

Epping Forest Countrycare

How to contact us

Countrycare is the District Council's countryside management service, which aims to maintain and enhance the natural environment for the benefit of both people and wildlife. This is achieved 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, tree wardens, wildlife organisations and national agencies, amongst others, encouraging participation in practical environmental projects.

Operating across the whole of the Epping Forest District, Countrycare undertakes a wide range of community-based activities and coordinates a regular programme of practical conservation tasks. This includes the management of the districts nine Local Nature Reserves.

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Website: www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/countrycare

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



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The Historic Buildings, Conservation Areas and Urban Design Team deal with most matters relating to historic buildings and conservation areas, including grants, enhancement projects, building risk, repairs, enforcement, prosecutions and advice. They also advise on the design of new development, prepare planning and development briefs and design guidance leaflets.

Email: contactconservation@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Forward Planning Team

The Forward Planning team within Forward Planning and Environment is responsible for the production of Epping Forest District Council's comprehensive District Wide Local Plan and for the production of much of the Supplementary Planning Guidance that has been adopted in the district. Email: contactFP@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

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www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/planning



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 **Epping Forest
District Council**



Enhancing your Environment
Countryside and conservation news
from Epping Forest District Council



Guess where this is? See inside.

Issue 12
April - July 2008



Epping Forest District Council

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Welcome to the twelfth edition of **E**nhancing **Y**our **E**nvironment. Hopefully you will enjoy a round up of news from the Environment and Policy Team of the Planning and Economic Development Directorate at Epping Forest District Council.

In this spring edition you will find a range of articles on the district's built and natural heritage. We have a story about how the 800 year old remains of Waltham Abbey are emerging once more.



There is a final update on our Favourite Trees Project and the district wide veteran tree hunt.

If you have ever wondered how to go about surveying a woodland for its archaeology and history there are a few pointers in our article about the Woodland Heritage Champions Project. And we have an article about how you can help conserve our bumblebees.

There is also our usual round up of some of Epping Forest Countrycare's activities for the next four months including walks, talks and volunteer dates. However, this is just a small selection of the volunteer projects and events so please contact the office or refer

to the Countrycare website for more information.
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/countrycare

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The front cover is a view of The Stone or Umbrella Pine (*Pinus pinea*) at Kew Gardens. See Tree Wardens News to find out why we were there.

The Royal Forest of Essex

By Robert Brooks

Following Norman traditions, William I introduced Forest Laws. These laws were devised to protect deer and wild boar (collectively termed venison), and permit royal hunting. Not only was the hunting of deer by the populace prohibited, but crops could not be fenced by their owners in order to control the venison. The laws applied only to certain areas of England, but these areas were extensive, eventually amounting to more than one fifth of the area of the country, spread between about 70 Forests. The term Royal Forest does not imply trees directly but does determine the legal boundary of the region.

The Forest of Essex was one of the largest in England, and its officials were based in three centres: Chipping Ongar, Waltham and Colchester.

Although direct evidence is lacking, the county of Essex became a Royal Forest around c.1100. Since deer were protected, so was their cover, and woodland management was restricted. The Royal Forest offered the opportunity for the king to hunt deer, generate revenue from fines, and stay at hunting palaces and lodges in relative security.

A Chief Justice of the Forests administered all Royal Forests, and a Warden was placed in charge of each. Foresters protected the deer and verderers were appointed to maintain the vert, the woodland. Woodwards managed the timber resources within the Forest and regarders were assigned to check encroachments of the Forest boundary.

Deer parks were constructed for raising and managing deer. Recorded evidence of 160 medieval parks in Essex has been discovered.

This Article is from the 'Ongar Tree Strategy' which was published in February 2008.

If you would like a copy please call Melinda Barham on 01992 564120, or you can print a copy from the website : www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council_services/planning/trees/tree_strategies.asp

The strategy is also having a special veteran tree walk around Ongar to launch the strategy. Its free and starts at Sainsbury's car park on the 19th April 2008 at 12:00pm (For all ages)



Ongar Great Park

Ongar Great Park was the first recorded English deer park, a "deer-haye", being mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon will dated 1045. This is the only pre-Conquest reference to such a park confirming the existence of deer management. The park lies to the east of Greensted Green. It is notable because of its size, possibly between five and six miles in circumference, and its considerable initial expense. A deer park would have been surrounded by a high bank and pale. Although most of the bank has been ploughed, remnants of it can be seen separating Ongar Park Wood from High Wood, near to Colliers Hatch.



The first Buzzzzz of Spring

by Paul Hewitt

I always remember reading "Silent Spring" by Rachel Carlson and it deeply moving me. The book by then had been in print over 25 years, but things still seemed relevant. Rachel Carlson was mainly referring to the impact pesticides were having on birds and hence the reduction in the dawn chorus. However, to me the first "buzz" of a flying bumblebee in spring has always signalled the end to those cold dark winter days, but have you noticed there are fewer of them about?

The last 60 years has seen a dramatic decline in bumblebee numbers and three species have become extinct altogether. When you consider that the bumblebee is our primary pollinator for crops and wildflowers this has got to be worrying.

We have 27 different species of bumblebee in the UK and six or seven can be found in any reasonable sized garden. (80 years ago this number would have been nearer 15).



To understand the reason for this decline it helps to know a little about their biology. Bumblebees are social insects and live in a colony with a single queen and up to 400 workers (daughters). They are not aerodynamic flyers and find flying hugely energy demanding. Scientists have calculated that a running man uses roughly the energy of a Mars bar ever 30 minutes. If a bumblebee were scaled up to the size of a man it would consume the energy equivalent of a Mars bar every 30 seconds in flight! A nest of 400 bees therefore needs an awful lot of energy and therefore a lot of flowers and here lies the problem. There simply are not the flowers across the UK countryside that there once were.

Perennial herbaceous plants such as clovers, trefoils and dead nettles have all declined and these are the primary plants on which bumblebees depend. Agricultural intensification and urban sprawl over the last 50 years have been largely to blame and when you consider 98% of our herb rich grasslands have gone it is not hard to see why other species will have been affected.

Other factors such as secure nest sites have also had an impact. Many species nest underground in rodent burrows, which are abundant in the base of thick hedgerows. With a 50% loss of hedges in each parish in England there is trouble again for the bees. If they choose to nest above ground in a grass tussock then habitat loss once more comes into play and changing farming practices such as silage production are a problem as they destroy the nest site.

So things look pretty bad for the bumblebee, but is it all doom and gloom? Well no. Hopefully, now EU farming policy has moved from subsidising production things may improve. Farmers are now receiving payments for putting back hedgerows and wildflower meadows. This can only help and we can do our bit too. Gardens can play a massive role, covering as they do more than a million hectares. This far exceeds all our nature reserves put together.

So here are three simple things you can do to help:

- 1) Minimise the use of pesticides
- 2) Supply the bees with nectar sources. Go for old-fashioned cottage garden species such as lavenders, lupins and sage or better still have a wildflower area - foxgloves and bluebells are good.
- 3) Put up a bee box to provide a nest site.

So try and do your bit and keep the buzz in the countryside and our gardens.

Based on an article in Biologist Volume 53 No6 by David Goulson of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Epping Forest Countrycare Events and Diary Dates

April 2008

Saturday 19 Ongar tree strategy launch
Thursday 24 Linder's Field LNR, Buckhurst Hill

May 2008

Thursday 1 Chigwell Row Wood LNR, Chigwell
Thursday 8 Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve, Ongar
Sunday 11 Veteran Tree Hunt Day - Nazeing Parish
Thursday 15 Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve, Chipping Ongar
Friday 16 Favourites Trees on BBC2 "Trees that Made Britain"
Thursday 22 Home Mead LNR, Loughton

June 2008

Thursday 5 "The Big Day Out" - Countrycare Volunteer Tour
Thursday 19 Hainault Forest, Chigwell
Sunday 22 Hainault Forest, Chigwell
Sunday 22 Veteran Tree Hunt Day - Upshire, Waltham Abbey.
Thursday 26 Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve, Ongar

July 2008

Thursday 3 Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve, Ongar
Saturday 5 "Summer of Hugs" - Veteran Tree Celebration Day, High Beach.
Thursday 10 Epping Green Millennium Garden
Thursday 24 Home Mead LNR, Loughton

Above is just a small selection of the volunteer projects and events Countrycare will be running over the next four months. Please note this programme may be subject to change. Please contact us to get the monthly update sheet to confirm details or visit the Countrycare website www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/countrycare

Unless otherwise stated there will be a pick up from Loughton Tube 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 will ply you with tea, coffee and biscuits to help keep your energy levels up!

Volunteer Task Information

Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve, Chipping Ongar. This partnership project with Ongar Town Council will dominate our time over the next few months with a whole variety of tasks and projects planned to turn this area into a great place for both people and wildlife. Thanks to all the efforts of the Countrycare volunteers so far the site is now starting to take shape. Most of the bramble that was to be cleared has been and we will now be trying to tackle the meadow creation by seeding and grass cutting. The existing meadow (where the donkeys were) is looking very interesting and already lady's smock is starting to appear. Surveying and active management of this area will be a priority through the spring and summer. Other jobs to be tackled will include the construction of a ramp off the High Street and an upgrade of the pathway that runs through the site. Gates, fencing and sign boards will also need to be installed so there will be plenty of different things for everyone to tackle. **Meet:** 10.00am, The Lorry Park, just off the bottom of the High Street on The Borough. **Grid Reference:** TL 551 026.



View across the Cripsey Brook February 2008 after the major clearance in the winter

Linder's Field LNR. This winter we have cleared the bramble around the bluebell area, removing log piles to create larger open areas allowing more light to the woodland floor, thus encouraging the

bluebell population. Also carried out blackthorn coppicing and oak thinning, around main field area.

This April's project will involve installing a few "Linder's Field LNR" waymarker posts, to indicate where land ownership changes between EFDC and City of London land. Also we will be repairing the notice board, installing a bench donated by Buckhurst Hill Parish Council (to commemorate the Linder Family) and finishing off the fencing along the main entrance. **Meet:** 10.00am, Roebuck Lane entrance. Park sympathetically in roads nearby. **Grid Reference:** TQ 415 945.



Owl on the entrance gates to Linder's Field.

Chigwell Row Wood LNR is a remnant of Hainault Forest which contains a variety of habitats. It is especially important for its 400+ veteran trees (see the next edition of EYE about our exciting tree survey in the wood) , particularly Hornbeam pollards. To date over 800 species of insect have been recorded including many uncommon dead wood species. Countrycare manages the LNR on behalf of EFDC who are trustees of a charitable trust that holds the land for the people of Chigwell.

There are a range of habitats across the LNR from semi-natural ancient woodland, through to areas of secondary woodland, heath and acid grassland. Until recently all that remained of a once much larger area of heath was a small patch on the eastern boundary of the wood. This was threatened by encroaching trees, but major works have seen shading trees felled and scraping of top soil to reduce nutrient levels. The

the precinct walls of the Augustinian monastery, and had previously been part of the Saxon burial ground. The monastery was founded as a Priory in 1177 and was upgraded to Abbey status in 1184. The north-west corner of the area is currently being landscaped, by EFDC, so as to display three of the buttresses of the south-east transept of the monastic church which was probably built in the early 13th century. One of the buttresses (shown above) remains to a height of about 12 feet (3.8m) and is the only remaining part of the church existing above ground. It is a clasping buttress which supported both the west and south sides of the transept corner. It must have looked very striking, with the use of different coloured stones. The buttress was faced in a greenish-grey Reigate stone,



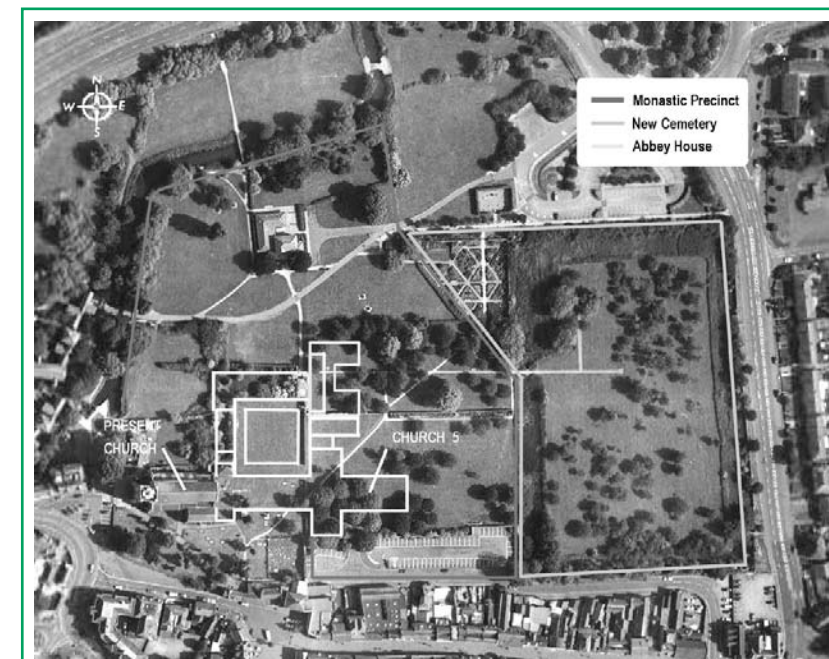
below this was a yellowish course of moulded Caen stone from Normandy; then both in Reigate stone, were a plain or ashlar course, and a projecting drip stone; below was another plain course in a honey-coloured Barnack stone from Northamptonshire.

An interpretative panel will be fixed to the post-medieval wall (adjoining the buttresses), which separated the formal garden of the later Abbey House from the



Jordan and Andy from Countrycare dig out 30 years of rubbish to once again reveal the only remaining part of the church existing above ground.

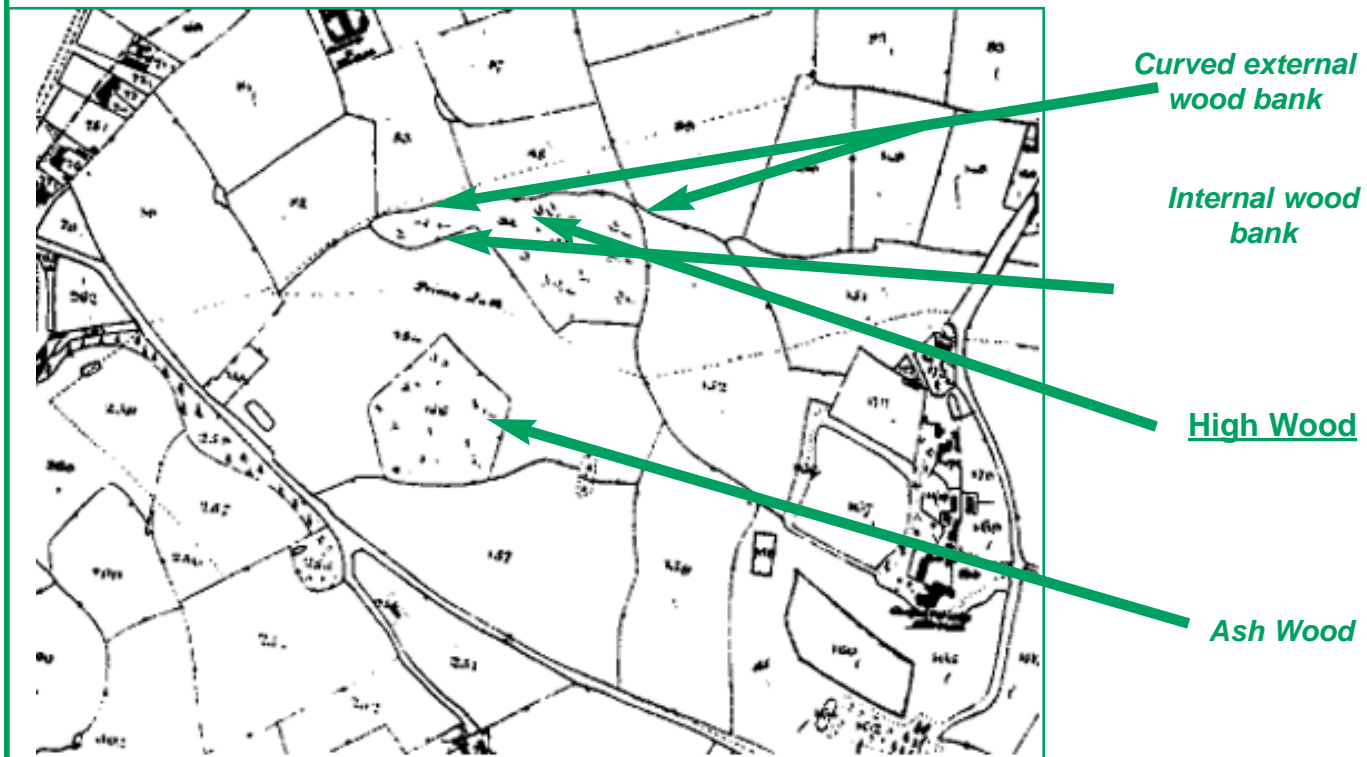
kitchen garden. The panel will explain the archaeological importance of the adjoining features and illustrate their context in terms of the original structure. Another interpretative panel will be installed near the south-east corner of the monastic precinct (at the other end of the car park).



worked for most of the 19th century by Robert Harvey and Charles Foster. It is possible that this may have been one of their extraction pits although more research is required to verify this.

From having studied the maps it is quite clear the northern wood bank boundary

forms part of a much larger feature in the form of a circular boundary. Other field boundaries within the area are predominantly straight lines. At present our thoughts are that this could be a small deer park, however, further research would be required before any conclusions are made.



Map 2 - Tithe map 1838

Waltham Abbey revealed (again).

By Paul Sutton, Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development

Sun Street is the principal shopping street in Waltham Abbey town centre. It was pedestrianised in the early 1980's as part of a wider environmental improvement scheme, which also included the construction of several new roads. The area behind the shops on the north side of Sun Street was compulsory purchased by the District Council in order to create a new public car park for shoppers and businesses.

While some areas of the Darby Drive car park that were not needed for parking were landscaped, these areas (mostly at the west end of the car park), fell into neglect recently and became the focus of anti-social activities. These areas were recently cleared and have now been paved, providing a much needed visual enhancement of this part of the car park.

The next phase of the enhancement will see the installation of two seats and litter bins, which will enable this well-aspected part of the car park to be used and enjoyed by visitors and residents.

This corner of the Darby Drive car park is of special archaeological and historic interest (see Peter Huggins' article below), as it contains the remains of some of the original buttresses to the monastic church, which date from the early thirteenth century.

Rescue Excavations 1974

by Peter Huggins, Waltham Abbey Historical Society

Rescue excavations in 1974-77, by Waltham Abbey Historical Society, before and during the construction of the car park on the north side of Sun Street, showed that the whole area was inside

results have been dramatic and resulted in an increase in heathland plants such as Gorse, Heather, Tormentil and Lousewort (pictured below).



We will be continuing the cutting regime to help protect these delicate plants and your help will be needed with cutting back seedlings, brambles and raking up the grass. **Meet:** 10.00am Lay-by Car Park off Romford Road (north bound) opposite All Saints Church, Chigwell Row. **Grid Reference:** TQ 464 932.

Home Mead LNR in Loughton has received a great deal of attention from both Countrycare volunteers and Capel Manor students this winter. A large area of scrub has been removed, which is working towards the long term plan of creating a mosaic of scrub of a varied age structure. Scrub is a much underrated habitat for nesting birds and insects and the clearance of the higher canopy in favour of dense lower growing trees will really help. In order to keep the areas cleared we will need to cut them and this will be the job this summer along the pathways and the more established grassland areas. We also hope to maybe upgrade the path if funding is available. **Meet:** 10.00am, at the entrance to the site at the junction of Clays Lane and England's Lane, Loughton. Please park sympathetically in roads nearby (please do not use the golf course car park). **Grid Reference:** TQ 438 978.



Home Mead LNR in June.

Epping Upland Millennium Garden

We were very lucky to have Peter Vaughan a local hedge layer and wildlife enthusiast, along to the winter volunteer day to teach the traditional methods of South East of England hedge laying technique. We managed to lay over 20 metres of hedge that had been planted some seven years before. The hedge looked fantastic when finished, and the plan is to carry on with this next winter.

Over the summer we will be cutting the wildflower areas and removing any new blackthorn encroachment. We cut and remove the hay to reduce fertility and biomass, leading to a constant open area of grassland for flora and invertebrate species such as the 6 spotted burnet moth (show below). **Meet** 10.00am, car park next to the Traveller's Friend Pub, Epping Road, Epping Green. **Grid reference:** TL 434 055



Grand Day Out. A day off from the regular work as we take you on a tour of the district to observe the fruits of your labours. Many of the sites are looking their best in June so it's an ideal time to visit. We will provide the transport and act as chauffeur for the day and of course there will be a stop at one of the district's watering holes. All welcome, but please book a place so we can arrange transport.

Hainault Forest, Lambourne. Just over the other side of Romford Road from Chigwell Row Wood LNR lies Hainault Forest. In the summer of 2004, Countrycare made contact with Geoff Sinclair, the Woodlands Officer for Woodland Trust (who manage the Essex County Council owned section of the Forest). In partnership with the WT both organisations are now working together to promote the wider Hainault Forest which includes Chigwell Row Wood LNR.

Since that time our main focus has been the restoration of the heathland on the Forest side of Romford Road. We will again be working on the heath undertaking careful cutting and scrub clearance. **Meet:** 10.00am Lay-by car park off Romford Road (north bound) opposite All Saints Church, Chigwell Row. **Grid Reference:** TQ 464 932.



Tree Wardens Corner

What are Tree Wardens?

Tree Wardens are local people who in this district are appointed by their local parish or town council. They work with Countrycare to gather information and to encourage practical projects relating to trees in their community. You do not need to be an expert 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.

In our district the tree warden scheme is coordinated by Paul Hewitt and Melinda Barham on behalf of the Tree Council. We are always looking for new tree wardens to join us and are especially keen to recruit new wardens to help with the veteran tree hunt. So if you are interest please contact us.

Epping Forest Tree Warden Trip to Kew Gardens 8th April 2008

by Sylvia Turtle (Epping Tree Warden)

We were met and escorted on our walk by Tony Kirkham, Head of the Arboretum at Kew, (see below) who was familiar to us from the TV Series. It seems at Kew they are always learning from the way trees grow and react and trying out new ways of looking after them.



They noticed with surprise after the 1987 hurricane that a tree (a Turners Oak), whose root plate had been shaken up by the storm, instead of dying back, benefited from the loosened soil, growing with renewed vigour. They also learned that at Kew tree roots were far more shallow than had been believed. Where the soil overlays the London gravel roots do not go any deeper than 18 inches.

In their natural habitat trees tend not to grow as individuals, but in a forest or woodland setting. Often little grows under the trees. So grass is a bad thing for trees because of competition from the roots. Regular mowing increases soil compaction



Photo 2 - coppiced hornbeams within the enclosure

To the south east small streams drain towards the eastern end of High Wood. Here a small pond containing pendulous sedge, nettles, hairy willow herb and celery-leaved crowfoot has formed. Several other wet flushes occur on the downward slope of this wood and there is evidence of soil creep which causes irregularities on the surface.



Photo 4 - Elongated pit

Post visit research

A follow up visit to the Essex Records Office enabled us to obtain a copy of the tithe award map from 1838 which gives us a snapshot of the land use at that time.

In 1838 the land was owned and used as a wood by the Houblon family who also owned the nearby Coopersale House in Houblon Hill. The majority of the land surrounding the wood was grassland and the pentagonal shaped woodland is recorded as an ash woodland.

Running though the central part of the woodland is a well used track way (Photo 3).



Photo 3 - Trackway

To the north west corner of the site (at the highest point) there is an oblong shaped depression (approx 5m wide, 20m long and 3-4m deep). There is water at the bottom and several mature trees growing close to or within the water. (Photo 4)

Although the track way is not marked on the tithe map it is clearly marked on the 1881 map. We have concluded that this is likely to be a track used by those coppicing the wood and then needing a hardened track to remove the wood from the site.

The oblong shaped depression within the wood could be a clay extraction pit for brick making. 'Epping: Economic history and local government; A History of the County of Essex, Volume 5 (1966) comments that by 1848 four brickmakers were established within Epping, and that a brickfield at Epping Plain (to the north of the wood) was



Map 1 - dated 1881 showing location of High Wood

- The old maps from 1881 clearly show the woodland and a track through it. On other maps of a similar date an elongated feature in the north west part of the wood is clearly visible.
- Chapman and Andre map of 1777 is inconclusive and does not show the woodland, although a curved boundary bank is visible,
- The local geology is glacial deposits of Boulder Clay and Head but as the land slopes to the south east the underlying Claygate Beds are exposed.

The main trees within High Wood are hornbeams which appear to have been coppiced many times over the centuries (photo 2). There is also some sycamore coppice, but many of the trunks show signs of Sooty Bark disease.

The wood contains several ancient woodland indicator plant species including wood anemone, bluebell, goldilocks and wood melick. Other plants include lesser celandine, dog's mercury, ground ivy, red campion, pignut, violet, wild arum, figwort, bramble, red currant and pendulous sedge. Ferns are also present. Dogwood, elder, hazel, hawthorn and spindle also occur along the internal boundary bank.



Photo 1 - wood bank marking edge of wood

as does the trampling of many feet on the grass.

Learning from this, Kew are now looking to reduce the compaction of the soil under their trees. This they are doing by spreading tree mulch. First, they remove as much grass as possible and then apply a four inch layer of mulch which suppresses the grass. This also creates a springy surface which drastically reduces compaction from thousands of people walking on it. A five metre radius from the base of the tree is generally sufficient for a mature tree. Any weed growth is suppressed by 'Round-up'. As a result of this treatment the trees have shown a visible increase in their crown density.

Where compaction has been very bad, aeration has also taken place by means of compressed air injection. This aeration system is used to introduce the symbiotic relationship of fungi and tree roots, where injected fungal spores form 'root-fungus' extensions on feeder roots. Most plants require mycorrhizae for normal growth and development in natural soils. Compressed nitrogen is also injected to encourage the growth of these mycorrhizae, which increase nutrient and water uptake efficiency, resulting in vigorous foliage

We were then shown some tree planting which was about 3 years old. The trees were planted as small whips with the use of a minimum pit, with no special soil improvement or staking. Square holes were found to be better than round ones for planting as it encourages roots to spread out. A low enclosure, about two feet high is enough to keep out the squirrels as it seems they will not get inside. They do not of course have to contend with deer or in the main part of the gardens with rabbits. We were really lucky with the weather & thanks to our friendly Kew host a most engrossing morning.

Favourite Trees Update

The 50 favourite trees project reached completion, climaxing with a well received exhibition at the Waltham Abbey Museum.

We are pleased to be able to finally report that "our" appearance in Series Two of the



John and Tony film at the Black Poplar at Waltham Point

"Trees That Made Britain" will be aired on **Friday 16th May at 7.30pm**. If you recall BBC Wales with presenters Tony Kirkham and Jon Hammerton from Kew Gardens joined the judging panel and filmed the whole thing at the Waltham Abbey Museum. Jon and Tony also filmed at Thomas Willingale School in Debden and the Black Poplar in Waltham Abbey.

We have no real idea how long our bit will be, but I'm sure the whole series, which starts May 9th will be well worth watching.

Veteran Tree Hunt

Following the completion of the 50 trees project we have moved seamlessly onto the district's veteran hunt.

The database set up for the 50 favourite trees project is proving ideal for storing all the tree data and accompanying photographs. Back in November last year, we had a major boost for the veteran tree hunt with a grant of £41.5k from the GreenArc. This enabled us to undertake a whole range of extra projects including full time surveying, schools outreach work and even a book!!

On the recording front it enabled Countrycare to take on a full time surveyor for three months. We were lucky to find former Countrycare Volunteer Abigail Oldham who had just completed her MSc at Writtle College. Abigail has coordinated the systematic surveying of six parishes in the district - Theydon Bois, Roydon, Stapleford Abbots, Epping Upland, North Weald and Lambourne. With the help of Tree Wardens and other part time surveyors Trica Moxey

and John Price we have now photographed and recorded over 1013 veteran and 245 notable trees in these parishes. For the district as a whole the number is approaching 2000 trees, recorded and photographed. All can be found on our pictorial database www.favouritetrees.com.

It is proving to be a fascinating and hugely exciting exercise. What is emerging slowly is a picture of an ancient landscape, which we sort of knew we had, over which is scattered this fantastic tree heritage, which is proving to be more than I had expected. For example, the surveys have revealed over 300 veteran trees in Lambourne Parish alone (excluding Hainault Forest) and most of these are worked pollarded trees. On a single farm on the Nazeing/Waltham Abbey border "Harold's Park Farm" we have recorded a staggering 80 oak pollards so far and the survey is still to be completed.

In March, we also found a new champion oak tree (for now anyway). It stands within Epping Forest's deer sanctuary at Theydon Bois and although access is restricted you can see it from a far outside of the fence. With an impressive girth of 6.60m (21.6 ft) and a height of 20m it is a giant tree. We are estimating its age to be in excess of 450 years, but it may be much older.



Giant oak in the deer sanctuary

We will be continuing our regular tree hunt days through the summer and we also hope to be joining in with a national event celebrating our old trees called the "Summer of Hugs". See below for details and please call the office if you fancy

coming along. Finally, if you know of any old trees give me a call or go to the favourite trees website.

Diary Dates - Veteran Tree Events

Sunday 11th May,
Veteran Tree Hunt - Nazeing Parish.

Sunday 22nd June,
2.00pm - 4.30pm Veteran Tree Hunt -
Upshire, Waltham Abbey Parish.

Saturday 5th July
"Summer of Hugs" Event, High Beach,
Epping Forest.

Happy hunting.

Paul Hewitt Countryside Manager



This outstanding and large hornbeam stands beside a stream to the west of Birch Wood in Theydon Bois. It is probably a historic Parish Boundary Marker. A hundred years ago it stood in the open alongside the ditch but today it has been encroached by other trees and forced to grow towards the light.

Ongar Tree Strategy

Back in February 2008, a photographic exhibition of trees in Ongar was held in the main hall of Great Stony Theatre Resource to mark the publication of the Ongar Tree Strategy. The display featured local examples of the favourite trees nominated in Ongar and other landmark trees in the parish as well as quiz based around trees.



A wonderful colourful document produced by members of the local community in association with officers from EFDC and Ongar Town Council is now available.

It is available online at http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Library/files/planning/OngarTreeStrategy_ss.pdf or a

hardcopy is available on request by calling the Tree and Landscape Team on (01992) 564 358.

The strategy contains a great deal of background information on the history and meaning of the treescape of the parish. (See extract titled The Royal Forest of Essex By Robert Brooks. Perhaps, most importantly, it makes positive suggestions for the future of Ongar's landscape and its trees.

The Ongar Tree Strategy is the fourth to be completed in the district with plans for Stapleford Abbots, Theydon Bois and Roydon already produced.

To launch the strategy there is going to be a veteran tree walk around Ongar looking at some of the veteran, as well as ancient trees in the parish. If you wish to attend please contact the Countryside team (contact details are on the back page).

The walk will start from the Ongar Lorry Park at The Borough 11.00am start, 19th April (all ages are welcome). This will be followed by a veteran tree hunt at 2.00pm.

The Woodland Heritage Champions Project

The Woodland Heritage Champions Project is an England wide initiative that promotes ancient semi-natural woodlands and encourages local communities, woodland groups and volunteers to care for their natural heritage. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Forestry Commission, the Woodland Trust and SYBRG (South Yorkshire Biodiversity Research Group).

Last year we were asked if we would like to become involved in the project, the result of which is that one of our case studies is to be included within a manual which is to be produced. The case study follows.

Site visit:

The perimeter of the woodland is marked by a substantial ditch and wood bank (Width 3.6m, Depth 1m) (photo 1).

On top of the wood bank are growing some large ash (girth 2.95m), hornbeams and oaks, mainly old coppiced trees. There are occasional field maples.

High Wood, off Stonards Hill, Epping

Prior to our first visit we were able to establish the following information from looking at aerial photographs and old maps (available through the internet).

- The site covers approx 5½ acres and is protected by a Tree Preservation Order placed on the woodland by Essex County Council in 1950.