

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



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*Epping Forest District Council*

[www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)



Welcome to the thirteenth edition of Enhancing Your Environment. Hopefully you will enjoy a round up of news from the Policy and Conservation Team of the Directorate of Planning and Economic Development at Epping Forest District Council.

In this late summer, early autumn edition you will find a range of articles on the district's built and natural heritage.

There are articles on a few new Countrycare project sites that we will be working on in the coming months. Also you will find articles on what our district tree wardens have been up to as well as some wonderful tree poems written by pupils from Thomas Willingale School. There is an update on the district wide veteran tree hunt and news about two of the district's Local Nature Reserves.

**Front Cover: Oak pollard, High Beach, Epping Forest. © Epcot Images**

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**Ancient beech, Epping Forest**

## A Beautiful Tree

Trees are beautiful,  
They let humans and animals live,  
If a tree wasn't living where would woodpeckers live,  
A tree is a brilliant habitat for lots of animals,  
It can be gloomy,  
And it can be bright,  
But every time it gives us life,

Trees are beautiful,  
It should be respected and loved by everyone,  
It gives squirrels food,  
And woodpeckers wood,  
This is a strong tree,  
Nothing will beat it,  
It will fight forever,  
Until it falls,  
By nature,

But when it falls by nature,  
It's seeds will make it grow,  
And life will come back,  
Once again.

**By Richard Wise**

Photo: Ancient Tree in High Beach



## The Oblivious Old Oak Tree

I stood in the cold,  
The wind crashing against me,  
My old hollow bark falling off into the sky,  
My roots are the only thing holding me up,  
The animals in my leaves are flying or jumping out,  
The wind is now my greatest enemy,  
The sun rose and the wind stopped,  
The sun is now my greatest ally,  
I am just an old oak tree.

By Chris Knight

Photo: Ancient Tree in High Beach

## Epping Forest Countrycare Events and Diary Dates

### August 2008

Wednesday	6	Veteran Tree Hunt - Harold's Park Farm, Nazeing (evening)
Thursday	7	Volunteer day - All Saint's, Berners Roding
Thursday	14	Volunteer day - Foster Street Burial Ground, North Weald
Thursday	21	Volunteer day - Roding Valley Meadows LNR, Loughton.
Sunday	17	Volunteer day - Blind Lane, Roydon
Thursday	28	Volunteer day - Chigwell Row Wood LNR, Chigwell

### September 2008

Sunday	7	Event - Epping Forest Festival, Chingford Plain (Countrycare Display)
Sunday	14	Veteran Tree Hunt Day - Bobbingworth Parish (morning)
Thursday	18	Volunteer day - Roughtalley's Wood LNR, North Weald.
Thursday	25	Volunteer day - Chigwell Row Wood LNR, Chigwell
Saturday	27	Event - Buckhurst Hill Green Festival.

### October 2008

Thursday	2	Volunteer day - Nazeing Triangle LNR, Nazeing
Wednesday	8	Walk - Hainault Forest led by Countrycare volunteer Peter Spence.
Thursday	16	Volunteer day - Featherbed Lane, Lambourne
Sunday	19	Volunteer day - Willingale Allotments, Loughton
Wednesday	22	Walk - Hainault Forest led by Countrycare volunteer Peter Spence.
Thursday	23	Volunteer day - Hainault Forest, Chigwell
Sunday	26	Event - Photographing trees - family day, Lambourne End Centre
Thursday	30	Volunteer day - Featherbed Lane, Lambourne

### November 2008

Sunday	2	Volunteer day - Swaines Green, Epping
Thursday	13	Volunteer day - Roydon Churchyard
Sunday	16	Volunteer day - Hainault Forest, Lambourne
Sunday	23	Volunteer day - World's End, Roydon
Thursday	27	Volunteer day - Bobbingworth Pocket Park, Bobbingworth

### Other dates for your diaries

**Hainault Forest Festival 2008** Friday 19 September to 2 November 2008

**National Tree Week 2008** Wednesday 26 November to 7 December 2008

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](http://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

**Chigwell Row Wood LNR** continues to demand much of our time and effort, being the most significant woodland site under Countrycare's management. The recent veteran pollard survey (see Chigwell Row Wood pollard article) has revealed 366 trees, a very high density acting as a reminder of Chigwell Row Wood once being part of the much larger Hainault Forest where a similar density of pollards is found.

On our August volunteer day we will be working on the area of heathland found on the eastern side of the wood. The heather, gorse, tormentil, lousewort and grasses found in this area provide a fantastic nectar source for the adult dead wood invertebrates. With the help of volunteers we will be cutting the area and raking off the arisings. This management mimics the effect of grazing, once very common in the wood, and prevents succession from taking place and maintains the area as open heathland. Hopefully, more plants like petty whin (pictured below) may appear.



The Autumn volunteer days will see us working in the wood itself with a variety of tasks to be carried out including felling of scrub, pollard creation, bramble clearance, cutting of glades and rides and litter picking. The pollard survey has revealed which veteran pollards are suffering from competition from younger trees and as a result a lack of sunlight. It is around these trees that we will concentrate our efforts in removing scrub.

**Meet:** 10.00am Lay-by Car Park off Romford Road (north bound) opposite All Saints Church, Chigwell Row. **Grid Reference:** TQ 464 932.

**All Saint's Church, Berners Roding** is situated to the small hamlet of Berners Roding at the very north eastern edge of the district. A magical place, the small church and its wildflower churchyard hides behind Berners Hall. The church itself was deconsecrated in the mid 1980s and is in private ownership. Unfortunately, after 700 years the building itself has seen better days and is in considerable need of some TLC. It is on the district's buildings at risk register, but the trouble is repairs to listed and old buildings need specialists and their time does not come cheap neither do the materials.



**Berners Roding - present day**

Countrycare has managed the little churchyard since 1995. During this time there have been two owners and now in June 2008 a third. We are currently talking to the new owners about the future management of the church.

So come and spend the day in this wonderful spot and help us with the annual hay cut of the churchyard and its adjacent grassland (0.32 h).

**Meet:** 10.15 am Berners Hall Farm, Berners Roding. **Grid Reference:** TL 603 099



**All Saints Church date unknown (pre 1950)**

## Trees are important

Trees give us oxygen,  
We don't realize often,  
We breathe in oxygen which they breathe out,  
We breathe out carbon dioxide which they breathe in with no doubt.  
From the shortest to the tallest,  
Biggest to the smallest,  
We don't care because they all share.  
Trees gave paper, furniture and wood,  
They are important and also good.  
So next time you see a tree,  
Hug it that includes you and me,  
Trees save your lives,  
So don't show them those tree-cutting knives!

**By Songyan Yu**

Photo: 3 Oaks in Theydon Bois

## The Tree of Life

Decaying, dead, mouldy log,  
Fallen on forest floor,  
Home for woodlouse, beetles, spiders,  
Insects of many more.  
The Oak in which it came from,  
Is fighting more each day,  
Despite everything it has been through,  
The tree's still standing today.  
In summer a beauty,  
In winter a shelter,  
In spring colourful,  
In autumn leaves falling down,  
A habitat all year round!

By Amber Reed-Johnson

Photo: Bobbingworth Oak

**Foster Street Burial Ground** is a small site covering (0.28ha) situated east of the M11 in the small hamlet of Foster Street. A secluded site, it is easy to miss it, hidden as it is behind a roadside hedge. Though the site cannot boast any significant trees there is an interesting yew avenue which forms an important feature. The grassland though is the sites most important natural asset with a healthy population of spring flowers including primrose and cowslip.

For the historians the site is interesting too. It was established in 1677 by William Woodward and called Potter's Croft. Non-conformists were not allowed to be buried in Anglican Churchyards and so the site acted as a joint burial ground for two churches at Four Street, Old Harlow and the other originally at Little Parndon, which later moved to Potter Street. Woodward is believed to have set up both the churches. The most famous resident of the burial ground is Sarah Flower Adams who died in 1848 aged 43. Sarah was a hymn writer who wrote the piece of music which played as the famous liner the Titanic sank in 1912!!



Countrycare became involved with the site in 2002 and has undertaken an annual cut of the grassland since then to try and keep the graves visible and help the wildflowers. **Meet:** 10.00am, car park of the Horn and Horseshoes pub, off Foster Street - Please park tidily at far end. **Grid Reference:** TL 487 088.

**Roding Valley Meadows LNR.** See article about cattle grazing. We will be helping out with the gates and fencing. **Meet:** Main Reserve Car Park, Roding Lane. **Grid Reference:** TQ 4299 9425

**Blind Lane in Roydon** is an ancient green lane that runs for a kilometre between World's End and Halls Green. Part of the Worlds End Wildlife Site its hedgerows support over 16 woody

species and over 40 veteran trees including a number of pollards. Working with Roydon Countrycare we will be doing a cut of the entire lane to help maintain access. **Meet:** Car park, Beaumont Park Drive, (top of Roydon High Street), Roydon. **Grid Reference:** TL 4095 0975.



*Ancient green lane Blind Lane.*

Roughtalley's Wood in its entirety is a large ancient woodland covering 25 hectares. However, in the 1860's it was divided unequally in two by the creation of the Eastern Counties Railway Epping to Ongar line extension. The largest section of the wood lies to the south of the railway, and is privately owned by the Gaynes Park Estate and until the mid 1990s, managed for commercial timber and pheasant shooting. It is now the Epping Forest Burial Park, which is free to visit. The smaller section of wood to the north is owned by us and is the Local Nature Reserve.



*Roughtalley's Wood 2007*

The ongoing maintenance of the site includes the felling of trees during the winter to encourage diversity and age structure, and cutting of grassland areas to prevent encroachment and succession from taking place during the summer.

Primroses, cowslips and common spotted orchids can be found in the grassland area during the spring and summer months and offer a fantastic nectar source for invertebrates.

In early June, we cut 70% of the grassland area, leaving 30% for the invertebrates. This early cut helps to stop the area from becoming species specific and slightly reduces nutrient levels. During the next volunteer day on the 18th of September we will be cutting the grass for a second time, making sure to leave some for overwintering invertebrates. We will also be cutting out the edges of the rides to keep the paths clear and raking up the cuttings. **Meet:** Car park, Norway House, off B181 Epping Road. **Grid Reference:** TL 4885 0371

**Featherbed Lane, Lambourne End** is another fantastic ancient green lane that runs south from Gallman's End Farm into Hainault Forest. It is a designated Wildlife Site (W54) and is special for some wonderful veteran trees including two of the district's biggest ash and hornbeam pollards.

The land is owned by Essex County Council and as public land we have done quite a bit of work on the lane in the past including clearance, tree planting and pollard management. However, it has been a number of years since our last visit and so we are returning to undertake some needed clearance and some hedgelaying. **Meet:** 10.00am, centre car park off Manor Road, Abridge. **Grid reference:** TQ 484 949.

**St Peter-ad-Vincula Church, Roydon** is a grade 1 listed building and dates from 1225. Parts of the churchyard have been managed as a conservation area for many years by Roydon Countrycare. Occasionally we help out with one off projects (some of you may recall the hedge laying we did a few years ago). Following the success of "soil scraping" that has taken place on other sites we are lending a hand and trying to improve a section of the churchyard by this method. Hopefully, plants such as Lady's Smock which is found elsewhere may spread. **Meet:** Car park to the church, High Street. **Grid reference:** TL 408 102

**World's End Wood** is an area of secondary woodland measuring 2.2 hectares and is believed to have formed from trees spreading out from the ancient hedgerows that border it on both sides. In

deed, the 6" Ordnance survey map of 1870 clearly shows the site as distinct open fields bounded by thick hedgerows. The wood lies within a small valley surrounded by farmland, but is clearly visible from Roydon. Consequently, it is a much valued local feature. Linear in shape the wood follows the shape of the valley and the stream that runs through it.

The wood is now dominated by hazel coppice with occasional oak and ash standards, which were part of the original hedgerow. The famous native black polar can also be found at 'one end of the wood.



**World's End Wood, Roydon**

In 1992, following discussions between ourselves, Roydon Countrycare and the owner Charles Abbey, it was decided to attempt to bring World's End Wood back into some form of management. The ideal was to restore the wood so that it could produce coppice products like stakes and heatherings while also improving its wildlife value. In 1993, work began as staff from Countrycare worked with volunteers and members of the local community coppicing the

A review of the EEP is expected to commence shortly, rolling the period forward to 2031. The need for increased housing provision in the period 2021 to 2031 is expressed frequently in the plan. Coupled with this is a requirement to carry out a strategic review of the boundaries of the Green Belt. The review should release sufficient land to avoid the need for further changes before 2031. Any land released from the Green Belt to make long-term provision for housing or employment growth can be "safeguarded" from early development pressure until it is needed.

The EEP requires that LDDs make adequate provision for affordable housing within the overall provision figures outlined above. This remains a big problem in the district, and the Council will be researching other ways to increase the delivery of affordable housing, be it social rented or low cost.

The district is included in a group of seven authorities, described as the "Rest of Essex" with a joint target of making provision for an additional 56,000 jobs up to 2021. Previously this district and Brentwood had been linked and required to provide 14,000 jobs. The changes in the adopted plan are welcomed as they represent quite a significant reduction in the total.

Despite its intention to promote sustainable development, the EEP is very light on the subject of infrastructure provision. The concentration of development pressure around Harlow means that significant improvements are required and separate studies are proceeding on extensions to the Rye Meads sewage treatment works, and the provision of a new electricity sub station. The traffic congestion problems in Harlow are acknowledged, but decisions on a bypass are being left until significantly later in the plan period. The Council remains concerned about this, as a bypass is considered to be key to promote the regeneration of Harlow town centre, and to unlock the potential for significant growth to the north of the town.

A "Single Issue Review" of the EEP is also currently underway, dealing with additional provision for gypsies and travellers - this Council is expected to identify suitable sites for an

additional 49 pitches. This Single Issue Review should be subject to an Examination in Public in October this year.

### **Tree Poems - Thomas Willingale School, Loughton.**



**Pupils measuring a tree at Thomas Willingale School**

Back in March 2008, photographer John Price worked with Thomas Willingale School in Loughton as part of the £41K GreenArc Veteran Tree Grant which Countrycare received.

The idea behind the project was to inspire the young people about our veteran tree heritage and the recording we have been undertaking to try and safeguard their future. The children were taken off site on a tree hunt to find old trees close to the school. Often this did not take very long!! Armed with tape measures and digital cameras the children recorded some of their favourite old trees.

Thomas Willingale School in Loughton discovered two fantastic nobly veteran oaks on a piece of land adjacent to the Willingale Road allotments (where we are working in October).

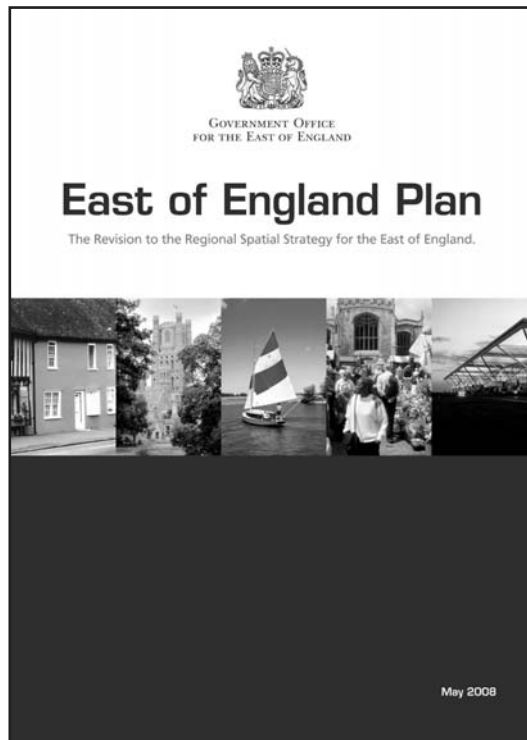
These old trees were to be the inspiration for a photographic and poetry project back in school. Pupils wrote poems and John recorded them reading them. All this then went onto a DVD with images of the trees that the pupils had taken with the digital cameras. Overleaf is a selection of poems from year 6 pupils of Thomas Willingale School.

## East of England Plan (EEP)

By Ian White

Forward Planning Manager

This was adopted on 12th May. It is the top tier of the Development Plan for the counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Amongst other things, it establishes housing and employment land targets for the period up to 2021. This Council must, in turn, prepare Local Development Documents (LDDs) to identify suitable land for housing and employment growth. Only six policies of the Essex Structure Plan now remain in force and, of these, only three have limited relevance to this district.



East of England Plan, Published May 2008

The EEP identifies Harlow as a "Key Centre for Development and Change", and provision is expected to be made for an additional 16,000 houses up to 2021. A proportion of this will be within the town boundary, but urban extensions to the north and east are expected to contribute. Smaller extensions to the south and west are also proposed. In the longer term, i.e. beyond 2021, the plan envisages very significant development to the north of the town - development of at least 10,000 houses.

### The plan includes five broad objectives:

- (a) to reduce the region's impact on, and exposure to, the effects of climate change;
- (b) to address housing shortages in the region;
- (c) to realise the economic potential of the region and its people;
- (d) to improve the quality of life for people of the region; and
- (e) to improve and conserve the region's environment.

This last objective will be achieved by:

- (i) ensuring the protection and enhancement of the built and historic environment, the landscape and water features;
- (ii) re-using previously developed land and seeking environmental as well as development gains from the use of previously undeveloped land;
- (iii) protecting and enhancing biodiversity through the protection of habitats and species, and creating new habitats through development;
- (iv) providing a network of accessible greenspace for a wide variety of uses;
- (v) reducing the demand for, and use of, water and other natural resources; and
- (vi) reducing waste and increasing the sustainable management of waste.

In addition to development around Harlow, the Council is also required to make provision for an extra 3,500 houses elsewhere in the district, although the total number of dwellings built since 2001 should be subtracted from this figure.

understory and opening up the canopy. This work has continued for the last 14 years and the wood now has a far more varied age structure and wildlife value.

We are working in the wood for two days in November when we will be coppicing the hazel stools and felling some of the trees where the canopy is closing over.

**Meet:** East End Farm, off Harlow Road. **Grid reference:** TL 419 101.

**Willingale Road Allotments, Loughton.** In partnership with Loughton Town Council we are looking at improving an abandoned section of the old allotment, which could become a public green space. Currently, it is 6 feet high in bramble so we will need to do an initial tidy up to discover what is there. One thing we do know is there are two ancient oaks on the site that will be a great centre piece. **Meet:** 10.00am Willingale Road, Loughton. Please park sympathetically on the street. **Grid reference:** TQ 443 972



Allotment

**Hainault Forest** is a wonderful ancient semi-natural woodland site packed with ancient trees. But it is only a shadow of its former self - a mere 113 hectares (280 acres) of what was, until around 150 years ago, a vast hunting forest. It all changed in 1851 when in just six weeks almost 3,000 acres were destroyed following an Act of Parliament, and the land converted to farmland. More than 100,000 oak, hornbeam and other trees were literally grubbed out.

In 1999, part of the forest came under the management of the Woodland Trust. In recent years Countrycare has been working in

partnership with the Trust promoting both the Forest and Chigwell Row Wood LNR.



Volunteer work at Hainault Forest

In Spring 2006, the Trust acquired Havering Park Farm - once part of the forest - increasing the size of Hainault Forest by half as much again. A planting programme is in place and we need your help this winter to continue the reforestation of Hainault!!

Over several project days Countrycare in partnership with the Trust and BTCV will be running volunteer days tree planting and creating pollards within the Forest. **Meet:** 10.00am Hainault Forest Country Park Main Car Park, Fox Burrow Road off Romford Road. **Grid reference:** TQ 476 925

**Bobbingworth Tip** is located to the south of Moreton village beside the Moreton Bridge Road. It is currently still a major construction, but this winter we hope to be able to help with the planting of 5000 trees. (See article in Reserves Updates)





THE TREE COUNCIL

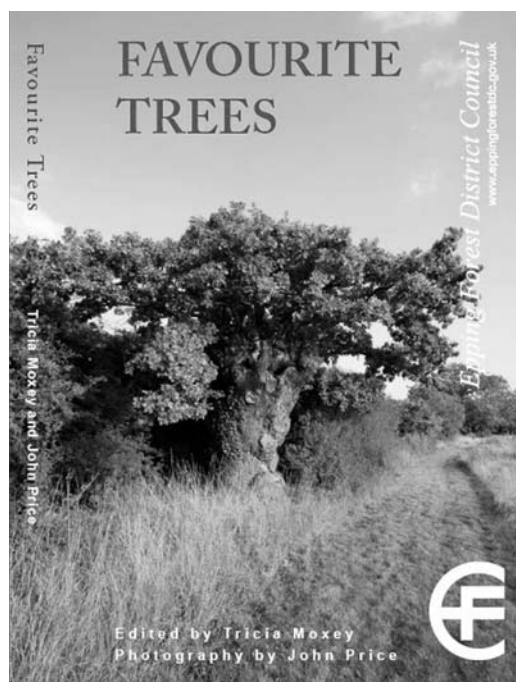
## Tree Wardens Corner

By Paul Hewitt

**Tree Wardens** are local volunteers with a passion for trees. They work in partnership with Countrycare on all things tree related and this can vary from information gathering through to encouraging practical projects relating to trees in their community. You do not need to be an tree expert as we will provide you with an "action pack" and all the training to give you the basic knowledge. All that is important is that you feel passionate about trees and their care.

In our district the tree warden scheme is coordinated by myself and Melinda Barham. 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. I am pleased to welcome four new wardens for Ongar and one for Buckhurst Hill who have joined us in the last few months. So if you are interested please contact us.

**Favourite Trees book available.** In May we finally published our favourite trees book (cover pictured below).



I hope you will agree it is a fitting climax to the 50 Favourite Trees project and an great introduction to the new phase the veteran tree hunt. It is the

culmination of a lot of hard work by designer and photographer John Price and editor Tricia Moxey. My thanks go to both of them for such a great book. If you would like a copy they are available free of charge (although we are taking donations for the Chairman's Charity) at the main reception at the Civic Offices, the Epping Forest District Museum Shop, Waltham Abbey or via Countrycare.

**Veteran Tree Hunt continues...** In mid June a very pleasant Sunday afternoon was spent wandering the lanes, woods and fields of Warlies Park and Copthall Green in Upshire. Local Tree Warden, Sue McKinley was on hand to lead the way as we recorded 10 trees including some fantastic old oak pollards. (see picture below) There was also a bonus sighting of a hobby. The final icing on the cake (literally) was tea and cakes at Upshire Church.

At the time of going to press the district total of recorded trees verified on the website is 10 Ancient Trees, 1500 veteran and 354 notable trees. These have all been recorded and photographed and can be found on our pictorial database. We still have a further 400 records to search through and verify, but these should be on



the website soon.

**"Summer of Hugs"** At the beginning of July Countrycare held an outdoor exhibition of the favourite trees on Queen's Green at High Beach. We were also promoting the favourite trees book and the Ancient Tree Hunts "Summer of Hugs" encouraging people to record our old trees.

In addition, we had arranged for archaeological dowser John Baker to show us some of his special skills as he attempted to age some of High Beach's ancient trees by dowsing. See the next edition of EYE for the full story. Pictures will soon be available on [www.favouritetrees.com](http://www.favouritetrees.com) in the tree projects section.

## Panels Enhance The Visitor Experience at Waltham Abbey

Visitors to Waltham Abbey can now enjoy commentary on the area's history as they take a stroll through Abbey Gardens. New Information Panels, beautifully illustrated by Suzy Avery, were unveiled on 28 April by Lord Petre, the Lord Lieutenant of Essex.



**Waltham Abbey Church including the new panels**

The Information Panels help to bring history to life for visitors. They highlight the development of the church from its earliest beginnings until its destruction at the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540. They show the use of reclaimed stonework, the construction of the Abbey Gateway, the 14th Century Stoney Bridge spanning the Cornmill stream, and mark the site of Abbey House built by the Denny family.

This project has been managed by Elaine Fletcher co-organiser of the King Harold Day society and supported by the Lee Valley Regional Park, the Abbey Church, Epping Forest District Museum, Waltham Abbey Historical Society and Waltham Abbey Town Council. It was funded by a local Heritage Initiative Grant of £25,000 and £2,500 from Epping Forest District Council.

The Abbey is beautiful and well worth a visit, the visitor Centre in the crypt is open from 10 am each day, more historical information can be found there. To receive a copy of the new "Days out in Waltham Abbey" leaflet which highlights

local attractions and activities contact the Tourist Information Centre on 01992 652 295. Also, a date for your diary is King Harold Day which will be held on Saturday 11 October in Abbey Gardens-see [www.kingharoldday.co.uk](http://www.kingharoldday.co.uk) for more information.

## Waltham Abbey Church - a bit of history

It is thought that the first church at Waltham was erected in the early 7th Century, the first of a sequence of five churches on the site.

A second building was built at the end of the 8th Century, and it was to this church that the miraculous cross found in Montacute in Somerset was brought.

Earl Harold extended the church as a fitting place for the Holy Cross, and it became a Secular College with a Dean and 12 Canons. He presented it with lands and great riches, and the church was consecrated in 1060 in the presence of King Edward the Confessor, Bishops, Abbots, Earls and many of the great men of the realm.

This church was followed by a Romanesque building with an apse and ambulatory, round which pilgrims could process. Excavation has shown that three chapels were added; a large eastern chapel was possibly a new site for the Holy Cross. The church you see today is just the nave of this building built between 1090 and 1150.

In 1177 as part of his penance for the murder of Thomas a Becket, King Henry II enlarged the church and replaced what had been a Secular College with an Augustinian Priory. A great extension to the east resulted in a building 500 feet long with two crossings, and monastic ranges round the cloisters. This was elevated to Abbey status in 1184, and Waltham Abbey was one of the largest and most important religious houses in the country.

## Waltham Abbey Historical Society June 2008

## Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Cattle Grazing by Leanne Sargeant.

The Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve is the largest surviving area of traditionally managed river-valley habitat in Essex. It is managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust on behalf of the joint owners Epping Forest District Council and the Grange Farm Centre Trust. Cattle have been grazing the Meadows back through the Centuries and Essex Wildlife Trust has been working with a local grazier to reinstate this practice.

The Trust has been working with local residents and visitors towards a better system for conserving these ancient flower-rich meadows. In recent years, there have been some problems with vandalism of the fences and harassment of the cattle, which has caused the cows to become distressed and break through the fences.



**Roding Valley Meadows (LNR)**

One of the most serious incidents was when cattle escaped onto the road. It is therefore vital to take action to prevent these potential accidents from happening in future. Work has already started with the improvement of fencing around the David Lloyd Centre to ensure that cattle are retained within the Meadows. To improve security for the cattle and peace of mind for the grazier, temporary electric fencing in Hither and Middle River Mead is being trialled. This field is ideal, as it really needs small areas fenced off to restrict the cattle to the worst areas and thus make them eat the tall rank grasses. Cattle can also be moved around within the field but remain separated from visitors, meaning that walkers can continue to enjoy access to all parts of the Reserve, even when cattle are present.

However, it is recommended that owners should keep their dogs on a lead when in the field with cattle. Warning signs will be erected at the field boundary and on the fence itself, which will consist of a single strand of electric cable, held by stakes with a battery attached for power onto the road.



**Longhorn Cattle on the Meadows**

We would like to invite visitors to the reserve on Thursday 11th September to meet with the warden and members of the management committee to discuss the electric fencing. Please come along and chat about these proposals and find out about the conservation of Roding Valley and how you could help!

For further information please contact **Leanne Sargeant** on 01621 862 971 or email [leannes@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:leannes@essexwt.org.uk)

Remember, volunteer work days are conducted every Wednesday, all volunteers are provided with the necessary tools and safety equipment needed for all activities, contact the warden for information, **Patrick Bailey** email [patrickb@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:patrickb@essexwt.org.uk).

## Reserves Updates

### Hallsford Bridge - A Forgotten Haven By Andrew Vaughan, Assistant Countryside Manager.

In a time when our open spaces are coming under increasing pressures and our landscape is in a somewhat fragmented condition, I become very animated when we come across snippets of land that are otherwise uneconomic for farming or development. These sites in general are pretty undisturbed and make them havens for a plethora of wildlife.

Countryside became aware of such a site, Hallsford Bridge situated off Stondon Road, Ongar in December 2006 whilst clearing footpath 37 Ongar. Potentially this is an important grassland site with the added bonus that it was actually owned by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC)!!!

With assistance from Essex County Council and EFDC records a rough picture of how this land has been managed over the last 60 years is appearing. The 1950's rights of way records describe the site as "rough grassland", indicating that this site has not been ploughed up for at least 50 years making this area significant 'unimproved' grassland. Also in this passage the site is described as "fenced with stiles at both ends", indicating that the site was grazed. Also we know from EFDC records that grazing rights of this site were requested by a local resident as late as 1994. Lastly, the adjacent landowners requested that the rabbits at Hallsford Bridge damaging their adjacent crops should be reduced in numbers. This adjacent field is presently out of the agricultural cycle.

The entire site is 3 ha in size and is linear in shape being squeezed between the hedgerow to the west and the River Roding to the east. On 20th July 2007 Countryside commissioned a general flora and fauna survey carried out by Dr Tim Gardiner of Entomology with an aim to produce a basic list of fauna and flora and assess its importance for conservation.

The findings, as you may agree proved quite encouraging. The hedgerow along the western boundary is clearly original, with ancient indicators such as Dogs-mercury, crab apple and buckthorn. In total the hedge has eleven woody species; combined with the presence of the

indicator species we can conclude that this hedge easily pre-dates the 1950 footpath survey.



**Crab Apple Flowers**

The grassland area covers some 70% of the site although nothing 'rare' was found it's a relief that the site has not turned to scrubland. This can only be put down to grazing until recent years and largely to the number of rabbits found in this immediate area. Abundant species found in the grassland include Black Knapweed and Birds-foot trefoil, which may identify low soil disturbance in the form of agricultural ploughing.

The site has very high numbers of butterfly species and considering that it is only 3 hectares in size it is comparable to estates such as Writtle College with 18 different species recorded on a yearly basis. The rarer species found at Hallsford Bridge include Small heath and Brown Argus. The latter uses cut leaved cranes-bill to feed on during its larval stage, which should be taken in to consideration when prescribing management for such a site.

Due to the site's proximity to the River Roding, although not thoroughly surveyed at this stage, the site has abundant White Legged Damselfly and Banded Demoiselles. Other common invertebrates on site include Dark Bush Cricket, Meadow Grasshopper, Roesel's Bush-Cricket and Long-winged Conehead. This site provides invertebrates with the rough pasture and encroaching scrub, which is required at different stages of their life cycle.

All these species indicate that Hallsford Bridge is a fragment of our countryside heaving with a diversity of wildlife. With further survey and consultation it is Countryside's challenge to decide its future, reflecting management that has

gone before. This article highlights the issues and considerations that Countrycare needs to take on board when giving management advice on such a fantastic grassland site.

### Bobbingworth Tip takes shape.

Bobbingworth Tip is the name currently being used for this large, 8.95 hectare, Epping Forest District Council owned site located to the south of Moreton village beside the Moreton Bridge Road.

Back in the 1950s the site was used for gravel extraction. Then for 11 years from 1961 it was filled with domestic rubbish. By 1974 the land had been "restored" to green open space.

However, by the late 1980s there were indications that things were not as they should be and this prompted a second phase of restoration in 1989. Soil was imported from the Church Lane Flood Storage Reservoir (now one of EFDCs 9 local nature reserves) which was being created at the time. Some 200,000m<sup>3</sup> of soil was imported and used to cap the site. Unfortunately leachate (polluted water) now began to come out of the tip.

In 2004, Veolia were awarded a contract by EFDC to remediate and restore the former tip and create a pocket park. After detailed planning and investigation, work finally began on site in 2007. Much of the soil imported from Church Lane has now been re-used to form an impermeable capping layer over the site, additional soil has also been imported to form a surface restoration layer to protect the engineered cap from the affects of weathering. Along with capping, the site has also had a grout wall constructed to contain the leachate within the site, a treatment plant has been built to improve the quality of the leachate that is discharged and a comprehensive network of drains has been installed from which leachate can be pumped. Poor weather last year and the slow down in the construction market this year has meant importation of good quality soil to the site has been difficult and the project has over run. Efforts are being made to complete hard landscaping as soon as possible.

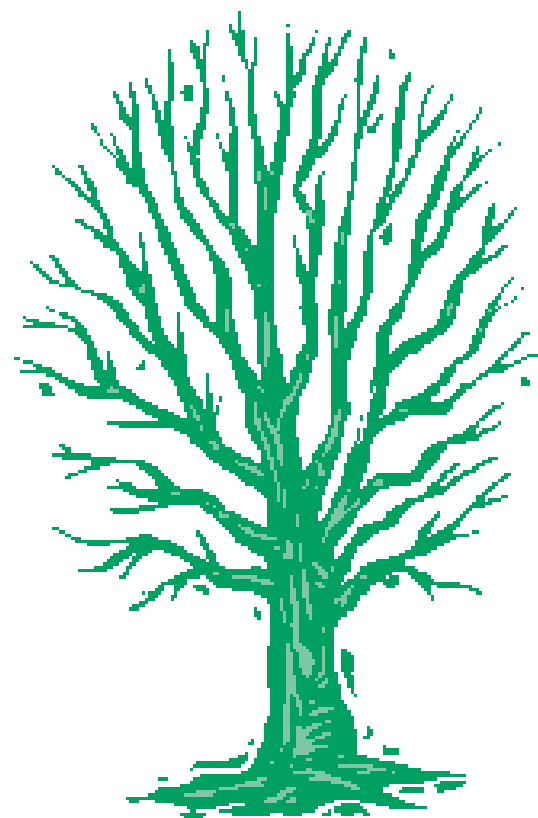
Veolia are the Council's partner in managing this site and will be on site for the next seven years. They will be working closely with Countrycare in creating wetlands, ponds, a huge wildflower meadow, plus the planting of over 6,000 trees.

Many of the trees will be provided by Essex County Council's Tree Initiative Project via a £20,000 grant.



### Replanting Trees in 2007

Through this winter Countrycare is inviting schools and local residents to help with the planting of trees over the site to create a series of copses and hedgerows. The main push will be during National Tree Week which runs from the 26 November to the 7 December 2008. Details of how to get involved will be released in October.



## Local Nature Reserve News

### Chigwell Row Wood LNR on the map!! by Jordan Thomas Assistant Countryside Manager.

I consider Chigwell Row Wood Local Nature Reserve to be the jewel in the crown of the LNRs under the management of Countrycare. A fantastic area of ancient woodland with real character, due largely, to the many old pollards found across the site. Surveys already undertaken have revealed the great significance of the woodland, with its heathland and old pollards.



© Picture Peter Comber

The main biodiversity interest is the unique insect life, which relies on decaying wood. These insects are only found within old trees, an association which has built up over many hundreds of years. Their protection and the correct management is essential for the survival of the woodland in its existing form.

A formal survey and recommendations for the management of the old pollards had always been desirable and in 2007 following a grant application to the GreenArc the money was finally available for this to happen.

James Curry Arborists were commissioned to carry out the survey and this was completed in March 2008. The detailed survey included the tagging of all the pollards (for future identification)

noting the species, height of bolling, total overall height of the tree, maximum crown spread, diameter at breast height, circumference of sound bark, and comments on condition and recommendations for management. This document will soon be available on the Countrycare website.

In total 366 veteran pollards were recorded, 74% percent were Hornbeam, 24% were Oak, with the remainder made up of Ash, Holly, Hawthorn and Goat Willow. This in a wood of just 15.6 Hectares (38.5 Acres) is an extremely high density and reflects the fact that Chigwell Row Wood was once part of the much larger Hainault Forest.



The last large scale pollarding of Hainault Forest was probably undertaken between 1850 and 1900. It would therefore seem reasonable to assume that a similar time has elapsed since the pollards in Chigwell Row were last cut. Many of these pollards are now well over 250 years old and becoming increasingly top heavy and vulnerable to collapse during high winds. Many are also being shaded out by young trees that have colonised during the time the wood has not been grazed.

The survey has revealed that to keep these old trees standing and in a healthy condition a considerable amount of work must take place. This is mainly in the form of crown reductions to reduce weight, and hallowing the trees to reduce competition.

Thanks to the survey we know how many veteran pollards the wood contains, how important they are for the wildlife of the wood and how easily they could be lost. The survey should help us to secure further grant funding to carry out the recommended works so that the wood and its unique character will continue to be enjoyed by future generations.