

Friends of Epping Forest



Newsletter Summer 2014

www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk

Have you ever been to Swaines Green, a lesser-known area of buffer land to Epping Forest? Carol Durston-Wyatt, Secretary of the Friends of Swaines Green, has kindly written this article to tell you about the area. The summer is a wonderful time for a visit, for its flowers, tranquillity and long views across the countryside...

A PLACE TO DISCOVER: SWAINES GREEN

Swaines Green is a 22-acre site on the western side of Epping, behind the Lower Swaines Recreation Ground and Epping Primary School. It comprises mixed woodland, scrub and open meadow, providing habitat for a wealth of trees, plants and animals. It is made up of four fields (Forties, Middle and Lower Lincoln's and Lovelocks) which date from approximately 1200 AD, bordered by an old trackway, Bolt Cellar Lane.

Though small by today's standards, the fields are bounded on almost all sides by hedgerows. There is firm evidence that the field boundaries are the original Saxon/Norman demarcations, and the hedgerows have been dated back to pre-Tudor times. The area has been covered by a Tree Preservation Order since 1992 and was designated a Wildlife Site in 1998.

The Green is currently a mosaic of open rough grassland, ancient hedgerows, scrub and developing woodland. It also has a stream, ponds and wetland areas. The varied composition means a huge diversity of plants and trees. Of particular importance are the areas of flower-rich meadowland on which a total of over 120 different flowering plants have been recorded to date.

A study has also revealed a wonderful variety of wildlife: 64 species of bird have been seen, along with 18 mammal species (including bats) and a wide range of beetles, bugs, ants, wasps, bees, dragonflies, damselflies, grasshoppers, crickets, reptiles, amphibians, spiders and woodlice.

The Friends of Swaines Green helped with the purchase of the land from a private landlord in 2005. The large part is owned by the City of London Corporation and the remainder by Epping Town Council.

Our main aim is to preserve Swaines Green as a habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna, while also ensuring continued access for members of the public. We also work to promote awareness of the site and actively encourage scientific research work on it.



This year's Swaines Green May Fayre. Photo by Roy Cumming.

We are an entirely voluntary charity and rely on individuals to both fund and physically carry out the work that is needed. Our most regular activity is the Conservation Day on the 2nd Sunday of each month (the next Conservation Day is in September). This can include anything from clearing pathways to building bridges, cleaning up streams and cutting back scrub. These are fun events, open to everyone, and involve a lot of socialising, with a plentiful supply of tea and coffee, and frequently end with a chat around a bonfire.

We also organise major events for the general public each year. Our recent May Fayre, a traditional English Fayre, drew over 2,000 people (along with the Friends of Epping Forest). It included maypole dancing, folk dancing, traditional crafts, lots of animals, stalls and children's games – all held in a beautiful part of the Green, giving it a wonderful rural ambience.

We do hope we shall see some of you this summer. For more information, see our website. www.swainesgreen.org.uk

• Access from Lower Swaines in Epping is either through the Sport Ground or via a marked pedestrian footway (and also via a public footpath off Coronation Hill).

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The Friends is a Registered Charity No: 299970.
Committee Members are the Trustees of the Charity.

Views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Friends of Epping Forest Committee.

QR code – from phone to web

If you have a smart phone and can scan a QR code with its camera, either with a downloaded app or via software that's already installed, scan this QR code and go to the Friends of Epping Forest website.

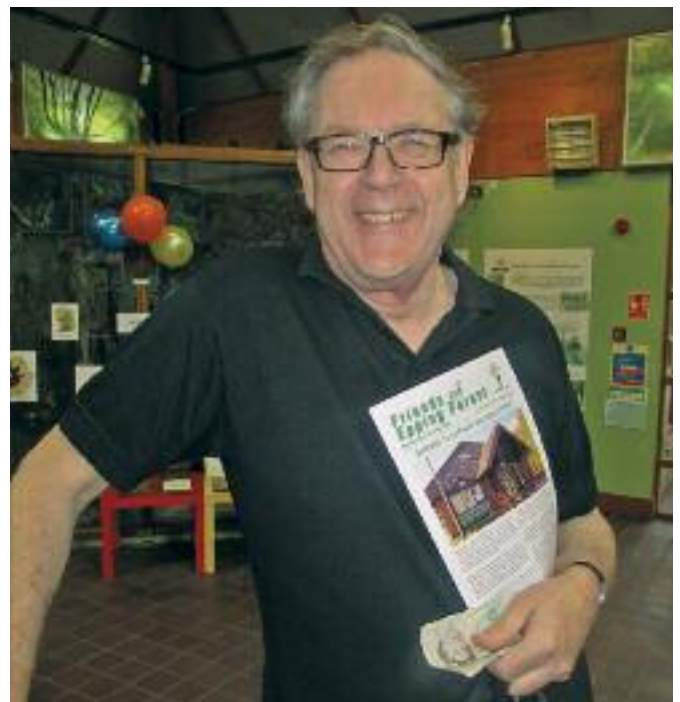


Dear Friend...

The activities of the past few months have been dominated by the Friends re-opening the Visitor Centre, and I would have to say it has been exhausting, but fun. Already we have spoken to over 3,000 people, many of whom are first-time visitors. This is letting us see the Forest through others' eyes and will enable us to make a much more effective contribution to the Forest in future.

There have been some delights, like our first flooding of the toilet floor as water was left on, our first time setting off the alarm of the building, our challenges with the new till and our first visitor, Verderer Michael Chapman. As we cannot reset the alarm ourselves, I am afraid we had to call out the Superintendent on Easter weekend (thank you!). But now that many of these initiative tests have been passed, we trust we shall enjoy smooth riding ahead!

Having spent some time reaching consensus on those areas where we could most effectively contribute (see last issue), we are now beginning to explore how we move forward. We will be carrying out high level consultations, which we hope will help to inform our approach.



Our first visitor (and customer) at the re-opened Centre: Verderer Michael Chapman. Photo by Judy Adams.

One of our phrases “we remain convinced that the Forest needs Friends” still rings true. With our work on the website (and Twitter), we want to ensure more people can see what we are up to, learn about the Forest, come to love it as we do and get involved. Please help us to continue to play our part for many years to come, including attracting new members. We know there are challenges now and we need to be fit enough to manage them.

Most importantly, continue to enjoy the Forest and share your passion about it. The front page reminds us of one of the special places and renews my belief in the magic of Epping Forest.
Judy Adams

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT! VISITOR CENTRE RE-OPENS



Above: The Friends of Epping Forest in partnership with the City of London re-opened the Visitor Centre at High Beach on 5 April. Over 85 visitors attended the event, including City Corporation Epping Forest Chairman Alderman Gordon Haines (left, presenting Friends Chairman Judy Adams with the key to the Centre), Epping Forest MP Eleanor Laing (right) and dignitaries from Epping Forest District Council, Waltham Abbey Town Council, Loughton Town Council and Epping Forest Verderers. The Centre will initially be open on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays between 11 am and 4 pm in the summer and between 10 am and 3 pm in the winter. Photos by Gill Woods Photography.



Batty hats (left, bottom) were popular with younger visitors, together with leaf rubbings. The new-look Visitor Centre has information, maps and walk routes about the Forest, children's activities, a bird observation window, and gift shop – and volunteer Information Assistants (left, middle) are on hand to help visitors find out more about the Forest, where to go and what is on offer.



These fallow deer sculptures are the latest arrivals to Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge, and are causing quite a stir with visitors. Fortunately, hunting is now banned in Epping Forest! Photo by Peter Adams.

FOREST MATTERS

Tour de France

On Monday 7 July, Epping Forest will see a new breed of visitors – competitors in the Tour de France. Stage 3 enters the Forest on the B181 from North Weald, before heading south to London, a total distance of 100 miles.

The route covers almost the entire length of the Forest. From Epping the peloton will sweep straight down to the Robin Hood Roundabout, through Woodford Green to the Waterworks roundabout, and down via Whipps Cross to the Lea Bridge Road. Among the highlights will be a sprint stage in Epping High Street. Whipps Cross roundabout promises to be another focus, with a big screen, live music, entertainment and refreshments.

The Tour de France was established in 1903 and is one of the world's premier sporting events. Among the 22 teams, with nine competitors per team, will be the world's leading cyclists, including British cycling heroes Bradley Wiggins, Chris Froome and Mark Cavendish.

Visit www.LeTourEssex.com and www.walthamforest.gov.uk/Pages/Campaigns/Tour-de-France.aspx for times, road closures and other activities.

New Deputy Chairman

Common Councillor George Abrahams has recently been appointed as the Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee. He succeeds Stanley Ginsberg, who has decided to retire. George is a local man, living in Woodford Green. We welcome him to this position and look forward to working with him.

THOSE CUCKOOS...

As I dared to hope in the last *Newsletter*, this spring the radio-tagged cuckoo nicknamed Chris arrived safely back in England to spend summer in Norfolk. He was a two-year-old bird when he was first radio-tagged in 2011, so this is his fifth summer here. He is now the oldest survivor of the cuckoos that have been tagged in the British Isles – and was recently mentioned on BBC's *Springwatch*.

When you last read about him he was leaving swamps of the Congo rainforest and about to move into west Africa. Subsequently he moved north through Nigeria, Ghana, across Mali and flew over the western part of the Sahara desert to Morocco – a more westerly route than he has followed in the

past. He crossed the western end of the Mediterranean into Spain and by April had passed over the Bay of Biscay and Brittany into Normandy. After he crossed the English Channel his radio-tag revealed he was in Cavenham, NW Suffolk. The total migration from Angola back to the UK took just under two months. He arrived almost a week earlier than last year ... did you hear a cuckoo during the last week of April?

Since being tagged Chris has clocked up a total of 47,000 miles and has transmitted information new to science, not only about migration routes, but the importance of "stop-over" feeding areas and at times the speed of travel. At one stage he flew 1,615 miles in two days. Each year he has been the first of the tagged cuckoos to leave Britain by July.

(With thanks to the British Trust for Ornithology). **Ken Hoy**

Epping Forest Arbitration Map

The word arbitration conjures up in most people's minds images of unresolved industrial relations disputes! The subject of this article was no less intractable but, dare I say, much more interesting and of great long-term significance.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Royal Forest system went into a state of almost terminal decline with extensive illegal enclosures. The Forest of Waltham was by no means exempt from this process and as it was common land with little large timber, it was of little interest to central government. This led to an Act of Parliament being passed in 1851 for the disafforestation of that part of the Forest of Waltham to the east of the River Roding, i.e. Hainault Forest. This seems to have met little if any opposition, and in the succeeding years the Commissioners of Woods and Forests encouraged lords of the manors to enclose land in Epping Forest and purchase the forestal rights of the Crown.

Unsurprisingly some lords of the manors took advantage of the offer and subsequently sold off land for building. The largest such loss to the Forest was in Loughton, where William Whitaker Maitland in 1860 purchased all the Forest



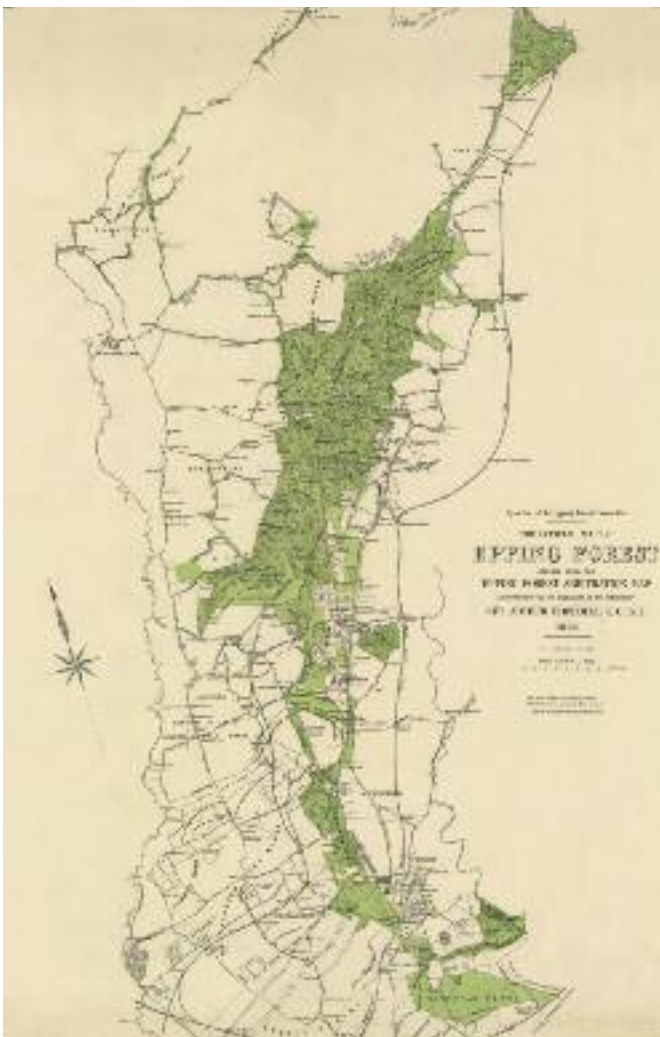
Verderers Richard Morris (left) and Peter Adams. Photo by Verderer Michael Chapman.

land within his manor; six years later his son started to fence it and in due course began to clear the woodland. This is not the place to review the complex and protracted battle to save the Forest, but suffice it to say that this activity stirred up increasing organised opposition from people in different strata of society.

Following the setting up of the Epping Forest Commission by an Act of 1871, perhaps two of the most significant points were the judgments by the Master of the Rolls, Sir George Jessel, in 1874. The first stated that enclosures made in the 20 years before the passing of the 1871 Act were illegal and secondly that Commoners had the right to turn their cattle onto all the lands of the Forest. In 1878 the Epping Forest Act was passed and this included provision for Sir Arthur Hobhouse to act as Arbitrator. After detailed investigations, his deliberations were many and his report of 1882 included a map showing the lands which the Forest should then include, including Maitland's land.

The Epping Forest Committee reprinted this map and for many years it was used as the official Forest map, up-dated from time to time to include each of the various land acquisitions. You may be familiar with the 1928 edition but, interesting as that is, the original 1882 edition is of much greater importance.

If you visit the Centre when the Friends have had an opportunity to hang this 1882 edition, you will be able to compare the land holding of the Forest in 1882 with today, using the present-day Official Map – and find that the Forest is actually much larger now, due to land coming into the Forest and through purchases since 1878. **Peter Adams**



Above: the Arbitration Map of 1882, updated to 1928. We are extremely grateful to Verderer Richard Morris, who has very generously donated to the Friends a framed copy of the original 1882 map to hang in the Epping Forest Visitor Centre at High Beach.

CORRECTION

In our Spring Newsletter on page 10, the caption for the photograph should read: An illustration by "Miss H." of William Sotheby's study at Fairmead Lodge. It was not on the site of Suntrap, which is on the site of the earlier Forest Lodge.



A review is under way of walks materials. Photos by Ron Andrews and (inset) Gill Woods Photography.

FRIENDS MATTERS

Forest walks

Prompted by our challenge at the Visitor Centre of providing and advising the public about walks in the Forest, several of the Info Assistants and a Friends member have begun to review what is currently available, how accessible they are to find/follow and what might the public be looking for in the future.

Research has begun into the published material available or previously available to see where walks have been described, where there are route maps and also at the variety of walks provided. We are finding at the Centre that people are looking for walks from the Visitor Centre that are half an hour (we usually recommend the easy access trail), an hour and a half or how to get to the Hunting Lodge and back. And also, "Can you plan a walk for our group from Chingford Station, lunch at the Gardeners Arms Loughton, up to High Beach and return to Chingford Station?"!

So already needs are being highlighted. Cyclists are also asking for guidance, and it is clear there are opportunities here to propose approaches for cycling that work for the Forest as well as Forest visitors.

Information staff are walking all the routes out from High Beach, so we are gradually accumulating an understanding of the present offer. If anyone would like to get involved by testing some waymarked trails or following some of the early published walk routes, let me know.

New Trustees would be welcome

If you love Epping Forest, have time to get involved and wish to contribute your skills to something very worthwhile, your interest would be welcome! We are particularly looking

for team players, individuals who have skills in one or more of the following areas: helping to organise some of the events we run; securing for the Friends a presence on social media and supporting our developing website; marketing skills; planning and policy work; and business experience.

Congratulations...

...to Ken Hoy, our Vice President, on celebrating his 90th birthday!

High Beach Festival 2014

Why not join in the High Beach Festival this year. It takes place on Saturday 19 July between 11 am and 4 pm, and is very much a local community event. Full details are on www.highbeachchurch.org.uk/high-beach-festival/.

There are lots of activities over four venues. You can follow the Red Ribbon Trail to walk from venue to venue. Enjoy Epping Forest as you go!

At **High Beach Green**, just to the west of the church, you will find wildlife and sporting activities, stalls, dog show (register at 11 am), a BBQ, live jazz band and children's fun races at 3 pm.

Refreshments and teas are available at **High Beach Church**, where you can try ringing the bells, visit stalls, view the children's art exhibition and listen to organ music. Refreshments and teas available.

At **Epping Forest Visitor Centre** you will find information about the Forest, children's activities, including mask making, and try out the easy-access trail.

Meanwhile, **Epping Forest Field Studies Centre** offers a tree trail and face painting, along with pond dipping and minibeast hunt sessions.



High Beach Festival – four venues, with something for all ages. Photo by Gill Hopkins.

FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST

ANNUAL REVIEW 2013/2014

Registered charity number 299970. www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk



Under new management! High Beach Visitor Centre. Photo by Gill Woods Photography.

Introduction

Epping Forest has seen its wettest winter in many years, with paths and the Forest floor very soggy for long periods and several of the lakes and streams filled to abundance. The number of visits made to Epping Forest has topped 4.3 million. Jubilee Pond has been relined and given a new lease of life, the Connaught Board Walk across the Lake has been completed and initial planting undertaken at Gifford Wood.

Our involvement with Gifford Wood and our more recent taking over of the operation of the Epping Forest Visitor Centre at High Beach have given us many new challenges and opportunities. It has been a busy year, working to preserve the Forest, helping others to enjoy and understand it, and ensuring the Friends are “fitter” now and for the future.

Furthering the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the Forest

A major annual event, the Epping Forest Centenary Walk continues to attract more than 150 participants and very much celebrates the saving of the Forest by the Epping Forest Act. Thanks to all those who assisted last year, including the Conservators and the Ramblers.

Ken Hoy's *Getting to Know Epping Forest* (second edition) continues to sell well and provides a comprehensive and interesting guide to the Forest.

Gifford Wood has been a highlight of the year. The Friends of Epping Forest have always valued the Corporation's purchase of additional Forest land or buffer land. While we have always thanked the Conservators for such far sighted action, this time the Friends got behind the Gifford Wood project and raised £5,000 to support the planting up of part of the land, helped with the Big Tree Plant, promoted the new acquisition at the summer events, and led a number of groups around the new “addition”.

Our walks programme continued apace, with 12 walks attracting 295 participants, up from 232 in the previous year.

We did get out more too! We attended seven fairs and fêtes, speaking face to face with over 350 people at length about Epping Forest and the Friends. This is proving valuable outreach work for us, as they are mainly community events, where we meet many local people.

The latter part of the year was dominated by our agreement to operate the Visitor Centre at High Beach on

behalf of the Conservators. This was very much a new departure for us. Not only did we attract over 20 new volunteers as Information Assistants, it has given us access to many Forest visitors, enabling us to share our enthusiasm and knowledge about Epping Forest. This is also a new departure for the City, and we hope that this project will spawn other new ways of working in the interests of the Forest and its visitors and the Friends. The open day was well attended, and we received a very positive response from local dignitaries and the community.

Supporting the preservation of the Forest

On the planning front, it has been an interesting year. While we still await the outcome of the Epping Forest District Council's "Issues and Options" Consultation, we have responded to a variety of planning consultations in the District. Developers have had an increased interest in viewing land for its development potential within the District following the production of the "Issues and Options" Consultation.

Fortunately, development on Green Belt land has so far been resisted, though we continue to keep a watchful eye. This summer the District is to publish the results of the Issues and Options Consultation, and we expect a flurry of activity at that time.

We have also participated in a number of discussions with Highams Park residents; initially over the works to rebuild the dam at Highams Park Lake and latterly as a member of the Greenspace Group, one of the topic groups working on a Neighbourhood Plan for the Highams Park area. Given that this includes Higham's Park Lake and Walthamstow Forest, as well as Mallinson Park Wood, we welcomed the opportunity to be involved in this important and interesting area of the Forest.

We have also played some part in commenting on national issues in respect of the Green Belt. We view with trepidation the results of the National Trust survey of local authorities that indicates that many are considering developing in the Green Belt.

The development of the Forest Management Plan has been delayed, though that has given the Friends the

opportunity to hold a couple of Committee workshops, identifying key areas where we are looking to make proposals. These are: litter, a costly challenge and one that affects the amenity value of the Forest; cycling, which we now consider needs increased management; the sustainability and impact of wood pasture; "parkification" of the Forest (where it is appropriate); and the continuing pressures on the Green Belt.

Developing the Friends

To ensure that we are fit and able to achieve our aspirations, we also undertook further work, including:

a) To increase, develop and support membership

Our membership provides both annual funding and influence, both crucial in enabling us to play our part in the Forest. As we went to print, our membership stood at 1,575 (a drop from 1,765 last year), largely due to people moving away. We are working hard to grow this membership to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead. The production of our new Membership leaflet is making a contribution in this area and our website review which has now begun should help us even more. Even now, more than half of our new members are coming via the web.

Our major annual event for our membership and invited friends is the Forest Supper, well attended this year, and providing the usual sales, quizzes and good company!

b) To raise our profile

Our activities in respect of Gifford Wood and more recently at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre have significantly raised the awareness of the Friends. From press coverage in the local paper, *Forest Focus*, in committee reports and in other groups' newsletters, there is certainly an increasing appreciation of what we are up to. We have held our first in a series of sessions on what is needed for our new website in order that we can obtain resources to undertake this work.

c) To raise finances

The opening of the View and now our involvement with the Visitor Centre are increasing our sales income, more than



Our walks programme goes from strength to strength. Above: Gilbert's Slade, August 2013 (Photo by Kathy Hartnett); Right: Mistletoe, Holly and Mince Pies, December 2013 (Photo by Pete Wrobel).



compensating for our low online sales (maybe in part due to increased postage costs) and limited sales activities at events. Now that our stock levels are much lower, we have the opportunity to look at new products to swell this area of income, and we will be working closely with the City to make this happen.

We need to look particularly at further publications, perhaps of Forest walks, and are presently reviewing the current provision.

Donations were very significant this year, both to support the Friends and to contribute to the Gifford Wood Appeal. The Gifford Wood income is not well reflected in our accounts, because many of the donations we received were directly passed on to the Appeals office.

d) To manage the effective development of the Friends and improve our governance

This year the Committee reviewed the Friends' priorities in order for us to sustain ourselves for the next 40 years. Memberships, income, influence, recruiting more volunteers, the website and the High Beach Visitor Centre have all featured and a number of these are already being progressed.

Thank you

Two of our very long-standing Committee members have resigned this year: Peter Read, with his 35 years' service, and Bill Dexter, about the same. We thank them most sincerely for their contribution to the Friends. As a volunteer organisation, it is volunteers who do all the work. We owe considerable thanks to all those who regularly help us with the *Newsletter*, walks, raffle tickets, planning applications and more. And also our website, newsletter production and auditing!

We were also very pleased to attract 20 new volunteers as Information Assistants at the Visitor Centre. They have considerable ambitions to share their knowledge and love of the Forest with visitors, which is to be welcomed. We are also attracting some additional support for the summer events we attend.

Thank you too to the Conservators, who have supported

and promoted a number of our key projects. And of course a big thank you to all the Committee members (the Friends' Trustees) and our membership, who enable us to contribute to the Forest.

List of donors 2013/14

Donations were received from Mrs K Abbott, Mr and Mrs McBrayne, Mr R Beard, Stanley Bird, Miss Blossom, Miss D Brooks, Mr and Mrs Fitch, Mrs R Gillan, Mrs Green, Miss B Harris, Mr & Mrs Haynes, Prof & Mrs Iles, Mr & Mrs Long, Mr & Mrs Marchant, Mr K Noble, Mrs Pingree, Mr and Mrs Rhodes, Mrs J Roden, Mr P Rowland, Mrs Gillian Simpson, Mr J Smith, and Diana Watmough. We are also grateful for donations in memory of Douglas Attfield, Dr Robert Bagg, Paul Narraway and Margaret Rumsey.

Looking ahead to 2014/5

Our activities ahead will be focused on the key areas we identified to help secure the future of the Friends: growing membership and our profile, developing our influencing work, increasing volunteers, improving the website and the development of the Visitor Centre. In respect of the Forest, we are looking to make contributions in a number of key areas, notably cycling, wood pasture, litter and fly tipping, site improvements and protecting the Green Belt.

Increased marketing is essential to grow the Friends and increase its influence. We are working to improve our website and produce new materials to promote the Friends.

Our ability to influence depends on a positive relationship with the City of London, its Members, officers and volunteers, that is about trust, capability and mutual respect. To help develop this further, we are looking to work on other joint projects and to liaise more closely with the Superintendent and the Verderers. We need to expand and increase how we can contribute to achieve greater influence and increased members.

In summary, we remain convinced that the Forest needs "Friends" and we want to ensure we can continue to play our part for many years to come.

Judy Adams, Chairman



The Friends' major contribution to the new Gifford Wood was highlighted at the Lord Mayor's Tree Party at the Mansion House last summer. Photo by Pete Wrobel.

Sarah Gardner, E-Communications Officer of The Ramblers, made her first trip to Epping Forest last September to take part in the Centenary Walk – and discovered some of its charms and its history

A RAMBLER'S VIEW OF THE CENTENARY WALK



Last year's Centenary walkers at the County Hotel. Photo by Robert Good.

The Forest was granted to the City of London to act as Conservators to maintain the natural aspect of the forest and it's held in trust as a place for people to enjoy forever. That's a fact worth celebrating, which is why every year the Friends of Epping Forest, with support from The Ramblers and the Corporation of London, hold an organised walk (well, what else?) from the southern edge of the Forest at Manor Park to the northern tip at Bell Common.

I'm rather ashamed to say I'd never been to Epping Forest, so the chance to walk the entire length of it in one go was too good to miss. On a damp Sunday in September, I travelled to East London to meet up with approximately 200 other people, masterfully kept in order by walk leader Mike Whiteley of the West Essex Ramblers.

As we walk through the Forest, I get chatting to some of the people who've come along and their affection for Epping Forest and its protected status becomes clear. One walker tells me that his parents were involved in the first centenary walk in 1978, having always volunteered with the Friends of Epping

Forest. A local resident tells me she walks here as often as possible to unwind and de-stress. Members of the Newham Striders, a group that holds short walks, have challenged themselves to complete the entire 15-mile walk, which they do, to their (weary) pleasure.

The walk is superbly organised. Not only are there guest speakers, places of interest (such as the brilliantly informative Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge) and refreshment stops (including at the County Hotel, who have provided coffee for the walkers, free of charge, for every Centenary Walk held), there are also a series of interconnecting shorter walks for those who want to drop in and out.

History and interesting facts come from the City of London Conservators and officers of the forest. When landowners began erecting fences to enclose the land, the lords of the manors were successfully pursued in court for obstructing the right to graze. The Epping Forest Act in 1878 ensured the natural aspect of the forest had to be upheld.

At a time when demand for housing in Greater London is high, it's fantastic to think that the complete 6,000 acres of Forest will exist untouched for people to enjoy forever. Not many other forests have survived so well – as we walk, my mind turns to the Great North Wood, an ancient forest once stretching from Croydon to Camberwell, now an area of Greater London suburbia called Norwood.

As one walker told me, "This is the most fantastic resource in London - vast green space for everyone to enjoy, walkers, cyclists, families, horse-riders, dog-walkers... it's full of history too. I love it!" Thanks to the City of London and the Friends for doing such an amazing job to keep it that way.

Sarah Gardner (www.ramblers.org.uk/blogs)

THIS YEAR'S CENTENARY WALK

Our annual event, the Epping Forest Centenary Walk, walking from Manor Park to Epping, is on Sunday 14 September. It's based on the walk established in 1978 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passing of the Epping Forest Act 1878. Join with us to celebrate Epping Forest!

The walk provides the opportunity to walk the entire length of Epping Forest in a day (about 15 miles) or take part in one of the local sections of the "long" walk.

9:00 am. Start at the Junction of Forest Drive and Capel Road, about 250 metres north of Manor Park Station.

9:50 am. Meet at the Green Man roundabout, Leytonstone.

11:00 am. Arrive at County Hotel, Oak Hill – which will

provide us with a welcome cup of coffee.

11:20 am. Depart from the County Hotel.

12:30 pm. Arrive at Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge, for lunch stop.

1:30 pm. Depart from the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge.

2:15 pm. Depart from Earl's Path Car Park, Earl's Path Road, Loughton.

4:30 – 5:00 pm. Arrive at Bell Common, Epping at the end of the walk.

Any enquiries, please phone the walk leader, Mike Whiteley, on 0208 524 2737 or Judy Adams 020 8418 0730. See the Friends' website for more detail and joining point locations, www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk

WALK REPORTS

Exploring Connaught Water (23 February 2014)



Wet underfoot! Photo by Judy Adams.

Just over 20 walkers joined Mike Smith for a walk around Connaught Water through Long Hills and Fairmead to enjoy, somewhat surprisingly, the winter sun. This was extremely welcome, given the long period of rain before the scheduled walk, where the Forest had been impassable in places.

There was the usual abundance of birds on Connaught Water, including tufted duck, mallard, great crested grebe, swans and the ever present Canada geese along with their Egyptian counterpart. We left Connaught Water to cut through the Forest, walking over thick leaf litter (finding it to be the driest area of ground). Then we joined one of the Forest trails, scampered along, and emerged at Fairmead Road.

Walking up the road now closed to traffic, we paid homage at the site of the Fairmead Oak and the earlier Fairmead Lodge (referred to as the New Lodge in the 14th century!), home to the poet William Sotheby in the latter part of the 18th century. From the 1830s, the Lodge began to provide refreshments for Forest visitors. When the tenant-occupier died around the end of the century, the estimated £200 required for repairs proved too costly and the Conservators decided in 1898 to demolish it, thus precluding us from enjoying a cup of tea. This historic site also seemed to be appreciated by a buzzard circling overhead, now a more common, though welcome, sight in the Forest.

As we headed back towards Connaught Water, we went through Fairmead Bottom and around the Alder Pond, one of the Project Nightingale areas and then joined the Red Path back to Connaught Water. There we spotted an ice cream van, an indication of the summer to come! **Judy Adams**

Birds on Wanstead Flats (30 March 2014)

This walk was led by Tim Harris, Chairman of the Wren Wildlife and Conservation Group and an enthusiastic ornithologist. He and other members of the Group devote many hours to

observing the bird life in this area and they notched up a tally of 135 different species in 2013. Many of these are casual migrants on spring or autumn passage. Our record for the morning was a much more modest 23! Tim explained that this part of Epping Forest is an outstanding location for birds as it is an oasis of green surrounded by houses. It is part of the green corridor that extends northwards along the valley of the River Roding, linking Epping Forest to the west to the open spaces in Hainault and Fairlop to the east.

The winter rains had flooded the area around the Jubilee Pond so that there was much exposed soil ready for colonisation by plants and we watched pied wagtails feeding on this bare ground, energetically chasing their insect prey.

Binoculars at the ready, the 30 of us observed a few black-headed gulls and feral pigeons flying around the Jubilee Pond, but they were upstaged by a pair of mute swans full of the joys of spring. It is easy to see how their graceful mating dance has influenced choreographers. Great tits were calling to one another while feeding and a mistle thrush sang from the top of an oak tree. A kestrel sat still on a lamp post for all to view. Several magpies and carrion crows were seen as well as blackbirds and a tuneful robin.



Mute swans performing a mating dance on Jubilee Pond. Photo by Kathy Hartnett.

This part of the Forest has a thin, acidic soil where heathland plants thrive. Broom is common and some gorse was in flower. Its prickly bushes provide ideal nesting sites for summer migrants such as the common whitethroats, which had not yet arrived. There is a small patch of heather as well as several species of fine leaved grasses including mat grass.

Several clumps of the dead leaves of purple moor grass were noted: these provide hiding places for beetles and other invertebrates as well as small mammals which are preyed on by various birds. Nestlings of many bird species are fed a variety of protein-rich caterpillars as an essential part of their diet, and 170 different species of moth have been recorded from a moth trap in a garden close by. Some of the group saw a freshly emerged small tortoiseshell butterfly feeding on a dandelion flower and attempted to photograph it. ➤



Wanstead Park. Photo by Kathy Hartnett.

➤ Skylarks are ground-nesting birds and several hold territories on the Flats. However, dogs disturb skylarks, and at an organised event the day before, Tim had been busy explaining the importance of keeping dogs on leads in this area. It was pleasing to see that most dogs were now on leads while walking near the nesting sites. Although no skylarks were heard singing, there were excellent views of meadow pipits to round off a pleasant morning's stroll. *Tricia Moxey*

Bluebells in Wanstead Park (24 April 2014)

I was joined by 30 people on a slightly overcast morning to take a stroll round Wanstead Park. As this was the first visit for some of the group, I gave a brief outline of the history of the area. I explained how its features had changed over time when the grand designs for the formal garden were altered as fashions in garden layout changed over the years, and that now the Park was largely seen as a "natural area" although it was still possible to find some of the garden features in addition to the lasting legacy of the lakes.

The view along the Ornamental Water reflected the spring greenery, dotted with cherry blossom. This sense of tranquillity with its reflected greenery, wildfowl floating on its mirrored surface and the fish within its depths was the essence of the formal 18th-century lakes within such grand gardens. 276 years since their construction, we can still enjoy being beside such lakes as they provide quiet calming retreats in our otherwise busy lives. To add to this peaceful scene, several chiffchaff, blackbirds and robins were singing their respective refrains and various bumble bees buzzed actively among the flowers.

We were delighted to be able to view the Grotto, which had recently been cleared of ivy and other obstructing vegetation so that its remaining intriguing features could be clearly seen. Built about 1760, from an eclectic mix of various stones, this Grotto, like others of its time, was designed to be a conversation piece, showcasing the skills and imagination of

its designer and the craftsmen who built it. Originally there was a boat dock, closed with double doors, a waterside landing stage and staircase to an upper enclosed chamber which was lined with sparkling crystals of quartz and amethyst. It was filled with curiosities such as coffin lids and bamboo furniture. The building was damaged by fire in 1884 and is being stabilised as a ruin.

We measured one of the large sessile oaks planted in the early years of the 19th century as part of Humphrey Repton's plans for modifying the gardens. His design for this part of the garden included trees marking out the form of the Union Jack, but sadly most of the trees have not survived. Close by in a patch of grass was a small colony of pignut. A member of the carrot family, this plant is considered to be an indicator of undisturbed grasslands and may well have been more common in the grassy areas of the grand 18th and early 19th century gardens.

Walking past the Temple into Chalet Wood, the stunning views of the carpet of bluebells was breathtaking. Although the sun failed to break through the clouds, the sight of the multitude of flower spikes was fantastic as they released their delicate perfume. The pathways through this woodland had been edged with large logs to protect the sensitive bluebell plants from being trampled. This was a task willingly undertaken by members of the Wren Wildlife and Conservation Group, who had also removed trailing brambles so that the bluebells could be appreciated in all their glory. *Tricia Moxey*

Galleyhill Wood in Springtime (18 May 2014)

People coming on walks in the main part of the Forest usually have at least some idea of where they are in relation to familiar locations and communities. The isolation and restricted access at Galleyhill Wood mean that this is unlikely to be the case. In the event, 17 people managed to find their way to the starting point at Aimes Green, and were rewarded with a fine and sunny walk in an area unfamiliar to most of them.

If all the roads are deleted from a modern map it becomes clear that Galley Hill Green forms part of a trackway climbing up from Waltham Abbey to Epping Green and the former Latton Priory, then on to the Abbey's lands further north in Essex. At the foot of this climb is what used to be a significant junction with Aimes Green, Puck Lane and Clapgate Lane branching off to either side. Anyone visiting the site after wet weather will wonder that any of these tracks were ever considered as roads, but they were used by packhorses and people on foot rather than wheeled vehicles which would soon have become mired in heavy clay.

On this warm spring day the climb up Galley Hill rewarded the walkers with spectacular views across the Lea Valley, the valley of the Cobbins Brook and the whole western side of the Forest from Wintry Wood and Swaines Green in the north to High Beach and the Irish Hills beyond.



Peter Adams leads the group down the trackway coming back from the top of Galley Hill. Photo by Pete Wrobel.

We were privileged to be allowed to go into the Wood itself, where a wide range of flowers grow in the rich soil. Most of the wood was historically coppiced but it has not been re-cut for fifty-plus years, with many trees close to collapse. There is now a large herd of fallow deer in the area and if it were to be brought back into a coppice rotation the deer would have to be fenced out for a while. But it would be nice if the public could be allowed in, if only for part of each year.

As to the origin of the Wood's name the best suggestion would seem to be that it comes from the old English words *gafol wudu* meaning the wood which pays rent or tax. Any other suggestions gratefully received. **Peter Adams**



The Forest photographed by Peter Warne, whose talk on finding wildlife in Epping Forest will be the featured event of the Annual General Meeting.

THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST
NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2014, 7.15 PM,
BANCROFT'S PREP SCHOOL HALL,
WOODFORD GREEN

(Access off Whitehall Road, just to the west of Woodford High Road)

7:15 pm	AGM
8:00 pm	Tea/coffee
8:30 pm	Talk by Peter Warne, wildlife photographer

Agenda for AGM:

1. Minutes of the last AGM held on 3 July 2013
2. Matters Arising
3. Chairman's Report 2013/14
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Treasurer
6. Election of Committee Members
7. Election of Independent Examiner
8. Any Other Business

Honorary Committee members at present are:

Chairman	Judy Adams (2012- 2015)
Vice-Chairman:	Sue McKinley (2013-2016)
Secretary:	Mike Smith (2013-2016)
Treasurer:	Alan Curran (2011-2014)
Membership Sec:	Jean Brockington (2013-2016)
Committee members:	Tricia Moxey and Pete Wrobel (Editor).

Committee members are re-elected each year.

The AGM will be followed by a talk, *Finding Wildlife in Epping Forest*, by Peter Warne, biologist and wildlife photographer. He has published a book with the same title, which will be available at the meeting. He will also have with him a copy of his *Review of Wildlife at Coppiced Hall*.

Hear about Peter's explorations of the Forest, and see photographs that make you feel you are in there with him. www.flickr.com/photos/14865557@N04/ or simply google Peter Warne Photographer.

JOTTINGS FROM HISTORY

Georgina Green begins an occasional series on historical aspects of the Forest with a focus on Wanstead Park – now a much-visited part of the Forest but once a grand private estate.

A Keeper in Wanstead Park c.1935

George Wright was a keeper in Wanstead Park from 1923 – 1966 and the following account is taken from a conversation between Georgina Green and his daughter, Stella Dodd, on 18 May 1983. Stella was born around 1931, so grew up in Wanstead Park until she married in 1952.

They lived in one of the two keepers' homes which were on the ground floor of the Temple. The other keepers were Mr Cockell, who looked after the Blake Hall Road side of the park, and Mr Feakes, who was the Head Keeper. Her father was responsible for the Ornamental Waters, and Stella remembered going into the Grotto to get the punt they used on the lakes. The Grotto was still quite intact before the last war, with shells etc. They used to go on the islands to collect the swans' eggs, so they did not get over-populated by swans.

One of her father's conditions of service was that his wife should be a good cook, and she used to prepare a seven-course banquet for the members of the Epping Forest Committee when they met each month in the Temple. The Superintendent, Mr McKenzie, would come down with the cookery book and tell her what to do, and the fish would be sent direct from Billingsgate, all was the very best. The desserts (trifles etc.) would be sent finished from London. They spent a whole week cleaning the silver pepper pots, and otherwise preparing for this visit.

Stella recalled that people used to swim in Leg of Mutton Pond, and her father would go and break the ice for them in the winter. Tom Offord, who had a chemist shop in Forest Gate, swam every day whatever the weather.

Boating was not allowed on Perch Pond as it was considered too dangerous, but the boathouse there was used to service the boats on Heronry Pond. Stella remembered that a V1 rocket came down in Heronry Pond, killing a young soldier (home on leave from the war) and his girlfriend, who were rowing on the pond.

Like many of the keepers in the early years of the 20th century Mr Feakes had served in the Boer War. Mr Cockell was a Sergeant Major who served in First and Second World Wars. George Wright was born around 1902 and was not an ex-soldier. The Superintendent, Colin McKenzie, was from a family which had a castle in Scotland as their ancestral home, and he ruled the Forest in a feudal way. The keepers were on duty 24 hours a day, and only had one day off a month.

When Mr Qvist came (aged 41) in 1949 he was not liked by the keepers. He had been a bailiff on a Norfolk estate and swept away the old archaic system. He introduced the

union, gave them weekends off, but also changed their old uniform, with bowler hats, to the more modern style with trilbies. Stella thought the keepers' lodges at Wanstead Park were built around 1966.

Wanstead House Grotto (as recorded by William Robertson in autumn 1797)



The Grotto in Wanstead Park, c.1905. (Passmore Edwards Museum, Newham)

“This most magnificent house is at present uninhabited...”

“The grotto very neatly disposed tho small this is the plan [see illustration, which is very small, just a quick diagram in the text] A principal room with a window divided into 3 compartments, centre one twice the size of the remainder, the view across an large irregular (triangular?) lake with an

island at its farthest extremity, some small weeping willows produced a beautiful effect backed by dark foliage of Elms, in the pairs which separate from arcade. B was two convex mirrors about a foot in diameter in which the scenery was reflected and formed a beautiful picture tho' the lake was quite dirty with weeds – the mirror reminded me of Grays pocket one which he used always carry with him for the purpose of critically examining the scenery & I saw here twould answer the purpose fully

“Out of the centre of the ceiling a small cupola issues, in this a star beautifully enriched and the perpendicular supports are also B is the arcade C front or principal entrance and separate apartment from the principal apartment D the back one both separated by doors from the inriched part of the grotto. Thro this last the person who shows it enters unseen, on the ringing of a bell & opens the front door – the floor of the principal room is ornamented with great taste with small pebbles laid in terras, about the size of kidney beans and disposed circularly in the centre and the rest fills the remainder the square.”

Transcribed by Georgina Green from a photocopy of the original Journal by Wm Robertson, Architect, 1795.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 21 June 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm

A Midsummer Evening Walk

Come with Peter Read on a walk for good views from Pole Hill, and to find out about William Morris, the Greenwich Meridian, wartime defence and the link between T E Lawrence of Arabia and the Forest. Meet in the Forest car park on Chingford Plain, next to the Royal Epping Forest Golf Club car park, Bury Road, Chingford E4 7AZ. Grid ref: TQ394949

Sunday 6 July 10.30 am – 1.00 pm

A Linear Walk from Epping Long Green to Waltham Abbey

A brisk walk exploring the high lands from Epping Long Green. Good views across the Cobbins Brook, Nazeingwood Common and beyond. Meet in the Cornmill Meadows car park on the Crooked Mile B194 north of Waltham Abbey. Then some cars will drive to Epping Long Green for the gently descending walk back to the remaining cars at Cornmill Meadows. Grid ref: TL384016

Saturday 19 July 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

High Beach Festival

The Festival spreads over four venues, with a Red Ribbon Trail between them. See article on page 6 or visit www.highbeachchurch.org.uk/high-beach-festival/

Saturday 2 August 10.30 am – 12.30 pm

Ambresbury Banks, Long Running and Beyond

Join Ron and Pat Andrews to explore the interesting area between Theydon Bois and Epping. Wildlife-rich heathland, along with the Iron Age Camp. Meet in Jack's Hill car park north, off Coppice Row (B172), Theydon Bois. Grid ref: TQ436996

Sunday 14 September 9.00 am – 5.00 pm

The Annual Epping Forest Centenary Walk 2014

Celebrate how lucky we are to have Epping Forest! Walk the entire length of Epping Forest in one day or take part in one of the local sections of the long walk. For more details, see



the article on page 7, contact 020 8418 0730, or visit www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk

Thursday 2 October 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Interpreting Loughton's Forest

Join local historian Georgina Green to discover parts of Loughton's Forest. Meet at Baldwin's Hill, Loughton. Nearby postcode IG10 1SF. Grid ref: TQ427975

Sunday 19 October 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

An Autumn Stroll in Gernon Bushes for Fruits and Fungi

Discover autumn in the Nature Reserve with guides Tricia Moxey and Reserve Warden Brian McGhie. Meet at the entrance to the Reserve in Garnon Mead, Coopersale. Turn off B181 Epping to North Weald Rd into Coopersale Common Lane and then left into Garnon Mead beyond railway bridge, CM16 7RN. Grid ref: TL476031

Sunday 9 November 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Fayre Mead and the Rayne Deer

Explore around Fairmead Lodge and Warren House and the large open areas in between with Verderer Peter Adams. Meet in Fairmead Oak Car Park, Fairmead Road, High Beach. Grid ref: TQ408967

Thursday 27 November

Forest Supper

Bookings are now open. See back page for details.

JOIN THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST

The Friends want Epping Forest to be a natural environment rich in wildlife, available and increasingly appreciated, used and understood by the public.

Our main aims are to support the preservation of Epping Forest as an open space for recreation and to preserve its natural aspect; and to further the understanding, appreciation, enjoyment and use of the Forest.

Our activities include responding to planning applications and the many consultation documents that affect the Forest emanating from central and local government and the City of London, which manages Epping Forest.

We run a programme of guided walks, including the annual Epping Forest Centenary Walk, give talks and, increasingly, work with local groups around the Forest, supporting

some of their activities and contributing a Forest-wide view on local issues and opportunities.

We also operate the Epping Forest Visitor Centre at High Beach, open Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays.

We are a membership organisation funded by voluntary subscriptions and donations and run entirely by volunteers.

Become a member of the Friends of Epping Forest and help us protect the Forest and help other people learn about and enjoy it.

Contact: Jean Brockington, Membership Secretary
jean.brockington@btopenworld.com 020 8529 3077
www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk/join.htm

FOREST SUPPER

Thursday, 27 November 2014

Chingford Assembly Hall, Station Road, Chingford E4 7EN (7.00 for 7.30pm)



salads, hot buttered potatoes and crusty French bread & butter. For dessert, choose between crème brûlée or chocolate fudge cake with cream. Coffee /tea with mints will follow.

Wine and soft drinks are included, along with table quizzes about the Forest (no mobile phones for assistance!) and sales goods including Christmas cards.

A good opportunity for you to meet our guests from the Epping Forest and Commons Committee and Officers of the Forest, along with other Friends.

We hope to see you at our annual get together this year, with catering provided by Alan Beere Catering.

Join us for a home-cooked cold meat platter, with roast Norfolk turkey, home cooked gammon ham, roast loin of pork, and poached Scottish salmon with a lime mayonnaise, accompanied by coleslaw and potato & chives, Mediterranean pasta, oriental rice and mixed green

It is a ticket only event, so please apply soon to ensure you get a place. Tables seat up to 10 people.

And please donate a gift for the raffle. The response has been very generous each year and it helps to raise funds for the Friends.

Please complete the booking form below and send with your payment **and S.A.E.** to: Hazel Shukla at 6 Knighton Drive, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0NY by 12 November.

REMEMBER – ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY



2014 FOREST SUPPER BOOKING FORM

Please provide ticket(s) @ £24.00 each (please list all names below) for the Forest Supper to be held on the 27 November 2014 at Chingford Assembly Hall, Station Road, Chingford, E4 7EN:

.....

I would like, if possible, to be seated with (full name please):.....

Please tell us of any special dietary needs, naming the relevant person/s.

NameTelephone No.....

Address.....

.....

I enclose my payment of £..... (cheques made payable to Friends of Epping Forest).
 Please return your completed Booking Form, payment and SAE by 12 November to: Hazel Shukla, 6 Knighton Drive, Woodford Green, IG8 0NY.

Bring your ticket with you on the night – there is a prize for the winning ticket number!

Don't forget to enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope!