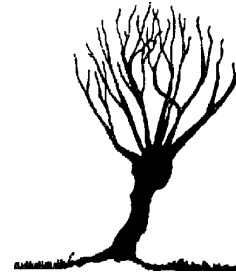


The Friends of Epping Forest Newsletter



July 2000

Dear Friend,

We have reported from time-to-time on the matter of fencing areas of the Forest in order to facilitate the return of cattle. We were very grateful that some months ago the Superintendent consulted us in respect of a proposal to fence some 750 acres to permit the return to a grazing regime. It was hinted that if this proved successful, in the Conservators' view, the enclosures could be extended to more areas of the Forest.

The initial area to be fenced would be the west sides of the Epping Road between Rangers Road, the Robin Hood, Cross Road to Mott Street, Church Road, Hornbeam Lane, east side Bury Road, north side Rangers Road.

Our response was lengthy and we commented that while we were fairly happy with a limited amount of grazing, we were opposed to any attempt to bring about a widespread return to a woodland pasture management system. We were not very supportive of the notion of the level of fencing proposed, or the possibility of even



more enclosures subsequently, and we thought that our membership, and the general public would also be unhappy about this aspect.

The Friends Constitution requires us – we pointed out – to uphold the provision in the Epping Forest Act 1878, to keep the Forest open and unenclosed, and to oppose measures that could be detrimental to the Forest and/or impair the amenities it provides.

Needless to say English Nature were delighted with the proposal to fence part of the Forest and gave their enthusiastic support to the scheme.

At the June 12, 2000, meeting of the Epping Forest & Open Spaces Committee, the Superintendent reported in respect of a considerably amended set of proposals for a return to grazing. It may be that our views have been very persuasive, or maybe the City's legal advisers took the view that the extent of fencing envisaged was likely to be in conflict with the Epping Forest Act. Perhaps a bit of both, we don't know!

The Report indicates that road traffic is the principal problem to be overcome in relation to cattle grazing, and looks to a partnership arrangement between the Conservators and the Highway Authorities as a way of bringing about a calmer traffic environment.

Traffic controls on all Forest roads is an unrealistic option at the moment so in order to facilitate grazing on the Forest block already outlined, it is proposed to put a post and two rail wooden fence along the Epping New Road between Rangers Road and the Robin Hood, the fence to run a short

way along Rangers Road and Cross Road to avoid cattle straying directly into these junctions.

In addition cattle will be herded 24 hours a day 7 days a week with the object of controlling them and directing towards specific areas to be grazed.

A herd of about 50-100 will be required and it is proposed that a partnership arrangement with local grazier Mr. Graham Matthews be adopted with him supplying the cattle and the Conservators providing land and buildings on the buffer land. Summer grazing only would be needed on the Forest.

continued over...

In this issue

<i>The Natural Aspect</i>	2	<i>Green Diary</i>	7	<i>Tyre Dumping</i>	11
<i>Millennium Wood</i>	3	<i>Walk Reports</i>	8	<i>News in Brief</i>	12
<i>The East London Mela Wanstead</i>		<i>Centenery Walk</i>	10	<i>Stalls</i>	12
<i>Flats 22/23 July 2000.</i>	3	<i>Ted Green</i>	11	<i>AGM</i>	12
<i>How Well do you Know</i>		<i>Letter to the Editor</i>	11	<i>Dates for your Diary</i>	14
<i>The Forest No7</i>	4				

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

The Friends is a Registered Charity. No: 299970
Registered with The Civic Trust

In addition residential accommodation might be needed for a stockman.

The Superintendent sought permission from the Committee to continue negotiations for a partnership scheme and undertook, if this were given, to report back shortly with a fully worked-up scheme with financial implications.

It was envisaged that a scheme would need to be flexible, and involve trust on both sides.

In generally agreeing to the Superintendent's proposal, the Committee took the view that such was the importance they placed on getting cattle back on the Forest, they were in favour of commencing a scheme and thereafter adapting it as lessons were learnt. The Superintendent promised that there would be further public consultation in respect of the proposals.

The Friends have not as yet met to discuss the new proposals but doubtless our Committee will have something to say in due course.

Editor

The Natural Aspect

The English are supposed to talk about the weather more than most people - perhaps we do, but then our weather changes more frequently than it does in most countries. I read somewhere, that the highest statistical probability about our weather is that no two consecutive days will be alike. Contractors needing to be sure of good weather are told to plan their work for two following days - one of them is sure to be fine! Even consecutive years are bound to vary. Records of one kind or another seem to be broken every year (or do we get more forecasters telling us so!) and this Spring we are supposed to have had the wettest May for many years - and it was warm too. Consequently frequently heard remarks have been - "Everything is so early this year," and "what wonderful growing weather" etc.

So what did we notice about this 'early and lush' season. Usually a wet Spring means fewer of the small caterpillars hanging from threads in the Forest. That was bad news for the Blue and Great Tits that depend upon these defoliating caterpillars as a main source of food for their young. Although it was good news for the trees, as there seems to have been little insect damage to their leaves. However, I have noticed many 'oak-apple' galls this year. These are large spongy swellings that grow on oak trees in late spring and are caused by a minute gall wasp laying its eggs in a bud and causing a mass of abnormal cell growth - the 'oak-apple'. Several grubs or larva of the tiny wasp are soon safely feeding and growing inside the gall and as male and female wasps they will emerge later in the summer. Unless they are unlucky enough to suffer attacks when even smaller parasite wasp

grubs develop from 'squatter' eggs also laid in the gall. Those of the 'rightful' species that survive will mate and the females lay eggs to form another completely different type of gall on fine underground roots of the oak. In these galls the larva survive the winter and emerge in the spring. However, those eggs produce only female wasps - that are already fertile! And, they lay the eggs that cause the oak-apples. So, the oak-apple is caused in the spring by a generation of pregnant females and their offspring - male and female - causes the formation of an entirely different kind of gall. More extraordinary is the fact that our English Oak (*Quercus pedunculata*) 'accommodates' several different species of gall-wasps. Each species' life cycle involves (spring and late summer) pairs of galls - that is double-generations of quite different galls. Their confusing and complicated life stories were largely explained by the work of a Chingford man, Mr J Ross, one time curator of the Museum at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge. Bearded and wellington-booted he was a familiar sight in the Forest where he spent many years, just before World War Two, 'discovering' the paired generations by breeding-out and identifying the wasps from the different galls. His pioneering work and original collections are held in the British Museum.

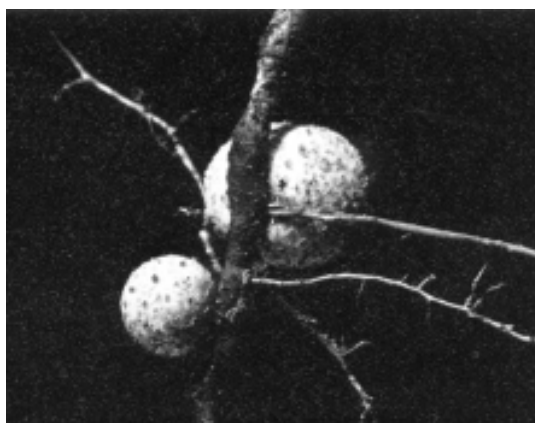
The recent high rainfall has filled the Forest ponds. Those of you who have been to Strawberry Hill pond recently will know that during the winter it was emptied, 'de-silted' and generally cleaned up after many years of deterioration. Almost all the Forest's ponds are man-made, most over a hundred years ago, and the silt that has

drained in or formed from rotting leaves has accumulated and encouraged vegetation to grow and expand across the open water as each pond became shallower. In summer heat a shallow pond quickly becomes polluted and loses much of its oxygen. Aquatic life then suffers and dies. Strawberry Hill pond was endangered in this way. However in a year or two's time, having been cleaned, it will be as attractive as it once was. Other Forest ponds are also in need of remedial treatment. Goldings Hill Pond although partially cleared a few years ago is badly in need of attention. Major work is to be undertaken to secure the retaining bank and overflow drainage of Baldwins Pond. Whilst Warren Pond will be partially cleared at a later date. All these large-scale projects involve complicated and costly procedures when performed properly. The removal of mud, silt and debris is difficult enough, especially if the natural condition of the pond is to be eventually restored, but there is as big a problem involved in disposal of the removed material. It must be allowed to drain somewhere safely first, then needs to be transported away and as far as possible recycled in an environmentally satisfactory

way. Obviously all work needs to be performed with the minimum damage to the surrounding Forest. Then, within a year or two balanced conditions should return - but the 'balance' of life will be a changing one, constantly adjusting



Oak-apple galls



Root galls

and readjusting as various factors change with the seasons, the weather and climate.

After so much care has been taken, it is easy to see how thoughtless and irresponsible actions can wreck the delicate balances and counterbalances in our ponds. Creatures, plants or other material, introduced from abroad, often via a commercial aquarist and then a garden pond, may cause immense problems. This has already happened in one Forest pond because an alien plant has found its way there. In the new or 'unnatural' conditions for that plant, it has proliferated, become dominant over many other native plants and become difficult to control or stop from spreading to other ponds.

Then there are the anglers who introduce the 'wrong' fish, or too many fish, or fish that are too large for the food supply. They inevitably destroy the natural balance of the ponds too. Such thoughtless interference can so quickly prove disastrous. Perhaps we should remember it is illegal to dump, release or distribute such material into the Forest or its ponds. Ponds are particularly vulnerable and delicately balanced places because they are comparatively small semi-enclosed habitats where there is great interdependence between the various life forms that is easily upset.

That apart, I am always surprised how quickly natural growth in the Forest recovers from the effects of drastic action, whether it is fires, storms or pond or woodland management - one growing season makes a great difference. So, I believe we can expect the ponds to quickly become healthy and attractive again.

Ken Hoy

Millennium Wood



Members will know that with the Conservators approval and support, a wood to commemorate the Millennium is being developed on the Coopersale fields 'buffer' land. Last November acorns were collected and stored over winter in the Warren before being planted out as plantlets in March. Two primary schools, Coopersale and Gernon Bushes and Oakhill Woodford, and volunteers from the Friends participated in the exercise.

That was always regarded as the first phase of the activity. The next phase will be a little different. What we now aim to do is collect acorns and plant them directly thus mirroring the natural way an oakwood tends to develop i.e. burying by jays and squirrels. In the absence

of organised contributions by these creatures, we will have to do the collecting and planting ourselves.

I will be writing soon to both schools inviting them to participate again, but this will be during the week of course. Hopefully many members will wish to take an active role as a good number did in the 1999/00 period. The day we have selected for members is **Sunday 6 October** which is the start of the Tree Council's Seed Collection Week.

We are aiming to start collecting acorns just after 10.00am. Park in the Forest car park of the Woodyard (off the Epping - North Weald Road). If that is full (hopefully it will be!), drive on to park in the commercial woodyard, the owner has given his permission.

We hope that there will be a good turnout, this is very much a Friends project, and we want to carry it through to a successful conclusion. Make a note in your diary!

It would be helpful if you could, assuming you propose to participate, drop me a line or ring me affirming this.

Hary Bitten

Poem sent by a member

Do you wish the world were happy?
Then remember day by day
Just to scatter seeds of kindness
As you pass along the way;
For the pleasure of the many
May be oft-times traced to one,
As the hand that plants the acorn
Shelters armies from the sun.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

The East London Mela on Wanstead Flats 22/23 July 2000.

Mela is an Indian (Sanskrit) word meaning meeting, and has come to describe an organised cultural gathering. Melas are held in many British venues that have big Asian populations, Slough, Bradford, Leeds, Newcastle, Leicester, Edinburgh and Glasgow to mention a few.

Outside of the sub-continent Melas have become annual events in such cities as Amsterdam, Paris, Vancouver, Toronto and San Francisco. Melas in East London started off in a small way being held in Plashet Park East Ham but have outgrown that venue.

In 1994 the Conservators gave permission for a Mela to be held on Wanstead Flats. This appears to have been a cultural success and well attended by a broad range of people though predominately Asian.

Unfortunately the sheer size of the event and indifferent organisational and site management led to strong criticisms of the event by many local residents. Attempts to hold subsequent Melas on the Flats were thwarted because of failures by the organisers to meet the conditions laid down by the Conservators as the result of problems thrown up at the 1994 Mela.

In September 1999 the Conservators received a proposal by the Chief Executives of Newham and Waltham Forest to hold an East London Mela on the Flats to celebrate the Millennium. The Conservators response was to remind the applicants of the conditions set out in 1996 and to indicate that they were prepared to consider an application meeting the conditions. Evidently bearing in mind the scale of what was under consideration, those conditions could not be met.

Thereafter some heavy lobbying took place by various

supporters of the holding of the Mela, one result of which was that the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, was in contact with the Lord Mayor of London.

Meantime a City and Forest Officers meeting took place with the Director of Leisure Services at Newham who was accompanied by Di Robson and staff of Di Robson Arts Management who are employed by Newham to undertake the management of the Mela.

After discussion approval was given to the use of Wanstead Flats subject to a number of conditions. The approval was in respect of use of the site on the Flats for 7 days for the holding of the Mela on 22, 23 July, the event to be for the year of 2000 only on the understanding that it is a one off Millennium event. Some of the conditions are:

- litter is collected throughout the day and the site and surrounding area will be clear of rubbish at the end of each day
- adequate security is provided
- no alcohol on site
- no fencing
- no charge for admission
- ground protection measures to be taken
- bus people to site to minimise traffic problems
- all amusements relating to site be agreed with Superintendent.
- event not to be nationally advertised

The actual Mela site will occupy 29 acres and in addition there will be very considerable areas of car parking. Some 70,000 visitors are expected over the two days concerned. Basic funding for the Mela will be from a £60,000 grant from the Millennium Commission, and £40,000 from Newham Council. Waltham Forest has also provided funding.

The Mela will include a range of events such as festivals, concerts, a symphony (sic), exhibitions, community projects and training programmes within the cultural sector. There will be one main stage for live acts, a smaller dance/music stage, a small cinema showing films throughout the weekend, art installations, food streets representing world cuisine and a market/bazaar selling arts, crafts, fabrics, clothes and much more. The site would include a funfair and dramatic entrance structures and banners to mark it out and draw upon the rich visual cultures of the Indian sub-continent.

Information of the Conservators approval soon became known and gave rise to considerable opposition on the part of local residents.

There were 149 written objections and a petition with over 700 signatures. There were 4 letters of support from members of the public.

The Friends wrote pointing out that there was a long history of local residents opposing the holding of large-scale events on Wanstead Flats. Epping Forest, of which the Flats are a part, is not an exhibition or public entertainment facility but an ancient Forest saved by the City for the recreation and enjoyment of the people. That is, we believe, the kind of recreation and enjoyment appropriate to the areas' Forest status.

We recognised that the Flats use as an amateur sports facility makes it somewhat different from other Forest land. But this use is for a few hours at the weekend and outside then there is little impact on the public's use of the Flats. The present Mela proposals would subject the Flats and the surrounding area to a level of impact beyond anything normally expected or permitted.

Since the Flats are within Redbridge and the Mela involves music and dancing, a public entertainment licence is necessary from that Council.

The Licensing Sub-Committee in Redbridge met to consider the application on 10 May. Members of the public were permitted to address the Committee. Having regard to information received and evidence presented, the Sub-Committee granted the Licence and gave approval to a firework display on 22 July. The total number of persons permitted within the show ground each day shall not exceed 25,000 at any one time.

On 22 July all concessions etc. shall be closed by 9.00 pm and no further activity shall be allowed after that. Events on the main staged area shall end at 9.30 pm. The firework display shall consist only of fireworks with visual effects no explosive sounds. On Sunday 23 July all activities, concessions, fairground and entertainments shall cease by 8.00pm. The Sub-Committee also underlined the various conditions already listed above.

This summary of the 'Mela story' is rather heavy on wordage, but we thought members would want to be aware in relation to this very large event that will take place on the Flats.

Harry Bitten

How Well do you Know The Forest No7

Beyond the north-western edge of the Forest are many ancient tracks and 'green' lanes that are mostly north of the Wake Arms roundabout and out-lying beyond the main part of the Forest. These are old routes, driftways and drove roads leading in and out of the Forest, and, they are part of the Forest. But being ancient 'highways' they are mostly classified as 'bye-ways' and are 'open to all traffic.' Some are just Bridleways and one or two are only Footpaths. Even on private land there are Public Footpaths that often link many of these isolated Forest lands and lanes. But a map is essential. They are part of an ancient landscape the outlines of which are still visible. Also to the north of Epping is The Lower Forest.

This time, these are the areas where we will look at the names of places.

There is a new O.S. Map (1:25,000) No. 174 in 'The Explorer' series, called 'Epping Forest & Lee Valley' that is excellent for walking in the area.

St. Thomas's Quarters, is the area of the main Forest that is north of Woodredon Hill (A121 from Wake Arms to Waltham Abbey), west of the Epping Road (B1393) and enclosed by the north-western boundary where the Forest adjoins the fields of Woodredon farm. A 'Green Lane', Drove road or Driftway links St Thomas's Quarters to Uphire, where the Parish Church is named after St Thomas.

Lodge Rd. Bogs: These two valley bogs lie on the eastern side of Lodge Rd. that is the old track/road running from the Epping road northwards to the lodge gates of Copped Hall. Recently it has been closed to traffic. Over two decades ago an analysis of the mud layers of the bogs showed that they were formed about 4,340 years ago. As the old track is the embankment or 'dam' that blocks the valleys its creation must surely be the reason why both the bogs were formed - in the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age period! There is no evidence to suggest a link with nearby Ambresbury Banks, as that is an Iron Age Hill Fort no older than c.400 B.C. - as far as we know. If the modern road remains closed to traffic an examination

of the base of the 'dam' may tell us much more about the origin of the ancient track - possibly the oldest in the district.

The mud layers of the bogs also showed - based on an analysis of pollen grains - that the Small-leaved Lime tree was over 90% dominant in that part of the Forest before it vanished from the 'pollen record' in the 9th Century A.D. This was nearly a 1,000 years after it had virtually disappeared from the rest of Britain. It was only then that the present community of trees began to develop in place of the previously dominant Lime. Around 800 AD is the probable date of expansion of Anglo-Saxon settlement onto the heavy soils of the Roding and Lea valleys. And, it is generally thought that, it was the spread of grazing or the collection of winter fodder by these folk that was the probable cause of the relatively rapid decline of Lime trees. Lime is a favourite browse of cattle and horses. These two bogs have told us a lot!

Warren Plantation: This was part of the Copped Hall Estate until 1992 when a total of 789 acres or 320 hectares of the estate was purchased by the Corporation of London. Soon after this a part of the estate, the Warren Plantation, was added to Epping Forest. Most of the plantation (107 acres - 43 hectares) lies to the east of the main drive and extends northwards to the M25. Some of the trees - notably two large Scots Pines - probably date from the 18th Century when Humphrey Repton landscaped the land around the 'new' mansion - the present ruined Hall. There is some evidence suggesting that the plantation was established by 1747. Containing over 40 species of trees, the plantation is being managed differently from the rest of the Forest so that eventually it will become a form of arboretum. Access may be obtained through the iron gate to the public footpath on the left-hand side of the main gates.

The Selvege: This strip of woodland, over which a public footpath runs, starts just behind the western lodge and is an old 'woodland walkway' or a wooded boundary belt around the west side of the Mansion's grounds. It dates at least from the Eighteenth Century, when Humphrey Repton was landscaping the estate. It is shown on the Chapman-Andre map (1773), as the western boundary of Copped Hall Park.

It was added to the Forest in 1993 and is now a Forest footpath that passes in a tunnel under the M25. There it adjoins, to the west, some of the fields of Ravensers Farm totalling 47 acres (19 hectares), which were also purchased by the Corporation, when part of Copped Hall in 1992. Public access to these fields is a 'permissive access' that therefore links The Selvege to the Forest land of Addison's Meadow and Copthall Green.

Addison's Meadow: This 14 acre or 5.5 hectare field, also purchased in 1992, was part of Ravensers Farm and called the Long Mead. As far as living memory recalls it has always been pasture. In 1993 it was renamed, after the late Sir William Addison, and added to the Forest. It links the fields of Ravensers Farm to the Forest at Copthall Green.

Copthall Green: Although locally it is now usually spelt differently it was obviously linked with Copped Hall. It is an ancient grazed common or village 'green' shown on the Chapman-Andre Map (1773) as 'Copped Hall Green'. It was included in the Forest in the 1882 Arbitration map and still is part of the Forest. It borders the north side of the road through Upshire Village and extends northwards along Fernhall Lane and around Long Street. Copthall Green almost adjoins the northern end of The Selvege at Lodge Farm. It was possibly more important as a route in the

past, no doubt because of Long Street's link as an ancient lane that crosses the Cobbin's Brook at Cobbin's End and then continues towards Claverhambury and Epping Green or Nazing.

Copped Hall Woods, Warlies and Woodredon Woods: Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who with his brother was involved in the battle to save the Forest in the 1860's and 70's, purchased Warlies in 1851. The family lived there until they sold it to Dr. Barnado's Homes in 1921. They continued to own the Woodredon Estate until they sold it to the GLC in 1974. In 1986 it passed to the Corporation of London together with the Warlies and Monkshams estates.

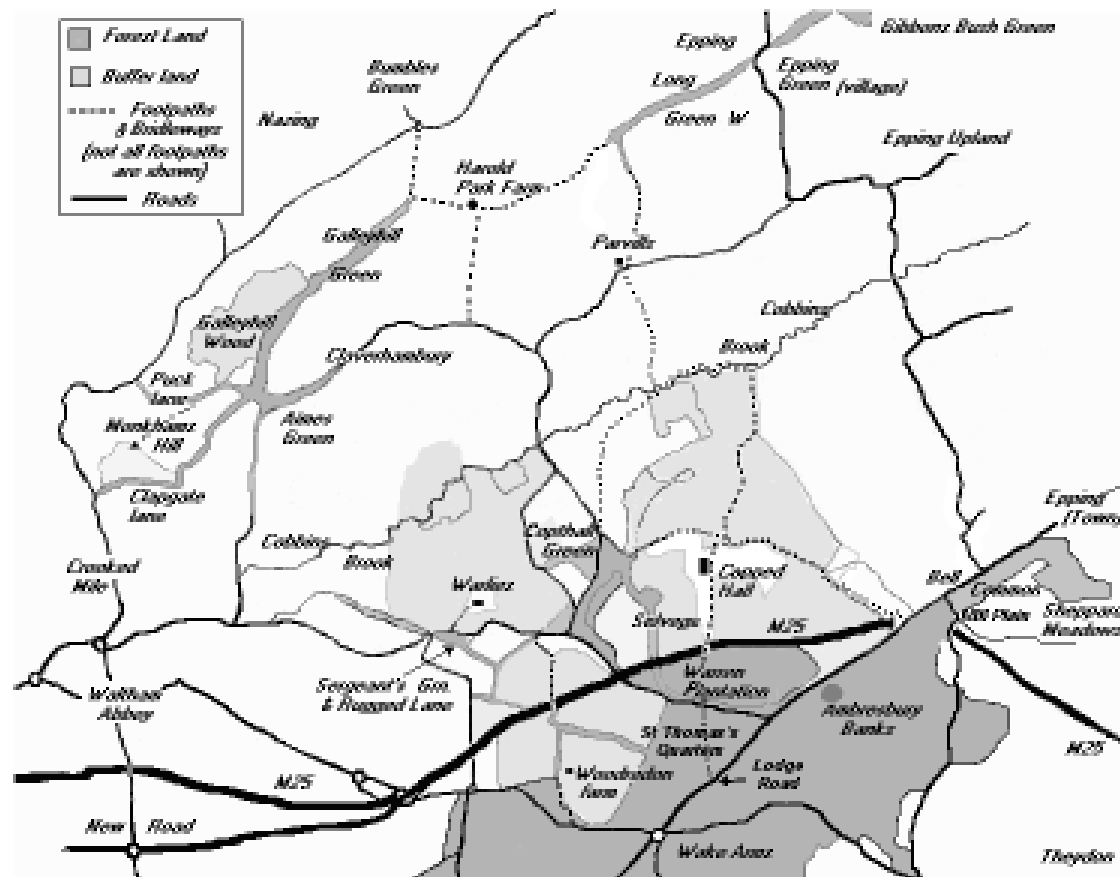
There are several small woods and copses on these private estates that the Conservators of Epping Forest manage as buffer land. **Buffer land** is mostly farmland managed by the Conservators to environmentally protect and conserve the Forest and its wildlife from undesirable development. There is no public access to the woods as they are maintained as wildlife sanctuaries. Fallow Deer shelter in many of them and can sometimes be seen feeding in the open from many of the public footpaths. Most of the woods are relatively ancient and in the past were managed mainly as coppiced woods.

Among the woods on the buffer lands of Copped Hall are, **Rookery Wood, Little Rookery Wood, Spratt's Hedgerow and Fitches Plantation.** The two main woods on the Woodredon estate are **Coneybury wood** and **Oxleys wood.** The Warlies estate includes the following woods, **Brookmeadow** and **Fernhall** woods.

There is almost no access other than the many public and some permissive footpaths but these provide fine opportunities to view the picturesque and ancient landscape of these estates - when visiting them a map is essential.

Aimes Green: This is another old Green that probably played a more important role in the past. It is the meeting point of several ancient route-ways (now 'Green Lanes') along which local people from settlements to the north and east would have driven cattle, pigs, sheep or geese to market in Waltham Abbey. In Medieval times, when movement was by horseback, pack animals or on foot, Aimes Green was probably on the most direct route linking the Abbey to Latton Priory, near Harlow. The block of countryside surrounding the Cobbins Brook valley, between Upshire, Waltham Abbey, Nazing, Harlow and Epping, contains few modern roads but many ancient trackways and drove roads that are no longer as important as they were in the past. This countryside can still be recognised as a relic of an ancient landscape. Aimes Green, like most of the Green Lanes, is part of Epping Forest.

Galleyhill Wood and Green: Galleyhill Wood is an ancient coppiced wood that was part of the estates of the Medieval Abbey at Waltham. It was acquired by the Conservators of Epping Forest when they took over Warlies, Monkshams and Woodredon estates after the abolition of the Greater London Council. Like the other woods it is 'Buffer land' to which there is no public access. The adjacent Galleyhill Green however is Forest land and joins Aimes Green to the Nazing Common road at Bumbles Green. It is a 'long-green' that was an old Green Lane with wide verges grazed by local cattle who no doubt followed a daily pattern back and forth to be milked and by drover's cattle going towards London or Waltham Abbey markets. As a route it would have been used by packhorse 'trains' and by local folk going to market.



Bumbles Green: Now little more than a 'location' at the northern end of Galleyhill Green lane from Aimes Green, it adjoined the ancient Nazing Common (long since enclosed) near where the old gate to the Common was situated.

In 1694 a levy was placed on all coal entering the City of London as a contribution towards the cost of rebuilding London following the Great Fire of 1666. Although amended in later years, posts were placed to mark the boundary within which the levy applied to the vending and delivery of coal. At Bumbles Green, one of these old Coal Duties Boundary Posts can be seen along the nearby roadside verge of what was Nazing Long Green. Another has been restored and can be found to the south along Galleyhill Green - perhaps an indication of the past importance of this route. Other probably better known Posts can be seen on the Epping Road near Ambresbury Banks and along the road from the Wake Arms to Theydon. Payment of the duty no longer applies.

Clapgate Lane and Puck Lane: These are two more old route-ways that remained Green lanes. They radiate from Aimes Green, which they link to the Waltham Abbey-Nazing road (the 'Crooked mile'). And, as with other Green lanes in the area, these old drove roads are part of Epping Forest. Clapgate lane runs southwest towards Waltham Abbey, whilst Puck Lane joins the road at a footpath near Holyfield. At the western end of Puck Lane is a 'Pudding Stone'. Found only near the Essex/Herts border these are rather mysterious large natural conglomerate boulders that are thought to have been used possibly as Neolithic trackway markers.

All this 'buffer-land countryside' and its 'Green lanes' remain comparatively undisturbed and rural. Many of its hedgerows are ancient and quite rich in flora and fauna and quiet walkers can often see deer

Monkhams Hill: This is the high ground south of Monkham's farm overlooking the Lea valley. Clapgate lane adjoins it on the southern side and Puck Lane can be reached via a footpath to the northeast. Part of the hill is 'buffer land' owned by the Conservators of the Forest over which permissive public access has been granted. Wonderful views, to the south and west, can be obtained from the top, where there are the remains of a wartime anti-aircraft gun emplacement and an OS 'triangulation' survey point at 83 metres or 271 feet above sea level.

Epping Long Green: This Green runs to the east and also to the west of the village of Epping Green on Epping Upland. Like Galleyhill Green it is a 'long green', that is a wide ancient packhorse trackway and drove-road whose verges also provided the villagers with common grazing. It is also no doubt part of an old route-way linking Latton Priory to Waltham Abbey via Nazing Long Green or Galleyhill Green. Modern wheeled vehicles and horses still make progress on foot difficult along some of these lanes when conditions are wet. Epping Long Green is part of the 'Three Forests Way' - a long distance footpath.

Gibbons Bush Green and Severs Green: These two greens adjoin Epping Long Green (East) and are no doubt relics of past common land with grazing rights when there may have been a higher population in the area. No doubt drovers also used them. Like Epping Long Green they are now part of Epping Forest. Severs Green is maintained as grassland but Gibbons Bush Green is becoming scrub.

Sergeants Green: Also part of the Forest this triangular green, at a bend on the hill of the Uphire Road opposite the entrance to 'Warlies', is linked to 'Rugged Lane' and other Green Lanes that led up to the Forest. Now the only link is by the wide bridge over the M25 to either Woodredon Hill or the Green Lane leading to St. Thomas's Quarters.

Bell Common and Mill Plain: This area, south of Epping town opposite the Bell Inn, together with Epping Plain (which is north of Epping and part of the Lower Forest) was the local common grazing land. It was also important grazing for long distance drovers taking cattle in to London, indeed the Bell Inn was known as a drover's inn. Bell Common, once called Epping Heath, is the high northern end of the Epping Forest ridge along which ran an ancient trackway. Here travellers were provided with refreshment and a settlement developed in medieval times on part of the heath. In 1253 a Charter to hold a fair on the heath was granted to the Abbot as it was within the manor of Waltham. It later became known as Epping Street and then Epping town. The name Mill Plain derives from the Windmill that was on the heath. It is believed a signal Beacon was also maintained there.

Sheppard's Meadows: These fields, named after the late Sam Sheppard, who was a well known Chairman of the Epping Forest Committee, were added to Epping Forest in 1991. They are adjoining and to the southeast of Bell Common. A footpath from the recreation field beside Ivy Chimneys School also provides access. A bridleway, once called 'The Western Road', that crosses the meadows from modern 'Western Avenue', was an old route giving access to the Common and the Forest for the drovers. The fields have a long undisturbed history of grazing and have an unusually diverse flora.

Lower Forest: This is the triangular area of the Forest that is north of Epping and detached from the main part of the Forest. It is about 270 acres or 109 hectares, in size. Confusingly it has been called '**Wintry Wood**' - a name derived from the ancient deer park, Wintry Park, that adjoined the Lower Forest on its western edge - all that remains is Wintry Farm, now a part of the Copped Hall estate. A lake, dug in 1893, sometimes called Wintry Wood Lake, is now virtually in the centre of the woodland. Earlier, and clear of trees, '**Epping Plain**' stretched as far as the lake until young Oak woodland grew up and covered the Plain in the first half of this century.

Epping Plain was important as common grazing land for both cattle and the horses when Epping was a 'staging post' in the coaching days of the early 19th century. It was also the site of Epping Cricket pitch, until it was transferred to the south end of Bell Common.

A broad ride that runs from the old 'Plain' north-eastwards through the centre of the area crosses an ancient trackway - the 'Stump Road' - almost at right angles. Recently both have been opened-up to let in light by re-pollarding old pollard trees.

The small strip of Forest on the south side of the North Weald road contains many hollows and water filled pits that are the result of brick and tile manufacture in the neighbourhood - there is some evidence from Roman times.

The Stump Road: This is the remains of an ancient medieval trackway called 'The Stump Road' It is in line with and running from the Coopersale Road through the Lower Forest to its northern corner at Thornwood,. Originally, no doubt, leading to Latton Priory, this was the main road to Harlow from London via Chigwell until 'Epping Street' became important enough for the present road to be built at the beginning of the 16th century. Some ancient pollarded Oaks fringe the old trackway, parts of which still has some hard surface showing. The beginning of Cripsey Brook runs alongside the 'road' eventually to the Roding - Thornwood being on the watershed between the Lea and Roding valleys.

Thornwood Common: The northern corner of the Lower Forest once joined the old Thornwood Common. To avoid confusion the Conservators have now called this open piece of Forest grassland, Wintry Wood Common. Thornwood Common now means the small isolated relic of the old common that still survives along Upland Road, sometimes called '**Crabs Green**'.

Coopersale Fields: This name has been given to 33 acres (over 13 hectares) of meadow land added to the Forest in 1994. It lies south of ('behind') the Woodyard and that section of the Lower Forest on the south side of the North Weald Road. The old Epping to Ongar railway line forms a southern boundary. The open grassland was of no great botanical significance, although its hedgerows are ancient, and the Conservators suggested it as a suitable site for planting a 'Millennium Wood' of Oak trees; an idea that was originally proposed by the Friends of Epping Forest. Acorns were collected last year, germinated, and planted this spring (2000) by children from Coopersale School and Oakhill School, Highams Park, and some of our own members. It is intended that open glades should eventually accommodate the footpaths that cross the area - when the schoolchildren can return with their grandchildren to view the Oak trees!

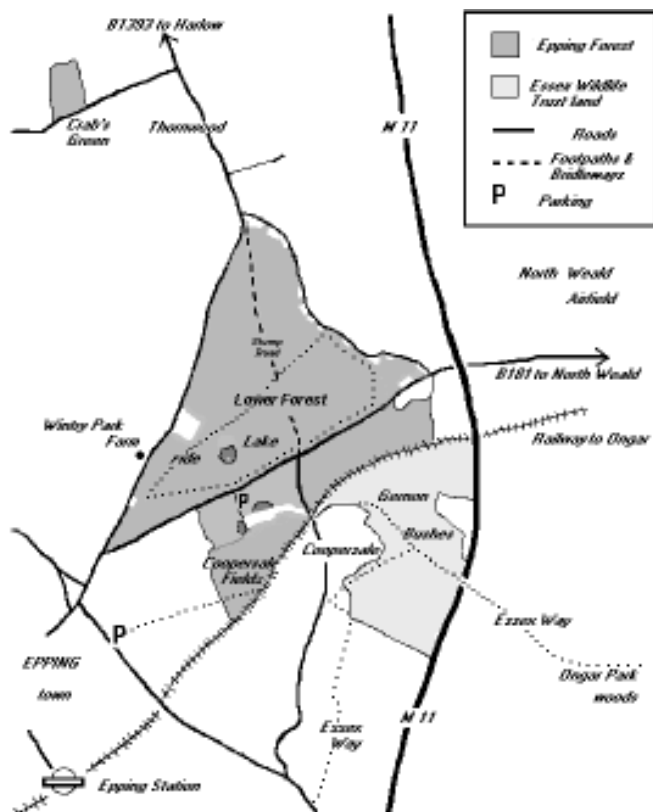
Ken Hoy

Green Diary

People are beginning to blame the planet's increasingly frequent natural disasters - such as the floods in Mozambique - on climate change. And they assume it must all be due to global warming resulting from human economic activity.

If you are wondering what this has to do with Epping Forest the answer is that global warming is likely to have a profound effect on natural woodland, thus affecting the very essence of life in this part of Essex.

But what is global warming?



The theory goes that trapped carbon dioxide generated largely by fossil fuel burning is increasing the temperature on and near the Earth's surface. This in turn is blamed for causing floods, gales and major environmental damage.

But is it true?

Many enlightened people are far from convinced and it would be fair to say that a minority of distinguished meteorological scientists are among them.

The valuable and influential PANOS Institute* believes, therefore, that the time has come to build environmental concerns into economic policy. It notes in a new briefing prepared for World Environment Day on June 5 and the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in September that environmentalists have been questioning the exploitation of the world's natural resources for more than 30 years. Some have even warned that our headlong pursuit of industrial growth is destroying the planet.

It is true that Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* triggered off a minor rumble of concern which has been growing slowly ever since. By 1972 when I attended the first UN conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm the debate had already become fierce. It was a long time ago, but apart from political rhetoric which has been used to score points over the years VERY LITTLE SEEMS TO HAVE CHANGED.

Kitty Warnock, director of PANOS's environment programme says: "Free market supporters have argued that capitalism will bring about the changes needed. As prices of scarce environmental resources rise and as industries and consumers have more money to spend, new technologies will be introduced to reduce the impact on the environment." She adds that green economists point out that such technologies already exist but are not being adopted quickly enough because there are no economic incentives to make them do so. They also argue that a country's economy may grow briskly while at the same time causing severe damage to its local environment. The well being of its inhabitants may stagnate or even decline as increases in wealth are offset by deterioration in health and quality of life. The greens name the UK the USA and Germany among countries where this is happening.

Do we agree?

If we do perhaps readers of this newsletter might write to support the PANOS Institute which is an international charity (Registered Charity Number 297366) providing information on sustainable development issues.

*The Panos Institute, 9, White Lion Street,
London N1 90PD. Tel 020 7278 1111
e-mail panos@panoslondon.org.uk

We are all, by now, conscious of the environmental burdens we bear because of our love affair with the private motor car. Yet who is willing to give up his or her wheels for the public good?

The dilemma has fallen on the broad shoulders of deputy prime minister John Prescott whom one feels always seems to pick up the impossible jobs. As transport supremo and the owner of two Jaguars he is charged with lightening the burden of powerful fast cars roaring down country lanes; road carnage; vehicle pollution; noise and excessive energy consumption; while at the same time maintaining Government popularity!

A start was made in May when the Government announced at the so-called Rail Summit that railways were

to get a £1.6bn boost. Much of it was to be spent improving the West Coast line operating between London and Manchester with the introduction of tilting high speed trains reducing the journey to less than two hours. Within a week of the Strategic Rail Authority announcement, however, we learned that the high speed rail project had been scrapped!

More encouraging are plans to revive lines axed by Dr Beeching in the 60s. The Observer reported: "The news will come as a major boost to the booming railway industry and frustrated passengers, but is the final proof that privatisation has failed in its primary purpose - to take the burden of rail off the taxpayer." The rail plan includes proposals to open new freight routes from Felixstowe to Nuneaton and the East Midlands and to Manchester and Scotland.

It certainly would be a relief to see fewer juggernauts roaring down our roads, but do we really believe it is going to happen? A Guardian leading article headlined Prescott Speak said that what makes the unsatisfactory performance of the railway worse is the absence of a coherent and convincing plan for improvement. The Rail Summit did little more than remind us where the deficiencies lie. "For all his well-meaning bluster John Prescott is out of his depth. For electoral reasons he needs rail users quickly to feel better," the Guardian declared. "But the expansion of capacity that would make their carriages less crowded, bring fares down and get trains running faster can only take place over time.

In the interim we will continue to suffer.

Alan Massam

Walk Reports

March 16th, Lee Valley Walk

Well we finally got back to the car park after being dragged halfway around the Lee Valley looking for birds, and all he kept on about was A.V.Roe who built aeroplanes in the Lee valley, and Fred Bremer who built motor cars in 1893 at Walthamstow, of silk, and flour and powder mills. 'That's the powder mills' he said, 'behind that fence' but we can't go in. Nevertheless we could see some of the old buildings, the magazine (1874) the mill buildings, the press house and other ruins half hidden by trees and bushes, where gun powder has been made since around 1665. Now the area is waiting to be made safe and to be restored so that visitors can see this industrial monument of national and international importance.

In the meantime it is a wildlife habitat, known to support a heronry, (and we saw some herons flying to and fro) a herd of fallow deer, and where otters have been seen.

The Cornmill Meadows were, before the Lee Valley Park took over an arboretum for the Greater London Council, and this is evident by the rows of potential street and parkland trees now growing along our route. The old hedgerows around the site did have elms growing in them, but these died from the disease, which does not kill the roots, so that new suckers sprout, only to die back as they are attacked when about 7.0 metres high. The home of the beetle grub that carries the virus that kills the trees were seen as a pattern of galleries eaten out by the grub on the underside of the dead bark of these young dead elm suckers.

Just before leaving the Meadows we crossed from east to west across the Greenwich Meridian, marked with a carved granite monument (from old London Bridge-where else?) decorated around the base by local school children.



Crossing a field next to the Mills fence a flock of some hundred or more goldfinches were seen, and treated us to a short but colourful mass flying display. And in the next field was a flock of some fifteen or more magpies. Reaching the road down to Hook Marsh one of our group saw a weasel, which did not stay to greet the rest of us, who at the time were busy negotiating a tricky stile.

From the bridge over the Horsemill Stream we saw Canada geese, one grey-lag and a barnacle with two farm yard geese and then we were amongst the lakes left by the old gravel workings and on which we could see tufted ducks mallards, gadwall, shoveler, great crested grebes, swans, coots and moorhens. Our path took us past the long eared owl roost that has been occupied for the last three months by some nine (so it is claimed) birds, but just our luck, they had flown, probably on their way back to more northerly nesting sites. Generally over the water areas were gulls, including black headed, common, herring and great black backed, with a number of cormorants flying over and perched amongst the bushes on many of the islands.

Following a convenient stop we passed the hide where the bitterns are seen and continued around 75 acre lake with plenty of blue tits, great tits, long tailed tits, chaffinches, robins, blackbirds, and a wren or two to keep us company. We were delayed around the lake by the sound of an early (or was it the resident) chiff-chaff. Then over Cheshunt Lock to just view the orchid area, (a bit early for them) and then back towards the Cornmill Meadow hearing and seeing another chiff-chaff. Spring must be on the way with the chiff-chaff singing, confirmed by other tell tales such as the blackthorn in bloom (a bit late) and plenty of catkins on the pussy willows.

At the meadows we detoured around the Dragonfly Sanctuary, where we put up a snipe, and saw teal, wood pigeon, stock dove, coot, moorhen and on the partly flooded grassland were numerous feeding widgeon, fattening up for their migratory flight to northern Europe and Asia. Also from the meadows he pointed out the old steam driven gun powder mills, and the new houses built on part of the Mills', site.

Confusion about what river was what was only partially sorted out, but we did walk along the Old River Lea, The Cornmill Stream, The Horsemill Stream, otherwise known by the less historical name as the Flood Relief Channel, and the Lee Navigation. Just to confuse the issue, the Cornmill Stream branches off from the Horsemill, and then branches itself into the course of the Old River Lea. Well, he said it was confusing.

Leaving the Meadows we crossed the Cornmill stream

(again) and the Meridian marked with another monument and a mown grass path along its line, to trudge back to the car park at long last. It was only going to take ~"two hours," he said. It took nearly three, he apologised, we said thanks very much, for although tired and weary we did see about 40 species of birds (and had a glimpse of some of the old powder mills).

ACE Reporter

Also seen: Great spotted woodpecker, Pied wagtail, Pochard, Reed bunting.

April

Starting from Earl's Path Pond

About a dozen of us turned up, well equipped to cope with the extremely damp conditions which had prevailed the previous day. Among us was our member who prefers to walk without shoes. We cut across down the hillside to Debden Slade but decided not to attempt the dilapidated bridge which crosses the stream there and followed downstream to 'Prince Henry's Bridge' on the horse ride. Our twisty walk went across to the beech woodland above Kate's Cellar and down and up to Loughton Camp - trying to imagine the hilltop without trees and superb views across to the Thames and Lea Valleys, and the amount of work involved in digging the earth rampart which has survived over 2000 years.

The Blackweir Pond (Lost Pond) approach was flat (and muddy) and we made our way down to the horse ride at Bellringers Hollow (or, if you prefer it - 'Pig's Bottom') and along towards Broadstrood. We cut back to the streams which become Loughton Brook and followed to Baidwins Hill Pond to examine the pond's dam, which carries the Clay Road and is causing the Conservators some concern. It has long amazed me that this clay wall with its brick tunnel, constructed in the C19th, should hold back the depth of water and silt indicated by comparing the lake surface to the north and the deep valley on its south side.

Beautiful, meandering, Loughton Brook took us, via Staples Hill, to the re-constructed Staples Road Pond - formed under the auspices of the National Rivers Authority, in cooperation with the Corporation's Ecology Officer, to collect any rapid run-off from the upstream slopes and prevent flooding in Loughton.

Uphill from the pond, through the woodland and we were suddenly where we started. Fun.

Irene Buchan

May

Saturday, May 20th at 7-0 a.m. was bright and sunny without a cloud in the sky. It was everything a 'May morn' was poetically supposed to be (even Harry broke out in poetry at one point!). There were sixteen of us at Connaught Water where the surface glistened and rippled with activity. Immediately binoculars came into use - out on the water was a pair of Ruddy Ducks (that's what they are called!). This is an interesting but controversial bird. It first escaped from captivity in Britain in 1953 and now a considerable 'wild' or feral population breeds in Britain and is spreading into Europe. A consequence of this alien introduction is that, like many such introductions, a very rare native European species is threatened by interbreeding. The White-headed Duck, a 'globally threatened' species that only occurs now in small numbers in, Spain, Turkey and Russia, is crossbreeding with the Ruddy Duck within its Spanish population.



The male Ruddy Duck is a handsome bird, a rich chestnut body, a black head with startlingly white cheeks and a rather ridiculous bright blue bill. To complete its 'cocky' appearance a sharply pointed tail sticks up at an acute angle. However the controversy arises from suggestions that it should be shot to prevent any further spreading and species 'contamination'. Already numbers have been shot in Spain to protect the White-headed Duck.

There are other problems with introduced species at Connaught. We saw two of them - Red-eared Terrapins (or 'turtles' as the Americans call them) from the Mississippi basin, central and southern U.S.A. One was sunning itself on the bank of the island and the other trying to clamber ashore until it fell back in. No doubt originally pets that 'grew too big for the bath' terrapins have been present at Connaught for a number of years and it is thought that they may be responsible for injuries to the feet of some of the water birds.

Another introduced species was present as usual - the Canada Goose. Apart from a group of noisy adult geese, who were quarrelling with everything except the Mute Swans who had five cygnets, there was a pair of Canada geese quietly tending their goslings on the other side of the lake.



Yet another 'alien' bird is often present at Connaught. That is the handsome Mandarin Duck, native of China but now occurring widely in Britain as a large wild population has become established - originally from escaped birds. This duck has its Forest 'headquarters' at Connaught Water, where there are sometimes large numbers (30-40) in the winter. In spring pairs disperse to breed near quiet woodland pools, nesting in hollow trees, and, sure enough later during the morning a pair sat calmly on a log at the Cuckoo Pits and allowed us to examine them. There were some *native* water birds at Connaught! - the Mallard duck of course and several pairs of Tufted Duck (who are later breeders), together with a Great Crested Grebe, Moorhens and Coots, who also had some young ones.

In the northeast corner of Chingford Plain we looked at a recently cleared area of 'scrub'. This had been previously an overgrown Hawthorn thicket. 'Overgrown' in that it was fifty years old (it grew up just after the War), was dense and 'closed in' and beginning to become secondary woodland. 'Scrub' is a valuable habitat for insect life and birds, but it must be cut rotationally every ten to fifteen years to retain that value. The area we examined, shown in the photo, has been cut to encourage regrowth

that will provide suitable nesting habitat for Nightingales to return to.



The reason for our 7-0 am meeting was hopefully to hear a Nightingale. It was a vain hope however. We heard none, although a very vocal Song Thrush fooled me for a moment. I believe two singing Nightingales have been heard this year in the Forest. However all the other songbirds we could expect performed well, including an obliging Willow Warbler that sang in full view on top of a small Oak. Most obliging of all were some Skylarks on Chingford Plain, who were running around taking advantage of the short grass of the 'model aircraft landing strip'. One Skylark circling round us demonstrated its characteristic quivering flight showing as it did so its white outer tail feathers and white trailing edge to the wings. There was also a Meadow Pipit that was carrying food in its beak, suggesting a nest somewhere nearby. All the birds had voluntarily performed on cue (not 'one that was arranged earlier' as was alleged!) and we finished at 10am as some folk were missing their bacon and eggs.

Ken Hoy

Centenary Walk

Sixteenth Annual Centenary Walk 2000, Sunday 24th September

The 'Centenary' concerned is that of the passing of the Epping Forest Act 1878 and the Walk was devised in 1978 to celebrate the acquisition by the Corporation of the City of London of this wonderful open space and its subsequent dedication to the people. The booklet describes the official walk is available at the Epping Forest Information Centre, High Beach.

Our walk will hopefully attract local M.P.'s, representatives from the Conservators and Verderers of the Forest and the Superintendent and his staff.

There will be representatives from the R.S.P.B., British Naturalists Association, Essex Wildlife Trust, Epping Forest Centenary Trust, Epping Forest Centre, Wren Group and Sun Trap and Hawkwood Field Studies Centres. There will be plenty of participants around knowledgeable about the geology, history, natural history and management of the Forest happy to pass on their expertise as you walk through the woodlands.

Starting point of the Walk will be at the junction of Capel Road and Forest Drive near Manor Park Station at 09.00 hours, please assemble at 08.45 hours. We will cross the Green Man Roundabout Leytonstone at 10.00 hours and take tea/coffee at the County Hotel Woodford from 11.00 - 11.15 hours.

We will pass by Butlers Retreat Chingford at around noon and lunch will be at the Robin Hood Public House from 13.30 - 14.15 hours.

We will then proceed to Epping via Loughton Camp, Great Gregories and Sheppards Meadows, two substantial areas of 'buffer' land which help protect the northern fringes of the Forest. On arrival at Bell Common Epping we will be welcomed by a senior Forest officer.

This is an easy walk of around 15 miles and provides an opportunity to view the extensive 'buffer' lands on the northern fringes of the Forest.

There will be ample stops and pauses and the route may be joined and left anywhere along the way, but we hope that most participants will try to do it all.

You don't have to be a member of anything in order to join in, everyone is welcome. Any further information required from:

Harry Bitten

Ted Green

After the AGM, Ted Green former laboratory technician, Windsor Great Park Forester, and now media person, and consultant gave us a talk illustrated by no less than three carousels of slides.



800 yr old Park Oak, Marks Hall nr.Coggeshall

Ted is an enthusiast for ancient trees, and for the ancient forests of this country. Heading south from Epping Forest across Europe, one has to cross the Pyrennes before coming to any comparable piece of woodland, he declared.

It was vitally necessary for Britain, which possessed more ancient trees than most European countries, to ensure their continued survival. He showed slides of trees in Germany which had protected plaques on them as important heritage features. Such trees, Ted said, would be given hardly a second glance in this country where there were thousands of such specimens.

Even so we were often quite casual about looking after these priceless survivals from centuries past. Ted instanced the owners and managers of the Stately Homes industry where very often visitors followed signs to the buildings to be admired passing on their way unacknowledged ancient trees hundreds of years older than the man made structures themselves. Moreover car parks were often sited in close vicinity to ancient trees causing ground compression and root damage.

Although in favour of cattle grazing as a woodland management tool, it was important that the cattle were

not chemically treated as is mostly the case nowadays. Owing to anti-worm and other treatments, cowpats, meadow muffins, or what have you, did not anymore provide a ready home for dung beetles and other organisms that formerly broke down the material. They tend to take on the appearance of an inverted 'frisbee' made of plastic!

Ted held our attention throughout and impressed with his enthusiasm, and individual views on woodland and their singular components.

Editor

Letter to the Editor

I seize the Friends Newsletter and usually read it from cover to cover before doing anything else that day. Unfortunately Henry (sic) Bitten's piece about St John's Pond quite spoiled my day. There were no crucian carp in this pond and we have never found them there, but we have found lots of goldfish, most of which are brown in colour and do not develop the golden colour of the imported garden pond fish. The fish that existed in that pond up to the time it was dredged out were a lot of small rudd and introduced carp (and a few eels).

On one of the occasions we were working there we encountered a gentleman (who lived very close to the pond) who accused us of stealing "his" carp. We were accompanied by a uniformed Forest Keeper and one of the Corporation's vehicles, but he persisted with his charge we were stealing "his" fish.

Crucian carp are **not** tolerant of muddy conditions. They are able to survive being frozen into the ice because they are able to metabolise the glycogen in their muscles. They are native but are now found locally in only a few Forest ponds because they hybridise with goldfish and carp (and the much larger carp compete with the smaller crucian carp). They are probably the most threatened fish species in the Forest ponds which is why the policy is to encourage crucian carp and take carp and goldfish out.

Alwyne Wheeler

I thought that I'd repeated the explanation from the Warren accurately but I suppose it's not beyond the realms of possibility that I muddled up my carps. - Harry Bitten

Tyre Dumping

The Forest is a S.S.S.I. (Site of Special Scientific Interest), not an S.D.U.T. (Site for Dumping Used Tyres).

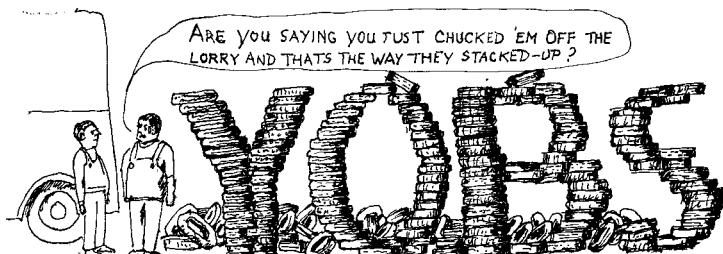
In recent weeks large dumps of used tyres have been left in various parts of the Forest. One lot was left in the area of the turning circle at the southern (Red Path) end of Fairmead Road, another in the car park off Lodge Road (first left towards Epping from the Wake Arms).

This illegal action stems from the fact that a premium is charged in respect of the disposal of tyres and unscrupulous dealers - if that's the right word - can avoid this considerable expenditure by dumping them somewhere.

This is bad news for the Forest because the Conservators then become responsible for removal and disposal - and we are talking about hundreds of tyres - which costs thousands of pounds.

Dumping must take place via lorries and shifting several hundred tyres is heavy work and must take a little time, time enough and obvious enough to be seen by somebody.

Accordingly if you see a lorry with a load of tyres on



board in suspicious circumstances telephone the Warren as quickly as possible and tell them the details. The number to ring is 020 8532 1010. If this number is dialled after hours there will be an automatic transfer to the Police.

The kind of dumping involved is an affront to the Forest, to those who look after it, and to all of us so please co-operate in helping to stamp out this abuse.

No heroics! Just telephone the number, don't attempt to tackle the villains (unless you are under 30, 6ft 5in, 19 stone and a judo black belt holder. This rules out many members!).

Harry Bitten

News in Brief

Membership and Donations

At the AGM on May 22nd our Treasurer Tony Sheppard proposed that we raise our joining rates from life £20; 3 years £7 and annual £3 to Life £30; 3 years £12 and annual £5. The meeting approved the new rates unanimously.

As Ken says in his annual report the Committee are very aware that we do need to increase our membership, which has remained pretty stable at about 1500 for some years, with new members more or less replacing existing members who move away or even sadly die!

We are having a new more eye-catching membership leaflet produced, and this will be available at the E.F Information Centre, libraries and on our stall at various events this year (please see dates for your diary on P.14) So as Ken says, please do your best to enrol a new member - it would be very rewarding to double our membership.

As our annual income is quite small, we depend very much on the generosity of members who make donations to us, some on a regular basis. We still have members who joined many years ago for £3 for life! As the newsletter now costs about £3 per person a year for 3 editions, you can see that our funds do need a little boost from time to time. So - many thanks to all those people who have sent donations:

M Black, J & M Harvey, H Mitchell, H & V Anslow, M Dormer, E & M Lawrence, J Longthorn, J Small, J Strevens, D Webber, R & T Mitchell, P Bloor, I McBrayne, H MacAlister, Mr & Mrs A Andrews, D Syme, C Lee & D Butcher, W & V Worth, V Smith, D Williams, L Gillard, B Brown, J Davidson, H Collinson, D King, A Wallace, Edmonton 100 Historical Society, J Rainbird, B & J Nicholas, P Cakebread, W Salisbury, Anon (and apologies if we have missed some as the recording system has changed in the last year). Total donated: £429.50

New Auditor

Also at the A.G.M. we appointed a replacement for our auditor of some years, Harold French. Because our funds and income are quite low, we do not in fact need an auditor, but an **Independent Examiner**. We are glad that Peter Gotham has agreed to be our Honorary I.E. He is a partner in Gotham Erskin Chartered Accounts in the City, specialising in charities.

Apologies to Judy Adams

The last paragraph of the Minutes of the 1999 A.G.M. was inadvertently missed off and should have read:

9. After the closure of the meeting and a break for coffee, Judy Adams of the Lee Valley Regional Park gave us an excellent talk with beautiful slides about the past, present and future developments of the Park, its rich range of wildlife habitats, and its recreational opportunities.

New Committee

Lord Murray of Epping Forest (President)	
Ken Hoy (Chairman)	01245 231 839
Sue McKinley (Vice-Chairman)	01992 712014
Peggy Bitten (Secretary)	020 8529 8594
Tony Sheppard (Treasurer)	020 8504 8288
Seymour Moss (Membership Sec.)	020 8529 0620
Harry Bitten	020 8529 8594
Irene & John Buchan	020 8529 6423
Eric Cropper	020 8504 2919
Bill Dexter	020 8529 1427
Jim Gimson	020 8989 3282
William Humphreys	020 8504 0073
Derek Meakin	020 8500 1571
Judy Miller	020 8504 8271
Peter Read	020 8524 1659
Joy Smith	020 8524 0823

Stalls

We are taking our stall and exhibition to various venues this year and would be grateful for a little help in "manning". If you can spare an hour or two please ring me on (020) 8529 8594.

Saturday July 8th - Chingford Village Festival, including live music, Chingford Green, 12.30 - 4pm.

Sunday August 6th - Chingford Day in Ridgeway Park Stalls and arena events, 12 - 5pm.

Sunday September 10th - Forest Festival at Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge. Stalls, exhibitions with a Tudor theme. 12 - 4pm

Have a good summer -Ed.

Annual General Meeting 22/5/2000

Chairman's Report: 1999 - 2000

When beginning to write this report of our activities for the past year I looked, as usual, at the Report of the previous AGM. And, so much do the same issues arise that I could easily repeat the two opening paragraphs of the last Report and they would be quite appropriate for this year! However, that would give an entirely wrong impression of the year and this time I would like to approach matters in a different way.

True the same major issues and threats to the Forest and its environment are there, although they have changed, developed or taken new forms. However your Officers, and various Committee members who have been involved, have had to continue to attend the same meetings and discussions and to write letters and raise issues in various quarters undertaking what I suppose we must call lobbying, to meet these changing threats.

What I am trying to emphasise is the importance of the steady functioning of our organisation - and not necessarily any spectacular events.

For instance, apart from attending our own committee meetings two or three members also regularly provide 'the public' at the monthly meetings of the Epping Forest

Committee at Guildhall in the City - this keeps us informed and up to date with Forest affairs. Receiving the Minutes and Reports in advance enables us, if necessary, to make representation to the Chairman or the Superintendent before such meetings.

Other committee meetings are regularly attended, for example, those of The Council for the Protection of Rural Essex. This is an organisation not just concerned with protecting cottages with roses around the door, but with issues such as traffic and road strategy across the whole County and the impact of the County's housing policy requirements. These are questions that could drastically affect the Forest and its roads in the near future.

Regular examination and checking of planning applications is necessary. Apart from the smaller erosions that eat away at the Green Belt, there are sometimes major developments to which we must be alert. Currently such projects as the industrial park and housing development south of Waltham Abbey, to be called 'Waltham Park', or, the proposed national sports developments at Fairlop and again at Picket's Lock, Enfield. These are huge proposed developments that are bound to affect Forest roads.

It is these apparently routine activities and meetings with which we are constantly involved, as well as attention to our finances and producing the Newsletters, that enables us to keep functioning effectively.

But that effectiveness ultimately depends upon the size of our membership - which is at a stable level of something like 2,000 individuals (allowing for family memberships).

However, and I hate to remind you of this, the membership and we are getting older!

Why am I saying all this? I'm trying to make you feel guilty, (you, and those members who will read this in the July Newsletter). Just guilty enough to take a membership leaflet and persuade a friend or a neighbour to join our ranks. That's all! As I am sure I have said before - the weight of what we say, the 'power of our elbow', depends entirely upon the number of people who, supporting our views and objectives, we can claim to represent. If you agree with what we are doing, the minimum that we ask you to do is **recruit a friend!**

I have started this year's Report in this way because your Committee increasingly feels that, although our membership is at a relatively stable figure as I have said, recruitment should now be a major concern

So, what are the issues with which we have been concerned? I have mentioned some already. For instance, developments in the areas surrounding the Forest that are, in particular, going to affect traffic flows on Forest roads. The Superintendent illustrated and emphasised these so well at a public lecture in this building last November. I will not mention them all, but take the housing and industrial developments south of Waltham Abbey for example. These developments will be linked by the new road to the Sewardstone Rd. and Honey Lane!

The biggest development on this site is a giant Sainsbury's distribution depot that will serve the north-eastern and south-eastern parts of London and its suburbs plus the whole of Kent. Fortunately much of this traffic will use the M25 - congestion permitting - but the transport requirements of the other industries on the site will no doubt involve the use of more local roads. Furthermore employees of the companies on the site will need to travel to and from work. The occupants of the four hundred houses that are planned to be built there will wish to shop

and go to work - elsewhere no doubt! As a result even more traffic will try to use Honey Lane/Woodredon Hill with consequent demands for an 'improving' widening of the A121 road over the Wake Arms junction. So once again it becomes apparent how important it is to the Forest for there to be a reconsideration of north facing slip-roads on the M11 at Debden to enable local traffic wishing to use the M25 to do so via the M11 and not the road through the 'Wake Arms roundabout'.

We have been to see the MP for Epping Forest, Eleanor Laing, about the implications of all this for the District and she is aware and agrees with much of what we are concerned about.

During the year we have continued to support the Superintendent in his efforts to eventually obtain a higher degree of protective planning status for the Forest and the surrounding area. In the Conservator's response to the Essex Provisional Local Plan 1999, both the District Council and the County Council have been made aware, but need to be reminded, of the importance of safeguarding the Forest from the implications of increased traffic flows within the Forest area.

There are other implications too. Those of you who attended the meeting in this Hall last summer, when the Superintendent's Deputy and the Forest Ecologist explained the new Management Plan for the Forest, will be aware that the long term management proposals for the Forest are based upon reintroducing grazing to the Forest. Some fencing of the Epping New Road (B1393) has been proposed, together with 'traffic calming' measures on other roads. We have been involved in discussions about this with the Superintendent. He is aware of our concerns about fencing the Forest and appreciates the widespread public disapproval of this. It is expected that he will soon present a Report on matter to the Epping Forest Committee (in June).

We have written expressing appreciation of the City of London's 'buffer-land' acquisition policy and have urged that this be continued whenever possible to protect the Forest still further from harmful development - especially on the western side.

You will know from the Newsletter of the 'Acorn collecting and planting' activities with which we have been involved to create a 'Millennium Wood' on the Forest land at Coopersale. We have also made suggestions about creating new ponds on the Forest and these are being considered.

You will also know from the Newsletter that two members have organised and donated a web-site for us. We are very grateful for this and I understand that already this has resulted in several 'hits' and the recruitment of some new members!

I have already mentioned the efforts of those involved in producing the Newsletter -and I must thank also those members who operate our delivery service and thereby save us a considerable amount of money. Obviously a large amount of work falls upon a few people. We are indebted to Peggy and Harry for a host of tasks (including prodding the Chairman!). Irene and John Buchan continue to deal with planning applications that need to be brought to the attention of the Committee. And, as usual I must thank the Committee as a whole for their regular work.

Sadly, as you will know from the Newsletter, during the year we have suffered the loss of our member and friend Harold French - and our best wishes go to Elsie.

Harold, for many years regularly undertook the examination our finances.

In conclusion, may I thank you and the rest of the membership for your continued support during the year.

Ken Hoy

The Report was accepted unanimously by the Meeting and was followed by the Treasurer's Report.

In conclusion the Chairman thanked the Treasurer for his Report and for the efficient way in which he has 'kept the books' during the year.

Dates for your Diary

July 22nd Saturday 12 noon. A tour around Moreton Village and a picturesque circular walk along green lanes and a winding brook. Meet in the car park of the Nags Head P.H. Moreton for a pre-walk drink. To get to Moreton: Travelling north from Epping, take right fork B181 past St. Margaret's Hospital, through North Weald Bassett to the roundabout at the Talbot P.H. Turn right on to the A414, and then the first left to Moreton.

Leader Bill Dexter GR 533 070.

August 24th Thursday 10 am. A walk in the Theydon Woods taking in the ancient earthworks Ambresbury Banks and the Long Running, fencing and grazing experiment. Meet in the car park at Jack's Hill on the B172 road from the Wake Arms roundabout to Theydon Bois.

Leader: Bill Humphreys GR 436 995

September 24th Sunday 9 am. Centenary Walk from Manor Park to Epping. Start at junction of Capel Road and Forest Drive or join half way at Butler's Retreat at 12 noon.

GR 419 860

October 13th Friday 10.30 am. A walk in the St. Thomas' Quarters area. Meet in the Lodge Road car park which is the first left turn off the B1393 travelling north from the Wake Arms roundabout.

Leader: Sue McKinley. GR 431 999

November 10th Friday 10.30 am. An autumn walk in the beechwoods. Meet in the car park opposite Earl's Path Pond on the road between the Robin Hood P.H. and Loughton.

Leader: Ken Hoy GR 416 967

November 24th Friday FOREST SUPPER.

December 9th Saturday 1.30 pm. A winter's afternoon walk in the Chingford Woods, followed by drinks and mince pies. Meet in the Bury Road car park (at the Bury Wood end).

Leader: Harry Bitten GR 394 951

January 28th Sunday 10.30 am. A walk around the Hollow Ponds area. Meet in the car park on the south side of Snaresbrook Road A 1007 (1st turning on the right going north on the A104 from Whipps Cross roundabout).

CR 395 891

February 23rd Friday 10.30 am. A walk through Hawk Wood to Yardley Hill. Meet in Hornbeam Lane off Bury Road Chingford.

CR 393 957

Other Dates

Corporation of London Epping Forest Information & Museum Service

FOREST FESTIVAL



A celebration of the story of Epping Forest including crafts, exhibits and displays about the historical aspects, natural history and practical management. FoEF stall.

Sunday 10 September, 12 noon - 4 pm, at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, Rangers Road, Chingford E4.

SUNDAY MORNING WALKS

Walks start at 10.30am and last about two hours. Please come suitably dressed for walking in the Forest, which can be very wet and muddy. Well behaved dogs welcome.

Sunday 9 July: In Buxton's Garden

Meet in the car park off Knighton Lane, Buckhurst Hill.

Leader: Tricia Moxey GR 408 935

Sunday 13 August: Paths, Lanes and Greens

Meet in car park behind Upshire Village Hall.

Leader: Ian Cox GR416 010

Sunday 10 September: Meanders and Coppices

Meet in the car park opposite Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, Rangers Rd. Chingford E4.

Leader: Richard Morris GR397 946

Sunday 8 October: The Tippa Burn Valley

Meet at Jack's Hill Car Park, A121.

Leader: John Besent GR435 996

Sunday 12 November: Autumn Beeches

Meet opposite the Foresters Arms PH, Baidwins Hill, Loughton.

Leader: Jeremy Wisenfeld GR 426 975

MIDWEEK WALKS

Tuesday 25 July: A Walk In The Cobbins

Brook Valley Meet in the car park of Breach Barns Caravan Park, Upshire. This walk will be long and strenuous. It will start at 10.00 am and end between 3.00 and 4.00 pm. Please bring a packed lunch with you (this will be taken to the lunch time picnic site). Pre booking is essential for this walk on 020 8508 0028.

Leader: John Holtom GR409 025

Wednesday 16 August: Fairmead and Hill Wood

Meet in Fairmead Car Park Fairmead Rd, Loughton. This walk will start at 2.00 pm and last about 1 1/2 hours.

Leader: Paul Moxey

Epping Forest Conserveation Volunteers Programme

July 9th Loughton Brook
July 30th Two Tree Island (Leigh-on-Sea)
Aug 13th Woodford Golf Course
Sept 3rd Lords Bushes
Sept 17th Lower Wake Valley Pond

Meet at the Warren 9.30 - return approx 3.30
Enquiries to Derek Meakin (020) 8500 1571