell Row village school.

*Leaders: Ron & Pat Andrews GR 471 936*

**11** July 14, Monday, 10.00am – 12.00pm

See the Plains and open areas of the Forest and the effects of cattle grazing and chance to discuss with supporter of cattle grazing the benefits they bring. Meet at Jack's Hill Car Park, on either side of the road.

*Leader: Michael Davies,  
Verderer of Epping Forest GR 435 995*

**12** August 4, Monday, 2.00pm – 4.00pm

History/Natural History of the Forest and Lea Valley. Meet at the Cornmill Meadows Car Park, off B194 The Crooked Mile, North of Waltham Abbey.

*Leader: Irene Buchan GR 384 017*

**13** September 21, Sunday, 9 am

**Centenary Walk from Manor Park to Epping**

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). Meet 09.00 at junction of Capel Road and Forest Drive, Wanstead Flats near Manor Park Station.

*Leader: Mike Whiteley  
(FofEF & Ramblers Assoc.) GR 419 860*

**14** September 25, Thursday, 10.30am – 12.30pm

**Pram/Strollers Walk** (all welcome!) **A chance to bring children and grandchildren for an interesting and fun guided walk.** All welcome even if no children available! Meet at Connaught Water Car Park, Ranger's Road, Chingford. **NEW WALK – NEW LEADER!**

*Leader: Dr Joanna Thomas,  
Verderer of Epping Forest*

**15** October 19, Sunday, 10.30am to 12.30pm or 1.30pm

**Discover Nature's Recyclers** in Gernon Bushes, in conjunction with Essex Wildlife Trust.

Optional extra walk afterwards to Coopersale Fields/ Millenium Wood. Meet at Gernon Bushes, Coopersale, Near Epping. Turn off B181 Epping - North weald Road into Coopersale Common Lane and then left into Garnon Mead beyond railway bridge.

*Leaders: Tricia Moxey & Robert Levene GR 476 031*

**16** November 12, Wednesday, 10.00am – 12.00pm

Discover the effects of the work done by the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers and how works done over many years can now be seen. Meet at: Rushey Plain Car Park, near High Beach. Go past Carl's Tea Hut for 200m then right into carpark road.

*Leader: Derek Meakin GR 414 986*

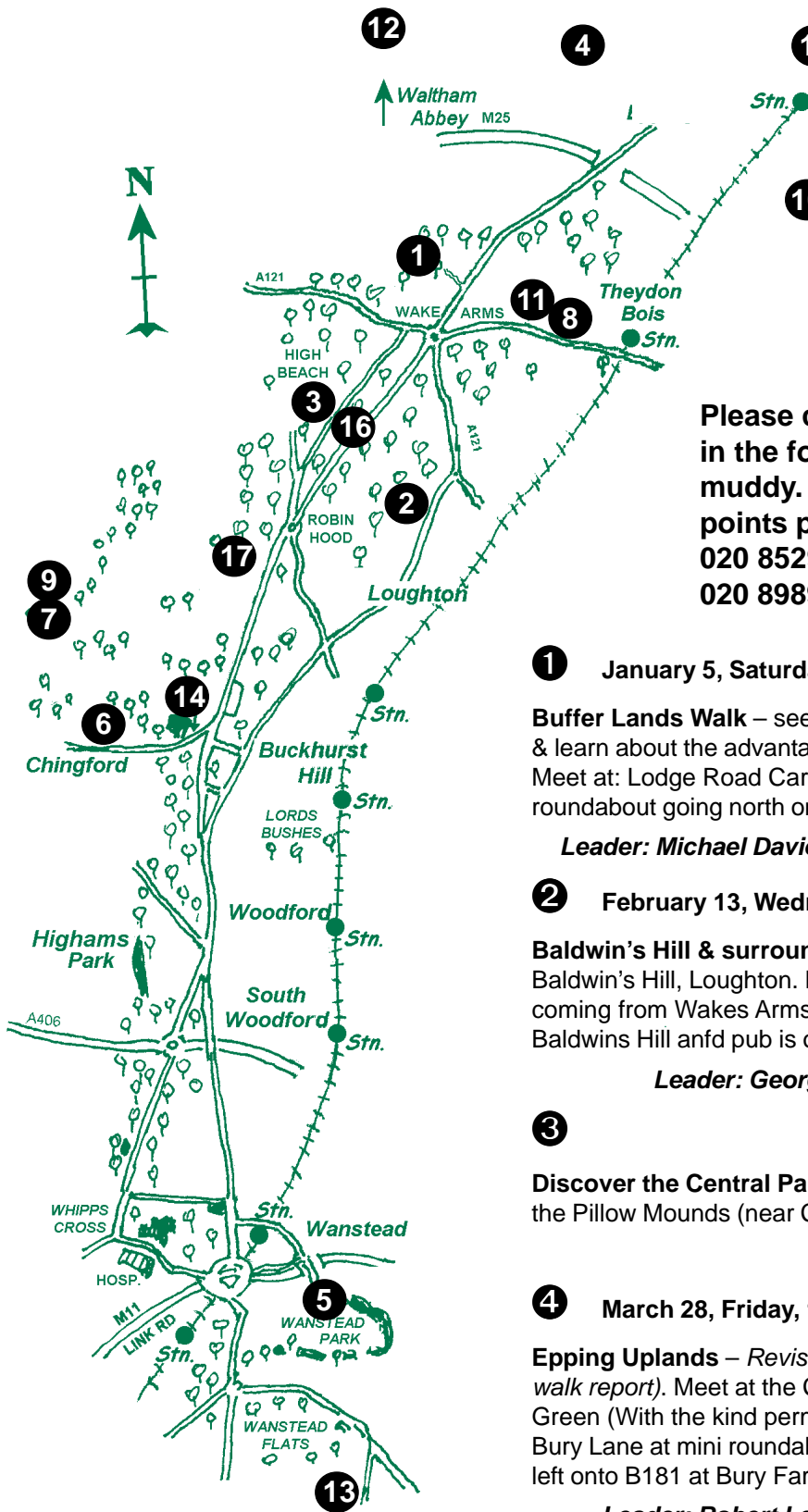
**17** December 14, Sunday, 10.30am – 12.30pm

**Christmas Cheer - with mince pies and wine!** Choice of two walks, an easier walk along the flatter areas of the Forest led by Ken Hoy or a slightly more strenuous walk to Hill Wood led by Judy Adams, both meeting back at the car park for wine and mince pies afterwards (free) Meet at Fairmead Bottom Car Park. Turn left north at Robin Hood roundabout and then sharp left at the Tea Hut, carpark is at bottom of hill.

*Leaders: Ken Hoy & Judy Adams GR 408 968*



# Join in these 2008 walks with The Friends of Epping Forest



**10** *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 or Robert Levene on 020 8989 0884.

**1** January 5, Saturday, 10.00am – 12.00pm

**Buffer Lands Walk** – see the buffer lands to the north of the Forest & learn about the advantages these bring in protecting the Forest. Meet at: Lodge Road Car Park. First on left past Wake Arms roundabout going north on Epping New Road.

*Leader: Michael Davies, Verderer of Epping Forest GR 432 998*

**2** February 13, Wednesday, 1.30pm – 3.30pm

**Baldwin's Hill & surrounding areas.** Meet at Foresters Arms Pub, Baldwin's Hill, Loughton. From A121 Goldings Hill turn right (if coming from Wakes Arms) or left if coming from Loughton) onto Baldwin's Hill and pub is on left opposite view point.

*Leader: Georgina Green (new walk leader!) GR428 976*

**3** March 16, Sunday, 11am – 1pm

**Discover the Central Part of the Forest.** Meet at High Beach, by the Pillow Mounds (near Carl's green tea hut).

*Leader: Alan Curran GR 412 983*

**4** March 28, Friday, 10.30am – 12.30pm

**Epping Uplands** – *Revisited!* (see elsewhere in this newsletter for walk report). Meet at the Car Park of 'The Traveller's Friend', Epping Green (With the kind permission of the Landlord). Turn left at B182 Bury Lane at mini roundabout on B1393 just before Epping and then left onto B181 at Bury Farm turn left at T-junction at Epping Upland.

*Leader: Robert Levene (or perhaps Bill Dexter) GR 434 055*







*Connaught Water early 20th century*



*The view from top of Yardley Hill... what Arthur's picnic-ers would have seen ... cooling towers and the reservoir etc.*

*we proceeded to the Bakers Arms and on some occasions to Snaresbrook - this area being very 'snooty' in those days.*

*I cannot remember anything in particular about the Forest except there were very few visitors. We did, a number of times, go to Connaught Water, but I cannot ever remember going on a boat. My Mother and Father always had a drink at the Royal Forest Hotel. The Forest was much more rural with not many paths. I cannot recollect a golf course on my early visits, but later can see the golfers in their "red jackets" (compulsory wear then).*

Arthur says, from the age of 9-10 he was always friendly with Irene - the

girl a few doors up the road. (Eventually they were married) But even when he went out to work in 1928 aged 16 he still did not have enough time or money to travel to the Forest. However when the 1930's began he and Irene could afford to go to the Forest fortnightly on a Sunday with his sisters and their boyfriends with a church rambling group - "you had to attend a short service at 9-0 am. and, be back by 6-0pm to ring the bells"

Writing about the early 1930's... he continues,

*"As I recall the Forest at that time was more natural with few paths. It was not manicured as it is now. Bushes especially blackberries were abundant.*

*In consequence there were more birds and the deer roamed the Forest and frequently were seen. I suppose only areas 1 or 2 miles from public transport were basically visited so there were large areas, especially in the north that rarely saw a visitor."*

**Arthur Gliddon**

I imagine there are many members, younger than Arthur, who can remember the Forest in the 1930's. And, although we may now think there have been great changes - such as travelling by car and a picnic that would now, if it were permitted, include a barbecue - still the purpose of a visit and the role of the Forest for people in the surrounding suburbs will not have basically changed. It still provides the same opportunities to relax and 'wind-down'. Now however, with the increased pressures and pace of life, it may be of even greater value.

In his letter Arthur mentions that he does not now have the time for more - other matters claim his attention. He says he has been living on his own for 24 years; cooking, shopping, washing, ironing and gardening. He goes to whist drives twice a week and a water colour painting class, once or twice a month, visits the South Bank to hear symphony concerts, is a member and visits the National Portrait Gallery - and, to help others, he writes a monthly 12 page newsletter for many ill, lonely and housebound people 'all over the country'. From this, much correspondence arises and must be answered. However at 94, Arthur says he is "beginning to slow down."

Thanks Arthur!

**Ken Hoy**

Dear Editor,

I agree with Penny Allier in her letter (in Summer Newsletter), Mountain bikes are causing increasing damage in Epping Forest especially on the smaller paths, many of which are severely damaged. Unfortunately, the Corporation of London are refusing to address this problem, seemingly putting the needs of mountain bikers before the other users of the forest.

I agree that the obvious solution is to limit mountain bikes to the semi-paved paths and bridleways. This makes complete sense as horses and mountain bikers are the most damaging of forest users so these restrictions will mean that they use the paths best able to cope with them and that can be easily monitored.

**Mark Dawes**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Forest Supper Thursday Nov 29th

#### November 7th Wednesday 10.30 am Autumn Colours Around Upshire

Meet in front of the Upshire Church, where parking will be arranged. 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.

**Leader: Sue McKinley**  
GR 417 011

#### December 13th Thursday 10.30 am Christmas Cheer!

A winter's walk in the High Beach area, followed by wine and mince-pies at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre. Meet in the carpark of the EFVC behind the Kings Oak PH.

**Leader: Harry Bitten**  
GR 408 978

### For FofEF 2008 walks see pull-out programme on pages 9 & 10

## OTHER DATES

### Epping Forest Visitor Centre

**Sat 3 November** 1.00pm - 4.00 pm  
Saturday Special at the Hunting Lodge. Enjoy a variety of crafts with a view to making some hand-made Christmas presents with a historic theme: suitable for both children and adults. £1.00 donation requested for some materials, others free.

**Saturday 10 November** 1.00 pm. - 4.00 pm. Gifts from the Temple. Crafts with a Regency feel to make and give as gifts, or keep for yourself.

**Wednesday 28 November** 10.00 am. - 12.00 pm. An autumnal wander around the Fairmead area. Meet at Fairmead Car Park

**Thursday 29 November** 6.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m. Alternative Christmas Shopping Evening at the Visitor Centre with a glass of hot non alcoholic punch and a mince pie whilst you browse for Christmas gifts. Call the Visitor Centre for further details.

**Saturday 1 December** 11.00 am. - 1.00 pm. **Tree Dressing**

Join the Epping Forest Centenary Trust and Visitor Centre staff for a traditional celebration of living trees, based on the traditions from many different countries and cultures. We will be making decorations from a variety of materials and decorating a

tree with them. Booking essential. Donations welcome.

**Saturday 1 Dec & Sunday 2 Dec** 1.00 pm. - 4.00 pm.

**Father Christmas at the Hunting Lodge.** Come and enjoy our picturesque timber-framed building festooned with Forest greenery in the traditional Christmas style. Seasonal hot spiced juice and a Christmassy craft and Father Christmas. £4.50 per child: (presents suitable for babies/ older children up to 10 years). Drop in event - no need to book.

**Sunday 9 Dec** 1.00 p.m. - 6.00 pm.

**Victorian Christmas Fair** at The Temple, Wanstead Park. A spectacular winter festival with a Victorian theme! Celebrating the 125th anniversary of Wanstead Park **FREE Family Event**

**Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 Dec 11.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.** (timed tickets)

**Father Christmas in the Forest**

*Epping Forest Visitor Centre*

A short self guided trail around High Beach leading to Santa in his outdoor 'Forest Grotto' (£4.50 per child, includes a gift). Hot non-alcoholic punch and mince pies will be served in the Visitor Centre. **Booking essential.**

**Saturday 5 Jan** 1.00 p.m. - 5.00 pm.

**Eleventh Night at the Hunting Lodge.** Tudor and medieval music (in three sessions over the afternoon), historic craft activity and enjoy the Hunting Lodge 'decked with holly' - all with a glass of hot spiced juice in your hand donations gratefully received).

**Sunday 6 January** 11.00 a.m. -

5.00pm. **Twelfth Night at the Hunting Lodge.** The Twelfth Night is the traditional last night of Christmas, the final fling of foolery and good humour. Enjoy the jolly japes of the visiting mummers, spiced drinks, food displays and a wonderful atmosphere to celebrate the end of the Christmas season. Children & adults are very welcome to come dressed in Tudor costumes.

### Epping Forest Centenary Trust

**Saturday 3 November Forest Hands** 10.30 am - 2.30pm

A fun, active and muddy day carrying out pond clearance work in the Forest to improve wetland habitats for amphibians. For details of the site please contact us on 0208 508 9061.

**Saturday 1 December Tree Dressing** 1- 4 pm Epping Forest Visitor Centre

Join us for a traditional celebration of living trees, based on the traditions

from many different countries and cultures. We will be making decorations from a variety of materials and decorating the tree with them. Booking essential, please call 0208 508 0028 to book

**Saturday 26th January Forest Hands** 10.30am - 2.30pm

Burn off the Christmas excesses with some Sycamore clearance on Warren Hill. Help to improve the woodland habitat on Warren Hill by removing the invasive Sycamore trees. All welcome, barbecue lunch provided and a short activity for children in the afternoon. If you are interested in attending please contact us on 0208 508 9061.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February Children's Lantern Walk** 4-6pm, Epping Forest Visitor Centre

Come along and decorate your own lantern then using the light of the lantern we will guide you on a magical walk through the Forest at dusk. Place are limited please phone Epping Forest Visitor Centre to book on 0208 508 0028.

### Conservation Volunteers

**Sun 4 Nov - Deershelter Plain**

Birch and holly clearance and creating log piles Parking: Golding's Hill CP.

**Tues 13 Nov - Rats Lane Bog**

Much needed restoration work. Parking: Adjacent to Duke of Wellington PH

**Sun 18 Nov- Deershelter Plain**

Continuation of the work of 4 Nov.

**Sun 25 Nov - Goldings Hill Inner**

**Pond** Improvement of habitat for great crested newts and other creatures. Parking: Goldings Hill Pond CP.

**Sun 2 Dec - Sewardstone Green**

Further clearance. Parking is very limited. Please use the Centenary Trust minibus from the Warren.

**Sun 9 Dec - Lords Bushes Upper Pond**

Removing scrub and clearing re-growth, including pond clearance. Parking: Knighton Lane CP or adjacent roads.

**Sun 16 Dec - Lord's Bushes**

Extending glades in the middle of this important woodland until Yuletide treats are ready. Parking: As preceding Sunday.

**Thurs 27 Dec - Lost Pond (aka Blackweir Pond)**

A brisk walk to the Lost Pond where we will coppice willow and carry out other restorative work. Parking: Mount Pleasant CP.

**Sun 30 Dec - Gilbert Slade**

Clearing holly and birch from around the hornbeam and oak



pollards. Parking: High View Road.

### **Sun 6 Jan - Swaines Green**

Widening the rides and walkways.

Parking: Lower Swaines opp Rec.Ground.

### **Tues 15 Jan - North Farm**

Contact Ralph Boswell or Peter Lyons nearer the time for details.

### **Sun 20 Jan - Long Running**

Continuing with birch clearance south of Long Running. Parking: Lodge Road CP.

### **Sun 27 Jan - Bush Wood**

Further glade creation by removing mainly holly from around the oak and chestnut trees. Parking: Bushwood.

### **Sun 3 Feb - Strawberry Hill**

Further clearance work. Parking: At the Warren or Lincoln's Lane CP

For further information please email [efcv2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:efcv2@yahoo.co.uk) or contact Peter Lyons on 020 529 3060

### **Epping Forest Field Centre**

#### **Hedgelaying Tutor: Peter Vaughn**

Thurs 8 & Fri 9 November, £77

This two-day course will cover the history, ecology and management of hedgerows as well as providing a sound practical knowledge of the

techniques required for hedgelaying, using traditional tools and materials.

For details of other Field Centre courses: Tel: 020 8502 8500 or e-mail: [enquiries.ef@field-studies.council.org](mailto:enquiries.ef@field-studies.council.org)

### **BNA Epping Forest Branch**

#### **Saturday 3 November.**

#### **Waltham Forest GREEN**

#### **CELEBRATIONS Autumn Tints**

#### **Walk -Warren Pond and Connaught**

**Waters.** Meet Chingford Station 10am -12:30pm. Leaders Ron and Pat Andrews (8524 4239).

### **Essex Wild Life Trust**

#### **(Epping Forest Group)**

For more information telephone Tricia Moxey on (01277) 364522

### **Lee Valley Park**

**Dec 9th (Sunday) 11.00-15.00**

#### **Christmas Greenery Sale - Myddelton House Gardens**

Come and enjoy our gardens on this open day and fulfil all your Christmas greenery needs. Home made cakes and teas, plant sales. Hopefully, there'll also be special visits from some farm animals. No booking required.

### **December 14 (Friday) Christmas Bazaar - Lee Valley Park Farms**

Christmas is nearly here and Santa has popped in for the day. Have you been good all year? Come and see him and receive a present. Also enjoy the festive games and buy some hand made presents in our traditional bazaar. Admission charges apply. Booking required.

### **Feb 3 (Saturday) 13.00 15.00 Snowdrop Walk - Myddelton House Gardens**

Come and see Winter's treasures. A guided walk to admire the Snowdrops (we have thousands) early Crocus and Hellebores. Costs: £4.20, £2.70 concession.

Tel: 01992 702200 or see [www.leevalleypark.org.uk](http://www.leevalleypark.org.uk) for details.

### **Copped Hall Trust**

Guided Tours - November 18 and December 9, approx 2 hours. Access at gates between 10.00 - 11.00 am only. Cost £7, children under 14 years and members of "The Friends of Copped Hall" free. Tea, coffee, and home made cakes are available.

## **CHRISTMAS CARDS**



Buckhurst Hill Community Association have recently become custodians of a painting of Epping Forest by well known local artist Walter E Spradbery (1889 - 1969). Its rescue is a long story and some of it is told on the cards. The painting is entitled February Snow and is a view across the Warren slopes towards Connaught Water. The second view is a detail. The Friends of Epping Forest are fortunate to have the opportunity of using these prints, thanks to the Buckhurst Hill Residents Society, John Spradbery and Buckhurst Hill Community Association.

Available in packs of 10cards (5 of each view) at £4.00 per pack. You will be able to purchase the cards at the Forest Supper on Thursday 29 November or arrange to pick up supplies by phoning Peggy Bitten, 020 8529 8594.

If you wish packs to be sent by post please send a cheque made payable to FofEF for £5.00 (£4.00 plus 1.00p p+p) per pack to Mrs P Bitten, 9 Frederica Road, Chingford, E4 7AL.

## PAUL MOXEY



Paul Moxey, 69, died on August 12 after a short illness. Long associated with the Forest, he began life in Hatch End, Middlesex, where the proximity of fields nurtured his long interest in natural history and the countryside. Joining the Ruislip and District Natural History Society as a junior member, he undertook bird surveys, carried out quadrat surveys and explored his local countryside, out as far as Tring. Following a degree at University College London reading geography and economics, he completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Conservation.

In 1963, he became a founding Trustee of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and was elected a fellow of the Linnaean Society of London. After a career in teaching, he moved to Epping Forest in 1970 to become the first Warden and Director of Studies at the Epping Forest Conservation Centre. Supporting its development from a muddy hole in the ground to a thriving education and research facility, he continued to teach stream studies along the Loughton Brook, urban geography of Harlow and woodland ecology. Whilst heading up the Centre, he saw the numbers of children using it rise to more than 12,000 per year, along with a varied programme of guided walks, day courses and an evening lecture series.

## NORMAN TAYLOR

We have to report the sad news of the death of Norman towards the end of September. Norman was a member of the Friends committee some years ago and he and his wife Eunice until very recently played an important role in preparing the Newsletter for distribution and in distributing it. Norman hadn't been very well recently but he had been a stalwart of a local badminton club which used to play in the Spicer Hall in Chingford. We remember many times seeing his tall figure striding to and from the venue.

Our condolences go to Eunice and her family.

*Ed.*

### A CELEBRATION OF PAUL MOXEY'S LIFE

The family would like to invite you to join them in a celebration of Paul Moxey's life on Friday 9 November at the Rye Meads Visitor Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts, at 11.30am. Refreshments will be served. Please wear brightly coloured ties, shirts, scarves, etc. The adjacent Rye Mead Nature Reserve is jointly managed by the RSPB and the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. As it is noted for its range of birds and otters, we hope that you will take the opportunity to see what is about, but no prizes for the longest tick list!

Rye Meads Visitor Centre,  
Rye Road.  
Stanstead Abbots  
Herts, SG12 8JS  
Phone: 01992 708383

If you are able to join us then, please let Tricia know on 01277 364522 or e-mail [tricia.moxev@vahoo.co.uk](mailto:tricia.moxev@vahoo.co.uk)

Whilst at the centre, he also taught the Certificate in Ecology and Conservation for more than 20 years, bringing ecology to many planners of north and east London.

He continued to maintain his commitment to Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, becoming its Vice president in September 2005.

Despite his professional career, he perhaps remained most happy with a pair of binoculars around his neck, wandering around woods and meadows.

Until his illness, he carried out surveys and provided considerable management advice to the City of London and others throughout London and Essex.

He is survived by his wife Tricia, three children and grandchildren.

He helped thousands of people to increase their awareness and appreciation of the Forest, for which we are very grateful. He will be sorely missed.

*Judy Adams*

## ALBERT TURPIN: 1923-2007

Albert who passed away in August was a long time member of the Friends. He loved and enjoyed the Forest and its wild creatures throughout his life.

His family suggested to those attending the funeral that instead of flowers they could perhaps consider making a donation in memory of Albert, to the Friends of Epping Forest.

As a consequence of this generosity we have received a substantial sum which is very much appreciated. The family have asked if a commemorative seat might be placed somewhere on the buffer land, perhaps on Warlies an area of which Albert was very fond. We have written to the Superintendent to seek his agreement and will communicate the outcome in due course. Meanwhile we again express our thanks to the generous folk concerned.

*Ed.*



## WALK REPORTS

### June 23 7.30pm Midsummer Walk

This was to be led by Peter Read but unfortunately he was indisposed (he's much better now) and I was drafted in to take his place. It was weatherwise an extremely miserable evening with a steady downpour throughout. Nonetheless around ten people with a masochistic outlook turned up. We circled around the West Essex Golf Course, the club house shone with lights but no one was playing, crossed Bury Road to Gilwell Lane. After splashing along there we entered and walked along the top of Yates Meadow from where there was a splendid view of north east London and Hertfordshire. Unfortunately we couldn't see it for the mist and rain. We did admire the birds foot trefoil and other flowers in the meadow. At this point an exciting storm developed with lots of lightning which suggested to us that the top of anything wasn't the best place to be! We hurried along to Yardley Hill and then slithered down to Daisy Plain and returned to our starting point at Hornbeam Lane via the horsepath at the bottom of Hawkwood. As we dispersed I asked lightheartedly whether everyone had completed and returned the consultation paper re extension of grazing? Blank looks all round! Oh dear.

**Harry**

### Epping Green Walk - 23rd August 07

When Bill Dexter rang me in early August and asked if I could lead his walk for him as he was going to go on holiday I readily agreed thinking this would be a nice easy task especially as he was sending me the route he intended to follow which he had copied from a book written by Fred Matthews and Harry Bitten, with whom readers may be familiar. He hadn't at that stage walked the walk himself in advance and I said "that won't be a problem, I'll walk it a few days before hand and then I'll be ready to lead the Friend's walk on the Thursday."

Well, on the Monday before the walk I drove up to Epping Green and my first discovery was that the parking place described had long since disappeared and now only had room for 2 or 3 cars. No problem, I thought, I'll go and talk to the friendly Landlord of The Traveller's Friend Public House who readily agreed that we could use his car park.

I then looked at the walks description in the book which said "...follow a footpath signposted 'to Nazing Common'...". There was no such signpost so after twice setting off

on different and wrong footpaths, I eventually found the correct footpath on my third attempt actually signposted "Lodge Farm" and looked out for my next instruction which said "...go through farm gates..." there were no farm gates, however, I was able to follow the route and in due course came to a point where I was directed to follow a footpath by a cricket ground, unfortunately that footpath was completely blocked and I found myself cutting across a field returning to where the farm gates should have been. Not the most propitious start; but no matter, as the guide book also described a shorter route that cut across from this point, saying now that one had to follow a barbed wire fence on the right which the reader will not, by this stage, be surprised to learn did not exist. It also said that I would pass a ditch on the left – long since filled in – and then cross a nonexistent plank bridge in the corner of the next field.

As I continued it came as no surprise at all to find that there was not a stile at the end of the next field, but I was pleasantly surprised that on reaching Jack's Hatch the description again became accurate.

Unfortunately at the next footpath I discovered that the footpath had been blocked with tree branches and an extended growth of brambles and nettles, however, 20 minutes of cutting with my cutters cleared a route past what was supposed to be a field used by Scouts for camping, but which now was a housing estate.

As I continued along I decided to abandon all reference to the route in Harry's guide book and just follow his excellent map, and in due course returned safely to my car, unsurprisingly missing out on passing a missing distant group of tall trees, a house which apparently used to have dead elms beside the gate - however, not only had the dead elms gone, but so had the house! - but no matter, I figured out that I had enough knowledge of the route to safely lead the Friend's walkers on that Thursday... after all, what else could go wrong?

As it turned out, quite a lot could go wrong!

On the Thursday, not only was it raining, but all roads into Epping Green were closed for road works and the "helpful" diversion signs sent people from one part of the closed road to another part of the closed road so although I arranged with the work men that they would allow access to our walkers, I had no way of communicating this to every-

one and therefore apologies to anyone who tried to join the walk but was unable to do so (*I wasn't responsible for this! Harry*).

At the appointed start time I stood alone in front of The Traveller's Friend, but 15 minutes later I was joined by 6 intrepid walkers including the afore mentioned Harry Bitten, who revealed that the walks book I had been given to use had gone out of print 25 years ago and it was therefore unsurprising that many of the features had changed!

We set off and had a most enjoyable walk, with quite a lot of banter between Harry & myself over my trying to follow a 25 year old description (A two-man comedy act). We also took in an extra section of Epping Long Green, a fragment of Forest that probably remains because of its ancient use as a cattle drove route.

The walk was enjoyed by the few who came, and included sightings of deer, and it is just a pity that more members could not get there.

Next time I may not so readily volunteer to take on a walk following a route description that has not been tried for 25 years!

**Robert Levene**

### Centenary Walk 2007

This took place on Sunday 30 September and was the second year of the Mike Whiteley era the Harry Bitten era having come to a shuddering halt in 2005.

There was a good turn-out at 0900 hrs on a calm bright morning, ideal for walking, at Manor Park. The Forest Verderers were present as were members of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee and the staff at the Warren.

The usual route was followed over Wanstead Flats, across the Green Man roundabout and Walthamstow Forest to the County Hotel for coffee (or tea or soft drinks). After the Sale and Highams Park, Woodford golf course was traversed and then Whitehall Plain and having crossed the Ching there was a brief pause when the Forest Conservation Officer Dr. Jez Dagley spoke about the native English black poplar (the only specimen in the Forest).

More people joined at Butlers Retreat and the 'crocodile' wound its way over Chingford Plain and through Bury Wood, Fairmead and Hill Wood to Paul's Nursery green and High Beach. Here we had a 70 minutes lunch stop to eat drink and rest weary feet. Resuming, we proceeded past Carl's

tea hut via the Generals Ride over Claypit Hill and along Verderer's Ride including a short halt at 'big view' where Jez spoke about the history of this notable opening and viewpoint.

Carefully crossing Woodredon Hill we continued through St. Thomas's Quarters and over the Epping New Road to the track by Long Running where Jez was called on to speak on the natural history of this feature. We turned left at the Green Ride and continued over the M 25 (in its tunnel) to the finish at Bell Common from where the walkers scattered to their various destinations. Over a hundred people had enjoyed the Walk in whole or in part on a very pleasant day.



*Walkers admiring the Big Veiw*



*A few intepid walkers going through the cattle enclosure near Butlers Retreat.*



## A CONTINENTAL OAK

### (Pollard? Probably Not)

While driving through Brittany recently we came across the venerable oak pictured (my inclusion in the photo is to provide scale not a contrast in venerability). The tree is recorded in Paris as the Pouldu Oak on the national archive of Arbres Remarkable.

The website asserts, rather hopefully, that Caesar's legions (50 BC!) may have marched under its spreading branches. If they did this oak would be the oldest in Europe by a long way!

At first glance the tree has the appearance of being pollarded but on closer view the main trunk appears to be continuous and any pollarding that took place was probably self inflicted.



**Harry Bitten**

This edition of the Newsletter is an experimental format including colour pages. Printing is more costly. What do you think of it?

Hope you have enjoyed reading this edition and feel moved to write to us. Look forward seeing you at the Forest Supper and on our expanded walks programme. Happy Christmas.

**Peggy Bitten**



*The Pouldu Oak recorded in the French national archive of Arbres Remarkable*