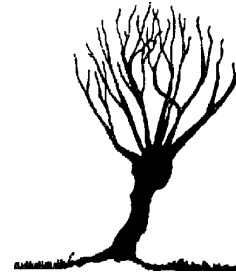


The Friends of Epping Forest Newsletter



July 1999

Dear Friend,

The March Newsletter referred to the fact that we had suggested a number of possible Millennium projects to the Superintendent including a Millennium Wood, Millennium Pond, Millennium Seats and a nursery for Forest trees. We met the Superintendent and his Deputy to talk about these proposals and they undertook to look into the possibility of establishing a pond providing a suitable location could be identified.

They also displayed a sympathetic attitude towards the notion of a Millennium Wood and suggested that the fields between Coopersale and Epping owned by the Corporation of London as part of the 'buffer' land might be suitable for this purpose.

The Superintendent indicated that, given that it could be demonstrated that there was no substantial local objection to woodland being developed on the fields, he would be prepared to make the necessary recommendation to the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee.

We have therefore corresponded with the Epping Society and Epping Town Council in order to obtain their views in the matter. Both bodies are supportive of the idea provided that existing ways and public footpaths are not encroached upon. I think that a categorical assurance can be given in this respect. The intention is that around only 20 of the 30 acres concerned should ultimately become woodland so there will be wide swathes of open grassland between the woodland sections. Of course it would be many years before any such woodland would significantly affect the appearance of the area.

The question of the establishment of a woodland also received an airing in the Epping Star but this has not caused any opposition that has come to our attention.

Epping Town Council made the suggestion that certain local primary schools should be invited to become involved with the establishment of the wood, and we will certainly follow up this excellent suggestion.

It is thought sensible to aim at initially creating an oak woodland in the expectation that other appropriate species will colonise the area over the years. It is planned to collect the acorns from the Forest this Autumn for planting next

March directly on to the woodland sites (the previously mentioned possibility of a nursery phase for the seedling trees has been dropped). We must of course be careful that no Turkey oak acorns are collected and inadvertently planted. More about this in due course.

In the order to organise the acorn collection and planting we need to call, in this Newsletter, the November Newsletter will be too late, for volunteers who are prepared to join in this very worthwhile exercise. A chance to put your hand to an enduring monument should not be missed!

But we do have a timing problem! This project cannot go ahead without the agreement of the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee which has yet to be obtained.

Because this call for volunteers has to be placed in this Newsletter in advance of consideration of the matter by the Committee, we have had to act in a way that might appear disrespectful of the Conservator's prerogative which is obviously the last impression we would want to give.

We must state firmly that all arrangements for the Millennium Wood are contingent on the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee giving their approval to the project.

With that in mind we need to press ahead and we are very anxious that this proposal, assuming that it 'gets off the ground' will be very much an important Friends' project, and we look forward to many members and their friends, children and grandchildren coming forward to register their willingness to participate.

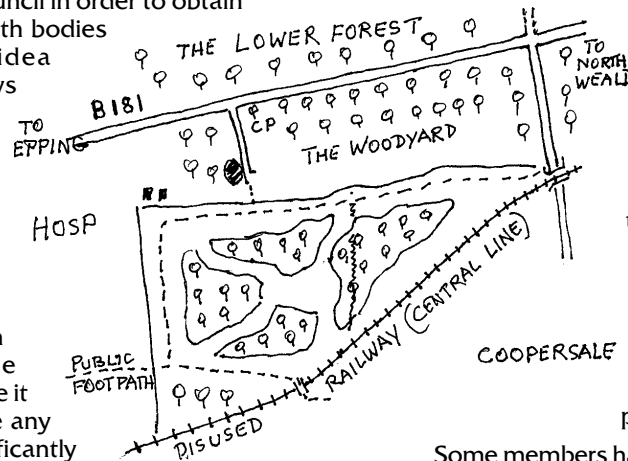
Some members have already come forward in response to the previous Newsletter and their names are of course already on record, **but please write or phone so that we will know who to contact with further information in due course before the November Newsletter.**

Prior to the actual planting of the acorns taking place, the Superintendent and his Staff would carefully survey the area and design the shape and extent of the woodland. It is expected that some interested and representative parties would be invited to participate in this process.

To give members an idea of what is proposed a map showing a possible design is set out above.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Ed.



The Natural Aspect

Writing this in June I find one of the most striking events of this season is the effect that the warm and wet period in the Spring has had on the growth of trees and other vegetation. Early tree growth - on the ends of the shoots - has really been quite amazing. On Beech trees the new green sappy growth has sometimes been two and three feet providing five or six inches of stem between each leaf! All this growth has occurred in seven or eight weeks. It is necessary to look a long way back along the shoot to see the girdle rings where this year's growth began - no earlier than the end of April.

For the reader of these notes it is now July, the silent month. Birds are beginning to moult, family instincts are waning and territory no longer needs defending. Song is therefore no longer necessary. Even the Robins who hold territory throughout the year are rarely singing in July. Pairs that naturally held a joint territory in the nesting season are going to split up and by September will have individual 'small holdings' and young juveniles will also seek to establish their own plots and also fiercely advertise their possessive rights by singing. Throughout the autumn and winter almost the only bird song you hear will be the melancholy 'autumn' song of the Robin. Although occasionally an odd Dunnock or Wren may give forth a half-hearted burst of song, as indeed will the Song Thrush if you are lucky enough to have one in your garden. It will be January or early February, before you hear other birds singing - when a Great Tit or Chaffinch may start on a sunny morning. Until then, the bird singing in the bushes will almost always be a Robin.

But it is still July. The time when, following a wet humid night, young Common Toads and Frogs will leave the pond and begin a hazardous life in the grass and undergrowth. It will be some four years, before those that survive, return to the same pond to breed themselves.

Also leaving the water of ponds, but in June or even late May, are dragonflies and damselflies - so many will be flying now. They are easy to tell apart - the damselflies are the small ones that fold their wings along their backs, while dragonflies hold their four wings flat and stiffly horizontally at right angles to the body.

The creature that hatches from the dragonfly's egg is called a 'nymph' and, in simple terms, is the larval stage and pupal stage in one form. Although like caterpillars it sheds its skin several times. This part of the life cycle is spent in water and varies in length between different species and the rate of growth which is determined by temperature and food supply. In the case of most British dragonflies it is at least two years, while some of the larger species may take three or four years. These nymphs are among the fiercest insect carnivores living in ponds and rivers. This year's generation are flying now as adult insects - some dragonflies will continue hunting until the first frosts of Autumn, others will die after a week or two; however their eggs will form the generation in two or so years time. Already next year's dragonflies are nymphs growing under

the surface of the water.

Epping Forest is rich in species of Dragonflies, perhaps more so than anywhere else in Essex. Some forty species breed in Britain and twenty of these breed in the Forest. Some of the common larger kinds are quite easy to identify.

You should be able to recognise the large Brown Hawker dragonfly, as it is the one with clearly visible brown tinted wings. The female of the equally large Southern Hawker is mostly bright green and black, while her male is green and blue and black. But the very slightly larger Emperor dragonfly is rather similarly coloured but does not, like the Southern Hawker, have a black and green striped thorax - the fat part behind the head. The thorax of the Emperor is a plain green.

The slightly smaller but very noticeable when numerous are the Migrant Hawkers, brown and grey with some blue spots on the male. They are tolerant of each other - not territorial - so you may see quite a lot together over a pond. As their name suggests they mostly migrate from Europe towards the end of the summer.

There are some quite striking medium sized species as well. The orange-red male of the Common Darter is an easy one. The rarer ruby-red Ruddy Darter is a richer colour but distinct if you see the two species together. The females of both these species are green and grey.

Most striking is the powder blue of the male Broad-Bodied Chaser; the female is brown with some yellow spots along her sides. This is a very fast flying and territorial dragonfly that perches on prominent objects in the pond.

Go to a forest pond on a sunny day and sit down with a pair of binoculars and look for yourself! Equipped with a good identification book (from the library to start with), you will soon be fascinated and then 'hooked'.

A book I recommend is by Andy McGeeny (a member who lives in Epping) who is President of the British Dragonfly Society, called "A Complete Guide to British Dragonflies" (1986) pub. Jonathan Cape. (full of Andy's beautiful photographs). Alternatively a new "Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland" Edited by Steve Brooks (1997) pub. British Wildlife Publishing, is also very useful.

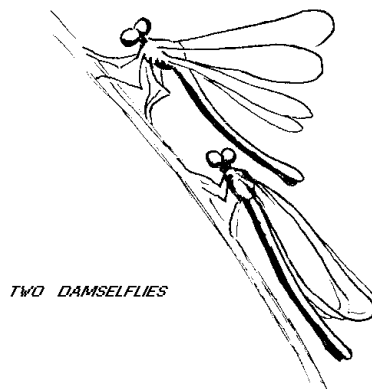
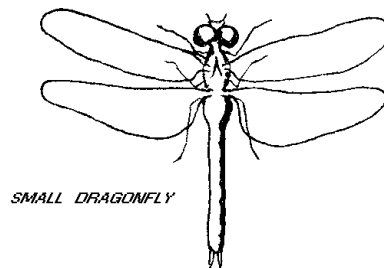
Good hunting - but don't wait, some species will be disappearing soon and then you will have to wait until next year!

Ken Hoy

Decision on Trueloves

Readers of the 'How well do you know the Forest' in the March Newsletter will recall that having, in 1995, decided to allow the two fields called Trueloves to revert to woodland the Superintendent recently changed his recommendation, and proposed that Trueloves should be fenced and grazed. The reasons given for this change of heart were:

1. Since being left alone the fields had developed in such a way to give prospects of becoming a species rich grassland.



2. The area could be joined up with the subsequently acquired Fernhills to make a single grazing unit.
3. Not allowing tree cover to develop would be better for access.
4. Ditto would preserve views.
5. Would help create a 'mosaic' of habitats (a phrase which to my mind is almost as universal and mis-used as 'sustainable' development).

Both the Friends and the West Essex Ramblers made representations opposing this recommendation on the grounds that:

1. The reasons for the original decision to allow reversion to woodland are just as valid now as they were when the decision was taken.
2. A woodland would be a decoration to the landscape which is of a generally open agricultural nature.
3. A woodland suitably designed and maintained would be in keeping with the public's perception of what Epping Forest should be.
4. Fences are inappropriate in the Forest, and not in accord with the spirit of the 1878 Act which provides that the Forest should be open and unenclosed.
5. Many people regard fenced fields with grazing cattle in them as inhibiting from an access point of view.
6. In wet pasture fields, such as Trueloves would be, cattle tend to congregate at gates and churn-up the ground into a sea of mud. A phenomenon readily observed on the Conservators' fields at North Farm Buckhurst Hill.
7. There are plenty of fields in the Conservators' 'buffer' land where cattle grazing requirements could be developed.

On receipt of these representations the Conservators considerably agreed to put off taking a decision on the recommendation, giving time to reconsider the matter and allow members an opportunity to visit the site.

Accordingly the matter came up before the E.F.O.S.C. on 10th May the members having visited Trueloves on the previous Saturday.

The Superintendent had reiterated and expanded his recommendation and English Nature had written commenting on some of the objections that had been raised. The Superintendent speaking of his recommendation indicated that there was no intention to create a wall-to-wall grazing grassland situation, the trees and shrubs of the hedges would be allowed to spread, and a wavy or 'scalloped' edge would be developed.

Isolated trees would not be allowed on the fields as it was not the intention to promote a 'park-like' appearance. Presumably woodland pasture, for which there seems to be such enthusiasm in other parts of the Forest, is deemed inappropriate here!

Some management would be undertaken in the green lanes on the perimeter of Trueloves for conservation purposes and to improve access for walkers and riders between the lanes and the fields.

For the first two years Trueloves would be mown to create a sward and to rid it of ragwort - nasty to cattle in the form of hay (but much appreciated by the larvae of the cinnabar moth) - after which presumably fences would be erected in order to contain the cattle. In order to conform to the 'scalloped' hedges are we to see the Forest's first crinkle crankle fence?

The objections to fencing on the grounds that many people find cattle in enclosed fields intimidating thereby

militating against access were brushed aside. English Nature were quite positive that cattle constituted no problems of access. However, at a recent major public enquiry in respect of a proposal to fence a substantial part of Chobham Common, the Inspector found that cattle could be regarded as intimidating. This formed part of the grounds on which the fencing proposal was rejected. Surrey objectors to fencing on public access land seem more successful than N.E. London/Essex objectors are.

The Superintendent said that any decision to graze Trueloves was not necessarily 'set-in-stone', and so that if in due course 'fashions changed' (he did not actually say that, it's a joke!) that woodland could be allowed to develop. The reverse was different. If woodland was allowed to develop it would not be so easy for it to be removed and permit reversion to grassland. I did not quite understand this since much of the current Forest management seems to be involving chopping down of trees in order to re-establish grassland. In fact there are numerous young trees there at the moment which will all be 'mown down'.

However, the E.F.O.S.C. accepted the recommendation and the mowing, fencing and grazing of Trueloves will proceed.

All the E.F.O.S.C. papers and correspondence can be inspected by members.

Harry Bitten

How Well Do You Know The Forest? No. 4.

The places described this time, and in the next Newsletter, are nearly all within the triangle formed with its base between Loughton and the Robin Hood PH. and the apex at the Wake Arms PH. The roads forming the boundaries being: - B1393 Epping New Road, A121 Loughton Road, and the road called Earls Path - a continuation of Forest Rd. towards the Robin Hood. The places are mentioned roughly in order from south to north.

Strawberry Hill Ponds: these are the exception as they are south of Earls Path (road)

There is one main pond and some shallow pits just a little farther south, one of which has been deepened and holds water. All, including the main pond, are gravel pits originating from the 1870-80's. The gravel extracted is from an older deposit than the gravel pits farther south in the Forest - these are later glacial deposits (Buckhurst Hill and Woodford), or Thames River Terraces (Leyton and Wanstead Flats). Strawberry Hill pond has deteriorated badly in the last two or three decades. It has become silted-up and Sallow willows and other vegetation has encroached. Some two years ago the pond dried up completely during a drought, thus causing further deterioration.

Earls Path Pond: This pond is just on the south side of the road (Earls Path). Its origin is similar to the previous pond, but it was worked a decade or so later (1890's) by Essex County Council to supply gravel for use on roads. The Epping Forest Committee - the Conservators - decided in 1894 to allow no more gravel extraction. This pond also has become heavily silted. Perhaps an interesting story might be put 'on record' here! This pond, like several others in the Forest produces a show of 'garden' water lilies every summer. The occurrence of many of these showy plants in Forest ponds is due to an old Loughton resident, the late Ernie Rule, who loved the Forest. Ernie, some three or

more decades ago, was working in the grounds of a large Loughton house. He was told to fill in a large pond. Rather than destroy the lily plants the pond contained, Ernie tied them into weighted hessian sacks and threw them ('illegally') into the middle of several Forest ponds. One such pond was Earls Path pond. A beautiful pink specimen that he threw into Fairmead pond has since been 'stolen'. On south side of the road, Earls Path, towards the Robin Hood was an old keeper's cottage. It was demolished some years ago - so do not be fooled by out-of-date maps.

Staples Pond: is situated where Loughton Brook leaves the Forest as it flows under Staples Road. The pond was first formed by the Conservators in the mid 1870's. It originally adjoined the edge of the road along which ran a line of railed posts. During the Second World War a brick wall was constructed and the pond designated as an 'EWS' - Emergency Water Supply (for fire fighting during air raids). After the war due to complaints about mosquitoes I believe, the pond was drained. After a serious flooding of Loughton, during a severe summer storm in the 1980's, it was decided to create a flood alleviation scheme. Major workings, including a great retaining bank now mean that the present pond can hold back a greater quantity of flash flood water. Also constructed was a silt/leaf trap where the Brook enters the pond.

Staples Hill: is the hill NW of Staples Road. It is the hill where traditionally the Loughton Loppers held their midnight celebration to re-establish their right to lop.

A row of old cottages along the road was called 'Mutton Row'. 'Black Mutton' was code for poached venison and the cottages were reputed to have cellars to accommodate the venison! A Willingale lived in Mutton Row, which can be seen in the bottom right corner of the older map.

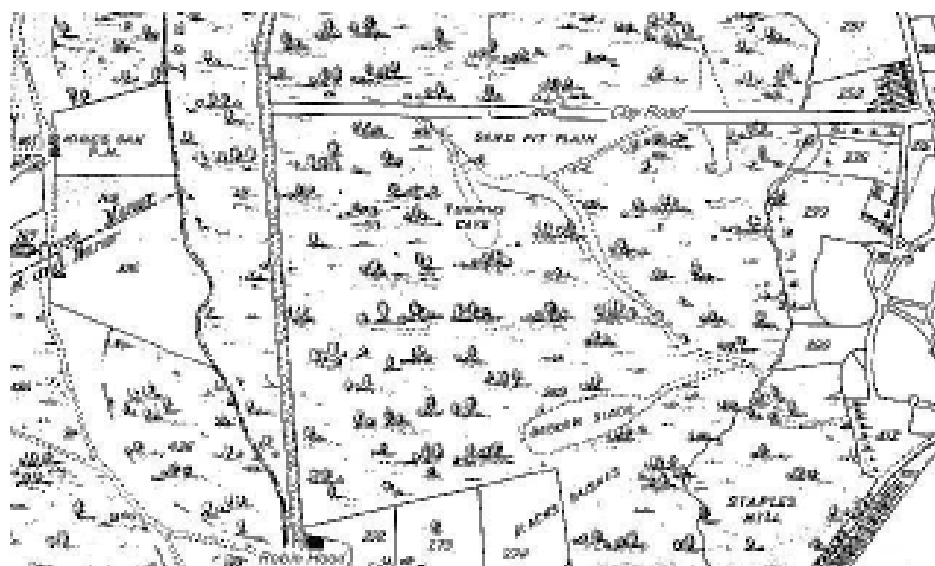
Loughton or Staples Brook: All the streams in the area of the Forest we are considering eventually drain south or eastwards into this Brook - some via Baldwins pond. Since the construction of the dam above which Baldwins pond was later created, Loughton Brook can be said to begin as the 'over-flow' from Baldwins pond. Except for the Ching Brook, Loughton Brook is perhaps the largest stream in the Forest. It is usually only dry in summer drought periods although its catchment area of streams is near the top of

the 'water-shed'. These tributaries originate from 'springs' starting usually where gravels and sands rest on clay. The streams in their steep-sided valleys function as storm channels during sudden rainfall but continue to drain the area throughout the winter and spring. A short section of the Brook was straightened to make ('illegal') enclosures in the Mid 19th century, and, a slope on the eastern side of the brook locally called '**Drummaids**' was one such old enclosure clearance (No.280). Apart from this straightened portion Loughton Brook is a fine example of a 'natural' watercourse; its valley may originate from before the last ice age. Its meanders show classic formations including a dry 'ox-bow' (isolated meander) and are studied by students from far and wide. **Woodberry Hollow** is a name given to part of the valley below Woodberry Hill

The Green Ride: This is the main north/south ride from Chingford to Epping. It was once called Victoria's Ride, as it was constructed for Queen Victoria's visit to the Forest in 1882. In the section of the Forest we are considering, the Green Ride crosses Earls Path by the pond. Then after descending to the bridge over the stream from Debden Slade, it continues up the hill to cross Sand Pit Plain and then snaking northwards eventually crosses the A121, the Loughton Road, halfway to the Wake Arms near Broadstroom.

Debden Slade: Slade is an old English word for a valley and is used locally in some Forest names. Debden Slade is situated just west of the Green Ride where the main tributary of Loughton Brook (south of Baldwins pond) having gathered three other streams, crosses the Ride to join the Brook. Debden Slade is described in 1882 'as a rushy plain'. It may have been an ancient 'deer lawn' - kept open by deer and rabbits.

Black Bushes: is an old name used in more than one place in the Forest and possibly refers to an open area scrubbed over with Blackthorn. This 'Black Bushes' is west of Debden Slade along the southern-most stream that drains the valley coming down from the Robin Hood PH. A nearby area of old Hornbeam pollards, between two of the streams, has been recently repollarded (1999). The woodmen performing the work referred to the area as 'Debden Slade' but it is west of the Slade. On one old map (pre-1870) the name is 'Black's Bushes' and indicates the south side of the valley.

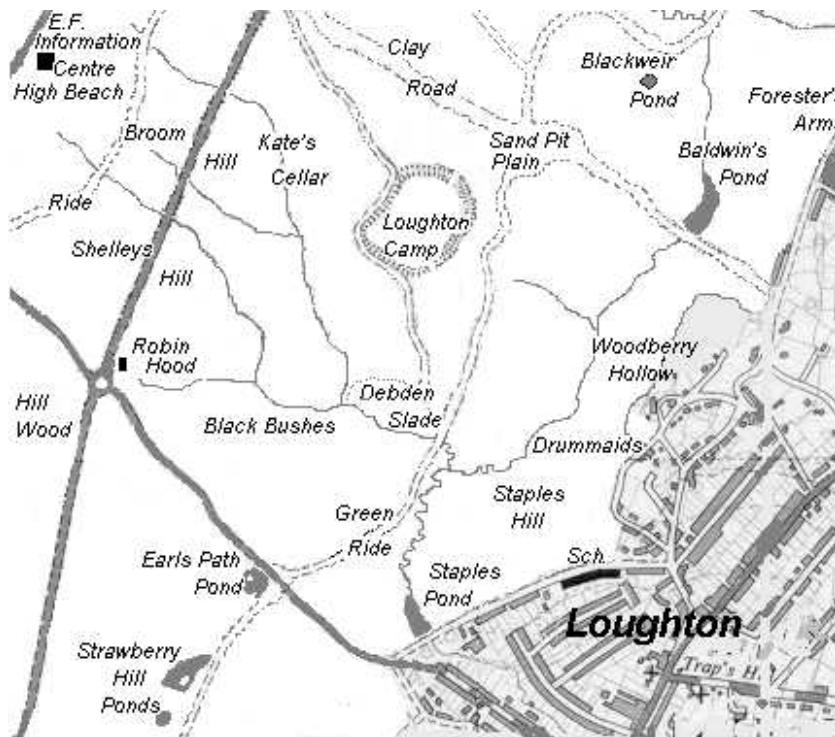


c. 1870; This map shows various numbered enclosures that were claimed before the passing of the Epping Forest Act. Enclosure No251 is the slope in front of the 'Foresters Arms'. Also shown is the straight line of the 'Clay Road' (No 403) Note the enclosure of 'Drummaids' (No 280). There are other enclosures near the 'Robin Hood' PH. - most were judged 'illegal' and 'thrown back' into the

Shelleys Hill and Broom Hill: As the B1393 (old A11) runs north from the Robin Hood roundabout it cuts through hills and crosses valleys on embankments. The first hill it bisects is Shelley's Hill and the next Broom Hill. East of the road these hills are covered with old pollarded Beech trees - and three or four scattered Wild Service trees.

It is good dry walking, but find the bridges to cross the streams.

Kate's Cellar: is the name given to the steep sided valley formed by the northern stream that enters Debden Slade. This valley, the deepest of those to the east of the road (B1393), forms the southwestern flank of Loughton Camp. 'Kate' is usually taken to refer to an old woman who reputedly lived 'rough' in the valley in the 18th or early 19th centuries.



the 'road'. This provoked the Commoners of Loughton and began the legal battle that saved the Forest. Today it is evidence of what nearly happened - except that at the end of the Nineteenth Century the Conservators quickly 'landscaped' the harsh and ugly straightness of its intrusion into the Forest. (See older map)

Baldwin's Pond: was formed in the years following the 'damming' of the valley of Loughton Brook by the Clay Road. It has long been a popular and picturesque pond at the bottom of the slope below the Forester's Arms PH. Unfortunately the stream(s) feeding it has silted-up the northern end of the pond. It is now over-grown; a Willow carr established and the area of open water reduced by about one third. Furthermore, the overflow conduit is crumbling and the bank of the dam in danger of becoming unstable. Considerable expensive repairs are needed. The silting-up is to be monitored for the next few years.

Ken Hoy

Letters and Comments

Loughton Camp: is the name given to a 'hill-fort' - also called the 'Ancient Camp' or the 'Roman Camp' in late Victorian times when it was first 'discovered' (1872). It is protected as a scheduled Ancient Monument. Its Archaeology has been investigated some two or three times, first in 1882. Considered to be an Iron-Age British hill-fort it has been tentatively dated (early La Tene) by a few pottery remains found under the embankment as no later than c.250 BC.- perhaps much earlier. It is thought to be contemporary with Ambresbury Banks the other hill-fort some two miles farther north in the Forest. The precise nature of its use is not known - although there is a general belief it may have been a refuge in time of tribal conflict. No hut posts etc. have been found, only the pottery shards, charcoal and some worked flint flakes which could be earlier than the pottery. At the NE corner evidence was found of the entrance in the form of a substantial double set of gatepost holes and some foundation stones. A considerable labour force must have been involved for a long time to construct the ramparts with primitive tools and enclose some 11 acres! Its position, nearly 100 feet (30 metres) above the valley of 'Kate's Cellar', is considered to be excellent from a strategic military point of view. At the end of the 19th century the slope below the 'camp' was open and heather covered and from the ramparts a fine view could be obtained. (Buxton 1882). A 'spring' in the centre provided a water supply. A shallow pit on the northern side of the 'camp' is marked as 'Turpin's Cave' on maps that are older than the 'discovery' (in 1872) of the embankments of the 'fort'.

Sand Pit Plain: is an old name for the large area of excavated pits immediately north of Loughton Camp. Although now covered with tall Beeches, this area was also open and heather covered in the 1880's. The name Sand Pit Plain now tends to be applied to the small area where the Clay Road crosses the Green Ride.

Clay Road or Ride: this was intended to be a road running from Ash Green on Baldwin's Hill across 'the waste' (the Forest) to High Beach. In the mid-1860's the Lord of the Manor of Loughton enclosed 1316 acres of 'the Loughton waste', felled trees and cleared scrub, began marking out plots of land for sale and started to construct

Blackweir Pond - a Correction: Following my comment in the last Newsletter about this pond where I referred to it as 'Blackweir pond - Jacob Epstein's Lost Pond', Wendy Brimble writes to correct me and mentions the following quote from her father's book - 'London's Epping Forest' (James A. Brimble) about the pond :

"I don't know that it has an official name. I have heard it called 'The Gravels' and 'The Top Pond'. To me it has always been known as 'The Lost Pond'. For, like many others, when first exploring the Forest, I walked blindly and stumbled upon the pond by accident, afterwards being unable to remember how I got there, or where to find it again. It became 'The Lost Pond'. Long later it was rediscovered, and with more knowledge and certainty of my bearings it was never lost again. But the name remains.

This part of the Forest was one of the favourite haunts of Jacob Epstein, the sculptor... On one occasion by 'the Lost Pond', where I came across him working, we discussed painting and photography and composition in pictures, and I mentioned how I had come to give the name to the pond. Often he brought with him on those Forest trips his son and two small friends ... On a later occasion, the children themselves referred to 'the Lost Pond'. The name had been adopted"

Yates Meadow : Hilda Anslow writes correcting my memory about Yates' Meadow

- my memory of two fields in the early sixties, which was really a faulty memory that originated from the forties ! Hilda knows. She pulled out the dividing hedge and ploughed the field in the 1940's. This is what she says: -

"The meadow was previously two fields divided by a rough hedge with a drop of about two feet into the lower field. In 1943-4 I was working as a 'Land Girl' at Carrolls Farm and these two fields were part of Bury Farm (we called it Bird's Farm). We were told by the War Agricultural Committee to remove the hedge and young trees and plough the fields and grow corn. I helped the contractors to remove the trees and then I ploughed the fields. 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 Geof. Seddon on a walk about 4 or 5 years ago to see such a lovely wild flower meadow with no sign of the bank between the fields. We used to under-plant cereals with Tares, (members of the Veitch family, ploughed in as a green manure? KH.) 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."

Hilda's account is interesting and important because in view of the present richness of the meadow it would be useful to know when the field was last under cultivation. Does anyone remember when it was last a field of cereal?

Cook's Folly - More information: A letter from Peter Vicary, who was until recently Schools' Librarian for Waltham Forest, refers to an article by Annie Hatley, (author, teacher and historian in Leyton) that appeared in the July 1955 issue of the Essex Review. The article gives much additional information about the house, Belle Vue which acquired the alternative name of "Cook's Folly" and which we have mentioned in the last two Newsletters. Many people in Walthamstow and South Woodford called Walthamstow Forest by the same name, "Cook's Folly", during the first half of this century and possibly earlier. Miss Hatley's article is too long to print here, (but anyone particularly interested should contact me) although it provides some interesting tidbits, for instance: -

Chas. Cooke was a Common Councillor of the City of London (1805-16) from the time that he built the house until his death. He married his wife at Gretna Green! The house was associated with several mysterious local stories. One of which was that Chas. Cooke kept seven mistresses in various cottages around the Belle Vue estate, and, that they were summoned to the house by different notes struck on a gong! A letter to Chas. Augustus Cooke (the son) quoted in the local Press says that "— the gardener acted rightly in giving information to the authorities," - about what ?

However, there is also some discussion about the origin of the name "Cook's Folly". For instance alternative meanings for 'Folly' were: - a clump of trees on a hill, a house on a hill surrounded by trees and a house upon which more has been spent than can be afforded.

Ken Hoy

Member's Letter

As a Friend of Epping Forest I would like to offer the enclosed poem for possible publication in the Newsletter. The poem was written by my mother, Doreen Argent, who died on 6th February last year. She was very inspired by the Forest and its wildlife. Her house was situated opposite the Forest and she enjoyed watching the deer throughout the changing seasons.

Yours sincerely,

Luke, Miriam and Paul Argent

THE FOUR SEASONS IN EPPING FOREST

Under the ancient and memorable Act,

The City of London made a pact.

Lord of manors' possessive inclosures

Were proved illegal; complete exposures.

*Now all the forest folk of towns and greens
Enjoy the varying season's scenes.*

*The churches set in forest pathways there,
Celebrate in flowers, both wild and rare.*

*In winter, there grows brilliant berried holly:
Whilst squirrels sleep under tall tree brolly.*

A snow white carpet clads silence supreme.

The sun through bare branches shines its red beam.

Brushing through to contentedly graze,

The black fallow and roe deer in woodland ways:

'Till spring, when it's time for their antlers to cast.

They choose ground for fawning, they knew in the past.

The forest's astirring to herald the spring:

Buds bursting, birds singing, cool streams bring

Fresh green to the hornbeam, oak, chestnut, beech.

High in silver birches, crows their nests reach.

Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge sees summer folk gay,

To view owls, butterflies, badgers, jackdaws and jay,

Out again on horseback to Chtingford fair;

Ott to Connaught Water; cool breezes to share.

Comes autumn. in glory across Anbresbury Banks.

Falling leaves, tumbling chestnuts, beechnut pranks,

Mingle the mellow scene of yellow and red,

Golden to amber - a forest gone to bed.

Butchers Broom-*Ruscus aculeatus*

There are few stranger plants in Britain than butcher's-broom. It is unlike most others because it has no true leaves; instead, it has leaf-like structures which are really flattened stems. These stems, which botanists call cladodes, have evolved to function as leaves in creating energy to fuel the plant's life processes. They are dark green, thick and rigid, and since they are not shed in the autumn, butcher's-broom appears to be evergreen. The tiny male and female flowers are borne on the cladodes in the angles of small papery bracts. If the greenish flowers have been pollinated, large red berries develop containing the seeds.



(A stiffly upright, much branched plant, with finely grooved stems. It has flat, oval, spiny-tipped 'leaves'. One or two flowers lie in the centre of the 'leaf'. male and female flowers are often found on different branches. The plant usually bears fruit from the previous year when flowering. 10 - 32 in (25 - 80 cm); flowers Jan. to April.)

Butcher's-broom is so colourful that it is often dried and used to decorate homes during the winter months, It is sometimes also planted in shrubberic and makes a very effective barrier hedge! As with asparagus, to which it is closely related, the young shoots can be eaten as a vegetable. According to tradition, bundles of mature branches were sold to butchers for sweeping their blocks, so giving the plant its common name. The 17th century herbalist Nicholas Culpeper suggested that drinking a potion made from the roots of butcher's-broom, and using a poultice made from the berries and leaves, helped broken bones to knit together. Butcher's-broom grows mainly among rocks and in dry woods throughout southern England, Wales and France and in scattered locations throughout Epping Forest but with at least 10 clumps in Hawk Wood, Chingford.

Commoner's Rights

Last March the Commoners of Epping Forest voted and four Verderers were elected to the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee of the Corporation of London (The Conservators) for seven years. Nowadays the Verderers "perceive themselves as representing a wider constituency (than just the Commoners) and of providing a link between the general public using the Forest and the City" - as we said in the last Newsletter.

However, one hundred years ago a fierce controversy raged. Two decades earlier - in the 1870's, the City Corporation had stepped in and picked up the Commoner's banner that had fallen when their case collapsed with the death of Tom Willingale. Now, over a century later it is interesting to examine the arguments and accusations that the Commoners with smaller holdings were using against the 'new' Conservators of the Forest just a few years after they had been allies in saving the Forest. What was at issue was Commoner's Rights.

When these smaller Commoners - sometimes calling themselves "Cottagers" - found themselves in conflict with

the Conservators they formed an organisation called the 'Epping Forest Commoners Defence Association'. In 1893 they published a pamphlet (edited by Percy Lindley and H.H.Clarke) stating the "Case of the Cottagers' agitation against the Conservators".

The Association claimed that "Epping Forest owed its existence today (in 1893) to the Rights of the Commoners", and, that these Rights were now threatened by the Corporation of the City of London.

The pamphlet asks "the public to remember that long before the Corporation raised a hand in Defence of London's woodland, some of these small Commoners were fighting the Lords of the Manors and were going to prison in defence of their rights".

They claimed these Common Rights to be :

1. the right of Lopping - for fire wood,
2. the right of pasture - for cattle,
3. the right of pannage - for pigs.

Their case was that they had already surrendered the first of these rights for which they received a total of £7000 compensation. Then, the Pamphlet claims, soon after "taking possession" of the Forest the Corporation made a new regulation that the City Solicitor strictly enforced, that Rights of Common would only be recognised by the Corporation if the applicant for those rights held half-an-acre of land.

This meant that many small and poor Commoners "were robbed of their birthrights" (of pasture and pannage). It "took away their legal right to turn-out (cattle) which they used to profit" and "left only the well-to-do" as Commoners, who as they held land and had little need to "turn-out their cattle on the Forest or if they did, only to a very limited extent". "It took away the rights from Willingale and old residents of his class and gave them to any new men owning or hiring half-an-acre of land who came into a Forest parish". (It must have been the son or nephew of Tom Willingale.)

It was claimed that for centuries the parish had enjoyed the right to appoint "Reeves" to mark the Commoner's cattle and regulate the turn-out. The Corporation had drafted an Amendment Act that among other things took away this right and vested it in the Corporation. Outraged, the Commoners formed a 'Defence Association' and telegraphed the Ranger, the Duke of Connaught, who was in India. The pamphlet goes on "little more was heard until 1889 when the Corporation again attempted to obtain similar powers and they went further... They asked that the List or Register of Commoners, as made out by themselves, should be conclusive evidence as to who were and were not Commoners. This time opposition to the Corporation's Amendment Act came from two of their own members, namely Mr Deputy John Bedford and Mr A.C.Morton M.P. The proposed Act was stealthily withdrawn."

The pamphlet continues, complaining that "the Commoners' interests were supposed to be represented on the Epping Forest Committee by the four local Verderers who are elected by the Commoners every seven years." However the Corporation by refusing to recognise their rights and place their names on the Register of Commoners was barring the Cottagers "from voting for these Verderers, who accordingly are chosen from and represent not the small (Commoner) but their own class of Commoner."



Old Cottager, circa 1906

So, the pamphlet continues putting the case at great length. It quotes and counter-quotes clauses from the Epping Forest Act of 1878, giving various persons' interpretations of those clauses, even a regulation of the Court of Attachments of 1790 is quoted. Also exchanges of letters (some published), meetings between Commoners and Verderers were held and accusations and counter charges made. Verderer Edward North Buxton even offered to pay for a Test Case to be heard, but the Commoners would not agree unless the Corporation agreed to be bound by the result and the Commoners not have to meet the costs of an Appeal against the result (As they had little or no money). So a test case was not heard.

The Commoners claimed that they had no quarrel with arrangements in the past or at the time of the passing of the (Epping Forest) Act. They were adamantly opposed to the Corporation's attempts to change the Epping Forest Act to the disadvantage of the Cottagers or small Commoners. An appeal was made to the Lord Mayor in the names of five residents of Loughton who had, for up to thirty years, had their cattle marked and turned-out on the Forest without question. Now they have "been refused the ancient right of turning-out on the Forest" (because they did not hold half-an-acre of land). "The Reeves, under instructions from the Corporation refused any longer to mark their cattle." Those named were William Philpot, Joseph Webb, George Grogan, Thomas Savill Jnr. and J Willingale. Thomas Savill continued to defiantly turn-out his cattle but his challenge was not accepted and nothing was done about his action and his cattle were never impounded.

At one point in the "agitation" the Conservators offered to recognise some small Commoners by "what the Corporation are pleased to call an Act of Grace." The Commoners reply was that the "Cottagers were Commoners, not by Act of Grace, but by something that in their case is better, by Act of Parliament."

A final argument by the Conservators was that the Forest would be spoiled and overgrazed by a great influx of cattle if all the Cottagers (who previously had the right to turn-out) were put onto the Register of Commoners.

Although the conflict had at times been bitter, the pamphlet ends by mentioning some remarks by Colonel Lockwood, M.P. for the Epping Division when speaking at Loughton, he said, "No agitation could have been conducted in a more patient, legal and straightforward way." He went on to say that the Liberal candidate in the same Division, Mr S Barclay Heward, "did good work for the Cottagers at the last election" and that "Mr A.C.Morton, M.P. also rendered valuable assistance to the Commoners."

Clearly the matter was an issue in an election. We must also note that A.C.Morton M.P. was associated with John Bedford in their opposition to the majority of the Corporation's Epping Forest Committee. This was the John Bedford, after whom an old Oak was named to honour his efforts in saving the Forest 20 years earlier - although strangely it was soon renamed after the cricketer Mr Grimston!

All this happened over one hundred years ago, but it makes much more significant and welcome the present Verderer's recently reaffirmed pledge to represent the public in general who use the Forest, as well as the Commoners who elect them (who still need to "hold half-an-acre of open land" to be a Commoner).

Ken Hoy

M11 Link Road to Open

For many years the Friends were active members of the Link Road Action Group, and in fact Ken Hoy was the Chairman. L.R.A.G. accepted that a road was necessary to relieve the congestion on Leytonstone High Road - whether we would think the same now as in 1980 is another matter - but that it would be a tunnel. L.R.A.G. specifically supported the Lister-Goldsmith design which envisaged a cut and cover tunnel with a linear parkway on the 'lid'. This would have proved inter alia a pedestrian route between Hackney Marshes and Epping Forest. The original Department of Transport design for the road was a pretty disastrous affair involving an incredibly intrusive three-tier flyover at the Green Man Roundabout.

After three public enquiries the road got the go-ahead in its present form which at least lowers the carriageway below street level and provides tunnels at the George Wanstead and at the Green Man, Leytonstone. The prolonged battle of the eco-warriors and others took place after all the significant decisions had been taken but had the effect to some extent of raising the profile of the anti-motorway movement.

The Wanstead section of the Link Road is due to open to traffic in July and the rest in September when we will see whether the promised traffic reliefs will actually occur, or whether the steady increase in traffic since the road was planned will have eroded the expected benefits.

A number of people involved in the original campaign feel that the opening of the Link Road should be marked in some appropriate way. They were not supporting the official opening ceremony!

It is proposed that there should be an exhibition illustrating the struggle to stop the building of the Link Road, and the enormous social upheaval its building caused. In the evening and a celebratory ceilidh will be organised.

The event will take place on 7 August at the British Legion venue in Leytonstone High Road. Those wishing to attend should look out for notices in the local press.

Harry Bitten.

Walk May 21st 1999

Twenty-six of us started from Connaught Water on a bright but rather breezy morning. We hoped we might hear a Nightingale singing but alas the discouraging wind or the time of day or late date was against us - even though we visited the 'right' spots. Nightingales sing at almost any time but seem to prefer to sing though the early hours and then through the dawn chorus onwards for two or three hours, or during the evening or early night. The latter time is of course the 'traditional' time and is when the silence of the night enhances their song. Later in the evening of the same day Dr Jeremy Dagley and a group of people were to hear a bird singing in the place where we *didn't* hear one! A male singing in late May - they first arrive in late April - is a sign of a settled territory. The Nightingale's habitat requirements are very precise. It prefers dense thicket that does not have a completely closed canopy and therefore still has a good cover of ground vegetation. Several decades ago when Nightingales could be heard in many parts of the Forest - from Whitehall Plain to the Robin Hood - the areas of thicket were younger and not so hollow underneath. The thickets around Connaught seemed to be particularly favoured and that is where one or two still sing each year. A management policy, specifically to encourage the Nightingale back to the Forest,

is being undertaken. The Conservators have coppiced two areas of old blackthorn thicket so that a suitable new habitat will grow up in a few years. One small area beside the Red Path near Connaught Water and a larger area off the Ash Ride near Palmers Bridge have been cleared. Further areas of old thicket will be renewed in rotation. However the loss of suitable habitat in England is not necessarily the only reason for the decline of the Nightingale; which is perhaps more than 50% since the early fifties!

We left Connaught having seen several pairs of Tufted Ducks and a female Pochard duck with just one little youngster (I do not remember Pochard breeding on Connaught before!). No Great Crested Grebes were present but a pair of Mandarin ducks was there and some American Red-eared Terrapins were sunning themselves on the islands

We walked through the Bury Wood's repollarded areas, noting that the Hornbeam pollards were growing vigorously. After reaching Ludgate House we crossed the West Essex Golf Course on the public footpath beside the hedge to the Bury Road near Gilwell Lane. Continuing along the road we re-entered the Golf Course up the public footpath along the main entrance drive, turned left at the top of the hill and walked on until we could join the bridleway that comes from Lippitts Hill and turns down across the Golf Course to Fernhills. A tortuous route but the easiest way of reaching the top of Fernhills from the Forest without walking along too much roadway. (An excellent new O.S. map "Epping Forest and the Lee Valley", No. 174 in the "Explorer" series 1:25 000, shows all the footpaths and bridleways - useful if you are unsure of your rights!).

The fields of Fernhills are the latest land to be acquired by the Conservators and added to the Forest in 1997. The 31 acres of fields have recently been fenced and Longhorn cattle are grazing there. Notices are displayed explaining to the public the purpose of the grazing policy. This purpose being to reduce the spread of scrub in the flower meadows. At this time of year, as the early summer flowers are coming into bloom, it will be interesting to see whether the Longhorns prefer grasses and flowers or hawthorn and briar scrub. Passing the remnant of the old Fernhill Wood and noting that the Wild Service tree was in full flower, we stood and admired the view to the west and northwest. "Trueloves" was just below us down the hillside and in the middle distance M25 traffic was visible crawling across the landscape. The new scar of bare clay that will become the new by-pass to the south of Waltham Abbey and the adjacent industrial area was also prominent. In particular one large new white industrial building stood out. However the dominance of woods and hedgerows in this part of the Lea Valley was still very obvious stretching away to the ridge of distant Hertfordshire. We returned to the Forest via Lippitts Hill passing The Owl PH. - some people disappeared at that point!

Ken Hoy

Clippings

(info. from RSPB Birds & BTO report)

✂ The British Trust for Ornithology, concerned about the decline in numbers of Barn Owls, examined 13,562 Barn Owl pellets and compared the results with a similar survey undertaken in the 60's and 70's. Their findings showed that the owl's diet now consists of a more varied selection of small mammals. Less Field Vole bones occur in the pellets now, although they were

the main prey obtained from their normal habitat. It seems there are not enough suitable rough pasture habitats available and the birds must travel farther to hunt for alternative food thus using more energy. This is a good illustration of population decline caused by the effects of habitat loss.

- ✂ Some interesting statistics came from the same survey. It was discovered when investigating Barn Owl nest sites that 27% were using trees (holes), 30% using buildings and 38% nest boxes! The provision of nest boxes has increased from 6,000 fifteen years ago to 25,000 now.
- ✂ Another investigation - into Badger setts in close proximity to public footpaths showed that the disturbance made little difference! It may even have been beneficial, as there appeared to be less persecution by badger digging on the setts near the footpaths.
- ✂ Some of the loss of Song Thrushes from our gardens and the 'dawn chorus' can be explained by recent research on mixed and arable farms. Crucial differences were found in breeding success between birds nesting on mixed farms in Sussex, where two and three broods were reared each season, and arable farms in Essex. Our Essex birds only managed one brood and none of the youngsters survived to breed locally. (Loss of thick hedgerows ?) Slug pellets spread in gardens kill snails and Song Thrushes !

(Extracts from Tree News - the Tree Council magazine)

- ✂ **Beetle pest alert** - A pest new to Britain threatens to kill many species of broadleaved trees if it becomes established here, according to the Forestry Commission. The Asian longhorn beetle is a major pest in China, Korea and Japan, and specimens have recently been found at many locations in North America. Populations are now established in New York and Chicago, where damage to street trees is high, and felling, sanitation and quarantine are carried out as the only viable management option. The beetle has recently been found at several locations in Britain, although damage to trees has not yet been reported. Its body is up to 35mm long, with antennae longer than the body, and is black with irregular white spots. Symptoms of its presence, in imported wood and wooden packaging, particularly from China, include oval grub holes and larger adult emergence holes. In broadleaved trees symptoms include bark damage, and small piles of wood shavings around the exit hole and on the ground below the tree. The adults emerge between May and August and fly into the crowns of trees to feed and mate. The Forestry Commission has placed import controls on wood packing material from China, and will be carrying out a beetle survey of twelve areas of Britain this summer.
 - ✂ **Veteran trees** - A new and detailed 8-page leaflet, Estimating the age of large and veteran trees in Britain, is available free of charge from the Forestry Commission on 01329 331345. The leaflet updates one published in 1994 and is written by the Forestry Commission's former dendrologist, John White, who described the method in the spring 1995 issue of Tree News.
 - ✂ The new organisation formed by the merger of the Countryside Commission and the Rural Development Commission has been named the Countryside Agency.
- "Clipper"**

Green Belt Loss

Epping Forest District Council recently followed the bad example successfully employed over the years by Waltham Forest Council by approving the building of a new school on a greenfield site.

E.F.D.C. gave itself planning permission to erect a new school on twenty acres of greenbelt land by Willingdale Road at Debden on the grounds that special circumstances existed as required by the D.E.T.R. guidelines.

The special circumstances adduced were that a pressing need existed for another school and that no other suitable site was available. In as much as this is true, it is because the local authority has sold off various local schools mostly for housing. Having closed down schools and built homes on the abandoned sites the Council then seem to have been surprised to find that the people who occupied the houses have produced children who in due course need a school to go to.

An attempt by protestors to have this planning approval 'called-in' by the Secretary of State on the perfectly legitimate grounds that it is a departure from the Local Development Plan (all development is supposed to be Plan led) failed. The Government Office for the Eastern Region the reference point for appeals to the S of S said that he only considers matters of more than local interest.

By such miracles of planning the precious Green Belt is subject to creeping erosion.

Harry Bitten

News in Brief

Verderers' Election Result

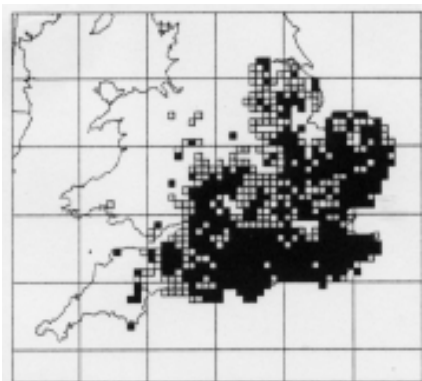
As mentioned in the Chairman's annual report the 4 standing Verderers were re-elected at the beginning of March this year. We offer our congratulations to Dr. Eric Dormer and Peter Adams for the southern parishes and Michael Davies and Richard Marris in the northern parishes. Another 7 years before you get the chance to vote again!

Nightingale survey

Breeding distribution of nightingales

Black: present/breeding 1988-1991

Grey: losses since 1968-1972



A national survey of nightingales is starting this spring and the organisers, the British Trust for Ornithology, would like to hear from anyone who hears a nightingale in Britain this year, quoting details of location, habitat, date and time of day. Contact Andy Wilson at the BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU.

The last national nightingale survey was in 1980, when 4,770 singing nightingales were found, but since then the species has all but disappeared from some areas, particularly in the Midlands. The aim of the new survey is not only to measure population change, but also to identify

areas and habitats in which the species has decreased so that conservation measures can be drawn up.

Correction

Further details to the information contained on Page 9 of the March Newsletter about the Thurrock Wildlife Concern:- the charity was set up and run by police liaison officer Sue Schwar and as Thurrock divisional wildlife officer, her job is to advise other police officers and the public on the law concerning wildlife crime. For example, that badgers and swans are protected species, and it is illegal to keep a golden eagle in your back garden.

Donations for Thurrock Wildlife Concern can be sent to PO Box 8. RM17 5FF and Sue can be contacted on 01375 378516

Ed.

Membership

Also as mentioned in the annual report we need more members, and we are therefore enclosing with this Newsletter a copy of the centre pages from our current leaflet. Please recruit a new member if you can - only £3 a year for 3 excellent Newsletters.

Epping Forest Field centre - Welly Appeal



Old Wellies of all sizes are desperately needed by the Centre. All Welly donations are gratefully accepted.

For details call 0181 508 7714

Ramblers' Association West Essex Group and The Friends of Epping Forest Annual Ramble through Epping Forest

Sunday 26th September 1999

This will be the fifteenth annual joint RA/FOEF Centenary Walk and we hope that our usual good luck with the weather will hold out.

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

We will pass by Butlers Retreat Chingford at around noon and lunch will be at The Owl Public House from 13.15 - 14.00 hours. Thereafter the Walk will continue via Hill Wood to High Beach arriving there at about 15.00 hours. We will then proceed to Epping via Honey Lane Quarters, St. Thomas's Quarters and Epping Thicks. On arrival at Bell Common Epping we will be welcomed by Sir.Richard Morris a recently elected Verderer of the Forest.

This is an easy walk of around 15 miles and provides an opportunity to view the Forest's constantly changing scene.

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

Have a good summer and hope to see you on the Centenary Walk

Peggy Bitten

Dates for your Diary

FOEF Walks

July 25th Sunday 10.30 am

A walk around Walthamstow Forest and Mill Plain taking a closer look at the natural history of the Oak Hill area. Meet in Forest Drive, off Oak Hill, Woodford Green.

Leader: Peter Adams GR 392 914

August 19th Thursday 10 am

A descending linear walk through some of the out-lying parts of Epping Forest situated along the Lea Valley escarpment, taking in Epping Long Green, Harold's Park Farm, Galley Hill Green and Clapgate Lane. Meet in the Cornmill Meadows car park in the Lea Valley Regional Park (the first car park on the left along the Crooked Mile (B194) from Waltham Abbey). Some cars will then transfer walkers to the start.

Leader: Harry Bitten GR 384 016



*From Harold's Park Farm, near Nazing
(Perceval's London's Forest 1909)*

September 26th Sunday 9 am - 5.30 pm

Centenary walk. An all day walk through the length of Epping Forest from Manor Park in the south to Epping Town in the north; passing through Wanstead Flats, Leyton Flats, Walthamstow Forest, Highams Park, Chingford and High Beach. Details in the Newsletter. Meet at the junction of Capel Road and Forest Drive, Manor Park.

Leader: Harry Bitten GR 419 860

October 16th Saturday 11.30 am

A longer circular walk along the River Stort to a lunch time stop at a P.H. with a return walk past Durlington and Sheering Halls to finish at approx. 4 pm. Meet at the Cock P.H. on the Harlow Road (B183), Sheering.

Leader: Bill Dexter GR 140 510

November 12th Friday 1.30 pm

A walk for some late autumn colours in the Honey Lane Quarters area. Meet in the car park at the top of Claypit Hill, High Beach.

Leader: t.b.a. GR 414 987

December 12th Sunday 1.30 pm

A shorter winter's walk in the Goldings Hill area, followed by a drink and mince pie. Meet in the Broadsbrook car park on the left of the road from the Wake Arms roundabout to Loughton (A121 - Goldings Hill)

Leader: Ken Hoy GR 428 987

Public transport is a problem for some of these walks so if anyone would require a lift, please contact 0181 529 8594 for help.

Advance notice of the Forest Supper - 26th November 1999.

The FOEF will have a stall at the following events during the summer:

June 27th Sunday 12 am - 4 pm: Forest Festival at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge, Chingford E4.

August 22nd Sunday 12 am - 5 pm: Chingford Day in Ridgeway Park

September 19th Sunday 10 am - 5 pm: Victorian Summer - Roding Valley Nature Reserve.

Access beside David Lloyd Tennis Centre in Roding Lane Buckhurst Hill.

We hope to have some new items for sale including an alternative design for our china mug, new pens and a FOEF cap, as well as our popular greetings cards. Do come along and enjoy all these events - lots of stalls, shows and attractions.

Other Dates

Epping Forest Information and Museum Service, High Beach.

July 1st Thursday Galley Hill Wood. Meet at Aimes Green at 2 pm (1½ hours walk).

Leader: Dr Amanda Samuels

July 18th Sunday Jeffrey Seddon will be talking about Tudor Hunting activities in the afternoon at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge.

July 11th Sunday. Warlies Park. Meet in the yard of Warlies Home Farm off Fernhall Lane, Upshire at 10.30 am. (2 hours walk) Leader: John Holtom.

Walks continue on 2nd Sunday of every month at 10.30 am. Further details on 0181 508 0028

September 18/19th Open House Weekend at Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge and The Temple 1 - 5 pm.

October 7th Thursday 8 pm Lecture - Ponds and Fishes of E.F. By Alwyn Wheeler

Lee Valley Regional Park - sample programme

July 24th Saturday and 25th Sunday. Cruise to the London Canal Museum from Three Mills Island, E3.

July 31st Birdwatching day course at L.V. Park Inf. Centre.

August 3rd Tuesday. Have a go at riding.

August 10th Tuesday. Bug mania.

August 18th Wednesday. Join a cycle quiz trail.

August 24th Tuesday. Discovery cruise from Three Mills

August 29th Sunday. Lee Valley Riding Centre Open Day.

September 3rd Friday. All day boat and coach trip to Waltham Abbey.

September 11/12th. Rye House Heritage Open Day.

For more details and a full programme of events including many for children contact the Lee Valley Park Information Centre on 01992 702200

Epping Forest Field Centre Courses

- Sat 3rd July.** Discovering Moths.
Sat 3rd July. Exploring Wildflowers.
Sun 4th July. British Reptiles.
Sun 10th July. Conservation and Management of E.F.
Sat/Sun 10/11th July. Higher Plant Classification and Identification.
Sat 24th July. Bats and other Small Mammals of Essex.
Sat 21st Aug. Grasshoppers and Bush-crickets.
Sun 22nd Aug. British Shield-bugs
Sat/Tues 4-7th Sep. British Plant Communities (NVC)
Thur 9th Sep. Management for Wildlife & Amenity
Sat/Sun 11/12th Sep. Discovering Forest Spiders
Sat 18th Sep. Identifying Trees
Sat 25th Sep. Deer in Epping Forest
Sun 26th Sep. Lichens and Atmospheric Pollution
Sat 2nd Oct. Fungus Foray for Beginners
Sun 3rd Oct. Advanced Fungus Foray
Sat/Sun 2/3rd Oct. Autumn Photography Weekend
Sat/Sun 9/10th Oct. Fungus Foray
Sat/Sun 15/17th Oct. Freshwater Invertebrates & Pollution Monitoring. Repeated Tues/Wed 26/27th Oct.
For details and full programme 0181 508 7714

Essex Wildlife Trust

Sunday 18th July: Dragonfly walk around the Lee Valley Dragonfly Sanctuaries, Waltham Abbey with John Clark. (Meet Lee Valley Park Information Centre, 11am)

Sunday 8th August: Butterfly walk led by Iris Newbery. (Meet 10.30am, St Maiy's Church, Church Lane, Stapleford Abbots)

Tuesday 10th August: Epping Forest walk with Alan Everett (Meet 10.30am, Jack's Hill car park (south side) between Theydon Bois and the Wakes Arms.

Tuesday 28th September: Fishers Green walk to be led by Alan Everett (Meet 2pm, Fishers Green car park, Stubbins Hall Lane, Waltham Abbey)

Tuesday 12th October: Epping Forest walk with Verderer Richard Morris. (Meet 10.30am car park opposite Butlers Retreat, Chingford, near Royal Forest Hotel)

Thursday 14th October: Indoor meeting- John Hall (EWT Director) will present Essex Wildlife Trust - 40 years of achievement. (8pm at Loughton Methodist Church Hall)(Admission by donation)

Thursday 18th November: Indoor meeting- Tricia Moxey presents Colours in Nature. (8pm at Loughton Methodist Church Hall)(Admission by donation)

For further information, contact Judy Adams 0181 504 6590

C.P.R. Essex events

July 19th. Supper at Ingatestone Hall.

July 17th. A walk in the Debham Vale.

August 22nd. Oliver's Open Garden.

Full details available from the Hon. Sec. CPREssex, The Garden Office, 79 Springfield Road, Chelmsford CM2 6JG. Tel. 01245 268 667

August Bank Holiday Weekend. Flower Festival at Waltham Abbey.

Fri. 27th, Sat. 28th, Mon. 30th 9.30 am - 8 pm

Sun. 29th. 12am - 5pm.

Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers

4 July - Gernon Bushes. The plan here is to build a proper wooden fence - a new task for the EFCV!

11 July — Two Tree Island, Leigh-on-Sea. This is always a popular task on a site that is ideal for mudlarks and birdwatchers alike, helping to control coastal erosion. Wear long sleeves and gloves, because we shall be handling hemlock, which might otherwise leave you with very sore arms. We must leave the Warren, 9.15 am.

25 July — Wellington Hill. The site is adjacent to the 'Long Bog' which is a stream well known to Victorian naturalists. The hillside where we shall work is overgrown with small Oak. These are shading out plants such as Heather, Woodsage and Heath-Bedstraw. We aim to start promptly and finish early, adjourning to a local hostelry for refreshment.

August 8th — Connaught Waters. We are to build a retaining fence to contain the reeds that we plant - a cunning plan to stop silt from the stream entering the pond; let's hope it works!

September 5th — Mill Plain (near Waterworks Roundabout). We are following up the improvements made here, February 14th and March 28th this year.

September 11th/12th — Slindon. This is a weekend task with West Sussex National Trust, pulling up Scots Pine on the diverse heathland of Lavington Common. Meet at the Warren 9.30, We aim to leave promptly at 9.45. Wear warm working clothes, boots and waterproofs; hard hats and gloves are provided, when necessary, as are waders for pond tasks. Bring food and drink if you are staying all day. Return to the Warren at about 3.30.

Enquiries: Diane Meakin, 0181 500 2095

Chairman's Annual report, April 1999

This past year began with our involvement with the Management Strategy Plan for the Forest and has ended with continuing discussions about various current aspects of the management of the Forest. We have also been concerned about the wider environmental changes that affect the Forest. If you have read your Newsletters throughout the year you will no doubt be aware of these various matters; thus I hope I only need to summarise the issues, for you to recall the details.

Over the past three or four years we have contributed to the various discussions and consultations on the Forest Management Plan - particularly the questions of re-pollarding and fencing to facilitate grazing on the Forest. Such issues have been among those well discussed in the Newsletters. The Management Plan was accepted by the Conservators and became policy in the spring of 1998.

You will recall we organised a well attended public meeting in this hall last June at which the Superintendent's Deputy, Jeremy Wisenfeld and the Forest Ecologist, Dr Dagley, spoke about the Management Plan.

A current matter, the management of which we have discussing, concerns the newest addition to the Forest, "Trueloves" - the area between The Green Lane and Lippitts Hill. A previous decision to allow the Trueloves fields to revert to woodland has been superseded by one to retain it for fenced grazing in conjunction with Fernhills. After discussing the matter in Committee we have presented a case to the Conservators in favour of the original decision of allowing a gradual reversion to woodland. We have also written to the Conservators expressing an opinion against establishing a Forest Car Park on Copped Hall in the field near Ambresbury Banks.

A long running Forest matter has been the question of regulating the use of horses in the Forest. Perhaps I should briefly recount what has happened. A Bill came before
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Parliament (which we supported); it was passed and became an Act of Parliament some ten years ago. Briefly, this was to allow the introduction of a licensing scheme for horse riders. The Conservators drew up the necessary Byelaws and submitted them to the Dept. of Environment, who put them out for public consultation. Numerous objections were received by the Ministry from horse riders. We approached fifteen other local organisations and wrote a collective letter supporting the Conservators. Revised proposals were submitted to meet the objections. Nothing further was heard for two years. However, within the last year our President, Lord Murray, has twice raised the matter with the Minister. The Department then wrote to the objectors asking if they still objected! Further objections were received and we wrote again with several other local organisations to the Ministry supporting the proposals. We hope that there will soon be a resolution of the matter.

As you know from the last Newsletter, we have recently made some suggestions to the Superintendent about possible ways of recognising the coming Millennium as far as Epping Forest is concerned. They were as follows -

1. Planting of a 'Millennium Wood on the Buffer lands.
2. The creation of a Millennium pond somewhere in the Forest.
3. The provision of seats at various viewpoints in the Forest.
4. The creation of a 'nursery' of seeding Forest trees 'of the Millennium year' - i.e. of 'genetically' guaranteed *Epping Forest* trees.
5. That the great Oak, known as 'Grimstons Oak' should revert to its earlier name of The Bedford Oak.

In the case of creating a Wood - the Conservators have asked us to 'sound out' local opinion about siting such a

wood on the 'new' Forest land at Coopersale fields and the possible planting of such a wood as a local voluntary project. There will be more details about this proposal in the July Newsletter.

A site for a proposed pond is being considered, and, the original role of John Bedford and the Oak is being researched.

The underlying principles of Local Planning around the Forest have received prominence since the Conservators became concerned about the deterioration of the rural character of the landscape in the High Beach area. As a result the Superintendent was asked to report on changes in the environment around the Forest.

Details of that Report, the conclusions of which we wholeheartedly support, have appeared in the last Newsletter. We have since written again to the Conservators with further suggestions of local support for the Superintendent's recommendation and that the idea of obtaining a form of Special Protection status for the Forest and its surrounding area be explored. This would of course involve widespread local discussions of many of the issues currently the cause of concern. Such issues as the effects of the industrial development of the area south of Waltham Abbey. The associated road schemes on the M25 and on the M11 at Leytonstone and Debden.

Over the year we have as usual monitored Local Planning Applications that might affect the Forest. One aspect to which we have given some attention is the increase of what has been called 'light pollution' - intrusive and glaring floodlights and display lights in the vicinity of the Forest.

The result of the recent Verderer's election has also been reported in the local press. All the four existing Verderers were re-elected and we welcome and congratulate those Verderers who are here tonight.

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THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST

The Friends of Epping Forest was formed in 1968 to represent the varied interests of all sections of the public who appreciate and use Epping Forest.

In the early 1970's The Friends joined with other local groups to give evidence at the M25 Inquiry and subsequently by Petitioning Parliament at Select Committees of Parliament. Concessions, such as the lengthening of the Bell Common Tunnel and the abandonment of the interchange there, were gained as a result. Later we gave evidence at various Public Inquiries, including those concerning Stansted Airport, the South Woodford to Barking Relief Road and the M1 Link Road Inquiry. In May 1982 we organised, with the help of other groups, the Centenary celebrations on Chingford Plain, attended by some 10,000 people, commemorating the famous visit by Queen Victoria to Epping Forest in 1882, when she dedicated the Forest "for the use and enjoyment of the public for all time".

We interpret our terms of reference widely and feel that threats to the Forest often arise outside its boundaries and that these must be resisted. For this reason we liaise and work with the Council for the Protection of Rural Essex and the London Green Belt Council. We are particularly active with other groups in the Epping Forest branch of the Coucji for the Protection of Rural Essex in opposing the mounting threats to the Green Belt countryside in this area where it will have profound effects on Epping Forest. For many years we have encouraged and supported the Conservator's policy of acquiring 'buffer' lands to protect and enlarge the Forest.

Our main purpose is to protect the Forest for the public in accordance with the 1878 Act and to provide a consultative link between the Conservators of Epping Forest and members of the public. Our membership includes people who use the Forest for many different purposes and we endeavour to provide a forum for the various interests. Where conflict arises between them we aim to represent the broadest public interest rather than any specific user group. We have close links with other local amenity and community groups and we are active supporter's of the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers.

The Friends organise a regular programme of walks, and members are sent a Newsletter three times a year as part of their subscription. The AGM is held in April and the Forest Supper in November.

Our Constitution ensures that our objectives are:

1. To support the preservation of Epping Forest as an unenclosed open space for the recreation and use of the general public and the preservation of the natural aspect, and
2. To further the knowledge and appreciation of the public in all matters relating to Epping Forest.

In furtherance of the above, we aim to:

Consult and liaise with the Conservators of Epping Forest, local Councils, Government departments, members of the public; provide information to public inquiries, arouse, form and educate public opinion, arrange public meetings, talks and walks.

Please join 'The Friends' and help us to protect Epping Forest. Our strength lies in the number of people we represent.

As you know our regular events, such as the Centenary Walk and the pre-Christmas Forest Supper have been successfully undertaken. The production, publication and distribution of our Newsletters and the recruitment and continued contact with our members has been maintained. Thanks are due once again to those many people who quietly undertake these necessary organisational tasks to ensure that success. This vital work is valued and should not be taken for granted.

I have said, our Membership 'has been maintained', and that means generally speaking loses have been replaced and even slightly increased. However, although our membership is 1316, when I was looking at a 1983 Newsletter the other day I saw that our membership then was 1338 ! - that's 22 more than today. So as far as membership is concerned we are standing still ! On the other hand as many are in effect 'household memberships' (at least 25%) we believe we can claim to speak for over 1600 concerned and informed local people (as far as Epping Forest is concerned). There must be - there are! - many more such people who care for the Forest. May I ask then, that if you consider your membership is worthwhile, try to recruit an interested friend - Membership forms are available at the door (and with this Newsletter). The size of our membership is of course highly relevant to the 'power of our elbow' when we endeavour to represent the interests of Epping Forest elsewhere.

I have already thanked those involved with the regular day to day organising tasks, but it would be remiss of me not to thank Peggy for all the efforts she makes. And, I might add, though she may smile, also thank Harry for the work he does to support her - and I don't mean just the cooking. I could also thank him for the occasional nudge he gives me!

Finally I must thank two people for the long service they have given our Committee as members and as Officers.

Clifford Pyne, who is retiring from the Committee and the Vice-Chairmanship first joined us back in the early 1970's. During those years there are many anecdotes that come to mind, but the one I relish most was when Clifford was giving evidence to a Public Inquiry. He was asked, in cross-examination, a long complicated question by a too clever Barrister - "Mr Pyne, do you not agree that...Blah.... Blah...etc" There was a long pause and then Clifford's clear resonant voice echoed around the room with just a simple, "No!" The astonishment on the Counsel's face had to be seen to be appreciated! I thank Clifford for that and much more, particularly his shrewd and measured interjections in Committee, when I thought we had finished with an item! On your behalf may I thank him and wish him well.

I must thank too our retiring Membership Secretary, Judy Miller, - no one can remember when she first took the job on! But when I quietly looked up the records, I found that she must have been sitting next to our first Treasurer at our very first meeting, as the receipt for her subscription was No.2 ! Long service indeed. She could not have undertaken the work for so long had she not been highly efficient and that extended to collating, packaging and distributing our Newsletter. We must all thank you, Judy, most sincerely for your quiet hard work over many years.

That concludes my Annual Report for the last year.

Ken Hoy

The Report was duly approved by the AGM. Later the Chairman thanked Seymour Moss, the retiring Treasurer for so valiantly undertaking the job and surviving. He welcomed the new Treasurer Mr Tony Sheppard after the Meeting had formally elected him. The Chairman thanked Harold French who has been our Auditor for many years and who is unwell. The Meeting wished him a speedy recovery.



THE FRIENDS OF EPPING FOREST

Application for Membership

Last Name **First Name(s)** **Title**

Address

.....

.....

Age (if under 18) **Phone No** **Date**

Please note: membership details are stored on computer

Membership charges (per person):

Life membership:	£20.00	Three year membership:	£ 7.00
Annual membership:	£ 3.00	Senior citizens membership:	50% reduction on all charges.

I enclose a cheque/P.O. to the value of £ (Cheques/PO. payable to 'Friends of Epping Forest')

Please send this form to: Membership Secretary, Mr Seymour Moss, 47 Long Deacon Road, E4 6EG

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