

The Friends of Epping Forest **Newsletter**

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

SUMMER 2007

Dear Friend,

I am afraid that once again we have to return to the controversial subject of cattle grazing and the attendant changes to the Forest that this would bring about.

The latest document '**Proposals for extending the re-establishment of Cattle Grazing**' is currently available for public consultation and we wanted to share with you the views of the Committee and encourage you to make your own response.

Whilst we are not opposed to grazing, it is the concomitant activities, impacts and value with which we have concerns; fencing, likely tree clearance, potential loss of amenity and wildlife.

Last autumn, we responded to the Epping Forest Grazing Strategy and then in the new year, to consultation documents on Wanstead Park and Wanstead Flats.

Now the views of the public are being sought on extending the re-establishment of Cattle Grazing, which proposes the extension of grazing to



Free-ranging Longhorns on Fairmead Bottom – they did not go into the woodland

the land between the High Beach and the Wake Arms on the western side of the B1393, a total of some 400 hectares or almost 1000 acres, beyond the area currently grazed from Chingford (300 hectares or 740 acres).

This area of 700 hectares (1730 acres) in total is described as Phase 1. Very recently, the City has produced the Summary Management Plan for the Forest 2004/2010. This illustrates very clearly that this same approach is proposed for Monks Wood, Debden Slade and Kate's Cellar, Lords Bushes, Walthamstow Forest and Gilbert's Slade and the Lower Forest north of Epping; **in other words much more of the Forest and potentially even more to follow.**

Hence our response to this present proposal will very much inform what happens to much of the rest of Epping Forest.

The Consultation Document

The Document itself makes a number of assumptions, some of which we question and they are summarised here. The headings below follow those of the document.

Cattle Grazing

Whilst we note that the initial consultation identified that 87% would like to see grazing extended, this figure is of little value, given that the associated activities and impact which accompany grazing were not identified and it is these activities with which the public may be concerned eg. fencing, likely tree clearance, loss of amenity and wildlife.

The History of Cattle Grazing

Whilst cattle grazing has been part of the Forest's history, we question its significance on the landscape and acknowledge the other activities that make the Forest we see today, including pollarding, wood gathering, hunting, increasing populations etc.

Wildlife Diversity and pasture woodland

The case for grazing is simply not made here, particularly in relation to the woodlands, where no grazing has taken place for many years – cattle prefer grass! We acknowledge the cattle's role in maintaining the grassland and heaths (Fairmead and

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Chingford, for example). However we question their value in grazing the woodlands, particularly given the clearance work that would be required to encourage them to enter the woodland for other than shade.

To achieve an open woodland will require substantial clearance of understorey and trees to enable grass to grow for the cattle to graze. In order to keep the areas subsequently open will require much higher numbers of cattle than the 150 animals proposed, but would make the Forest rather more like Richmond Park than the Forest we know today. Furthermore, during most of the last century the numbers of cattle grazing (a few hundred annually post WW2) did not prevent scrub encroaching upon the grasslands.

This open environment would be very vulnerable to disturbance, particularly given the huge numbers of potential visitors on the doorstep of the Forest.

Proposals

As mentioned above, the current grazing area shown on the map is misleading. The areas grazed at the moment are largely Fairmead and Chingford Plain with no cattle straying into the woodlands. Probably grazing therefore takes place in around 40 hectares or 100 acres, not the 300 hectares or 740 acres shown on the plan. The new proposed area for grazing would add another 400 hectares or nearly a 1000 acres, though in reality grass for grazing exists primarily just on Honey Lane, the area near the Volunteer public house, the newly created Wake plain is rushes and birch at present and Sunshine Plain is heathland. Whilst there is additional grassland at High Beach, grazing here will compete with the recreational use and it is difficult to see how cattle could roam freely in this popular area, where picnicking takes place.

Hence they are proposing over 4 km or over 2.6 miles of fencing, which in reality would provide grazing for not much more than 10 hectares or 24 acres of grass and heath.

Controls

Cattle grids - These were introduced at the Waterworks Roundabout to cope with a particular problem at the newly developed A406. Surely if detailed discussions have taken place with the highway authority, then the feasible locations have already been identified.

Fencing

We are opposed to fences in the

Forest on the grounds that these are against the spirit of the 1878 Act, which declares the Forest should be open and unenclosed and that its natural aspect should be preserved. Furthermore fences are restrictive, imply ownership and 'keep out', are visually intrusive and moreover are unlikely to achieve the apparent aims of the strategy to create a open parkland (a vision of which we are not in sympathy).

Virtual fencing

Were this to become available, it could reduce the requirements for fencing.

Electric fencing

This is currently used to fence smaller areas of grassland, where presumably more intensive grazing is sought. As a way of maintaining these areas of grassland, cattle grazing is effective. Even where currently there is fencing along the B1393 (old A11), there are still areas of electric fencing; thus demonstrating that even with wooden fencing, electric fencing is used.

So what are your Committee's views

a) There should be an informed professional debate about what grazing could achieve, particularly within the woodlands, how many animals would be required and detailed information on the results of the grazing undertaken to date. Have the grasslands improved, what about the woodland areas, how do the cattle use the woodland, how many are needed and what will it cost?

b) Enclosing a further 400 hectares (1000 acres) by a wooden fence 4km.(2.6 miles) along with associated cattle grids and the like should not take place, because:

- i) the value and feasibility of cattle grazing of the woodland is neither proven nor demonstrated by the grazing which has been undertaken to date;
- ii) enclosing the Forest is inconsistent with the Act;
- iii) enclosing this large area, totalling 700 hectares (1730 acres) is unlikely to obviate the need for using electric fencing to achieve the intensity of grazing.

And what can you do?

a) **Get the consultation document** – free copies of the document should be obtained from the Epping Forest Visitor Centre at High Beach in person or by telephone on **020 8508 0028** or via email **epping.forest@cityoflondon.gov.uk**.

b) Attend the presentations and walks about grazing, advertised in the consultation document to find out first hand.

c) **Respond to the document** – it is vitally important that as many people as possible respond individually to the document. In the 2005/06 consultation the Friends careful and detailed objection was considered as one response even though on behalf of an organisation with over 1500 members. Please add your comments to the response!

We suggest you say **NO** to the first question ... because if you approve the locations of the fencing, it implies you are supporting fencing that entire part of the Forest.

If you do not answer the question, your further alternative views, may not be counted and the YES (approval) vote, as a %, will then be that much bigger.

We would recommend you then add and respond to the questions that should have been there; namely:

Do you want to see cattle grazing extended?

Do you want fencing?

And make comments as you wish.

Please don't leave it to others. This is important.

Also note that all responses must be received by 13 July 2007.

THE NATURAL ASPECT

I find I can't keep up with the amazing weather records that are broken almost every month - the warmest winter, earliest spring, the wettest this, and the driest that. How can anyone still deny that 'something is happening'?

Undoubtedly spring this year began at least three weeks early.

On a day I spent in the northern part of the Forest in mid-April I thought that the balance was beginning to re-adjust. Many tree buds had been open for some weeks. But the earlier opening of the buds meant that the defoliating caterpillars were appearing a week or so later than they usually do to synchronise with the leaf buds opening.

However by the end of April it was clear that this year the numbers of caterpillars were greater than for many years. Although Oaks and other trees were affected, the 'attack' on the Hornbeam trees was particularly heavy.



Blue Tit: just out of the nest - these are the 1-2 days when they are most in danger.

Blue and Great Tits, who usually only have one brood each year somehow manage to arrange their maternity programmes within a few days of each other. My three garden nest-box families and the family growing up in the Suntrap Centre's nestbox, (they have a camera monitoring progress on a 'TV' screen showing the children what is happening) all these families seemed to be in almost exactly the same stage of development. However, the development of the nestlings this year was somewhat later than the growth of the caterpillars. Usually they too are well synchronised. As these caterpillars are a major food source for Tit families such an 'out-of-sync' occurrence could be serious and has been predicted to increase as global warming has more effect.

Like the 'Suntrap' children no doubt, I watched my nest-boxes closely. Two families continued to develop normally. But the third family, where originally 8 babies hatched, I noticed week or more later, were having feeding visits from the adults only half as frequently as the other nests. By watching closely I realised they had 'lost' the male bird (to a Sparrow Hawk or cat?) and had become a single-parent-family. Soon three little heads were gaping for food at the nesthole and the adult was unable to enter the nest. Only the three were receiving food. When I climbed up to look inside the box I found five corpses at the bottom of the nest. I removed them. Although working hard the female had been unable to feed the 8 young ones. The three strongest, as hunger increased, climbed to the entrance and thus survived! (As I write the nest-box is empty - the 3 young flew this morning).

The point of telling this story is to

illustrate that from the moment eggs are laid a 'natural' process of attrition affects all families. Tits can lay up to at least 10 eggs. This number plus two adults - 12 - must be reduced down to 2 again by next spring to maintain a balanced population! This applies to all birds; many of whom have 2 or 3 broods of 5 young!

The balance is achieved by Magpies, Jays, Crows, and Grey Squirrels in the breeding season, and by Sparrow Hawks, domestic cats and other predators throughout the year. However when changes occur that affect the balance we begin to notice. That is happening now. For example, have Magpies and squirrels increased?

Fifteen to twenty years ago groups of people from Wansfell and Friday Hill House, who I took regularly into the Forest were noticing that we saw fewer and fewer birds. Scientists who quite correctly require hard evidence, are only now accepting that, like 'farmland birds', something is happening to 'woodland birds'. It is most likely that there are multiple causes. There have been great changes in farming methods in Britain, Europe, and winter quarters in Africa and elsewhere. There have been and are, climate changes, human population and development changes causing natural habitat changes. Un-noticed insect life-cycles will have been affected that are bird food sources!

Of course it can be said, changes have always occurred; 'dutch elm disease', DDT, myxomatosis, more-cars/less-deer, BSE in cattle... but Grey Squirrels have been here since the 1940's; so have Jays, Magpies, Crows and Sparrow Hawks. There is no simple answer, it is far more complex.

There is no simple answer to the current grazing controversy either. Records show that cattle grazed the Forest plains in hundreds during most of the 20th century - until the late 1980's. But still young trees and scrub increasingly encroached on the grasslands. Thus they needed to be cleared mechanically to try to maintain a balance (e.g, Fairmead Bottom, Whitehall, Almshouse, Pear-tree, Ludgate and Deershelter Plains).

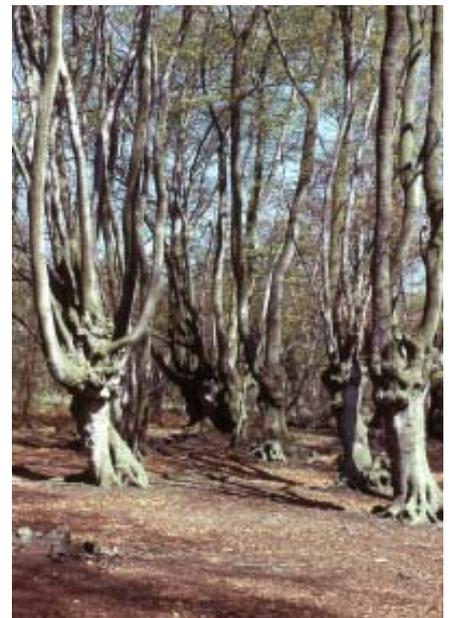
Currently the removal of bushes and under storey to create extensive 'open

pasture woodland' will create massive changes too... but the more that 'gardening' management takes place the quicker the scrub will grow back. And, the more it will cost to clear it. The cattle will still prefer eating the grass of the plains and ancient greens to entering the woodlands to browse tree growth.

Fencing great areas of high canopy woodland will not make grass grow under the trees, it will merely inconvenience the public and be intrusive in the appearance of the Forest landscape. Even if extensive open 'wood-pasture' forest should be what the public wish to see, it will take an impossible number, thousands, of cattle to maintain a balance if further hectares are to be 'managed' into 'wood-pasture' (not the 150 animals proposed).

Meanwhile we will still have a permanently fenced Forest.

Few cattle have grazed the Forest north of Fairmead Bottom in living memory, and none have voluntarily done so in the recent years of grazing - although there have been no fences there to stop them! There is very little grass for them to eat. Erecting more fences as far as the Wake Arms roundabout will not change that!



Woodland labelled 'Wood-pasture' and fenced - but where is the grass? or, which trees will be cut down?

The effect of allowing the present 300 hectares to be grazed and the grazing strategy has a whole, must be properly assessed before a further 400 hectares of woodland is hastily and unnecessarily enclosed with permanent fencing. No proper assessment has ever taken place! And, the issues have not been properly and seriously debated.

Ken Hoy

STOP AND THINK !

The history of Epping Forest, except as a legal entity, is not well recorded. Until relatively recent times the vast majority of those who lived in the area had very limited literacy. When reading the small number of documents available one needs to be aware of the perhaps prejudiced views of the authors and the context within which they were written.

These circumstances are fertile grounds for myths to arise and be steadily modified over time. They can bear little if any connection with reality. For example, while Dick Turpin undoubtedly lived in the area his exploits have been greatly embroidered and many locations have been claimed for his 'cave'. On the other hand it is extremely doubtful that Queen Boadicea ever came to Ambresbury Banks let alone the Forest. Other than to an historian these two colourful stories are really quite harmless.

Old myths can be reinforced and new ones started when people of a perceived status make unguarded or wrong statements. A situation occurred recently when such a person said that "cattle are opening up areas of thickened forest that had become inaccessible to walkers, riders and cyclists". The statement is wrong in almost every respect, but it creates a myth that the Forest would become an impenetrable thicket if it were not for the cattle and all the paraphernalia that would have to go with them in the 21st century. Let us examine the situation.

There is a tendency to pigeon-hole or label things so that people can better understand them. This can be dangerously misleading and one must appreciate that the Epping Forest is a special place and does not fit any one hole. The Forest is not a Country Park or wood-pasture and, despite the huge importance of its natural history, it is not a Nature Reserve. Neither should we consider it a collection of golf courses, football pitches, woodland, etc. The whole is very much more than the sum of the various parts.

We cannot know what the Forest area was like in prehistoric times or even in the middle ages. If we could it would be interesting in itself but not relevant to the situation in which we now find ourselves. There are some, who ought to know better, who say that the Epping Forest is a royal hunting forest and has been managed as such since the middle ages. To all intents and purposes it ceased to be one more

than 400 years ago and as the Forest Laws lapsed such management as there was became a case of partially controlling the amount of exploitation by commoners and local landowners.

The amount of devastation caused by this reached its peak in the century before the passing of the Epping Forest Act 1878 and in a strange way led to the Forest being saved. No doubt it was this that stimulated the draughtsmen of the Act to require the Conservators to "maintain the natural aspect". Discussion of these deceptively simple words deserves more space than is available here and now.

Such areas as remained open, as grasslands or heaths, were predominantly those close to farms on the Forest's edges where the grazing was intensive and where the cattle were often taken off the Forest each day. Graziers had to have substantial acreages of land outside the Forest to feed their animals during the long autumn and winter months. The cattle would have to vie with horses and deer for food at this time.

Before the advent of mined coal the principal use of the Forest for local people was probably as a source of fuel to provide warmth and cook food. Grazing for what small number of cattle the locals had was of some value but the King's deer were a confounded nuisance. Even when the population began to increase in the late 18th and early 19th centuries the clearance of trees was done by a process of active felling. The urbanisation of the Forest boundaries continued apace and the number of farms and cattle steadily declined. Clearly despite the many hundreds of cattle that the commoners were putting out they continued to have very little if any impact on the density of the woodlands.

In the early years of their tenure, following the passing of the Epping Forest Act in 1878, the Conservators concentrated on drainage schemes, the thinning of large areas of woodland and the removal of what were seen as unsightly pollarded trees. Then, after the Second World War a more naturalistic approach was developed. In the last 30 years the level of intervention has dramatically increased to recreate someone's perception of what it was like in the middle ages. Regrettably there are fashions in countryside management as in all things and the Forest takes a very long time to recover from each of them.

There was no golden age in terms of management that we should try to

copy even if we could. Perhaps the most important thing that a Conservator needs to understand is that the Forest has been subject to very substantial changes in climate and economic and social pressures. Changes for the better in the Forest take place over a very long timescale and attempts to ignore these pressures will be seen in the future as negative rather than positive.

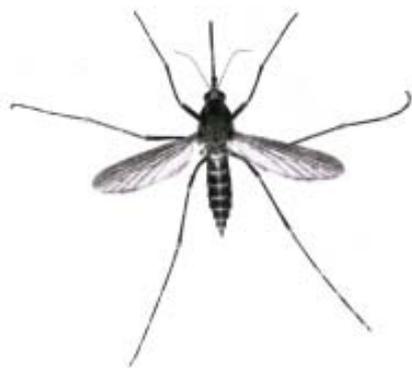
The opening up of so-called 'inaccessible' areas is being done with Conservators chainsaws and stump grinders not with the small number of cattle that are now on the Forest or are proposed in the foreseeable future. It is questionable whether cattle ever went into or spent much time in the woodland, and yet there are large areas that are easily accessible without the wood-gang's and the cattle's intervention. In living memory cattle rarely went into the wooded areas and sightings of them in the High Beach area were both rare and usually after very dry summers. On these occasions the quality of the grass further south had deteriorated so much that they were desperately searching for palatable food. Even so they found nothing to attract them and moved on.

Commoners' cattle have been one small element of the Forest for many hundreds of years. The benefits in terms of controlling scrub and free grazing was directly related to the numbers involved, but until the 20th century it has for the most part only been apparent to those with the keenest eye or a vested interest. More recently most local people found the free ranging cattle at worst a nuisance, but one that they would tolerate for the benefits to them of living close to the Forest. However, with the pressures of large amounts of fast moving vehicular traffic the costs have been significantly increased in recent years and it is now proposed that there should be more cattle grids and miles of fencing. The fact that there will be plenty of gates and places to squeeze through the fences entirely misses the point. The unique wild and unconstrained character of the Forest will be very substantially changed for the worse.

This is a very high price to pay and one that might only be accepted if there were commensurate benefits. Apart from the rather shallow "isn't it lovely to see cows in the Forest" argument, can we really say that we can see any benefits of substance?

Verderer Peter Adams

MOSQUITOES OF EPPING FOREST



A female mosquito

Although measuring no more than a centimetre in length, the female mosquito can be a troublesome blood feeder. The long feeding tube with which it punctures the skin can be seen.

Mosquitoes, or gnats as they are commonly called in this country, can be troublesome insects especially during the summer months. They are two-winged flies and so belong to the insect order Diptera.

Mosquito bites lead to raised wheals and reddening of the skin accompanied by intense irritation. This is the result of an allergic reaction to the secretion that the mosquito pumps into the skin as it feeds. This fluid contains an anticoagulant which prevents the blood from clotting and an anaesthetic to allow the mosquito to bite its victim without causing pain, and hence feed unnoticed. The saliva also serves to dilute the blood so making it easier for it to be sucked through its fine feeding tube.

Before condemning all mosquitoes, two points should be made: firstly, a quarter of the thirty-three species of mosquito recorded from this country do not bite humans, and secondly, only female mosquitoes are blood feeders. Male mosquitoes feed exclusively on nectar and honeydew. In Epping Forest, twelve species have been recorded, most being troublesome to people.

The aquatic breeding sites of mosquitoes vary considerably. Some species develop in permanent ground water, while others occupy temporary fresh-water or saline pools, some mature in the water that collects in holes in trees and yet others in containers such as rainwater barrels and horse troughs. One British mosquito selects underground water that collects in flooded basements, the

foundations of dwellings, drains and in underground railway tunnels.

On summer evenings swarms of mosquitoes may be seen. These are mating swarms and are made up of tens or even hundreds of male mosquitoes, all of the same species, performing an aerial figure of eight dance. The purpose of the male swarm is to attract female mosquitoes of the same species. When a female enters the swarm, one of the males immediately mates with her and she then flies away to find a blood meal so that her eggs will develop. When the eggs have matured she seeks a suitable spot to lay her several hundred eggs. Depending on how long she survives, she may lay another two, or even three, batches of eggs.

In the warmer areas of the world, mosquitoes are responsible for transmitting malaria, yellow fever, dengue and West Nile virus. In Britain we do not experience the same problems from mosquito bites, but we should not be complacent. A form of malaria, known as ague, was once present in this country. As late as 1887, malaria was common in many parts of southern England causing sickness and death. Outbreaks of malaria also occurred following the First World War and, to a lesser extent, the Second World War when troops invalided home with malaria were sent to convalesce in coastal districts of Essex and Kent. These areas coincided with the presence of



*An egg raft of *Culex pipiens**

Although only about half a centimetre in length, the raft contains about two hundred eggs.

Here they are hatching and the young larvae emerging.

certain species of mosquitoes, belonging to the genus *Anopheles*, which are capable of transmitting malaria. The outcome was that large numbers of local civilians contracted the disease.

Six species of *Anopheles* mosquitoes have been recorded in Britain, and three of these, *Anopheles claviger*, *Anopheles plumbeus* and *Anopheles messeae* occur in Epping Forest. Of these, *Anopheles messeae* and *Anopheles claviger* develop in weedy ponds and *Anopheles plumbeus* in the water which accumulates in tree holes. All of these species are capable of spreading malaria, given sufficiently long spells of warm weather to allow the parasites to develop inside their bodies. Warm periods are predicted to occur more frequently in the future as a result of global climate change, and hence there is a possibility that malaria will return to this country.

Woodland mosquitoes like *Aedes cantans* and *Aedes punctator*, both common in Epping Forest, bite people readily and can be a problem to day-trippers, hikers, anglers and horse riders. They have an interesting life history. In common with all other mosquitoes, the early stages develop in water but the eggs of these species are laid in dry ditches and woodland depressions during summer months and not in water. By late autumn or early winter these areas will have filled with water, allowing the larvae to hatch and develop. Pupation occurs in early spring and the adults are on the wing by April or May, just as the water in which they have developed is drying out.

The most common mosquito in Britain, including Epping Forest, is the 'house-gnat', *Culex pipiens*. This small brown insect breeds in ground water and water that has collected in artificial containers such as water butts. The two hundred or so eggs are laid in a batch called a 'raft' and float on the water surface. The adults eventually develop and the female mosquitoes feed on the blood of birds, only becoming obvious when they enter our houses in late summer and early autumn to find shelter to spend the winter. However this innocent insect is usually persecuted and blamed for all autumn and winter 'gnat bites'. The real culprit is usually *Culiseta annulata*, the largest of the British mosquitoes, which also enters houses to pass the winter. However it becomes active and hungry from time to time and seeks our blood.

Keith Snow

STOP STANSTED EXPANSION

On 30th May the public enquiry opened following Uttlesford Council's refusal of planning permission to British Airports Authority's proposal to extend the Airports capacity from 25 million passengers per annum to 35m.

It is expected that BAA will very shortly put in an application to build a second runway at Stansted in line with the government's Civil Aviation White Paper of 2003.

It would appear that the government is pursuing contradictory policies advocating restraint on carbon emissions to combat climate change on the one hand and expansion of airports on the other!

The National Trust is opposing the expansion on the grounds that the adjacent Hatfield Forest will be even more seriously affected than it already is.

The Friends have supported the SSE campaign for many years believing that the traffic and other adverse factors stemming from an expanded airport will impact on the Forest. For instance the proposed expansion of Harlow is, in part, designed to cater for a vastly increased workforce at an expanded airport also creating intrusions into the Green Belt.



THE EUROPEAN SQUIRREL INITIATIVE

Following the Friends AGM on 21 May, Miles Barne, Chairman of the European Squirrel Initiative, gave an illustrated talk explaining what they hoped to achieve in the future. He mentioned that the last red squirrels had been recorded in Epping Forest about 50 years ago and that there were now very few localities where they were currently thriving. Colonies in Thetford and the Lake District were under threat from the more competitive introduced grey squirrel and were likely to disappear within a couple of decades.

With 90% of England and Wales now colonised by grey squirrels, the destruction caused to woodlands is well documented. Alarming they are now moving further northwards, carrying with them the deadly squirrelpox virus which infects red squirrels, although they appear immune to its effects.

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

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

grey squirrels into the European woodlands, orchards and vineyards.

A lively discussion session followed indicating the level of interest amongst members. If you were unable to attend the AGM or would like further information about the project.

Why not visit the website:

www.europeansquirrelinitiative.org.

Alternatively you can purchase a copy of *The Red Squirrel, Redressing the Wrong* by Charles Dutton. Please send payment with a cheque for £20 to the European Squirrel Initiative, 4 East Bank house, Tide Mill Way, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 1BY. 01394 386 919.

Tricia Moxey



HOW CAN WE SAVE THE RED SQUIRREL?

Reprint from The Guardian 23/8/06

It's had its food stolen and been pushed northwards by its nastier cousin and now a killer virus could wipe out the red squirrel within a decade. It is thought that 70% of grey squirrels carry the virus and, although unaffected, they can pass it to the reds: if caught, it is usually fatal within two weeks.

But how to stop it spreading? Researchers from Newcastle University, and the University of London

say the only way is to protect the 16 red squirrel refuges in England, by killing all greys at the entry points,

Jessa Battersby of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, which advises the government on wildlife issues, says this won't lead to a growth in gated communities for the creature, with Squirrel Nutkin's scampering around living in fear of apocalyptic viruses. "They're not fenced in," she says. "We manage the areas for the benefit of red squirrels - they tend to survive best in coniferous areas [disliked by greys] and sites are carefully selected for dependability. Then you cull grey squirrels in a buffer-zone area."

The greys can run but they can't hide: the buffer zones are cleared of woodland or patrolled by landowners and once caught in traps, the grey squirrels are clubbed to death (following RSPCA guidelines).

There are, however, other protection measures. Last week, a Scottish group set up a rope walkway above a motorway to prevent red roadkill. In Herefordshire, one man is breeding squirrels from European stock. There is also a contraceptive pill for greys in development. And in a House of Lords debate earlier this year, the Conservative peer Lord Inglewood suggested getting Jamie Oliver to put squirrel on school menus, thus eliminating the twin evils of grey squirrels and the turkey twizzler in one go.

Red Alert, a campaign group to save red squirrels, says refuges are the best hope. "There's no point in trying to eliminate greys in the rest of the country," says David Hill the vice-chairman. "Given the right habitat, food sources and protection, red squirrels will breed and eventually re-migrate to the rest of the country where they once were."

Emine Saner

WHITE HOUSE AND THE LIMES

This property of 12/13 acres is at the northern end of the Yardley Hill estate along Sewardstone Road. It used to serve as the kennels for Walthamstow dog track but that is all gone now.

The site itself although next to Yardley Hill is just over the border in Epping Forest District to which a planning proposal was submitted in respect of the erection of 119 "affordable houses". Epping Forest District is somewhat behind in meeting its target provision of affordable houses and despite the officers recommending rejection on Green Belt grounds approved the application.

The Government Office for the Eastern Region to whom application was made to call this decision in for consideration by the Secretary of State, ruled this out. However Waltham Forest Council who are opposed to the development on Green Belt grounds, traffic implications along Sewardstone Road and pressure on local infrastructure returned to the charge. At the time of writing the Secretary of State is reconsidering the decision and is said to be minded to call for a public enquiry. The Friends the Conservators and many other groups have opposed the development.

Harry Bitten

LETTERS

In response to our request for criticism and comment on our activities etc., I received a very thoughtful and frank letter from an elderly, long time member, Arthur Gliddon. Many of the points Arthur raised, had already arisen from our own self-examination, but he strongly made some points about the Newsletter not being 'newsy' enough and even boring and too technical. I assured him we would take note of the points he had raised.

Thanks Arthur!

Ken Hoy

Some thoughts

I think you are a great organisation. The news letter is looked forward to. I have enjoyed the walks I have been on. I think the cards you sell are a very good buy.

a) Have you considered or already done, an occasional pub stop or a lunch? This would help people to get involved as you could talk to them and remind them of the next events.

b) A family walk suitable for cross

country buggies or juniors with a stop for a climb or run about.

c) Advertise a fast walk or something more challenging. Keep up the pace, just one stop for a talk. You would need to tell people or at a meet divide into two groups the fast and the not so fast.

I did feel on my last walk that the Forest was all rather too precious, keep out, do not tread on a blade of grass. Do not allow the children in, do not climb and certainly do not allow them on bikes. Keep the young out at all costs. It all felt rather restricted and I felt a loss of freedom. Surely the Forest is there to be used and not kept as a museum piece.

Thank you for allowing me to have a say. I remain an enthusiast and supporter and grateful for all your hard work.

Paula Browne

E-mail from Australia

Thank you to you all for the emailed magazine. The photos are great in it in fact last year I kept one as a screensaver. Irene and I were hoping to have gone on one of your walks when we were on holiday in the summer last year in UK. We will make an extra effort the next time we are in UK.



Some of your members maybe interested to learn that I have 20 acres here with my own forest but I do have a big problem with many of the large Tea trees they are dying through the mistletoe which is spread by a little bird called aptly the Mistletoe bird. It swallows the seed and when its passed there is a sticky substance comes out when the bird passes the seed and this causes the seed to remain some 30ft and more up in the tops of the trees which over time kills the tree outright.

*Michael Schooley
ex Leyton Boy, now in Australia*

Bike damage to Forest

I am deeply concerned at the damage being done to the forest by bikers. I have been on to a website that said a group meet at High Beach 9.30 am on Sunday mornings.

<http://www.epping-forest-abc.co.uk/>

I was born in Chingford and have enjoyed and cherished the forest as a haven of peace and tranquillity. I have read your history and appreciate the work you have done. It is good to see all sorts of people benefiting in many different ways from the forest. Whilst bikers use the main horserides and bridle paths that seems fine to me. However, in recent years I have seen that they are using the tiny paths in the heart of the forest. On Sunday I walked up from Fairmead Bottom to High Beach Church with my son who was visiting from Dorset. We branch off the main track to the left and walk up through the huge old trees across the stream and then come around back to the road opposite the church. I was appalled to see how the undergrowth had been mowed down, the tracks were bald and there were purpose made jumps for bikes. This used to be a quiet stretch where one only met the occasional walker. We were nearly mown down by bikers coming down at speed.

On our way back down the same way, we met a man and woman on the side of a once tiny path with a camera. He told us to be careful because bikers would be coming down at speed. I responded that it was for the bikers to look out for me, not for me to keep out of the way.

I am sure as friends of the Forest are fully aware of this issue. I would be grateful to know of the opinion of the Friends and receive advice on any action I can take.

Penny Allier

NEWSLETTER

DELIVERERS REQUIRED

(ONE for each of the following areas)

NAPIER ARMS area including Derby, Stanley, Chelmsford Roads + Empress Avenue.

LOUGHTON - Traps Hill area including Tycehurst & Spareleaze Hills.

LEYTON - Whipps Cross area including Fulready Road & near parts off Shernhall Street.

LEYTON - Midland Road area including Coopers/Farmer Roads to Forest Drive location.

Total number of copies in all 4 areas is just over 40. Postage well worth saving with your help, thank you.

If you can help please contact Keith Foster (020) 8523 4025



Associated with these are "Gateways" designed to provide a sense of place and to give a clear indication to visitors that they have arrived in Epping Forest! This will be a useful guide since, the way things are going the Forest will be otherwise unrecognisable!

As for the Hubs the areas indicated already have car parks or car parking spots that are perfectly accessible. Chingford, High Beach and Theydon already have refreshment facilities. Toilet facilities are notoriously difficult to maintain are, regrettably, readily vandalised and probably expensive to run. The public toilet on the slope to the west of the Royal Forest Hotel was prey to all those problems and was closed and removed. Waltham Forest Council found the same problems with the Chingford toilet and have come to an arrangement that the Royal Forest Hotel toilets may be used by the public.

A quarter of the Forest's hornbeam pollards will be re-pollarded on a cyclical basis of between 15-35 years - quite a management task!

Other aspects in the Plan are wetlands, resources, monitoring, protection, access and heritage.

Harry Bitten

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2004 - 2010

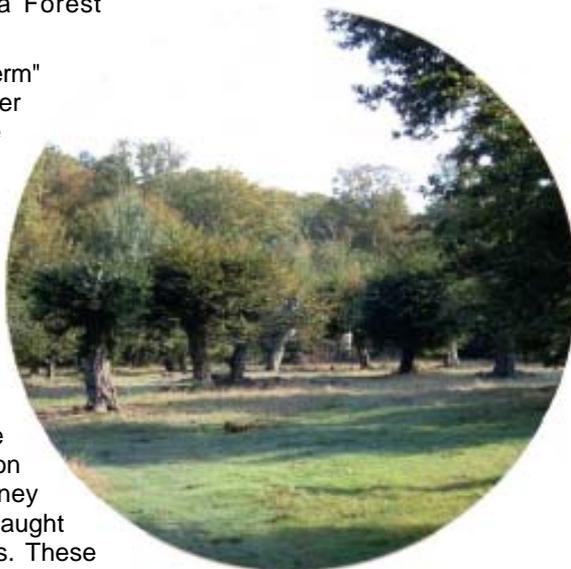
If you really want to know what the Conservators have in mind for Epping Forest up to 2010 and beyond you should quickly obtain a copy of this document by telephoning 020 8 532 1010 or from the Information Centre at High Beach .

The centrefold map in the document reveals the extent - for the time being - of the plans that will create a Forest very different from the one we have known.

Up to 2010 some 180 acres of Bury Wood will be transformed into pasture woodland which will require the removal of hundreds of trees and shrubs and give rise to a Forest looking like the illustration!

Moreover in the "longer term" it is aimed to create well over a thousand acres of pasture woodland i.e. over a quarter of the Forest's woodland will be transformed! The only major part of the Forest that will be relatively untouched - for the moment - will be that north of the A121 as far as Epping!

The Plan includes the creation of Hubs at Theydon Bois, High Beach and Honey Lane, Chingford and Connaught Water, and Wanstead Flats. These "will serve to provide visitors with excellent access to the Forest by way of accessible car parks, orientation and interpretation signage and visitor facilities such as refreshments and toilets.



JOHN WARD'S PRAYER (an 18th century Nimby)

John Ward was Member of Parliament for Dagenham and Hackney until he was expelled from Parliament and imprisoned in the Fleet prison in 1730. This prayer was found among his papers.

O Lord, though knowest that I have mine estates in the City of London, and likewise that I have lately purchased an estate in fee simple in the county of Essex. I beseech thee to preserve the two counties of Middlesex and Essex from fire and earthquake, and as I have a mortgage in Hertfordshire I beg thee likewise to have an eye of compassion on that county. For the rest of the counties, Thou mayest deal with them as Thou art pleased....

FOUR FOREST YEARS

by Pete Relph

Many books have been published about the life and work of the 19th century poet John Clare over the years but *Four Forest Years* by Pete Relph is unique. The local author hails from Loughton and has spent a lifetime enjoying exploring the paths of Epping Forest, carefully observing all he sees and notes it is 'a fitting place to restore the flagging spirit, the sagging soul'. His recently published book is a personal response to John Clare's poetry, tracing the poet's stay at Dr. Allen's Asylum at High Beach from 1837- 41, reflecting some of the poems written there 'with room enough to walk and search for flowers'. Pete Relph's fondness and enthusiasm for Clare's works offers an easy introduction to unfamiliar readers or those who may feel poetry has passed them by. I share an affinity with the writer in my affection for Clare's poetry, the forest and nature and feel sure many local readers will feel the same.

The book is enhanced by the inclusion of selected poems, well-chosen colour photographs of the forest through the seasons and reproduced historical photographs.

Pete Relph writes in the introduction: 'Enjoy the book, enjoy your explorations'. I did; I will!

Penny Freeston
(member of the John Clare Society)

Four Forest Years is available from Pete Relph, 61a The Broadway, Loughton. Essex IG10 3SX, £9.95 incl. p & p or from Local Bookshops & the Forest Visitor Centre, £9.95

WHY EPPING FOREST WAS 'SAVED'

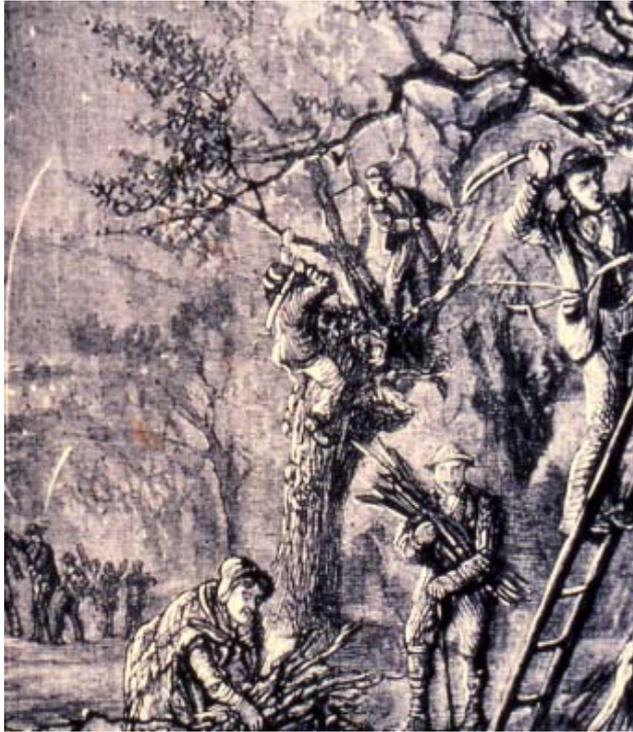
The Conservators continue to emphasize the importance of the ancient Common Rights to graze cattle on the Forest. This emphasis gives an inaccurate picture of why local folk and eventually the Corporation of London fought so hard to protect the Forest.

Referring to the 1793 Report of the Land Revenue Commission, Hoskins and Stamp (Common Lands of England & Wales) stated:

".. the Forest amounted to 9,000 acres of open (access) land and was much frequented by Londoners from the East End for recreation, so much so that the Commissioners said it was most important that nothing should be done to enclose it".

In the Court of Common Council (governing body of the Corporation of London, the Conservators of Epping Forest) nearly eighty years later in 1871, John T Bedford moved the following resolution:

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



For most commoners the right to lop was essential for warmth and cooking. Few possessed a cow

Five years earlier public protests over threats to the Rights of Commoners to lop wood were the start of the legal battle involving the Willingale family and many other commoners and local public figures.

After Thomas Willingale's death the Corporation of London took on the legal battle. They were concerned to preserve the Forest for "purposes of public health and recreation", there were also common rights of both lopping and grazing. But a commoner's rights to lop wood applied only in the Manor in which they lived, whilst it was argued grazing rights applied across the all the Forest manors. This right was therefore chosen to contest as an action against all the Lords of the Manors.

Thus it could be said this was little more than a choice of legal tactic.

The Corporation's intentions were clearly to protect the Forest, as the subsequent Act of Parliament said... "for the recreation and enjoyment of the public".



Victorian East-enders enjoy a 'knees-up' on Chingford Plain

On the occasion of Queen Victoria's visit to Epping Forest on 8th May 1882, the Loyal Address to the Queen included the words that "nearly 6000 acres... is now available for public health and recreation". This was why the Forest was saved... not to protect the rights of commoners to graze cattle.

Ken Hoy

EPPING FOREST CENTENARY WALK - DON'T MISS IT!

The Epping Forest Centenary Walk from Manor Park to Epping will this year take place on Sunday 30 September, celebrating once again the passing of the Epping Forest Act 1878. If you are in any doubt about the importance of the Epping Forest Act, stand on Chingford Station and look in the direction of High Beach, where the railway was intended to finish. Imagine how it would look now had the railway company not gone bankrupt. And then give thanks to Queen Victoria, who dedicated the Forest to us, and the Corporation of London, who maintain it to such a high standard.

Our walk will start at the junction of Forest Drive and Capel Road, near Manor Park Station at 9 o'clock and should reach the centre of the Green Man Roundabout, Leytonstone around 9.45 am. We then expect to reach the County Hotel, Oak Hill at 10.45 am where we will take a short break and the Warren Pond car park (near the Royal Forest Hotel) at mid-day. The lunch stop will be taken at High Beach where refreshments can be obtained at the King's Oak or Wellington pubs or at the tea huts. For those who wish to browse, the Epping Forest Information Centre will be open. The walk should finish at Bell Common, Epping before 5.00 pm.

The walk is, of course, open to anyone who wishes to take part. It can be joined or left at any point during the day, and there will be pauses during the walk for brief talks on forest management, history and wildlife. Please join us on 30 September to celebrate our Forest. If you need any more information, please phone Mike Whiteley, who will lead the walk again this year, on 0208 524-2737"

Mike Whiteley

WALK REPORTS

February 22nd, Wanstead Park

A small and select group of members turned up to join Tricia Moxey for a walk in Wanstead Park on 22nd February. Braving the cold rain Tricia was able to explain to them something of the history of the Park, which includes a long period of Roman settlement, a well used Tudor Hunting Park and the elaborate 18th century gardens and lakes which rivalled Versailles their splendour. All of this grandeur was lost following the demolition of Wanstead House in 1824 and the felling of many of the fine trees from its surrounding estate. However, the chain of lakes have survived to remind us of its past glory and are frequented by many wildfowl in the winter months including shovellers, swans and a large number of coots, some of which return to mainland Europe for the summer.

Although the dampness of the morning discouraged us from stopping to make too many close observations of wildlife, a number of orange ladybirds (*Halyzia 16-guttata*) were spotted over wintering on sweet chestnut twigs. This species of ladybird seems to be increasing in Great Britain and is also found on sycamores where it feeds on mildews.

A few yellow flowers were seen on gorse bushes and some early leaves of bluebells were just emerging between the fallen leaves. [The bluebells flowered early this year and were at their best in mid April].

Although we returned to our cars somewhat windblown and soggy, we felt virtuous and refreshed in spirit after our wander in the fresh air!

The City of London is planning a number of events this year to mark the 125th Anniversary of the formal opening of the Park for public use in 1882.

Wednesday 18th April

A group of over 30 people met at Nursery Road car park (also known as 'The Stubbles' the name given to the stretch of open land we were about to walk across) on the edge of Loughton where Epping Forest is at one of the closest points to the town. The sun shone and we looked forward to an interesting walk which Richard Morris called 'Reflections in Forest Ponds'.

As we walked up the gentle slope to the first of the 5 ponds we were to visit over the next 2 hours the group settled into a gentle pace, allowing for amicable conversation, and we soon reached Strawberry Hill Ponds where



Strawberry Hill Pond

we gained our first 'reflections' of trees in the still water.

We then turned right to Earl's Path Pond, which is one of the easiest ponds to visit in the Forest as it is just off the road leading from Loughton to the Robin Hood Pub. This was the only road we were going to have to cross during our 2 hour walk through the Forest.

At this point Richard reminded us that all the ponds in the Forest had been created by man, rather than nature, either as a result of gravel digging for road construction or bomb craters from World War Two.

We then walked through Debden Slade (Debden, a corruption of Deep Dean meaning 'a deep valley') past 'Kate's Cellar' a deep sided valley along side Loughton Camp, where only the previous weekend, someone had thought it amusing to drive a stolen car into the heart of the Forest and set it alight, causing, not only damage to the trees and undergrowth, but also presenting great difficulties for the Forest Keepers and Fire Brigade in their attempts to extinguish the blaze and remove the wreckage. Such people cost the City of London Corporation well over £250,000 a year in unnecessary expense that could be much better spent on conservation projects.

And so we had arrived at one of the most interesting and ancient earth works, known as Loughton Camp. We walked around the circumference of this Iron Age fort, tentatively known from fragments of pottery found there, to date from 300 - 200 BC. This is now a scheduled Ancient Monument, one of the

highest levels of protection awarded to any site.

From there to Blackweir Pond, also known as The Lost Pond, where we not only enjoyed the spectacular, multicoloured reflections, but a few metres off to one side looked at what is allegedly the oldest tree in Epping Forest, estimated at more than 600 years old!

We returned to our starting point via Baldwin's Pond and Staples Pond both of which are on the course of Loughton Brook and have been used to prevent a recurrence of the flooding of Loughton which had occurred in the past.

**Walk lead by Richard Morris,
Verderer of Epping Forest.
Article by Robert Levene**

Saturday 19 May

The afternoon weather was kind and around thirty walkers joined for a two hour circular walk starting at High Beach. Exiting Pepper Alley we enjoyed distant views in a NW direction, across the Lea Valley, ignoring the M25 and the Iceland and Sainsburys depots. At Suntrap Sue, McKinley gave a short talk on its history and work and, further on, Peter Adams described the rare Service Tree adjoining Fairmead Car Park. Then on to Strawberry Hill and Earls Path Ponds, later exiting the Green Ride to follow Debden Slade, avoiding the heights of Loughton Camp, and a steady climb back to the Epping New Road. A short leg along the Up & Down Ride and then back to the High Beach car park.

After the walk we returned to Paul's Nursery Green and drank a toast to the memory of Jim Gimson.

Alan Curran



Drinking a toast to the memory of Jim Gimson

POSTSCRIPT

We have tried to get this Newsletter out earlier this summer so that you will **ALL** have time to get a copy of the *Epping Forest Public Consultation - Proposals for Extending the Re-establishment of Cattle Grazing* from the Visitor Centre at High Beach and sending off your comments before July 13th. The more replies the better. Don't leave it to someone else. See you during the summer on our walks or at one of the events where we shall have a stall.

Ed.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WALKS June - November

**June 23rd Saturday 7.30 pm
Midsummer Walk**

Our usual midsummer's evening walk in the Chingford woods and fields. Meet in Hornbeam Lane, 10 to 15 minutes walk or 3 mins drive from Chingford Station along Bury Rd and is the first turning on the right just before the houses.

**Leader: Peter Read
GR 393 957**

**July 13th Friday 10.30 am
Looking at Dragonflies, Butterflies
and other summer insects**

A gentle 2 hr walk. Meet in the Cornmill Meadows car-park off the Crooked Mile north of Waltham Abbey.

**Leader: Ken Hoy
GR 384 017**

**August 23rd Thursday 10.30 am
Epping Long Green, a detached
part of Epping Forest**

A circular walk from Epping Green through Nazingwood Common. Meet at Epping Green which is about 2½ miles NW of Epping. Take B182 off Epping New Road (B1393) just south of Epping. Turn left at Bury Farm onto B181, then L again at Epping Upland. There is informal parking on the section of the old road to NE of village. There is a PH at Epping Green.

**Leader: Bill Dexter
GR 435 056**

**September 30th Sunday 9am
Centenary Walk from Manor Park
to Epping**

A day's walk through Epping Forest from Wanstead Flats in the south to Epping in the north. Lots of stopping points with chances to join (or leave). Lunch stop at the High Beach PH. Details nearer the time from Mike Whiteley on 020 8524 2737.

**Leader: Mike Whiteley
(FofEF & Ramblers Assoc.)
GR 419 860**

October 12th Friday 10.30 am

From Woodyard to the Millennium Wood and the Lower Forest. Meet in the Woodyard car-park. Travelling north on the B1393 through Epping, fork right towards North Weald and car park is on the right past the hospital.

**Leader: Robert Levene
GR 472 031**

**November 7th Wednesday 10.30
am Autumn Colours Around
Upshire**

Meet in front of the Upshire Church, where parking will be arranged. Upshire is 1.25 miles along Crown Hill, which is the turning off the Epping New Road just north of the WakeArms roundabout westwards towards Waltham Abbey.

**Leader: Sue McKinley
GR 417 011**

**ADVANCED NOTICE OF FOREST
SUPPER - CORRECTION**

Please note the Forest Supper will be held on Thurs 29th Nov 2007 - not the 19th as advertised in the Spring Newsletter. Apologies for any confusion.

STALLS

We will have a stall at:

Sat 30th June - Chingford Village Festival 12-5pm

Sat 14th June Wanstead Day on the Green 11-5pm

Sun 14th July - Forest Festival on Chingford Plain 11-4pm

Sun 16th Sept - Wanstead Festival

Please pay us a visit and look at the re-vamped exhibition.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Epping Forest Visitor Centre
JUNE**

Wed 27 Jun, Guided Walk: Pole Hill

Thu 28 Jun Walk & Conservation Demonstration

JULY

Sat 7 Saturday Special: Victorian Pressed Flowers (QEHL)

Sat 7 Craft Display: Wood turning

Sun 8 Guided Walk: A Summer Stroll (QEHL)

Thu 12 Walk & Conservation Demonstration (Knighton Woods)

Sat 14 Family Event: Tarzy Wood Fun Day

Sat 14 & Sun 15th Family Activity: Roman Weekend (The Temple)

Mon 16 to Wed 18 Painting Course: Painting the Forest

Thu 19 to Thu 2 Aug Exhibition:

Painting the Forest

Wed 25 Family Craft Activity:

Beetles, Bugs and Butterflies

Wed 25 Guided Walk: Damsels and Dragons (Wake Valley)

Sun 29 Guided Bike Ride: The Forest in High Summer (QEHL)

AUGUST

Running throughout August:

Victorian Summer (QEHL)

Wed 1 Guided Walk: Summer Tree Creature Walk (EFVC)

Wed 1 Family Activity: 'Victorian' Photographs (QEHL)

Thu 2 Walk & Conservation Demonstration: Yates' Meadow and Yardley Hill

Sat 4 Saturday Special: Herbs (QEHL)

Sat 4 Outdoor Performance: Much Ado About Nothing (The Temple)

Sat 4 & Sun 5 Family Activity: Tudor Wanstead (The Temple)

Sat 11 Wildlife Activity: Moth Night! (EFVC)

Wed 15 Family Activity: 'Antique' photo frames (QEHL)

Sun 19 Victorian Melodies for a Summer's Day (QEHL)

Sun 26 Family Event: Punch and Judy Show (QEHL)

Sun 26 & Mon 27 Annual Summer Trail (EFVC)

Wed 29 Family Activity: Tassel making (QEHL)

Wed 29 Guided Walk: Ancient Ancestors (Fairmead)

SEPTEMBER

Sat 1 Saturday Special: Corn Dollies for Harvest (QEHL)

Sun 2 Family Event: Forest Festival (Chingford Plain)

Epping Forest Field Centre

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

16 Jun, Natural Connections

17 Jun, Wild Food and Medicine,

24 Jun, Green Man Arts Day

01 Jul, Insects, Spiders and other Invertebrates

01 Jul, Painting and Drawing in E F

07 Jul, Discovering Wild Flowers,

08 Jul, Wildlife Ponds

08 Jul, Aquatic Plant Identification,

18 Aug, Walking with History

19 Aug, Epping Forest: The Cockney Playground

02 Sep, Shieldbugs

08 -09 Sep, Tree and Shrub Identification

09 Sep, Survival for Beginners

11-13 Sep, Certificate in Offsite Safety Management

16 Sep, Identifying Trees in Leaf

23 Sep, Using Environmental Crafts with Young People

23 Sep, Discovering Badgers

29 Sep, The Intriguing World of Fungi

30 Sep, Beginners Guide to Fungi

06 Oct, Fungi and their Identification for Beginners
07 Oct, Adv. Fungus Identification
20 -21 Oct, Mammal Identification
28 Oct, Autumn Walk in EF
08 -09 Nov, Hedgelaying

EF Conservation Volunteers

Sun 1 July - Balsam Bash (site TBC)
Tues 10 July - Leyton Flats
Sun 15 July - Swaines Green
Sun 22 July - Lord's Bushes
Sun 29 July - Lord's Bushes
Sun 5 August - Whitehall Road
Sun 19 August - Bush Wood
Sun 26 August - Lee's Pond
Sun 2 Sept - Chingford Plain
Tues 11 Sept - Small Alder Pond
Sun 16 Sept - Wanstead Park
Sun 23 Sept - Lee's Pond
Sun 30 Sept - Long Running

We meet at 9.30am at the Warren, Epping Forests Corporation of London headquarters. This can be accessed either from Warren Hill in Loughton or from the Epping New Road between the Warren Wood pub and the Robin Hood roundabout.

We aim to leave for the site promptly at 9.45am. Wear old clothes and sturdy boots (preferably reinforced), and bring refreshments.

For further information please email efcv2@yahoo.co.uk or contact Peter Lyons on 020 529 3060

Essex Wildlife Trust

Epping Forest Group

Open to non-members as well as members. Please come suitably dressed for cold and wet conditions. Donations appreciated (suggested donation; £2per adult).

Phone Tricia Moxey on 01277 364522 for more details.

Suntrap Field study Centre

Saturday 30th June "Music in the Forest" 11am - 3pm -a joint event with the Waltham Forest Music Service. A day of performances in Epping Forest and a BBQ in Suntrap's grounds.

Saturday 13th October 1pm to 5pm Suntrap Open Day.

Events in Wanstead Park

Opera in the Park on Sunday 24th June. Details from Epping Forest Visitor Centre on 020 8508 0028.

Roman Weekend at the Temple 14th & 15th July. Do you have any fragments of Roman history in your garden – a piece of tile, some pottery or a coin, bring it when experts from the Museum of London will be available to record it. Details from Epping Forest Visitor Centre 020 8508 0028.

Music in Wanstead Park Saturday 21st July 2 – 6pm Craft Display and Stalls. 2.pm – 11pm live music.

BNA Epping Forest Branch

Sat 21st July, Morning walk, Balls Wood Nature Reserve.

Sat 4th Aug Short all day outing, Regents Park.

Sat 18th Aug, Morning walk, Gunpowder Park

Sat 15th Sept, Morning walk Hainault Forest.

Sat 22nd Sept, Walk at Glen Faba.

Sat 27th October, Fungus Foray in Hainault Forest.

Sat 3rd Nov. Morning Walk Waltham Forest GREEN CELEBRATIONS
Autumn Tints Walk-Warren Pond and Connaught Waters

Copped Hall

Guided Tours: February 18, March 18, April 15, May 20, June 17, July 15, Aug 19, Sept 16, Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 9.

Open Days: Sun May 27 and Aug 26
Apple Day: Sun 7 Oct

Baroque Music for a Summer's Evening: Sat 30 June 7.30 p.m

NEWSLETTERS BY

E-MAIL

When a member joins the Friends and asks for the Newsletter to be sent by e-mail (in glorious colour) the Membership Secretary uses the following procedure.

An e-mail is sent to the address with information of how to download the Newsletter and asks for a reply by e-mail. This also tests whether the usually hand written details are correct. It is surprising how many get returned "unable to deliver". So if, as a new member, you filled the e-mail details and wondered why your Newsletter (other than the first with your membership card) comes by

Robin Hood Retold: Sat 14 July 5.00 pm.

Traditional Jazz - Hugh Rainey Band Sat 8 Sep 7.00 pm

Oktoberfest Sat 20 Oct 7.00 pm
Gilbert and Sullivan - excerpts from favourite operas Saturday 10 Nov 7.30 pm

EF Centenary Trust

Sat 14th July, Tarzy Wood Funday

11.00 -5.00pm by the War Memorial on Wanstead High Street

The event will be raising money for Haven House Hospice.

Wed 25th July 2pm - 4pm

Summer Activity

Visitor Centre, High Beach (booking essential, please phone 0208 508 0028)

Forest Festival

Sunday 2nd September

Ilam - 4pm *Chingford Plain, Bury Road, E4*

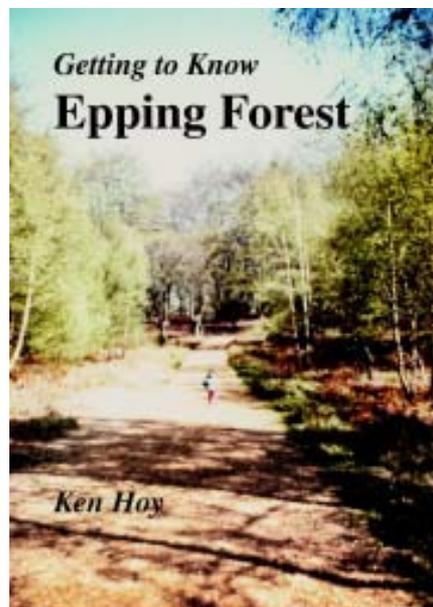
Sat 29th Sep Forest Hands - Pond Clearance

another method, this may be the cause.

If any member does not get their Newsletter by e-mail and would like to, please contact by e-mail the membership secretary at seymour@moss40.freeserve.co.uk

Remember if you change your e-mail address and don't tell the Membership Secretary the Newsletters will stop. The same applies if you are using a job based e-mail facility and change jobs or college. The reverse also happens, if you move home you will still get your Newsletter by e-mail, but the Friends will not know your new address, so again please advise the Membership Sec.

Seymour Moss



Getting to Know

EPPING FOREST

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

Available from

Seymour Moss on
020 8529 0620

£6-00 to members (£7-00 inc. p&p).

FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007

I am afraid this Report like last year's Report, must begin sadly. You will have read in your Newsletter of the death in late November last year of our Committee member 'Jim' Gimson. Those of you who deliver our Newsletters will know what a quiet, kindly and unassuming person he was. He organised and efficiently ran the delivery of some 1300 copies to our 2000 members or so all over the Forest area - and further. In trying to follow on we have realised what a great job he so quietly and competently carried out And we have to thank Hilary Kunzru who has agreed to take on that task.

On a brighter note, at the beginning of this last year we have welcomed the new Superintendent of the Forest, Mat Roberts. Soon after he commenced his duties in June the Committee welcomed him and entertained him to a very friendly informal luncheon.

Protecting the Forest

This year has again been an extremely busy year for your Officers & Committee.

Soon after the last AGM we had to respond to a further Report on the proposals for Grazing the Forest. (Initially presented in May 2006). This involved a great deal of detailed work. In spite of this we found it necessary to make a second response to a further report to a Reference Sub-committee of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee set up to deal with the Implementation Proposals for a Grazing Strategy.

We found this involved a large increase of the existing area currently grazed (i.e. the woodland from Chingford to High Beach) by extending it northwards to the Wake Arms. The existing area amounts to 300 ha. and the further proposals would add another 400 ha. These two large areas have been coupled together and called Phase 1 (totalling 700 ha. or 1730 acres).

We had originally objected, and still do object, to the existing grazing operations because of the extent of the fencing and infra-structure involved ... and to the past, and continuing, clearances undertaken to 'create' wood-pasture. The 'new' further proposals - the extra 400 ha. - has been agreed without any assessment, to our knowledge, of the existing or past grazing operations.

We had a meeting with the Superintendent and the Conservation Officer, where we were able to put our point of view. But this is an on-going issue that I will return to later.

In October we had to respond to a management plan for the area around the Hunting Lodge, Dannetts Hill, and the River Ching and eastwards to the Epping New Road (called in the Report 'BarnHoppitt').

About the same time we were required to comment on the ISP (Integrated Site Plan) for the management of Wanstead Park - following our comments on the ISP for Wanstead Flats.

This meant that the last half of 2006 was an extremely busy and challenging time for us.

Furthermore, the draft East of England Plan from EERA (East of England Regional Assembly) came out for consultation. This Plan, with its proposals for very significant developments in the M11 corridor and the surrounding districts, requires local authorities in the region to find space to build 500,000 houses. (in Epping Forest District, some 3,500). This is required, without any planned proposals for the necessary infrastructure, the water supplies, hospitals, schools or traffic needs!

You will have seen a summary of the response that Harry made on our behalf in the Newsletter. Our response identified the threats to the Forest presented by the vastly increased traffic and the inevitable encroachments upon the Green Belt around the Forest and its Buffer lands, which will be a consequence of the proposals.

In addition, we continued to make representations to the Planning Authority, where we felt an application adversely affected the Forest. This includes the proposed large housing development along the Sewardstone Rd. below the Gilwell Scout centre.

During the year we have continued to be involved in our regular 'liaison' commitments with other organisations such as the London Green Belt Council and The Council for the Protection of Rural Essex. We have been regularly represented among 'the public' who attend meetings of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee - The Conservators. We met with the Verderers and the Superintendent as necessary to discuss Forest matters.

Furthering an understanding of the Forest

During the past year, we have continued to organise our successful monthly walks in the Forest and its countryside. We have attended several fetes and events this year, including a major presence at the Forest Festival - this provides us with a very good opportunity to meet many Forest users and non-users and to share our understanding and enjoyment of the Forest. These activities were assisted by the purchase of a new gazebo.

In addition, we continued to produce three Newsletters a year. These include a considerable wealth of information on the Forest, and are generally well received.

Reviewing our priorities and activities

During this year, the Committee began a review and consideration of our activities, priorities and our future! We asked ourselves, "After almost 40 years, how should the Friends of Epping Forest now be responding?" We know much has changed since we started in 1968 and we considered it was timely to consider again our aims, objects and operation.

The Committee began by conducting a survey of what we ourselves thought of the Friends, how well we are doing, what new areas we should consider, what maybe we should not continue to do etc.

Not surprisingly a large majority view was - as with most voluntary organisations - that too few were forced to attempt to do too much... and, a related aspect, we are 'not getting younger' - most of us! This was also reflected in our membership.

Positively, we felt we had a reasonably 'good image', obviously needed to recruit a younger membership and needed to develop activities to achieve this.

Through the Newsletter, we asked you, the membership, what you thought! However there was a low response and we have had to conclude you were mostly satisfied!

We will be completing the review this year and hope that it will help to focus our activities. Perhaps some comments may come from reading this Report, to aid the process.

Looking Ahead

We will continue our usual vigilance over Forest matters.

We will also continue to press for an independent assessment of the grazing policy, and indeed the Management Plan itself - which has never been assessed (other than by the managers), although in its second five year period.

I must mention in particular our opposition to the extension of the Grazing policy north of Avey Lane - the road past High Beach Church. We do not consider this block of woodland is at all suitable to become 'wood-pasture'. Apart from the High Beach slope - so heavily used by the public - and the heathland of Sunshine Plain that is already grazed, there is little grassland other than Honey Lane Plain in the whole 400 ha. We do not consider this justifies, even under the proposed management plans, the amount of fencing and cattle grids etc. required or the attention of the 'herdsman' to ensure the animals reach the right spot.

We intend to press for this area in particular to be excluded, whilst maintaining our objections to the continuation of extensive grazing, with further fencing, without any assessment of the results,.

Having acquired the gazebo, we are now developing a new exhibition to better assist us during our appearance at fetes and other events.

We are exploring improvements to the appearance of the Newsletter - although generally speaking there appears to be approval of the contents

In addition, we will complete our review of 'the Friends' and develop a simple plan to outline our priorities ahead. This will include consideration of our overall objectives within the terms of our Constitution and the development of a financial strategy, i.e. describing the purposes for which we should use & reserve our capital resources.

Thanks

I am sure this meeting - when endorsing this report will wish to thank the Officers and Committee who have undertaken so much in this last year. We must also recognise the efforts of the many other active members who support the work of the Committee in all our regular activities. As I say every year we must recognise that these tasks are no less important because they are undertaken regularly and without much apparent recognition. Thanks must given to all those dedicated members.

That concludes my report.

Ken Hoy, Chairman.

CURRENT FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Judy Adams	Loughton	020 8418 0730	Robert Levene	Snaresbrook	020 8989 0884
Peggy Bitten (Sec.)	Chingford	020 8529 8594	Sue McKinley (Vice-Chair)	Upshire	01992 712 014
Harry Bitten	Chingford	020 8529 8594	Derek Meakin	Chigwell	020 8500 1571
Irene Buchan	Chingford	020 8529 6423	Seymour Moss (Memb. Sec.)	Chingford	020 8529 0620
Alan Curran (Treas.)	Buckhurst Hill	020 8504 8720	Tricia Moxey	Chipping Ongar	01277 364 522
Bill Dexter	Chingford	020 8529 1427	Peter Read	Chingford	020 8524 1659
Ken Hoy (Chairman)	High Easter	01245 231 839	Tony Sheppard	Woodford Grn	020 8504 8288

TREASURER

At the AGM our Treasurer Tony Sheppard was thanked for his many years of sterling and meticulous service, when our bank balance achieved its present very healthy state.

He was presented with a turned wooden bowl of Epping Forest oak.

Thank you Tony and good wishes in your new post as Chairman of a large charity. Alan Curran was appointed as our new Treasurer

F of EF E-MAIL AND WEB ADDRESSES

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Membership Sec. (Seymour Moss):
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FRIENDS of EPPING FOREST NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE ON CD

All 24 Friends of Epping Forest Newsletters from 1999 to 2006 on CD. Includes table of contents, article search facility and many pictures that were not used due to lack of space. Windows XP or 2000.

Available £3.00 from Seymour Moss.