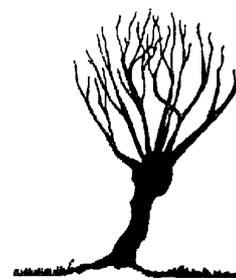


The Friends of Epping Forest *Newsletter*



March 1999

Dear Friend,

Although in the past I have from time to time been able to write with news of some fine addition to the Forest or the acquisition of some protective 'buffer land' - the news about the environment around the Forest is not always good.

Most readers will know that we have been very concerned, for a number of years, about developments within the green belt around the Forest - particularly in the High Beach area. In the past we have written to the Development Committee of the District Council and to the Conservators of the Forest about our concerns. Both have been aware of the problems. Like the Superintendent, we have frequently opposed Planning Applications we considered were detrimental to the Forest.

However, deterioration of the rural nature of the Forest's surrounding landscape has continued. Some months ago the Epping Forest Committee of the City of London (The Conservators) visited the High Beach area and were so dismayed to see the effects of some recent changes that they asked the Superintendent to report on the situation.

In January that Report came before the Committee. It considers the changes in the environs of the Forest that have occurred over a number of years, details measures taken to mitigate those effects, suggests additional protective measures that could be taken and propounds a prognosis for the future. It is an excellent report.

Having seen it, our Committee felt we should give wholehearted support to the suggestions and conclusions of the Report. Consequently we wrote to the Chairman of the Epping Forest Committee, conveying our congratulations and suggesting that the Committee might consider giving the Report a wide distribution.

The Report begins by illustrating the rural nature of the area in 1878 at the time of the passing of the Epping Forest Act. Mr Besant says, "The principal attraction of the Forest as a public open space has always been its informality and apparent naturalness ... a huge tract of seemingly wild countryside which offered ... the freedom and abundant fresh air of acres of grassy plains, heaths and open woodland."

He continues, "... the Forest is still able to give the Londoner a taste of the wildness and remoteness of a National Park. It can still provide an escape from the pressures of present day life through its apparent constancy and timelessness". He says this "Epping Forest Experience" has been much impaired of recent years and has become increasingly difficult to sustain and in the



West Ham in 1783, showing the smock mill and river wall, with a vessel in the creek

future will be even more threatened than in the past as development pressure grows. The diversity of the Forest's flora and fauna will also be threatened as this depends on, "... the complementary wildlife habitats of neighbouring countryside, and on keeping open wide corridors of rural land to the wider countryside beyond the Forest's immediate environs.

In the years between 1878 and now, the Forest has become like a green peninsular in a sea of grey urban development; it must never become just a green island. That is a major challenge for the new Millennium."

In summarising six decades, from the passing of the Epping Forest Act to the second World War, the Superintendent sees a dramatic change around the southern Forest from rural to urban, whilst the northern Forest remained well protected by agricultural land. However, in the following decades since 1940, although protected by the creation of the Metropolitan Green Belt, there are changes - detailed on maps - that have taken place that have compromised the rural surroundings of the northern Forest. As a consequent the Forest's natural aspect has been greatly impaired by the combined effects of roads, traffic, lighting, and signs etc. and permitted development.

Protection: The Superintendent sees three principal protective measures that have been taken.

Firstly, in part where Local Planning Authorities in their Development Plans have endeavoured to protect the Forest - but also by the scrutiny of these Plans, followed where necessary by representations.

Secondly, by scrutinising all Planning Applications and opposing those considered harmful to the Forest's environs.

Lastly, by the development of the Corporation's Buffer Land strategy.

In considering the future, Mr Besent sees the threats to the Forest's rural environment continuing, and, coming particularly from roads and traffic.

He suggests future protective measures should be:

1. Vigilance in influencing Local Development Plans and opposition to potentially damaging developments including road proposals prejudicial to the Forest's interests.
2. The Buffer Land Strategy should be used again whenever possible in future.
3. A Roads Strategy for the Forest be developed and agreed with several highway authorities.

He also suggests that some national recognition might be accorded to the Forest in terms of its status as a heritage site, as a nature reserve and its unique qualities as a public open space.

Finally he finishes thus; "The Forest is an extraordinary asset to London, arguably more so today than ever before, and this fact needs to be fully appreciated, especially by those bodies that have it within their power, either inadvertently to cause harm to the Forest, or to take steps to protect the Forest."

In our letter we gave particular support for the continuation, whenever possible, of the Buffer Land Strategy. That is, the acquisition of land around the Forest by the Corporation to protect it from future development and to broaden the base of support for the Forest's wildlife.

We also expressed our concerns about the landtake needed to meet housing requirements over a similar time span as the Superintendent's Report. For instance, Essex has to provide land for 111,000 housing units by the year 2016 - the comparable figure for London being 650,000. When such numbers are considered, the prospect for the future of Essex's countryside is not good.

Editor

Horseriding

In 1990 Parliament gave the Conservators power to regulate and license horseriding in the Forest. In due course a set of draft Byelaws was produced and presented to the Department of the Environment for approval via the Ranger. In the public consultation that followed a substantial number of people objected to the Byelaws. The Friends and fourteen other local groups wrote to the D of E in support of the proposals.

The D of E referred the Byelaws back to the Conservators to see if the proposals could be modified to accommodate the objectors' views.

In due course, a revised set of Byelaws was sent back to the D of E which reduced the cost of a licence from £40 to £30 per year, allowed the joint ownership of a horse of up to three people per licence, increased the cost of a licence from £40 to £50 in respect of riding stables and promised to keep the situation re mountain bikes under review.

This revised set of Byelaws has recently been sent by the D.E.T.R. (Dept. of the Environment, Transport and the Regions) to objectors to the original set for their comments if any.

The Friends, feeling that the Conservators have made every reasonable effort to meet the objections raised, and that the will of Parliament should prevail, have written to the D.E.T.R. indicating our support for the proposals and urging that the Secretary of State should approve them.

Editor

Millenium Blues

1.1.2000 will at one level be just another day and some people will doubtless look at it in that light. I suspect, however, that as the day nears, even the most cynical will get caught up a bit in the orgy of celebration, backward and forward looking and the magnitude of the sheer coincidence of being around on a millennium day. That's something that hasn't happened to an awful lot of very famous people!

So not wishing to see the Forest (which has already seen a good number of millennia) left out of the fun we have suggested to the Conservators a number of ways this might be done:

1. The planting of a Millennium Wood somewhere on the buffer land, the seedling trees to be planted by volunteers. You will come forward won't you?
2. The creation of a Millennium Pond somewhere on the western side of the Forest where there is a dearth of ponds.



3. The provision of a number of Millennium Seats to be placed at various viewpoints.
4. The establishment of a nursery of Epping Forest trees grown from seeds taken from the Forest itself thus ensuring an appropriate genetic inheritance. There is evidently a fairly widespread concern that many broad leaved woods now being planted under a variety of government supported schemes come from seedlings imported from abroad, many from eastern Europe.

We have also suggested that the noble oak standing in its own glade north of Connaught Water, presently called Grimston's Oak, should be re-named Bedford's Oak. It was in fact called Bedford's Oak at one time - before that it was called Cuckoo Oak - but for some reason, unknown to me it was re-named Grimston's after a cricketer who suggested the scrub around it should be cleared. Though Grimston was doubtless a worthy individual, Bedford's role in saving the Forest was absolutely pivotal. It was he who proposed to the City Corporation that they should promote a bill through Parliament making them owners and protectors of the Forest.

It would be a worthy Millennium project to apply the name of Bedford to perhaps the most notable tree of the Forest.

H. Bitten.

P.S. There is a possibility that the Coopersale Fields, now part of the Forest's buffer land and owned by the Corporation, could be a suitable site for a carefully designed Millennium

Wood.

The Fields cover about 33 acres and could accommodate woodland on about 20 acres.

The aim would be to leave wide grassy swathes around much of the perimeter and diagonally across the site.

Seedlings would be grown from acorns and other seed sources from the Forest itself, and brought on in a suitable probably buffer land location. Planting out would hopefully be done partly by volunteers!

Before this proposal could be progressed (as the jargon goes) we would obviously need to ensure that there was general approval of the idea particularly having regard to the views of local site users.

We would welcome a phone call or letter from you accordingly.

The Natural Aspect

I risk a charge of repetition to say, the two great requirements of the Epping Forest Act of 1878 are briefly, that the Forest shall be for the 'Recreation and Enjoyment of the Public' - in a place where - 'The Natural Aspect is Preserved'.

I think that the perceived need and intention behind those phrases is well described and summed-up in the Superintendent's recent report, quoted in the introduction to this Newsletter. There he calls ... "the seemingly wild countryside of Epping Forest, with its taste of wilderness, remoteness and timelessness; with a freedom and escape from stress for the Londoner" ... the 'Epping Forest Experience'.

What can that experience consist of in March? When writing in early February I must say it may still be one of squelching wetness! However, especially in the drier hilly northern Forest where it is a little easier to get away from the muddy footprints, the tyre-marks and the hoof-prints, the Forest will live up to its reputation of exhibiting beauty no matter what month of the year.

But maybe in March it is necessary to look just a little harder and closer to see it!

In the first months of the year the lower plants - the mosses, lichens and liverworts - are growing and well worth looking at. This is the time when these flowerless plants could be said to come into 'flower'. For they are now displaying their fruiting bodies; all with intricate and beautifully structured capsules that have ingenious ways of distributing their spores. Some by the breeze on warm dry days, others by the striking raindrops during showers. The fascination increases if you have a 5x or 10x magnifying lens (available from most good optical shops). These plants are growing on tree trunks, logs and banks as well as the ground - so those of us who find it difficult to get down (and up!) can still appreciate them. Even if you cannot do that, just look around! The trees are not merely dark skeletons. In the distance they are tinted with greens, greys, blues, purples and orange-yellows. The buds are swelling and discarding their scaly bud-cases - causing the trees to be smeared with those subtle and misty colours. The Birches are touched with red and purple, the Oaks with ginger, the grey Beeches with orange, and of course the Sallow or 'pussy' Willow with silver and then yellow. Butcher's Broom is now in flower. Look for the minute star shaped flowers under the 'leaves' that are really flattened thorns.

On a sunny day, with the snowy blackthorn in flower, the birds singing and the warm shiver of the sun on your back, surely the 'sap will rise' and the Forest's atmosphere

become electric. Sit in the sun under a great beech coppice stool and just think! All the coppiced clumps were there at least 200 years ago and many much longer. One giant clustered stool, that is just south of Blackweir pond - Jacob Epstein's 'Lost Pond', has recently been estimated by experts to be 900 to 1,000 years old! Maybe it was there before William of Normandy sailed across the Channel. Think of the Griselda's and Ethelred's, the Albert's and Amy's, and now perhaps, the Wayne's and Charlene's, that might have sat there or once passed that way to lop or coppice.



To me all that, is what I think the Superintendent calls, the 'Epping Forest Experience'.

Perhaps he may have coined a phrase!

Stop press

The latest issues of the RSPB magazine 'Birds' and the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) Newsletter have just arrived. Both emphasise the significance of the several bird censuses and surveys that in some cases have been running for two and three decades. The Government has now taken 'on board' the mass of scientific information that this research has produced and has placed 'the populations of birds' in eleventh place out of thirteen indicators of the 'Sustainability' or 'Quality of Life' -

A new statistical barometer of the state of the nation and the health of the environment.

One of the recent survey results shows that the fear of a sudden collapse in the House Martin population (Nov. Newsletter) has not happened, although there is still a serious long-term decline. Four thousand people responded to the survey - including some of our readers - and the survey will continue this spring and summer. So if you have House Martins nesting near you, fill in form! Obtainable from the RSPB. The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2DL.

One other interesting survey carried out by the Mammal Society is worth mentioning. There is an estimated domestic cat population of 800,000 in Britain. A survey of 964 cat owners gave the following results. Over one year the 964 cats killed 3,383 birds, over 6,000 voles and mice, 10 Grass snakes and 87 Slow Worms.

The total was over 14,000 prey items - an average of about 15 per cat. Cats with bells on their collars killed more than those without! Perhaps they were the best hunters and their owners felt the need to do something about their success - ineffectively.

Ken Hoy

John T Bedford - Member of the Corporation of the City of London.

At a recent Committee Meeting, Harry Bitten raised the question of "Grimstons Oak" that was once called "The Bedford Oak". He felt that John Bedford's efforts in saving the Forest towards the end of the last Century have been very much undervalued. He suggested that a hundred years later renaming the old Oak could rectify this. The Committee agreed and accordingly we wrote to The Superintendent, John Besent, who has agreed to research the role of John Bedford.

Recently I came upon a pamphlet (in my "archives" when moving house!) that is a reprint of a published Lecture given by John T Bedford entitled "The Story of the Preservation of Epping Forest". This Lecture was delivered on 24th July 1882 before the Members of the City of London Tradesmen's Club.

The pamphlet contains over thirty pages and it is an interesting account illustrating some of the problems, anxieties and apprehensions behind the struggle.

The booklet begins with a Note saying:

"As in May 1871, I took the first step, in the Court of Common Council, in commencement of the proceedings by the Corporation of London for the Preservation of Epping Forest, so today I attended at Old Palace Yard to witness their completion.

Sir Arthur Hobhouse, Q.C., the Arbitrator under the Epping Forest Act, had appointed today to sign his final awards and the official Map which determines for all time the boundaries of the Forest".

Following two speeches, John Bedford thanked the Arbitrator in the name of the Conservators, "for the undying patience and unvarying carefulness and courtesy which he had uniformly displayed ". He continued, "So ended one of the most interesting chapters in the whole varied history of the Corporation". Bedford's commitment is evident when he finishes by saying: -

"From May 1871, to July 1882, constitute more than eleven years, a large portion of a man's life during which to have constantly before him the attainment of a great object. I have been spared to see, in 1882, the accomplishment of what I commenced in 1871, and am thankful and grateful accordingly"

July 24th. 1882. J.T.B.

His key role becomes clear when later, in his lecture he recounts, albeit modestly, several incidents and events. However he begins the story thus:

"In April 1871, Mr Cowper Temple moved the following Resolution in the House of Commons: 'That it is the duty of the Government to preserve Epping Forest for the

recreation and enjoyment of the people' The motion was strongly opposed by

Mr Robert Lowe (later Viscount Sherbrook), the then Chancellor of the Exchequer". It was carried with a majority of over one hundred. Mr Bedford continues by quoting what the Chancellor smugly said publicly some time afterwards about the Resolution, "It was treated by the Government with contemptuous indifference"!

John Bedford goes on, "I read the debate the next morning; and Mr Cowper Temple's allusion to the City's good deeds first suggested to me the idea of endeavouring to preserve Epping Forest. I devoted about a fortnight to mastering all the facts of the case, and then gave my notice of motion to the Court of Common Council".

"On the 25th May, 1871, I proposed the following Resolution: 'That a Committee be appointed to seek a conference with Her Majesty's ministers, to ascertain on what terms and conditions the Corporation can secure to the people, for the purposes of public health and recreation, those parts of Epping Forest that have not been enclosed with the assent of the Crown or by legal authority".

John Bedford was evidently persuasive for the motion was carried unanimously. The Corporation of London had begun its fight!

However, he went on to explain that their interviews with members of the Government soon convinced them that they could expect nothing in the shape of assistance. So, "We at once resolved to try in the Court of Chancery the great question

of what were the rights of all persons concerned in the wastes of Epping Forest" A Bill was then ordered to be prepared and was placed on the file of the Court of Chancery on 14th August. 1871. They did not waste any time!

Next, to prevent further abuses of the Forest, they applied to the Lord Chancellor to obtain the revival of the Verderer's Court, which in the past had had charge of the Forest "but had latterly fallen into desuetude". At the meetings of the Court in September,"— we presented a long list of unlawful enclosures amounting to nearly 3,000 acres."

He recounts that about this time, when rambling through the Forest, "I came upon a fresh enclosure, in which was a large board fastened to a tree, stating that 'Trespassers would be prosecuted with the utmost vigour of the law.' As I knew it was in the manor of a certain reverend gentleman, I thought it seemed a nice Christian intimation; so I broke through the enclosure, sat under a tree, and wondered who was the trespasser. Upon being warned that, if I repeated the trespass I would be imprisoned, I offered to repeat that offence at any time that was appointed - but my offer was not accepted".



"Grimstons Oak"

Enclosures were occurring all over the Forest. The Corporation took out injunctions to prevent damage, and John Bedford says, “— in all which cases I had to attend and give my personal guarantee for the consequences if we failed.”

One of the injunctions was, “— against a man - caught red-handed as it were, plough-in-hand - breaking up what is called Bush Wood.” He had taken a lease on the whole wood at 30s. an acre. If ‘waste’ could be legally enclosed then it would be worth ten times its unenclosed value!

Mr. Bedford continues to tell of the obstructions, penalties imposed and pressures used against the Corporation by the Government. On one occasion “eighteen gentlemen of the bar” appeared against them!

In July 1872, “... we devoted five days to perambulating the Forest in company with the Epping Forest Commissioners. “We made quite an imposing display ... Mr Driver the Government Surveyor, led the way in his trap, accompanied by his clerk with his maps and plans. The Commissioners followed in their brake. Then came our two carriages, with the Committee and the City Solicitor with our maps and plans. Then followed a deputation of the Metropolitan Board of Works, accompanied by a learned Barrister, and on one occasion the rear was brought up by the Committee of the Epping Forest Fund Society on a four-horse drag.” (The latter was a body formed to raise money to support the Corporation.)

He continues, “In 1873, while preparations for our great case were progressing, we took action in no less than sixteen cases to protect the Forest from wilful damage in felling trees, digging gravel, etc., and in no less than nineteen other cases during the following year.”

At length, eventually based on the denial of their grazing rights over the whole Forest by the enclosures, “—in the summer of 1874 (June 29th) our great Chancery suit, which had taken three years to prepare, came for trial.” By then “One of the ablest and most brilliant judges, Sir George Jessel, succeeded to the position of Master of the Rolls”. No less than twenty-three days were devoted to the hearing. “I was present when on the 23rd November, 1874 he delivered his masterly and conclusive judgement - so masterly and conclusive it has never been appealed from!”

At this point in his lecture Bedford says, almost as an aside, “You will understand the ... large amount of interest I took in the case... when I tell you, I was informed that if we lost, our costs would be nearly £100,000.” (something like £10 million at today’s value) from this, “you may judge to some degree my anxiety!”

He goes on to say, “The hour occupied by the Master of the Rolls in delivering his judgement was to me one of the most interesting in my long life. All my anxiety was over, all my devotion to the great cause amply repaid; and it was with an amount of satisfaction difficult to thoroughly realise that I heard the Judge make use of these remarkable words: -” “These persons (The defendants - Lords of the Manors) have taken what did not belong to them, without the consent of the owners, and have applied it to their own purposes and have endeavoured to support their title by a large amount of false evidence.” Bedford says, “Seldom has such language been heard from the Bench, applied to men occupying such positions in society as the defendants in this case...it passed through my mind...what a fortunate thing it is for these *gentlemen* that this case was not tried by the Recorder at the Old Bailey!”

Later he says, “I have never seen any learned judge

show such towering indignation as Sir George Jessel displayed at this shameful proceeding”

The words of Sir George Jessel have often been quoted, but it is John Bedford’s words relating his own reaction that are interesting here.

John Bedford’s involvement is also shown when he explains the finances of the case. How, he says, he had many anxious conferences with the City Chamberlain after the Epping Forest Committee was first persuaded to go to Court back in 1871. How, “We hit upon the scheme we finally adopted.” In short, they offered to give up the City’s chartered right to *measure* all corn coming into the Port of London, producing £9,000 p.a., if Parliament would grant them a small tax (three-quarters of a farthing), for thirty years, on every hundredweight of foreign corn entering the Port. In one year this produced £24,000! Total legal costs of the case to the City were £257,000, but 5,600 acres of Epping Forest were saved and as Bedford himself says, “Never was money better spent”

He makes a further interesting point. Halfway through the case they were told, to their surprise, that even if they won, “the public would still have no legal right to enjoy the Forest.” However he then quotes Sir Wm. Harcourt, that, “No one had a legal right to go upon a common, but if he chose to go there no one had a legal right to turn him off!”

All of Epping Forest, of course, had been proved to be a common.

It is clear that John Bedford was deeply involved throughout the case, in fact he was the prime mover on the Epping Forest Committee. Sir William Addison mentions in his books the leading role of “the redoubtable Mr Deputy Bedford.” There is also a bust of the gentleman in the Temple, in Wanstead Park, but he is otherwise little known, and, although an Oak was named after him for a short period - it then became associated with a cricketer!

N.B. Some readers may wonder where the story of the Willingales fits into the picture.

Tom Willingale and family members took their ‘direct action’ in November 1865 & 1866. That, and the public outcry that followed, no doubt contributed to the moving of the motion in the House of Commons in April 1871. John Bedford’s story is how the Corporation of London subsequently became involved. We should also remember that many others, such as the Buxton family and the Commons Preservation Soc., supported John Bedford in his endeavours.

Ken Hoy

M11 Link Road

As you may be aware, after 37 years of battle the M11 Link Road will be opening this summer. The W.F. Civic Society has no intention of joining any ‘official celebration’ but feel that it would like to get together with other protest groups to mark the occasion in some way. They have written to the ‘Friends’ (as founder members of the Link Road Action Group) to see if we would be interested in such an event and if so what form should it take. They have numerous documents, slides and videos which could be displayed, and as the road is likely to open in the summer, an open air event could be considered.

We discussed this in our January Committee and we were unanimous in not wanting to be part of the ‘official’ opening, but like the idea of an alternative ceremony - a ‘wake’ was suggested - maybe in a nearby pub!

Ed.

Extract from the Epping Forest Work Programme 1999/2000

Maiden pollarding - Maiden pollarding would be undertaken in the following compartments:

Lower Forest 'cross-roads', Rushey Plain glades, Deershelter Plain south (Beech & Oak), Great Monk Wood at Court Hill (around Zygodon areas), Kate's Cellar (around wild service), Green, Ash and Grimston's Oak rides as part of rideside widening, Warren Hill - Beech & Oak around the heath.

Clearance around overstood pollards - Clearance work to allow more light to overstood veteran pollards would be undertaken in the following compartments:

Rushey Plain, Kate's Cellar, Loughton Brook (slopes above the brook), Long Hills, Warren Hill.

Group repollarding - Group repollarding of veteran Hornbeams would be carried out in the following compartments:

Lower Forest (along Stump Road and NE-SW ride - about 30 in total), Rushey Plain (Hornbeams in small groups, 15-20 in total), Bury Wood (Woodman's Glade & Boundary Ride - about 50 in total), Bury Wood-Long Hills (near Fairmead/Palmer's Bridge, about 25), Walthamstow Forest (about 25 Hornbeams).

Streamside/linear repollarding - Streamside repollarding would be carried out in the following compartments:

Loughton Brook, Suntrap Stream, The Ching.

Re-cutting Oak pollards - Summer and winter cutting of around 20 trees would be undertaken in various compartments including the following:

Taylor's Ride, Barn Hoppitt
(to coincide with safety work).

Re-cutting veteran beeches - A handful of suitable Beeches would be located and after careful consideration tackled.

Secondary woodland high forest - Thinning would be carried out at the Warren Plantation and Epping Plain.

Deer glade maintenance - Existing glades in the following locations would be maintained:

Epping Thicks (1 glade), Wormleyton Pits (2 glades), Galleyhill Wood (2 glades).

Mowing wood pasture - Repollarded areas (including Bury Wood and Walthamstow Forest) would be mown as necessary.

Pheromone traps - Gypsy Moth control would be carried out in Walthamstow Forest.

Control Sycamore / Turkey Oak - Sycamore and Turkey Oak would be continued to be removed from the following compartments:

Powell's Forest (20+ large Sycamores next to 1998 pollards), Warren Hill (brought forward from 2002 - mainly small Sycamore & Norway Maple), The Sale - year 3 of clearance as planned.

Wanstead / Leyton Flats - Commoners' grazing - Further attempts would be made to encourage the 4 existing commoners to re-start their grazing.

Heathland Grazing - Grazing at Long Running would continue.

Fernhills grazing - Grazing would be re-introduced to Fernhills.

Grassland mowing - This programme would be carried along the lines of the 5 year Grassland Mowing Action Plan although it is heavily weather dependent. At present mowing by mini system is in its infancy and may require some revision in the light of experience. A contractor will be engaged for hay cutting.

Restore heaths - Heaths would be restored by the clearance of Birch/Oak secondary woodland on the following sites:

Long Running (west), Long Running (east), Rushey/Wake Plain, Deershelter Plain, Clay Road / Sandpit Plain, Warren Hill.

Stump grinding of Birch and Oak stumps is likely to be

one of the most important tasks this year to allow cutting with mini-system or Rytech.



Fairmead Bottom

Restore grasslands - Grasslands would be restored by clearance of scrub and secondary woodland on the following sites:

Bell Common, Theydon Plain, Sewardstone Green, Pear-Tree Plain, Yardley Hill, Pole Hill, Chingford Golf Course, Barn Hoppitt, Woodford Golf Course.

Maintain heaths by hand - Sunshine Plain would be maintained after restoration.

This area needs an urgent review as it is declining rapidly. Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers task planned for 18/4/99. Options for further scrapes and use of minisystem need exploring. Sensitive hydrology needs to be noted.

Bracken crushing - If the trials with the machinery go well including demonstration by Burnhani Beeches staff, sites including the following would be managed:

Long Running, Copley Plain, Clay Road, Furze Ground.

Bracken spraying - Bracken spraying by specialist contractor would be undertaken at Deershelter Plain and Long Running.

Heathland scrapes - *Molinia* tussocks would be removed from within the grazed area at Long Running. Bracken litter would be removed and uneven scrapes would be made across parts of each:

Long Running (east) and Deershelter Plain (west).

Open Streambanks - Vegetation, particularly scrub, would be cleared/coppiced back from along the following streambanks:

Suntrap Stream, Cuckoo Brook, The Ching.

Wanstead Park - Further consolidation works would be carried out to the Grotto and restoration to the banks of the Ornamental Waters. The Bund would be cut for hay, areas of scrub would be removed from grassland and secondary woodland would be thinned.

Woodland glades - Secondary woodland and scrub infill in or adjacent to ancient woodland areas would be cleared by Forest staff to create glades at the following locations:

Old Church Plain, Ludgate Plain, Hatch Forest.

In addition, EFCV and EFCT would work on a number of smaller sites as per the Management Plan.

Widen ridesides - Encroaching vegetation on a number of horsesides would be cut back including Debden Green Bridleway and Bury Wood rides.

Scrub management - Scrub would be managed in a rotation at locations as per the Management Plan including the following:

Gas Ride east (other side from 1998/99 block), Connaught Water - area between Ash Ride and Red Path, Warren Hill Fields - EFCV/EFCT task, Warren Wood slopes - area near to 1998/99 block.

Gorse cutting - Rotational Gorse cutting by Forest staff would be undertaken at the following sites as necessary:

Wanstead Flats, Leyton Flats, Woodford Golf Course, Chingford Golf Course, Theydon Road.

In addition, EFCT and EFCV would carry out Gorse cutting at various smaller sites as per the Management Plan.

Wild Service/ Crab Apple protection - Scrub would be cleared from around trees which are being overshadowed.

Magpies would be culled on the Forest in order to reduce numbers during the songbird breeding season.

Walks

Friday 22nd January was a bright sunny day and some twenty members met in the Lodge Rd. car park at 10-30 am. Lodge road, (the old road to Copped Hall gates) readers will remember, has been closed for some two or more years - we hope it will remain closed permanently. It is now pleasant to use, as it is no longer necessary to constantly 'look-out' for cars. This is in marked contrast to the Copped Hall drive now well frequented by cars!

Lodge road - the 'dippidy-dip' road to the locals of Upshire - on this Friday was flooded by the overflow from one of the two boggy ponds.

We paused to consider the strange significance of the first of these bogs.

The story is worth telling in some detail!

As one walks towards the Copped Hall gates, with the two bogs on the right, both valleys to the left are comparatively deep. After a moment's thought it is obvious that the road forms a dam across the two valleys that has in fact caused the bogs to form by blocking the drainage down the valleys. During the 1970's two geographers from King's College, London and Paul Moxey for the Epping Forest Conservation Centre investigated in detail the sediment of one of the bogs.

Several boreholes were made and the maximum depth of sediment was found to be almost 8 feet (240 mm). The bottom was eventually carbon dated to 2,340 BC - Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. Thus the road, perhaps by far the oldest road in the district, was probably a trackway well over 4,000 years ago. Ah, we might say - Ambresbury Banks is just a little way across the road. But the archaeological evidence from that ancient hill fort places its date between 800 BC to 300 BC - Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age. We can speculate - perhaps it is a much older site (but no evidence!). Or, surely an ancient ridgeway ran through here? To Grimes Graves, the famous Norfolk Neolithic flint mines? Who knows?

However the story did not end there. Tree and plant pollens were extracted from the mud deposits at various depths - to establish the vegetation at different times in the age of the bog. The deeper deposits being the oldest of course. The lower mud cores contained pollen of the Small-leaved Lime, a tree that at one time grew widespread over most of lowland England but that had 'disappeared' from the pollen records of all other investigated bog sites in western Europe over 2,000 years ago.

The deposits from the Lodge road bogs showed that the Small-leaved Lime still existed in Epping Forest nearly a 1,000 years later than elsewhere! Also, in the Forest, it had an exceptionally high dominance over other tree pollens - Lime constituted 86% of the tree pollen when the bog was formed, and later reached a maximum of 95% (when all the figures were corrected for the difference between insect or wind distributed pollens).

The decline of Lime pollen in the Forest bog record was a relatively sudden decline during two short periods around AD 600 and AD 840. The first coincides with the main Saxon settlement of the Roding and Lea Valleys when population expansion and cattle grazing of the forest ridge was probably occurring. The second and final sudden decline of Lime pollen (down to below 10%) could be associated with the social disturbances of the Danish invasions and settlement in Essex. Then the wooded ridge may have provided seclusion from conflict in the valleys.

Soon after there is an almost complete absence of Lime pollen in the deposits, it appears there was a sharp increase in Birch pollen and then Oak. Later mostly Beech with some Oak and Hornbeam replaced the Lime completely.

In other words a similar community of species was established as we have today, but apparently (at least around Lodge road) this only happened some 1,000 years ago!

Fascinating evidence of the Forest's history from two quite small bogs.

Maybe, if the present road is closed, it will be possible to have an archaeological investigation to establish the nature of the deep foundations of the road where it dams the valley. Other ancient roads or causeways on wet swampy land have had branches laid to form their base.



We continued up the valley until we could safely cross. Then proceeded through the old coppiced and pollarded Beech woodland until we were able to cross Crown Hill road and enter the Warren plantation - once part of Copped Hall Park.

The Corporation of London added the 107 acres of the plantation to the Forest in July 1992, after the purchase of nearly 800 acres of Copped Hall estate (the remaining acreage is Buffer land).

We remembered a previous Friday walk in November 1992, when the late Peter Burman led us around the Warren Plantation. On that frosty morning Peter identified over 40 different species of trees for us. This time we tried to remember a few of the conifers he had showed to us. We walked through roar of M25 traffic over the motorway bridge to the Mansion. Admiring the views over the landscape the party then crossed the field to the Selvage - now also part of the Forest - and looking for deer tracks passed under the M25, through the tunnel. The Selvage footpath must have been too wet of the deer - it was certainly so 'sloshy' it made walking difficult for human feet. We then passed through the footpath 'side gate' by the two lodges - it often needs a heavy shoulder charge to open it. Crossing Crown Hill again we noted that once again the footpath sign had 'disappeared' from the roadside! Finally the car park appeared and the distance covered? - no more than a gentle, but interesting, three and a half miles!

Ken Hoy

Members Letters

Butlers Pond: Michael Faraway writes about the pond beside Butlers Retreat - mentioned in the Nov. Newsletter. He recalls arriving on the scene after a V-2 rocket fell on the pond. He says:

“My recollection is of an inverted cone shaped hole, that subsequently filled with water. When I arrived (together with many other boys) you could still smell the explosive. The roof of Butlers Retreat was covered with earth and turf as was that of the Hunting Lodge. All the leaves and branches of the surrounding trees had been stripped off. At first sight it was a scene of desolation. But things were not as bad as they seemed. The weather had been very wet and the soil was very soft. The rocket had penetrated deep into the soil so that the blast was upward rather than outwards, thus saving Butlers Retreat and the Hunting Lodge from demolition”.

Mr Faraway was nine at the time and does not remember whether there was a pond there before the rocket or not.

By strange coincidence Bill Dexter (member of our Committee), recalls the incident too. At the time he was also nine and over a mile away in Organ Lane. He happened to be looking at the sky towards the Northeast. When, he says, “I saw a glinting flash, fairly high in the sky, followed by a little puff of smoke. A few seconds later I heard the bang”. (It would have taken a few seconds for the sound to travel over a mile!) Bill cannot explain further what he actually saw. But later he too remembers seeing the crater. In the book ‘Chingford at War’ of which Bill has a copy, it says that a Long-range Rocket fell near Butlers Retreat at 12 noon on 22nd October 1944. That was the first V-2 to fall on the Borough. Fortunately no one was hurt other than minor injuries from flying glass, although a large piece of the exploding rocket was thrown half a mile away to drop through the roof of 40 Connaught Ave. This lump of metal was still too hot to handle over an hour later!

Part of a map from the book, which we print below, shows the crater made by the rocket, also the “dump” of unexploded bombs that existed for some time in the NE corner of Chingford Plain. The map also indicates where two “Flying Bombs” fell - one on the eastern end of the Plain and the other farther west in Hawk Wood.

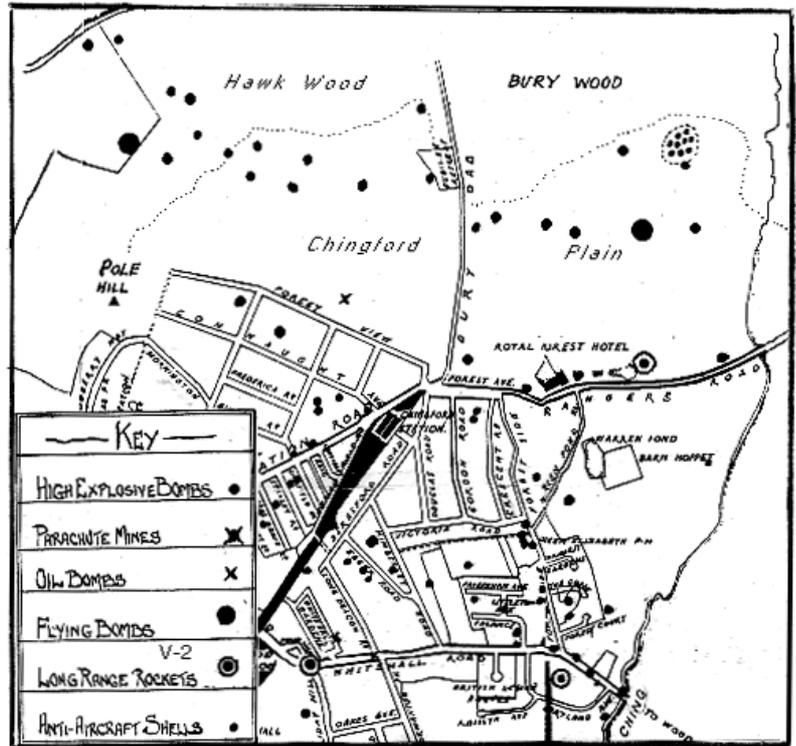
Also shown are a surprising number of high explosive bombs.

Today the shape of the pond has a large bulge in the NE corner.

The pond itself is shown on more than one map before the first war - including an O.S. map surveyed sometime between 1892 and 1895. However it is not illustrated on Buxton’s map (pub.1885). This is strange - because Dr Alwyn Wheeler in a recent paper (pub. London Naturalist) states that the pond is mentioned in the Epping Forest Committee Minutes in 1878 and 1882. In the first case as a potential source for gravel and four years later as being, “cleaned out and improved”. In 1910-11 work was carried out to adapt it for paddling.

The fact that Buxton does not show the pond may be because at that time it was too small or shallow. Buxton does show the ‘new’ Rangers Road.

Dr. Wheeler goes on to say, “A German V-2 rocket fell just beside the eastern edge of this pond. The point of



impact was just on the extremity of the gravel and the crater was in the clay. This filled up with water quickly. Since the War the level in the pond has been unstable.”

I can recall seeing the pond containing water before the War and during the early 1940’s. We can only speculate about the use of the gravel. Dr Wheeler suggests it may have been used to surface the surrounds of the Retreat, or, for mixing concrete when the Royal Forest Hotel was built in 1878 - although a request for this latter purpose seems to have been rejected by the Committee. There is no mention of gravel being used to surface Rangers Road, although that could have happened.

House Martins and “Cooks Folly”: Mention of nesting House Martins in the Nov. Newsletter prompted Mrs. Cecily Redwood to write from Ashford, Kent, reporting that the House Martins that have nested under the eaves of her house for several years arrived as usual in 1998, but disappeared when the cold weather occurred. However they returned later to breed successfully. Presumably they left to find a reliable source of insect food elsewhere and thereby survived the cold spell.

Mrs Redwood, who was born in Chingford and had relatives living near Forest Rd., Walthamstow, also queries the house called “Cooks Folly” (Nov. Newsletter).

She points out that the house called Cook’s Folly is marked on Buxton’s map (1885) near the line of a “proposed new North Circular Rd.” where it would join Hagger Lane, now Forest Road. (The southern end of the line of the new road was not followed towards the Rising Sun PH.)

Another reader, Ian Payling also points out my mistake in the last Newsletter. Ian writes, “Cooks Folly was a name given to Belle Vue House built by Charles Cook(e), a millionaire publisher about 1810. He died only a few years later in 1816. The House was demolished in 1935. It was situated adjacent to where Belle Vue Rd. is now, between Beacontree Road and Hale End Rd. The house in Sky Peals Rd., also demolished about 1935, was actually called Sky Peals House” and built in the second half of the 19th Century. (This is the house I mistakenly referred to as

“Cooks Folly”, KH.) Ian continues, “In 1900 it was bought by a couple called Harris and Polly Ruda. It became a ruin and I remember firemen putting out a fire a few years before its final demolition.” Ian’s own house in Sky Peals Rd., built in 1936 is next to the boundary wall of the old House and his and neighbouring gardens still contain ancient fruit trees that are relics of the old orchard.

It is strange that the name “Cook’s Folly”, referring to the woodland of Walthamstow forest, should have been so widely used locally in the 19th and early 20th Centuries. Also that Buxton called Belle Vue House, “Cooks Folly.” A local ‘nickname’ ?

Ian Payling also provides information about boating on Bulrush Pond, near the Rising Sun PH. He says, “The ‘paddle’ and rowing boats were still for hire ... in the early sixties, our two eldest sons used to have rides on them!”

Several members also remember the “Chinese Garden” at the end of Sunset Ave. Woodford Green. It must have been a very popular attraction.

Ken Hoy

Letter from John Harvey

On Saturday last we received a visit at noon from a large injured fox, unable to use one of its forelegs. It drank copiously from the fishpond and then rested for a while on the lawn.

I telephoned the local RPCA as a result of which we were visited by Ian and Barbara of Thurrock Wildlife Concern. The fox was eventually located in the neighbouring garden but eluded all attempts at capture so that the activities were abandoned by 3 pm. We have reason to believe that the fox is still around. You may know of the Thurrock Wildlife Concern but I enclose a leaflet they left with me just in case this is of any interest to the Friends. It appears that Barbara is something of a hedgehog expert.

John E Harvey

(member and Retired Senior Verderer)

THURROCK WILDLIFE CONCERN WILDLIFE REHABILITATION AND ADVICE CHARITY

84 BANKFOOT, BADGERS DENE, GRAYS, ESSEX. RM17 5AJ
24 HOUR TELEPHONE: 01375-378516

Barbara and Ian 0181 478 5394

In recent years the wildlife habitat of Thurrock and surrounding areas has been subjected to immense change. With industrial and residential development, road and rail building, the local wildlife is finding the task of survival more and more difficult. With food supplies diminishing and hazards increasing, ever expanding numbers of animals are found needing our help.

Many of our patients are brought into care having been orphaned through sickness, injury or homelessness.

THURROCK WILDLIFE CONCERN is a purely voluntary organisation funded solely by public donations. We strive to maintain our much needed work to the best of our ability, in spite of these limitations.

Great care and consideration is given to relocating all animals when they are fit and well enough to be returned to the wild where they belong.

Please help support our aim of providing a caring and competent rescue service catering for the urgent needs that exist within the wildlife community.

Forest Supper

The Forest Supper in November was a success socially but less so financially.

The message appears to be that in previous years Denis Chasney - being a Friend himself - gave us a substantial discount in doing the catering. Come back Denis!

Overall we had a shortfall of about £40 but this level of loss was only made possible by three factors:

1. The tremendous generosity of all who donated raffle prizes.
2. The awe inspiring commitment and dedication of the raffle ticket sellers.
3. The inability of all members to withstand the sales onslaught from 2. to such an extent that almost £500 worth of tickets were sold - wow!

1998 Raffle Prizes received from:

Ron Wortley, Mr. & Mrs. Taylor, Denis Chasney, Beverley Tankard (Bargain Books), Peter Kulba, Lady Joan Ellis, Ron and Edna Budd, Pat Bishop, Pat Fearn, Mr. & Mrs. H. Edler, Mr. & Mrs. A. Oliver, Mr. & Mrs. J. Besent, Jean Smith, Vera Templeman, Joan Stowers, Pat Gunn, Mr. & Mrs. Kunzru, The Misses Anslow, Mr. & Mrs. A. Good, Mr. & Mrs. Harry Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Humphreys, C. Gimson, Georgina Green, Taylors Restaurant, Barbara Blossom, Eric Dormer, Josie Boulton, Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Wisenfeld, Sheila Hobbs, Mr. & Mrs. French, Joan De Barr, Alan Brayfield, Michael Davies, Dorothy Friedman, Maggie Charles, Mr. & Mrs. Perry, Mr. P & Mrs. T Adams, Vera Higginson, Denis Moss, Erica Jackson, Joan Stowers, Sid Harris, Mr. & Mrs. J. Harvey, John Holtom, Jean Green, Mr. & Mrs. Johnson, Lord & Lady Murray, Mr. & Mrs. Harold Royd, Mr. & Mrs. Moxey. A tea cloth and Strawberry basket of stationery were left without name.

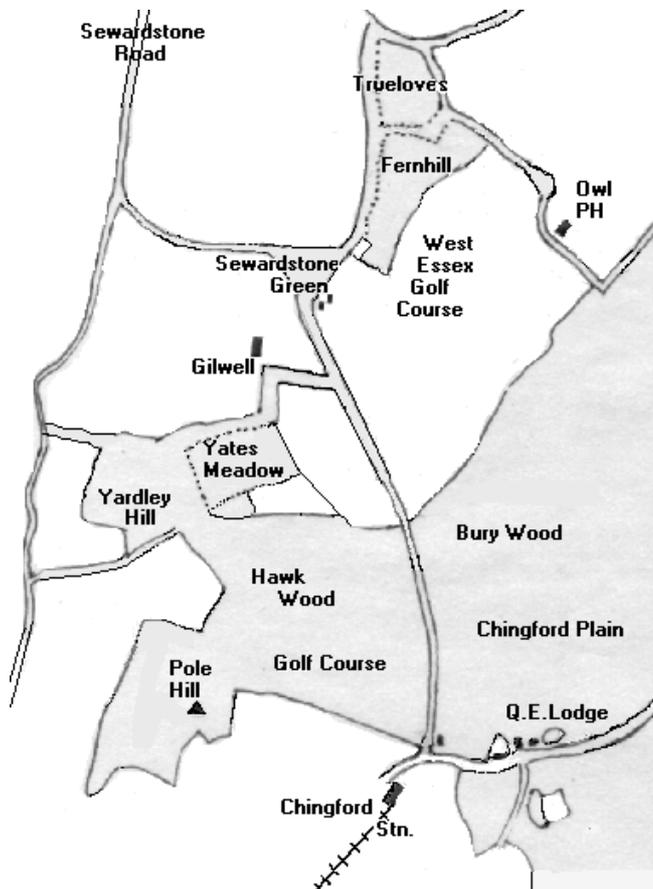
HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE FOREST?

No. 3.

The places dealt with this time are mostly west or north of the Bury Road that runs across Chingford Plain. Several of these places have been added to the Forest since the Act of 1878 was passed to conserve the Forest.

Hawk Wood is another name that has ‘moved’ slightly. Buxton’s map (1882) restricted the name Hawk Wood to the woodland around and just east of Pole Hill. Other old maps show Hawk Wood where now we call the woodland, Bury Wood. However, Hawk Wood today applies to the woodland from Pole Hill eastwards as far as the Bury Road that crosses Chingford Plain. This road was an old forest track to Sewardstonebury. It led past Hawkwood Farm renamed ‘Jubilee Retreat’ after Queen Victoria’s 1887 Jubilee, by which time the farm was a ‘Retreat’ providing refreshments. The Corporation of the City of London had acquired it in 1880. Hawkwood House was situated in the valley between Pole Hill and Yardley Hill and was demolished soon after the Second World War. All that remains today is the Lodge to the old House that is now one of Waltham Forest’s Field Study Centres. Another farm near the western end of Davis’s Lane, an older name for Yardley Lane, was called Hawksmouth Farm. Today the name Hawksmouth is sometimes applied to the gap on the ridge between the two areas of woodland comprising Hawk Wood. From there a narrow plain runs northwards down into the valley at the bottom of Yardley Hill. This is called locally, Daisy Plain.

Pole Hill: is perhaps the most well known hill in the



Forest. It is the subject of a locally common myth that it is "the highest point in Essex". It is 299 feet or 91 m. above sea level. But High Beach Church is 360 feet or 110 m. and Ambresbury Banks over 380 feet or 118 m.! However it is justifiably famous because the line of zero longitude - the Greenwich Meridian - passes through it, as also of course it does through Walthamstow and Leyton, but on Pole Hill it is marked by an Obelisk that was the 'North' sighting point for the Greenwich Observatory telescope. Therefore, if you visit it, you can step from the Eastern into the Western Hemisphere! A plaque on the Obelisk gives interesting details.

From the mid-nineteenth century until 1930 a large brickfield (now built over) existed to the southwest and clay from that side of the hill was excavated for the bricks. It is well known locally that Lawrence of Arabia purchased several small plots of land on the top of the hill and built a hut and swimming pool there and was a frequent visitor. In 1930 the Corporation acquired the land from Lawrence and the top and southern side of the hill were added to the north slope, which had been part of the Forest since 1878. Lawrence's timber hut was demolished, renovated and re-erected at The Warren, The Epping Forest Office and HQ. If you have not been to Pole Hill, go! - The view from the top is very fine!

Yardley Hill: is the hill to the north of Pole Hill and is virtually the most westerly point of the Forest. It is not as high as Pole Hill; just 218 feet or 67 m. which means it is some 170 feet or over 50 m. above the floor of the Lea Valley thus also providing fine views across the valley to the south-west and west. In the past such views were possible right round to the north but the growth of trees and bushes now prevent this. Yardley Hill was added to the Forest in 1899 when much of it was grazed fields. Much of the scrub now growing on the eastern half was cleared about two decades ago but it has now regrown and it is intended in future to clear such bushy areas

periodically and in rotation. Such scrub is a valuable source of pollen and nectar for insects and thus indirectly for birds. The hill is significant as it is said to be the most southerly point reached by the ice sheet of the last Ice Age. It is capped by remnants of the Chalky Boulder Clay that is the typical deposit left behind by the ice that originally covered a lot of Essex. This more calcareous soil is why the hill has a richer flora than much of the Forest's London Clay grasslands. Among the plants growing there, is the wild clematis - Oldman's Beard or Traveller's Joy. This climber is a good indicator of the presence of Chalky Boulder clay whenever you see it scrambling over Essex hedgerows.

Yates' Meadow is a new name for twenty-five acres of the eastern part of the ridge that is Yardley Hill, that were acquired by The Conservators in 1983 and incorporated into the Forest and named after the previous and Late Chairman of the Epping Forest Committee. Previously it was two fields and at some time in the sixties was ploughed and grew a cereal crop. Since then it has returned to grassland producing hay. Like the western part of the hill, the meadow has a relatively rich flora due to the capping of Chalky Boulder Clay. Future management by the Conservators will aim to enrich further the area's hay meadow flora. In recent years this management policy has been comparatively successful. If viewed from Daisy Plain in certain lights the unevenness of the slope due to old land slippage can often be seen. The last of these occurred during the thaw following the frozen winter of early 1963. From the NW corner very fine views of distant London can be obtained, but take binoculars! Go there on a clear day in May or June when meadow flowers are best.

Gilwell Lane adjoins the northern edge of Yates' Meadow and is an ancient lane running along the top of the scarp, above the meadow. It continues, down behind Yardley Hill to the Sewardstone Road. Originally it was probably a driftway or drove road to reach the water meadows of the Lea marshes or in the opposite direction for commoner's access into the Forest. Its boundary is marked by an old earth bank and as with many other green lanes and roadside verges was designated to remain 'common land' and become part of Epping Forest by the Act of 1878.

Sewardstone Green is possibly thought by many people to be as just the triangular green by Carroll's farm on the Bury Road, however it is really a 'long green' that extends back along the Bury Road, past the entrance to Gilwell, to Bury Farm. Originally it would have continued as a 'drove road' with wide verges running south into the Forest. Buxton, in his well known guide book, describes what we call the Bury Road as "the Bury Path, an *old forest* way from Chingford to Sewardstone, which has recently been gravelled" (in 1883)



Carroll's Farm

The Green Lane as it is confusingly called, is one of several green lanes or drove roads around the Forest. This one runs northwards from the Northeast corner of Sewardstone Green down to the lower part of Motts Street. It borders Fernhills and Trueloves, and like the other lanes was an ancient highway that did not become a road

Blind Lane is the short green lane that branches off The Green Lane northeastwards until it joins the Forest verges of Lippits Hill. The Blind Lane separates Trueloves from Fernhills. Like most ancient lanes and hedgerows it is quite rich in tree species.

Fernhills was purchased and its 31 acres added to the Forest in July 1997. It consisted of several fields and includes the relic of a piece of ancient woodland. This originally was quite a large wood, called Fernhill Wood, and is shown on the Chapman-Andre map (surveyed in 1773). Unfortunately most of it was felled in 1957, permission being granted on condition that it was replanted - that never happened. In the 1960's and 70's it was grazed by horses.

The 'new' Fernhills slopes down from the edge of the West Essex Golf Course to the two green lanes previously mentioned and from its top can be obtained one of the finest views in the Forest area. June is a good time to visit Fernhills when its rich flora is well displayed. Some of the invading scrub has been removed and it is hoped a light grazing policy, now that the area is fenced, will encourage the grassland flora.

Trueloves was two fields totalling some 24 acres, bounded on the west and south by The Green Lane and Blind Lane. It has Mott Street and Lippits Hill to the north and east. The City of London purchased it in June 1994 with some additional land north of Mott Street, which has been retained as Buffer Land. In Sept. 1994 Trueloves was dedicated as part of Epping Forest. It had been arable until the early 1990's and then was for a time in 'set-aside'. Originally the Conservators intended allowing the area to slowly revert to woodland as trees and scrub spread in from the hedgerows. Currently there is discussion and a recommendation that it should be fenced and retained as grazed grassland. Over the last five years, since 'set-aside', it has begun to develop during transition, a richer grassland flora. It forms, with Fern Hills and the old green lanes, a new block of Forest land (over 60 acres) linked by the Forest verges of Lippits Hill and the Bury Road to the rest of Epping Forest.

Ken Hoy

Planning decisions

(to which we have objected - except 6)

1. The Grange, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey:- to build a 2-storey hotel - approved.
2. Beechoak Farm, Church Road, High Beach:- change of use of agricultural building to educational purposes - refused (gone to appeal).
3. Garden Cottage, Lippitts Hill: conversion of existing bungalow to a 2-storey dwelling - refused.
4. Lower Lodge Farm, Long Street, Upshire:- conversion of barn to dwelling - refused.
5. Forest (Fairheads) Nursery, Nursery Road, Loughton: erection of agricultural building - refused.
6. Forest Lawn, Hollybush Hill, Snaresbrook, erection of single dwelling - refused (gone to appeal).

Sightings

On a bright but cold February morning, we went for a short stroll in Hawk Wood and saw a party of Long-tailed tits (with Great and Blue tits), 3 Treecreepers, 2 Goldcrests

and heard 2 Greater-spotted woodpeckers knocking, and several Green Woodpeckers calling. On the way back we saw flurries of Greenfinches, Chaffinches and Bramblings, all in addition to the usual tally of Blackbirds, Thrushes, Jays, Magpies, Squirrels etc. (but no sign of Nuthatches).

Blackthorn was showing a dusting of white blossom at Highams Park on February 1st - is this a record?

Hope to see you at the A.G.M.

Peggy Bitten

Dates for your Diary

March 26th Friday 2.00 pm

Over the hills! An afternoon walk around Pole and Yardley Hills, Meet in the Bury Road, Chingford car park (at the Bury Wood end).

Leader: Irene Buchan GR 394 951

April 25th Sunday 2.00 pm

A longer than usual walk i.e. up to 3 hours, through Gernon Bushes and Ongar Park Wood. Meet in the Woodyard car park off the Epping/North Weald Road (B181).

Leader: Harry Bitten GR 472 031

The Friends of Epping Forest A.G.M.

Monday 26th April 1999 at the Sir James Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green at 7.30pm. Agenda attached.

May 21st Friday 10.00 am

A walk from Connaught Water through to the western edge of the Forest and over footpaths to look at some of the new land added to the Forest. Meet in the Connaught Water car park on Rangers Road, Chingford B1069).

Leader: Ken Hoy GR 404 952

June 26th Saturday 7.30 pm

A midsummer evening stroll along part of the meridian line from Pole Hill. Bring your compass and binoculars and take in the view. Meet at the junction of Eglington Road and Forest View, Chingford.

Leader: Peter Read GR 388 949

July 25th Sunday 10.30 am

A walk around Walthamstow Forest and Mill Plain taking a closer look at the natural history of the Oak Hill area. Meet in Forest Drive, off Oak Hill, Woodford Green.

Leader: Peter Adams. GR 392 914

August 19th Thursday 10.00 am

A descending linear walk through some of the out-lying parts of Epping Forest situated along the Lea Valley escarpment, taking in Epping Long Green, Galley Hill Green and Clapgate Lane. Meet in the Cornmill Meadows car park in the Lea Valley Regional Park (the first car park on the left along the Crooked Mile (B194) from Waltham Abbey). Some cars will then transfer walkers to the start.

Leader: Harry Bitten GR 384 016

September 26th Sunday 9.00 am - 5.30 pm

Centenary Walk. An all-day walk through the length of Epping Forest from Manor Park in the south to Epping Town in the north; passing through Wanstead Flats, Leyton Flats, Walthamstow Forest, Highams Park, Chingford and High Beach. Details nearer the time from 0181 529 8594. Meet at the junction of Capel Road and Forest Drive, Manor Park.

Leader: Harry Bitten GR 419 860

Public transport is a problem for some of these walks, so if anyone would require a lift, please contact 0181 529 8594 for help.

**Advance notice of the Forest Supper
26th November 1999**

Other Dates

Epping Forest Information & Museum Service, High Beach.

Forest Festival at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge
June 27th Sunday 12 - 4

Again the aim of this Festival is to celebrate the long history of the Forest and give visitors an opportunity of finding out how the Forest is managed today. It is hoped that a range of crafts, exhibits and displays covering both the historical aspects and practical management will provide an interesting day out in Epping Forest.

Walks

Sunday 14 March 10.30am, 2-1/2 hrs

AMBRESBURY BANKS AND NON INTERVENTION

Meet in Jacks Hill Car Park, off A121

Leader: Bill Humphreys. GR435 996

Sunday 11 April 10:30, 2-1/2 hrs

EPPING FOREST - THE BIG VIEW

Leader: Jeremy Wisenfeld Meet at Epping Forest Information Centre High Beach GR 412 982

Sunday 18 April 12.00

A launch of the 18th section of the London Loop (Enfield to Chingford). This is being organised by the London Walking Forum and the main event will take place on Chingford Plain. Details will be available shortly so any one interested should contact the Information Centre for details.

Sunday 9 May 10.30 am

THROUGH THE WARREN PLANTATION

Leader: Ian Cox. Meet at the entrance gates to Copped Hall Park off Crown Hill, Upshire (GR 431 005). Cars can be parked in car park in Lodge Road off B 1393

Friday 21 May

SEARCHING FOR NIGHTINGALES

Leader Dr. Jeremy Dagley. Meet in Connaught Water Car Park off Rangers Road, Chingford E4 at 7.15 pm

Thursday 27 May

May Paul's Nursery Revisited Leader: Paul Moxey. Meet at the Epping Forest Information Centre, High Beach at 2. 00 p.m. (1-1/2 hr walk)

Sunday 13 June

Summer time in Sheppard's Meadows Leader: Tricia Moxey. Meet at the end of Hemnal Street, Epping at 10.30 a.m. (2 hr walk)

Thursday 1 July

Galley Hill Wood Leader: Dr Amanda Samuels. Meet at Aimes Green at 2. 00 p.m. (1 1/2 hr walk).

Sunday 11 July

Warlies Park Leader: John Holtom.

Meet in the yard of Warlies Home Farm off Femhall Lane, Upshire at 10.30 a.m. (2 hour walk).

Epping Forest Lectures 1999

These lectures will take place in the Lecture Room at the Epping Forest Field Centre starting at 8. 00 pm.

Cost £1.50 including tea/coffee.

Thursday 11 March 1999

THE FOREST ON FILM, Acorn Films, Chingford

Thursday 1 April 1999

ESSEX AISLED HALLS, John Walker

Further details and bookings for lectures via:

The Epping Forest Information Centre, High Beach, Loughton, Essex JG10 4AF or phone 0181 508 0028

Essex Wildlife Trust

Epping Forest Local Group

Thurs 18 March (*Indoor meeting*)

Jeremy Wisenfeld - Future Challenges Facing Epping Forest (Loughton Methodist Church Hall (8pm).

Sat 27 Mar (*Outdoor Event*)

Mad as a March Mad-Hatter

A family event on Roding Valley Nature Reserve, with treasure hunts and other entertainments.

EWT Midweek Walks at:

**Fishers green, last Tuesday of every month
30 March, 27 April, 25 May and 29 June.**

Meet: 2pm Fishers Green car park; Stubbins Hall Lane, north of Waltham Abbey on the B 194. GR3 770320
Bus 505 Walthamstow to Harlow (hourly service via Chingford and Waltham Abbey)

10 mins walk from Cheshunt station

Epping Forest walks

Tues 13 April

Chingford Plain to Grimston's Oak and Warren Wood.

Meet: 10.30 am Bury Road car park; north end
GR 394950

Tues 8 June

Epping Stonards Hill car park to Lower Forest and Gernon Bushes (EWT Nature Reserve).

Meet: 10.30 am at Stonards Hill car park GR 465025

For further information on Essex Wildlife Trust events please contact Bob Bridges, phone 529 0356.

Lee Valley Park

April - Oct dates available end of March.

For details contact the L.V. Park Information Centre on 01992 702 200

Debden House Centre - is the London Borough of Newham's Residential Adult Education Centre. It was acquired by Newham in 1947 and has since fulfilled an education role.

The centre consists of a large house and cottages used for short courses, for conference and training provision. Debden House has a beautiful setting in Epping Forest and provides an ideal venue from which to explore the Forest and the Valley. Each week-end is informal and relaxed with a focus on learning out of doors. Talks are given each evening and walks take place during the day. Saturday involves a day walk, about 7 miles with a number of stops along the way. In addition the fifty acres of grounds are used for camping and caravanning.

Weekends Courses 1999

March 26th/28th 1999 - Seasonal awakenings - an exploration of the countryside as a new season unfolds

July 16/18, 1999 - Beneath the landscape - making sense of natural diversity and fascinating history

How to book/further details

Debden House, Debden Green, Loughton, Essex IG10 2PA

Tel: 0181-508-3008, Fax: 01 81-508-0284

Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers

Conservation task days.

Mar 14 River Ching Mar 28 Mill Plain

April 4 Hangboy Slade April 18 Sunshine Plain

May 2 Paul's Nursery

Meet at the Warren at 9.30 am

Contact Chairman or Secretary, Derek and Diane Meakin
0181 500 1571

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 26th April 1999**
at the Sir James **Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green at 7.30pm**

Agenda for A.G.M

1. Minutes of the last AGM held on 27th April, 1998
2. Matters Arising
3. Chairman's Report 1998/1999
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of the Hon. General Sec. & Hon. Treasurer
6. Election of Committee Members
7. Election of Auditor
8. Any Other Business

After the meeting and a break for coffee there will be an illustrated talk by Judy Adams.

Illustrated talk by Judy Adams following the A.G.M.

There is a view that Epping Forest should be a mosaic of different habitats all carefully managed to promote particular ecological niches. But move the perspective upwards somewhat and roughly the same result but on a large scale can be envisaged. In this scenario Epping Forest is largely the wooded area while the Lea and Roding Valleys are the open, watery, meadow complementary systems.

Judy Adams of the Lea Valley Regional Park is to talk to us about one of these areas. Judy, ecologist and teacher, worked at the E.F. Field Centre of over 10 years before moving to the L.V. Park, where she is now Head of Corporate Policy. Her talk is entitled **CREATING A REGIONAL RESERVATION**. Changing demands, new opportunities, ongoing pressures – yet a continuing commitment to develop a new environment for people and wildlife is required. Some examples of recent initiatives, including catering for others; what's up with the Bittern?; how far is the trail?; what's happening with the filter beds?; will be considered. There will also be a chance to discover more of the Valley story and how it is likely to unfold in the future.

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 General Sec. and Hon. Treasurer or Committee members, please complete the form below and send it to: Mrs. P. Bitten, 9 Frederica Road, Chingford E4 7AL by 12th April 1999.

Officers at present are:

Chairman: Ken Hoy due for re-election in 2000

Vice-Chairman: Clifford Pyne due for re-election 2001

Hon. General Sec: Mrs. Peggy Bitten due for re-election in 1999

Hon. Treasurer: Seymour Moss due for re-election in 1999

Hon. Membership Sec: Mrs J.Miller due for re-election 2001

Existing Committee members willing to stand are:

Harry Bitten, Irene Buchan, John Buchan, Eric Cropper, Bill Dexter, Bill Humphreys, Sue McKinley, Jim Grimson, Peter Read and Joy Smith.

THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST - NOMINATION FORM

I nominate for the office of 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 glue details as above on a separate sheet.

Minutes of the 1998 A.G. M of the Friends of Epping Forest - held at the Sir James Hawkey Hall on Monday 27th April 1998 at 7.30 pm.

Mrs.P.Bitten (Secretary), S.Moss (Treasurer) Mrs. J. Miller (Membership Secretary, H. Bitten, Mrs. I. Buchan, J. Buchan, B. Dexter, C. Gimson, W. Humphreys, Mrs. S. McKinley, P. Read, Mrs. J. Smith

82 members were present. Apologies were received from Hilda & Vera Anslow, E. Cropper, Caroline Freedman, Mr. & Mrs. E. Lawrence, C. Pyne, Mr. & Mrs. Shukla, Mr. & Mrs. M. Taylor, R. Terrell, R. St. John.

Before opening the meeting the Chairman paid tribute to our past Treasurer Mr. F.Wetton who had died the previous week.

1. THE MINUTES of the last A.C.M. held on the 28th April 1997 were approved and signed. Proposed by P. Read, Seconded by R. Wortley.

2. MATTERS ARISING

A member reported that nothing had been done to alleviate the flooding at High Beach, the local Council having run out of money. Now in view of the beginning of the financial year he asked all interested (perhaps including the Conservators although the Superintendent had said it was not a Forest matter) to write to the Council.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 1997/1998

A copy will be enclosed with the July Newsletter. Adoption of the Report was proposed by Norman Taylor, seconded by Irene Buchan and carried unanimously.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Chairman paid tribute to John Nicholson who retired as Treasurer after the last meeting, and introduced Seymour Moss who presented the Report and explained the Balance Sheet. Acceptance of the Report was proposed by B. Dexter and seconded by Mrs. J. Miller. There had been no other nominations and S.Moss was elected as Treasurer. Proposed by M. Wetton and seconded by R. Wortley.

5.6.7. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN,

HON. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND AUDITOR.

There had been no other nominations and all were unanimously re-elected including Mr. C. Gimson who had been co-opted during the year. Proposed by M. Wetton and Seconded by R. Wortley.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

Forest Supper. It is very much hoped that Chasney's will be able to cater this year. Failing this a fish and chip supper was suggested but received under ten votes. Suggestions of another caterer who would be able to meet Chasney's standard and price would be welcomed by the Committee.

Land between Honey Lane and Sewardstone Road Waltham Abbey. Not strictly a Forest matter and we refer to CPREssex. The number of houses and industry has not been increased.

Land between Loughton and Theydon along Railway Embankment, golf course, Clays Lane to Birch Hall. £10 million school proposed. There was suggestion that the ideal solution would be for Conservators to buy the land.

Maps of the Forest and a concise version of the Management Plan are available from the Conservation Centre at High Beach.

After closure of the meeting and a coffee break Georgina Green, Secretary of the Friends for four years presently Secretary of the Woodford Historical Society gave an illustrated talk on "Trees in History" which was most enjoyable, informative and well received.