



Dear Friend,

In the next two or three months, the Conservators will be asking the public to give their views on some fundamental questions affecting the Forest and how it is to be managed in the next few years. We hope that many of you will respond by giving your opinions.

In this Newsletter we are endeavouring to send the membership a 'wake-up' call - to be prepared to look and think about the Forest during the rest of the summer... how you want the Forest to look and what sort of Forest you would like it to be. And, then to write and tell us or the Superintendent what you think!

The latest edition of 'Forest Focus' concentrates on two aspects of the Forest's management namely the creation of new 'wood-pasture' and the associated grazing by cattle. These are not new, there has been much emphasis on these aspects for some time.

In the latest issue the 'Superintendent's View' states that the Corporation will shortly be embarking on three major public consultations:

1. An Integrated Site Plan for Wanstead Park
2. An Integrated Site Plan for Wanstead Flats
3. The management of Cattle Grazing on Epping Forest

The last of these points concerns the Forest as a whole and is the one

with which we are particularly concerned.

The Superintendent states that he will be extremely interested to hear the public's views "about how the Corporation should be taking forward the issue of cattle grazing on Epping Forest" He goes on to say he will "... be planning for the future to ensure we take this matter forward with broad support."

**THE COMMITTEE
CALLING ALL
MEMBERS ...
YOUR VIEWS
AND OPINIONS
ARE NEEDED!**

We hope the consultation will consider the matter of grazing itself ... not just how to take grazing forward "with broad support"!

The issue of cattle grazing on the Forest is not just a matter of 'Do you like to see cattle grazing peacefully in the bucolic landscape of the Forest?' (We can probably all say 'yes' to that)

We are told, "Grazing is an essential force driving the rich diversity of this natural system ...". It has become a central plank of the Forest's management policy and it now appears set to determine the future of our Forest. That is what we must consider!

Cattle grazing has been a feature of the Forest for a long time. However the conditions now are very different from 1878 and before! Historically there would have been no requirement for fencing, except for the small cattle pounds used to hold animals that were illegally grazing. However the increase in population, the number of roads and the amount of traffic means that grazing now involves a need for fencing.

Many of you have seen the wooden rail fencing alongside the Epping New Road, between Rangers Road and the Robin Hood roundabout, and, the electric fencing that contains the cattle on Chingford Plain. This latter has taken place in spite of the Countryside Agency's recent warning to landowners not to use electric fencing where it is likely to come into contact with the public - especially children!

'To take grazing forward' will require much more fencing. There are many people who consider that not only is wooden fencing visually intrusive but that it is alien to the historic atmosphere and the open aspect of the Forest's characteristic

continued...

In this issue

<i>Dear Friend,</i>	1	<i>So Near But So Far</i>	7	<i>Trees</i>	10
<i>The Natural Aspect</i>	2	<i>Thomas Willingale Heritage Plaque</i>	7	<i>'Not in my Back Yard' say</i>	
<i>Trafalgar Wood</i>	4	<i>21st Centenary Walk</i>	7	<i>SEERA Planners</i>	10
<i>Access to Buffer Land</i>	4	<i>Epping Forest</i>	8	<i>House building in the South East</i>	10
<i>The Age of Theydon Bois Trees</i>	5	<i>House Martins - Not on my house!</i>	9	<i>Things were different then!</i>	10
<i>CPR Essex - Walk</i>	6	<i>Walk Reports</i>	9	<i>Dates For Your Diary</i>	11
<i>Verderer, Dr Eric Dormer</i>	6	<i>What's in a Name</i>	9	<i>FofEF Annual Report - April 2005</i>	13

landscape as an unenclosed space for public recreation and enjoyment. Fencing has been proposed to allow grazing on Wanstead Flats for instance.

Furthermore, the proposals appear to extend grazing by creating 'wood-pasture' in many parts of the Forest by clearing bushes, undergrowth and herbage to provide an open grassland forest, with scattered pollarded trees - a landscape suitable for grazing.

This landscape will be very different from our present Forest. It will reduce cover for a variety of animals and birds and will enable more traffic and houses to be seen through the woodland. It will affect aesthetic appreciation and detract from the 'mystery' of the woodland by potentially increasing and widening access by dogs and people and virtually create a park-like landscape. This we

fear will be the ultimate result of the present management policy of creating 'wood-pasture' wherever pollarded trees are to be found.

It is unclear how extensive are these proposals. How much of the forest is to be grazed?

We would also like to hear what you think... for example:

1. What are your views on fencing areas of the Forest?
2. Do you object to fencing of any kind on open areas such as Wanstead Flats?
3. What is your opinion about the use of electric fencing on the Forest?
4. What sort of Forest landscape would you like to see?
5. What in your experience is the impact of recent grazing on the Forest?

The Conservators are due to commence their public consultation shortly. We hope you will contact the Warren or the Visitor Centre at High Beach and ask for a copy of the consultation documents to be sent to you as they become available.

Also send in your comments by:

WRITING DIRECTLY (copy to us) to:
The Superintendent of Epping Forest,
The Warren, Loughton, Essex,
IG10 4RW

E-mail:
eppingforest@corpoflondon.gov.uk

LET US KNOW TOO - WRITE
Peg Bitten, 9 Frederica Raod,
Chingford, London E4 7AL

or E-mail: Peg Bitten
peganarri@waitrose.com
or Ken Hoy kenhoy@care4free.net

THE NATURAL ASPECT

I'm afraid I must start by mentioning the weather again. The warmth in January and first half of February promised an early spring, then the spell of bad weather – even snow. Then start and stop again... and as for the cold windy May, it might well have affected the arrival and survival of the insect eating summer migrants, or worse, it might have caused a bad breeding spring for many birds; especially the single brooded Tit families. Scientific surveys carried out later in the year may tell us whether this in fact has been the case. Cold weather can affect the breeding of many different birds. I know of two early Mallard duckling families that perished from lack of small insects – they need this food as soon as they are fledged and out on the water.

There now is an acceptance, based on statistical evidence, that over the last two decades, there has been a decrease in the populations of many woodland birds. I think that this fact has been noticeable, for some years in Epping Forest. On our walks and rambles folk have said, 'why do we see and hear so few birds in the Forest these days'... unfortunately it now seems that our purely subjective impressions are being confirmed. The causes of this are largely unknown and are to be investigated.

The interdependency of many forms of life in woodland is very complex and there is a myriad of small insect species that often have particular life cycles about which we may know very little? All are dependent upon or need to fit into the pattern followed by other species. Changes in these life cycles

can have a widespread effect that affects many birds. As global warming occurs this disruption of the 'web' of woodland life may increase.



Mottled Umber Moth Caterpillar:
One of the caterpillars that damages the trees in spring – but provides food for young birds.

An example of the interdependent 'web of life' but an obvious one that can often be seen in springtime, especially this last spring, are the caterpillars dangling on silk threads in the woodland. They are a most important food source for many birds. I remember, several decades ago, seeing House Sparrows and Starlings (when there were more of them!) on regular long fly-lines back and forth across Chingford Plain to the Bury Wood, collecting beakfuls of caterpillars to feed their young in nests back in houses in Chingford.

The numbers of these defoliating moth caterpillars can vary considerably

with the weather and a virtual failure of the caterpillar population, especially if accompanied by cold weather, can sometimes create a disastrous shortage of food.

Ideally all these events are 'synchronised' so that the birds are feeding young in the nest just as the caterpillars are most prolific. This year I noticed in most parts of the Forest the oak trees in particular have suffered very badly from the leaf-eating caterpillars (but a 'good' year for the birds!). In fact I think the effect on the trees this spring has been the worst for many years. The varying number of caterpillars from year to year can be due to several factors.

Those affecting either the laying of eggs in the previous summer, or their survival through the winter, or, in the next spring the synchronisation of the emergence of the caterpillars from the eggs and the opening of the leaf buds. The moth larvae (caterpillars) usually hatch and enter the leaf buds as they are about to burst open. Then as the caterpillar grows the new foliage is consumed.

The Oaks that are attacked in late April and May will produce further growth in June and July, called 'lammas growth'. Thus this year it should be visible by the time you are reading this Newsletter. This growth has a reddish or coppery colouring that protects the tender new shoots from the stronger summer sunlight. The new growth also contains greater amounts of tannin making it less palatable to insect feeders.



Storm Damage 1987: This created many sunny clearings where natural re-growth began.



Beech woodland: A beech tree died, leaving a gap in the canopy of leaves. Within five years of sunshine, undergrowth and young trees were growing well - restarting a natural cycle of woodland growth. Nothing normally grows under the deep summer shade of mature beeches.

Thus the fluctuating balances (not quite a contradiction) of different factors each year can have a serious effect on the whole complex web of woodland life; from the breeding successes of the tits to the extent that a year of heavy caterpillar defoliation of the trees could eventually show up as a thinner tree ring because the growth of the tree has been retarded that year... so, probably a thinner tree ring for 2005!

The caterpillars are mostly the larvae of three small moths, the Green Oak Tortrix, the Winter Moth and the Mottled Umber Moth. The Tortrix is the smallest and principle 'offender'! An alternative, older, name for the Tortrix moth is the Oak Leaf-roller because the caterpillar uses silk to curl a leaf into a roll in which it safely feeds and then pupates. By the end of May and early June these curled and rolled leaves can be seen. Finally the 'new' moth emerges

from the chrysalis in late June or early July and the life cycle starts again. Sometimes scores of the dusty green moths flutter out from disturbed foliage as we walk through the summer woodland.

Earlier, if disturbed by a predator or the wind, the caterpillar may be seen dangling upon its silk thread. This is its 'safety line' which it can gather-in to 'climb' up into the foliage again. The caterpillars of the other two moths also lower themselves on silk threads when they are ready to pupate. This they do in the soil below the trees.

At the moment (June) the ground is very dry and if the remainder of the summer continues to be dry then I fear trees will begin to suffer. The Beech in particular suffers stress. For three decades now Beech trees in the Forest have shown signs of stress. This was very noticeably at the time of the two excep-

tionally dry years 1975 & 76 and the several hot summers since then. Signs of suffering are usually the production of much smaller leaves, especially at the top of the tree. Die-back of those upper twigs and branches often follows. Subsequently disease, often evidenced by fungal growth preceding the death of the tree. In the past Beeches with their shallow root systems have managed to survive on the dryer slopes of the northern parts of the Forest, but their age, the cessation of pollarding, increased air pollution and the droughts of recent years all mean that our beech woods are changing. As individual trees die creating a gap in the canopy, grasses and new trees begin to grow in the sunny clearings. But this is a natural woodland cycle starting again.

Those dry years of the last three decades with the

associated fires and the great wind storms of 1987 and 1991 caused an acceleration of natural change in the Forest. The dying trees and those felled by the wind caused changes by creating natural open clearings where grasses, brambles and undergrowth supported the growth of young trees. A natural woodland cycle beginning again where usually the first colonisers are the birches and willows followed by the slower growing oaks, hornbeams and beeches. To see that change in operation visit the slopes of Hill Wood south of High Beach Church. Before the 1970's much of this area was high beech woodland. The fires and storms changed that and a mosaic of mixed woodland is developing.

This is the natural process of change that could eventually bring greater variety back into the woodlands of Epping Forest.

Ken Hoy

TRAFALGAR WOOD

Sunday, 21st October is the Bicentennial of the Battle of Trafalgar and the Conservators are anxious to celebrate this historic event by the planting of an oak woodland to be called Trafalgar Wood.

The site of the new woodland is the sizeable field lying between the largely conifer plantation alongside the track to Copped Hall and the Selvage (see map).

The Conservators have indicated that they would welcome the association of a voluntary organisation with this project and the Friends have been very happy to volunteer ourselves (**which means that we have also volunteered you, the membership**).

So that there is some immediate evidence for the existence of the wood, the idea is that some sizeable oaks should be taken from the Forest and replanted at the site. For this, specialist mechanical equipment will be required and we have offered to provide a substantial grant to cover the expense of its hiring.

In addition, the plan is to plant acorns to look after the longer-term development of the wood. The collection of seeds (acorns) is proposed on the Tree Council's National Seed Collection Day, **Sunday, 9th October**, and we would very much welcome members joining us on that day for a short walk cum acorn-collecting exercise. Join us on the Bury Road Car Park on Chingford Plain at 10.30am on Sunday, 9th October... It could be an interesting exercise for children and grandchildren. After the collection the acorns will go to the Warren and be looked after by the Epping Forest Centenary Trust.

Local schools will be invited to an acorn collection exercise in the week previous to the 9th October.

On **Tuesday 11th October** 11.00am, help will be needed with the planting of acorns and hopefully some small treelets. The Warren will provide necessary tools and equipment, and again we hope that our members will avail themselves of the opportunity of participating in this historic enterprise.

The London Gates of Copped Hall (on Crown Hill) will be open at 11.00am on Tuesday 11th October. Parking will be arranged just inside the gates, and it is but a short walk to the planting area. The planting will obviously go on for quite a few hours so we suggest that helpers could go on arriving until 3pm and still get the opportunity of planting.

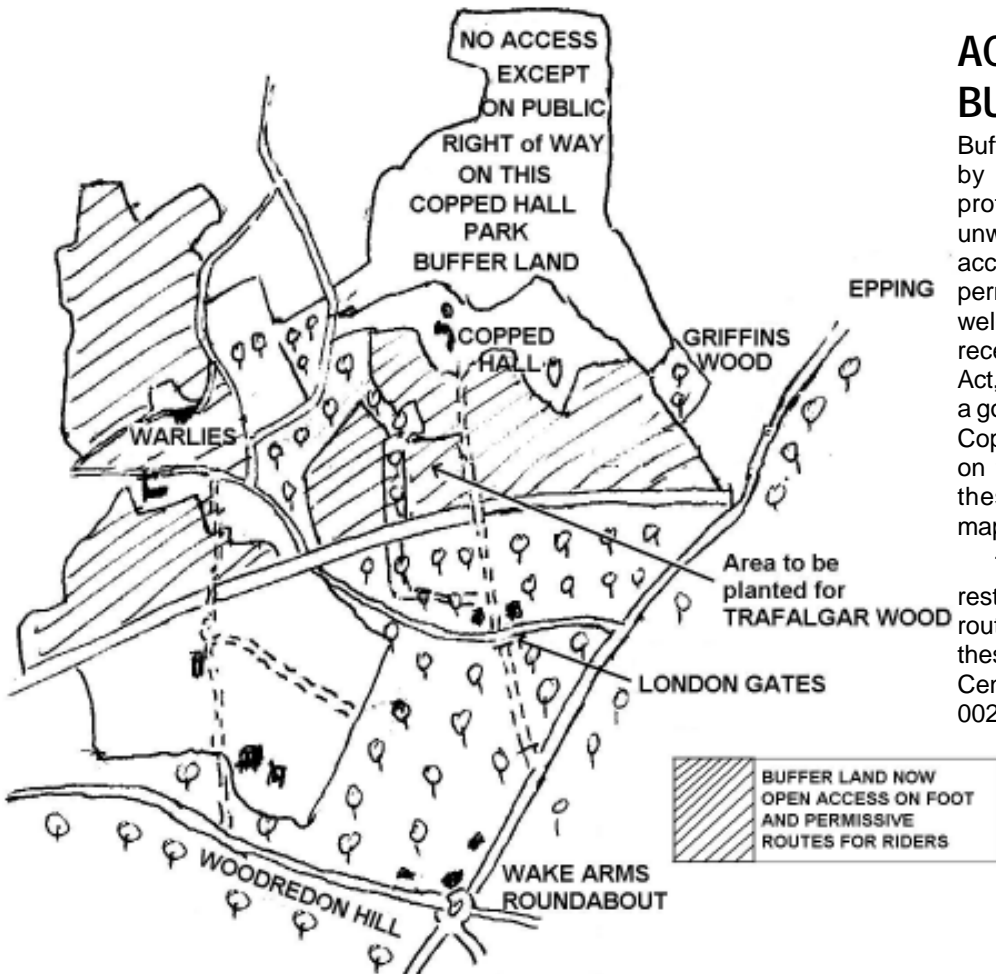
The credibility of the Friends as an organisation, anxious to give practical help to the Conservators (as well as having to disagree with them on occasion) is at stake and we hope that members will come forward to help at these two opportunities.

In the case of the seed collection walk on the Sunday, 9th October, please just turn up, but in respect of the actual planting day on Tuesday 11th October it would be helpful if members could notify Peggy on 0202 8529 8594 in advance so that the Superintendent can be apprised (good word that!) of the parking slots and quantity of tools required. It would probably be best to wear boots or wellies!

Refreshments will be provided.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Harry Bitten



ACCESS TO BUFFER LAND

Buffer Land is of course land acquired by the Conservators to help in the protection of the Forest fringes from unwanted development and is already accessible by public rights of way and permissive paths. However in a very welcome move and in the spirit of the recent Countryside and Rights of Way Act, the Conservators have thrown open a good part of Woodredon, Warlies and Copped Hall Estates to public access on foot. We have attempted to show these on the accompanying sketch map.

There are a number of small restrictions and also some permissive routes for horse riders. A leaflet about these is available from the Information Centre at High Beach. Ring 020 8508 0028 if you want one.

THE AGE OF THEYDON BOIS TREES

If you recall, the age of the avenue of oak trees across Theydon Green was mentioned in walk report three editions ago, with a note suggesting that it would be worthwhile checking as to whether the rule of thumb or any other estimate for age assessment were reliable.

So I measured the trees in the avenue to see whether the 40 years to the metre of girth (1 inch for each year) suggested by our ACE Reported is a sensible rule of thumb, or not.

There are sixty-two trees in two rows, and I have numbered them from the Coppice Row end, odds on the left, evens on the right. Ten of the trees (numbers 16, 30, 43, 24, 32, 39, 31, 53, 54, 56) are obviously replacements of the originals, and these ten range in girth from 19cm. To 36 cm. Suggesting that they re no more than 10 or 15 years old. All the rest are mature trees, one of which is dead, (No. 5) but only recently so, and hence it has been included in the assessment.

The fifty-two mature trees range in girth from 147cm to 384cm with an average of 228cm. Although this appears to be rather a wide range, all, except the largest, can mathematically be considered to be part of the same group. It is not unreasonable therefore to assume that all these fifty-two trees were planted at or about the same time, and to be of a similar age. By dividing the trees into sub-groups and 50cm. Increments of girth, the frequency diagram (fig.1) can be drawn and this shows that a sub-group of twenty-two trees are close to the mature trees' average girth of 228cm.

Recorded information suggests that the avenue was planted in 1832 or 1837, (Hoy 2002) but the difference is well within the error of an estimate of the age deduced from any method other than an annual ring count. Other sources give the planting date as 1832, when with the help of his friends, and, (one guesses) workmen from the estate, Lieutenant Hall-Dar (RN) planted the avenue. (Jack Farmer). Farmer also records that refreshments were provided by the Bull Inn and that all the planting was completed in one day.

So it can be assumed that the trees were planted in the 1830s, and hence can be considered to be 170 years old.

Based on the crude rule of thumb of one metre in forty years then our trees should have a girth of 425cm, which is way above the average, and 41 cm

larger than the biggest tree. However, Mitchell (1978) suggests that this ROT (rule of thumb) applies only to trees that have grown throughout their lives under ideal conditions, and he gives these examples quoted by Harris, Harris and James (2003).

Under 'ideal' conditions, a tree of 244 cm girth will be 100 years old. In a wood, a tree of the same girth will be 200 years old, and in an avenue, a tree of the same girth will be 140 years old.

Hence, assessing the age of our trees in proportion to Mitchell's 244 cm and our average of 228 cm. Then our trees should be only 131 years old.

A rather more sophisticated age assessment is given by John White (1998), which allows for different rates of growth in three different stages of the tree's life. The method is a bit complicated and is based on the first 40 to 100 years producing an increase in volume of wood year by year as the canopy increases, such that a more or less constant annual ring width is maintained despite the increasing diameter of the trunk. Then, as the canopy reaches a maximum and remains constant in leaf area, the amount of new wood each year is also constant, and hence the annual rings get thinner as they spread this constant volume of wood around the increasing girth of the trunk. The third stage is reached when the tree branches start to die or become damaged or fall off; the leaf area decreases and the annual rings get so thin (less than 0.5mm wide) such that the tree dies.

Perhaps this has happened to the one dead tree, and maybe happening to many others as they all appear to have had branches removed at some time, some are stag headed and some show serious amounts of missing bark around the trunks, probably as a result of damage by vehicles and subsequent fungal growth.

Now, if we use White's figures for the mature state annual ring as he suggests for poor ground then we can calculate that our average tree is 121 years old, whilst the smallest (of the mature group) would be 85 years old, and the largest 233 years old. The calculation for a tree growing in the middle of a wood gives ages of 186 years for our average tree, 85 years for the smallest and 465 years for the largest.

Whilst the 'middle of the wood' average only differs by 16 years from the known age of 170 years, there is a big difference between the smallest and the largest tree, (380 years), whereas

the 'poor ground' calculation for the average girth is 49 years adrift, but the range is considerably less at 148 years. (233-85).

Confused? So am I, but the exercise does indicate that a simple measurement of the girth of a tree, without some detailed knowledge of its growing conditions throughout its life only gives a very, very rough estimate of age. For these trees at Theydon Bois one can judge that conditions are not ideal with the trees close together, and with a hard surface between the two rows the roots can only spread in a narrow arc from each tree towards the Green without competing one with another. Furthermore, the ground is probably rather wet at all times, (and frequently semi-flooded) which may have restricted growth. Growth rates for individual trees would also have been affected by the way each tree was planted, and referring back to Jack Farmer's report that the trees were all planted in one day, it suggests that all manner of men did the work, skilled and unskilled, in a hurry to finish in the day, and with ample supplies of beer from the Bull Inn it may have been that all the trees were not planted in the correct and proper manner.

Perhaps this research into girth related to age should be extended to include other trees in and around the Forest, using written evidence and further measurements. So if anyone has some relevant information, perhaps they will pass it on to me, so that it can be correlated and perhaps produce a formula for the Growth Rate of Epping Forest Trees.

Alan Everett

**89 Kings Avenue, Woodford
Green, IG8 0JN**

- Ref : Farmer, J (1980) *Theydon Bois as I Knew It* or (1983) *Theydon Bois*
Mitchell, A. (1978) *A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europ.* Collins
Harris, E . Harris J. James, N.D.G. (2003) *Oak A British History*, Windgather Press
Hoy, K. (2002) *Getting to Know Epping Forest*, Friends of Epping Forest
White, J (1998) *Estimating the Age of Large and Veteran Trees in Great Britain*. Forestry Commission Information Note.

How Girth Reveals Ancient Beginnings

Trees are the longest surviving occupants of our planet. Some British yews are 8,000 years old, though elsewhere in Europe, old trees are rare because of the tendency to fell the more mature specimens.

In conjunction with the awareness campaign the Tree Council has issued a guide from the Charnwood Trust, an environmental charity on estimating a trees ages from the girth, which should be measured about four feet from the ground.

However, growth rates vary with altitude, soil type and density of tree cover.

Solitary oaks, sweet chestnuts and limes:

GIRTH ft (cm)	ESTIMATED AGE years
8 (244)	110
10 (305)	135
12 (366)	167
18 (549)	245
21 (640)	286
24 (732)	327
30 (914)	410
35 (1067)	477
40 (1219)	545

Hazel, ash, beech and elm:

GIRTH ft (cm)	ESTIMATED AGE years
8 (244)	75
10 (305)	95
12 (366)	110
18 (549)	169
21 (640)	197
24 (732)	225
30 (914)	280
35 (1067)	330
40 (1219)	375

Yews:

GIRTH ft (cm)	ESTIMATED AGE years
9 (274)	240
12 (366)	300
18 (549)	720
21 (640)	1,020
24 (732)	1,360
27 (823)	1,800
30 (914)	2,400
33 (1006)	3,000
35 (1067)	4,400
36 (1097)	5,600
over36ft	ad infinitum.

Contacts:

The Tree Council - 071 235 8854

CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ESSEX – WALK HANDS OFF OUR GREEN BELT

This year is the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the Metropolitan Green Belt following Duncan Sandys' circular of 1955.

Councils were called upon to define a wide swathe of open countryside around major conurbations within which no further development would be permitted, other than that related to agriculture and forestry, apart from limited infilling and rounding off of existing settlements.

An essential part of Green Belts was to be their permanence and since 1955 all governments have by and large adhered to the principle of their protection.

However, the present Government has proposed an enormous volume of house building and other development in the South-East and as part of this the East of England Plan has set out proposals for massive building in the Region including large scale destruction of Green Belt in our area.

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Green Belts and to draw public attention to the Government's serious reversal of all previous Governments support for Green Belts, the CPR England is promoting a series of walks all around London to take place on Sun 21st August.

It is hoped achieve maximum publicity and participation for this important event, especially for our Epping Forest area walk.

An additional purpose of the walks is to attract sponsorship to raise funds to support CPRE's Campaign to protect Green Belts.

To obtain further information on this aspect and the necessary sponsorship forms, apply to Mr. D. Saunders, Campaign to Protect Rural England, 128 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SW.

The Epping Forest walk that we have been invited to promote is from Chingford to Theydon Bois, approximately six miles. It starts at 10.30am on Sunday, 21st August from either Bury Road Car Park, Chingford Plain (GR 394 947), or Chingford Rail Station (GR 391 946). There will be a number of short stops on route including a possible pub stop at The Owl, Lippitts Hill or a tea stop at High Beach.

The finish will be at Theydon Bois Central Line Station (GR 456 991).

There is a possibility of a mini bus to return walkers to Chingford.

Hope to see you there - in numbers!!

Harry Bitten

VERDERER, DR ERIC DORMER, RETIRES AFTER 24 YEARS



Eric Dormer and Mrs Joanne Dormer at the end of the Centenary Walk in 1985

In 1981, Bernard Ward, a knowledgeable Field Botanist and Forest historian died. He was replaced as a Verderer of the southern parishes by Dr Eric Dormer.

Eric distinguished himself at school in West Ham but along came World War II and he spent seven years in the RAF as a Meteorological Officer.

On leaving he studied medicine at Bart's Hospital and then followed a long and distinguished medical career ending in 1986 after 22 years as Consultant Physician at Whipps Cross for the Forest Group of Hospitals.

When Verderer John Harvey retired, Eric took over his place as Senior Verderer, a nominal but important position in which the Senior Verderer generally articulates the views of the Verderers – where they are all in agreement of course!

Eric has invariably been friendly and helpful in his dealings with the Friends and we will all very much miss him. He was and is an inveterate doer of the Centenary Walk which puts him in the top bracket! He has on occasion, having done the walk and on arriving at Bell Common, had more than enough breath left to entertain his fellow walkers with a welcoming and erudite speech.

He retired as Verderer in June 2005.

We wish him and Joanne well for the future.

Harry Bitten

SO NEAR BUT SO FAR

As I left the noise ridden busy B road and stepped over the unused stile - does anyone ever ramble any more? I almost immediately felt at peace. Ever since I first knew these fields they've been pasture - probably permanent pasture which has never known the plough. A sort of silence surrounded me, allowing me to easily disregard the buzz of traffic in the growing distance. No birds were singing, just their quiet interlude perhaps, as most birds, this time of year, are quietly going about their business, feeding and rearing their next generation.

I reached Round Pond, approximately 80 metres in diameter, deep, clean and fringed by reeds and rushes that doubtless provide nesting sites and niches for many creatures.

I sat, back to an oak tree, and relaxed. Birds were now singing; chiff-chiffs, a blackbird and the laughing cry of a green woodpecker; later seen.

On the grassy, well manicured banks, littered with tubular shaped excreta - were seven Canada Geese resting in the sun - they crop the grass and are guilty of providing these generous dollops of dung - too much of it in a lake can cause problems, sometimes an outbreak of algae-bloom that pollutes and poisons.

On the pond a pair of tufted ducks, pairs of moorhens and coots and prize of the lot - so far - a pair of Little Grebes or Dabchicks diving and feeding their three tiny chicks, already emulating their parents and practising diving for food. The male in particular was a gaudy bird and looked resplendent with his distinct chestnut cheeks and neck and pronounced white patch behind his beak.

Suddenly the tufted duck swept up into the air and departed, obviously they were only visitors and within seconds the female returned or so I thought but it and her three colleagues were in fact mallard - they looked like nearly fully grown youngsters. Various species of dragonfly have also set up home at this quite recently excavated pond, a creation of the conservation mindful owners who have landscaped, planted and provided such a wonderful sanctuary for all these different species.

I left the pond, I didn't have a dip as planned as I didn't want to disturb the Grebes, and entered Round Pond Wood. I fancied I had heard the weak 'ki' like chirpings of young 'hobbies'. I'd previously found a nest nearby some years before and witnessed the parent hobbies successful rearing of their three young.

THOMAS WILLINGALE HERITAGE PLAQUE



Thomas Willingale 1799-1870

'Are they here again?' I climbed up the woodland slope noting the remnants of the bluebells that have long finished their blooming and noted the increased rabbit population. A cock pheasant crowed in the adjacent meadow.

Leaving the wood I climbed the slope and reached the peak of the rounded down shaped hill and viewed the panoramic view below through my binoculars -marvellous! So far not one human being had crossed my path.

Swifts suddenly swept into view, flying high to Hoover up their insect prey. They are incredible birds to watch, such speed, such aerobatics. Then I realised two of the 'swifts' were too big. They were, I delightfully realised, a pair of hobbies - certainly now the top prize of the day. I have no doubt that the 'ki' like chirpings I'd heard in the wood are those of these hobbies recently hatched young. There and then I made the mental note to revisit this environmental gem that is so near but so far.

Peter Relph 4/7/2004

2005 Footnote: *Peter tells us he has been back again this year and the Hobbies have returned and the Little Grebes (Dabchicks) are on the pond again with at least one youngster ... and all is still quiet and peaceful.*

The Willingale Family Society are organising an event to mark the **official unveiling to the Thomas Willingale blue heritage plaque**, which is situated on the wall surrounding St John the Baptist Church, Loughton. The event will take place on **Saturday July 30th, from 2pm to 5pm** and it is intended to draw attention to the part played by Thomas in securing the freedom of Epping Forest. At this stage the event has no form - this will depend on responses received.

We are particularly keen to borrow any pictures of Thomas and his relatives that may exist.

All will be welcome but we do need to know beforehand who intends to participate and / or attend by July 16th in order that activities can be co-ordinated and as space is limited.

Thank you in anticipation of your assistance.

Keith Willingale

*Chairman Willingale Family Society
Bow-in-the-Cloud Vineyard, Noahs Ark,
Garsdon, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 9NS
e-mail wine@bowinthecloud.co.uk*

21ST CENTENARY WALK SUNDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER

Come and join us, either at the start or somewhere along the route of this year's Centenary Walk.

Start at 9am sharp at the junction of Capel Road and Forest Drive near Manor Park Station. Thereafter, approximate timing is, Green Man roundabout 10am (meet centre of roundabout), County Hotel, Oak Hill, Woodford, 11am (the hotel has applied for planning permission so coffee may not be available!), Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge/Butlers Retreat, Chingford, 12 noon. Lunch stop will be at The Owl PH, Lippetts Hill at 1.30 - 2.15pm.

After lunch the walk will continue via High Beach, The Verderer's Ride and Warren Wood to Bell Common, Epping, and the end of the walk at around 5.30pm.

The walk is around 16 miles and there will be ample stops when short talks will be given on the Forest, its management and history in furtherance of the Walk's objectives to promote the appreciation and knowledge of this priceless open space.

The walk can be joined and left anywhere along the way.

Any queries, please ring me on 020 8529 8594.

Harry Bitten

EPHING FOREST

In 1974 or 1975 I went to a small exhibition about Epping Forest in the Passmore Edwards Museum in Stratford and wrote a tiny piece about it in the East London History Society's *Newsletter*, at that time edited by Alfred French, who, sadly, died last year. I do not have a copy of the article, but I recall writing how surprised I was to learn that Epping Forest once came down as far as Bow Bridge. I should not have been surprised, of course, as Epping Forest still comes down as far as Wanstead Flats, which can not be more than a couple of miles from Bow Bridge. When it was pointed out to me that it was possible to walk among trees all the way from Wanstead to Epping, I resolved to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

I don't like to rush things and it was to be thirty years before I got around to putting my resolution into effect. On Sunday the 19 September 2004, the day the first new areas were opened up to rambblers under the 'right to roam' legislation, the Friends of Epping Forest and the West Essex Ramblers made their contribution to the historic day in the form of arranging a conducted walk through Epping Forest from Wanstead to Epping. Not that the 'right to roam' had any implications for walkers through Epping Forest. As Harry Bitten, who led the walk, said in his words of welcome, Epping Forest was 'a long way ahead of the field'. The right to roam through Epping Forest had been established when it was acquired by the City of London Corporation in 1878. In fact, the annual walk from Wanstead to Epping had been inaugurated in 1978 to celebrate the centenary of the City's acquisition of the Forest and the right of Londoners to enjoy it for ever.

At 9.00 a.m. about 70 of us met at the Manor Park end of Capel Road, a number that more than doubled in the course of the day, with people dropping off and joining in at various points along the way. A number, like your intrepid correspondent, braved the full sixteen miles. We set off behind Harry to walk through Wanstead Flats as the first footballers were emerging from the changing rooms opposite Tylney Road. The preponderance of grey hairs amongst us ensured we were not mistaken for the visiting under-10s team, although I noticed that several players interrupted their warm-up to watch us pass. We could have been no more curious a sight than the equally numerous flock of Canada geese that have inhabited the renovated Jubilee Pond. The Epping Forest



An hour's stop at the Robin Hood Public House permitted us to quench our thirsts...

Superintendent, Jeremy Wisenfeld, explained that there were in fact too many of them there (geese, that is, not rambblers), with a potential for environmental damage, hence the introduction of railings in some sections. Still, it has to be seen as a big improvement on the eyesore it had become since the concrete base of the old pond had failed to retain the water some years ago.

The next stop was Wanstead Park, where Epping Forest Verderer Peter Adams drew attention to the limes that led to the great house, long demolished, and remarked on the extraordinary quietness that prevailed, given that we were only a stone's throw away from busy roads and a major centre of population. We continued through the Leytonstone and Walthamstow sections of the Forest, had morning tea at the County Hotel, Woodford Green, courtesy of the proprietors, skirted the lake in Highams Park and by 12.30 had reached Butler's Retreat, near Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge in Chingford.

Reinvigorated after half an hour's rest, we pressed on towards Fairmead Bottom, where another Verderer, Richard Morris, treated us to a brief but interesting talk on the house of the Southerby family that once stood there. This family's 'retreat' went back to the 19th century and was the oldest building in the Forest. It was demolished by the City of London in 1898. An hour's stop at the Robin Hood Public House permitted us to quench our thirsts, demolish our sandwiches and prepare ourselves psychologically to enter the final straight. This was soon enlivened by another brief talk at nearby Loughton Camp by Peter Adams, who explained

the archaeological significance of the site. The next stop was at Debden House Camp site, well known to East Londoners. In such a large group it was impossible to meet everybody in person, but I was fortunate at this point to stand alongside some men who had been camping here in their distant youth and entertained each other (and me) with stories of their escapades there.

The next stop of any duration was to view the protected herd of black fallow deer at Theydon Bois, a viewing that was illuminated by another short talk from the Park Superintendent. The end was in sight and shortly after five we reached Epping and disbanded and made our way, with Harry's good wishes, to cars or to the nearby Epping Station. The walk would be held again in September 2005, we were assured before departing, and would take a different route through the Forest. I highly recommend it to members. Sixteen miles may seem a long way, but remember we have the whole day to do it, with lots of rests. Whatever its benefits to poorly functioning hearts or arthritic knees, there can be no doubt about the value of the walk in increasing our knowledge and appreciation of this unique feature of our local environment. On the train back, I could not make up my mind whether to be enraged that so much of this ancient forest had been lost - it would be nice if it still came down to Bow Bridge - or to rejoice that, given the environmental depredations elsewhere, so much of Epping Forest has been preserved.

Colm Kerrigan

HOUSE MARTINS – NOT ON MY HOUSE!

Once upon a time, a long while ago, we used to have house martins along Frederica Road. They nested on many of the big houses, especially those fronting the golf course on Chingford Plain. It was a very real pleasure seeing the martins scooping up mud after rain, from the Forest track alongside the golf course, to make or repair their nests.

Alas these pleasures, together with the martins, disappeared some time ago, the big houses having generally been replaced by successive apartment blocks (that seem to get higher with every planning consent).

Imagine the delight when last year the martins returned, and a stroll to the Forest or Chingford Station was enlivened by observing the flights of these little summer visitors.

Unfortunately, there was to be no repeat in 2005. The houses that harboured the nests have generally been fitted with carefully sited nets or other defensive devices to frustrate the nesting attempts by what the residents presumably regarded as damaging, and therefore expense-generating squatters!

I have no doubt that many of the people concerned have been watching Bill Oddie and his younger and much better looking co-presenter, Kate Humble, on BBC's Springwatch. It seems ironic and pretty disappointing that people will happily watch and enjoy the plethora of 'nature' on the telly but when nature itself in the flesh comes to call it is given short shrift and sent on its way. Another form of NIMBYism.

Harry Bitten



Young House Martin: just fledged in August from a nest at High Beech, when Martins were more numerous. A few weeks later it would make a 7-8000 mile journey to East Africa

WALK REPORTS

Friday 22 April 2005

Nineteen members of the Friends joined me on this walk which should have been led by Irene Buchan. Starting from the Cornmill Meadows car park, we wandered through a short stretch of the Lee Valley Park admiring the flowering blackthorn bushes before crossing the Crooked Mile. We then walked along through the enchanting greenness of the elm scrub lining the old tack way of Clapgate Lane before turning off to climb to the top of Monhams Field which is 83 m or 271' above sea level. Although the distant horizon was misty, the view was spectacular in all directions. Sadly, the massive structure of the Sainsbury's distribution depot overshadows Waltham Abbey itself.

We noticed a large number of small thorn bushes growing amongst the grass on this steep hillside. This field is part of the Corporation's Bufferland and urgent steps must be taken soon to prevent thickets of impenetrable scrub developing on this important grassy field with its fantastic view.

Keeping to the footpath, we crossed a field of wheat to look at the view of Galleyhill Wood and the surrounding countryside. Here is one the best surviving stretches of the boundary bank to the old deer park established in 1542 by Henry VIII. One of several deer parks in the area, this one did not remain as an enclosed park for long, the land had apparently reverted to farmland by the mid 17th century. However, there is ample evidence that the deer are still present in large

numbers; we found a cast antler, fresh droppings and many slots in the soft mud.

A slight breeze kept the temperature down, but the hazy sunshine was sufficient to encourage a number of butterflies to fly in search of nectar. These were a lovely primrose yellow (male) Brimstone, several Peacocks and Orange tips (both male and female) and a newly emerged Speckled Wood. We saw more than two swallows and heard both Blackcaps and Chiff Chaffs singing so felt that summer had definitely arrived.

Tricia Moxey

19 May 2005

18 members, including two from Malden, Essex, joined us at Fishers Green for a morning walk to look for summer bird visitors.

The Fishers Green area was created from old gravel workings and is managed by the Lee Valley Park for recreation and wildlife. The morning began overcast with plenty of swifts hawking for insects, these were joined briefly by a hobby, a small falcon that visits us for the summer months.

We were soon listening to the songs of spring visitors to the area, including nightingale, garden warbler, blackcap, lesser white throat, common white throat, chiff chaff, willow warbler and sedge warbler.

From the weir we watched young great crested grebes hitching a lift on their parent's back. Unfortunately, as the morning progressed, so did the number of showers. We gratefully ended the walk in the Bittern Watchpoint hide, looking at common terns nesting on the rafts and listening to the reed warblers. In total 48 species were seen or heard.

Terry Smith

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Once there was the Countryside Commission and the Rural Development Commission (or was it Corporation?) Then these were amalgamated to become the Countryside Agency.

There was also the Nature Conservancy Council that became English Nature.

Now they have all been combined to become Natural England. It's called an integrated agency for countryside and wildlife.

The influential Commons Select Committee on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has called for the new agency to be given statutory powers to protect the landscape.

TREES

"If we had to design from scratch the primary vegetation for the planet, to house and feed other living things, to regulate the cycles of air and water, it would be almost impossible to improve upon the Trees. They are the architectural climax of evolution, the longest lived organisms on earth, and even in their present depleted ranks still provide the world's greatest engine for converting the sun's energy into living tissue.

No wonder perhaps that trees have always been seen as a challenge by humans. Few people have been untouched, in some way, by their complexity and age and sheer stubborn rootedness. Early humans worshipped them; early farmers attacked them. In the Age of Improvement they were seen as expressions of national pride and social standing; in the Age of Industry as symbols of wasted land and rebellious spirits.

Today we are beginning to respect the tree of life again. It is a full circle in more than one way, and a remarkable fusion of scientific and poetic vision. The ancient mythological idea as the lungs of the earth is now known to be a hard ecological fact, and the struggle to save them is a matter of urgent necessity as well as romantic affection..."

From an Introduction by
Richard Mabey to the book *The Tree*
by Peter Wood.

FofEF NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL

All new members who supply an e-mail address are initially sent a printed Newsletter and Membership Card.

The membership secretary then sends a test message to verify your e-mail address and provide information, on how obtain *Adobe Acrobat Reader* (required to 'read' the Newsletter) and the problems encountered with "hotmail". If any member who has requested their Newsletter by e-mail and finds it subsequently arrives by other methods, please contact "seymour@moss40.freeseve.co.uk" giving their name and address and e-mail address.

Existing members wishing to receive the Newsletter by e-mail should also contact Seymour Moss at:
seymour@moss40.freeseve.co.uk.

Please send your request by e-mail to ensure we get your correct address.

NOT IN MY BACK YARD SAY SEERA PLANNERS

The national newspapers have recently carried the news that plans to expand Heathrow and Gatwick Airports have received a major blow with the publication of a report that describes the expansion of unnecessary and a serious threat to the environment.

The report was commissioned by the South East Regional Assembly (SEERA – not be confused with 'our' one the East of England Regional Assembly, EERA, both of course non directly elected bodies) from independent consultants and has been welcomed by campaigners who have been fighting a long battle to halt expansion, particularly of Heathrow.

In commenting on the report, the Director of Planning for SEERA is reported as saying that the proposed expansion of the two airports is environmentally unsustainable and inconsistent with international policy and has got to be changed if the Prime Minister is serious about climate change. The result of airports expansion will be gridlock in the skies and this should be tackled by persuading people to take fewer flights.

Unfortunately he also is reported as 'admitting' that there was a possible case for the expansion of Stansted Airport which is of course outside SEERA's area.

This is of course just the kind of 'divide and rule' situation that delights Government Departments by setting one Region against another. In this case they don't even have to do it themselves, the Director of Planning SEERA has done it for them.

Harry Bitten

HOUSE BUILDING IN THE SOUTH EAST

The Government's failure to address the Environmental implications of its house building programme was highlighted in a scathing report from the Commons Environmental Audit Committee. The Committee warns of significant long-term damage unless the programme is reassessed.

Resistance to the housing programme is mounting – there were 26,000 responses including ours and yours to the East of England Plan – and when the Examination in Public of the Plan takes place this Autumn, the protestors will have many powerful bodies as well as arguments on their side.

THINGS WERE DIFFERENT THEN!

Back in 1937 there was a body called the School Nature Study Union. Recently one of their pamphlets headed, 'How to Identify the British Snake-like Reptiles in the Open' (written specially for young people) came our way and made interesting reading.

The text started off very encouragingly, drawing attention to the tendency of 'most' people on encountering a snake-looking object in the countryside is either to run away or kill it. It went on with the reassuring statement that "except in notorious 'viper country' the chances against the creature being venomous are very much greater than ten-to-one".

Then follows a straightforward description of the various reptiles and how to recognise them, until on the last page comes the bit that excited our interest!

I quote:

"There are occasions, however, when a viper is found when there is a danger that children may be bitten or when it is felt that the possibility that a snake may be venomous is so great that no risks should be taken.

It should be approached from the tail end and the head smashed with a long-handled hammer, the head of a golf club or the heavy handle of a walking stick. If nothing heavy is available, its backbone should be broken by blows with a stick just behind the head.

It must be remembered that snakes will quiver and even bite for long periods, sometimes hours after they are 'dead' in the ordinary sense of the word: so it is best to handle them with a pair of tongs until the quivering ceases."

In these days when risk assessments are the order of the day, it is nice to know that back in 1937 a teacher setting out with his pupils on a bit of reptilian nature study need only carry a long-handled hammer, golf club or heavy handled walking stick, and a pair of tongs!

HELP!

We need someone to take minutes of the Friends Committee meetings which are held approximately every six weeks on Monday evening and usually last from 8.00pm to 10.00pm.

If you are interested please contact me on 020 8529 8594

Peggy Bitten

FofEF

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Walks

July 16th Saturday 1.30 pm, Flowers of Fairmead.

Meet in the carpark at Fairmead Bottom. Travelling north on the A104 Epping New Road, turn left at the Robin Hood roundabout and left again at the first green tea hut and downhill to the carpark on the right. Nearest station is approx. 30mins away to the east at Loughton.

**Leader: Tricia Moxey
GR 408 968**

August 20th Saturday 10.30a.m. Disappearing Essex.

A walk along the R. Stort and then northwards through beautiful open countryside which is part of the 10,000 house expansion of Harlow. Meet in the Moorhen PH carpark. The simplest (but not the shortest) way to get there by car is northwards along the B1393 through Epping to the Hastingwood roundabout. Turn left onto the A414 and continue northwards to the 5th roundabout (Harlow Mill), where turn left (still A414), continue on to the 4th roundabout (Burnt Mill), where turn right, proceed over the railway, then turn right into Burnt Mill Lane. Follow the road bending round to the left and after crossing the Stort Navigation look for a sign on the right for the Moorhen carpark. Nearest railway is at Harlow Town Station. Various PH's in the area for lunch.

**Leader: Bill Dexter
GR 447 115**

August 21st Sunday 10.30am

CPR Essex walk 'Hands off our Green Belt' Start Chingford Station or Bury Road Carpark See page 6 for details.

September 25th Sunday Centenary Walk, 9am-5.30pm

Meet at junction of Forest Road and Capel Road at 9.00am sharp. From Wanstead Flats in the south to Epping in the north via the Green Man roundabout Leytonstone (meet centre of the roundabout 10.00am); County Hotel Oak Hill (for coffee at 11.00am); Butlers Retreat Chingford (noon); and the Owl P.H. Lippitts Hill for lunch at approx. 1.30pm. Finish at Bell Common at approx. 5.00pm.

**Leader: Harry Bitten
GR 860 419**

October 9th Sunday 10.30am

Acorn collection – see Trafalgar Wood article.

October 11th Tuesday

Acorn planting – see Trafalgar Wood article.

October 14th Friday 10.30am The Damming of Cobbins Brook

A circular walk northwards from Upshire over the Bufferland fields of Warlies Park to look at the site of the proposed dam in the Cobbins Brook Valley. The Environment Agency has permission to dam the river to help control the flooding further downstream in Waltham Abbey. Meet in the Upshire Village Hall carpark (please park tidily at the far end). Upshire is 1.25 miles along Crown Hill, which is the turning off the Epping New Road just north of the Wake Arms roundabout westwards to Waltham Abbey. The Village Hall is opposite the church.

**Leader: Sue McKinley
GR 417 011**

November 6th Sunday 10.30 a.m. Rushes, Rifles and Rabbits.

Meet at the Rushey Plain car park, on the east of the Wake Road, to the north of the tea hut at High Beach. It is the first car park on the right after passing the entrance to the Epping Forest Information Centre. It is approximately 30 mins walk from Loughton Station.

**Leader: Judy Adams
GR 414 985**

The FofEF will have Stall at:
**The Chingford Village Festival
Saturday July 9th 12.00-6.00pm**
N. Chingford Green

**Epping Forest Festival
Sunday 4th September**

1.00am - 4.00pm, Wanstead Flats
A celebration of Epping Forest with Norman Lords, Saxon Villagers, WWII display, Woodland crafts, Victorian Gentry, Forestry display, Beer tent, Tudor Revelry, Hog roast, Wildlife societies, Historical exhibition.

**Wanstead Festival
Sunday 18th September**

ADVANCE NOTICE

**Forest Supper
November 24th 2005**

OTHER

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Epping Forest Visitor Centre

Sunday 10th July 10:30am-12:30pm
Summer Wild Flowers Guided Walk

Explore the wild flower meadows around Bell Common with Verderer Peter Adams. Meet at the northern end of Bell Common adjacent to Hemnall Street, Epping.

Saturday 23 July 10:15am-12:15pm
Summer Spring Cleaning in the Loughton Brook Area

Join members of our litter section and see just what has been left behind whilst exploring the Forest in this area. Collect a litter stick and bag at the start and make a real difference to the environment. Meet at Shaftesbury, off Forest Road, Loughton.

Sunday 24th July
Bats Before Breakfast

Discover the bats that hunt around Connaught Water at night with Head Forest Keeper Keith French. Meet at Connaught Water Car Park. Please check start time with Epping Forest Information Centre.

Sunday 31st July 10:30am-12:30pm
Four Ponds Walk

A guided walk led by Forest Keeper Philip Murfin. Visit the four ponds of Butler's Retreat Pond, Warren Pond, Connaught Water and Taylors Ride Pond. Meet at Barn Hoppitt Car Park, Rangers Road, Chingford.

Sunday 17th Aug 10:30am-12:30pm
Woodredon and Beyond

Explore the areas around the Woodredon Estate with Public Affairs Manager Sally Hayns. Meet at Honey Lane Car Park, adjacent to the Volunteer pub.

Sunday 4th September 11am-4pm
Forest Festival, Wanstead Flats

Sunday 11th September
Introduction to Epping Forest

All are welcome to join this introductory amble around High Beach. Meet at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre.

Sunday 11th September
Bats at Dusk, Yet Again

Join Forest Keepers Alison O'Connor and Brian Gotts on a hunt for bats in Bush Wood. Meet at the junction of Bush Wood and Hartley Road. Please check start time with Epping Forest Information Centre.

continued...

Thursday 15th September
Last Chance Bat Walk

Looking for bats under the ancient oaks at Barn Hoppitt. Meet at Barn Hoppitt Car Park, Rangers Road, Chingford. Please check start time with Epping Forest Information Centre.

Saturday 17th Sept 10am-4pm
Long Walk

Led by Forest Keeper Ian Greer. Please bring a packed lunch. Meet outside St Peter's House, Forest Rise, Woodford.

Sunday 18th Sept 10:30am-12:30pm
Step Back In Time

Led by the Forest's Land Agent, John Holtom. Looking for clues and evidence of our Forest ancestors. Meet at Jack's Hill (South) Car Park, Theydon Bois.

Epping Forest Field Centre

For details on Field Centre courses:
Tel: 020 8502 8500 or
e-mail: enquiries.ef@field-studies.council.org

Sat 9th July **Discovering Wildflowers**, Neil Fuller

Sun 17th July **Insects, Spiders & other Invertebrates**, Geoffrey Kibby

Sun 17th July **Dragonflies and Damselflies**, Andrew McGeeney

Sat 30th July **Aquatic Plant Identification**, Ken Adams

Sat 20th Aug **Walking with History**, Peter Lawrence

Sun 21st Aug **Epping Forest: The Cockney Playground**, Peter Lawrence

Sun 4th Sept **Shield Bugs**, Roger Harvard

Sat 10th-Sun 11th Sept **Tree and shrub Identification**, Ken Adams

Sat 17th September **Identifying Trees in Leaf**, John Wood

Sat 24th Sept **Using Environmental Crafts with Young People**, Eilish Rothney

Sun 25th Sept **Discovering Badgers**, Paul Cook

Sat 1st Oct **Mushrooms, Myths, Magic and Mycelia**, Tricia Moxey



Church Road, High Beach

The Centre is holding its
**Annual Open Day on
Saturday October 8th October
1-0 pm - 5-0 pm.**

Everyone is welcome to see the work of the Centre in action – so bring your children or grandchildren to enjoy the many activities in which they can take part.
Refreshments available.

For further information
Tel. 020 8508 0611
Registered Charity No: 1102119

EF Conservation Volunteers

Sunday 17 July - Honey Lane .
Removing invasive Himalayan balsam and opening up the stream.

Sunday 24 July - Thames Valley Bog TQ 435996. Removing regrowth and birch.

Sunday 31 July - Conservation Path TQ 431999. Birch and scrub oak removal.

Sunday 21 August - Chingford Plain TQ 394949. Remove invasive blackthorn, bramble and scrub oak.

Sunday 28 August - Bulrush Pond TQ 389896. Removing reeds invasive plants.

Sunday 18 September - Fernhills
Removing hawthorn from the southern meadow.

Sunday 25 September - Gilbert Slade Pond TQ 396898. Coppicing willow on the banks and removing debris and some reeds from the pond.

For more info contact Peter Lyons on 020 529 3060

**Essex Wildlife Trust
Sunday 17 July, High Summer**

A walk in Bedfords Park with Tricia Moxey and Alan Everett. 10:30 am Bedfords Park visitor centre

Sunday 23 Oct, Fungi at Gernon Bushes. Warden Brian McGhie and Tricia Moxey. 10:30 am at NR entrance at Coopersale.

**British Naturalists' Association
Epping Forest Branch**
Saturday 23rd July **Waltham Forest Green Celebration Walk, Hollow Ponds, Gilbert's Slade and Waterworks corner** Meet: Whipps Cross Roundabout bus terminus, Pat & Ron Andrews (8524 4239)

Saturday 13th Aug 2.30pm
Epping Forest Meet: Chingford Station. Return to Betty and Rai's home for tea and cakes. Leaders: Rai and Betty Fenton (020 8529 7307)

Saturday 24th Sept All-day **Forty Hall** Meet: Chingford Station at 10:30am, bring picnic lunch. Leader: Ursula Burgess (8524 9359)

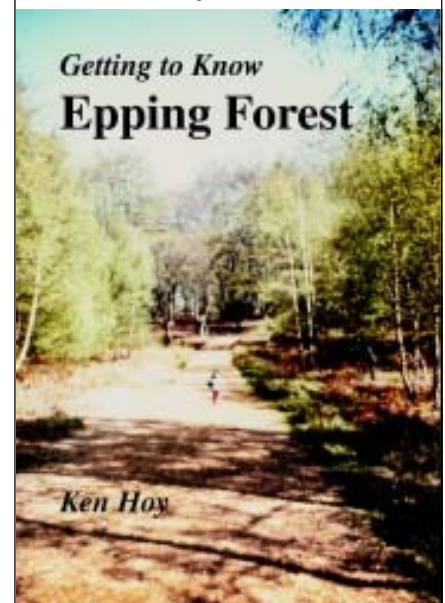
Saturday 5th Nov All-day, **Autumn Tints at Court Hill.** Meet: Car Park adjacent to Plume of Feathers PH at 9:30am, Leaders: Pat & Ron Andrews (8524 4239)

Willingale Family Society

AGM and unveiling of the Thomas Willingale Blue heritage plaque, Saturday July 30th, from 2pm to 5pm at St John's Church Hall, Church Lane, Loughton, Essex.

Getting to Know
EPPING FOREST

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



Copies are available
from Seymour Moss on
020 8529 0620
£6-00 to members
(£7-00 inc. p&p).

FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2005

Very soon after our last AGM, on the 20th of May, we heard of the sad death of our President, Lord Murray. Lionel, you may remember was present at our last AGM.

He was known as Len Murray when he was in the Trades Union movement, and, when he was General Secretary of the TUC. It was a great loss to Heather and his family – and also of course in many ways to “The Friends”.

Heather is unable to be with us tonight she sends her apologies but she has previous commitment.

Perhaps if we admit that the Friends of Epping Forest is a sort of pressure group!... we should go on to say, yes, and we have one particular aim... the future well-being of Epping Forest and its surrounding countryside. Our constitution allows, or perhaps I should say, virtually instructs us, as one of our major functions, to “arouse, inform and educate public opinion” in the best interests of the Forest.

Since our last AGM we believe there has been an increasing threat of major importance to the Forest and its surrounding area. Of course I am referring to the proposed developments that the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) and their planners call the ‘Harlow/Stansted/Peterborough M11 corridor.’

Our Officers and Committee, as you know, took emergency action in contacting the membership with a letter and a Petition to Parliament about the Green Belt. We also produced an early edition of the Newsletter devoted almost entirely to those perceived threats. That incurred extra expense of course and here I must thank the members who included a donation when they returned their petitions forms.

You will hear later in the Treasurer’s Report that we deliberately maintain a surplus

in our finances to cover such emergency campaign expenditure, legal representation and the possibility of having to give evidence to a public inquiry.

There is no need to repeat all the implications of the EERA proposals because I see, not only did they feature in my report last year, but they have been reported and up-dated in detail in every Newsletter since then. You will recall that the recent Newsletter called for individual action on the part of our membership. I think it might be

appropriate to take this opportunity tonight to say how proud you should be of your collective response.

Although mentioned in that last Newsletter may I emphasis again what we achieved. The protest petition against the threats to the Green Belt that was submitted to Parliament containing in total over 13,500 signatures. And, we understand that for such a petition, this is an unusually large number. What we should be particularly pleased about is that in just three short weeks our membership obtained 9,500 out of that total number of signatures ... just over 70%.

I am reminded of a previous occasion in 1980 when we went to see Norman Tebbit, (he was then MP for Chingford), over a matter we were concerned with at that time. He congratulated ‘The Friends’ on sending him more letters than he had ever before received from his constituents on one issue - 80 members had written to him. But, measure that against the local Guardian who recently said they had received more letters about the threat to the Green Belt from the proposed housing development than ever before on a single subject ... in this case it was nearly a thousand!!

We don’t know how many of you sent letters to ‘East of England Regional Assembly’(EERA)... in spite of the apparently deliberately complicated form supplied for a response to the so-called public consultation and also the very confusing way the information was actually given in the Report... in spite of those obstructions, we assume it was a correspondingly large response.

However the matter is far from over... Such has been the Government’s attitude that even the Regional Assembly has said it cannot comply with the proposals of the Plan unless more details and money are provided to supply the necessary infrastructure needed for the huge increase in housing. However we assume they are to go ahead with the ‘Examination in Public’ that is due to take place later this year. We understand we will not be allowed to give evidence to that Inquiry but we assume the CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) will be allowed to do so ... we will give support through our membership of the Epping Forest branch of CPRE.

There is one further point that I would like to emphasis. We should constantly keep in mind the original

intention of the ‘Metropolitan Green Belt’... because it is invariably blurred in the ‘double-talk’ of official announcements and letters etc. Green Belt land cannot simply be exchanged for bits of ‘green-space’ somewhere else. The Green Belt is a 50 year old concept ... a planning measure or tool, designed to prevent conurbations, towns and villages from merging into one continuous sprawl. Such as would happen if Harlow, North Weald and Epping were virtually to be joined as one. That is why the Metropolitan Green Belt came into existence and why it should be defended resolutely.

Although this issue over-shadows all else that we have been concerned with during the year there are many other matters with which we have been involved.

- For instance, traffic and its increasing effect on the Forest: We have supported the Superintendent and the County Council in endeavouring to establish a general traffic strategy for the whole Epping Forest area. A strategy that will aim to deflect traffic away from the Forest roads, lower the status those roads and reduce speed along them.
- We have expressed deep concern about the re-introduction of free-range horse riding in the Chingford woods. Many of you will remember this is the area where the greatest damage occurred in the past - because there ‘free-range riding’ meant riding along narrow footpaths. We have been asked to comment on the whole question of horse riding within the Forest when it is reviewed in November ... after another summer of ‘free-range riding’ in this area.
- The Conservators have also asked us to comment upon their bid for a grant from the Heritage Interpretation Fund. This we have done.
- Our views have been sought by the Conservators upon matters such as access to the Buffer lands. In this we have supported a qualified increase of access - especially by people on foot. We have asked for control of dogs - especially in the woods. Generally we have continued our support of the Conservators in their policy of acquiring further suitable buffer land.
- We have given our views on the future of the High Beach Information Centre as there is a possibility that it may be closed and transferred to

the Golf Caddie House on Chingford Plain. We emphasised the importance of maintaining an Information Centre at High Beach and said we do not wish to see the decision about a Centre at Chingford to be conditional upon the closure of the High Beach Centre. We said we did not object to a Centre at Chingford but did not think the 'Caddie House' a suitable location - Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge is preferable.

- We having examined the plans to build a flood-alleviation dam across the Cobbins Brook valley on the Warlies Estate. This is aimed to protect Waltham Abbey from flooding and is only expected to operate in exceptional circumstances.
- We have supported the Stop Stansted Expansion Campaign as we see this as the main driving element behind the development threats, as well as generating in particular, greatly increased traffic through the Forest. It should be noted that the EERA proposals are based upon a single runway at Stansted - not the expansion to two runways as now proposed with even greater consequent development pressures.
- With regard to the management policies of the Forest: we continue to have considerable reservations about the intensive cattle grazing and extensive creation of 'wood-pasture' to complement this. We see such a policy requiring increased fencing of the Forest and we are totally opposed to this.
- Our Secretary, Peg, has been asked to chair a Committee that has the task of drawing up a Code of Practice for Horse Riders and Rides.

Committee meetings of other bodies with whom we are associated have been regularly attended, such as those of The London Green Belt Council and The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Essex.

And, here I should mention that the London Green Belt Council were so impressed with Harry's analysis of the EERA Report printed in the Newsletter that they have circulated it to all their members in the London area who are likely to be similarly affected!

Obviously, as I always say on these occasions, the routine work has continued during the year, such as:

- reviewing planning applications, and where necessary objecting to applications that might affect the forest.
- the organisation of our regular events and walks.
- representation on or attendance at the meetings of various other organisations (including the Epping Forest & Commons Committee).
- the writing, production and distribution of our Newsletters – no small task.

Many people regularly undertake the work involved in keeping our organisation functioning... And those people I must now thank on your behalf in making this report.

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

Here I would like to add... that the exceptional work involved in recent months has been extremely heavy and for that we must thank Harry Bitten particularly. Only he and Peg know how much this has meant in time and energy. And, I would like that to be recognised... Thanks Harry!

Now, in concluding this Annual Report perhaps I could remind you that, after questions, comments and discussion, I must ask for a mover and seconder for a motion to 'Adopt the Report' In passing such a motion you are approving and ratifying what the Committee has done on your behalf during the past year. Of course if you wish to disagree with it, you should move a motion 'to refer back the Report'

In saying this I am not **expecting** the meeting to disapprove of our actions... but, it is appropriate

sometimes that I should remind you of the correct procedure.

That concludes my Report.

Ken Hoy, Chairman

The Report was received and adopted unanimously by the Meeting after questions and discussion.

The Chairman's Report was followed by the Financial Report of the Treasurer.

This was also adopted unanimously. 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. He also thanked the Financial Examiner, Peter Gotham, for his part in the procedure.

Following the AGM our guest speaker was Jon Stokes of the Tree Council and coordinator of their national Tree Warden Scheme and joint author of a new book 'The Heritage Trees of Britain and Northern Ireland.

Jon spoke enthusiastically and showed beautiful slides of a whole range of heritage trees, pointing out that an ancient tree should be cherished in much the same way as the heritage buildings, in the grounds of which they often stand. Alas the cherishing cannot be taken for granted and all too often an ancient tree's need for protection of its space and root system is neglected.

We were very grateful to Jon for sparing the time to come and talk to us, he is very busy and doesn't have a great deal of time on his hands. We would have liked to have dragged him round our Forest to show him some of its delights but it was not to be. The Heritage Trees book is well worth getting hold of (buying!)—it not only describes 88 remarkable trees but indicates how to get to them.

Ed.

Apologies for not having space for some submitted articles in this issue. Have a good summer, see you at FofEF walks and stalls.

Ed.

CURRENT FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Judy Adams	Loughton	020 8418 0730	Jim Gimson	S. Woodford	020 8989 3282
Peggy Bitten (Sec.)	Chingford	020 8529 8594	Ken Hoy (Chairman)	High Easter	012 4523 1839
Harry Bitten	Chingford	020 8529 8594	Robert Levene	Snaresbrook	020 8989 0884
Gareth Browne	Highams Park	020 8527 1601	Sue McKinley (Vice-Chair)	Upshire	019 9271 2014
Irene Buchan	Chingford	020 8529 6423	Derek Meakin	Chigwell	020 8500 1571
Alan Curran	Buckhurst Hill	020 8504 8720	Seymour Moss (Memb. Sec.)	Chingford	020 8529 0620
Bill Dexter	Chingford	020 8529 1427	Peter Read	Chingford	020 8524 1659
Robin Gaine	Chingford	020 8529 8890	Tony Sheppard (Treas.)	Woodford Grn	020 8504 8288