

Epping Forest Countrycare

As Epping Forest District Councils countryside management service, Countrycare aims to maintain and enhance the natural environment for the benefit of both local people and wildlife. This is done by creating and maintaining habitats, improving public access and increasing awareness of our rural heritage. Countrycare's team of four paid members of staff work with schools, volunteers, youth groups, wildlife organisations and national agencies, amongst others, encouraging participation in practical environmental projects.

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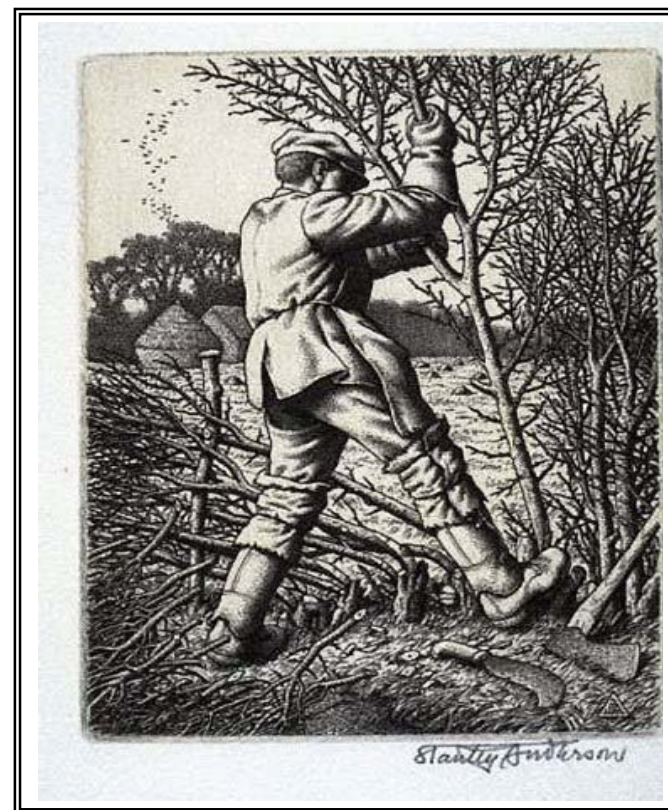
We like to include contributions from our readers in the newsletter, so please feel free to send in a letter, poem, quiz, question or drawing. Please send us your contributions by the end of October.

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E.Y.E

*Enhancing Your Environment
Countryside & Conservation News*



Issue 1

August - November 2003

Epping Forest District Council





Welcome to the first edition of E.Y.E, the newsletter for Enhancing Your Environment! This brand new newsletter brings together news from the Conservation and Environment Section based within Planning Services at EFDC. In E.Y.E you will find articles on built heritage, landscape and arboriculture and countryside conservation. So if you were expecting the regular Countrycare newsletter, this is the new improved version that hopefully contains more interesting snippets from around the District.

Ramblings of a Countryside Manager – The last 4 months seem to have just flown by and April now seems a very long way off as we have rattled through yet another spring and the good part of another summer (which at the time of writing has been pleasantly sunny, hot and largely dry, what's going on?).

Countrycare has now entered its 18th year and the many sites we look after are really beginning to see the benefit of everyone's hard work. As I keep saying it often takes a long time to see the fruits of your labour in conservation work, but things are really starting to show now. There was probably no better example of this during June, when the Church Lane LNR looked totally stunning covered as it was in Ragged Robin and Meadow Buttercup.

We have also got on maintaining other sites like Copy Wood Field, Loughton Brook, All Saints Churchyard to name but a few, all with the regular hay cut. With the fruits of our labour clearly visible, I look forward to the next 4 months of work and I would like to give a big thank you to all our volunteers without whom all our work would not be possible.

Paul Hewitt, Countryside Manager

This means that the current situation is likely to continue at least for the time being, until legislation is re-introduced. Neighbours can remove overhanging branches and encroaching roots, but no more. If a tree or a hedge is causing a nuisance, as defined legally (that is damaging property or causing financial loss) then action can be taken through the courts. However, there is still no remedy for loss of light, shading or adverse effects on a garden.

Tree Strategies

The Theydon Bois Tree Strategy was published in the spring, has now been distributed throughout Theydon Bois and an action plan published. A meeting to discuss the action plan was held recently in the Theydon Bois Village Hall and well attended by villagers and interested parties. The action plan involves the Conservators of Epping Forest as well as Epping Forest District Council. The Conservators of Epping Forest will consult the village on proposals for future management of the Green and they will cooperate with the village and the District Council on several tree management and planting issues, and in particular further involvement with the school to plant trees and hedges on the buffer land above the village. We will be looking at the street trees, to finalise a plan to deal with existing problems and to plant many more street trees, in a joint project with residents, the Parish Council and the Rural Preservation Society. At the time of writing a walk is due next weekend, partly as publicity for the strategy, which will finish at the home of one of our tree wardens, Robin Llewelyn Jones and his wife Jean. The general local reaction to the tree strategy document has been very favourable. Copies are available from us (call Melinda Barham on 01992 564120) at a cost of £5.

Work is under way on the next two strategies, that for Roydon and Ongar, to be published by March 04 and March 05. We are also looking at the possibility of Grant Aid to speed up the process to include the whole district.

Chris Neilan, Landscape Officer and Arboriculturist
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was unable to find the party in the woods! Carrie and I undertook our own walk and were particularly amazed by the number and rarity of the wild flowers.

In the afternoon we visited Ickworth Park and Gardens, where again we had the benefit of expert guides. The site was described to us as the 'sleeping giant of the National Trust in eastern England', because of its potential, but also because of the fact that for a number of years very little had been done to make the most of it or to attract visitors. It was fascinating to hear about the ambitious restoration plans for the grounds, now beginning to be implemented.

The forthcoming regional tree warden forum should be of interest to many tree wardens. It is on a theme that we have covered, that of trees and biodiversity. Nevertheless, there are interesting speakers for the morning session and a guided afternoon walk in a particularly interesting setting; Staverton Park. The cost is only £10 for wardens. The date is Sunday 5 October but don't leave it too late to reply, in case places have been booked. All wardens should have received details with the newsletter.

Legislation

At the time of writing it seems likely that both the bills intended to deal with nuisance hedges (known as the high hedges bills) are likely to be talked out. The two Private Members Bills have been making their way through parliament for some months now and had reached the Committee stage. They were both aiming to put in place a complaints system for the problems of boundary hedges, mostly Leylandii. If neighbours were unable to resolve the problem the agreed party would be able to complain to the Council, who would be issued with guidance to impose a solution.

However, Members of the House of Commons were concerned about a number of problems, including the definition of hedges, what hedges should be included and the danger of other trees, including TPO trees being drawn in to disputes. As a result a large number of questions were tabled leading to the first Bill being talked out early in July and the second facing the same situation.

Epping Forest Countrycare volunteer diary dates

August

Sunday 3	Swaines Green, Epping
Tuesday 5	Home Mead, Loughton
Thursday 7	Home Mead, Loughton
Thursday 28	Berners Roding Churchyard

September

Tuesday 2	Matching Airfield, Abbess Roding
Thursday 4	Matching Airfield, Abbess Roding
Sunday 14	Thornwood Common Nature Area, North Weald
Thursday 18	Roughtalley's Wood LNR, North Weald

October

Thursday 2	Chigwell Row Wood LNR
Sunday 5	Nazeing Scout Hut Pond
Tuesday 7	Beauchamp Roding Special roadside verge
Thursday 23	Beauchamp Roding Special roadside verge

November

Sunday 2	World's End, Roydon
Tuesday 4	Church Lane Flood Meadow LNR, North Weald
Thursday 6	Church Lane Flood Meadow LNR, North Weald
Thursday 27	Chigwell Row Wood LNR

Although not all listed here, we do have a project **every Thursday** and **every first Tuesday and Sunday of the month**. If you would like details of all projects, then please give us a call and we will send you a copy of the finalised details in our monthly update sheet as **the list above may be subject to change.**

Unless otherwise stated on our update sheet, there is a pick up from Loughton Station at 9.30am for all volunteer projects and we will aim to have you back there again by 4.30pm. Please bring a packed lunch, sturdy boots (steel toe-capped if you have them) and plenty of enthusiasm. We'll ply you with tea, coffee and biscuits to help keep your energy levels up!

Countrycare Project Details

Swaines Green, is located on the north western fringe of Epping Town and totals 9.64 hectares (23 acres). It is bounded by ancient hedgerows that now enclose areas of scrub grassland, ponds and developing woodland. The site is managed by Countrycare under a legal agreement with EFDC, Epping Town Council and the landowner. Along with the Friends of Swaines Green we are all trying to secure the sites long term future by buying it and negotiations regarding a possible purchase are still ongoing. In August and September we will be undertaking scrub clearance and cutting of the better grassland areas. **Meet:** 10.00am, Lower Swaines Road, Epping, by the entrance to Lower Swaines Recreation Ground. **Grid Ref:** TL 455 023

Home Mead, Loughton is a small EFDC owned site that is gradually taking shape with all your hard work over the last few years. Areas of acid wet grassland are getting better with flowers such as Ragged Robin appearing and Tormentil flourishing. The problems with fly tipping have been resolved and the hedge planting, woodland thinning and coppicing work is all looking really good. With your help we will be under taking a further cut of the grassland areas to keep them free from scrub. **Meet:** 10.00am, at entrance to site at junction of Clay's Lane and England's Lane, Loughton. Please park sympathetically in roads nearby. **Grid Ref:** TQ 438 978.

Berners Roding Churchyard is an old favourite, in one of the most peaceful and out of the way places in the District. In partnership with the owners Essex Farms, Countrycare has been looking after this deconsecrated churchyard since 1996. Over the years the wildflowers have steadily increased especially the Knapweed in the adjacent paddock and this peaceful church is well worth a visit. Once again we will be undertaking the annual grass cut in the churchyard and small adjoining paddock area. **Meet:** 10.15am, Essex Farms, Berners Hall car park, Berners Roding. **Grid Ref:** TL 602 101.

HERS funding. The first such scheme to be given consideration will be the parking area at the end of Highbridge Street, which is aimed at improving the setting of the Abbey Church. The public viewed a series of preliminary proposals in April and it is the intention of Council staff to incorporate the comments received into a final draft design for the area, which will be available for further public comment later this year. Also as part of the HERS, efforts have been stepped up to remove or reposition unauthorised satellite dishes, and remove and redesign large or modern shopfront signs and solid metal shopfront shutters, all of which undermine the character and historic nature of the area. In addition, the need to deal with Waltham Abbey's large pigeon population has been identified as a priority under the scheme. The Council is seeking the public's co-operation to reduce the number of pigeons in the town with a [Please Do Not Feed the Pigeons](#) campaign.

Anyone interested in more information on the Waltham Abbey HERS, including grant application forms, are encouraged to contact Karen Rolfe, Assistant Conservation Officer, on 01992 564068 or 07789 372041, or Paul Sutton, Conservation Officer, on 01992 564119 or 07789 372033.

Landscape & Arboriculture

Tree Warden Scheme

Wardens from several parishes have been active recently looking after street trees, and in particular removing suckers from the stems, improving the appearance of the trees. They have been keeping an eye on local tree issues, including the safety of trees, on trees requiring protection and trees on development sites.

Approximately 12 wardens, together with family and friends took the Countrycare minibus to Suffolk. In the morning they had a guided walk around Bradfield Woods, which is a splendid example of a medieval coppice woodland, still in working order and notable for spring and summer flowers, butterflies and birds. I am told that the morning and the picnic lunch in the wood was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Unfortunately I managed to arrive slightly late and

Waltham Abbey HERS

The Waltham Abbey Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) aims to safeguard the historic and architectural interest of the Waltham Abbey Conservation Area and stimulate the economic activity and prosperity of the town centre. The Waltham Abbey HERS is jointly funded by English Heritage, the District Council, Tesco and Sainsbury's and is part of a government initiative that provides grants for the repair and restoration of selected properties within conservation areas. Grant assistance in the region of 50% of the cost of eligible work in the following three main areas is available:

1. The repair and conservation of buildings,
2. The reinstatement of missing architectural features, and
3. The enhancement of the spaces between buildings.

The scheme is now in its third and final year and we are pleased to report the successful completion of six projects including 16 Sun Street (roof repair and façade restoration), 18 Sun Street-Jigsaw Pizzeria (slate roof and window repairs, brick repointing), 34 Sun Street-Dr. Lakha's Surgery (re-roofing slate roof, window repairs, new cast iron gutters), 44 Sun Street-Abbey Parlour shop (re-tiling natural red clay tile roof), 3 Market Square-R.P. Sweet News (new slate roof) and 4 Sun Street (installation of new traditional shopfront).

Grant offers have also been made towards six additional properties within the Conservation Area to date, with a number of property owners expressing interest in applying for grants under the HERS program. The Council encourages anyone interested in grant assistance to submit their applications as soon as possible as grants can only be offered up to March 2004 and the money in the scheme is distributed on a first come first serve basis.

The Waltham Abbey HERS is not only a grants scheme, but also includes initiatives to improve the image of Waltham Abbey for both residents and visitors alike. The enhancement of certain public areas within the Waltham Abbey Conservation Area is eligible for

Matching Airfield, Abbess Roding is one of PH's favourites and one where Countrycare has worked since 1994. This privately owned former WWII airfield now provides an ideal habitat for wildflowers like Common spotted orchids, Wild basil, Restharrow and Oxe-eye daisy to name but a few. A good web site about the airfield is www.merlinsroared.tripod.com This Autumn's volunteer days will be grass cutting and scrub control. **Meet:** 10.15 matching airfield, lay-by on Anchor Lane, east of Matching Green. **Grid Ref:** TL 552 113. (Private ownership)

Thornwood Common Nature Area, North Weald was created in 1996 by Countrycare and the owners North Weald Parish Council on 5 redundant allotment plots. The site will be getting its annual hay cut to help the colony of Bee Orchids to spread. At this time of year grasshoppers and bush crickets will be out in force. **Meet:** 10.00am, Thornwood Village Hall, Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood. **Grid Ref:** TL 473 046.

Roughtalley's Wood LNR, North Weald is one of EFDC's 6 LNRs. On September's volunteer day we will be concentrating our efforts on the interesting grassland areas within the wood. In May, the Essex Field Club surveyed the site and came up with a good plant list that included a colony of Broad-leaved helleborines. With your help we will be managing the areas where interesting plants were found as well as cutting the marsh area and orchid rich grassland. **Meet:** 10.00am, Norway House car park, off Epping Road, North Weald. **Grid Ref:** TL 488 038.

Chigwell Row Wood LNR is our fantastic remnant of Hainault Forest containing a variety of habitats from ancient hornbeam and oak pollards through to relict heathland. The wood is probably ranked within the top 40 of sites with over a 100 veteran trees in Britain. In October, we will be cutting and expanding the heathland area and in November we will be carrying on with our coppicing and pollarding works. **Meet:** 10.00am, car park off Lodge Close, off B173, Chigwell. **Grid Ref:** TQ 460 931.

Nazeing Scout Hut Pond is situated on Middle Street in Nazeing. A historic pond, last year it underwent major restoration with tree works, desilting and bank reprofiling. All this has gone really well and the pond looks great. The icing on the cake is to be the construction of a viewing/dipping platform. Your assistance is needed to construct the platform. **Meet:** 10.00am, Nazeing Scout & Guide Hut, Middle Street, Nazeing. **Grid Ref:** TL 401 056.

Beauchamp Roding Special Roadside Verge is one of 5 special verges that Countrycare manages annually. The Beauchamp Roding verge is one of the very best packed as it is in June with Sulphur Clover, Rest Harrow and Bee Orchids. Our last major volunteer effort here was back in 1997, when we undertook restoration work to the adjacent hedge and clearance of encroaching scrub on the banks of the verge. This autumn, we will be returning for the annual cutting and a renewing of the coppicing works to the hedge and bank. We will also be restoring an area of the verge, which has become enriched by stripping the turf layer to reveal the subsoil beneath. **Meet:** 10.15am, Beauchamp Roding Village Hall, off the Dunmow Road B182 **Grid Ref:** TL 579 103

World's End, Roydon is a County Wildlife Site that contains a mixture of mainly hazel coppice surrounded by more mature ash, oak, willow and black poplar – one of which was recently chosen by the Tree Council as one of Britain's 50 Great Trees! Once again we will be returning to carry out coppicing work. **Meet:** 10.00am, East End Farm yard off Harlow Road, Roydon. **Grid Ref:** TL 419 101.

Church Lane Flood Meadow LNR, North Weald was the first habitat creation scheme undertaken by the District Council in 1989. Created from an arable field this fantastic wet meadow and pond now supports over 180 grasses, trees and flowering plants including Bee Orchids, Common Spotted Orchids and the rare Marsh Cinquefoil. It is now a designated Wildlife Site and Local Nature Reserve. In October 2002, the site was re-entered into DEFRA's Countryside Stewardship Scheme for a further 10 years. As part of the stewardship we will be planting a new boundary hedge and laying the hedge beside the access track planted in 1993. The first project days in November, will see us laying of this

Other grants may be available from English Heritage if your property is listed either Grade I or II*.

Obtain Specialist Advice

Historic Buildings require special care. Carry out regular maintenance. If defects are left they may become difficult and costly to put right. Do-it-yourself repairs or work done by inexperienced tradesmen is often short lived and does not solve the basic problems. People inexperienced in dealing with old buildings often propose solutions that are unnecessarily costly and may spoil the character of the building.

Take care and obtain specialist advice. Try to find a professional who is a specialist on old buildings. Use a registered architect or surveyor especially if you are considering any alterations or extensions. Informal advice and help may also be sought from the Conservation Section of the Council's Planning Service.

Further information

Check out these websites –

www.english-heritage.org.uk (English Heritage is the government's statutory adviser on the historic environment).

www.ihbc.org.uk (The Institute of Historic Building Conservation is the principal body representing professionals and specialists involved in the conservation of historic buildings and their surroundings).

www.spab.org.uk (The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings is a registered charity providing advice on all aspects of repair and maintenance of old buildings).

www.essexcc.gov.uk (The Historic Buildings and Conservation Section of Essex County Council provides advice on the alteration and extension of historic buildings as well as on repair and maintenance).

Financial Help

The District Council may make grants towards the cost of repairs to historic buildings. Such repairs often cost more because of the need to use high quality materials and employ special skills to preserve the character of historic buildings.

Grant aid will only normally be offered for the cost of repairs only. The work must be considered necessary to retain and enhance the character of the building. The following list provides examples of eligible work:-

- Repairs to roof and roof structure
- Repairs to timber frame and weatherboarding
- Repair of doors and windows
- Insertion of damp proof course
- Eradication of dry rot
- Repairs to foundations
- Repairs to brickwork
- Renewal of rainwater gutters and downpipes

Domestic work such as redecoration and other minor works such as plastering, rewiring or plumbing is not normally grant aided.

Grants are calculated on a sliding scale applied to the total cost of eligible works, excluding VAT, as set out below:

A - 30% of first £1,000 of eligible costs

B - 20% of second £1,000 of eligible costs

C - 10% of remaining costs up to a maximum grant of £1,000

A grant is only available when eligible expenditure exceeds £500. The maximum grant of £1,000 is only payable when eligible expenditure exceeds £7,000. The allocation of grant is always at the discretion of the Council. The total grant which may be provided will not exceed 20% of the total cost of eligible works, however the annual budget is limited, and grants are awarded on a first come first served basis from April each year. However, the total amounts paid for small scale works is restricted and the maximum grant will normally be no more than £1,000.

75m section of hedge and coppicing more willow trees around the pond edge. **Meet:** 10.00am, on site and park at end of access track for sewage works, off Church Lane. **Grid reference:** TL 497 045

Forthcoming Countrycare events

Down on the Farm, Sunday 10th August 2003.

Berners Hall Farm, Berners Roding is a large commercial arable farm located right on the edge of the District. The farm is in Countryside Stewardship, whereby management is carried out sensitively with the needs of wildlife in mind. There are a mixture of wildlife habitats here including field margins, coppiced woodlands, ponds and ancient hedgerows. Come along and find out more about this diverse, modern farm first hand with Farm Manager, Dave Watson and Paul Hewitt. Distance: 3.25km (2 miles) **Booking essential**

Mammals! Wednesday 20th August 2003. Would you like to be a mammal detective? Come and discover how to identify the tracks and trails left by British mammals. Most of these animals are either pretty rare, shy or nocturnal so a few droppings here and there or some tell tale paw prints can provide valuable evidence for the budding mammal detective. Distance 4km (2.5 miles). Rough terrain and stiles, not suitable for pushchairs. We recommend walking boots or strong footwear. **Booking essential**

EFDC Chairman's Charity Walk Sunday 21st September 2003

This year's Chairman Cllr Stephen Barnes is raising funds for the Haven House Hospice in Woodford. The facility offers care for children, young people and their families who are affected by life limiting or life threatening illnesses. This sponsored walk is open to everyone with participants being encouraged to obtain at least ten sponsors at a minimum of £1 each. This should ensure that we can make a healthy contribution to the appeal. The walk will start and finish at Ashlyns Farm Shop and will be a maximum of 7 miles. So why not join in?, enjoy a great walk and benefit a worth while cause.

For full details of the above contact the Countrycare Office.

World News

Farmers get wind of tax on livestock emissions. Farmers in New Zealand are enraged that they are to be charged a "flatulence tax" as part of the country's efforts to combat global warming. Greenhouse gases expelled by livestock are responsible for about 50% of New Zealand's emissions. Now farmers will have to pay up to 72 cents (24p) per cow and 9c (3p) per sheep to reflect the damage they cause to the environment. Deer and goat farmers will also be taxed. The levy, expected to come into force in 2004, will help to fund research on ways the country can meet its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol to reduce harmful emissions.

Biodiversity News

A Growing Problem. A 4-year project has just begun to look at new ways of combating Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*). This truly evil plant (sorry as you can guess its not a favourite) has ravaged so many parts of the country, especially in Cornwall and Wales, that Cornwall County Council and the Welsh Development Agency are giving £500,000 to fund a research project. The project will aim to find biological methods of controlling this introduced weed and much of the basic work will be done by universities and scientific establishments in Japan. Currently, there are thought to be 28 organisms that attack Knotweed and scientists have already identified a beetle and rust fungus that appear specific to the plant. The good news is that Knotweed in this country is clonal having all grown from cuttings. This makes it weak in that it cannot adapt and so if something can be found it's a sitting duck. Knotweed is currently controlled by herbicides and it is predicted that in Wales alone by 2010 it will cover 800ha and cost a staggering £76 million to control. Anyway, let's hope scientists get it right and find an organism that is specific to knotweed and will not damage anything else, remember the introduction of the Cane Toad to Australia!

Get more buzz in your garden! English Nature, the Governments advisors on nature conservation are hoping to work with garden centres and nurseries to promote plants that will help protect the common bumblebee. Surveys conducted over the last 70 years

have shown that 2 species of bumblebee have become extinct and many have declined by more than 95%.

- Removal of parapet or cornice, canopy or balcony or other architectural features;
- Internal alterations e.g. the removal of staircase, fireplace or structural timbers;
- Removal or alteration of interior doors;
- Creation of through rooms;
- Addition of signs, advertisements, shutters or security cameras.

This list is not comprehensive and if you are in any doubt about whether works consent, contact the Conservation Section of the Planning Service before carrying out the work.

What about repairs?

Repairs that are carried out using identical materials do not normally require Listed Building Consent. The District Council will always encourage owners of Listed Buildings to undertake sympathetic repair work, where possible, rather than the replacement of original features. The replacement of original materials and features can often harm the character or appearance of buildings especially when cheap or unsuitable materials are used. Many original features can be preserved with careful repair.

The following materials are **NOT** usually acceptable:-

- Concrete roof tiles and machine-made roof tiles
- Synthetic resin or fibre cement slates
- Narrow or PVC weatherboarding
- Standard, mock-period windows and doors
- UPVC replacement windows and doors
- Modern softwood rafters and beams in place of oak
- PVC rainwater gutters and downpipes
- Hard cement renders and mortars.

The list description of a building is not intended to be exhaustive and usually only notes particular features that help to date or identify the building. The fact that the list description may not mention a particular feature, does not mean that it is not covered by the listing. Many listed building descriptions were made without internal inspection, but this does not mean that the interior is of any less value

The setting of a listed building is also often an important feature of its character and an important factor when new development or extensions are being considered.

What is Listed Building Consent?

A Listed Building must not be demolished, extended or altered in any way that would affect its character, without first obtaining Listed Building Consent. You must get this consent in writing from the District Council before beginning any works. This special form of control is in addition to planning permission, which may also be required. You can apply for Listed Building Consent on special forms available from the District Council. There is no fee payable, however the forms must be accompanied by detailed plans and an explanation of the proposals. The only works that normally do not require consent are repairs carried out on a "like-for-like" basis.

PLEASE do not carry out work to a listed building without first obtaining consent, it is a criminal offence. The penalties can be severe and you could be made to make good the work or even demolish unauthorised structures.

Works that require Listed Building Consent

Remember that any work which would affect the character of a listed building requires listed building consent. The following list provides examples of work that requires Listed Building Consent.

- Any form of extension or demolition;
- Removal or insertion of chimney stacks;
- Recovering of roof with different materials;
- Any alterations to, or replacement of, doors and windows;

- Addition of porch, bay windows or conservatory;
- Erection of satellite dish;

The UK currently has 25 species of bumblebee, although 2 have not been recorded for many years. A survey undertaken in Essex between 1985 and 2000 revealed Essex has 17 species and of these 3 are very scarce and 2 have very localised populations. Gardeners are being urged to grow traditional plants and avoid imported hybrids with no nectar. Our common wildflowers are the best like Bugle, Dead Nettle, Heathers, Foxglove and Scabious. So next time your gardening think of the bees and try and plant a good nectar plant or simply leave that "weed"

Reference material - A leaflet produced by English Nature and the National Trust was launched at this year's Chelsea Flower Show and is available to download or order from English Nature's web site www.english-nature.org.uk Go to publications and maps, click on publications and then enter bumblebee in the keyword search. A good book is the Bumblebees of Essex by Ted Benton (2000) published by Lopinga Books.



It's those hedgehogs again!!



Yes, I'm on about it again – the great Hebridian hedgehog debacle. As you may remember from earlier issues, the offending hogs have been eating their way through the eggs of important bird colonies in the Outer Hebrides. In April, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) mounted a culling programme to try and rid North Uist of the pesky beasts. Well, after six weeks it was all over and although SNH were pleased with their efforts, they had only caught 53 hedgehogs. As the cull had cost £6,900, the cost per hedgehog was just over £130!!

The scheme will be repeated next year but with a new weapon. The male hedgehogs will be tagged when they surface from hibernation and tracked so that their springtime lust will lead scientists to the females!!



Conservation News

LISTED BUILDINGS

What is a Listed Building?

You have probably heard people talk about their house being “listed”, but what exactly do they mean? If your house is listed it simply means that it is a building of special architectural or historic interest. The “list” is in fact a register compiled by the Secretary of State for the Environment that shows the name and address of the building, its grade, and a short description. The lists can be inspected at the Planning Services reception at the District Council Offices in Epping. If you want to find out whether your house is listed, you can call the Conservation Section on 01992 564119 (or email psutton@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

A listed building need not necessarily be a building at all – it could be a bridge, a milestone, a telephone kiosk, railings, or even a tomb! There are 1,369 listed buildings in the Epping Forest District – the fourth largest number out of all the Essex Districts. These include 13 Grade I listed buildings such as Hill Hall at Theydon Mount, but the vast majority are Grade II and range from timber framed cottages to more unusual “buildings” such as village pumps, a lock-up and a pigstye!

Listed Buildings enjoy special protected status under planning law. The purpose of the listing is to ensure that the character and special interest of the building is preserved. To protect this country's heritage of buildings, demolition is rarely allowed and permission (known as Listed Building Consent), is required for any work of extension or alteration that could affect the character of the building.

How are Buildings chosen for Listing?

All buildings built before 1700 surviving in anything like their original condition are included, and most buildings between 1700 - 1840. Between 1840 and 1914 only buildings of definite quality and character are listed. Occasionally, exceptional modern buildings may be listed.

Buildings are classified in grades to show their relative importance:-

Grade I - Buildings of the most exceptional interest (2% of total).

Grade II* - Particularly important buildings of more than special interest (4% of total).

Grade II - Buildings of special interest, which warrant every effort being made to preserve them.

In choosing buildings for listing particular attention is paid to:

- special value within certain types, either for architectural or planning reasons, or as illustrating social or economic history (e.g. industrial buildings, railway stations, schools, hospitals, theatres, town halls, markets, exchanges, almshouses, prisons, lock-ups, mills);
- technological innovation or virtuosity (e.g. prefabrication, cast iron, or the early use of concrete);
- association with well-known characters or events;
- group value as in examples of town planning (e.g. squares, terraces or model villages);

What is Listed?

Contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing as a “listed interior” or a “listed façade”. The entire building is included in the listing - the inside as well as the outside. Anything in the grounds of the building that was there before 1948 (even if it was not fixed to the listed building) is also listed. This includes outbuildings, boundary and garden walls, gates and statuary. Anything fixed to a listed building is also listed, whether it is mentioned in the list description or not. (This would include later extensions.)