

The Friends of Epping Forest Newsletter



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

Spring 2003

Dear Friend,

Our Editorial in the last Newsletter mentioned Superintendent Jeremy Wisenfeld's and Conservation Officer, Jeremy Dagley's then current visit to The Netherlands. Members Margery and Pat Lloyd of Brampton, Huntingdon have written (letter reproduced elsewhere) saying that the receipt of the newsletter coincided with a lecture on 'The Great Fen Project' by Chris Garrard of the Local Wildlife Trust who had also visited The Netherlands in the same group.

The Superintendent has now reported on the visit to the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee; a group report is also being put together by the Forestry Commission to which all parties contributed. His report refers to the fact that The Netherlands is a small country of some four million hectares and a large population of 16 million (4 pop per ha).

This led me to recall David Corke's book, *The Nature of Essex* published in 1984. In this he points out that, defined as it was for many centuries by the rivers Thames, Lea and Stour

and the sea, the old Kingdom of Essex covered some 1529 square miles or around 390,000 hectares. This area, including the built-up boroughs of East London, now has a population of well over two-and-a-half million, a density considerably higher than that of The Netherlands (6.4 per ha). Not quite comparing like with like, but fairly near!

The two principal reserves visited by the group were Oostvaardersplassen (6,000 ha) and the Veluwezoom National Park (5,000 ha). There is a Dutch Government scheme which aims at creating a very large scale protected landscape of over 150,000 hectares – getting on for half the size of Essex – in the middle of the Country by 2020, centred on the two reserves mentioned and with linking corridors to other major reserves.

The Superintendent's report rather concentrates on extensive grazing by deer, cattle and horses that has developed and been encouraged on the reserves but unfortunately does not mention the reserves recreational status,

which seems to me to be important in the context of Epping Forest. In fact, I believe that many of the reserves do not have open public access as we understand it in 'our' Forest.

One of the outcomes of the visit was an agreement with the Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust to explore ideas with regard to protecting Epping Forest and its surrounding Green Belt. This appears to involve the Forest, Hainault Forest and Thames Chase in an exercise aimed at ensuring strong and effective 'nature development' corridors between them to enhance the quality and improve public access to the Green Belt. Perhaps Bedfords Park, Dagnam Park, Havering Country Park and the new RSPB Lands at Rainham Marshes could also be included!

All of this is very much applauded and to be encouraged! There does seem to be, in conservation and ecological circles, a genuine and general move in the direction of seeking to establish and develop nature



Cattle in Oostvaardersplassen

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Mrs P Bitten, 9 Frederica Road, Chingford, E4 7AL
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conservation projects on a large or landscape scale. Small nature reserves are valuable of course but by their nature create isolated populations that can be readily wiped out if things go wrong.

There is only one slight apprehension I have in relation to making the Green Belt more user and nature-friendly. This is that every care should be taken to ensure that attitudes are not encouraged to divide the Green Belt into good and bad bits. The Green Belt concept is to designate a broad band of land around major conurbations to prevent settlements coalescing and to preserve openness. Except for buildings related to forestry and agriculture, no developments are permitted unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Beauty of landscape and such considerations are not relevant to the concept. The cry often goes up, "Oh, it's only a tatty bit of land, why should it be defended on Green Belt grounds?" There are plenty of developers about who would rapidly buy up bits of the Green Belt and deliberately make it tatty if the concept were to be relaxed. (See London Green Belt Council Report.)

Editor

THE NATURAL ASPECT

By the end of March clear signs of the coming spring are usually apparent in the Forest. Tree buds have begun to swell and soon cast off the brown scales that have protected them all winter. From a distance this gives the woodland a hazy cast of colours - ginger browns on the oaks and beeches and even a hint of purple from the birches. Most years the snowy white of Blackthorn blossom appears well before March becomes April and on other trees 'flowers' are apparent before their leaves appear.

No doubt we are all familiar with the tasselled catkins of the Hazel, although there are very few growing in the Forest itself, but by the end of February the hedges of the Green Lanes and bridleways are usually well decorated with them. However, try examining the Hazel twigs more closely - there are usually other 'flowers' present. Some small green buds on the twigs will have little tufts of crimson spikes protruding from the end of the bud - just 2-3 mm. These tiny spikes are sticky and will catch the wind-blown pollen grains shaken from the dangling catkins. Of course the catkins are the 'male' flowers and the minute red tufts are the 'female' flowers that, when fertilised, will grow on as hazelnuts.



Female Hazel flower

Gardening books refer to 'flowering trees' - the cherries, crab apples, hawthorns and the plum family. These are the

decorative trees where insects are attracted to their flowers that we call 'blossom', but of course all trees have a means of reproduction - their 'flowers'. This is the time of year when it is worth looking at some of these 'flowers', for with a magnifying lens they are really quite intricately beautiful.

The four trees that dominate in Epping Forest - the Oak, Hornbeam, Beech and Birch all have flowers. But unlike the 'blossom' trees, where the 'male' and 'female' parts are present in the same flower and fertilised by insects, our four forest trees have separate 'male' and 'female' flowers and the pollen is distributed by the wind.

In April the 'male' flowers are easy to find - have a look at them. The Oak, Birch and Hornbeam all have dangling catkins that fall and litter the ground when their pollen is spent. The Beech is a little different, the pollen bearing stamens are in a little bunch hanging on the end of a hairy stalk. But they too will litter the ground at the end of April.

As wind pollination is relatively by 'chance', (not by insect 'choice') massive quantities of pollen are required to ensure success. In fact at this time when you walk through the dry leaves on the woodland floor your shoes are often covered with the yellow dust of the 'wasted' pollen.

However, like the Hazel, their 'female' flowers are insignificant too and in the case of the Oak and Hornbeam, quite difficult to see. At first the 'female' flowers of the Birch are small upright catkins, the Beech too has 'female' flowers that are on an upright stalk - a bunch of yellow stigma surrounded by reddish 'hairs'. This of course becomes the beechnut.



Female Beech flower

But the willows and poplars are different. Like the Holly and the Yew, they have the 'male' and 'female' flowers growing on *different trees* - so we have separate 'male' and 'female' trees. This is the reason why some holly trees will never have berries! The Goat Willows ('pussy-willow') will have furry buds, those that are most silvery will be on the 'male' trees and their catkins will burst out with yellow pollen-covered stamens. On other 'female' willow bushes the flower buds will appear as smaller yellowish green catkins; here the pollen is mainly transferred by insects.

I am sorry, here endth the 'biology lesson'! However if you do take a walk in the Forest during the next few weeks, and you are unfamiliar with the 'flowers' I have described, I am sure you will find it worthwhile to stop and have a second look at some of the trees. I say 'some' because

like your garden fruit trees the amount of flowering on each tree will vary from tree to tree and year to year depending upon the successful creation of flowering buds during the previous summer. So it is the previous spring and summer we have to thank ... nothing to do with the myth that 'lots of berries means a hard winter'

One last point. We should realise, in the varying weather of springtime, how so very important are those sunny days - when the insects are buzzing around acquiring pollen and nectar - for the successful breeding and even survival of many of our smaller insect eating birds.

We should also realise how misleading therefore is the rather derogatory use of the term 'scrub' when we apply it to the bushy parts of the Forest that are supplying so much of the pollen & nectar that the insects need!

But go out and enjoy those sunny spring days - the magic will soon be gone and it will be mid-summer again!

P.S. Readers may remember that I mentioned in the last Newsletter seeing migrating White Storks soaring on thermal air currents and eventually disappearing into some small cloud. Not thinking the question through, I then rhetorically asked, "How do thermals 'go into' clouds?". I am very grateful to Donald Syme who sent me the following letter explaining the situation very comprehensively.

Ken Hoy

"My mother has passed on to me the FoEF Newsletter for Autumn 2002 in which you ask how thermals go into clouds. It is the thermals that are causing the clouds to form. Hot air rises and cools at an average rate of 1 degree C for every 550 feet. These currents can be very strong and can carry birds aloft with a minimum of effort on their part. As the air cools, it eventually reaches Dew Point, when condensation occurs and the invisible water vapour turns to minute water droplets and we see the result as cloud. Condensation releases latent heat which pushes the rising air up further. Eventually, rain falls, in this case usually of the heavy/thunder type. Inside the cloud, the thermals rise rapidly, sometimes until they reach an inversion layer between 20,000 & 35,000 feet (varying with season & temperature) where strong winds can blow out the top of the cloud to form the 'anvil' of thundery Cumulo-nimbus clouds. These thermals can be strong enough to break the wings off aircraft and are avoided by glider pilots and civil aircraft alike. There is one recorded incident in - I think- the Korean War of a pilot ejecting from a stricken plane inside a Cu-Nim. cloud and when his parachute opened, he was carried upwards to the top of the cloud. Perhaps this is why birds also avoid going into the large Cumulus clouds!"

Donald Syme (In darkest Herefordshire)

WHERE HAVE ALL THE WOODLAND BIRDS GONE?

My comment in the November Newsletter about the lack of birds on a September walk was queried in a letter I received from Dr Derrick Boatman who, although now living in Yorkshire, knew the Forest very well throughout the 1940's when he lived in Buckhurst Hill. He finds it difficult to believe that we could walk for so long in Epping Forest without seeing many birds. He lists the large numbers of birds he has seen when making regular counts over the last ten years in the East Yorkshire Woods for which he is responsible - and he finds "no real evidence of a decline in the number of species or individuals over that period"

Dr. Boatman goes on to comment :- "Could it be that the lack of, or type of management in Epping Forest is responsible for the decline of birds? From time to time I visit a couple of woodlands in this region that were replanted on ancient woodland sites 40-50 years ago and have now been taken over as nature reserves (not by the YWT). They have a sparse shrub layer, have been thinned so that the trees are evenly spaced and are cleaned of dead wood. Result: very few birds - not surprising as there is very little to attract them." Not quite a fair comparison with Epping Forest today!

I must admit that perhaps I gave a somewhat false impression in the Newsletter of our walk as it was 'a family ramble' of rather a large group of people with children and dogs and we were not particularly looking for birds.

However, I think a more serious comparison might be worthwhile and I will look at my diaries & recorded lists of trips in the Forest in the early 1940's. I will repeat - at the same time of year and in fairly similar weather conditions - the routes that I took then (some of them with Derrick!). However I will only be able to compare numbers of species not numbers of birds. Results in future Newsletters.

Ken Hoy

LONDON GREEN BELT COUNCIL: 2002 AGM

Peg and I attended this event in Westminster Hall last December. It was as always an interesting occasion but there was one particular item worth reporting and which also has some relevance to matters mentioned in our Editorial.

A member from Hertfordshire reported that a 200 acre farm had been acquired by a company in the Tewin Valley. Having done so, the company divided the area up into numerous smaller plots and sold them to both UK and foreign clients. In the glossy brochure produced by the company it was clearly stated that the area was in the Green Belt and that presently there was no question of developing the plots for housing.

However, at the same time it was pointed out that changes were brought about in the Green Belt boundaries from time to time and that purchasers could look upon their acquisitions as a long term investment that could benefit their children or even (if the worst came to the worst) their grandchildren.

A number of other members indicated that similar developments were taking place in their sector of the Green Belt.

It would be very illuminating to know just how much of London's Green Belt is owned by individuals or bodies, who are just waiting for changes in the MGB's status or boundaries to occur so that they can cash in.

Harry Bitten

Loughton Historical Society have recently published a new book by Verderer Richard Morris about the Powell family of Loughton. Baden-Powell of the scout movement belonged to a branch of the family. It was Nathanael Powell who enclosed the Forest around Buckhurst Hill Cricket ground and this is 'Powell's Forest' today.

THE POWELLS IN ESSEX AND THEIR LONDON ANCESTORS

To most people the name Baden Powell is associated with the founder of the Boy Scouts, and locally with Gilwell Park at Chingford, which is now the Headquarters and international camping site of the Scout movement, although Robert Baden Powell never lived at Gilwell. It was only his generation and line of the family that decided, in 1902, to use Baden as part of their surname. Other members of the family had used it as a christian name, and retained Powell as the surname.

The name Baden Powell came from two families: the Badens of Old Sarum in Wiltshire and the Powells who lived at Hawstead in Suffolk. David Powell (1695-1784) was born at Hawstead and came to London in 1712 where he became a successful merchant in the City. He was apprenticed to a Mr Baden, whose cousin Susannah Thistlethwaite he married. One of their children was christened Baden (1731-1802), and it was this member of the Powell family who came to live at Bench House in Loughton in 1772. He built up a considerable estate of over 120 acres at the southern end of the village, and also purchased another 30 acres in Theydon Bois.

In about 1760 David Powell moved to Byland House in Clapton, which became his 'country' house, although he still had his 'town' house and office in the City. His sons David (1725-1810) and James (1737-1824) also became merchants in the City and also had houses in Homerton, Clapton and the City.

Another son, Thomas (1735-1820), lived at a house called The Chestnuts, in Tottenham High Road, where now is the Police Station. Although he was a partner in the family business, his main interest was in writing plays and poetry, and some of his work is in the National Library of Wales. However, it is his son, David Thomas Powell (1771-1848), who is best remembered for his contribution to the arts. He spent almost all his lifetime visiting villages in over 40 counties of England and Wales, where he made watercolour sketches of the churches and manor halls, and wrote notes on their history. Many of his manuscripts are in the British Library, including a collection for Essex.

He records how he used to travel on horseback from Tottenham, across the River Lea, to Walthamstow, Chingford and Loughton, where he passed his uncle's (Baden Powell) house, and on to the remains of Latton Priory, near Harlow. On other occasions he visited Little Dunmow, Coggeshall, Earls Colne, St Osyth, Colchester and many other Essex villages. He died in 1848, a wealthy man, mainly from inheritance. He left most of his fortune to the London Hospital where it was used in 1854 to build a new Medical School. David Thomas Powell was buried in the churchyard of St Nicholas Church, Loughton.

When Baden Powell died in 1802 he left his estate at Loughton to his nephew David (1764-1832), a grandson of the first David Powell. This David and his large family moved to Loughton from Walthamstow and became well known in the local community. David had six children by his first wife, Mary, who died in 1809, and a further seven by his second wife, Grizell. However on the 15th May 1832 David was walking in the grounds of his estate at Bench House when he was caught in a thunderstorm. He took shelter under an old elm tree but this was struck by lightning and David was killed instantly. The Times newspaper reported the event a few days later, describing in some gory detail the corpse, including how his boots were literally shivered into small fragments.

In 1838 one of David's daughters, Agnes Powell (1820-1902), married her cousin Nathanael Powell (1813-1906). Nathanael was the son of James Powell (1774-1840), who ran a wine merchants business from his house in Carey Street in London, but who in 1834 purchased the Whitefriars glassworks, which had been founded in the City of London in 1680. By the second half of the 19th century Whitefriars, under the ownership of the Powells, had become a leading manufacturer of stained glass and mosaics for churches, as well as its tableware business. St Paul's Cathedral, Waltham Abbey and many churches in Essex and throughout England contain examples of their work.

Nathanael Powell was a partner in the firm but he spent most of his time working in the community. He moved to Luctons House, at Buckhurst Hill, in 1855, which became the centre for his activities. He was a governor of Chigwell School for 50 years, a churchwarden at St John's, Buckhurst Hill, for 36 years, a Deputy Lieutenant for Essex, and a Visitor to the County Asylum and Chelmsford Prison. For many years he served on the Committee of Kings College Hospital, and was one of the first aldermen when Essex County Council was formed in 1889.

The Powells had for many generations been involved in the founding and management of hospitals. David Powell was one of the founder members in 1750 of St Luke's Hospital for 'poor lunatics', and his descendants played a key role in its management for the next 200 hundred years.

Richard Morris's book is well illustrated with colour and black and white photographs, including David Thomas Powell's watercolours and some delightful portrait sketches of members of the Powell family. It is published by the Loughton & District Historical Society and can be obtained from them or at bookshops, price £9.50 plus £1.50 p&p

For orders and more information contact :

Richard Morris, Secretary LDHS

6 High Gables, Loughton, Essex IG10 4EZ

Tel 020 8508 4974 Email: verdmorris@btinternet.com

THE HIGH BEACH RAILWAY

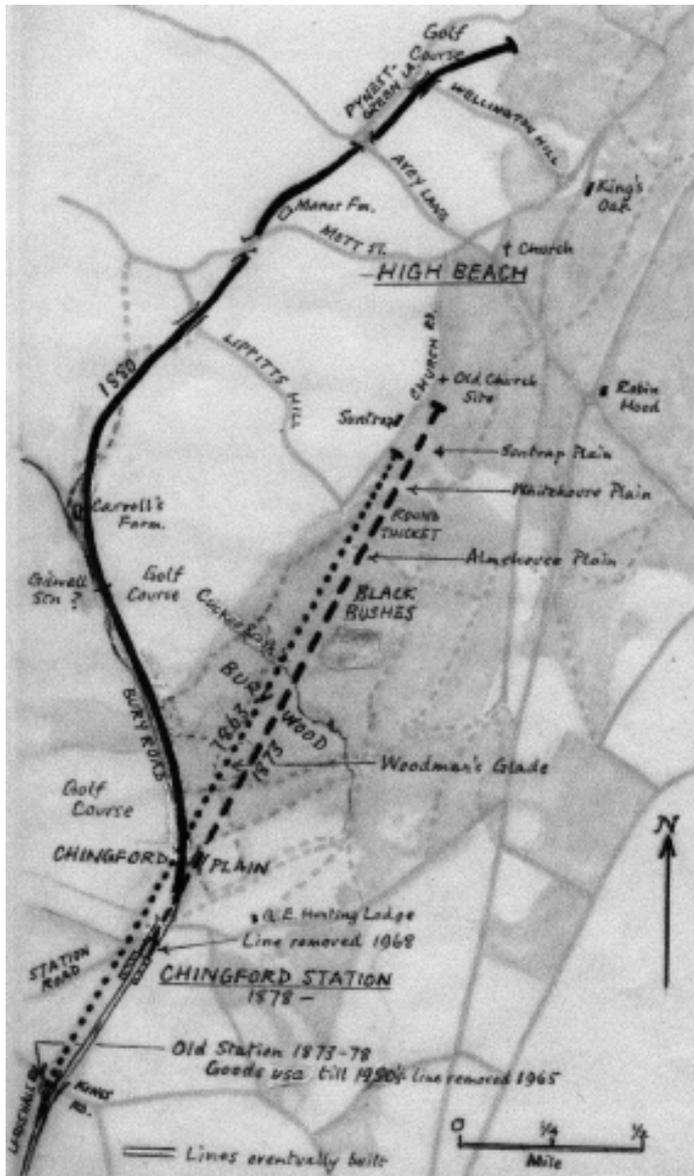
A bit of History

"Platform 12... Stratford... Knotts Green... Wood Street, Hale End, Chingford Green, High Beach"

The indicators at Liverpool Street might have read like this had suburban railway plans of 1863 been realised. The line to Loughton had already been opened in 1856. It ran from a junction with the Cambridge Line just north of Stratford; it was a commercial success. So, at the end of 1863, the Great Eastern Railway proposed another line, this time to run to the beauty spot of High Beach (or *Beech* as spelt in the legal documents of the time). Business reasons were sound; excursion traffic would be considerable and discreet high-class building would be encouraged - the latter generating a healthy first-class season-ticket revenue. The plans were approved by Parliament in mid-1864.

The line was to start near Loughton Branch Junction and was to pass through Leyton and the eastern part of Walthamstow. Chingford - then a small rural community - was, of course, not the prime objective. Entering the Forest at Chingford Plain, the line made a straight course across Forest land to a terminus adjacent to Church Road High Beach, a short distance south of Suntrap Plain (it was a long climb to High Beach village!)

The GER stalled. They were short of money and already there were the first rumblings of local opposition. No



Proposed routes for the High Beach Railway

construction took place and Parliament was petitioned for the abandonment of the entire scheme. In 1869 this was allowed, provided plans were submitted by 1870 for a railway to "Chingford Green", the station to be no further south than Bull Lane (the present Kings Road). These plans made use of the present west-east route through Walthamstow which had been approved and was being built; the line up through Leyton was forgotten. This "cobbling-together" of routes is the reason for the abrupt east-to-north change of alignment of today's Chingford Line in the Wood Street area. (The complex machinations leading to this situation - along with its social consequences - are described by Loughton historian Christopher Pond in his book "The Walthamstow and Chingford Railway" published by the Walthamstow Antiquarian Society.) So at last, on 17 November 1873, Chingford got its first station. It was at the corner of today's Larkshall Road and Kings Road, a site which remained in railway use until the 1950's. The only part of the 1863 plan which was actually built was from this station down to just north of Forest Road Walthamstow.

On the same day as the "Old Station" was opened, the GER submitted plans to Parliament for an extension from this line to High Beach once again. They were entitled "improvements", but the entire route through the Forest

was re-surveyed on a slightly different alignment, roughly parallel to that of 1863 but about 60 yards to the east. In particular, the old station was bypassed and the course through North Chingford was different (it is the course of today's line). The High Beach terminus was intended to be further north, on the *north* side of Suntrap Plain, not far from the site of the Old Church.

Parliament was not impressed. "No further than Chingford Plain" was the ruling (the limit was where the Masonic Hall now stands). Wisely, the GER did not even attempt to cross Maddox Lane (now Station Road). The present station was built - and opened in 1878. The design was that of a through station, still in the hope of a possible future extension. An embankment reached out towards Station Road until recent times, only being levelled in 1968 to make room for the bus terminus.

Realising the opposition to a direct route across the Forest, The GER proposed in 1880 an entirely different, and longer, route. Extending from Chingford Station, this would have gone round the Forest's western flank, ending at a station site where High Beach golf course now is. (It's still a stiff climb up to the King's Oak!) For various reasons, Parliament did not debate it until 1883. Coming as it did *after* the 1878 Epping Forest Act, there was not much chance of success - even though the Corporation of London supported it, as did such a major figure as Edward North Buxton. Some idea of the heat generated may be gained by reading R.L. Layton's account in The Essex Journal of Summer 1884.

So the High Beach Extension was dead. Chingford Station (on the edge of Chingford because its line is *really* looking towards the Forest) became the scene of Queen Victoria's Royal Progress in 1882 - as well as that of pandemonium on Bank Holidays in the pre-car era. Now we worry about the number and size of Forest car-parks and encroaching road schemes!

"Day Return to High Beach"

For our walk at the end of April, I thought we might make an imaginary journey through the Forest on our Victorian train. The route I have chosen is that of the abortive 1873 plan; the adjacent map shows it and the other routes in relation to well-known Forest landmarks. The reason for my choice is that it starts from an easily visible point - Chingford Station - and finishes in a pleasant woodland glade just off Church Road High Beach. We shall try to keep as close to the course of the line as we can, but conditions in the heart of the Forest might make some deviations essential.

Compared to a road, a railway must have only moderate gradients and be free of sharp curves. After leaving Chingford Station, the route is *completely* straight from end to end; its maximum gradient is 1 in 100. Why deviate from a straight line if there is nothing to avoid but Forest trees? And cuttings and embankments can iron out the Forest slopes.

In 1873, North Chingford was beginning to be built up. So instead of the expected rural level crossing, Maddox Lane (soon to be Station Road) was to be diverted and lowered so that the railway could bridge it at right angles with adequate headroom. The same fate would have befallen Bury Road, at that time an unmade track on its old course (the "Bury Path"), roughly where the eastern edge of the car park is today. Across the part of Chingford Plain now occupied by the golf course would have been an embankment, its maximum height of 17 feet being reached where Bury Road now runs. (The "Spin Doctors"

in the opposition to the railway had a field day with scare-stories of a 30-foot high bank!) The line now strikes off diagonally across the corner of Bury Wood; by the time Jubilee Ride is reached, the embankment has fallen away and a shallow cutting begins. Walking along, we enter an open space - Woodman's Glade - and soon join a well-marked path. After a short distance, the path bends to enter the trees again and we follow the railway's course by bearing off left. We begin to descend; clearly the railway has to keep up by leaving its cutting and starting to run on an embankment. Up to this point the line's gradient has been 1 in 330; now it steepens to 1 in 100 which continues for three-quarters of a mile (harder work for a Victorian steam engine - and its fireman!)

We walk further down through the trees. Where a muddy track comes in on the left from nearby Three-plank Ride we would actually be under the gradually rising embankment. We take an unmarked route down into the valley. Cuckoo Brook is at the bottom and our imaginary embankment is rising higher and higher on our left. Some of us may be appropriately shod for fording the brook; others may be able to use an impromptu bridge in the shape of a substantial log. Had the railway arrived, here it would have been among the treetops. The embankment would have been over 30 feet high and the brook contained in a culvert at its base. We climb up into thick woodland out of the valley, soon reaching a flatter region and crossing two paths on the way. In places we may have to deviate from our ideal straight line; the wood gets so thick and there is the inevitable holly! Before long we arrive at the clearing of Almshouse Plain and a solitary oak alongside the horse ride ahead marks the exact place where the railway would have crossed. The railway's climb has been maintained by a shallow cutting through the north part of the wood - the Black Bushes - and a low embankment across the Plain.

Now here is Round Thicket. We may go round or through it before continuing our imaginary line on the other side at Whitehouse Plain. A fair bit of mud here reminds us of the difficulty of building an embankment across it. We go into the woodland opposite (is it called "Suntrap Thicket"?). We are within sound of Church Road and we

can turn down a side path to see where the 1863 station might have been, almost opposite Willow Lodge.

Going back through a break in the trees we cross Suntrap Plain and enter the lower edge of Hill Wood. After a short distance we would have encountered the outer end of the platforms of High Beach Station. A little further on, a pleasant glade on the left marks the end of the line; through the trees is Church Road with Fairmead Farm beyond. The steep slope of Church Road ahead tells us why the railway had to stop here - the average gradient to the top of the hill works out at 1 in 21! But after all, the first-class commuters would have had their private transport to their mansions on the hill; the lower orders coming here at weekends would walk!

Here is our little wooded terminus - Great Eastern red brick; a mini-Chingford. The little tank engine stands at the buffer-stops, the enginemen busying themselves with the host of duties necessary with steam. The station staff (yes, there would have been a Station Master and porters even at this small outpost) are shepherding passengers off the train; the guard returns to his van to write up his journal. The signalman sets the road for the engine to run round the train ready for the return trip to Liverpool Street. Rural branch lines *were* like that - would this one have been different? Perhaps it would (think of the hordes on Bank Holidays!) and perhaps the Forest would have been far different from what it is now. We'll never know, but I like to imagine the Forest with its rural station. But now we'll leave our imaginary train and make our way back to Chingford through the Forest that we *do* know and enjoy.

In planning this walk I am very grateful to Irene Buchan who put me on the right lines. Essex Record Office provided original plans of the line from which I was able to do a detailed exploration.

Edgar Brown

WALK REPORTS

Stanstead Abbots is a lovely walk on a fine, dry day. However, November 23rd 2002 started wet and got wetter but eleven brave people completed the course. It looks as if those with wellingtons had the edge!



November Walk (Photo by Robin Gaine)



January Walk (photo Ron Andrews)

Christmas Walk, December 15 2002. It says much for the commitment and determination of our members that 39 of them turned up on a very miserable and damp day for a stroll around Wanstead Park - or was it the attraction of the wine and mine pies?

Anyway it was a simple walk down to the Ornamental Water and then along the River Roding until we reached the end of the land of the former Empress Works acquired a few years ago by the Conservators. At this point we saw a nice flock of Long-tailed Tits.

We turned on our heels and headed back past the Perch Pond and made our way to The Temple. This had been specially opened for us and we were able to inspect the exhibition before proceeding upstairs to a room with a suitably large table, around which we all sat and exchanged pleasantries while we consumed the aforesaid mince pies and Chateaufort du Pape premier cru – or something similar.

24th January 2003 walk. If you enjoy mud and failed to join us on this walk you missed a treat. Nonetheless, about 30 enthusiasts including two young ladies from Waltham Forest Council met on a bright morning at the Snaresbrook Road Car Park.

We walked across the green to the south of Forest School towards the pedestrian crossing at Woodford New Road, noting on route a few houses that seemed to be going in for a modern variation of the historic 'rolling hedge'.

Having crossed the road and circled round the back of St. Peter's-in-the-Forest and the Rising Sun (PH) we paused at Canada or Kennedy Plain to look at the ducks - mostly absent - on Bullrush Pond. One day I'll learn not to announce the name of Forest features because this always invites the question, where does the name come from? I try to invent answers to cover ignorance but I am not believed!

As we passed the Walthamstow Spade Husbandry allotments we noted the dilapidated 'protective barriers' around them, partly constructed of wartime Anderson shelters. The two young ladies could scarcely believe the explanation.

We crossed under the A406 via the western tunnel into Walthamstow Forest past Scotchman's Hoppet and then through the car park of the County Hotel recalling their excellent hospitality on last September's Centenary Walk. We returned via Mill Plain, Gipsy Smith's Stone, (a member present vouchsafed the information that Gipsy Smith's grandson still lives in Woodford and we hope to get an article from him) Waterworks Roundabout (I know where the name comes from!) and Gilbert's Slade (don't know).

Our boots took a pasting but nobody complained as far as I know.

Harry Bitten

A NEW GROUP WALKING IN THE FOREST

As part of the World Health Organisation and British Heart Foundations campaigns to get people walking and to reduce Heart problems, strokes and other illnesses contributed to by peoples life styles and lack of activity Epping Forest District Council has been organising "lifewalks"

EFDC organise walks on 3 or 4 days each week over various routes, some of these are in the Forest, others in Buffer lands (Warlies) as well as surrounding areas such as Lea Valley Country Park.

Each walk varies in length (1 to 3 miles) and 3 grades of difficulty (flat, gentle slopes & part hilly), with both a leader and back marker on each walk.

Average numbers on the walks is increasing and is typically about 20 people. The pace being suitable for each individual. Social & special events are also held. For more information contact Jenny Filby at EFDC on 01992 564 222

SPRING

By Sheila Horsham

*If this is Spring, as I've been told,
Then why is it so bloody cold?*

*Why are the winds gale force, not breezes?
Why am I stuffed with coughs and sneezes?*

*Why are the flowers so late in coming?
Where are the bees, why aren't they humming?*

*I've yet to see a cloudless sky
Or that rare thing — a butterfly.*

*My clouts are ready to be cast,
But why is it always overcast?*

*Fields under water, rivers in flood,
The paths in the forest are slippery with mud.*

*Why is it raining? Why won't it stop?
I've worn out the bucket and the mop!*

*This is the time when young men's fancies
Should lightly turn to thoughts of love.*

*But young men cannot court and woo
If all the girls are down with 'Flu'.*

*What CAN we do, but hope and pray
That the rain will go away.*

*That the skies will turn to blue,
That the sun starts shining too.*

*That the buds stay on the trees
That "Someone up there" will hear our pleas.*

*Well, 'Nil desperandum' as they say,
Tomorrow is another day.*

*We'll wait to see what it will bring,
With any luck it might be Spring!*

STANSTED AIRPORT – PROPOSED EXPANSION

As indicated in the last Newsletter, we duly wrote to the Secretary of State expressing our objections to the expansion of Stansted on the grounds that the extensive infrastructural developments that this would generate would be detrimental to Epping Forest.

In the original document for consultation 'The Future Development of Air Transport in the South East' any expansion of Gatwick Airport was ruled out because of an undertaking given at the time of the original planning concept. A High Court judgement resulting from a case brought by protesters, ruled that Gatwick should, in fact, have been included in the consultation. I assume that as a result of this the consultation process will have to be done again.

The Superintendent reported to the October Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee, providing his comments on the Air Transport Consultation Paper. After summarising the arguments set out in the Paper he indicated that there would be significant effects on the Forest following a major expansion on Stansted Airport. These effects would be increased traffic activity around and in the Forest in terms of pollution and noise. Any expansion would see an associated increase in local housing and associated infrastructure. All these issues have the potential to affect the wellbeing of the Forest, particularly with reference to its designation as an SSSI and as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The Superintendent was recommending that he should be authorised to respond to the consultation along the lines he proposed. However, at this point the Town Clerk's representative pointed out that the City's Planners had put forward their comments to the Policy and Resources Committee for their approval. Alas, these comments were quite favourable to the expansion of air transport in the South East, as a contribution to the development of business interests (an interesting parallel to the City's attitude to railways extension in 1883, see p5 para4).

It would be inappropriate for the City to speak with two voices and the decision was deferred until Policy & Resources could consider both aspects.

A decision was taken, in due course, that the Planners recommendation be generally approved, but that this should be subject to the response stating that it is strongly recommended that the expansion or development of any location should be subject to an in-depth analysis of the social and environmental impact associated with the scheme, and that these should be taken into account in reaching a conclusion.

We will continue to watch the situation!

Harry Bitten.

SUNTRAP–FUTURE OF!

Our members will know that generations of children from Waltham Forest schools spent part of each term at Suntrap on environmental education programmes related to their regular schools curriculum.

It is our view that to some extent it was this close association with Suntrap and its teachers that imbued children with a positive and good attitude towards Epping Forest.

Since schools have been responsible for their own budgets and the regular attendance at Suntrap ceased to be mandatory, there has unhappily been a falling off in attendance. Recent reports in the local Guardian suggested that some decisions affecting the future of Suntrap were about to be made and we immediately wrote to the Council Leader and the Head of Lifelong Learning. We pointed out our belief that Suntrap's influence had led to Waltham Forest children having a certain respect for the Forest, and that had it not existed there would have been more vandalism.

We have had a brief acknowledgement but await news of the future with some trepidation.

EARLY INSPIRATIONS

From 1998-9 I wrote up nature notes from fragments jotted down in notebooks during Adult Education walks in Epping Forest, with Ken Hoy as leader. I was voluntarily repeating a task set nearly 40 years ago when I attended the Jubilee Retreat Field Study Centre once a fortnight from Selwyn Girls' Junior School, Highams Park. Half the class went to Mr. Speakman at High Beach and the rest of were taught by Ken (with much darker hair!)

How I loved those days traipsing through the forest learning about trees, flowers and fungi. I realise they set a pattern for future enjoyment: walking and observing nature close to home or further afield.

We attended the Jubilee Retreat in all weathers; I remember tracking birds and animals in thick Snow. Ken would have a roaring fire going before we all arrived; wellington boots were pegged together in pairs at our disposal and a crate of milk was delivered for our consumption. Indoors we gathered round to watch him



Children from a Walthamstow school at Suntrap Field Centre

ring birds and outside we saw deer and heard birds less common these days: bullfinches, greenfinches, goldfinches and long-tailed tits. I know this because I still have my old exercise books, meticulously detailed, and I include a few snippets for your amusement!

It is always useful to keep your eyes open when looking down holes in the ground. Mr. Hoy found the remains of an ox living before Christ...

I saw a magpie with Mr. Hoy's binoculars(!)

A green finch was trapped and it was found to have a ring. Mr. Hoy put another ring further up its leg. Outside we saw a brambling. This makes it the second time Mr. Hoy has seen one this winter but unfortunately Mr. Speakman has not seen one all! In a bush we saw a bank vole and in the sky we saw a great tit previously caught and ringed by Mr Hoy.

When I became a primary teacher I often accompanied classes to Suntrap. Our older daughter, inspired by the Suntrap experience of handling creatures from the wild, later went on to become a veterinary nurse. I remember one Saturday morning in May, in the company of a group of teachers, listening to birdsong at High Beach, enthralled by Ken's knowledge and enthusiasm. Our lives have overlapped: I taught his grandson, knew his family, live close to where he grew up. One of my neighbours was in his class at Churchfields Junior School and I was able to reintroduce them to each other a few years ago. Through Adult Education classes life came round full-circle and Ken was as inspiring as he had been to our class of eleven year-olds many years ago.

I grew up close to Highams Park Lake and spent much time in the forest as a child. Each day I walk the dog across Mill Plain along the forest paths close to where I grew up.

But Ken's walks pushed me further afield to the woods at Loughton, Theydon and the nature reserves of the Lee Valley with their dragonflies, kingfishers and wild orchids. It is all there to be revisited with renewed enthusiasm and joy. There is so much to see in all seasons, all weathers; to share what I learned and to explore further.

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep"... I have "miles to go before I sleep."

Penny Freeston

Postscript:

I am sure that 'dark-haired' man would be embarrassed by what Penny says - however

I think she may have become nostalgic following the news that Suntrap's future is a little uncertain. So if the Centre still means anything to any of our readers... the Suntrap Staff are very keen to make contact with you, especially if you fit one of the following categories:

Past pupils. Past teachers who used the Centre with their pupils. Headteachers whose classes used the Centre. Governors of schools who appreciate the Centre's work. And, last but not least... Parents who are pleased their children do, or once did, use the Centre...or, anyone else !

Ken Hoy

To help - please contact:

Jill Brookman, Suntrap Field Study Centre,
Church Road, High Beach, Loughton, Essex, IG10 4AJ
Tele: 020 8508 0611 or
E-mail address: suntrap@lineone.net

COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP FOR PARTS OF COPPED HALL PARK

At the January meeting of the Epping Forest & Open Spaces Committee, the Superintendent sought and received approval to enter substantial areas of the Warlies and Copped Hall Park buffer land into the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. In the case of Warlies, this amounts to a continuation of the present scheme whose ten-year span ends shortly.

Regarding Copped Hall Park the proposal concerns all the 'in-hand' land south of the east-west estate road plus one field north of the estate road and the holly-hedged field to the west of the Epping New road just before the M25. These lands are presently in Set-aside Scheme but these cannot be winter-grazed by cattle which is what the Superintendent wishes to do. The Stewardship Scheme has provision for this and is more financially advantageous than Set-aside.

Interestingly the annual payments under stewardship amount to £280 per hectare. On Copped Hall Parks 103 hectares this equals £23,790 and apparently is 40 – 50% above current agricultural rents!

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme is also directed at improving public access where appropriate and we have written to the Superintendent hoping that this aspect will be considered. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act while making provision for the right to roam over open country, which is hardly applicable to Essex, also sets out to improve the rights of way network which would be much appreciated in respect of the Copped Hall Estate generally.

Harry Bitten

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In the article in your November edition about declining numbers of Forest birds, Ken Hoy, who is clearly no mean ornithologist, remarks that the reason for the trend is unknown.

The British Trust for Ornithology has recently estimated that the UK House Sparrow population has dropped by 10 million, but again the explanation is unclear. This illustrates the complexity of natural systems and the way species interact with each other. In fact, it shows, in my opinion, that despite exhaustive study our understanding of ecology is rudimentary.

Yet, our Prime Minister can confidently state that GM crops could be introduced into the countryside with no adverse effect.

Our experience with BSE (mad cow disease), which we were told by 'experts' could not be transmitted to humans, should be a warning against the introduction of 'novel' agricultural practices. It now seems abundantly clear that genetic modification of plants is primarily a means to enrich American multi-corporations.

It is a gamble we should not tolerate.

Yours faithfully, Alan Massam

Dear Friends

My wife and I have now lived in Brampton for almost two years after our move from Chingford. Brampton is a village of some 5000, approximately two-and-a-half miles south west of Cromwell's town of Huntingdon. Our areas of birding locally are Paxton Pits, Grafham Water (an inland sea!) and 'our' Brampton Wood that is much smaller than the Forest but almost as varied an habitat within its area.

Our garden provides a great deal of bird-watching on site and I sometimes feel like a reserve manager when buying seed and nuts in 25 kilogram sacks. The daily task of refilling feeders results in our sparrows (upwards of 25 on most days) making the garden look like the Berlin Airlift.

Occasionally we are treated to a female sparrow-hawk resting in our ash or birch trees. She has taken the odd sparrow and collared dove and regards our garden as her feeding station. Just recently we get regular visits from a male greater-spotted woodpecker, who obliges us by staying as long as 15 minutes. Garden total count (including a few flyovers) is 42 species.

The main subject of Margery & Pat Lloyd's letter is Oostvaardersplassen! (See Editorial, 1st para).

They continue...

The most interesting thing we found was Chris Garrard's photographs, especially one which he felt was a great achievement, an Eco-bridge over a motorway which was planted along its edges with trees, the 'roadway' being grassed – to provide a corridor for wildlife including the deer and cattle. When we mentioned to Chris 'our' Eco-bridge at Bell Common, he was well aware of it having obviously been put in the picture by the two Jeremys! Another picture showed a huge unspoiled landscape dotted with a few trees but showed mature antlered stags as well as other deer with flocks of greylags browsing - idyllic, and all in just 35 years, and several millions of euros no doubt.

The expansion of Wood Walton and Holme Fens seems to be a good start but one realises how long it will all take. Let's hope our successors appreciate it all!

Regards, Margery and Pat Lloyd

Keith Nichols (who ran the children's swings at the Victoria Centenary Festival) writes from his present home in Kessingland, Suffolk, following the November article about the Broomhill Road hedge. Keith lost touch with his father when he was 12, so knew very little about him except that the family lived in Woodford and Walthamstow (his Dad lived in Monkham's Avenue).

"My Dad's grandfather was a wealthy man, a builder, and built many houses in Woodford Green, he himself lived at Hurst House. The next bit is a bit hazy, for there are two versions on how he lost his great wealth. One was during the slump, the other through unscrupulous people with whom he was involved and trusted. He then moved to Aveling Park Road, Walthamstow, a lovely house but nothing on the scale to which he was used. I would love to know more about Hurst House and former occupiers, hoping my great-great grandfather is amongst the list. It is said that until I was born the eldest of all the male line was called Walter Herbert Edwin Nichols.

Also, my Dad's other relative, first thought to be an uncle, but now apparently a cousin, was the famous author, Beverley Nichols who lived in a large house which stood on the site of what is now a parade of shops at the bottom of Snakes Lane.

My Dad often told me of all the family get-togethers, he was only about 10 years old at the time.

So, help please! Can any readers shed any light for me I wonder?

On a last note, my great grandfather, I am told, was the designer and builder of the Kingfisher Swimming Pool and was involved in landscaping in Knighton Wood. Many of the large rocks and rhododendrons can still be seen

Still Available !

“GETTING TO KNOW EPPING FOREST”

This is a new book published by the **Friends of Epping Forest** that is also supported by the **Conservators of Epping Forest**. It is based on the articles ‘How Well Do You Know Epping Forest’ that appeared in past Newsletters. Ken Hoy has revised and enlarged the material and the book contains 136 pages including colour and black and white photographs and illustrations. The book is described as: ‘A book to enrich a trip into Epping Forest with historical and current information about over 200 of the Forest’s woods, plains, streams and tracks. Many of the place-names mentioned are old. Sometimes the origin of the name is known, frequently it is intriguing, but invariably it is worth a visit to discover the changing beauty of the Forest’s landscape - whatever the season. You may find new information about familiar places that you thought you knew or discover quiet unknown spots that you will be encouraged to explore. Maps show the location of most of the places mentioned in the text’.

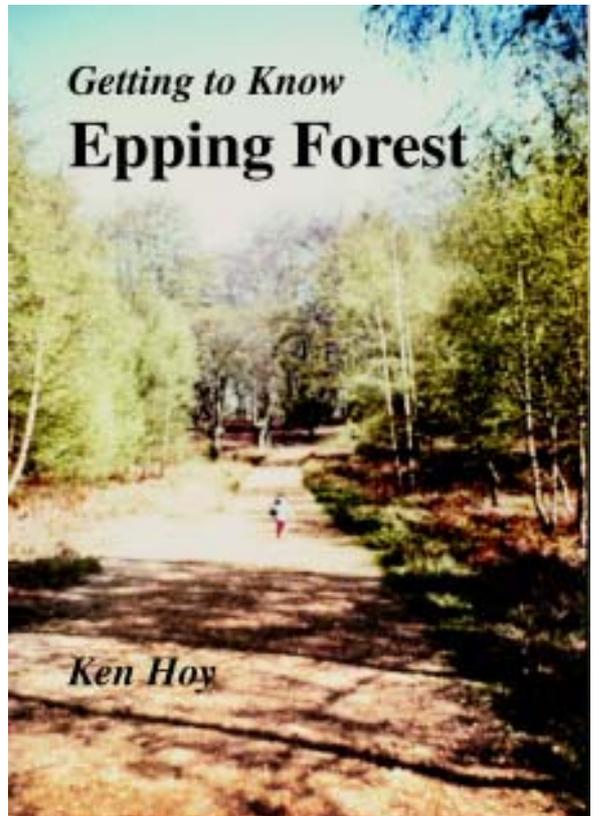
A great present for anyone interested in the Forest and it’s history! On sale at the Epping Forest Information Centre, High Beach & local shops - Retail price £6.95.

Special offer price for FoEF members £6.00!

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

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

(proceeds go to The Friends of Epping Forest)



ISBN 0 9543872 0 1

letters cont...

today...I wonder, did he build a house on this spot and are today’s shrubs part of that garden? I remain intrigued.

Keith Paul Nichols

20 Rider Haggard Lane, Kessingland, Suffolk, NR33 7PD

PS from Editor – I have sent a copy of this letter to the Secretary of the Woodford Historical Society.

Shaftesbury Retreat Remembered

With the help of a grant from the Lottery Heritage Fund, Loughton District Historical Society has recently erected an interpretive board about the Shaftesbury Retreat in ‘Shaftesbury’ Loughton. The Conservators were also most helpful and the company we used produced excellent graphics from our often crude layouts.

The board tells the story of the two million or so East End children who alighted at Loughton Station to walk to the Retreat from 1892 – 1939. There they were fed in large

sheds and taken over into the Forest for what for many of them must have been their only holiday that year. We used David Wilkinson’s excellent history of the site ‘From Mean Streets to Epping Forest’ for our text and and some of the photographs from the Society’s unique collection.*

Our grant application emphasised that this aspect of the social history of Epping Forest could easily be forgotten locally and even quite unknown to other visitors to the Forest. Other local groups may perhaps feel that there is some historic site that could be recorded by such a board in their area. I would be most willing to pass on all the information we gained (planning permission, best companies etc.) and most useful of all the correct ‘PC’ answers to the relevant questions in the application form.

** Available from Epping Forest Information Centre and local book shops. Price £3 or direct from the Society at Forest Villa, Staples Road, Loughton, IG10 1HP.*

John Howes

NEWS IN BRIEF

Christmas Cards

We are running out of snowy scenes of Epping Forest! If you have or know someone who has some photos that might be considered for this year’s print we would love to hear from you. Alternatively it might make an interesting change to have some hand-painted ones. Any ideas? Contributions for consideration needed by end of April please.

Forest Supper

Speaking on behalf of the committee, I think I can say that it was the usual modest success. The hall was filled to its capacity of 260 and the usual mix of quizzes and lots of chat seemed to ‘hit the spot’.

At the risk of repeating myself, the Committee think the supper should be the social event for our members where we don’t aim to make a profit but, at the same time, in consideration of those members who do not participate we should not make a loss. So, once again, we were kept out of the red by the magnificent effort of our raffle selling team, led by member, Denis Moss. Thanks to him and to all those who donated such wonderful prizes, the raffle made £600 which meant a profit of £267 over all the expenses. On top of that we sold lots of Christmas cards and Ken Hoy’s new book, ‘Getting to Know Epping Forest’.

Donations to the Raffle

(with apologies for any missed names)

Gail Abbott, H & V Anslow, S & J Besent, Pat Bishop, B Blossom, Mr & Mrs Breame, M Charles, J & I Cox, Mr & Mrs Clark, L & B Dexter, E Dormer, M Davies, J & E Davis, J & H Edler, Lady Ellis, P Fearne, M. Frost, G & R Gaine, Jim Gimson, S Gower, P Gunn, Mr & Mrs Harris, S Hobbs, J Holtom, J Humphreys, E Jackson, H Jones, J Ker, H & R Kunzru, A & A Levene, R Levene, S & M McKinley, Ann Pearson, J & D Moss, T & P Moxey, Lord & Lady Murray, E Pugh, P & M Read, Mr & Mrs Royds, H & D Shukla, Joy Smith, Jean Smith, J Stowers, D Spence, Miss Sylvester, E & N Taylor

Tip us off!

Fly-tipping, "the plague of the 21st century", is the illegal dumping of unwanted household goods, builders rubble, tyres and much more. Waltham Forest is running a campaign asking residents to let them know when and where they see rubbish being dumped. It is already proving successful. The number to call is 020 8496 2000, between 8am and 6pm Mon- Fri. This anti-social, unsightly activity also occurs in Epping Forest (as you would expect) and anyone seeing fly-tipping should ring the Warren on 020 8532 1010. A note of the registration number of the vehicles involved is extremely useful in tracking down the culprits.

Wanstead Flats Playing Fields

Last November, the Conservators mounted a public consultation exercise in regard to their desire to improve sports training facilities for local communities.

The proposals were for training pitches and changing facilities for local clubs between 4pm and 9.30pm, seven days a week, in Aldersbrook Road and Capel Road areas.

Mobile lighting units would be utilised where necessary and relevant car parks would be closed at 9.30pm. The consultation paper also included the rather hopeful assertion that the presence of organised activity in the area might deter anti-social behaviour that sometimes occurs on the Flats. The training refers to football although the paper did not identify the activity!

Our own response indicated that we were not entirely happy over the matter of lighting without more details and that we thought very careful attention should be paid to the views of local residents, who would be the people who would have to cope with any problems thrown up by the proposals.

In the event, there appears to have been a high level of objections - the Conservators arranged a public meeting in order to explain the situation to the residents. Alas, we were unable to attend the meeting, partly due to short notice but understand that it was fairly lively and the Forest Officers took away with them the strong views expressed which we are sure will be taken into account in coming to a decision.

Harry Bitten

Volunteers, please!

We have committed ourselves to having a stall at the two-day National Trust Fair at Hawkey Hall on May 13/14, which means from 5 – 9pm Tuesday evening and from 9.30am – 4pm on Wednesday. So we badly need some assistance to cover all those hours. If you can manage an hour or two, please ring me, Peggy Bitten on 020 8529 8594 – I'd love to hear from you!

And, more volunteers!

We also hope to have a stall at Chingford Village Day on Chingford Green on 21 June and at the Forest Festival at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge on Sunday 7 September. This year we are celebrating 125 years since the passing of 1878 Act and the City's management of Epping Forest.

Work Programme Review

(extract from Forestfocus, Winter 2002)

The current five year work programme at Epping Forest is generated by a management plan that details what is important about the Forest and how the Conservators should protect and enhance the Forest for the benefit of people and wildlife.

This can include deciding which grasslands we are going to try and restore, which ponds are going to be cleared out, which horse rides will be resurfaced, what information leaflets and other publications we will produce and so on.

We are currently reviewing our existing management plan with a view to producing a work programme for the next five years. We intend to produce a summary consultation document for distribution at the end of January. You could help us by looking at the document and giving us your views on the proposals. If you would like to receive a copy of the consultation, please contact the Epping Forest Department on 020 8532 1010.

HAINAULT FOREST

The previous secretary of FoEF, Georgina Green, has written a new book, "The Story of Hainault Forest" published by LB of Redbridge. In the course of her research for her earlier book, "Epping Forest through the Ages", she also discovered much about Hainault Forest, and in fact the two forests were administered together and for many centuries much of their story is the same. Her "aim in producing this booklet is to mark the passing of the Act of Parliament in 1851 which led to the destruction of 100,000 oak, hornbeam and other trees in present day Ilford. They covered the area of the present day Country Park and extended south to Marks Gate and west to Barkingside and Woodford Bridge. Tradition has it that they were grubbed up in six weeks, dragged out of the soil by chains attached to steam plough. The land was converted into farms but during the last war some of the plain was given over to military use and runways were built. The current controversy over the future of Fairlop Waters is just another chapter in the long history of Hainault Forest."

Georgie's book provides an illuminating history of Hainault Forest from earliest times until its disafforestation and almost total destruction in 1851. It could be said that Hainault Forest was a sacrificial lamb in that its destruction sounded a warning that Epping Forest would - and nearly did - go the same way. Just in time defences were marshalled to prevent that happening. A fascinating read. Available from Redbridge Libraries.

GOVERNMENT'S PLANNING BILL CONTINUES TO THREATEN DEMOCRACY

(Extract from Essex Protector)

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill is currently before Parliament. In CPRE's view, it remains "an unacceptable and unworkable centralisation of strategic planning."

In the January and April editions of last year's *Essex Protector* we outlined the December 2001 Green Paper *Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change* and reported on the reaction of CPRE and other voluntary bodies.

In November 2002 the Queen promised, in her speech to Parliament, that her Government will "introduce legislation to speed up the planning system while improving the involvement of local communities."

The Government's Planning Bill was duly published on 4 December 2002 and reach the House of Lords in the New Year.

CPRE welcomes many of its proposals but the Bill contains, as expected, plans to abolish Structure and Unitary development plans, thus removing a crucial level in the system and denying local enthusiasts and experts their influence. The countryside will be left in the hands of un-elected regional bodies.

As Henry Oliver, CPRE's Head of Planning comments: "Decisions on issues like housing numbers over most of rural England will no longer be so open or accountable, depriving communities of a say over the future of their countryside and local areas. The contrast with the Government's proposals to bring power closer to communities in the Local Government Bill is startling.

"Structure planning at the county level has secured a degree of public consensus over contentious issues like planning for housing over many years. It has brought benefits for the beauty and tranquillity of English countryside as well as for the communities who value it.

"Without that process of testing and debate, huge areas of countryside could now be at risk from centralised, unaccountable planning by diktat."

CPRE will continue to argue that County Councils and Unitary Authorities should retain a statutory role in decision-making at sub regional level, rather than merely acting as "agents" of regional bodies who will prepare new "Regional Spatial Strategies".

The value of County Councils lies with their accountability. They ensure democratic decision-making, giving the public a far better opportunity for engagement in debate with elected councillors who live and work in the area and are much more accessible than some unknown and un-elected regional body. Currently the public has at least two opportunities to comment on draft Structure and Unitary Development Plans.

They also allow planning at a strategic level while giving attention to detail and make use of local expertise such as the archaeologists, ecologists and historians employed by local authorities. If the statutory function of county and district councils is weakened by the new legislation, it is unlikely that they will continue to pay for such resources.

CPRE is worried about how this gap between the regions and the local level will be filled and has commissioned research into the possible future roles of county, unitary and district authorities.

CPRE is pleased to see that, following the establishment of a new Ministerial team, some proposals have been improved. The original proposal to give Parliament the role of deciding on Major Infra structure Projects appears to have been dropped but CPRE would like to see Public Inquiries able to consider the principles not just the details of a particular proposal.

Along with many other bodies that have participated in the consultation, CPRE would also like to see the introduction of a new Third Party Right of Appeal in order to redress the current imbalance in favour of the developer. It is believed that there is considerable support for this in both Houses and that the Planning Minister is sympathetic, so CPRE will continue to highlight its importance.

A proposal not detailed in original Green Paper but contained in the Bill, is for Statements of Development Principle to replace outline planning consents. This proposal would require local planning authorities to make determination on the broad principle of a development proposal without knowledge of the details an unwise and potentially damaging move. At present outline planning permission can be withheld when insufficient detail is submitted.

Henry Oliver concludes: "There is much to welcome in this Bill but the proposals for strategic planning are anti-democratic and unworkable. They will create a dangerously wide gap between regional bodies and local planning. We will be working hard to secure changes to the Bill during its passage through Parliament."

CPRE has published a briefing paper *Planning to Deliver* which may be obtained from Head Office or downloaded from the web site as a PDF file and they will continue to arrange meetings and briefings, propose amendments and lobby MPs and Peers for major improvements to the Bill before it becomes law.

Volunteers are urged to continue to raise the profile of these concerns with MPs and councillors as the Planning Bill proceed through Parliament

PM

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

March 27th, Thursday, 10.30am. A walk through the beech trees of Loughton Camp and Monk Wood. Meet in the car park at Earls Path Road, which is on the road between the Robin Hook (PH) and Loughton.

Leader: Verderer, Richard Morris GR 416 967

April 25th, Friday, 2pm. Day Return to High Beech! A walk along the route of a 19th century railway that might have run across the Forest. Meet in the car park in Bury Road, Chingford, next to Bury Wood. **GR 394951**

If car park is full, carry on along Bury Rd and turn right into Hornbeam Lane, Sewardstonebury.

Leader: Edgar Brown. GR 393 957

May 22nd, Thursday, 10.30am. The 'Wild Woods' of Theydon. An exploration of Hangboy Slade and the Foxburrows on the way to the Debden Deer Sanctuary. Meet in the Broadstrood car park on the A121 Goldings Hill between the Wake Arms and Loughton.

Leader: Ken Hoy GR 428 986

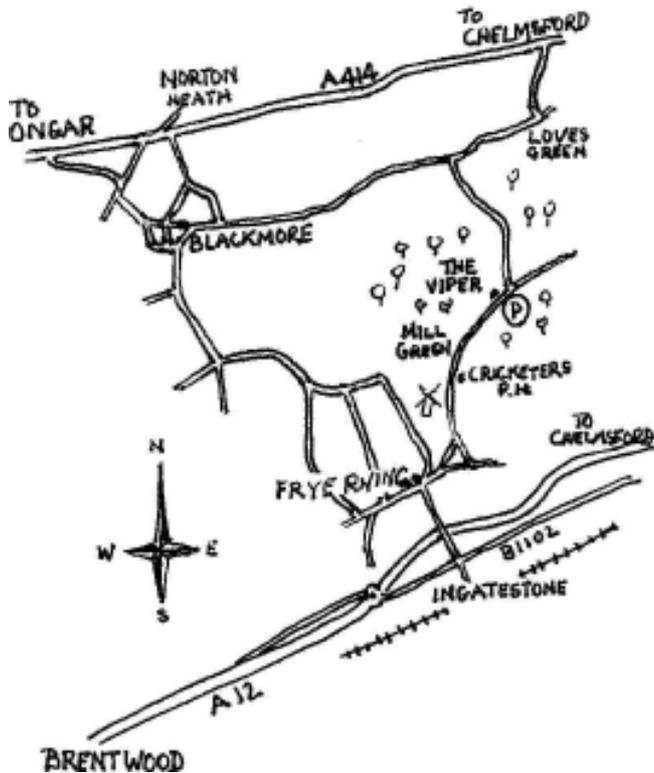
June 21st, Saturday, 7.30pm. A mid-summer evening walk through Chingford's woods and fields. Meet in Hornbeam Lane, off Bury Road, Chingford (on the right as you reach Sewardstonebury).

Leader: Peter Read GR 393 957

July 27th, Sunday 10.30am. Writtle Forest. Our 'away-day' walk in the Essex countryside. Meet at the Viper Public House near Mill Green. Take the A12 towards Chelmsford; turn off onto the B1002 into Ingatestone and then left into the narrow road west to Fryerning.

continued over...

At the top of the hill and at the T-junction turn right and keep along the middle of three roads. At the next T-junction turn left, go past the windmill on the left and the Cricketers Public House on the right and continue until you reach the Viper (PH) on the left. The car park is in the woods opposite.



Leader: **Bill Dexter**

GR 642 021

(O.S. Map 161 – London NE)

Dates for Stalls

May 13, Tuesday, 5pm – 9pm & Wednesday 14, 9.30am – 4pm. National Trust Event at the Sir James Hawkey Hall, Broomhill Road, off Broadmead Road, Woodford Green. GR 403 921

June 21, Sunday, 11 am – 5pm. Chingford Village Festival on Chingford Green.

Sept 7, Sunday, 12 noon – 4pm. Forest Festival at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge. 125th Anniversary event.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers

Meet at The Warren at 9.30am off Warren Hill in Loughton and aim to leave 9.45am promptly.

Mar 2-Walthamstow Forest, Mar 16-Fairmead Bottom, Mar 23-Chingford Plain, Mar 30 Rushey Plain, Apr 6-Warley Place (Essex Wildlife Trust), Apr 20-(Easter Bank Holiday) Sunshine Plain, April 27-Near Woodford Golf Course, May 4-(Bank Holiday) Walthamstow Forest, May 18-Wellington Hill, May 25-(Bank Holiday) Highams Park Lake.

For further details, contact the Chairman, Peter Lyons on 020 8529 3060.

Epping Forest Information Centre

Sunday 9 March Two ponds and a Well A guided walk led by Ian Cox. Meet beside the Lakeside Diner. Whipps Cross Rd. Leytonstore at 10.30 am. (GR 391 887)

Monday 24 March The Cook from Kentwell. Joan Williams will talk about Tudor food and cookery

techniques and spill the beans on her experiences as a costumed demonstrator at Kentwell. Cost £3.00

Booking essential.

Thursday 27 March **Create your own glittering Tudor style jewellery.** Family activity at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge. Ages 6 - 14) Free. 1.00 to 4.00 p.m.

Friday 28 March **Woody Shady Boughs** Poetry and Music at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge a literary amble through Epping Forest presented by the Poetry Collective. Cost £4.00 for refreshments.

Saturday 29 March **Posies for Mothering Sunday.** A family activity making posies at the Temple in Wanstead Park. 1.30 to 3.30 p.m. Cost £2.00 per child, accompanying adults free. Booking essential.

Sunday 20 and Monday 21 April **Easter Egg Trail.** A self guided trail starting from the

Information Centre, High Beach. Come and solve the clues and claim your Easter egg. 11.00 - 5.00 each day. Donations?

Friday 25 April **Bluebell Walk in Wanstead Park.** A guided walk led by F/K Brian Gillam starting at the end of Warren Road at 2.00 p.m. (GR 414885)

Epping Forest Field Centre at High Beach

A wide range of courses is held here on such subjects as plant identification, trees and shrubs, fungi, birds and mammals, amphibians and reptiles and invertebrates. Courses are directed at both those interested in their own professional development and those seeking enlightenment at the general interest level. There is also a programme of environmental education and general interest activities including walks. Details of these courses are available from the Centre on 020 8508 7714.

Essex Wildlife Trust

Thursday 27 March - Big Cats

Terry Moore from the Cat Survival Trust will give a talk on these amazing creatures and their current status. Meet: Loughton Methodist Church Hall at 8:00 pm SHORT AGM at 7:45 pm before the talk.

Sunday 6 April - Roding Valley Meadows Nature Reserve in Early Spring

Walk by the Warden Paul Cook. Meet: Chigwell Riding Trust, High Rd, Chigwell, near Jubilee Lodge at 2:00 pm. Please park at bottom of lane.

Friends of Suntrap and Hawkwood Centres

May 18 Sunday 2.30. Round the Rides, a walk for approx 1 1/2hrs followed by refreshments at Suntrap. Adults £2 – family £5. Meet at Suntrap Field Centre in Church Road, High Beach. Take the road west from the Robin Hood P.H. and follow until you reach the crossroads at the top of Mott St. Turn left, then fork left into Church Road. Suntrap is on the right 3mins drive. GR405971

Advanced Notice - June 21/22. During the annual schools' summer camp, the Friends of Suntrap will be organising a BBQ evening, to which members of FOEF are welcome (we are associate members). Details later on 020 8508 0611 GR405971

July 5th Saturday 10am - A Walk around Knighton Woods and Lords Bushes led by Pat and Ron Andrews. Meet in car park in Knighton Lane, off the High Road Buckhurst Hill. GR408933

THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND FORM OF NOMINATION FOR OFFICE HOLDERS THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held on **Monday 28th April 2003**
at the Sir James **Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green at 7.30pm**

Agenda for A.G.M

1. Minutes of the last AGM held on 29th April, 2002
2. Matters Arising
3. Chairman's Report 2002/2003
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of the Chairman.
6. Election of Committee Members
7. Election of Independent Examiner
8. Any Other Business

After the meeting and a break for coffee there will be a talk by Lady Suzanne Walker, chairman of Council for the Protection of Rural Essex.

Officers at present are:

Chairman: Ken Hoy due for re-election this year

Vice-Chairman: Sue McKinley due for re-election in 2004

Hon. General Sec: Mrs. Peggy Bitten due for re-election in 2005

Hon. Treasurer: Tony Sheppard due for re-election in 2005

Hon. Membership Sec: Seymour Moss due for re-election in 2004

Existing Committee members willing to stand are: Harry Bitten, Irene Buchan, Bill Dexter, Robin Gaine, Jim Gimson, Robert Levene, Sue McKinley, Derek Meakin, Judy Miller and Peter Read.

Committee members are re-elected each year and those listed above have agreed to stand together with Alan Curran and Judy Adams who were recently co-opted. If you wish to submit nominations for the post of Chairman or Committee members, please complete the form below and send it to: Mrs. P. Bitten, 9 Frederica Road, Chingford E4 7AL by 7th April 2003.

THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST - NOMINATION FORM

I nominate for the office of Chairman or Committee member *(Please delete as appropriate):*

Name

Address

Tel:

Signature of Candidate

Signature of Proposer Tel:

Name In Capitals

Signature of Seconder Tel:

Name in capitals

If you wish to nominate for more than one office, please write details as above on a separate sheet.

MINUTES OF THE 2002 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST HELD AT SIR JAMES HAWKEY HALL ON MONDAY 29TH APRIL AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Committee Members. K, Hoy Chairman, Mrs.P.Bitten Secretary, T.Sheppard Treasurer, S.Moss Membership Secretary, H.Bitten, Mrs.I.Buchan, J.Buchan, B.Dexter, C.Gimson, Mrs.S.McKinley, D.Meakin, Mrs.J.Miller

Our President and his wife, Lord and Lady Murray, attended as did about 70 other members.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Mr.J.Adams, Mr&Mrs.Besent, Miss.B.Blossom,Mrs.R.Gaine, R.Levene, Mrs.Stothard, P.Read and Mr.Wetton

1. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON Monday 30th April 2001 were approved and signed.
2. MATTERS ARISING: There were none.
3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2001/2002 – A copy of the Report will be included in the Summer2002 Newsletter.
Adoption of the Report was proposed by Mrs J Miller and seconded by Mrs L Redman.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr Sheppard explained his Receipts and Payments Account from 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002 and the Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 March 2002. Copies of both were distributed.

The Excess of Income over Expenditure was significantly higher than that recorded a year ago due to increases in membership subscriptions, the sale of goods and to the raffle tickets sold at the Forest Supper. The Statement of Assets included, for the first time, an assessment of the stock of goods held. There were no liabilities.

Adoption of the Report was proposed by J Buchan and seconded by S Moss.

5. ELECTION OF HON. SECRETARY AND HON.TREASURER

There had been no other nominations and Mrs Bitten and Mr Sheppard were re-elected unanimously. *Mrs Bitten was proposed by Mrs McKinley and seconded by Mr N Taylor. Mr Sheppard was proposed by Mr S Moss and seconded by Mr P Adams.*

6. ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE

The existing members of the committee, including Mrs Gaine who had been co-opted, were re-elected unanimously. *Proposed by Mr L Harris, seconded by Mrs Humphreys.*

7. ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Peter Gotham was unanimously re-elected as Independent Examiner and thanked for his contribution. *Proposed by Mr R Budd, and seconded by Mr P Sinfield.*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was a call for a member to volunteer to assist in the vetting of Local Authority Planning Applications that might have deleterious effects on the Forest. For more details please contact the Secretary.

The need for as much as £12,000 deposited in the bank account was queried, but the Treasurer explained that this was an amount about to be transferred to a higher interest bearing account.

Some dates and venues at which we hope to have a stall will be published in the Summer Newsletter and an appeal was made for help at these events.

After closure of the meeting and a break for coffee, Mr John Meehan, Director of Thames Chase gave a very interesting and informative illustrated talk on this 26,000 acre development as an urban fringe community facility. His talk was followed by a lively question and answer discussion which gave clear evidence of the interest and enjoyment that it had generated.

FofEF E-MAIL AND WEB ADDRESSES

Ken Hoy: khoy@care4free.net

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

FofEF web-site: www.friendsofepppingforest.org.uk
or <http://members.aol.com/friendsef/foef.htm>

NOTICES

SUPPORT THE FRIENDS by purchasing goods for sale - Ken's new Book, Fleece jackets, T-shirts, caps, mugs, pens and greetings cards - contact Seymour Moss on 020 8529 0620.

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

F of EF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Judy Adams	Loughton	020 8418 0730
Peggy Bitten (Sec.)	Chingford	020 8529 8594
Harry Bitten	Chingford	020 8529 8594
Irene Buchan	Chingford	020 8529 6423
Alan Curran	Buckhurst Hill	020 8504 8720
Bill Dexter	Chingford	020 8529 1427
Robin Gaine	Chingford	020 8529 8890
Jim Gimson	S. Woodford	020 8989 3282
Ken Hoy (Chairman)	Pleshey	012 4523 1839
Robert Levene	Snaresbrook	020 8989 0884
Sue McKinley (Dep.-Chair)	Upshire	019 9271 2014
Derek Meakin	Chigwell	020 8500 1571
Judy Miller	Buckhurst Hill	020 8504 8271
Seymour Moss (Memb. Sec.)	Chingford	020 8529 0620
Peter Read	Chingford	020 8524 1659
Tony Sheppard (Treas.)	Woodford Grn	020 8504 8288