

# Friends of Epping Forest



Newsletter Summer 2015

[www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk)

## CORRIDORS THAT MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

We tend to take our surrounding landscape for granted: it is just there, but it is an important aspect of our lives. We feel more comfortable in a familiar one, perhaps the district where we were raised, and changes to cherished vistas are unsettling.

Our own area's undulating landscape has been modified by human intervention over time. Long ago, swathes of the original wildwood were cleared on the river valley slopes to create farmland. Trees were left on the higher ground, some to be felled for timber, but many lopped for fuel, forming the thousands of pollards so characteristic of this former Royal Hunting Forest. Narrow lanes linked the surrounding settlements as generations worked the land.



*Spring comes to the Forest:  
oaks near Highams Park.  
Photo Peter Wrobel.*

Then some 160 years ago the railways came, resulting in massive urbanisation on the Forest's fringes. The remaining fields round the Forest became larger as many hedgerows were grubbed up, and the varied habitats became increasingly fragmented. Pylons appeared, lakes filled former gravel pits and non-native species of trees and plants were introduced into plantations and gardens. Today the congested M25 and M11 skirt the Forest and pollution levels from traffic fumes are worryingly high. More built development is scheduled; modifications in agricultural activities and the response of vegetation to climate change will have further impacts on our precious Forest's landscape.

Open green land is seen as an ideal target for further development – reducing the potential for food production, tree growth, flood relief, recreational spaces and wildlife habitats. Habitat degradation in such areas and their increasing fragmentation is being addressed with various attempts to retain

and enhance biodiversity and landscape quality.

A major driver for this is the Living Landscape movement. It seeks to link special habitats with one another through creating green corridors of thick hedges, roadside verges or shady river banks. These can link up fragmented habitats – allowing a wide range of organisms to move between them.

Ideally these greenways should be 150 metres wide over much of their length, thus providing space to include tall trees. Many exist on the Forest's Buffer lands and local river valleys, providing vital links between the Forest and outlying fragments of established or newly planted woodlands. Indeed the Forest itself is one large living landscape, linked up by such features, making

the maintenance of its integrity of paramount importance.

Recent academic studies are evaluating these linear corridors and also the spacing of small vegetated islands within larger habitats which can act as stepping stones to help maintain these vital links, especially for bees, beetles and grasshoppers. These diverse islands surviving in an agricultural landscape can be havens for woodland wildflowers too, but are really only effective for all kinds of wildlife if about 150 metres from a much larger habitat island covering about 2 hectares. Similarly, wildflower patches in urban gardens could provide some links between fragmented urban green spaces.

At this time of the year it is important to note what is growing in or using such green corridors as a record of just how well they are functioning. Sightings of butterflies, beetles, grasshoppers, birds or bats and other mammals are important too.

*Tricia Moxey*

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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.*

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### 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...

It certainly has been splendid in the last few weeks to see the Forest coming alive again. It rather lifts the spirits, and the views around Highams Park (see front cover) do the trick if you have not yet been out much yourself!

I am hoping very much that you can attend our AGM this year. Please note that we have had to change the date advertised in the last Newsletter. It is now Tuesday 23 June, *not* Wednesday 24 June. Our speaker, Mark Lewis, will give, for many of us, a new take on ways of appreciating the Forest and maybe give us some ideas for new activities ourselves.

We are keen to discuss with you opportunities for moving forward as the Friends. As I mentioned in the last "Dear Friend" and in the Annual Report in this issue, the Forest continues to need Friends – and particularly now! It is difficult to remember a time when the demands on the Friends have been greater. The changing perceptions of the Forest by individuals, groups and the Conservators, Green Belt pressures, new activities and the preparation of the new Forest management plan, place pressures on us to increase our efforts on behalf of the Forest. Our responsibility as Trustees and indeed members is to ensure we are an organisation that can respond effectively to these challenges and enable a long-term future for the Friends.



*Bluebells near Strawberry Hill. Photo Peter Wrobel.*

You will also see in this issue mention of the visit by BBC Essex to the Visitor Centre, along with exhibitions coming up. Most notable is the 1882 Monster Map of Epping Forest on show in Loughton Library on 4 July, a unique opportunity for Forest enthusiasts.

Is there anyone out there who has undertaken or is undertaking research on land use before 1880 within or around the present-day Forest? We are trying to build up a picture of what activities took place and when, to consider how that likely diversity of use impacts on the Forest we see today. We suspect that it was not always all the same – that is., a homogenous land use – and we would like to begin to understand this better.

**Judy Adams**

## LAND GIRLS IN THE FOREST

*Essex Land Girls*, written by Dee Gordon, has just been published. As part of her research, the author came across an article in the July 1999 Friends Newsletter, where Hilda Anslow commented on her experience as a Land Girl working in 1943/44 at Yates Meadow, Chingford:

“The meadow was previously two fields divided by a rough hedge with a drop of about two feet into the lower field. When I was working at Carroll’s Farm, these two fields were part of Bury Farm. The War Agricultural Committee told us to remove the hedge and young trees and plough the field and grow corn. I helped the contractors to remove the trees and then I ploughed the field. Whilst doing so, the tractor skidded down the bank and got stuck. With the farmer’s assistance in trying to dislodge the tractor, it overturned. My memory of the fields is that they were rough grazing. I left the Land Army in 1945 so I do not know how long it was cultivated for cereal growing. But I was surprised when we accompanied Geoff Seddon (Museum Curator at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge) on a walk in about 1994 to see such a lovely wild flower meadow with no signs of the bank between the fields. We used to under plant cereals with Tares (members of the Vetch family, ploughed in as a green manure?) so that when the crop was harvested there was another one growing over the stubble. Whether this had any effect on the present flower meadow or whether it was re-seeded I don’t know, but knowing what the land was like before it was ploughed I lean towards re-seeding. It is only 50 years for nature (perhaps with a little help from man) to produce such a lovely flower meadow.”

Many of you may have known both Hilda and Vera Anslow of Woodford Green. Whether it was through delivering magazines locally for the National Trust, the



*Right: Hilda and Vera Anslow, Friends stalwarts. Above, Hilda (right, back) as a Land Girl at Daw’s Hill.*



Friends and the Essex Wildlife Trust or at local fairs and fetes promoting the Friends, they were very supportive of the Forest and its communities. They also staffed the then Visitor Centre at High Beach, when it was part of the Conservation Centre, walking for each session from Woodford Green and back. Those who live locally may have even spotted them on many a day taking their tools by wheelbarrow down to their allotment in Broadmead Road!

Sadly Vera died in December 2014 and Hilda on 20 February this year, just 3 months short of her 100th birthday. We send our condolences to her family and are grateful for the character and life of the Anslow sisters. **Judy Adams**

*Essex Land Girls*, by Dee Gordon, paperback, 192 pages, ISBN 978-0750961523, The History Press, 2015, £9.99 (Kindle edition, £9.49).

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## THIS YEAR’S CENTENARY WALK

Our annual Epping Forest Centenary Walk, from Manor Park to Epping, is based on the walk established in 1978 to celebrate 100 years since the passing of the Epping Forest Act 1878. Come and join with us on Sunday 13 September!

Organised by the Friends of Epping Forest, with support from the Ramblers’ Association and the Corporation of London, 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.



*Walk leader Mike Whiteley (front) with centenary walkers.*

**1:15 pm.** Depart from the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge.

**2:00 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, [www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk), for more detail and joining point locations.

## FOREST MATTERS



*Changes from top to bottom at Highams Park Lake. Left: Landscaping, new planting and, just visible on the right, a new flood wall at the bottom of the lake. Right: Extensive desilting by the Corporation and removal of scrub as part of the Epping Forest Centenary Trust's Window on the Lake project have transformed the top of the lake – it is revealed again as a place of special solitude, and without the famous "stink" that used to characterise it. Photos Peter Wrobel.*



### Highams Park Lake works

#### Planning update

##### Planning application approved in the Green Belt!

At High Beach, an application for five houses on the Pine Lodge Riding Stables has been approved. This is likely to set a precedent for any subsequent proposals on other land holdings in the High Beach area, which is in the Green Belt. At the meeting when the Pine Lodge Riding Stables application

was approved, Epping Forest District Council stated that precedent was not something that should be taken into consideration. This is contrary to their views several years ago and a worrying sign in respect of development in the Green Belt.

##### Licensing of a mobile catering facility at High Beach at Crossroads

The licensee has now been agreed and the tea hut will continue to be operated by the current licensee.

## THOSE CUCKOOS...

We have been following radio-tagged cuckoos in their migrations for several years. One in particular has been nicknamed "Chris" (after Chris Packham). Scientists have now radio tracked several other species of birds and the technique has produced valuable information.

Chris has provided information about the refuelling stops and wintering grounds as well as the differing routes the migrations have taken. Other data relate to the speed and distance of travel, the effect of weather conditions and in Chris's case, age – he was in his second year when first tagged in 2011.

This winter Chris was again in Angola. Recently his radio tag reported he was moving north and then flying west out of the Central African Republic. He continued westward from the Ivory Coast on into Ghana, moving 1,060 miles in the ten days after 21 March.

As I write, his radio tag has reported that he has crossed the Sahara and on 29 April, he returned to the area around the Norfolk/Suffolk border where he was first tagged in spring 2011 and has spent each subsequent summer.

Since leaving our shores in 2011, Chris has flown over, or visited, 28 different countries, crossed the Sahara Desert eight times and reached speeds of up to 60 mph.

Dr Chris Hewson, lead scientist on the project at the British Trust for Ornithology, said, "Chris was one year old when we fitted the satellite-tag, which makes him five years old now, and quite an age for a cuckoo; the oldest we have on record is almost seven. The tag was also given a life of two to three years, so that is getting quite old too. We had everything crossed for Chris to make it back again this year and give us another complete migration route, and he hasn't let us down."

**Ken Hoy**

(With thanks to the British Trust for Ornithology – and Chris).



*The Glade, Wanstead Park. Photo Tricia Moxey.*

## Wanstead Park consultation on proposed Master Plan

We also responded to the extensive Master Plan proposals for Wanstead Park. Proposals included to open up views, re-create some of the earlier gardens, public events, pop up food stalls, play area, exposure of earlier earth structures associated with the park, along with a feasibility study to examine how water levels could be maintained in the lakes.

Key points raised by the Friends included:

- **The value of the wildness and “naturalness” of the Park should be maintained** – the Friends encouraged an approach which maintains the feeling of naturalness and informality, valued by the public during the 2006 consultation.

- **Conserving should be the focus rather than restoring**

- **Financial sustainability** – In the long term the park needs to be maintained and it is essential that maintenance costs are considered given the current lesser resources available for the Forest and the potential impact of increased maintenance costs on other areas of the Forest.

- **Recognising Wanstead Park as part of Epping Forest** – A number of people asked me whether the Friends were interested in Wanstead Park, as it was not part of Epping Forest! I was pleased to reassure them that it was indeed part of the Forest. The Friends have an interest in the whole of the Forest and indeed consider that its various parts not only add considerable interest for the visitor, but demonstrate that the total is truly greater than the sum of the parts!

## Proposed Open Spaces Legislation

As mentioned in the last *Newsletter*, the City of London has now undertaken consultation on its proposed modifications to the legislation governing “its” open spaces, including Epping Forest. In order to attempt to make any changes they have to promote a City of London (Various Powers) Bill.

We responded to the consultation and welcome the review. While many proposals were largely technical updates and many gave us little concern, the proposals to extend the length of licences to run, for example, cafes (currently a maximum of

three years) risks alienating areas from the Forest for longer periods. It is critical that more detail on the proposed time period and nature of the schedule to which it applies be provided before the Bill is promoted. We shall respond further when this detail is available. The Epping Forest Act 1878 (as amended) has served us well. We need to be convinced that any changes serve the present-day Forest even better.

## Natural play structures near Hollow Ponds

Waltham Forest council has now installed three wooden structures on Leyton Flats (at a cost of around £30,000). The council has also agreed to maintain them. We responded to the consultation by voicing some concern about the introduction of structures into the Forest and the precedent this initiative sets for other parts of the Forest.

While there is no formal policy on constructed natural play in Epping Forest, the Epping Forest and Commons Committee agreed in principle to support the installation of natural play structures in Epping Forest back in September 2013. The relevant papers and minutes are in the public domain and can be accessed online at <http://bit.ly/1H8D7wR>.

The Wanstead Park consultation puts forward a further such play area. We are worried about the appropriateness of these structures spreading throughout the Forest. ➤



*Some of the new play equipment installed on Forest land near Hollow Ponds. Photo Peter Wrobel.*

► **Take part in consultations – give us your email!**

Members who have supplied us with their email addresses are now sent details of each consultation and occasional events, enabling them to reply directly or attend advertised events. Most consultations are advertised between our newsletter distributions, making email and in the future our website the only way for us to let you know about these activities.

So *please*, if you have an email address, let us have it. You need not ask for the *Newsletter* by email, but it does mean that you will have a chance to respond yourself, adding individual members' views to the City's deliberations.

**Epping Forest Management Plan for the next 10 years!**

The issue of the Management Plan has surfaced before in the *Newsletter*, but it now seems very likely that the consultation for this will begin this year, probably in the summer. This will be the most significant consultation that the Conservators have undertaken for many years and the plan will set the agenda for the next ten years and in effect well beyond.

Please keep a close eye on the City of London website (<https://consult.cityoflondon.gov.uk/consult.ti>). And do please give us your email, so that we can let you know when consultations go live.

**Current Consultation – the Iron Age forts**

A survey to find out what visitors know and value about our Iron Age hill forts is running now, finishing on 14 June. Both Ambresbury Banks and Loughton Camp are within the Epping Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest and are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. That means both Natural England and Historic England have a say in their future management. And needless to say, given their different jurisdictions, their views may not be the same. So please share your views using the City's website, details above.



*Loughton Camp. Photo Judy Adams.*

**FRIENDS MATTERS**



**Monster map to come to Epping Forest**

The Essex Record Office is bringing the largest map in its collection to Loughton Library on 4 July 2015. The 1882 map shows Epping Forest and was made to reflect the final arbitration award under which land which had been illegally enclosed had to be thrown back into the Forest. The map measures 30 feet long by 13 feet wide, and this will be the first time it has been completely unrolled for public display. The day will be a great opportunity to see it in all its glory.

There will also be other displays of other maps and images of historic Loughton, and two short talks from the Loughton District Historical Society: 11.30 – Richard Morris, *The Epping Forest Arbitration 1878-1882* and the *Production of the Arbitrator's Map, July 1882*; and 12.00 – Chris Pond, *The Excursionists' Forest – A Cockney Paradise*. For further details, see "Dates for Your Diary", page 11. ►



**QUIZ**



A mystery duck seen on Connaught Water. What is it ?

**Answer:**

**Ken Hoy** worn while new flight feathers grow. The photograph shows an adult drake mallard in what is called the "eclipse" plumage... this is a transitional "disguise" After mid-summer birds moult their feathers before assuming a bright "uniform" of new feathers before August ends.

# FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST

## ANNUAL REVIEW 2014/2015

Registered charity number 299970. [www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk](http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk)



*Spring blossom, Whitehall Plain*

### Introduction

Another busy year and not so wet as last year! 2014 gave us a sunny summer, with good numbers of purple emperor, although the exceptionally dry early autumn meant the fungi fared less well. The number of visits to the Forest has now topped 4.4 million (an increase from 4.1 million) assessed through the annual Visitor Survey programme. Also we remember the many humbling ceremonies recognising the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War.

In the Forest, the Conservators have reinforced the dam at Highams Park Lake, as required by the Environment Agency to reduce risk of flooding, and taken the opportunity to carry out some de-silting of the pond improving the amenity. The Tour de France came quickly through the Forest giving us good sightings of the participants and providing a fun day picnicking 'on' the road beforehand. The new Gifford Wood lychgate has been installed, along with the Supporters' plaque acknowledging the contribution of the Friends.

For us, a major achievement has been taking on the

delivery of services at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre. In addition, consultations and planning applications potentially affecting the Forest have been considerable this year.

### Increasing awareness, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the Forest

Our joint annual event with the Conservators and the Ramblers, the Epping Forest Centenary Walk, continues to attract many participants (topping 170 in 2014). The walk continues to be a worthy celebration of the saving of the Forest through the Epping Forest Act, and of the extent the Forest covers today. Our thanks to all those who make it possible, including the Conservators and the Ramblers.

Our walks programme continues apace, with 13 walks attracting 311 participants, up on the previous year (295). Our outreach work has taken us to seven community events in Epping, Highams Park, Loughton, the High Beach Festival and Suntrap Open Day. Through these events we spread the word about the Forest, distributing Forest Diaries and selling Official Maps, speak face to face with visitors (this year with over 800 ►



*Left: the highlight of the year – re-opening the Visitor Centre (Photo Peter Wrobel). Middle: major works in Highams Park have had a dramatic impact on the Forest.*

individuals) and come to better understand visitors' views.

The highlight of the year has to be the re-opening of the Visitor Centre at High Beach by the Friends. This service has put us in touch with nearly 15,000 visitors, some local, others from some distance away and even from abroad. Their reactions and comments about the Forest and what it has to offer are of great value to us and the Forest.

Four of our current Info Assistants received Volunteer Awards from the Conservators for contributing over 150 hours on behalf of the Forest, with the team donating a total of 2,097 hours (equivalent to 300 seven-hour days). This working relationship is a new approach by the Conservators and we are hoping this project will encourage further opportunities for joint working in the interests of the Forest and its visitors.

### Supporting the preservation of the Forest

Responding to planning application that pose a risk to the Forest is a major part of our work. We were pleased that the housing development for the Forest Lodge site next to the Wake Arms has been refused, but are mindful that a second application is likely.

At High Beach, an application for five houses on the Pine Lodge Riding Stables has been approved. This is likely to set a precedent for developing some of the other land holdings in the High Beach area, which are in the Green Belt. At the meeting where the Pine Lodge Riding Stables application was approved, the Council stated that precedent was not something that should be taken into consideration.

We have continued as a member of the Greenspace Group, one of the topic groups working on a Neighbourhood Plan for the Highams Park area (including the Lake, Walthamstow Forest and Mallinson Park Wood). The plan is now largely complete, and the Neighbourhood Plan Group is pursuing recognition as a Community Interest Company. Other Forest districts and boroughs are likely to begin Neighbourhood Plans. While the neighbourhood focus encourages residents to become more involved with their local part of the Forest, a critical role for the Friends and the Conservators is to nurture local communities to also celebrate

the whole of the Forest – truly a case where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts!

Six consultations have taken place this year, largely initiated by the Conservators. We responded to the consultation on the natural play area next to the Hollow Ponds, voicing our concerns about the introduction of significant structures into the Forest and the precedent this initiative sets for other parts of the Forest.

We also responded to the consultation on Wanstead Park, which focused on the degree of restoration of the historic gardens. The Friends encouraged an approach which maintains the feeling of naturalness and informality, valued by the public during the 2006 consultation.

Most recently we responded to the consultation on the proposed legislative changes to the Epping Forest Act through a Various Powers Bill. While many proposals were largely technical updates, the proposal to extend the duration of licences (currently a maximum of three years) for business such as cafes and tea huts risks alienating areas from the Forest for longer periods. Those members who have provided email addresses are now sent details on consultations, enabling them to respond and increasing our voice.

The Friends have made some progress this year in terms of key areas, where we are looking to make proposals. Our cycling review is nearing completion and we are beginning an investigation into a) the nature of wood pasture in the Forest area, b) the varying scientific views of wood pasture and c) the value and nature of "restoration". And we continue to protect the Green Belt.

### Developing the Friends

To ensure that we are fit and able to achieve our aspirations, we have worked on the following:

#### **a) To increase, develop and support membership**

Our membership provides 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 1,586, virtually the same as





atic effect on the lake as well as improving flood safety (Photo City of London). Right: new lychgate at Gifford Wood (Photo Peter Adams).

last year. Our new membership is largely coming through the website, and we are building this capacity more significantly into the development of our new website.

The 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 key project in this area this year has been to commission a new website. The development will begin shortly. Publicity for the Friends has been more extensive this year, due particularly to the Visitor Centre and our planning work.

**c) To raise finances**

The View and now the Visitor Centre are helping to sell our sales goods, whereas online sales (maybe 12 a year) and sales activities at events make a more limited contribution. Now that our stock levels are dropping, we will be looking at new products, particularly publications and walks, working closely with the Conservators.

**Donations given in 2014/15**

Donations came from a greater variety of sources this year including contributions given on our walks, at the Centre and one off contributions to our work. These, along with membership, provide immense support to our work for which we are grateful.

Donations were received from Mr R Barrel, Mrs Button, Miss W Graigen, Mrs O Dawkins, Mrs Green, Mr J Hayward, Mrs Roden, Mr Sack and Miss Stening. We are also grateful for donations in memory of Malcolm William Maidment (from his son, Roger Maidment) and Mr P Narraway.

**Thank you**

As our new website develops, Roddy McLaren, who has been managing and updating our website for longer than I can remember, will be retiring from this role. A great big thanks for his efforts, commitment and timely way of working. I wondered

what he would do in all his spare time and then remembered not least his new job taking groups on holidays to fascinating places including Scotland and further afield. As a longstanding member of Orion Harriers, he of course will continue to run too!

We also thank the volunteer Information Assistants at the Visitor Centre, with seven new ones signing up this year. They share their knowledge and love of the Forest with visitors, which is well received. And they take on the till, centre security and the like! We are grateful to our deliverers, who continue to stuff our newsletter envelopes and deliver locally (about 400).

Thank you too to the Conservators, who have supported and promoted a number of our key projects. And a big thank you to all the committee members, the Friends' Trustees, all of whom are volunteers too!

**Looking ahead to 2015/16**

It is a difficult to remember a time when the demands on the Friends has been greater. The changing perceptions of the Forest by individuals, groups and the Conservators, Green Belt pressures and the preparation of the new Forest management plan place pressures on us to increase our efforts on behalf of the Forest. These thoughts will dominate our work this year, ensuring that we have an organisation that can respond more effectively to these challenges and that we can ensure the long term future of the Friends.

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**



Wild garlic, Oak Hill. Photo Peter Wrobel.

## EDUCATION IN THE FOREST – THE EARLY YEARS



*Main image: back garden of Suntrap during its first term, November 1967; right, a rescued blue tit, about to be released, June 1964; inset, group arriving by bus, with building work in progress, July 1968. Photographs courtesy Ken Hoy*

“Education out of Doors”...that is, out of the school classroom, is currently receiving increasing attention. Epping Forest has long played a prominent role in this area of education.

Since the teaching methods (using the environment) of Annie Higdon at the Burston Strike School in the early years of the last century, many teachers have used the natural environment to enhance their pupils’ first-hand experience. For many years the School Nature Study Union (later known as the School Natural Science Society) existed to encourage this approach.

From the late 1950s, Fred Speakman, with support from Walthamstow Council, was able to operate a small nature study centre in Epping Forest at Jubilee Retreat, Bury Road, Chingford. Ken Hoy took over that centre in January 1963 when Fred Speakman moved to High Beach. Until he retired in 1970, Fred Speakman continued working from a nature study centre next to his house, “Roseaville”.

In 1965 the new London Borough of Waltham Forest began to provide the Jubilee Retreat Centre with additional support, enabling complete classes to come accompanied by their teachers. The importance of this was that it then became possible to integrate the work of the Jubilee Retreat Centre more fully with work in schools. The schools’ curricula were developed and the aims of the Centre more closely linked to the general objectives of primary school education. This was not just “nature study” for its own sake, but a multi-disciplined approach.

As more classes from Chingford and Leytonstone schools wished to attend the centre, further expansion was needed. Fortunately, Waltham Forest was offered the old nursing-home of Suntrap. In July 1967, Ken Hoy was able to move the centre’s operations from Jubilee Retreat to Suntrap, near High Beach, and the development of the

Suntrap Field Study Centre began.

Increased support from Waltham Forest allowed rapid expansion to a staff of 11 field teachers (13 in summer), enabling the centre to receive even more classes. This meant that between 150 and 200 children were using the centre intensively each day with their teachers. Each class could then plan an annual programme of nine monthly visits linked in with their school’s curriculum. Suntrap became virtually unique nationally as a primary school education facility, both in size and the potential of a closer integration of its programmes with the work of all the borough’s junior schools.

In their strong approval of this policy and provision, both the Plowden Report and H.M. Inspectorate (HMI) recognised the Local Education Authority was providing whole generations of Waltham Forest children with a richly enhanced learning opportunity, using the Forest as an educational resource. The HMI report was circulated to all field centres in the country as an example of best practice.

Although in recent decades financial constraints have reduced the scope and impact of the centre (now called “Suntrap Forest Education Centre”), it continues to offer education out-of-doors to schools from a wide area of Essex and London.

From those early days, provision of education has increased in the Forest. The Field Studies Council opened a Field Centre at High Beach (1970), the Epping Forest Centenary Trust began operating services (from 1978) and more recently the City of London has expanded its education programme at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge and now at the View. From small acorns, a “forest” of provision is now in place!

*Judy Adams*

**Editor’s note:** Ken Hoy was Head of Suntrap Field Study Centre from 1967 to 1986.

# FRIENDS MATTERS (CONTD.)

## > A cryptic clue leads the way

We had three new visitors to the Visitor Centre on Sunday 2 May. Unlike most of our visitors, Graham, Liana and Mike were equipped with a vehicle with a satellite mounted on top and several microphones. They had found us, not using a route map or satnav, but with one cryptic clue to our mystery location. And they broadcast live from the Visitor Centre.



On air! Photo courtesy BBC Essex.

This is the clue: "Follow the rules of the road to Calgary Bay and you'll find Sherwood is the focal point."

Fortunately, they were helped by "friends" who phoned in to advise where we might be! Their visit was part of *The Essex Quest*, a live radio programme produced every Sunday morning by BBC Essex. They had made their way from the Redwings Ada Cole Rescue Centre near Harlow, using just the clue above. They met me at the Visitor Centre, along with Richard and Ray, and had a look around. Their biggest challenge was finding the next clue, displayed prominently on our notice board.

And if you are wondering about the cryptic clue, see the answer below.

1. The HIGHway Code contains the rules of the road – many of which are legal requirements.
2. There's a BEACH at Calgary Bay on the Isle of Mull in Scotland.
3. Sherwood as in FOREST.
4. If someone or something is a focal point, they are said to be the CENTRE of interest or activity.

• *The Essex Quest* airs between 9 am and 11.30 am on Sunday mornings on BBC Essex, on 103.5 or 95.3 FM.

## Thousands flock to Visitor Centre

Our first year running the centre has now taken place. Nearly 15,000 visitors came to visit us! It has proved to be a valuable opportunity for the Friends, the Forest and the Conservators.

We are beginning to develop proposals for the centre and to work with the Conservators on how we could develop what's available there and what additional services we might be able to offer. This summer we are encouraging groups to come on Thursday or Friday mornings to enjoy the Easy Access Trail along with a visit to the centre and perhaps have lunch or a picnic to make a full morning or day of it!

## High Beach Festival

We are also running the High Beach Festival – 25 July from 11 am until 3 pm. At the Epping Forest Field Centre we will have the Great Bio-Blitz (wildlife hunt) as well as minibeast hunting, pond dipping, wildlife recording and face painting. The Epping Forest Visitor Centre will have information about the Forest, children's activities, creepy crawlies, mask making, and the opportunity try out the Easy Access Trail.

And why not visit the Church when you are with us? You will find a marked Red Ribbon Trail to take you there through the Forest (10 to 15 minutes). You can visit the beautiful church and enjoy teas and scrumptious lunches.

## AGM speaker: a "personal response" to the Forest

Our speaker at the Annual General Meeting has lived near Epping Forest for nearly 30 years and in the last decade has been making a personal response to the forest through drawing, paint and photography.

"I am presently embarking on a series of drawings and paintings in various media, which aim to capture the effect of light and sense of place in different parts of the Forest environs throughout the seasons," he says. "I also find that I occasionally respond emotionally, painting what it feels like to be there at that particular time."

Mark currently lectures part-time at the Goldsmiths' Centre in London and is a visiting lecturer at Birmingham City University.

*Judy Adams*



## NOMINATION FORM FOR ELECTION AT AGM

(either cut out or photocopy; see page )

I nominate for the office of Chairman/Committee member:

Name

Address

Tel

Signature of candidate

Signature of proposer

Print name .....Tel.....

Signature of seconder

Print name .....Tel.....

Statement by nominee (up to 100 words on your experience and how you will contribute to the Friends).

[Please send to Mike Smith, Secretary, by Monday 8 June.]

## WALK REPORTS

### Chingford Hatch and Highams Park (18 January 2015)

This walk explored the changing environment in the manors of Chingford, Woodford and Walthamstow Highams, prior to and just after the passing of the Epping Forest Act in 1878. Many of the changes are also typical of a number of areas around the Forest at that time.

The River Ching forms a natural boundary between the manors of Chingford and both Woodford and Walthamstow Highams. For much of its history, Chingford was an isolated community with the regularly flooding valley of The Ching forming something of a barrier to easy movement to the east. This all changed when the lord of the manor left money for a causeway to be built across this area linking to Woodford and more particularly Woodford Mill which was located near the present Mill Lane (and close to the present day Harvester Castle at Woodford). This track eventually became Chingford Lane, which remains today. Initially the track had a branch part way along that led to Woodford Wells, though it has since disappeared.

Most of the land on the Chingford side formed the estate around the lord of the manor's home at Friday Hill House, and it stayed that way until it was bought by London County Council just before the Second World War. The land on the Woodford side was the southern part of the unimaginatively named Woodford Wood. This wood was steadily cleared and enclosed at the behest of their lord of the manor in the first part of the 19th century.



resulting from its earlier arable use can still be seen on parts of the Woodford golf course.

Around Chingford Hatch there were a number of smallholdings, and their grazing animals subsequently played a significant part in keeping the area open. In 1890 the noted golf course designer Tom Dunn supervised the laying out of what became Woodford Golf Club. The clubhouse was initially at 3 Manor Cottages (i.e., in Chingford) before in due course it moved to its present home at the top of Sunset Avenue.

The very wet ground conditions made it difficult for the participants at times to appreciate the finer points of the area's history. Yet it was fascinating to view the evidence that we can still see today!

**Peter Adams**

### Wanstead Park and Humphry Repton (26 February 2015)

Wanstead Park, acquired by the City of London Corporation on 1st August 1882 on payment of £8,000, makes a worthy addition to Epping Forest.

The walk focused on the work of Humphry Repton at Wanstead Park. To give some idea of how the estate had evolved, we first visited the Ornamental Waters and then came up The Glade, to help us imagine the beautiful white mansion on the skyline and the remnants of the stylised gardens from c.1713, a hundred years before Repton's visit.

Sir John Child, 2nd Earl Tylney, inherited the property in 1750 at the age of 38, about the time that "Capability" Brown started out on his own, working at Petworth and Stowe for other younger members of the aristocracy. It is highly likely that around this time many of the formal features of the gardens at Wanstead were swept away and replaced by the more natural style of landscaping. The pictures which Repton painted in 1813 for his client, William Long Wellesley Esq., certainly show an almost featureless park with rather overgrown copses as seen from the windows of the house.

Wanstead Golf Club permitted the Friends to visit the site of Wanstead House, to enable us to imagine the scene in 1813. But apart from the deep gully where the house is sited, all that can now be seen is the golf course! In addition, the light



*Passing through The Highams Park. Photo Peter Wrobel.*

The lord of the manor of Walthamstow had his house at Highams (now Woodford County High School for Girls), and following advice from Humphry Repton had his adjoining estate landscaped to include the present Highams Park Lake. He also cleared the woodland northwards to the manor boundary, and the land was for a while used for growing arable crops. The poor gravelly soil made this uneconomic and the land reverted to forest. The ridge and furrow undulations



*Wanstead Park: Humphry Repton replaced many formal features with more natural landscape. Photo Georgina Green.*

drizzle we experienced at the start of the walk had become a steady downpour, and it is a testament to the stoic nature of the party that almost everyone stayed until the end of the walk, even though our cars were nearby!

In 2002, when Repton's book of drawings came to light, Dr Sally Jeffery and Fiona Cowell, well respected landscape historians, accompanied me to see it and we were given permission to photograph the entire volume. I am now fortunate in having my own facsimile copy as well as a typed version of the text. The three of us spent several days studying the text, looking at contemporary maps, and walking the ground to try and understand Repton's intentions and assess how many of his proposals were actually carried out.

During the walk I was able to use some of his illustrations and text to describe his proposals, such as the bridges which he proposed to link the two largest islands in the Ornamental Water.

Wanstead Park is a grade II historic landscape. In 1989-90, the City commissioned a tree survey by specialist consultants Debois Landscape Survey Group. The City acted on some of their proposals to highlight surviving historic features in the park. As I was allowed to photocopy some of the report, I have their estimates of the date some of the trees were planted.

From these sources I was able to point out a number of trees planted by Repton, and to illustrate the "Union Jack" pattern of avenues he planted across the open area in the centre of the park. One feature of Repton's work was his practice of planting a group of trees in one hole, so that the results of the work would become obvious to his client more quickly. Wanstead has a number of the resulting "bundle trees".

Heavy rain prevented me from showing some of my material, but I hope I was able to illustrate the way that Repton changed the landscape at Wanstead during the time it was the home of William and Catherine Long Wellesley. He had great hopes that this would be the climax of his long career, a masterpiece which could be seen by travellers from the major road to the east of London.

Sadly, although his client did undertake some of the work, Repton was never paid and Wellesley did not even bind Repton's pages and drawings. When listed in the catalogue for the sale of the contents of Wanstead House in 1822, they were simply described as "Repton's Drawings of Plans for improving the grounds at Wanstead House".

Perhaps it is as well that Repton died in 1818 and did not live to see the destruction of Wanstead House just ten years after his first visit.

*Georgina Green*

### **A Springtime Stroll** (26 March 2015)

Twenty-three joined the walk on a grey morning to visit the varied habitats in the part of the Forest around Earl's Path and Strawberry Hill. The glacial gravels were excavated to create the two ponds, and couple of mandarin drakes were swimming in Earl's Path pond, which is close to the road. Strawberry Hill pond is larger and historically was used as a swimming pool by youngsters from Loughton.

I was able to point out some traces of ridge and furrow created in the early 19th century when a section of this part of the Forest was ploughed up in an attempt to grow cereals on this very poor quality stony and acid soil. Heather and mat grass are common on this site – known as Strawberry Hill Heath – which is kept free of invading birch by the actions of volunteers from the Epping Forest Centenary Trust. This area is crisscrossed by many tracks created by mountain bike tyres.

This part of the Forest had been enclosed about 1856 and sold off as individual plots ripe for development. Following the passing of the Epping Forest Act in 1878, this area of the Forest was thrown open and Superintendent Alexander McKenzie arranged for a considerable number of saplings – costing a farthing each – to be planted to improve the appearance of the area. The species list included sweet chestnut, sycamore, black pine and Norway maple, many of which are now tall trees. Sycamore and Norway maple produce many seeds so there are lots of saplings here, but there are some young ash and wild service trees too. ➤

- ▶ An extensive patch of bluebell plants were found close to the Green Ride, but they were not yet in flower.

The group were reminded that the fine wood pasture oak in the middle of the grass is over 12 feet in girth. It would have been a young tree when farmer Henry Lincoln established a small dwelling nearby on the land that he owned. As his fortune improved he was able to move to larger premises in Loughton and on his death in 1912 he left a legacy to found some almshouses within the town.

The large ant hills in the rough grassland close to the ride were admired as significant features of such habitats. No ant hills were visible on the mown grass close to Fairheads Nursery, where I gave a short explanation about the value of phenology (study of life cycle events, such as flowering times) in monitoring climate change. Bud burst seems to be later this year as the days and nights were still cool.

As a fitting finale to the walk we were able to admire an extensive clump of primroses growing on the spoil removed from Strawberry Hill pond when it was last desilted several years ago.

*Tricia Moxey*

### Spring Migrants on Wanstead Flats (12 April 2015)

A strong wind was blowing across Wanstead Flats when 32 of us joined ornithologist Tim Harris for a walk to see various bird species. Three exotically plumaged Egyptian geese were swimming on Jubilee Pond alongside immature mute swans and several Canada geese. Some thuggish behaviour was observed as a drake mallard attacked a rival which luckily managed to escape. Several pairs of tufted duck showed off their agility as diving ducks, but there were few gulls to be seen in the vicinity of the pond. A number of starlings and carrion crows were seen flying as well as countless feral pigeons.

hear the characteristic songs of two recently arrived migrants, a chiffchaff and black cap, while a resident wren produced its whirring song from a nearby gorse bush. As a pair of mistle thrushes remained in view for several minutes, Tim explained the reasons for their recent decline and their habitat requirements. A green woodpecker flew off yaffling, great tits and blue tits produced brief snatches of their respective calls and some twittering goldfinches were also seen and heard.

Crossing Centre Road to the location of the skylark nesting ground, the group was eventually able to see and hear a couple of skylarks which had been reluctant to rise above the tussocky grass due to the gusty wind. The skylark is a species in decline across the wider countryside and seeing and hearing these so close to central London is awe-inspiring. Tim explained that a group of at least 50 migratory meadow pipits had dropped by at the end of last week, but they had moved further north after a short pause as had some swallows and ring ouzels. There are several pairs of meadow pipits in this area of the Flats.

Successful bird watching is a mixture of chance, of being in the right place at the right time, but knowing what might be using a particular habitat helps too, and Tim explained what you might expect to see in each location.

The windy conditions had discouraged some of the regular bird species from flying, but the chance to get some good views and learn more about bird behaviour from an expert had made the morning pass very quickly. Our total of 23 species was a little disappointing, but as the historic bird list for Wanstead Flats stands at 200 there is ample opportunity to see other species another day! Tim persuaded several people who had not previously attended a guided bird walk to join him on the next bird count walk so that they could learn more about some of the many species in this well recorded part of Epping Forest.

*Tricia Moxey*



*Watching birds on Wanstead Park with Tricia Moxey (red scarf) and Tim Harris (right). Photo Kathy Hartnett.*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Saturday 20 June 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm**

### **A Midsummer Evening Walk**

Sue McKinley leads an exploration of the woods and open farmland just to the north of Upshire. Wild flowers, woods and views! Meet at Cophall Green, at the junction of Fernhall Lane/Long Street and the Upshire village road. Nearest postcode is EN9 3TA. Grid ref: TL421012

**Tuesday 23 June, 7.15 pm**

### **Annual General Meeting**

Including reports on the last year's work, elections, and a talk from artist Mark Lewis. See below for details of venue and agenda; page 7 for an election nomination form.

**Every weekend in June, 12 pm to 5 pm**

### **Essex Arts Club in the Forest – fauna and flora**

A themed exhibition on the subject of fauna and flora throughout June at the Temple in Wanstead Park. Tel 020 7332 1911

**Saturday 4 July, 10.30am-3.00pm**

### **Epping Forest on the Map**

Loughton Library, Traps Hill, Loughton, IG10 1HD. Free entry, suggested £2.00 donation. In partnership with Loughton Library, Loughton & District Historical Society, and the Conservators of Epping Forest. See page 6.

**Sunday 5 July 10:30 am – 12:30 pm**

### **Birkbeck, Whitehall and Hatch Forest**

Join Verderer Peter Adams to discover some of these less visited parts of the Forest. Meet at The Pines, off Whitehall Road, Woodford Wells. Grid ref: TQ400937

**Saturday 25 July 11 am – 3 pm**

### **High Beach Festival**

Fun for all the family. Based around the Visitor Centre, the Field Studies Centre and High Beach Church. For details, see article on page 7.



**Sunday 2 August 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**

### **Great Gregories and beyond**

A longer and brisk walk, exploring some of the outliers of Epping Forest, once part of the Forest. Led by Alan Curran. Meet Jack's Hill car park north, off the B127. Grid ref: TQ436996; nearest postcode: CM16 7DR.

**Sunday 13 September 9:00 am – 5:00 pm**

### **The Annual Epping Forest Centenary Walk**

Discover a little more about the whole Forest. Walk the entire length of Epping Forest in the day or take part in one of the local sections of the long walk. Details, page 3.

**Sunday 11 October 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**

### **Wanstead Flats, Park and a View of the Roding**

Join Mike Smith for a slightly longer walk in the open spaces of Wanstead Flats, Park and the River Roding. A good chance to stretch your legs a little and see how these spaces join up. Meet at the Harrow Road Pavilion car park, Harrow Road, E11 3QD. Grid ref: TQ397865

## THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (note change of date)

**TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2015, 7.15 PM,  
BANCROFT'S PREP SCHOOL HALL,  
WOODFORD GREEN**

(Access off Whitehall Road, just to the west of Woodford High Road; see page 7 for Nomination Form for elections)

7:15 pm	AGM
8:00 pm	Tea/coffee
8:30 pm	Talk by Mark Lewis: An Artist's Perspective on the Forest

#### Agenda for AGM:

1. Minutes of the last AGM held on 25 June 2014
2. Matters Arising

3. Chairman's Report 2014/15
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Chairman
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 (2014-2017)
Membership Sec:	Jean Brockington (2013-2016)
Committee members:	Tricia Moxey and Pete Wrobel (Editor).

Committee members are re-elected each year. To submit nominations, please complete the form on page 7 and send it to: Mike Smith, Secretary, by Monday, 8 June 2015. The AGM will be followed by a talk, *An Artist's Perspective of the Forest*, by Mark Lewis.

# FOREST SUPPER

## Thursday 26 November 2015

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



Mediterranean pasta, oriental rice and mixed green salads, hot buttered potatoes and crusty French bread & butter. For dessert, choose between sherry trifle or blackcurrant cheese cake with cream. Coffee /tea with mints will follow. Vegetarian meals are available on request.

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

It is a ticket only event, so please apply soon to ensure you get a place. Tables seat up to 10 people. It's a great 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, gammon ham, roast loin of pork, and poached Scottish salmon with a lime mayonnaise, accompanied by coleslaw and potato & chives,

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

### 2015 FOREST SUPPER BOOKING FORM

Please provide ..... ticket(s) @ £25.00 each (please list all names below) for the Forest Supper to be held on 26 November 2015 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. ....

Name ..... Telephone 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!**