

# Friends of Epping Forest



Newsletter Autumn 2015

[www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk)

## THE NEXT 10 YEARS – AND BEYOND



Photo Michael Chapman

### “Love the Forest as much as we do? Get involved!”

These words were featured in the promotional handbill about the consultation undertaken by the City of London in respect of the Forest management plan for the period 2017-2027. We were also told that it was the largest public consultation ever undertaken. We were warned about the extent of the documentation, with 6 themes and 58 management issues, from habitat management, car parking, litter, recreational activities and more. Regrettably, through our discussions with a number of you who had hoped to complete the survey, the task is somewhat daunting and a number have been put off from responding. We also heard some concerns that if you did some of it, which is encouraged, does that mean it is interpreted that you neither had any interest nor cared about the other issues you did not complete?

The Friends have now responded as an organisation, and we did cover the whole of it. Here I am keen to share with you the higher-level issues we identified and shared with the Conservators. While the document is impressive in its detail, higher level/policy issues can fail to emerge by tackling it on a management issue basis.

**Its focus on Forest land.** The Friends have always welcomed the purchase of additional land for the Forest. In some cases, the land has been directly added to the Forest (e.g. Gifford Wood). In others, the purchase has been of buffer

land. This means that while making a huge difference to the Forest including its protection, biodiversity, recreation, amenity and vistas, buffer land does not have the same protection as Forest land, which is protected by the Epping Forest Act. Given the importance of buffer land to the Forest, we want to ensure that any buffer land that could become Forest land does so, ensuring its protection in perpetuity. This is particularly important now, given the significant pressures on the Green Belt.

**The value of partnerships.** The Friends have welcomed the inclusion of partnership as one of the “golden strands” of the consultation document, which expresses well the value and role of partnerships in the saving of Epping Forest. However, several recent documents from the City – including this questionnaire – do not in our view adequately reflect the contributions to

be made through working with partners. While financial benefits can accrue, the role of partners in advocacy, bringing additional skills and knowledge to the Forest, bringing new audiences, intelligence gathering and delivery also contribute to the Forest. We have welcomed our involvement at the Visitor Centre and are seeing some of these contributions taking place first hand. Hopefully the value of partnerships will be further developed in the future plan.

**Quality.** It is interesting that quality has not been included as one of the “golden strands”, though various quality benchmarks are cited in the questionnaire. When, for example, a visitor comes to the Forest, it is that first impression (“visitor welcome”) that should communicate a message of care, love and responsibility. We consider quality should be included as one of the “golden strands” and note that this may mean that increased management work will be needed in some areas to improve quality.

**Priorities.** The questionnaire is ambitious in extent, proposing a myriad of activities that could take place. Presumably this consultation aims to help sieve out the priorities. However, when there is the tick box to AGREE or DISAGREE with each proposal, it often means you inevitably tick AGREE and then write a series of caveats in the Comments box. You really want to say AGREE, but e.g. not ►

*Continued on page 5*

## In this issue



	<i>PAGE</i>
<i>The Next 10 Years – and Beyond</i> .....	1
<i>Dear Friend</i> .....	2
<i>Forest Matters</i> .....	3
<i>Chris the Cuckoo</i> .....	4
<i>Mystery Quiz</i> .....	5
<i>Epping Forest Centenary Trust</i> .....	6
<i>Friends Matters</i> .....	7
<i>Tales of Blackberries</i> .....	9
<i>Walk Reports</i> .....	10
<i>Walks Programme 2016</i> .....	13
<i>Dates for Your Diary</i> .....	15
<i>Forest Supper</i> .....	16

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The Friends is a Registered Charity No: 299970.  
Committee Members are the Trustees of the Charity.

*Views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Friends of Epping Forest Committee.*

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### QR code – from phone to web

If you have a smart phone and can scan a QR code with its camera, either with a downloaded app or via software that's already installed, scan this QR code and go to the Friends of Epping Forest website.



## Dear Friend...

We have just had the most splendid Centenary Walk. It really is the event which celebrates that the Forest is here and ours to enjoy - large, vibrant, full of energy, with an ability to revive, calm and engender warmth and magic for all who take part.

Our thanks again to the West Essex Ramblers, our walk leader Mike Whiteley, Best Western Plus Epping Forest at Highams Park for that welcome cup of coffee at the end of the first leg of the journey, the Conservators, the Epping Forest and Commons Committee (three of whom joined us on the day), Forest Keeper Andrew Gammie and Superintendent Paul Thomson, Friends Committee members Mike and Sue, along with Joyce Whiteley, two new helpers, Imogen and Jack, along with the minibus and Conservation Officer Nick Ely from Epping Forest Centenary Trust.

We were also active over the summer, with attendance at the Epping Forest Burial Park Working Woodland Day, along with the Open Day at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre.



*Autumn web. Photo Peter Wrobel.*

We have continued to be very active with responses to planning applications and various issues. Is it surprising that a number of planning applications came up during August when perhaps more people are away?

We have also had close sightings of a sparrowhawk at the Visitor Centre. A number of our visitors saw it, so it provided a very good lesson in woodland food chains. The greater spotted woodpeckers and their young entertained us earlier in the season.

Thinking of food chains, please give thought to booking for the Forest Supper, if you have not already done so. The Chingford Assembly Hall venue worked well last year and we look forward to the quiz, along with meeting up with friends.

I have just come back from the Visitor Centre, delivering more of our walks leaflets. I was delighted en route to see a young magpie bathing in one of the puddles, splashing about in the sun!

**Judy Adams**

# FOREST MATTERS

## Green Belt

The Cabinet of Epping Forest District Council recently gave consideration to a Stage 1 review of the Green Belt, which they had commissioned. This report includes an assessment of areas within the Green Belt where development would least impact on Green Belt values and those where development would most impact and therefore may be more worthy of protection. EFDC has made it clear that given the extent of Green Belt in the District that some development of the Green Belt will be required to meet housing needs. You can see this report on the Council's website.

Following the approval of an application for five houses on the Pine Lodge Riding Stables ( see previous *Newsletter*), a further three applications have been made for housing in High Beach in the Lippitts Hill/Church Road area: Three Horseshoes (barn to house), Pipers Farm (4 houses+1 barn conversion) and Fairmead (3 houses).

The Friends will be objecting and note the potential ongoing development of High Beach and its impact on the Forest and the potential erosion of the Green Belt.

An application to build 72 houses, half of them "affordable", at a former road haulage yard in Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey, has recently been refused, but an appeal is in process.

## Natural play structures on Leyton Flats next to the Hollow Ponds

The responsibility for the maintenance of the three wooden structures, called natural play areas, installed on Leyton Flats, highlighted in our last *Newsletter*, rests with LB Waltham Forest. If you have any concerns about these, remembering that the installation prohibits signs on the structures or the adjacent area of Forest, please raise them with Waltham Forest. The web link is <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/pages/report.aspx?src=main-nav-links&med=web&camp=hpt>



*Play structure on land next to Hollow Ponds. Photo Peter Wrobel.*



*The felled red oak at Knighton Woods. There are just three specimens left. Photo Ron Andrews.*

## We lose one of our most brightly coloured oak trees

In Knighton Woods, the woodland garden of the earlier Buxton estate, a number of red oaks were planted. First introduced to Britain in 1724, they come from eastern Canada and America. Early settlers identified their potential contribution to parks and gardens in the UK due to the splendid colour of their leaves in autumn.

Sadly, one of the red oaks in Knighton Woods has had to be felled, largely due to damage by disease and the resultant risk for Forest visitors, particularly given its close location to one of the main paths. There are three remaining specimens on site, so do make a trip this autumn to pay homage to these wonderful specimens.

## Proposed City of London (Various Powers) Bill

We have just confirmed the timetable with the City. It is still their intention to place the Bill for deposition in Parliament this November. Once it reaches Parliament, the timescale is uncertain but it is likely that it would be some time in 2017.

We had mentioned in our response that the proposal to extend the duration of licences (for example, to run a business) risks removing areas from the Forest for longer periods than the present maximum of three years. We await the detail on the proposed licence duration and nature of the schedule to which it applies. ►

## ► Waste recycling depot near M11

A public consultation was carried out during July into the possibility of opening a new waste recycling depot in Hastingwood, next to Junction 7 of the M11. Regrettably, the Friends did not hear about this in time to respond. Objections have been made by North Weald Parish Council, among others. There has also been criticism in the local paper that Essex County Council did not adequately publicise the consultation. The Friends consider that such a development poses risks to the Forest environment due to lorry movements, dust and noise. It is an industrial activity which would be better placed on an industrial site.

## Mini-Holland scheme

“Mini-Holland is an exciting programme to improve walking and cycling in the borough of Waltham Forest” – so proclaims the Waltham Forest website. Successful in achieving funding of £30 million from Transport for London, LB Waltham Forest is now progressing the scheme.

The one section which impacts on the Forest is Lea Bridge Road at the Whipps Cross roundabout, where a new T junction is planned to replace the present day roundabout. The proposal actually returns some Forest land to the Forest, which we welcome. For more detail see [www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/](http://www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/)

We also noted that the draft road scheme for this roundabout included five associated projects: a Community

orchard, pond, and works at Wood Street corner and at Forest Rise green verge, along with an Epping Forest gateway on Forest land. The proposed gateway bears little resemblance to those being developed by the Conservators (see right). We have now been reassured that the gateway proposed for Forest land has not yet been discussed with the Conservators and would require agreement by the Conservators, as well as planning permission.

## Litter bins

Members will be aware that the Friends have identified litter as one of the Forest challenges, due to its impact on the amenity of the Forest and Forest finances, due to the large costs of removal. Our involvement at the Visitor Centre at High Beach provided us with an opportunity to comment on the nature and locations of the new bins there, which are now in place. They are visually more attractive and seemingly functional. We will be continuing to work with the Conservators over their litter policy and its management.

## Waymarked trails

We have had a busy summer in respect of our work at the Centre. The Conservators are now updating the Forest waymarked trails, as part of finalising their Heritage Lottery work. Given our experience of communicating the trails and routes to the public at the Centre and the considerable “trail” experience of many of our volunteers, we have contributed suggestions and proposals on how we think they could be improved to better serve our visitors.

# CHRIS THE CUCKOO

We have been following radio-tagged Cuckoos, especially Chris, in his migrations for several years. He has contributed information about the refuelling stops and wintering grounds, as well as migration routes, the speed and distance of travel, the effect of weather conditions and age – he was in his second year when first tagged in 2011.

On 29 April, he returned to the area around the Norfolk/Suffolk border (Cavenham Heath), where he has spent previous summers. On July 4, good signals were received from Chris's tag which revealed he was in the Netherlands, close to Rotterdam. Low-quality signals received a few days before show he may well have arrived in mainland Europe earlier than this, before moving north-east to his current location – further north than the locations in Belgium he has been seen in previous years.

Chris's stay in the Netherlands was quite short this year. A signal during the early evening on 7 July showed that he was in Bavaria, just outside of the town of Langenthonhausen. This is the furthest east he has ventured since being fitted with his satellite tag.

Chris continued south and by 17 July was in northern Italy, just east of Ferrara. Poor-quality signals indicate that he journeyed first to Germany, then to Slovenia and then on to Italy.

The BTO is now quite concerned because as of 18 August 2015, it had not received any good-quality locations for Chris since 3 August. Poor-quality signals do indicate that he left Italy shortly after this and was crossing the Mediterranean Sea on the 5 August.

The Po Valley in Italy is Chris's usual stopover site. But the region is experiencing its worst drought in years, and given the short length of time our cuckoos have spent here this year, has presumably meant a shortage of caterpillars.

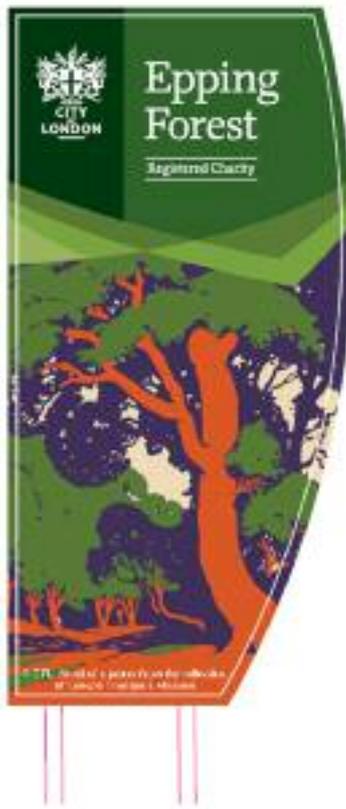
Poor-quality signals from Chris's tag show that he made it to the Tibesti mountains in Northern Chad by 8 August, but no good signals have been received to confirm this and elevate his location so that it is visible on the public maps. He seems to have been here for around eight days, which is very worrying as he normally crosses the desert in a day or two, stopping on the shores of Lake Chad in the south of the country and on the southern edge of the desert.

At this stage the BTO are very concerned about him and, given the conditions in Italy, they fear that he may not have been able to take on the amount of food needed to prepare for, and successfully complete, the journey. Two other tagged cuckoos, Peckham and Larry, also stopped in the mountain area and continued on to complete their crossing of the desert, though neither spent as long as Chris has in the area.

(With thanks to the BTO... and Chris).

**Ken Hoy**

## Gateway signage



During the past year, the Conservators have been working on “Gateway signage” for key entrances or gateways to the Forest. The image of the gateway sign, approved by Epping Forest and Commons Committee and agreed by London Transport Museum, is on the left.

The Friends commented in the earlier stages. The signage would be located at 21 key entrances or gateways to the Forest – each subject to planning permission by the relevant planning authority. If you have visited Lee Valley Regional Park, you will have seen that its “new” road signage at major entrances is of a similar nature.

## Forest Diary

The Conservators will not be producing the Forest Diary in 2016, but instead propose to produce four seasonal issues of Forest Focus, one more than the current three. They will continue to feature Forest events, but the space allowable may affect how many events they can include. The Friends were very supportive, when the introduction of the Diary enabled the Friends’ events and others to be included and hope that this may continue.

**Judy Adams**

*The Next 10 Years, continued from page 1*

everywhere, nor at all times and only if it can be sustained. It is difficult to see how overall priorities can be learned from this questionnaire.

## Need for strategies and policies

In some sections, the various proposals to tick include one saying something like “prepare a strategy/policy”. The management plan should be driven by policy and strategies, not simply by votes on a set of activities. The key challenge for the Conservators is to manage the range of views on what the Forest should/could be and develop clear policies to direct the strategies and activities.

Sustainability, including economic, ecological and delivery sustainability, is crucial. In a Public Inquiry a few years ago, when I asked, “If a particular management is undertaken and it cannot be sustained, is it better not to begin it?”, the answer from Natural England was “Yes”. This question related to Forest management sustainability. However, sustainability is relevant across all activities of the Forest and should be a key consideration in all activities, especially the land management operation of the Forest.

In summary, we want to ensure the plan emerging from the questionnaire ultimately is policy led, with sustainability at its core. While it is a ten-year plan, the Friends believe it needs to be informed by a longer view, one where sustainability, protection of the Forest, quality and partnerships are at its core.

And remember, as John Clare wrote –

*I love the Forest and its airy bounds  
Where friendly Campbell takes his daily rounds  
I love the breakneck hills – that headlong go  
And leave me high and half the world below  
I love to see the Beech Hill mounting high...*

**Judy Adams**

## MYSTERY QUIZ



During late summer, although this woodland object aims to attract attention and its presence is easy to detect, it is not easy to find and must be searched for! Have you found one? What is it? (Photos and question, Ken Hoy.)

### Answer below

It is a relatively common fungus, the Stinkhorn (*Phallus impudicus*). It erupts from a white ball of “jelly” and then expands quickly in a matter of hours as a porous white stalk that is topped by a cap covered with a dark greenish liquid that has a powerful foetid stench. The slimy fluid releases the smell that is particularly attractive to flies. This slime, consisting of millions of spores, is rapidly consumed by the flies, thus widely distributing the spores. The smell is detectable over a wide area especially on a still, humid day.



*The flies here are consuming the last of the spore liquid.*

# EPHING FOREST CENTENARY TRUST

**At our recent AGM, our Chairman, Judy Adams, said that the Friends had been invited by the Epping Forest Centenary Trust (which she also chairs) to meet with them to discuss whether the exploration of a potential merger/establishment of a new trust could be of value to each organisation. The article below, written by EFCT Trustee and Director John Besent, outlines its origins and activities over the years. Hopefully this will be of interest to you, particularly if you have little knowledge of the Trust and its activities.**

Epping Forest Centenary Trust, a Limited Company and charity (registered in 1978), was established in celebration of the Epping Forest Act with the object of complementing the activities of the Conservators for the benefit of the Forest's conservation, the public's understanding and enjoyment of the Forest and the development of young people through conservation work.

Initially, and because the Conservators' own information service was restricted, the Trust focused on providing Forest information. This was achieved through a mobile information unit and the publication of leaflets on the Forest's ecology and history. Restoration work was undertaken to Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge coupled with the production of new museum displays. A comprehensive walkers' and horse riders' map of the Forest was produced, which later became the basis for the Conservators' own Forest map.

Adoption of Trust programmes by the Conservators has been the catalyst for new projects, thus keeping the Trust alive and relevant. A significant new project in the mid 1980s was the Conservation Project. Working with local schools, the Project Officer undertook a variety of habitat conservation projects, especially on sites where hand work was essential. This project continues today and its particular focus at present is to involve people with learning difficulties.

In 1988 the Scout Association, the Conservators and the Trust established Project 800, enabling scouts from all over the country to undertake a week long conservation project

at various sites throughout the Forest. This annual project, too, continues today.

Another pioneering project of the Trust was the High Beach Wheelchair Path (now the Easy Access Path), which was initiated, funded and built by the Trust in 1987.

The success of the Trust in combining conservation with the development of a greater awareness and understanding of the Forest inspired the Forestry Commission to establish the Forest Education Initiative, initially in Epping Forest in 1992 and then nationally two years later with a special launch at the Epping Forest Field Centre.

Having provided financial support to the Field Centre for many years, a Winter Wonderland Week began at the Centre with support from the Trust to provide, free of charge, opportunities for groups with special needs to undertake activities in the Forest. This led to the setting up of the Trust's Environmental Awareness Project and the recruitment of a second Project Officer. Even in its first year, this new project provided 1,737 child visits, raising their awareness and appreciation of woodlands generally and of Epping Forest in particular.

Other Trust projects have included the creation and maintenance of a wildlife refuge on the Forest's buffer land at North Farm, the adoption of the Forest Schools national programme, and the formation of the Green Team of conservation volunteers, who continue to work in the Forest under the guidance and supervision of the Trust.

Recent Heritage Lottery funding has enabled the Conservators to expand their activities and so once again the Trust is undertaking a review of its role so that it can continue to provide innovative programmes for the benefit of the Forest and its visitors.

**John Besent**

**• Members who wish to find out more are invited to come to the Visitor Centre at High Beach on either 5 or 14 October at 10 am, 2 pm or 7pm to hear more about the Trust and to share your views. Please RSVP if you plan to come, by calling 020 8418 0730 or emailing [judith.adams21@btinternet.com](mailto:judith.adams21@btinternet.com). More information about the Trust can be found at [www.efct.info](http://www.efct.info).**



*The Happy Loppers, an EFCT initiative which brings together adults with learning difficulties to work weekly in the Forest. Photo EFCT.*



Centre volunteers busy getting ready for the open day on 25 July. Photo Judy Adams.

## FRIENDS MATTERS

### Visitor Centre

It is hard to believe we are nearly six months into our second year operating the Visitor Centre! It has been an amazing journey, with new volunteers joining us this year and some moving on to jobs and other commitments, or out of the area.

You'll see some changes at the Centre, mostly "removal" so far. The woodland habitat display case has gone. When we realised the mammals on show were not coming back, we decided the space was of greater value than an empty very large display unit! And also the gibbet has gone – the panels that hung on it were too worn to use and I think it did remind us all of a hanging structure too!

### Extended opening hours for our second year

**Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays**

**Until 30 October                      10 am until 4 pm**

**From 30 October                      10.30 am until 3 pm**

We want to acquire much better mammal pictures for our woodland corner, develop four seasonal panels, and with the City are looking at better shop and leaflet display. If you can assist us with any such projects, do get in touch. And we are looking forward to a lick of paint sometime in the autumn! Yep, we are going for green...

Our open day went well – the photo above shows some of our Info staff trying out the children's activities. We have some cross-sections of wood "seats" for our woodland hut (thanks to the City, and to David, who sanded them down) and we welcomed the arrival of the feelie boxes. You know what they are. Just put your hand in gently and see if you can work out

what is inside – no peeking or removal allowed.

We are beginning to develop proposals for the Centre and to work with the Conservators on the service development, in terms of what's available in the Centre and additional services we might be able to offer. This summer we have been encouraging groups to come on Thursday or Friday mornings to enjoy the Easy Access Trail along with a visit to the Centre and perhaps have lunch or a picnic to make a full morning or day of it! This will carry on until the end of October. ➤



Feelie boxes have proved popular! Photo Judy Adams.

## HELP US HELP YOU – SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!



We would like to be able to contact Members with information about the Forest by email. While the Newsletter comes out three times a year, it is amazing how frequently some of the consultations for example come up between Newsletters. So if you would like to keep in touch with consultations, events coming up and Forest issues, would you please send your name and email to: [secretary@friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](mailto:secretary@friendsofeppingforest.org.uk).

It will help us keep you informed. We will never give any other organisation the address and we will only ever send Forest-based information. If you had an email from us about the Epping Forest Act or the consultation "the Next Ten Years", then you are among the small number of members whose email addresses we have.

### > Out and about

Summer is the time to get out and about, they say. We enjoyed the Woodland Working Day at North Weald, Swaines Green Festival at Epping, Highams Park Day (the "hottest" event of the year), High Beach Open Day and for the Loughton Festival this year added in a Friends walk – "Exploring Loughton's Forest" – led by Georgina Green.

I also gave various talks promoting the Forest and the Friends, including one to the London Humanist Group, Theydon Bois Rural Preservation Society, St John's Church Mothers' Union, U3A Buckhurst Hill, and the Bishops Natural

History Society. It was good to get a photo in the *Chingford Times* to advertise the Epping Forest Centenary Walk. To any of you who saw the advert, however, the walk regrettably did not include a lunch at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge as was mentioned in the advert.

### Christmas cards

The Friends have only just sold all our cards dating from 2013, so we shall not be able to produce new ones this year. The City still has a considerable stock, so we shall focus on selling them, which will enable us to launch new ones next year.

### AGM outcomes

It was another successful AGM this year (23 June), though the numbers were a little down on last year. You have seen the Annual Report of Activities in the Summer *Newsletter*. Elections this year re-elected me as Chairman and Pete Wrobel and Tricia Moxey as continuing Committee members. The AGM was followed by a fascinating talk from artist Mark Lewis, sharing his perspective on the Forest.

The AGM also approved the financial accounts. Financially, we are in a strong position. Our income in the year to 31 March 2015 rose to £15,853, while expenditure fell. As a result, and taking into account changes in stock levels, the balance sheet shows net assets of £45,003.16. Full accounts are available at [www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk).  
*Judy Adams*

## ENJOY THE EASY ACCESS PATH IN AUTUMN HUE



We are keen to encourage groups with learning, sensory or mobility difficulties to visit us at the Centre particularly on Thursdays or Fridays between 10:30 am and 12:30 pm. If you join us then, we'll give a short presentation, have a chat about the Forest and encourage you to try out our scavenger hunt along the Easy Access Trail. Prizes all round!

You could bring a picnic – a large tarpaulin is provided on loan for your visit – or enjoy lunch at one of the many nearby facilities.

The Centre has a toilet for people with disabilities. To book: ring 020 8418 0730 or email [visitorcentre@friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](mailto:visitorcentre@friendsofeppingforest.org.uk).



*The AGM saw us bid farewell to Duke of Edinburgh volunteer Katherine Hough, here receiving a token of our appreciation from the Chairman. Photo Peter Wrobel.*

# TALES OF BLACKBERRIERS

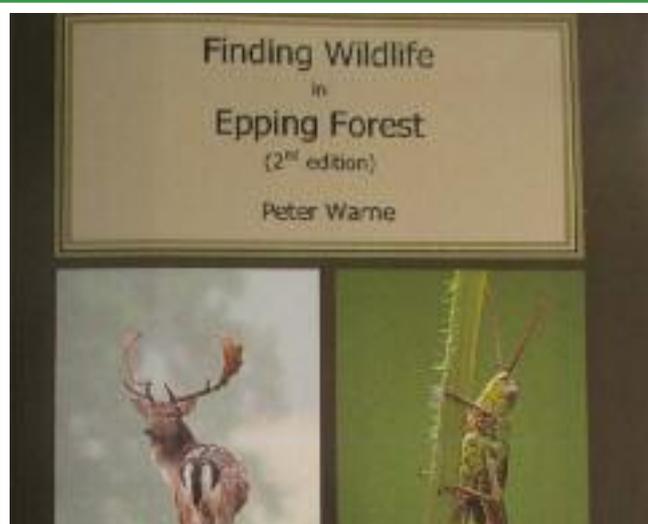
“I recently came across, the cutting on the right,” writes Georgina Green. She notes that the date, 30 September, “seems quite late in the year – I picked 3 boxes of lovely blackberries at Pepper Alley on 17 August 2014.” Georgina adds: “The area of the forest by the Toll Gate must have been near Bancrofts. She mentions the stall was half hidden among the trees and bushes of the forest but there must have been some good open ground for the blackberries to have flourished sufficiently to make all this worthwhile.” The full cutting is transcribed below.



Blackberries at Yardley Hill. Photo Georgina Green.

“ Having occasion to pass through Woodford late on Saturday night, I was surprised on reaching that part of the High Road across which some years ago stretched the old toll-gate, to find a brightly-lighted stall standing half hidden among the trees and bushes of the forest. A blazing fire was burning at the side, over which was suspended a large boiler, while three dusky forms were flitting about, now in the glare of the light, and now among the shadows of the trees, busily preparing something for their stand. Upon a closer inspection I discovered that the stall was a coffee-stall and the dusky forms were those of the proprietor and his assistants, who were actively engaged in cutting up bread and butter and cake, and preparing tins of hot coffee. Being the only person within sight or hearing, and considering the lateness of the hour (12 o'clock p.m.) and

the unfrequented spot upon which the stall stood, I might well be pardoned for wondering for whom this midnight repast was being prepared. Judging from the huge piles of coffee, it was obvious that the coffee-stall keeper was expecting no small nor chance body of customers, and arguing from the class of provisions and the accompanying surroundings, I concluded that the caterer calculated his consumers, whoever they might be, would possess voracious rather than dainty appetites. Leaving the place where I had been standing, I walked up to the stall and politely enquired of the proprietor the cause of such studied preparations. The stall-keeper, a most respectable, civil, and obliging man, in answer to my question informed me that he was preparing for blackberries. “Blackberries!” said I, “but surely you don’t get enough of those individuals down to recompense you and your assistants for a night’s labour”? “Well,” said my informant, “I am only here three Saturday nights just at the height of the season, and you would hardly credit it, sir, but between one and two o’clock in the morning I have as many as from two to three hundred blackberry boys round my stall at a time. Most of them come down from London in gangs, and after regaling themselves at my stall, they stretch themselves down under bushes, or on fallen trees, where they take a short nap until either the cold or the first peep of daylight awakens them, when the business of picking the blackberries begins. Indeed, some are so anxious to be the first “in the field” that they are busily at work before daylight picking the fruit by the aid of lanterns.”



## A BOOK FOR CHRISTMAS

Looking for a present for Christmas? You’ll do no better than buying *Finding Wildlife in Epping Forest* by Peter Warne, who made such an impression when he spoke and showed his photographs at the 2015 AGM. You can acquire it from Epping Forest Visitor Centre (see page 7 for opening times) or from 2 High View Close, Loughton IG10 4EG (ring beforehand 020 8418 0730 to make sure we are in). To receive it by post, please send a cheque (made out to Friends of Epping Forest) with your order to Judy Adams, 2 High View Close, Loughton, Essex IG10 4EG, adding a delivery charge of £2.50 unless collected.

From what I know of the nature and reputation of these “gentlemen,” I had formed an opinion that their ideas of honesty were generally suspect as being of a somewhat doubtful character, and with this thought in my mind I asked my communicative friend how he managed to prevent being cheated, or even too hold possession of his stall in the midst of such a number of questionable characters, and further if he knew how the orchards and fruit gardens fared, bordering upon the “hunting ground” of these nocturnal visitors. To which he replied, so far as his own case was concerned, he had nothing to fear, since they all appeared to fully appreciate the convenience afforded them by his stall, and further that the special policemen were on duty in the immediate vicinity, who could be called upon for assistance should occasion arise...

# WALK REPORTS

## May in the Forest (16 May 2015)

Meeting at the Forest Gate public house at Bell Common, Epping, gave walkers the choice between a light lunch and a drink before setting off on the walk or arriving for the 2 pm start. Most chose the former!

Eleven of us, plus Pat and Ron's dog "Trec", set off across the southern tip of Bell Common and then around the edge of the cricket pitch. We always refer to this as "the most expensive pitch in the world", as it was reinstated above the cut-and-cover tunnel constructed as part of the M25. The tunnel prevented the fragmentation of the Forest.

Continuing south we were paralleling the nearby Epping New Road, the B1393. The path took us between two ponds that were the result of gravel digging for the road – these are known as the Pizzle Pits. The open area ahead is known as Kemps Lawn, with perimeter ash trees probably indicating the presence of chalk in the soil.

Ambresbury Banks, an Iron Age encampment, was to be the highlight and the turning point of our walk. At the northwest corner, we climbed onto the raised bank of this earthwork and kept on the top where possible, passing across the dip of the original main entrance. We exited at the southeast corner where the height difference between the bank and the ditch is most pronounced.

More information on the earthworks can be found on page 177 of the 2nd edition of the Friends' publication *Getting to Know Epping Forest* by Ken Hoy MBE [see page 15].



*The southeast corner of Ambresbury Banks, where the height difference between bank and ditch is the greatest. Photo Ron Andrews.*

Turning north onto the Green Ride and having passed the Four Wantz junction, we continued through Epping Thicks. This area lives up to its name, as they are very much a wildwood left to nature.

Just before again passing above the M25 to conclude the walk, we took a wander off the ride to see a few small clumps of butcher's broom, *Ruscus aculeatus*. **Ron Andrews**

## A mid-summer evening walk (20 June 2015)

The weeks leading up to mid-summer's evening were warm, dry and sunny. June 20 was a day of thunderstorms and torrential rain which finally petered out just before our walk. But for the handful of people who braved the weather, or risked a last-minute decision, the rewards were many and various.

From the 18th century folly in Warlies Park, known as the Temple, the horizon was clear along Nazeing Common with the Cobbins Brook Valley between Harolds Park and Warlies Park. Sadly, neither the metal railing protecting the Temple from grazing cattle nor the waist-high nettles and thistles enclosed by it had deterred graffiti writers, giving it a rather sad air up close, in contrast to its striking position in the landscape. Walking down the Temple Field, we were struck by the number of seedling oaks, presumably the work of jays, which can distribute five thousand acorns each while laying up stores for the winter.

We walked from buffer land on to Epping Forest proper between Long Street and Fernhall Lane down to the Lower Lodge of Copped Hall. This stretch of woodland is notable for its ash trees and for some impressive old oak pollards. One of these, on the boundary bank between the Forest and Obelisk Field, a tree on the Veteran Tree Register, had lost a third of its crown, the fallen wood completely blocking the trackway and necessitating some scrambling. The evening air was now very still and humid, bringing out the scent of the towering masses



*Clumps of butcher's broom at the end of the walk. Photo Ron Andrews.*



*The long mead of Addison's Meadow, with a layer of white mist. Still concealed in this picture were a herd of shallow deer. Photo Mike McKinley.*

of honeysuckle beside the path.

As we crossed the fields to Copped Hall, a beautiful mix of leguminous plants, presumably seeded for its wildlife benefits, was seething with insects having an end-of-day feed.

We skirted Trafalgar Wood, planted by the Corporation of London in 2005 to commemorate the battle's 200th anniversary, including an oak planted by the Friends, part of a formation of oaks in the shape of a ship's wheel.

After crossing the Selvedge, we walked down from the highest field of the 16th century Ravens Farm. The Long Mead (Addison's Meadow) was below us, filled with a dense layer of white mist. The setting sun was catching the hedgerow. The effect was mystical. As we crossed the Mead, shapes became apparent in the white blanket – a herd of fallow deer standing and lying in the mist.

I think we all agreed that the moment was worth our squelching boots and clinging trousers. **Sue McKinley**

### **Birkbeck, Whitehall and Hatch Forest** (5 July 2015)

We followed a trail revealing the steady encroachment of this area of Forest from the early 1800s. "Woodford Wood", covering that part of Woodford north of Sunset Avenue between the River Ching and the High Road, was owned by the lord of the manor. In a survey he had carried out in 1757, it amounted to more than 270 acres of Forest land. At this time Woodford was a small strung-out village, and Chingford was made up of three small hamlets of little significance. About a hundred years later, all this was going to change.

In 1812 William Wellesley-Pole, through his marriage to the wealthiest heiress in England, Catherine Tylney-Long, had become lord of the manors of both Wanstead and Woodford and Lord Warden of Epping Forest. In an astonishingly short time, he managed to spend his way through most of

Catherine's family's vast fortune. The demise of the huge family estate had to begin and this was aided by the government of those times, which was facilitating the disafforestation and clearance of much of the Forest.

The construction in the 1830s of the Woodford and Epping New Roads, as well as Whitehall Road, cut through the Forest, including Woodford Wood, and marked the start of the Wood's decline. The process of enclosure took place in a piecemeal fashion as can be seen from pockets of development now seen on modern maps. One such purchaser was the Birkbeck Freehold Land Society, which acquired a parcel of land between Whitehall Lane and Brook Road. Fortunately, the Epping Forest Act of 1878 and the Arbitrator's subsequent report required this land to be sold back to the Conservators, but the name of this area (Birkbeck) has probably stayed because of the presence of the marker stone.

After exploring a number of these enclosures in Woodford Wood, we carried on to see what had happened on the Chingford side. The Boothby family owned the manor of Chingford Earls in 1608 and held it for some 332 years. They steadily purchased more land and most of their estate continued to be used for agriculture right up to the 20th century. Their home, Friday Hill House, could be clearly seen from all around and the family had a dominant influence.

After crossing the Ching at Whitehall Road, we headed south and saw what had once been the access track to Whitehall, one of the very few substantial buildings in the area. It was used by the Royal Navy during WW1 and demolished soon afterwards. All that could be found of this property was a small wall that once formed part of the outbuildings. The rest had disappeared under what is now the houses and gardens of Courtland Avenue.

When a large part of the area was sold to the London County Council in 1940 to build the Friday Hill estate, the Conservators purchased two coppice woods, Hatch and ►



*Damp but cheerful. The walkers on Whitehall Plain. Photo Judy Adams.*

## Great Gregories and Beyond (2 August 2015)

The weather was glorious but sadly we were few in number - eight in total. Maybe the descriptor “longer & brisk” put some off.

After crossing Piercing Hill to the east of Theydon Bois golf course we inspected the remains of the ancient Purlieu Bank, marking the edge of the royal forest – an area where the king had exclusive hunting rights. It is thought the first ditches of the purlieu banks were dug in the 13th century, making them one of the few surviving structures from that period.

Continuing along the eastern edge of the golf course, and past Great Gregories Farm, we came to the Epping High Road and continued over and onto the meadows below Copped Hall. There we were rewarded with sighting of red kite, sparrowhawk and, further on, English Longhorns grazing with their young. We also took the opportunity to inspect the lake, nowadays barely visible through the surrounding trees.

Thence via The Selvage and beneath the M25, where we emerged to spot a solitary muntjac. We then took the opportunity to go off piste and admire the magnificent beech trees of St Thomas’s Quarters, to the west of Lodge Road. The absence of undergrowth made for an enjoyable leafy ramble among the old pollards.

Then back via the Green Ride to Jack’s Hill car park, our starting point.

*Peter Adams*

*Alan Curran*

- Bluehouse Groves, to add into the Forest. We found that though now much overgrown, we could still see the wood-banks that had marked their separation from the Forest for many centuries – even the remains of an old vegetable patch.

While crossing back across the Ching to our starting point, we found a wide range of wild flowers that were thriving in the warm, damp conditions. A delight in our otherwise soggy walk!



## Centenary Walk, 13 September 2015

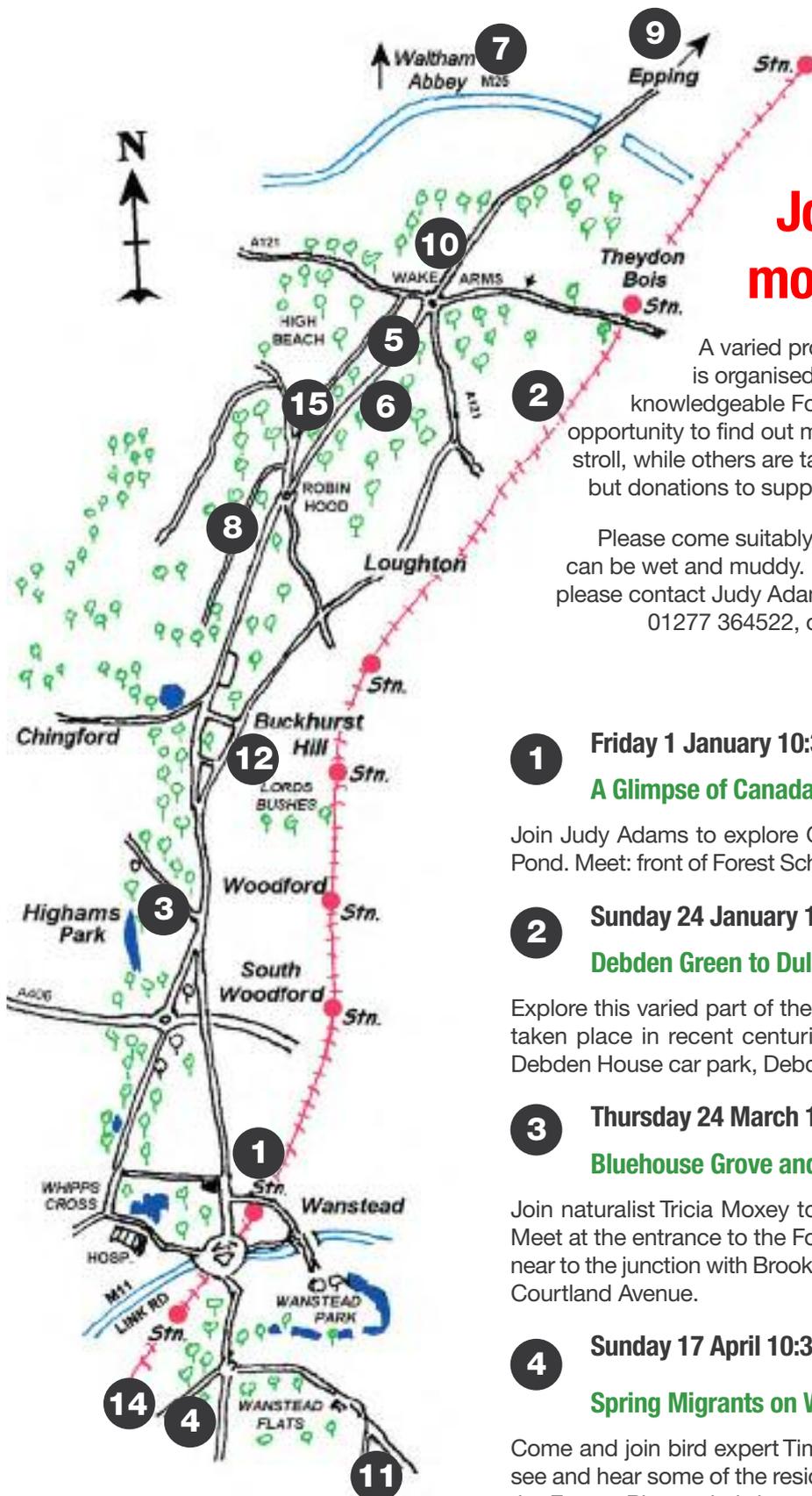


*Above: Centenary walkers in Gilberts Slade. As the walk progressed their numbers swelled to some 170. Right: Friends Chairman Judy Adams holds aloft a fine wooden sign thought to have been made for the first Centenary Walk, 1978. Left: many joined at the Best Western Plus Epping Forest hotel (formerly the County Hotel), which as it has done for many years provided free and very welcome cups of coffee. Photos Richard Arnopp.*



# Friends of Epping Forest

## Programme of Guided Walks 2016



### Join us and discover more of Epping Forest

A varied programme of walks throughout the Forest is organised by the Friends of Epping Forest. Led by knowledgeable Forest enthusiasts, these walks provide an opportunity to find out more about the Forest. Some are a gentle stroll, while others are taken at a faster pace. The walks are free, but donations to support the work of the Friends are welcome.

Please come suitably dressed for walking in the Forest, which can be wet and muddy. For help in getting to the meeting points, please contact Judy Adams on 020 8418 0730 or Tricia Moxey on 01277 364522, or visit [www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk)

**Walks free, donations welcome.**

#### 1 Friday 1 January 10:30 am – 12:30 pm **A Glimpse of Canada**

Join Judy Adams to explore Gilbert Slade, Canada Plain and Bulrush Pond. Meet: front of Forest School, London E17 3PY. Grid ref: TQ893393

#### 2 Sunday 24 January 10:30 am – 12:30 pm **Debden Green to Dulsmead**

Explore this varied part of the Forest and the many changes that have taken place in recent centuries with Verderer Peter Adams. Meet at Debden House car park, Debden Green, IG10 2NZ. Grid ref: TQ438982

#### 3 Thursday 24 March 10:30 am – 12:30 pm **Bluehouse Grove and the River Ching**

Join naturalist Tricia Moxey to look for signs that winter is at an end. Meet at the entrance to the Forest on the south side of Whitehall Road near to the junction with Brook Rd. Grid ref: TQ399938 Parking in nearby Courtland Avenue.

#### 4 Sunday 17 April 10:30 am – 12:30 pm **Spring Migrants on Wanstead Flats**

Come and join bird expert Tim Harris for an amble across the Flats to see and hear some of the resident and migratory species in this part of the Forest. Please do bring your binoculars! Meet at the Jubilee Pond car park, off Lake House Road, London E11 3NW. Grid ref: TQ401863

# Guided Walks 2016

**5** Saturday 7 May 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

## Exploring Honeylane Quarters and Beyond

Join Ron and Pat Andrews for a walk from Wake Valley Pond, taking in Sunshine Plain, the Big View and Rushey Plain. Meet at Wake Valley car park, off Epping New Road (A104) on the west side, just south of the Wake Arms Roundabout (Miller and Carter). Grid ref: TQ422989

**6** Sunday 12 June 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

## Monks in the Forest

Join Verderer Peter Adams to explore Great and Little Monk Woods in the heart of the Forest. How were the monks involved and what did the woods mean to Loughton residents? Meet at Mount Pleasant car park off the Epping New Road (A104) on the east side, to the south of the Wake Arms Roundabout (Miller and Carter). Grid ref: TQ418982

**7** Saturday 18 June 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm

## A Midsummer Evening Walk

Join Sue McKinley for an evening ramble through the woods and fields just north of Upshire. A good time and place for wild flowers and deer, wide skies and sunsets. Meet at the end of Fernhall Lane/Long Street near the junction with the Upshire village road. Grid ref: TL421012. Nearest postcode is EN9 3TA.

**8** Sunday 3 July 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

## Exploring the Forest around West Essex Golf Club, Trueloves and beyond

Join Alan Curran to explore the western fringes of the Forest north of Chingford. Meet at Fairmead Oak Car Park, Fairmead Road, High Beach. Grid ref: TQ408968

**9** Sunday 10 July 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

## A Wander round Swaines Green for Summer Flowers and Insects

Join Tricia Moxey and Martin McCleary. Meet at the Lower Swaines entrance close to Epping Primary School. There is limited parking in Lower Swaines or Coronation Hill at the end of St. John's Rd Epping. CM16 5ES. Grid ref: TL456025

**10** Sunday 24 July 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

## Discovering Copped Hall Estate's Wildlife

Local biologist and wildlife photographer Peter Warne will share his love and knowledge of the wildlife in and around Copped Hall Estate in Epping Forest. Meet at Lodge Road Car Park, off the Epping New Road (B1393), north of the Wake Arms Roundabout (Miller and Carter). Grid ref: TQ431998

**11** Sunday 11 September 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

## The Annual Epping Forest Centenary Walk

Walk the entire length of Epping Forest in the day or take part in one of the local sections of the long walk. Celebrate how lucky we are to have Epping Forest! Arranged by the Friends of Epping Forest, with support from the Ramblers and the Corporation of London, the walk is named for the centenary of the passing of the Epping Forest Act. For more details, contact 020 8418 0730 or visit [www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk)

**12** Thursday 6 October 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

## Knighton Woods

Come and join local historian Georgina Green for a walk exploring Knighton Woods, with exotic trees planted when it was the garden of the home of Edward North Buxton, and Lords Bushes with some colourful native trees. Meet at Forest car park, Knighton Woods, Knighton Lane, Buckhurst Hill IG9 5HQ. Grid ref: TQ407936

**13** Sunday 16 October 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

## Garnon Bushes in Autumn Hue

An opportunity to discover the autumn harvest of fruits, seeds and fungi in this Nature Reserve with guides Tricia Moxey and Reserve Warden Brian McGhie. Meet at the entrance to the Reserve in Garnon Mead, Coopersale, CM16 7RN. Turn off B181 Epping to North Weald Rd into Coopersale Common Lane and then left into Garnon Mead beyond railway bridge. Grid ref: TL477031

**14** Sunday 6 November 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

## Wanstead Flats, the Park and a View of the Roding

Mike Smith leads a slightly longer walk linking the open spaces of Wanstead Flats, the Park and the River Roding. Visit these fragments of the earlier much larger "Epping Forest". Meet at Harrow Road Pavilion car park, Harrow Road, E11 3QD. Grid ref: TQ397864

**15** Sunday 11 December 10:30 am – 12.30 pm

## A Christmas Miscellany

Come and explore High Beach, Rats Lane, the Church and more! Join with us for this pre-Christmas celebratory walk led by naturalist Judy Adams. Mince pies and drinks provided at the end. Meet at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre, behind the King's Oak Public House, IG10 4AE. Grid ref: TQ413982



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2015

**Sunday 11 October 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**

### **Wanstead Flats, Park and a View of the Roding**

Join Mike Smith for a slightly longer walk in the open spaces of Wanstead Flats, Park and the River Roding. A good chance to stretch your legs a little and see how these spaces join up. Meet at the Harrow Road Pavilion car park, Harrow Road, E11 3QD. Grid ref: TQ397865

**Sunday 18 October 10:30 am – 12:30 pm**

### **An Autumn Stroll in Garnon Bushes for Fruits and Fungi**

An opportunity to discover what's growing this autumn in the Nature Reserve with guides Tricia Moxey and Reserve Warden Brian McGhie. Meet at the entrance to the Reserve in Garnon Mead, Coopersale. Turn off B181 Epping to North Weald Rd into Coopersale Common Lane and then left into Garnon Mead beyond railway bridge, CM16 7RN. Grid ref: TL476031

**Sunday 8 November 10:30 am – 12:30 pm**

### **From the Stubbles to the Fields**

A fresh look at parts of Loughton's Forest, led by Verderer Jo Thomas. We'll walk over the fields with views to the



Roding Valley and beyond and through the woods of Epping Forest and adjacent buffer land. A few little climbs en route! Meet at the Stubbles Car Park, off Nursery Road, near junction with Connaught Avenue, Loughton. Grid ref: TQ418964

**Thursday 26 November**

### **Forest Supper**

The highlight of the Forest year! Food, wine and friendship. Bookings are now open. See back page for details.

**Sunday 13 December 10.30 am – 12.30 pm**

### **A Christmas Miscellany**

Come and explore High Beach, Rats Lane, the Church and more! Join with us for this pre-Christmas celebratory walk led by naturalist Judy Adams. Mince pies and drinks provided at the end. Meet at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre, behind the King's Oak Public House, IG10 4AE. Grid ref: TQ413982

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## GETTING TO KNOW EPPING FOREST by KEN HOY

Updated 2nd edition with over 220 pages of Epping Forest information.

Reference to over 300 place names.

Over 200 pictures, illustrations and maps of the Forest area. On sale at the Visitor Centre (see page 7) and local bookshops.

A free copy of the History of the Friends when you buy this book from us! Price £8.95 per copy. Please send cheque (made out to Friends of Epping Forest) with order to Judy Adams, 2 High View Close, Loughton, Essex IG10 4EG, adding a delivery charge of £2.50 unless collected.



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## JOIN THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST

**The Friends** want Epping Forest to be a natural environment rich in wildlife, available and increasingly appreciated, used and understood by the public.

**Our main aims are** to support the preservation of Epping Forest as an open space for recreation and to preserve its natural aspect; and to further the understanding, appreciation, enjoyment and use of the Forest.

**Our activities include** responding to planning applications and the many consultation documents that affect the Forest emanating from central and local government and the City of London, which manages Epping Forest.

We run a programme of guided walks, including the annual Epping Forest Centenary Walk, give talks and, increasingly, work with local groups around the Forest, supporting

some of their activities and contributing a Forest-wide view to local issues and opportunities. We operate the Epping Forest Visitor Centre at High Beach, open Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays.

**We are a membership organisation** funded by voluntary subscriptions and donations and run entirely by volunteers.

**Become a member of the Friends of Epping Forest and help us protect the Forest and help other people learn about and enjoy it. Single Membership, £10 a year; Joint/Family Membership, £15 a year.**

**Contact:** Jean Brockington, Membership Secretary  
jean.brockington@btopenworld.com 020 8529 3077  
www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk/join.htm

# FOREST SUPPER

## Thursday 26 November 2015

### Chingford Assembly Hall, Station Road, Chingford E4 7EN (7.00 for 7.30pm)



Mediterranean pasta, oriental rice and mixed green salads, hot buttered potatoes and crusty French bread & butter. For dessert, choose between sherry trifle or blackcurrant cheese cake with cream. Coffee /tea with mints will follow. Vegetarian meals are available on request.

Wine and soft drinks are included, along with table quizzes about the Forest (no mobile phones for assistance!) and sales goods including Christmas cards.

It is a ticket only event, so please apply soon to ensure you get a place. Tables seat up to 10 people. It's a great opportunity for you to meet our guests from the Epping Forest and Commons Committee and Officers of the Forest, along with other Friends.

We hope to see you at our annual get together this year, with catering provided by Alan Beere Catering.

Join us for a home-cooked cold meat platter, with roast Norfolk turkey, gammon ham, roast loin of pork, and poached Scottish salmon with a lime mayonnaise, accompanied by coleslaw and potato & chives,

And please donate a gift for the raffle. The response has been very generous each year and it helps to raise funds for the Friends.

Please complete the booking form below and send with your payment **and S.A.E.** to: Hazel Shukla at 6 Knighton Drive, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0NY by 12 November.

## REMEMBER – ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY

### 2015 FOREST SUPPER BOOKING FORM

Please provide ..... ticket(s) @ £25.00 each (please list all names below) for the Forest Supper to be held on 26 November 2015 at Chingford Assembly Hall, Station Road, Chingford, E4 7EN:

.....  
 .....

I would like, if possible, to be seated with (full name please):.....

Please tell us of any special dietary needs, naming the relevant person/s. ....

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

Address.....

.....

I enclose my payment of £..... (cheques made payable to Friends of Epping Forest).  
 Please return your completed Booking Form, payment and SAE by 12 November to: Hazel Shukla, 6 Knighton Drive, Woodford Green, IG8 0NY.

Bring your ticket with you on the night – there is a prize for the winning ticket number!

**Don't forget to enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope!**