

Epping Forest Countrycare

is the District Councils countryside management service. We aim 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..

Epping Forest Countrycare, c/o Planning Services, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4BZ.

01992 788 203. countrycare@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

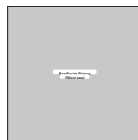
The Tree and Landscape team deal with tree

and landscape issues in connection with Planning applications; applications for works to trees within conservation areas; making and administering of Tree Preservation Orders; liaising with members of the public on tree issues and coordinating the Tree Warden Scheme within the District. Contact Chris Neilan on **01992 564117**

The Historic Buildings, Conservation Areas and Urban Design Team.

Deal with most matters relating to historic buildings and conservation areas, including grants, enhancement projects, buildings at risk, repairs, enforcement, prosecutions and advice. They also advise on the design of new development, prepare planning and development briefs and design guidance leaflets as well as overseeing the Waltham Abbey HERS (Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme). Contact Paul Sutton or Karen Rolfe on **01992 564119**

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



E.Y.E

Enhancing Your Environment



Countryside and Conservation News
Issue 06 - July - October 2005

Epping Forest District Council
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Welcome to the sixth edition of EYE! Another quarterly round up of news and events from the Building and Natural Environment Conservation Teams.








This issue covers topics such as a special roadside nature reserves article and a look at the many benefits of dead wood.

Countrycare welcomes a new apprentice trainee. Gareth Jones is back with us full time. And we give you a taste of things to come with our volunteer project dates and our "Wake up to Wildlife!" event on Sunday 31st July.

We also have the usual round up of what has been happening and some volunteer dates for the next four months, giving you the opportunity to work with Countrycare on environmental projects across your district.

Cover illustration by
Julie Chandler.

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Linder's Field Local Nature Reserve

is in fact far more than just a "field". Tucked away off Roebuck Lane, this wonderful site is a mosaic of scrub and meadow, but over half the site is woodland. In the spring, the wood comes alive to the sound of birdsong and Bluebells occupy the sunnier spots. The site has two small ponds that are breeding sites for frogs, toads and newts. In the summer, the meadow is a buzz with insects and wildflowers give it a splash of colour. The site is accessible all year round





Wake up to Wildlife!

A Local Nature Reserve Celebration



This event will celebrate wildlife in a variety of ways including an outside theatre performance, art and craft activities, storytelling, willow weaving and many other exciting activities.

Sunday 31 July 2005

1 - 4pm

Linders Field Local Nature Reserve

Roebuck Lane, Buckhurst Hill

Tickets must be booked in advance
£10 Family ticket (2 adults, 2 Children)
£3 per Adult,
£2 per Child

To Book please call Leisure Services on 01992 564226

Please note there are no toilet facilities on site and on street parking is limited. Please ensure you wear suitable clothing and protection for an outdoor event, you are welcome to bring a picnic.

"Wake up to wildlife" is being jointly organised by EF Countrycare, Epping Forest Arts and Community Leisure, all sections from Epping Forest District Council.

Countrycare Welcome A New Member of Staff



We take great pleasure in welcoming Gareth Jones to Countrycare as a Trainee Countryside Assistant. Gareth came to us from St Johns Secondary School, Epping in February 2002, since then Gareth has been a paid casual member of staff and has now joined under the EFDC apprenticeship scheme. Gareth has a thirst to learn about the countryside and the concepts that go into managing it. Gareth has also shown a particular interest in woodland habitats and identification, and is constantly improving his skills.

Royal Gunpowder Mills Waltham Abbey

Ignite your Imagination!

The Gunpowder Mills situated in Waltham Abbey, supplies us with a landscape of mysterious complexity. The explosives made here in the 1600 helped to shape the history of Britain and the world. The site includes historic buildings, explosive film, fire arms exhibition, nature trail, interactive science and a whole lot more.

Opening Times

The 2005 season started on the 30th April and will open every weekend and Bank Holiday Monday until 9th October.

Events

23rd & 24th July - National Archaeological Day

6th & 7th August - American Civil War Re-enactment

For further information or details on more events at the Royal Gunpowder Mills, please see: website:

www.royalgunpowdermills.com

Tel: 01992 707370

Countrycare's volunteer diary dates



July

Sunday	3 - Hainault Forest SSSI
Thursday	7 - Chigwell Row Wood LNR
Thursday	14 - Loughton Brook
Thursday	21 - Linder's Field LNR
Sunday	31 - Linder's Field LNR- Wake up to Wildlife

August

Thursday	4 - Nazeing footpaths
Sunday	7 - Roydon PROW
Thursday	25 - Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills

September

Thursday	1 - Chigwell Row Wood LNR / Hainault Forest SSSI
Sunday	4 - As above
Thursday	8 - New Way Lane
Thursday	15 - Berner's Roding Churchyard

October

Sunday	2 - Nazeing Triangle LNR
Thursday	6 - Roughtalley's Wood LNR
Thursday	20 - Old Shire Lane, Waltham Abbey
Sunday	30 - Fungi walk

Although not all listed here, there is a volunteer project every Thursday and the first Tuesday and Sunday of every month. If you would like details of all our projects, please give us a call on (01992) 788 203 and we will send you a copy of the finalised details in our monthly update sheet as [the above list may be subject to change](#). Unless otherwise stated there will be a pick up from Loughton Station at 9.30 am for all volunteer projects and we will aim to have you back there for 4.30 pm. Please bring a packed lunch, sturdy boots and plenty of enthusiasm. We'll ply you with tea, coffee and biscuits to help keep your energy levels up!

Dead wood specialists

Woodpeckers are highly specialised to utilise the dead wood environment. They are adapted to feed on insects and other invertebrates living either in or on dead wood, or under the bark of dead or dying trees. The strong bill is used to excavate nest holes in tree trunks, and to chisel into timber to expose prey. The long, thin, barbed tongue helps extract insects from their holes

Great spotted woodpeckers favour the soft wood of dead birch trunks more than 20cm in diameter. Around half of their nests are found in mature trees with heart rot. Lesser spotted woodpeckers prefer damp woods and can use branches that are too small for other woodpeckers. Green woodpeckers require much larger holes and are more dependent on much older trees.

All three species of woodpecker excavate their own nest holes in trees. They may use the same nest hole for several years, although other trial holes may be excavated before choosing one to nest in. This behaviour and competition for nest sites with other birds such as starlings (which will take over a woodpecker's hole, and even evict the occupants) means a large supply of potential nest sites is needed to support a breeding population of woodpeckers, especially where all three occur in the same area.



Dead wood is important as a nest site for many other breeding birds. Some are restricted to deadwood nest sites, others may use it only occasionally. Nests can be hidden in splits in broken limbs, rotting stumps, small rot holes or large areas of heart-rot depending on the type of the bird.

Willow tits, for example, rely on rotten stumps in which to excavate nest holes. Larger birds, such as owls and ducks, need larger holes in mature trees, whereas tree creepers find nest sites in splits of dead limbs, or where dead bark peels from the trunk.

winter when you may disturb hibernating wildlife.

October



As winter draws near, try to leave plenty of berries and other fruit as food for your garden wildlife

so that they can build up healthy reserves for the harder months ahead.

If you are planning ahead for your garden, try to ensure that there is plenty of food throughout the year for wildlife.

Wildlife gardening doesn't have to be untidy, maybe just a little more relaxed! So enjoy yourself and revel in the beauty of the birds and beasts that will benefit from a slightly lighter hand.

Dead wood - a wildlife treasure

- by Zoë Freeman

Many forest species are in deep trouble because of the removal of the dead and dying trees they need, campaigners say.



WWF, the global environment group, says insects, plants, birds

and mammals are all suffering because of an increasing tendency to remove decaying timber. A WWF report, "Deadwood - Living Forests", says a third of forest-dwelling species rely on dead or dying trees, logs, and branches for their survival. It says: "The removal of decaying timber and old trees from Europe's forests has led to a drastic decline in species such as insects, beetles, fungi, and lichens. It also states that: "In western Europe, forests have on average less than 5% of the dead wood expected in natural conditions."

The report says forests with old and dead trees are often much healthier and more resistant to disease, pests, and climate change than tidy young forests. Dead wood keeps forests productive by providing organic matter and nutrients for trees, preventing soil erosion, and providing long-term storage for carbon, tempering some of the impacts of climate change.

A spokesman for WWF said, "We need to debunk the myths that dead wood and veteran trees mean a sick forest. In most cases they mean a healthy forest with a long life cycle and a very high diversity of habitats for species."

Countrycare Project Details



Hainault Forest SSSI

Lowland heathland is a rare and threatened habitat internationally and is protected under Annex 1 of the habitats Directive 1994.

Today only one sixth of the heathland present in 1800 exists, covering less than 0.3% of England's land surface. So for this reason our heathlands are well worth putting effort into.

After our combined project in the winter we managed to clear a large section of secondary woodland that had encroached on to the heathland on our adjacent site, Chigwell Row Wood and we have also made a real difference on the Hainault side of the Romford Road. The idea is to impoverish the soil so that it is more favourable for heathland flora and fauna. In the coming months we will be joining forces with the Woodland Trust once again and undertaking construction projects and countryside related events. **Meet:** 10.00am, car park for Hainault Forest, off Romford Road (A112). **Grid Reference:** TQ 478 929

Loughton Brook Flood Scheme

We will be spending the day hay making on this small but important site. **Meet:** 10.00am, Shaftsbury, Loughton. **Grid Reference:** TQ 420 966.

Linder's Field LNR

We will be hoping for good weather, as we will be hay making to keep the grassland from becoming over run with scrub and to encourage wildflowers. We will also be preparing the site for our "Wake up to wildlife" event on 31st July. **Meet:** 10.00am, Roebuck Lane entrance. Please park sympathetically in roads nearby. **Grid Reference:** TQ 415 945.

Nazeing Footpaths

We will be undertaking some rights of way work to ensure that the parish is easier for walkers to use.

See update sheet for parking details.

Roydon PROW

There will be more right of way work for this project day. This time, however, we will be in the lovely parish of Nazeing.

See update sheet for parking details.

Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills

We have been asked by the Gunpowder Mills to help them to repair a path that runs beside the dry canal bed. We will be helping to resurface the path so that visitors can use it.

Meet: 10.00am, car park off Powdermill Lane, Waltham Abbey.

Grid Reference: TL 378 008.

New Way Lane

This is one of the districts Roadside Nature Reserves and it was awash with cowslips in the spring after a severe cut back by the County Council. We will be giving it a cut to try and encourage them to come up again next year!

See update sheet for parking details.

Berner's Roding Churchyard

This attractive churchyard is tucked away right at the top of the district. The day will be spent giving the site its yearly cut to keep the wildflowers blooming! Please note the later start time.

Meet: 10.15am, Essex Farms, Berner's Hall car park, Berners Roding.

Grid Reference: TL 602 101.

Nazeing Triangle LNR

Our smallest Local Nature Reserve is in need of its yearly cut so we will be cutting it and raking off the cuttings to impoverish the ground for the benefit of wildflowers.

Meet: 10am, Roadside parking on Back Lane, Upper Nazeing next to the reserve. **Grid Reference:** TL 414 065.

Roughtalley's Wood LNR

Yet another cutting project! This time we will be cutting areas of the site and its surroundings, which support wildflowers including orchids.

Meet: 10.00 am, Norway House car park, off Epping Road, North Weald. **Grid Reference:** TL 488 037

cuttings are always raked off and bailed, and often donated to Ada Cole memorial stables.

So when you are driving through the District, remember that the roadside harbours some of the rarest flowers, some of which are quite literally on the **'VERGE' of extinction.**



Wildlife Gardening Calendar

The following are a few tips to help you make a little bit of room for wildlife in your back garden!!

July



Hedgehogs are breeding now so spare a thought as you tidy your garden.

Our prickly friends favour dried vegetation in quiet places such as under hedges, under sheds or compost heaps or even in garages. Bare this in mind as you clear these areas and help your natural slug removers to breed successfully.

In drier weather it is a good idea to top up ponds, bog gardens and bird baths. If you don't have a pond, consider putting down a shallow dish of water for

hedgehogs, foxes and other wildlife to drink from but ensure they can climb in and out easily so they don't drown.

August



As plants die off the urge to tidy can be almost overpowering!

But try to do it in moderation as

wildlife thrives in a slightly less tidy garden. Try to leave a variety of perennial seed heads for birds and insects and when clearing leaves place some underneath shrubs and at the back of borders.

September



Leaving piles of dry sticks, prunings and dry leaves will provide hibernation sites

for beneficial insects such as ladybirds and lacewings. Log piles can provide great overwintering sites for frogs, toads and newts so try to build some of these features into your garden. They needn't be an eyesore, tuck them away behind shrubs and at the back of borders.

If you must tidy your garden, try to do it now and not in deep

The 'VERGE' of extinction - Compiled by Andrew Vaughan



In the last fifty years, Essex has lost 99% of all its flower rich meadows and nowhere is this more evident than in Epping Forest District. This is due to three main reasons, the first being the change of land use to arable land after the second world war, secondly the development of housing and thirdly, and by no means the least damaging, is successional encroachment from scrubby species, thus turning the grassland to woodland.

"So what?" You may say. "It's only a piece of grass" However, in ecological terms this is a disaster.

As you drive your vehicles through the Countryside you will notice the fields changing colour, the rape/ linseed seed oil in flower, the vivid fertilised green of the hay fields and almost believe this is our 'green and pleasant land'.

Although very few will notice the verges adjacent to our major roads, and the fact they are home to some of the counties rare flora

species. Including Sickle leaved Hares-Ear, Early purple orchid, Bee orchid, cowslip, primrose and many more.

There are 100,000 miles of verges in the British Isles, adding up to a staggering half a million acres of land. A large percentage of these verges are managed by the highways authority, but the Special Roadside Nature Reserves have very specific management. The conservation of these areas is a difficult task, as these sites are often cut by contractors, adjacent to dangerous roads and difficult to access. However in 1994, Epping Forest Countrycare took over the 4 main roadside nature reserves in the District. The reserves can be found in the Parishes, Matching (New way Lane), Sheering (Sheering Lodge), Beachamp Roding and Fyfield (Birds Green).

The reserves are managed by the areas being cut once annually, usually during August allowing wildflowers to set seed, and one early cut every fourth year to reduce nutrient levels. The

Fungi walk

This fascinating wander through the world of fungi will take place at Chigwell Row Wood and will be led by a fungi expert. Places must be booked in advance, call the Countrycare office on 01992 788203 for more details or to book.

Old Shire Lane, Waltham Abbey

We will be taking a trip down to Old Shire Lane for a general cut and tidy up and then later in the year to do some hedgelaying across the front of the site. Since we began managing the site in 2000 we have planted over 1500 trees, established a pond and created a new wildflower meadow. We are gradually seeing changes on this site that will hopefully in the future become an established nature area.

Meet: 10.00am, Old Shire Lane, round about off jct 26, M25.

Grid Reference: TQ 403 999

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.

Meet: 10.00am, car park off Lodge Close, off B173, Chigwell.

Grid Reference: TQ 460 931.



Tree Wardens Corner

Date for your diary

Tuesday 5th July 2005 - Tree Warden Quarterly Open meeting
- Council offices , Epping - 2pm - Committee Room 2.

Wednesday 17th August 2005 - Veteran tree survey day - Lambourne Parish.

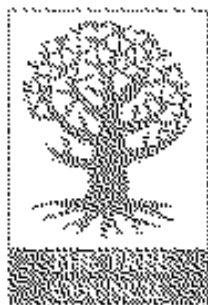
We are undertaking a survey of veteran / landmark trees and old hedgerows in the parish, the day will be spent out and about on the public footpaths. As we will be out all day - appropriate clothing and footwear will be needed as will a pack lunch / drink .

Thursday 15th September 2005 - Evening Bat Walk , Hainault Forest.

By using our bat detector we will see if we can ID the bats of the forest.

Wednesday 21st September 2005 - veteran tree survey day - Lambourne Parish - details as per 17th August.

Sunday 16th October 2005- The Deer Walk (part 2) - the rut - Copped Hall.



A second visit to Copped Hall to look for deer - see if we have better luck this time!

Saturday 22nd October 2005 - East Anglian Regional Tree Warden Forum - Hylands House, Chelmsford.

The theme for the day is 'Our Future: New Trees?' Cost for the day is £10 - places need to be booked directly with Chelmsford Borough Council. Further details from Countrycare.

Sunday 30th October 2005 - Fungi Foray - Chigwell Row Wood LNR.

If last year is anything to go by this always proves popular - a very successful and interesting event.

If you are able to join us please call Countrycare on 01992-788203 and they will be able to provide you with exact timings and details of where to meet.

What are Tree Wardens?

Tree Wardens are local people appointed by their community group, residents association or parish council to gather information and to encourage practical projects relating to trees in the community. You do not need to be an expert as you will be provided with an "action pack" and training to give you the basic knowledge you will need. What is important is that you should genuinely care for trees and the environment.

The Tree Warden programme is run by Epping Forest District Council on behalf of the Tree Council. The Tree Council's role is to improve the environment by encouraging tree planting and to gather knowledge and understanding about trees and their management.

Tree Wardens are needed because, over many years, trees, woods and hedgerows have been disappearing from our landscape at an alarming rate due to many causes such as disease, urban sprawl and changes in land management.

If you are not currently a Tree Warden but would be interested in joining then please call Andy or Zoë on (01992) 788 203 for more details.

