



## Dear Friend,

In the Autumn 2007 Newsletter, Ken summed-up much of the Friends' attitude to the Conservators plans to extend cattle grazing throughout the Forest. Shortly after the Newsletter came out, we learnt that, following the recent public consultation, Phase 1 of the grazing extension plan would be considered by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on 12th November 2007. The Phase 1 proposals are to extend grazing to 700 hectares (1,730 Acres) between Whitehall Road and Woodridden Hill. An accompanying map shows the position of the miles of fencing and the general position of 9 cattle grids.

The consultation posed two questions, do you support:

- i) the proposed fencing locations?
- ii) the proposed use of cattle grids?

There were 507 responses, 61% answered yes to both questions and 29% answered no to both questions, leaving 10% of mixed responses. The user group, where a majority of members were against both proposals, were horseriders. 76% were opposed. We don't know how many members of the FOEF responded but it was clearly not enough!

Ken then wrote on behalf of our committee to the Chairman of the Conservators setting out the Friends' attitude to what was planned. Briefly the objections were:

1) The public consultation was flawed in that it asked only for a response to the 2 questions. The critical question - 'Are you in favour of the extension of grazing to this large area?' - was not put.

2) This large area has major blocks of mature woodlands and north of Fairmead there are few grasslands and therefore limited grazing opportunities other than Honey Lane Plain and



Near Big View, Epping Forest - Photo by Ken Bray

Sunshine Plain, the latter already being grazed within temporary electric fenced enclosures.

3) That the grassy slopes of High Beach, being heavily used by visitors and having large numbers of cars and motor bikes on the adjacent roads, is an inappropriate location for cattle grazing.

4) The Summary of Management Plans 2004/2010 indicates that this is Phase 1 only and that Phase 2 includes further large scale tree and scrub removal and more miles of fencing, on the other side of the Epping New Road (B1393).

At the Committee meeting on 12 November, Verderer Michael Davies declared a prejudicial interest - the conservation herd of cattle belongs to Michael - and after a short statement re the Friends letter left the meeting.

During the Committee's discussion, the following points were made by Committee members:

a) This consultation was too simple and should have been expanded

b) The assertion that areas such as Sunshine Plain were grazed 300/400 years ago was questioned. In response the Conservation Manager said that there was historical evidence that the plains had been grazed in the past.

c) Concern was expressed in respect of grazing on the heavily used High Beach area. There would be safety issues given the number of vehicles and horse-riders there in addition to any cattle. Similar concerns were expressed re extending grazing to Woodridden Hill.

d) A member was sceptical that Wanstead Flats was considered suitable for grazing.

e) The Superintendent understood the concerns and said that a herdsman was being used to manage the cattle.

*Don't forget the AGM on 19th May, followed by FREE refreshments and a talk on Woodland Birds by Roger Tomlinson of the RSPB - see page 5 for details*

Please send all letters to the Secretary and Editor: Mrs P Bitten, 9 Frederica Road, Chingford, E4 7AL

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f) The Superintendent stated that with regard to the Consultation that while two questions were asked there were opportunities to add further comments. He added that there was a genuine variance in trends across the board.

A vote was taken and there were 8 for, 1 against and 4 abstentions. Consequently the Superintendent was instructed to implement Phase 1 of the Grazing Strategy; to provide an annual report on progress until 2012; to report to the Committee on detailed implementation proposals for the Wanstead sites by 2010; to re-negotiate a grazing contract with E.W.Davies Farms Ltd to allow the current grazing

regime to continue during 2008 & 2009 prior to the extension of grazing and a possible tender process.

Following the meeting and decision of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, we received a detailed letter from the Chairman & Deputy Chairman in answer to the points we raised with them

However we are disappointed and dissatisfied with the reply. We believe the letter makes many points that could be challenged and the accuracy of some points debated; this, apart from the fact it assumes the public consultation has been adequate and is considered a fair indication of public approval.

Since a decision for this Phase 1 has now been made, we have replied briefly and have made the following points:

a) that the large new extension has been agreed without the effects of the previous grazing programme ever being properly assessed, although it has been in operation now for thirteen years

b) that the proposals claim to be following the general ideas and principles of the Management Plan... that itself has never been widely discussed or the public consulted in any way.

End of story? ... We shall see!

**Editor**



**More of these means...**



**more of these**



*Beech Woodland designated Wood Pasture in Phase 1*



*Newly re-created Wood Pasture at Cuckoo Pits - hoping the grass will grow!*



*Trees approx 18 months after re-pollarding*



*Woodman's Glade 12 years after pollarding - Conservators idea of "ideal Wood Pasture"*

## THE NATURAL ASPECT

There were Daffodils fully out in my garden on the 25th January! George Bush can disagree - but we all know that changes are occurring. Call it 'climate change' or whatever. Perhaps we might have an early spring, but as I write the north of England is in chaos caused by heavy falls of snow... like we used to have in January and February!

Changes in farming practices have certainly caused changes in countryside wildlife, particularly in birds. For instance the decrease of Skylarks, Yellowhammers, Lapwings/Peewits and others. And, as I have said before, we have also noticed changes - losses, in woodland bird populations. This is now generally accepted and research is taking place. A walk now in the Forest in winter will not include sightings of many birds, except near gardens. I have looked at my (late teenage) notebooks of the early 1940's and later of the 60's; the difference is quite alarming.

So, is this more than the effect of a decade or two of climate change?

Back in those halcyon days a winter stroll in Epping Forest would reveal, the presence of several large mixed flocks of the Tit family. But now only occasionally do you see Coal Tits, and very rarely a Marsh Tit. Both were quite common 60 years ago; as too were Nuthatches and Tree Creepers. Large flocks of Chaffinches and Greenfinches could always be seen feeding on beech nuts and hornbeam seeds among the fallen leaves - not now.

In summer the Willow Warbler was most common. I did not hear one singing in the Forest last summer.

However we must beware, some changes have always occurred. I read recently of Henry Doubleday, writing from Epping in the 1830's and commenting how common were Whinchats and Stonechats on the Forest. - the latter he called 'Furzechats'. One year he writes of the Forest 'being alive with Redstarts' All these last three species are now extinct as breeding birds in our Forest. We know that the Forest has changed and the once heavily pollarded forest was more open. Doubleday and later Edward North Buxton both also observed the beginnings of a decline in numbers. However the Redstart was still reasonably frequent in the Forest of the 1940's, as was the Tree Pipit and the Nightingale - a few years ago there were no Nightingales at all in the Forest. Now 1 or 2 pairs have returned. But this is exceptional.

Generally population statistics are down and I think it is more than just minor fluctuations. We must ask ourselves what changes have occurred in insect populations? - the food supply of so many birds in spring and summer. What is happening in the winter quarters, usually in Africa, of our summer visitors and what happens on their migration south of the Sahara? Now perhaps we are back to climate!

There is probably more than one explanation - but we just don't really know!

However, I would like to mention a particular bird - relatively common in the 1940's but now extinct in the whole of Britain! Nowadays, other than ardent bird watchers travelling in Europe, few people seem to have heard of it! A hundred years ago all country folk knew of the 'butcher bird', the Red-backed

Shrike. In those 1940's days I speak of, bird watching in Epping Forest was made exceptionally exciting by the presence of so many breeding pairs of this Shrike. In 1942 there were eleven pairs nesting successfully within one mile of Connaught Waters. That year I ringed the young of several pairs - four pairs alone in Fairmead Bottom! But by the late 1960's none were breeding in Essex; was it the use in those days of strong insecticides? Now the Red-backed Shrike has completely disappeared as a summer breeding bird from our north-western corner of Europe.

It was a fascinating bird ... no larger than a Skylark but with the hooked beak of a predator. The strikingly coloured male would sit prominently on top of a small bush ready to fly up and take a passing bumble bee or go down into the grass for a grasshopper. It was notorious - the 'butcher bird' - for hanging its surplus prey on the thorns of a small hawthorn bush. Nicknamed its 'larder', it was a cache of food usually not far from the nest site. It provided ready clues to the prey that were fed to the young in the nest. The items I found included most frequently beetles & bees, also displayed were moths and other large insects, nestling birds or fledglings, and once an adult Chiff Chaff, and frogs and even a lizard. Once I fed an apparently 'shocked' juvenile on grasshoppers, for several days, until it was strong enough to be released near its family in Fairmead Bottom.

Days later a colour ring on the leg told me it had survived with the family.

If we are optimistic, 'climate changes' might yet bring back such birds.

**Ken Hoy**

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*Male Red-backed Shrike at Fairmead in the 1940's*

*- painting by Ken Hoy*

## OBITUARIES

### John E Harvey - 1920- 2008

Sadly we must report the death in January of John Harvey. John was a Verderer of Epping Forest for 28 years, from 1970 until 1998 - longer than anyone since the Buxtons. He was a good friend of the Forest and when he retired as a Verderer, he and Joyce became life members of the Friends of Epping Forest, although he had always been closely associated with us since our foundation in 1968.

John's family had a long connection with the sea and when the second World War came he joined the Merchant Navy as a Radio Officer. His ship was torpedoed in the Indian Ocean and he was only rescued after spending 3 days on an open raft.

Immediately he was demobbed he married Joyce who had been an old school friend in Lyme Regis.

He was involved in management and directorships with Burmah Oil until he finally retired in 1988. From 1955 until 1966 he was Member of Parliament for the Constituency of Walthamstow East. During this time he moved Private Parliamentary Bills for the City of London. This was the beginning of his many years of devoted service to Epping Forest, eventually becoming a Verderer. He was awarded a CBE by the Queen in 1994.

To the Friends of Epping Forest from those very early days, he was most approachable and helpful, always prepared to give advice and help, both officially and 'off-the-record'. On occasions he chose to be publicly associated with us. In February 1980, he spoke with Bob Mitchell on a 'public platform'- wearing his political hat of Chairman of the local Conservative Party - supporting the 'Friends' when we were involved, with a broad group of community organisations, in trying to get the Link Road extension of the M11 put into a tunnel where it passed through Wanstead and Leytonstone. We were partially successful.

Indicative of his independence of thought and determination to see the interests of the public using the Forest well represented, he also supported our campaign when we opposed the Conservator's proposal to extend the Chingford Golf Course across the remaining half of Chingford Plain; eventually persuading the Epping Forest Committee to change its mind. He was always concerned about the problems caused by horse riding in the Forest and played a significant role in the Conservators obtaining Parliamentary consent to the Bill that eventually provided a solution to the problem.

In his retirement address (May 1998) to the Epping Forest Committee of the City of London he spoke of the role of the Verderers:

"Your four Verderers are reputed historically to be the successors of the four Chief Men of the Forest, appointed by King Canute, renamed Verderers after the Norman Conquest. Over the centuries they acted as law officers safeguarding... the Crown's hunting rights over the Forest's domain. Parliament saw fit to maintain their office in a modernised form in the Act of 1878... We are, in effect, the interface between the Conservators in Guildhall and the local communities of the Forest area. Parliament appointed us as full members of this Committee, having the same powers, authorities, rights and privileges as the members selected from the Court of Common Council" (the Governing body of the City of London).

In the September following his retirement as a Verderer he expressed a particular wish to welcome the walkers at the completion of the Centenary Walk. In the past he had taken part in several of our Centenary Walks, and on more than one occasion addressed the tired walkers on Bell Common, Epping,



as they reached the end of the walk. On these occasions his remarks were always, appropriate, well considered and thoroughly appreciated... this time he felt was rather special - and we print below his last welcoming address to the walkers on September 27th 1998. Clearly many of his remarks are still very appropriate today !

He will long be remembered

**Ken Hoy**

### Welcoming Address to the 1998 Centenary Walkers.

It has been for me, a great honour to serve as a Verderer of Epping Forest for these last 28 years until my retirement in May of this year. It has also been an honour to be associated with the Friends of Epping Forest from the time of their foundation.

Among other honours that I value is that of being a Freeman of the State of Texas and I have been watching with some concern the progress of Hurricane George across the Gulf of Mexico. As you know, hurricanes are named in alphabetical sequence and I wondered just for a moment at about midnight last night whether today's Centenary Walk was to be wrecked by the unexpected arrival of Hurricane Harry. But Harry's influence in high places, which has never ceased to astonish his friends, brought things back under control in time to enable you all to complete the 14th. annual walk since we first celebrated the Centenary of our Forest.

When I was last invited to welcome you back from your perambulation of the Forest, I had occasion to warn of the danger of a Belfry-type golfing complex becoming centred on Copped Hall. Since then, a combination of local interests combined with the initiative of the Corporation of London has effectively ended that particular danger.

We owe more than is generally realised to the initiative of the Superintendent of Epping Forest (John Besent), encouraged by the Verderers and supported

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by vigilant Chairmen of the Epping Forest Committee, in developing the concept of acquiring Buffer Lands in order to protect the Forest.

I had inevitably been involved in Forest matters in my days as Member of Parliament for Walthamstow East, which ended in 1966. It was in 1968 that our Superintendent's predecessor, the late Alfred Quist, asked me whether I might be interested in a vacancy he expected to arise in the ranks of the Verderers. When I asked him what this would involve, he replied "To protect the Ancient Forest of Epping for the enjoyment of the people of London for ever".

The protection of the Forest remains as important today as it has ever been. It is to the great credit of the Corporation of London that it has provided that protection for 120 years at no cost to the beneficiaries, - you and me. The fact is, however, that well intentioned as Governments or Local Authorities may profess to be, the demand for land continues inexorably. There are many instances of the erosion of Green Belt land. Some of the very land recently acquired as Buffer Land might already have been in danger had the Corporation of London not supported the recommendations of its Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee.

I must not allow myself to be drawn too far into the political complexities of land use. I believe, however, that the

green and pleasant land you have traversed today would have presented a very different complexion if a broad cross-section of people and interests had not resolved to defend it in the 1850s and onwards.

In congratulating those who put so much effort into the organisation of this Centenary Walk, let me say simply this in conclusion. Long may this annual perambulation continue to attract the support of those who so love this splendid Forest that they are resolved to protect the ancient Forest of Epping for the enjoyment of the people of London for ever.

**John Harvey, September 1998**

*Sadly we must also report the loss of two other veteran members...*

### Julie Small

Julie and her husband Roger were present, representing the Epping Forest branch of the London Natural History Society, at the inaugural meeting of the Friends of Epping Forest, held appropriately in Lopping Hall, in November 1968.

As Secretary of the LNHS Branch Julie was well known organising the activities of the Society in the Forest area. In earlier days the Branch activities had been centred on Chingford and the Epping Forest members made the branch one of the most active in all the London area. Julie, remembered no doubt, by many of our older members, carried on those

activities and often shared her wide knowledge of the Forest on organised walks and rambles. Her kind and quiet manner, backed up by a willingness to work away, sometimes in the background, provided the qualities that are essential to keep a local organisation running actively.

**Ken Hoy**

### Norman Gunby

Norman was also an 'old', long-standing, member of the 'Friends'. He was born in Ilford in 1914 and apart from WW 2 service in the middle East, lived all his life there. Well known for his passionate interest and involvement in local history, and consequently Epping and Hainault Forests, he is probably known to a wider community for the talks he gave, and as the author of 'A Potted History of Ilford', (first published in 1991 & an enlarged edition in 1997)

The title is misleading for the book is just short of 400 pages! A large 'pot' tightly packed with information! Worthy of dipping in and tasting at any time, but also a massive source of reference material on Ilford.

In 2001 he wrote: "*What I have attempted to do is narrate the history of Ilford as a story from its very beginning up to the last decade ... and, I like to think it is something worth leaving behind*". Indeed Norman!

**Ken Hoy**

## FofEF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2008**

**7.30 p.m. at the WOODFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, HIGH ROAD, WOODFORD GREEN**

**There are some important items to come up about the future of Epping Forest, and we would love there to be lots of members to contribute to the discussion.**

**After the business part of the AGM we have been fortunate to secure Roger Tomlinson of the RSPB to talk about Woodland Birds and and the results of the Garden Watch Survey.**

**So PLEASE make a note in your diary NOW!**



## DEER IN EPPING FOREST

At the end of January a member was stuck in a traffic jam on Woodredon Hill because a vehicle had stopped ahead while a dead deer was being loaded from the side of the road. We phoned the Warren to report this and were relieved to be informed that they had been informed of an accident that day and had made arrangements for the removal of the body. There is an alarmingly high count of animal deaths on Forest roads, on average 30 to 40 a year. So do drive carefully! But this probably does not include the unknown number of animals that are struck by vehicles and crawl into the nearby woods to die. If you see an accident involving wildlife, please phone the Warren on **020 8532 1010** and they will contact the highways department of the local council if removal from the roadside is necessary.

## FOREST SUPPER NOVEMBER 2007

After a slight dip in numbers in 2006 we began to wonder whether the Supper's format was getting a bit tired and that we'd need to think again about the event. Fortunately laziness prevailed and we just did the same as before. Luckily laziness was rewarded and attendance was around the optimum number and, furthermore we made a profit, just!

Alan Beere, the caterer, maintained the previous high standard and there have been many unprompted comments on the excellent quality of the nosh. The copious supplies of alcoholic and other beverages went down well, with modest individual intake precluding aggressive and riotous behaviour.

The quizzes were all easy and unchallenging and showed signs of an increasingly threadbare imagination! Northeast London's premier raffle was once again a wonder to behold, a testimony to the incredible generosity of our members and friends. It raised very nearly £700.

We were very glad to welcome our guests from the Conservators London Green Belt Council and the Campaign to Protect Rural Essex etc. We hope that they all enjoyed themselves, as we hope, did all those present. Don't miss November 2008.

### Donations to the Raffle

Hilda & Vera Anstow, Jenny & Joe Barling, Chris Beavan, Sheila & John Besent, Pat Bishop, Barbara Blossom, Irene Breame, Pauline Burns, Stella & Gerald Butler, Brenda & Ken Bray, Maggie Charles, Joyce & Ron Clayton, Jean & Ian Cox, Sue Coulbeck, Michael Davies, Beresford Ducks, Joan & Harry Edler, Ms Fearne, Carole Francis, Amanda & Peter Gotham, Pat Gunn, Yvonne Hinton, Erica Jackson, Marilyn Kramer, Mr & Mrs Leadley, Fay & Robert Levene, Hazel & John Leyton, Catherine McGuinness, Wendy Mead, Tricia Moxey, Brenda Moses, Lady Heather Murray, Stephen Murray, Ann & John Pearson, Mary Porter, Peter Relph, Francis Rosen, Doreen & Harry Royds, Jean & Alf Sherman, Tonia Slack, Jean Smith, Miss Silvester, Mr E V Smith, Joan Stowers, Margaret Tinkler, Maureen & Jim Tribe, Keith Venables, Joyce & Mike Whiteley, Percy Wilding.

**Advanced Notice:**  
**Forest Supper 2008**  
**Thursday 20th November**

## LETTERS

*Thanks for the lovely lot of letters about the new format Newsletter:*

I write to compliment the society in the last edition of the Newsletter. I note that it is more expensive to produce but feel that it provides a good advertisement for the Society and gives it an air of professionalism. Perhaps sponsors or advertisements might help to defray the extra cost although I would hope that means could be found to defray the cost in other ways.

**R.M.Allen**

Thought I would drop you a line to say how much I like the new Newsletter. I hope we can afford to keep it up.

**Ron Budd**

Thank you for sending a copy of the Newsletter and hearty congratulations on the new format to all concerned.

**Derek Balls (Past Chairman of the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Cttee)**

The current edition of the Friends Newsletter is so much more enjoyable to read - clear, extremely well set out and really good to see colour photographs. We hope the cost is not too prohibitive and this format will continue. Thank you for all your hard work.

**Peter and Pat Fuller**

While there was nothing wrong with the old-style newsletter, I think the new look is a big step forward. The newsletter is the major link with us ordinary members and I for one always find it interesting. But it is also, in a way, the public face of FOEF - several times I have passed on my copy to friends who were thinking of joining. The new look is more professional and while the words might be the same, it gives a more authoritative look. Yes there is an

issue of cost, but I think it is well worth it. The FOEF sub is very modest and if it has to be increased, I certainly would not begrudge another pound a year. So congratulations on the new design.

**Steve Short**

Congratulations on another excellent edition! The pictures are really good and I especially enjoyed the amazing observations at the Spider's web bistro.

**Lady Suzanne Walker**

Thank you for the latest Newsletter ... You invited feedback so here's mine. Colour printing, higher quality pages, more pictures ... a terrific leap forward!

At last I feel I'm getting a magazine that communicates messages and information from what presents itself as a serious organisation. I know the quality of the content has always been there but the old format was too like a parish magazine from the 1980's.

I'm not sure the paper quality is right yet and I can see there might be some layout ideas that could do with tweaking (if you have the technology to print good quality pictures PLEASE put one on the front page! It would really help draw new readers to the magazine).

Here's another thought - it may be more expensive but it looks professional - professional enough to attract advertisers if that would help offset the higher costs. How about a few selective advertisers - local bookshops, outdoor equipment shops etc ?

**Kevin Wyatt- Lown**

... I think the new printing really brings the newsletter alive. Brilliant, well done.

**Peter Lawrence**

*Thanks for all letters - we will certainly try to take the suggestions on board.*

**Ed.**

## FREE TALK ON WOODLAND BIRDS

**Following the business part of the AGM and light refreshments, Roger Tomlinson of the RSPB will talk about Woodland Birds and the results of the Garden Watch Survey**

**MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2008**

**7.30 p.m. at the WOODFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, HIGH ROAD, WOODFORD GREEN**

## "GO PLAY IN THE FOREST - GET SOME FRESH AIR"

Ken Hoy's memories of the cattle pen opposite St. Aubyns School in the 1930s triggered a few memories of my own in that part of the forest in the 1950s. The pen was still there in the 1950s as was another in Oak Hill, opposite the Kingfisher Swimming Pool - sorry that's long gone, it's now a hotel site. But at least the hotel, like a cafe is a place of refreshment and there were many cafes around the forest during my childhood. Lets see if we can remember a few:

History tells us that this part of the forest, along the Woodford New Road (new in 1829) was a well-known destination for day-trippers or "excursionists" that gave our forest the nickname the "Cockney Playground". Walthamstow and then Leyton Municipal Trams came out as far as Whipps Cross in the 1890s. Lambs Cafe at the top of Lea Bridge Road is the only Forest edge cafe surviving from those times. The trams were extended to the "Rising Sun" Public House. Remember the "Rising Sun" when it was just a couple of cottages knocked into one with a tea kiosk facing towards the children's boating pond and the refreshment hut on wheels in the forest on the other side of the road? In 1905 the trams were extended along the Woodford New Road to a new terminus at the top of Oak Hill, which was and still is in Walthamstow. The boundary between Walthamstow and Woodford does not cross the Woodford New Road until a point between Oak Hill and Empress Avenue. We Woodfordians did not like the idea of ugly tram wires in our parish! Quite quickly the area around the terminus became developed with the building of the "Napier Arms" public house on the corner of Fullers Road (formerly Windmill Lane) and the Walthamstow "Mill Cottage" estate was sold in 1908 and developed into Oak Hill Gardens.

Others saw the potential for providing refreshments for day-trippers and gradually the cafes that I can remember still being there in the 1950s were opened. They included the "Cosy Cafe", now where the petrol station is next to the Napier Arms. The "Romany Teas Gardens", where the petrol station is at the top of Oak Hill and the "Bungalow Teas Rooms" was at the top of Oak Hill, just beyond Oak Hill Gardens, where the block of newer houses are today. The trams were replaced by electric trolley buses either



*Napier Arms, Empress Pavilion Teas Rooms and tram, Woodford  
Photo. supplied by Peter Lawrence*

side of the war with the concrete walled turning point now used by the car dealers opposite. Remember the 581s and the 623s? By the way, the car showroom on the corner of Fullers Road was originally the poshest of the refreshment houses, called the "Empress Pavilion Teas Rooms". The waitresses were dressed in black and white uniforms, like the Lyons Corner House "nippies". It's more than just a co-incidence that three out of the four cafes were replaced by something to do with the motor car.

The "Bungalow Tea Rooms" was my Mother's favourite and she like so many mothers in the 1950s would encourage me to play with friends in the forest.

From where I grew up in Stanley Road, Woodford, it was a short walk through the alleyways to the forest. There in the summer time several of the houses in Peel Road whose gardens backed onto the forest would sell teas and lemonade. Today when we debate how over-protected children's lives appear to be, I'm glad I can still hear my Mother's voice saying to me, "Go and play with your friends in the forest - get some fresh air - be back by tea time".

(A response to an article in the Friends of Epping Forest Newsletter, Autumn 2007)

**Peter Lawrence, Chairman of  
Woodford Historical Society**

## PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

At the Epping Forest & Commons Committee Meeting on 7th January a proposal by London Borough of Waltham Forest to install a Puffin Crossing on Snaresbrook Road to provide a safe passage for both forest users and children from the nearby school was considered. This entailed the relocation of a bus-stop, the creation of the crossing point some 15 metres east of a road called The Forest, together with the extension of the pathway over forest land and improvements to the hard surfaces and the installation of short sections of guard rail to direct pedestrians to the controlled crossing point.

I am generally in favour of anything that improves the lot of walkers in the

forest and avoids them behaving like what A.P.Herbert (remember him?) used to call the human hen, running squawking and fearfully across roads full of menacing and oncoming traffic.

However some committee members thought the project, as it stood, disturbed the rural appearance of the Forest, as did the guard rails. Consequently the proposal was referred back to the LB of WF.

It is good that the rurality of the Forest is protected although one does wonder why a few metres of guard rail should be found to be a problem, when the prospect of many miles of fencing in much more sensitive areas is regarded as acceptable and presumably not affecting the rural appearance!

**Harry**

## PUBLIC ACCESS TO BUFFER LAND

We were delighted when the Corporation decided to experiment with open public access on its buffer land estates of Warlies, Woodredon and Copthall. We were involved in the consultation process to decide how to manage this freedom, without compromising the wildlife benefits of the open fields and secluded woodlands that make up the estates.

Our November walk gave us the chance to see how the policy is working out in practice. It was very pleasant to walk across the fields as a companionable group rather than strung out along narrow footpaths. However, one problem was evident from the start when we were unable to access the Warlies buffer land at all from the Forest land bordering the road through Upshire because the gateway is shared by pedestrians on the footpath and horses joining the permissive riding circuit also set up by the Corporation. The poaching of the path approaching the gateway made it impassable. An alternative entry point was found, leading from a pub car park but this would require local knowledge, or a map, so we were surprised to find the interpretation board in this more obscure position rather than on the way-marked path.

We have corresponded with the Conservators on the matters and they have promised to look into the problems of shared horse/walker access although we are less than confident about the idea of widening the path - in our experience elsewhere in the Forest, this simply widens the area of poaching!

We also asked for some consideration to be given to the rather mixed message to buffer land users by open access fields with signs saying "Bull in Field". We know that the black Aberdeen Angus cattle grazed on Warlies are a docile breed and grazing the bull in the company of his lady friends is within DEFRA guidelines but many casual visitors would not be aware of this and would interpret the signs as "Keep Out" notices. Also, as not every gateway is signed, it is possible to meet the bull without warning, which could be somewhat disconcerting! Excitable young cattle crowded around gateways as cattle often do, are also a daunting prospect for many people.

The Conservators have taken our concerns on board and will be discussing them with the grazier before the cattle are turned out again.

**Sue McKinley**

## DOGS ON THE FOREST

I have been known to walk Molly (a mongrel), another Molly and Sophie (Cocker Spaniels) and the sadly departed Higgins (yellow Labrador) in the Forest, so I'm clearly not opposed to dog walking.

However the comparatively new phenomenon of the professional dog walker does throw up some problems. What happens here is that a vehicle arrives on Chingford Plain (I'm told it also occurs at Wanstead) and on the doors being opened, up to six or more dogs eagerly jump out and start running about. The dog walker is in charge of the animals and is presumably employed to give the dogs a good run the actual owners being at work or otherwise unable to do so themselves.

The byelaws require that dogs must be kept under effective control while in the Forest. The Conservators' leaflet '*You and Your Dog*' declares that your dog is not under effective control if it is out of sight or does not come when called. Dogs should also be wearing a collar with the owners name and address on it.

In 2004 the Epping Forest Committee decreed that 4 should be the maximum number of dogs that could be regarded as under effective control by one person. Unfortunately the leaflet does not mention this.

In Bury Wood on recent walks we have come across groups of 10 or more dogs under the 'control' of two people. Obviously two professional dog walkers have joined up for company with their charges. On both occasions the dogs, once including a Rottweiler and an Irish Wolfhound and on the other no less than 4 Rottweilers, came bounding up to and through our group much to the concern of some of the members. The dogs eventually responded to the shouts and exhortations of the 'owners' to leave us alone but these were not pleasant experiences.

These are not idle fears, there have been a number of cases recently in the media where Rottweilers have killed or maimed people including their owners. The dangers are magnified when groups or packs of dogs are involved.

Is the answer to make it compulsory for Rottweilers and similar breeds to be on a lead when in the Forest?

Any views?

**Harry B**

## VOLUNTEER(S) WANTED.

**Any age—either sex. To clear up round CONNAUGHT WATER, 1 or 2 mornings (Thurs, Fri, Sat, or Sun).**

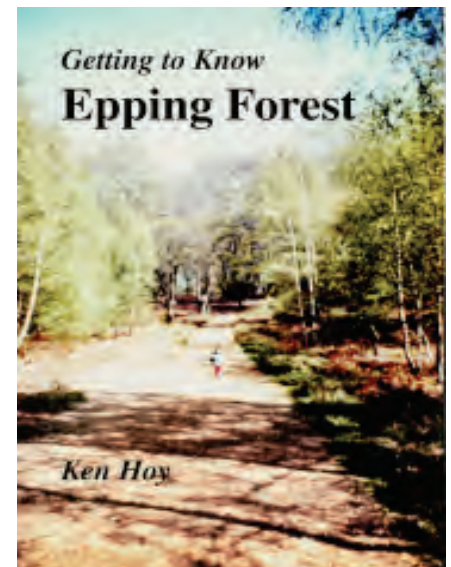
A litter-picker employed by the Conservators regularly clears up around Connaught Water and the car park at the beginning of the week but for a number of years Friends member Paul Narraway, (with the agreement of the Conservators) has been clearing litter at the end of the week. He is now looking for someone to share this task with him. Would anyone like to volunteer to do one or two days a week to help Paul — a clearance takes 1 to 2 hours. If you are interested in helping to keep this part of Epping Forest tidy please ring Paul on 07726 138 802.

## F of EF E-MAIL AND WEB ADDRESSES

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

Membership Secretary  
(Seymour Moss):  
[seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk)

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



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

Copies are available from Seymour Moss on 020 8529 0620 £6-00 to members (£7-00 inc. p&p). Otherwise available at the Epping Forest Information Centre, High Beach and in several local bookshops (£6-95).



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**March 16, Sunday, 11am – 1pm**  
**Discover the Central Part of the Forest.** Meet at High Beach, by the Pillow Mounds (near Carl's tea hut).

*Leader: Alan Curran GR 412 983*

**March 28, Friday, 10.30am - 12.30pm**  
**Epping Uplands – Revisited!** Meet at the Car Park of 'The Traveller's Friend', Epping Green (With the kind permission of the Landlord). Turn left at B182 Bury Lane at mini roundabout on B1393 just before Epping and then left onto B181 at Bury Farm turn left at T-junction at Epping Upland.

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

**April 20, Sunday, 10.30am - 12.30pm**  
**Spring in Wanstead Park** – Explore this Historic area. Meet at: Warren Road, Wanstead (at Park's Entrance). Cross at the George Wanstead to St Mary's Avenue and then left into Overton Drive and then right at junction with Warren Road.

*Leader: Tricia Moxey GR 414 876*

**May 12, Monday, 6.30pm – 7.30pm**  
**A Jog in The Forest NEW EVENT - BE IN AT THE START!** Meet at Orion Harriers Changing Rooms which are between The Royal Forest Hotel & The Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge, Chingford. Run to suit all levels of ability from beginners to experienced runners!

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

**May 19th AGM (see notice on p5)**

**May 24, Saturday, 2.00pm – 4.00pm**  
**'Day Return to High Beach'** Meet at Bury Road Car Park, Chingford Discover the Route of the Proposed 19th Century Railway Line from Chingford to High Beach.

*Leader: 'Bare Foot Walker' Edgar Brown. GR 394 951*

**June 6, Friday, 10.30am – 12.30pm**  
**Theydon Bois and The Gregories.** Meet at: Lower Car Park on Jack's Hill (**not** where there is a car park on both sides of the road). Take A121 for Theydon Bois from Wake Arms roundabout.

*Leader: Harry Bitten GR 439 996*

**June 21, Saturday, 7.00pm - 9.00pm**  
**Mid-Summer's Evening Walk** for views over the Forest (**NEW – well-behaved dogs, on leads, are welcome!**) Meet at: Hornbeam Lane, 1st right on Bury Road when coming from Chingford Station.

*Leader: Peter Read GR 393 957*

*Friends of Epping Forest Newsletter Spring 2008*

**June 28 Sat 12.00 - 5.00pm**  
**Chingford Village Festival**

We shall take our stall to this event and would be very grateful for any help for 1 or 2 hours.

**July 10, Thursday, 10.30am - 1.30pm**  
**A NEW OPPORTUNITY** to learn about orienteering (if you wish to take part in the orienteering just bring your own compass). or just enjoy the guided walk. Explore Hainault Forest, followed by optional pub lunch (well-behaved dogs, on leads, welcome). Meet at "telephone box car park" opposite Chigwell Row village school.

*Leaders: Ron and Pat Andrews  
GR 471 936*

**July 14, Monday, 10.00am - 12.00pm**  
**The Plains and open areas of the Forest.** See the effects of cattle grazing and chance to discuss with supporter of cattle grazing the benefits they bring. Meet at Jack's Hill Car Park, on either side of the road.

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

**FOR OTHER DATES please contact:**

**Epping Forest Visitor Centre**  
020 8508 0028

**Epping Forest Centenary Trust**  
020 8508 9061

**Conservation Volunteers**  
(Doing practical work in Epping Forest) 020 8529 3060

**Epping Forest Field Centre**  
020 8508 7714

**BNA Epping Forest Branch**  
020 8529 7307

**Essex Wild Life Trust  
(Epping Forest Group)**  
Tricia Moxey on 01277 364522

**Lee Valley Park**  
01992 702200 or see  
[www.leevalleypark.org.uk](http://www.leevalleypark.org.uk) for details.

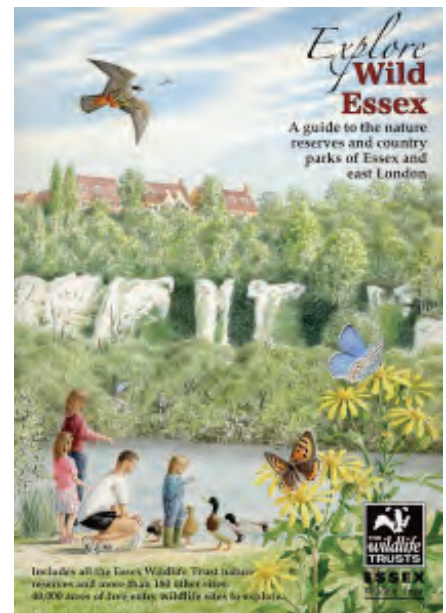
**Copped Hall Trust**  
01992 571657

**Stop Stansed Expansion**

Although the Inspector has not yet reported on the recent Public Enquiry on BAA's application to increase use of the existing runway, there is already an expectation of an application in respect of a second runway.

SSE is organising a series of events aimed at fund-raising and increasing awareness. See [stopstanstedexpansion.com](http://stopstanstedexpansion.com) or call 01279 870558 for more details.

## EXPLORE WILD ESSEX



Tony Gunton's new guide to the nature reserves and country parks in Essex and east London is to be published in aid of the Essex Wildlife Trust in June.

**Explore Wild Essex** includes over 260 sites covering almost 40,000 acres. The Epping Forest district is fortunate in having more than its fair share of these sites. It boasts the three biggest sites in the book (Epping Forest, Lee Valley Country Park & Ashlyns organic farm) plus many smaller sites: giving a total of around 13,000 acres.

**If you make a reservation before publication the book will cost only £12.95 including postage - a saving of £2.00 on the bookshop price.** You can make a reservation online ([www.lopinga.com/Essex](http://www.lopinga.com/Essex)) or by writing to Lopinga Books, 23 Tye Green, Wimbish, Essex, CB10 2XE. Please do not send money with your reservation - you will be asked to pay when the book is published.



*"Excellent! So that's passed then. All we need do now is draft the consultation document"*

*-Private Eye 2008*

## EPHING FOREST RIDERS ASSOCIATION

Much as I enjoy reading the Newsletter I always receive it with trepidation expecting something that is detrimental about horse riding in the Forest. The Autumn edition containing Mark Dawes letter about damage to the Forest unfortunately fulfilled those expectations with his comments about horses added to those concerning cyclists!

However, Mark's letter contains much truth but unfortunately only touches the surface of a very controversial and difficult problem. All human activity from a single walker to an illegal motorbiker will damage the Forest to a greater or lesser degree. When I was a young man studying for my Physics 'O' level I was set the task of working out who caused the most damage to a floor between an 8 stone woman in stilettos and a 14 stone man in normal shoes. Surprisingly the woman exerted several tons per square inch whereas the man a lot less. Now if one were to take, for example, the large black horse Duke which is often seen being ridden in the Forest by the Superintendent, who is a man of fine physique, and compare the force being exerted on the Forest floor by its feet with that of the force exerted by the cycle that the Superintendent used when he undertook a recent cycling event in the Forest I would have to suggest that the cycle is the worse. Coupled with the fact that the cycle has a motorised wheel at its rear then there is no argument, in my mind, which is the worse!

Now, you are probably thinking along the lines that I, as a horserider, would say that. However, lets look at some facts. About 18 months ago the EFRA Committee decided to undertake some research into damage of the Forest floor. We deduced the following: Fact 1, horseriders and horses do not like mud - it has to be hosed off which is very unpleasant for both horse and rider in the winter, it can also pull shoes off and tear tendons. Off-road Cyclists love mud and hosing one's bike off causes no problems! Fact 2, horseriders are precluded from the majority of the Forest from late Autumn until Spring whereas cyclists can go where they want all year (with a couple of minor exceptions). Fact 3, closing the Forest causes more damage to the posted rides that are then shut which puts more pressure on the surfaced rides. Fact 4, there is a Byelaw about causing damage to the Forest but of course you need Keepers in order to be able to enforce it, but we won't go down that road! Fact 5, horse Licencing

was enacted in part because of the perceived damage that horses do to the Forest but it took 15 years to bring in - how long would it take to licence cyclists with their lobbying powers? Fact 6, in October there had been only 519 Horse Riding Licences issued (not including the Riding Schools and visitors) - how many cyclists are there? Fact 7, we found that the vast majority of riders



*Hoof-marks miraculously disappear...*



*... Bike wheel tracks don't  
photo. [www.epping-forest-mbc.co.uk](http://www.epping-forest-mbc.co.uk)*

stay on the posted rides and surfaced tracks all year round with, probably, no more than about 40 going off into the Forest when permitted. Fact 7, hoof marks are self-repairing where there is light usage (don't ask me 'how' - it just happens!) - can the same be said for wheel marks? Fact 8, Forest maintenance works, or rather the vehicles associated with those works, cause far more damage than either cyclists or horse riders.

Following on from this research we decided to instigate a series of guided

rides throughout the Forest off the beaten track, so to speak. These have been carried out this year and very successful they have been with the riders expressing their amazement about the beauty of the Forest and the excellent condition of the floor, even after heavy rain. Most, though, stated that they would stay on the tracks for reasons which varied from the fear of getting lost to lack of time due to work and family commitments. This prompted us to suggest to the Conservators a change to the normal method of shutting the Forest this winter. When the Forest is shut together with the posted rides riders have to use the surfaced tracks; EFRA suggested that the Forest should stay open with the posted rides being shut if this was warranted, our argument being that the vast majority of riders would only use the surfaced rides and would not venture off into the Forest. This was given very serious consideration by the Conservators but turned down, not because of the potential damage that might occur but because the Keepers would have difficulty deciding whether a rider was on a posted ride or in the Forest should they be riding near to one. Having come to that decision we were then somewhat surprised this year to find that most of the posted rides were shut before the Forest, which was open until the 3rd December, thus making the very situation that they said was unworkable!

EFRA, and hopefully the riders who use the Forest, are very aware of the potential for damage to be caused by horses and we are willing to liaise with anyone in order to mitigate these effects. We enjoy riding in the area and wish to continue to do so; reducing the possibility of damage will obviously help that desire. We fear that the numbers of cyclists will continue to increase and feel that some sort of measures should be implemented before long in order to stop the escalating damage that they cause. I understand that the Superintendent is trying to set up a cycle forum in order to address these problems, however, I think it would be a good idea for that forum to include representatives from all the interested bodies concerned with the Forest thus ensuring that a balanced approach is achieved and for the cyclists not to feel that they are being victimised - we do all need to work together for the benefit of the Forest as a whole.

**Adrian J Liddle**  
**Chairman, Epping Forest Riders**  
**Assoc.**  
[www.efra.co.uk](http://www.efra.co.uk); [info@efra.co.uk](mailto:info@efra.co.uk)

## MORE LETTERS

I wanted to write to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading about what is happening in and around my Forest in the Friend's Newsletter and this is so much more important to me now living so far away. The new format is super and I have read and re-read all the news and anecdotes many times over.

My substitute for Epping Forest is Bickton Park Gardens near Budleigh Salterton where there is a large number of mature trees. The photograph is a view in early spring of a path up a long hill to Holm Oaks, which is a common species in this area.

I moved to Beresford Road, Chingford when I was 6 and the Forest was a place of interest and enjoyment for me until 1996 when we moved away. I was lucky to have a father who, like me, had grown up with the Forest, having lived at 9 Forest Road, Woodford Green with his family. His father, John Henry Lock, was responsible for the water supply in Loughton, Woodford and Chingford. Anyone living in the area in the 20's, 30's and 40's would have known of "the Locks" ! So thank you so much for helping me to relive special moments in the Forest through the Newsletter.

**Wendy Capper from Exmouth.**

I enclose a donation and as I am a taxpayer the Friends can claim gift aid...

I was born in Chingford but our family left for Kenya in 1946. I always enjoyed the Forest as a youngster. I have lived in Wye, Kent for nearly 40 years, an historic village said to have Saxon origins. The church was 'beautified' by Cardinal Kempe who was born locally. In 2006 we were in serious danger of being engulfed by a preposterous plan by Imperial College, London, who own Wye College and some hundreds of acres of land in an ANOB— they wanted to put a huge 'science park' plus hundreds of houses to pay for it! They were foiled for the time being but Ashford (4 miles away) is a development area, decided by government, so I appreciate the problems that are arising around your area and the Forest.

**Cecily Redwood**

*We receive quite a few letters from Epping Forest expats, even as far afield as Australia !*



*Bickton Park Gardens*

## WALK REPORTS

### Christmas Walk Thursday 13th December

It was a cold crisp and frosty morning when 32 people left the Visitors Centre at High Beach for a brisk walk around Monk Wood taking in the Lost Pond. Here we skimmed icy fragments across the frozen pond making a very satisfactory pinging noise - this was the activity of the more intellectual members of the party! We redeemed ourselves by inspecting the ancient beech coppard nearby and speculating on its age and how it came by its present configuration.

After trudging along the green Ride we crossed part of Deer Shelter Plain and noted the virtually dried-up pond before turning south-west through

Monk Wood. (A favoured part of EF little touched by management). Having crossed the A104 we circled around Wake Valley Pond, also iced over, and headed back towards Rushey Plain. I always feel that fallow deer are lurking among the hollies hereabouts but sadly none appeared. However I should mention that this January the 'feeling was rewarded by the sight of a good sized herd in the aforesaid hollies near Rushey Plain.

On return we had a very convivial time consuming wine and mince pies before congratulating ourselves on how energetic we'd been and nipping off home.



*Along what was called the Woodchip Ride*

## Buffer Lands Walk Saturday January 5th

Around 30 of us met Verderer Michael Davies at the Lodge Road car park on a not unpleasant morning, although it had been wet!

Michael opened the gates to Copped Hall so unusually we didn't have to squeeze through the side gate. We walked over the motorway and then visited the Trafalgar Wood - Michael had a key to that as well - and then crossed the field between the Selvage and the Hall. There was a very muddy area to traverse and then we encountered the herd of longhorns which were moderately frisky. They didn't seem to recognise Michael although they, of course, belong to him!

We also saw some fallow deer sneaking away below the walled garden. After crossing the field alongside Rookery Wood we arrived at Little Rookery Wood and then the concrete estate road. On the other side we entered first one and then the second little wood to which there is normally no access. Having crossed the main estate road we headed over the home park field crossed the motorway bridge and returned to the car park. It was nice to visit areas of the Conservators Copped Hall Park where one is not normally permitted to go. As well as cattle and deer we saw a hare but no buzzards or red kites which occasionally put in an appearance. Thanks to Michael for an interesting and informative walk.

**Harry**



*View of Copped Hall from below the ha ha*



*Buffer land walkers*

## Baldwin's Hill & surrounding areas Wednesday 13 February

It was remarkably warm and sunny when 22 people assembled on 13 February for the walk around Baldwin's Hill at Loughton. Many were familiar faces and they all seemed keen so we set off with enthusiasm down the hill and into the mud by the lake. I'm afraid steep hills and goeey mud were inevitable for this walk.

The theme of the walk was looking at the size and growth of the trees we saw, to try to guesstimate their age. To help with this I had a copy of the Epping Forest Commission map coloured to show land use. For example Baldwin's Hill and several nearby plots were shown as grassland or arable in 1871 so the trees here were secondary woodland. On the further side of the Loughton Brook the forest had not been cleared and there were many very old trees. In the area of Loughton Camp we estimated some "coppards" (early coppice which has been lopped in later life, giving the appearance of a group of old pollarded trees growing from one root base) were 4-500 years old while another near the Lost Pond was possibly 800 years old.

A stop was made at Loughton Camp where the extensive gravel-diggings made it easy to see how the site had escaped recognition as an Iron Age encampment until 1872. We also considered the "pit" shown on Victorian maps as "Turpin's Cave" and looked at newspaper accounts of the night of 4/5 May 1737 when Dick Turpin shot

Thomas Morris, servant to a Keeper. The first report (The London Evening Post, 7-10 May 1737) did not specify an exact location, it was later that the cavern surrounded by a thicket in the forest between The King's Oak and the Loughton Road was specified.

The next stopping point was the Lost Pond which originated as a gravel digging made by the firm of A G Askew & Sons, approximately between 1900-1913. I was fortunate in being able to chat to his son, Frank Askew, and recorded our conversations 25 years ago. Most of what he told me about the

creation of the Lost Pond was included in "Keepers, Cockneys & Kitchen Maids" (p.15-16) but I didn't add his aside of how, as a young lad on a very hot day, he gave the sweating workman water to drink with tadpoles swimming in it and they didn't notice!

By now my two hours was nearly up so it was decided not to carry on to Goldings Hill Pond but to return via the Clay Road and Baldwin's Hill. The forest in the winter sunshine was very beautiful!

**Georgina Green**



*Georgina and walkers at Loughton Camp*

# THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST

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

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 19th May 2008

at the WOODFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, Woodford Green at 7.30pm

### Agenda for A.G.M:

1. Minutes of the last AGM held on 21st May, 2007
2. Matters Arising
3. Chairman's Report 2007/08
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of the Hon. General Sec. and Treasurer
6. Election of Committee Members
7. Election of Independent Examiner
8. Any Other Business

### Officers at present are:

**Chairman:** Ken Hoy due for re-election in 2009

**Vice-Chairman:** Sue McKinley due for re-election in 2010

**Hon. General Sec:** Peggy Bitten due for re-election this year

**Hon. Treasurer:** Alan Curran due for re-election this year

**Hon. Membership Sec:** Seymour Moss due for re-election in 2010

**Existing Committee members willing to stand are:** Judy Adams, Chris Beavan, Harry Bitten, Irene Buchan, Bill Dexter, Robert Levene, Sue McKinley, Derek Meakin, Tricia Moxey, Peter Read.

Committee members are re-elected each year and those listed above have agreed to stand. 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 1st May 2006.

**After the meeting and a break for coffee there will be a talk by Roger Tomlinson of the RSPB about Woodland Birds and the results of the recent Garden Watch Survey.**

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## THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST - NOMINATION FORM

**I nominate for the office of Hon. General Sec., Hon. Treasurer 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. Nominations to reach the current Hon. Sec. at 9 Frederica Road, E4 7AL by Mon 28th April 2008.

## MINUTES OF THE 2007 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST HELD AT WOODFORD COUNTRY HIGH SCHOOL, MONDAY 21st MAY AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Committee Members: Ken Hoy, Chairman, Tony Sheppard, Treasurer, Seymour Moss, Membership Secretary, Mrs. Judy Adams, Mrs Irene Buchan, Alan Curran, Bill Dexter, Mrs Sue McKinley, Derek Meakin, Peter Read and Mrs Tricia Moxey, Minuting Secretary.

APOLOGIES: (Committee Members: Mrs Peggy Bitten, Secretary, Harry Bitten and Robert Levene.), Lady Heather Murray President, Peter Gotham (Independent Examiner), Richard Morris, Dr. Keith Snow.

1. The MINUTES of the last meeting held on 22nd May 2006 were approved and signed. Proposed by Seymour Moss and seconded by Peter Read.
2. MATTERS ARISING. There were none.
3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2006 - 7.

The Chairman highlighted a number of points from his Report, which was available at the meeting. He paid tribute to the hard work of Jim Gimson who died in November, who had been responsible for organising the delivery of the Newsletters. The Chairman mentioned that the Committee had responded in detail to the Grazing Proposal put forward by the Conservators, to the management plan for Barn Hoppitt and the ISP for Wanstead Park. A detailed response had also been made on the draft EERA East of England Plan and objections raised on many local planning applications. Three editions of the Newsletter had been produced, a varied programme of walks enjoyed and a new display prepared for use at outside events. The Committee were currently reviewing the future role of the Friends and how to make the best use of the resources available. The Chairman thanked all those who had been involved in helping in various ways over the past twelve months.

At the end of his report there was a lively discussion about the extent of the proposed fencing along the Epping New Road and the number of cattle which might be turned out to graze.

Seymour Moss stated that members of the Committee of the Friends were not necessarily united on the issues surrounding cattle grazing. Adoption of the Report was proposed by Peter Adams and seconded by Paul Argent. It was accepted unanimously and included in full in the Summer Newsletter.

### 4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Tony Sheppard explained the balance sheet showing the Receipts and Payments Account from 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007 and the Statement of Assets and liabilities as at 31st March 2007, copies of which were distributed. The accounts showed a healthy balance and he thanked Peter Gotham for his work as Independent Examiner of these Accounts. Adoption of the Report was proposed by Judy Adams and seconded by Peter Read. It was accepted unanimously.

The Treasurer then announced that he would be standing down as he now had other commitments; but that Alan Curran had agreed to take over from him. Both he and Peter Gotham were willing to guide the new Treasurer in his tasks.

Ken Hoy thanked Tony for his excellent work as Treasurer and presented him with a turned wooden bowl created from a fallen Forest tree.

### 5. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mrs Sue McKinley was re-elected unanimously. Proposed by Derek Meakin and seconded by Lynn Jones.

### 6. ELECTION OF TREASURER

Alan Curran was proposed by Tony Sheppard and seconded by Bill Dixon elected unanimously.

### 7. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

The members of the committee were re-elected en bloc. Proposed by Gill Leadbetter and seconded by Tony Sheppard.

### 8. ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Peter Gotham was thanked for his work and unanimously re-elected for the current year. Proposed by Tony Sheppard and seconded by Derek Meakin.

### 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sue McKinley mentioned that volunteer helpers were urgently required to help with the running of the various outside events organised during the summer. Any volunteers who could spare time to help were asked to sign the appropriate lists at the back of the hall.

Len Harris commented that the audio equipment at the Hawkey Hall and in this Hall were not very efficient and wondered if the Friends could invest in some alternative equipment for use at indoor events.

Stan Newens said he had much admiration for the work of the Friends, but suggested that the committee should consider how they could engage with and gain support from a younger audience which could also include school groups.

Paul Argent mentioned concerns over the proposed redevelopment of the Wansfell College site and the housing development on the land at St Margaret's Epping and hoped that the Friends would continue to be vigilant regarding planning issues and their impact on the Forest and its surroundings.

After the closure of the meeting and a break for coffee, Miles Barne, Chairman of the European Squirrel Initiative, gave an illustrated talk explaining what they hoped to achieve in the future. He mentioned that the last red squirrels had been recorded in Epping Forest about 50 years ago and that there were now very few localities where they were currently thriving and these colonies were under threat from the more competitive introduced grey squirrel and were likely to disappear within a couple of decades. With 90% of England and Wales now colonised by grey squirrels, the destruction caused to woodlands is well documented. Alarming they are now moving further northwards, carrying with them the deadly squirrelpox virus which infects red squirrels, although they appear immune to its effects.

Using comparative data Miles listed how much more damage was caused by grey squirrels as opposed to the native red squirrel. Culling grey squirrels took a great deal of effort and alternative techniques to prevent conception were being developed. The Organisation would be working with landowners to encourage the re-establishment of red squirrels after the eradication of the greys and he quoted the success of projects in various locations such as the one on Anglesey.

Red squirrels are present in suitable habitats across Europe, but he explained that the organisation was founded in 2002 following the escape of a small number of grey squirrels in northern Italy. He showed maps predicting the rapid colonisation of the surrounding area which provided the impetus for discussions with governments on how best to curtail the possible spread of grey squirrels into the European woodlands, orchards and vineyards.