

Epping Forest

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT

for

2002/2003

Presented to the

Epping Forest & Open Spaces Committee

10th November 2003

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PREFACE

Epping Forest is owned and managed by the Corporation of London, who were constituted the Forest's Conservators by the Epping Forest Act, 1878. Under the terms of the Act, the purpose of the Forest is to provide an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public and this is to be achieved by conserving the Forest in all its vegetative forms and doing it in such a way that the Forest feels to the visitor to be a natural place. It is this natural aspect that distinguishes the Forest as an open space and gives to the Londoner visiting the Forest a taste of the wilderness and remoteness of the National Parks.

At over 6000 acres the Forest is the largest public open space in Essex. It provides opportunities for many recreational pursuits, for organised outdoor sports and games and for nature study. Its historic and attractive landscape is the principal feature of the local environment providing a backcloth to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people both at home and at work. Epping Forest has often been called "the People's Forest" and its success has inspired the development of new Community Forests throughout England.

In terms of its scientific interest, Epping Forest is of European importance. Leaving aside those areas set apart for sports and games, virtually the whole Forest is a Site of Special Scientific Interest as designated by English Nature and a candidate Special Area of Conservation. It is one of a few remaining large-scale examples of ancient wood-pasture in England and supports outstanding assemblages of invertebrates and amphibians and an exceptional breeding bird community. The Forest retains a variety of habitats of high nature conservation value including ancient semi-natural woodland, scrub, grassland, heathland, marsh and open water.

Under the Corporation, the responsibility for the Forest is vested in the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee comprising twelve members of the Corporation and four Verderers. The Verderers are elected every seven years by the Forest's Commoners. The policies and directives of the Committee are carried out by the Epping Forest staff of the Corporation's Open Spaces Department. A brief description of the Epping Forest section's work and Forest events and activities between 1st April 2002 and 31st March 2003 is given in this report.

The entire net cost of the Forest's management, amounting to £3,952,000 in 2002/2003, is borne by the Corporation from its private funds with no contribution from the public purse.

EPPING FOREST AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE 2002/2003

J L Bird, OBE	Chairman to December 2002 Deputy Chairman from January 2003
Mrs C M Cohen, OBE	Deputy Chairman to December 2002 Chairman from January 2003
Alderman D T R Lewis, MA (Oxon)	
Alderman J B Stuttard, MA	To December 2002
Alderman Sir Alexander Graham, GBE, DCL	From January 2003
Deputy Mr J A Barker	From January 2003
F M Bramwell	To December 2002
Deputy Miss S E M Currie	
F A Falk, TD	
Dr P B Hardwick, QHP	
J E H Haynes	
Mrs W Mead	
Deputy Mrs J C Nash, OBE	
Mrs B P Newman, CBE	
Verderer A E Dormer, MD, FRCP	
Verderer M Davies, OBE, DL	
Verderer P R Adams	
Verderer R S Morris, OBE	

OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT – EPPING FOREST STAFF

The establishment of the Department on 31st March 2003 is set out below:-

Superintendent of Epping Forest	Mr Jeremy Wisenfeld
Land Agency Section	
Land Agent and Projects Manager	Mr John Holtom
Clerk of Works	Mr Richard Barrrell
Assistant to Land Agency Section	Mrs Sue Rigley
Building/vehicle maintenance/yard staff	5 Full time
Litter Clearance staff	8.5 Full time equivalents
Forest Operations Section	
Forest Operations Manager	Mr Ian Cox
Forest Operations Team Leader North	Mr Patrick Osborne
Forest Operations Team Leader South	Mr Craig Morss
Forest Operations Team Leader Forest-Wide	Mr Keith Thompson
Forest Operators	20 Full time
Golf Course/grounds staff (Head Green-keeper - Mick Willingale	4 Full time
Wanstead Flats Playing Fields staff (Head Groundsperson - Ray Parrish)	3 Full time
Administrative Section	
Office Manager	Mrs Sally Hopper
Superintendent's Secretary	Mrs Helma Kempton
Secretarial/Administrative Assistants	2.6 Full time equivalents
Support Services Officer	1 Full time
Public Affairs Section	
Public Affairs Manager	Ms Sally Hayns
Information Services Manager	Mrs Patricia Moxey
Head Forest Keeper North	Mr Nick Eade
Head Forest Keeper South	Mr Martin Whitfield
Forest Keepers	16 Full time
Heritage Education Officer	Ms Rachael Boddie
Interpretation Officer	Mrs Clare Eastwood
Information Assistants	7 part time
Forest Conservation Section	
Forest Conservation Officer	Dr Jeremy Dagley
Forest Ecologist	Mrs Imogen Wilde

Since my last Annual Report the following members of staff retired:

- Terence Stembridge, Forest Keeper
- Anne Quade, Information Assistant
- Dr Amanda Samuels, Forest Ecological Surveyor

Training and development of staff

All staff receive a performance and development review on an annual basis with a six monthly review and from this review come their individual training and development plans. A wide range of training and development was undertaken including:

- European Computer Driving Licence
- Personal safety for Forest Keepers
- Byelaw enforcement and criminal law
- Ranger course
- Various Health and Safety training
- Various computer courses
- Chainsaw training
- Manual Handling
- Digger driving

A training manual has been produced which is to be used across the Open Spaces Department. This manual identifies the skills, qualifications and training required to do the many and varied roles across Open Spaces.

Investors in People

Epping Forest was successful in gaining the Investors in People Award in February 2003. To gain this award we were assessed against 12 indicators centred around people management. We received the top score of good evidence met on 7 of the indicators and sufficient evidence on the other five. The Investors in People Award lasts for three years and will be due for renewal in February 2006.

Epping Forest Learning Partnership

Sally Hopper was invited to join the Epping Forest Learning Partnership in March 2003 and at her first meeting gave a presentation to the group on defining competencies, identifying training needs and linking them to meet business objectives and priorities. This group is part of the North Essex Learning Partnership and meets quarterly to share best practice on learning.

Staff Conference

Various members of staff from Epping Forest attended an Open Spaces staff conference held at Gilwell Park on the 11th, 12th and 13th November 2002.

Road Traffic Accident

On the morning of the 20th January 2003, whilst a Quality of Life meeting was taking place at The Warren, a road traffic accident occurred outside of the main Warren office on the A104. Sadly one motorcyclist died as a result and another was seriously injured. Many staff helped with the aftermath but one who deserves a particular mention in this report is Jackie Wilkinson, Support Services Officer, who received letters of commendation from Essex Police and Essex Ambulance Service for her bravery on the day.

OVERVIEW

It is the duty of the Corporation of London to conserve Epping Forest as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. In this the 125th anniversary year of the Epping Forest Act of 1878, it is appropriate to note that this task continues to be a challenging one, just as it was 125 years ago when the Corporation saved Epping Forest from obliteration. This Report has been produced in the hope that it gives a real flavour of the rich and varied work involved in the fulfilling our duty as Conservators.

I would like once again to commend the efforts of those who have made it all happen, in particular the staff at Epping Forest. It was particularly pleasing that Epping Forest achieved Investor in People accreditation during the course of the year, demonstrating I believe that the major structural changes of recent years have helped make it possible for each member of staff to play a full and active role in the work of the Department.

During the year, 3 valued members of staff retired.

Terry Stembridge retired after more than 31 years of service on Epping Forest in a number of roles, most recently as Forest Keeper. Dr Amanda Samuels retired after more than 9 years as an ecologist at Epping Forest. And Anne Quade retired after 9 years of service at the Information Centre where she had worked since it first opened. All 3 staff, all in very different roles, contributed considerably to the collective knowledge, protection and enjoyment of Epping Forest.

The year was one of significant achievements both within the Forest's borders and on a broader front.

Ladies Day was held on the 20th June, and the Chairman's principal guest was the Lady Mayoress, Lady Oliver. The luncheon was held on a glorious summer's day under a marquee in the grounds of Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge. Before lunch, guests had the opportunity to walk into Bury Wood to view free roaming English Longhorn cattle in an evocative ancient wood-pasture setting. The re-introduction of commoners' cattle to Epping Forest on 27th May 2002 after an absence of six years was one of the true highlights of the year. It is hoped that in 2003 it will be possible to build further on this success with larger numbers of cattle grazing more areas of the Forest.

As you will read in this Report, the work programme represents the diversity of features that make the Forest special and raise it above the ordinary. For example, its heaths, bogs, ponds, grassy plains, flowering scrub, high forest and its ancient and extraordinary pollards.

The Forest owes much of its richness in wildlife and landscape to its continuous history of pollarding and grazing, both elements of which are now firmly addressed within the work programme. The importance of protecting the Forest's environs has been further borne out by the reintroduction of cattle to the Forest. During the winter months the cattle grazed off the Forest on Buffer Land and in addition on the Roding Valley Meadows, an Essex Wildlife Trust managed site.

Whilst the Conservators continue to be vigilant about protecting the landscape within which the Forest sits, they do not simply wish to be passive observers in this process but to actively engage in the decision making process, forging links with other bodies where appropriate.

In March 2003 the final report of the Quality of Life Capital study “What matters and why in Epping Forest” was produced on behalf of the Epping Forest Liaison Group. The study, quantifying as it does the environmental, social and economic benefits of the Forest, presents a powerful shared vision of the Forest and its environs. I believe it is already proving to be of significant value in protecting both the Forest and the landscape within which it sits.

In my 2001/2002 Annual Report I referred to a Public Inquiry that was held during the autumn of 2001 into the London Borough of Enfield’s wish to construct the Northern Gateway Access Road (NGAR) as a crossing over the River Lee between Mollison Avenue in Enfield and the Waltham Abbey southern bypass (in Epping Forest District Council). The outcome of the Inquiry was made known in August and I am pleased to say that the Secretary of State upheld the Inspector’s view and refused to grant planning permission for this link road. This decision marked a significant step in achieving the Conservators stated aims of reducing the impact of traffic in Epping Forest and to achieving the shared vision of the Quality of Life Capital study.

Following the NGAR Inquiry, the Conservators were invited to become ex officio Members of the Enfield, Essex and Hertfordshire Border Liaison Group. Included in the Group are Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils, the London Borough of Enfield, Broxbourne Borough and Epping Forest District Councils and the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. The Group was established to encourage joint working between the constituent bodies in order to improve awareness with regard to development, the environment, transport and the regeneration in the area bordered by Enfield, Essex and Hertfordshire; to seek to develop effective and sustainable development and an integrated transport system to serve all users; and to enhance the area as an attractive place in which to work, learn, live and play. Membership of the group is proving to be most useful.

The pressure for increased urbanisation around the Forest continues unabated. During the year some 210 planning applications and appeals were considered (as compared with some 175 last year). 155 of the applications were in respect of Epping Forest District Council and the remainder were in respect of the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest and Redbridge. The applications ranged through residential loft conversions; residential extensions at both ground and first floor level; new residential dwellings; construction of residential flats, 160 in one case; change of use of agricultural buildings to storage or residential; major telecommunication masts and smaller masts for localised areas of communication coverage; a Football Academy and a helicopter landing and take off pad.

Many of the applications were on sites within the Metropolitan Green Belt and were opposed on the grounds of their visual impact in the landscape; light pollution into the Forest; noise and disturbance to wildlife; possible detriment to Forest trees; impact through sheer size and many were opposed as being contrary to the Local Plan Policies designed to protect the Green Belt. It is pleasing to report that a very significant number of those applications and appeals opposed on behalf of the Conservators were refused planning permission or were dismissed at appeal.

Concern over mounting pressures for development in the Green Belt has been instrumental in the Corporation strengthening links with other major open space owners and managers to the north and east of London. The **Green Arc** project, which is in its infancy but going from strength to strength, seeks to create an expansive and integrated network of accessible open space in an arc from the Lea Valley to the Thames.

FOREST LAND UNDER MANAGEMENT

Year acqd.	<u>EPPING FOREST LAND</u>	<u>AREA</u> (acres)
	(a) Land held on 4.7.1882, i.e. initial acquisitions under provisions of Epping Forest Acts 1878 and 1880	5,531
	(b) Additions to 1979	331
	(c) Additions since 1980:	
1983	Yates Meadow (part consideration for a wayleave transaction)	25
1991	Sheppard's Meadows (land granted in exchange for 9 acres lost to M25 Motorway)	19
1992	The Warren Plantation (part of the purchase of land from the Copped Hall Estate)	107
1993	The Selvage and part of Raveners Farm (part of the purchase of land from the Copped Hall Estate)	34
1994	Truelove's (acquired on the open market)	26
1994	Land at the former Empress Avenue Sewage works (land granted in exchange for 7 acres lost to Hackney – M11 Link Road)	20
1995	Land at Knotts Green (consideration for a wayleave transaction)	Less than 1 acre
1997	Fernhills (acquired by private treaty)	31
	(d) Freehold transfers for major road schemes:	
	For A406 Improvement : 15 acres For M25 : 9 acres For M11 Link Road : 7 acres Total transfers	(31)
	Total Epping Forest (Includes many small areas of land dedicated to public highway use)	6,073

All Epping Forest land is available for public recreation, except those areas dedicated to public highway use.

BUFFER LAND UNDER MANAGEMENT

Year acqd.	<u>SITE</u>	<u>AREA</u> (acres)	<u>USE</u>	Access Acres
1959	Land at Theydon Bois	112	Deer Sanctuary. No public access+ Permissive public access to adjoining fields (15 acres)	15
1968	Land at Theydon Bois	42	Leased for golf. No public access+	
1969	Land at Clays Lane, Loughton	31	Leased for golf. No public access+	
1986	Woodredon and Warlies Park Estate	734	Agricultural/forestry use. Permissive public access on land at Monkams Hall (39 acres); otherwise, no public access+ Additional linking permissive footpaths at Warlies Park	39
1989	Land at Great Gregories Farm, Theydon Bois	100	Mainly agricultural/forestry use. Part leased for golf. Permissive public access on 33 acres	33
1990	Land at North Farm, Loughton	57	Agricultural/forestry use. Permissive public access to the fields (41 acres)	41
1992	Land at Copped Hall Park	590	Agricultural/forestry use. No public access+ Linking permissive footpath	
1992	Land at Raveners Farm, Upshire	47	Agricultural/forestry use. Permissive public access on 39 acres	39
1994	Land at Coopersale	33	Agricultural/woodland use. Permissive public access	33
1994	Land at Netherhouse Farm	41	Agricultural use. No public access	
1995	Land adjoining Conybury Wood	7	Grassland/forestry use. No public access	
1995	The Ridge and Estate Drive, Copped Hall Park	11	Grassland and drive. No public access+	
Total area of Buffer Land		1805 acres	Total access acres	200

The purpose of Buffer Land is to safeguard the rural environment of the Forest and thereby its natural aspect or feel and to provide to the Forest wildlife support and complementary wildlife habitats, thus facilitating the protection of the Forest's flora and fauna.

+ No public access other than on public rights of way

THE WEATHER IN THE FOREST

Summary of Weather Conditions: April 2002 – March 2003

(as recorded at the Epping Forest Weather Station, Epping Forest Field Centre, High Beach)

Temperatures:

Average Maximum and Minimum temperatures for the Forest over the past year tend to show a general warming trend compared to recent years. January and February in particular were on average some 4 to 5°C warmer than the previous year according to minimum measurements, with most other months about 1 or 2°C warmer than the previous year according to both maximum and minimum measurements.

The hottest day was on the 30th June, with a maximum of 30.6°C. The coldest days were the 22nd and 23rd of October with minimum temperatures of -5°C. It is quite rare that the coldest day should be in October as opposed to the usually colder months of December, January, and February. This minimum was also 7°C warmer than the coldest day of the previous year's report.

Rainfall:

2002/2003 was an average year for the Forest, with exactly 650mm of rainfall recorded. There were, however, some 'odd' months: September was exceptionally dry with only 1.4mm of rain. Other months with unseasonably low rainfall were February and March with 42mm of rainfall between them.

The wettest month was November with 137.4mm of rainfall, with the wettest day falling on the 11th October with 25.5mm of rainfall.

Average Maximum and Minimum temperatures in Epping Forest (Degrees Centigrade)						
	1979-1999		April 2001 – March 2002		April 2002 - March 2003	
	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min
April	13.3	3.6	12.9	2.3	13.9	4.2
May	16.8	8.7	17.5	8.6	17.2	7.7
June	19.8	9.0	19.6	8.6	22.9	9.4
July	22.6	11.6	23.6	12.5	21.8	10.6
August	22.1	11.2	21.4	12.5	22.4	12.2
September	18.9	9.4	18.5	8.3	19.2	9.5
October	14.4	6.4	17.2	10.0	14.1	6.2
November	10.8	2.8	9.4	1.1	n/a	5.5
December	8.0	1.4	8.4	1.2	n/a	1.7
January	7.0	1.6	9.0	-3.9	n/a	1.6
February	7.8	0.3	12.1	-3.3	8.7	0.8
March	10.3	2.2	11.5	2.4	13.5	3.4

Monthly Rainfall in Epping Forest (mm)			
	Monthly Average 1979-1998	Monthly Rainfall Totals April 2001 – March 2002	Monthly Rainfall Totals April 2002 – March 2003
April	57.8	96.5	36.8
May	53.3	74.5	80.7
June	54.4	93.1	41.9
July	53.8	33.8	53.9
August	52.6	52.6	28.9
September	51.9	62.5	1.4
October	70.3	104.2	59.9
November	61.2	34.3	137.4
December	50.4	33.3	67.0
January	60.2	39.2	100.1
February	39.5	80.8	20.4
March	47.3	*47.3	21.6
Total	652.7	679.6	650.0

* Figure adjusted to an average because Rain Gauge broken.

Weather Diary			
	Temperature Range Degrees Centigrade	Days with >10mm Rainfall Recorded	Other Weather of Note
April	-0.5 – 22.5	14mm on 28/4	Thick Fog – 24/4
May	4.0 – 23.5	15.5mm on 21/5	Very Windy – 24/5
June	5.0 – 27.0	22.0mm on 9/6	
July	8.0 – 30.6	13.4mm on 3/7	Thunder – 29/7
August	11.0 – 24.0		Very Humid – 7/8
September	7.0 – 23.0		
October	-5.0 – 20.0	25.0mm on 11/10	Very Cold – 22/10
November	3.0 – N/A	23.5mm on 25/11	Very Misty – 25/11
December	-1.1 – N/A	23.5mm on 14/12	Very Mild Month
January	-4.6 – N/A		Cold first week
February	-4.0 – 14.2		Very Frosty – 18/2
March	-0.2 – 17.9		Lots of Sunshine

PHYSICAL MANAGEMENT

This was a momentous year for the Forest with the reintroduction of Commoners' cattle on the 27th May 2002. English Longhorn cattle grazed the area of Fairmead and Chingford Plain for the first time for 6 years. The grazing will have a beneficial impact on the composition of flowers in the grassland allowing competition with vigorous grasses like tufted hair grass. It will also benefit the invertebrate community which will aid many species especially birds such as starlings and swallows that have been in decline over a number of years.

In addition to the re-establishment of extensive grazing, cattle were also able to graze smaller sites where they were confined by the use of temporary electric fencing. Two key sites were grazed in 2002, the heaths of Sunshine Plain (north) and Long Running. The heathlands of the Forest are still in an unfavourable condition as a result of air pollution and a lack of management during much of the 20th Century. It is imperative that their condition is restored as they are a vital component of the special importance of the Forest for wildlife but also they are places of special meaning historically.

The other major highlight of the year was the introduction of a programme of restoration work on ancient Oak and Beech pollards using techniques that have been modified in the hope of achieving greater success in survival. The work requires great skill, effort and attention to detail and at Epping Forest we now have in place two teams of climbers to carry out this work, a resource that few sites can match. This work is of international significance as the Epping Forest population of ancient trees are of outstanding importance in Europe. Trees reformed in the winter are showing promising results.

On a less positive note, the Forest experienced storm damage on the 27th October 2002 which resulted in programmed work being postponed to accommodate making safe dangerous trees along the Forest boundaries and access tracks.

A detailed description of the years physical management can be found below.

Trees

The year saw an increased level of work on crown restoration of ancient Beech and Oak pollards in the Forest in addition to the pollarding of Hornbeams. This specialist work involved both summer and winter cutting and attracted media interest during the year. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency visited the Forest on the 1st October and were able to see teams in action.

Group repollarding was carried out on Hornbeams both in Bury Wood and along Three Planks Ride. Rescue work was carried out to a number of degenerating Hornbeams at Cuckoo Pits and Peartree Plain creating a total of 27 restored trees between the 2 locations. 21 veteran Hornbeams were also restored in the Rising Sun Wood (north of Canada Plain) and Gilbert Slade. This had the added benefit of opening up pathways through the area.

Unfortunately work on pollarding both in the Lower Forest and Hawkwood had to be postponed until 2003/04 due to a combination of ground conditions and the impact of the storm in October.

Clearance around overstood pollards was concentrated on trees at Barn Hoppitt and Lords Bushes. Additional crown Oak reduction work was carried out on an Oak tree at St Johns Pond and 3 Oaks on the Green at York Hill.

During the summer 6 huge ancient Beech trees at Flagstaff Hill and 7 at High Beach had their crowns reduced by 10-15%.

A further 10 pollards at Woodbury Hollow were tackled and 8 along the Woodchip Ride during both the summer and winter months.

Clearance of trees along Jacks Hill took place as part of a continuing programme of work releasing the heathy wood pasture habitat with its old pollards. 22 recently released Oak and Beech pollards along the side of Jacks Hill had their crowns reduced.

An important part of the work programme was the creation of maiden pollards which was carried out in conjunction with the crown reduction programmes.

Boundary tree safety works

Following the storm of 27th October, major work was carried out along Forest verges to make trees safe. In addition to these works staff cut back trees along the road verges at Whipps Cross, Woodford Road and Epping New Road to the junction with Rangers Road. Some of this work included removal of invasive species such as Sycamore and Turkey Oak. Work carried out ensured that highway regulations are met and that dense stands of young trees that had established themselves on roadside banks have been thinned to prevent their collapse onto the highway.

Planting in the Warren Plantation to further develop the arboretum there continued. This included the planting of a Water Oak by the new Chairman Mrs Christine Cohen at a Committee visit in March 2003.

Coppicing of Hornbeam at Bluehouse Grove was carried out in order to improve both the Wood Anemones and the Bluebell population in that area.

Scrub management

An area of Sycamore and Hawthorn was coppiced between the Red Path, Taylor's Ride and Palmer's Bridge. Work near Palmers Bridge took place aimed at rejuvenating some old and scarce Buckthorn. Areas coppiced in previous years of the plan period are now thickening up and a variety of song birds is likely to increase in these areas over the next 5 years. Already whitethroats have colonised very well and a reed bunting has also been noted near Palmer's Bridge.

Grasslands

The grassland mowing programme was carried out throughout the year and managed to tackle most of the sites on a very ambitious programme. Highlights included the protection of Devil's-Bit Scabious at Sheppards Meadows by careful mowing around the plants.

The early cutting of rushes at Almshouse Plain attracted the recently released Longhorn cattle in June and this pressure helped to open up the sward there allowing the expansion of Greater Birdsfoot Trefoil.

The scarce Forest plant Dyer's Greenweed appeared on Almshouse Plain along with the Greater Burnet.

Grazing by 13 English Longhorn cattle was carried out on 310 hectares throughout the summer between Fairmead and Almshouse Plain. Cattle had been released on the 27th May and they were removed in October.

The second phase of clearance of secondary woodland around Baldwins Hill was carried out including bramble clearance. Bramble was also cleared from the edge of Sheppards Meadow in order to restore the flower rich meadow edges.

Heathland

Cattle grazed an extended area at Long Running with the use of temporary electric fencing. This grazing followed up several years of clearance work by both the grassland team and Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers. Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers carried out a number of tasks at Sunshine Plain to celebrate their 25th anniversary and cleared the area very successfully. Introduction of cattle has made a notable impact on reducing the Purple Moor grass tussocks there.

At Wake Plain soil turning was carried out in order to expose the seed bank and to level the ground surface. The results will be noticed over the next 2 years and it is hoped to graze the site as part of the agreed grazing rotation. Light growth was removed from Rushey Plain but mowing was unable to be carried out as the site is obstructed by stumps and it is intended to graze the area in the near future.

Bracken rolling was carried out during July at Wormleyton Pits, Big View, Copley and Hatgate Plains, Clay Road Heath, Kate's Cellar and 3 Forests Way where germination of many heather plants has been noted.

In addition bracken rolling was carried out at Deer Shelter Plain, the Furze Ground and along Hangboy Slade despite very difficult ground conditions.

Gorse was coppiced at Baldwins Hill, Clay Ride, and at Sunshine Plain.

Forest paths and rides

A full rides review was carried out in 2002 and a report submitted to the Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee with recommendations to be carried out over the next 5 year plan period. Surface ride repair and maintenance was carried out along Jubilee Ride and Boundary Ride. All works on pathways were carried out at the Lower Forest, Theydon Loop Ride, Woodridden Hill, High Beach, Ash Ride, Grimston's Oak Ride, Gilwell Lane, Warren Pond Road (entrance), Woodgreen Road and Gilbert's Slade.

At Grimston's Oak Ride work was limited to an adjacent glade where an ancient Wild Service pollard was released from over shading Hornbeam trees. Here additional crown reduction work was also carried out.

Clearance of verges along Lippitts Hill, Church Road, Rangers Road and Bury Road was carried out to maintain a grass sward.

Paths in Wanstead Park, in particular around Ornamental Waters, were cut back to enable easy access.

Most of the wooden bridges along the main roads in Lords Bushes and Knighton Woods were replaced with wider culverted bridges which will last longer and are easier to maintain.

Damaged barrier gates were replaced throughout the Forest and a height restriction barrier was installed at Snaresbrook Car Park in the Autumn of 2002.

Forest ponds

The year's major project was the completion of the Jubilee Pond (formerly Model Yacht Pond). The former Model Yacht Pond was replaced with a softer informal wildlife pond with a clay lining and is scheduled to be formally opened during the course of 2003. Work during construction was temporarily disrupted on the discovery of a World War II bomb that was made safe on site by the MOD with an earth shattering bang. The pond is fed from a bore hole system abstracting water from a chalk aquifer immediately below the pond.

Invasive pond plant species are monitored with special regard to Floating Pennywort and New Zealand Stonecrop which is removed as and when necessary.

Following the exceptional wet spring, water that had gathered on Wanstead Flats Playing Fields was directed by a restored stream across the Flats into Alexandra Lake.

Litter collection

Litter continues to be a major problem throughout the Forest and as in previous years our thanks go out to the many groups and individuals who voluntarily pick up and remove litter.

Litterbins continue to be removed from isolated sites following consultation with relevant parties, and bins at honeypot car parks and food outlets are gradually being replaced with

larger robust closed bins. Litter campaigns have been carried out both in the Autumn and Spring using staff members and volunteers and large amounts of litter and bulk items cleared.

A partnership has now been formed between the Conservators and the neighbouring local authorities in respect of litter management. Issues covered include the illegal dumping of bulk litter and abandoned vehicles that continue to be a major problem. Our thanks go to both the surrounding local authorities and the various Conservation Groups, including the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers, for help in dealing with these problems.

The Conservators also participate in the London Borough of Redbridge Residents Consultation Group. This group is vocal and active, covering all issues of litter clearance in the Redbridge area. The Group receives updated reports on problems of litter in the Forest together with progress reports on litter clearance and accompanying problems. The Group is keen to share views and ideas on these various issues.

Other works

Staff joined pupils from Theydon Bois Primary School and members of Epping Forest District Council Countrycare to plant a hedge at Great Gregories reinstating a former system as part of the National Tree Planting Week.

A major scheme this year was the erection of a 2 kilometre cattle barrier along the Epping New Road in order to reduce the likelihood of road accidents involving the recently reintroduced cattle on the Forest. Squeeze gaps and gates have been located at regular intervals along the barrier to accommodate Forest visitors. Cattle road warning signs were put up both by Epping Forest District Council and the London Borough of Waltham Forest in response to the return of commoners' cattle to the Forest. Close liaison was established with all the highway authorities for the Forest and a number of schemes are now being considered to improve the safety of roads and to reduce traffic speeds through the area.

Wooden rustic seats have been replaced throughout the Forest on a regular basis, in particular Woodford Golf Course where a number had been vandalised.

A major review of car park provision and condition was undertaken during 2002 and recommendations will be implemented over the next 5 year period.

In February and March the Fairground site at Chingford was used as an emergency commuter car park while urgent essential repairs were carried out on the Central LT Underground Line.

Krenite was applied to Birch and bramble at Wormleyton Pits deer glades to remove unwanted growth to maintain grass sward.

6 Poplars were removed from the Churchill Avenue at Woodford Green as part of the planned long term programme of works for the restoration of the Avenue.

Removal of Himalayan Balsam was carried out by the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers at Honey Lane stream, Loughton Brook and the Lost Pond. Fairmead was grazed by the Longhorns during the year and will reduce vigour of Michaelmas Daisies there.

Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers (EFCV)

It was perhaps appropriate that during their 25th Anniversary year the group held their first AGM on Thursday 17th September 2002 at Epping Forest Field Centre, High Beach. The main proposal was that in place of the ad hoc basis and latterly a self-perpetuating co-opted committee there should be a formal constitution and an elected committee. This was ratified by the members. It will be a challenge for the committee to ensure that the group's appeal is broadened whilst at the same time ensuring the high standards of work undertaken are maintained. The group's website has created considerable interest and in addition to providing details of the group and forthcoming tasks it also contains photographs taken on recent sites showing the "before" and "after" the volunteers had been in action. During the past year they have been joined on occasion by a number of participants in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and in addition a group of Army Cadets. The group welcomes external participation in their activities as it provides these young people with an introduction to practical conservation and has the benefit of assisting the group to complete tasks more quickly.

Through the year the average attendance at weekend tasks improved to 18.6 compared to 18.1 last year, this average having now been consistently maintained at around the 17 or 18 level for the last four years. There has been a small drop in overall membership numbers during the last 12 months but this has been largely compensated by the increase in attendance of their active members.

Continuation of the management plan to allocate tasks at core sites enables the group to concentrate on a few specific projects during the year whilst retaining the flexibility to undertake once-only visits to sites necessitating such action. Both the group's members and the general public are then able to clearly identify the impact of the work done at the core site whilst still giving the volunteers a variety of different tasks and locations.

The EFCV provided 716 workdays over 34 weekend tasks and 15 weekday tasks in the current reporting period. Most of these tasks continued to be a mixture of grassland, heathland and pond clearance at 31 separate sites within the Forest, with the following highlights :

- ◆ Three visits to Fairmead Bottom, a new area for the group, where an area was cleared around the old Fairmead Oak and a large amount of Willow was either coppiced or removed.
- ◆ The planting of some 400-plus trees and shrubs on buffer land at Copped Hall as part of National Tree Planting Week.
- ◆ A continuation of visits to various Forest ponds to remove invasive species including, for example, American Pennywort, some of these tasks being performed by the mid-week volunteers.

The regular programme of monthly mid-week tasks was continued, together with a few arranged at short notice to carry out more urgent work. These tasks included small self-contained projects, as well as work such as removing regrowth and burning material left from previous tasks. An average of 5.2 mid-week volunteers over the year was achieved and provided a valuable contribution to the group's efforts.

A summary of the full list of tasks carried out by the group in 2001/2002 is detailed below :

Location	Description of Task / No. of Visits
Almshouse Plain	Coppicing of Willow (1 visit)
Barn Hoppit	Sycamore, Scrub Oak & path clearance (3 visits)
Bellringers Hollow	Scrub clearance (1 visit)
Brickyard Pond, Lower Forest	Clearance of pond (1 visit)
Bulrush Pond	Removal of American Pennywort (2 visits)
Chingford Plain	Oak scrub clearance (1 visit)
Copped Hall Estate	Tree planting (1 visit)
Dulsmead Bog	Bramble clearance (1 visit)
Earls Path Pond	Stonecrop removal (1 visit)
Epping Cricket Ground Pond	Path and pond clearance (2 visits)
Gilberts Slade	Scrub clearance (1 visit)
Fairmead Bottom	Birch & Willow clearance (3 visits)
Hollow Ponds	Removal of American Pennywort (1 visit)
Honey Lane Plain	Removal of Himalayan Balsam (2 visits)
Little Alder Pond	Bramble & reed clearance (1 visit)
Long Running	Heathland restoration (1 visit)
Long Running (Conservation Path)	Birch clearance (2 visits)
Lord's Bushes, Jericho Plain	Scrub clearance (2 visits)
Lower Wake Valley Pond	Pond clearance & Birch removal (1 visit)
Manor Rd/High Rd, Buckhurst Hill	Sycamore clearance (1 visit)
Mill Plain (Gypsy Smith Stone)	Birch & Holly clearance (1 visit)
Oak Hill Pond	Pond clearance (2 visits)
Organ Lane	Scrub removal (1 visit)
Palmers Bridge (Cranesbill Glade)	Scrub clearance (1 visit)
Rushey Plain	Birch clearance (3 visits)
Strawberry Hill Pond area	Scrub clearance (1 visit)
Strawberry Hill Pond	Crassula Helmsi clearance (1 visit)
Sunshine Plain	Birch & scrub removal (3 visits)
Walthamstow Forest	Birch and other scrub clearance (1 visit)
Wanstead Park	Sycamore & Bramble clearance (1 visit)
Woodford Golf Course area	Oak and Holly clearance (1 visit)
Woodford Old Road near Oak Hill	Scrub clearance (1 visit)

In addition, the EFCV assisted on three other tasks outside the Forest as follows :

- ◆ Hemlock control and saltmarsh restoration at the Essex Wildlife Trust reserve situated at Two Tree Island, Leigh-on-Sea.
- ◆ Fencing and Holly clearance at the Essex Wildlife Trust reserve situated at Garnon Bushes.
- ◆ Wall restoration at the Essex Wildlife Trust reserve situated at Warley Place, Brentwood.

Total attendance statistics over the last six years are as follows (these include tasks outside the Forest) :

Year	No. of Volunteer Days	Total Tasks (including mid-week total in brackets)	Average no. of Volunteers per task (excludes mid-week tasks)	Membership
1997/98	560	35 (1)	16.7	211
1998/99	593	36 (5)	18.9	188
1999/2000	572	38 (5)	17.4	172
2000/01	550	39 (9)	17.5	161
2001/02	655	48 (15)	18.1	165
2002/03	678	49 (15)	18.6	154

The EFCV website can be found at: <http://homepages.uel.ac.uk/1278/conserv/efcv/html>

EPPING FOREST CENTENARY TRUST (EFCT)

In the last year the Trust has continued to work with special needs, college, schools and youth groups as well as encouraging retired people's groups, refugee and ethnic minority groups to enjoy and learn about the Forest.

Carrying out this role is down to the two executive officers, as unfortunately Nicola Ward, the Project Assistant, moved on from the Trust and found herself a full time position as Farm Ranger for Essex County Council. The two Trust Officers remaining, Richard Hutton, the Conservation Project Officer and Andrew Fleming, the Environmental Awareness Officer continue to carry out the two roles of the Trust namely the Conservation Project and the Awareness Programme.

The Trust still enjoys support from dedicated volunteers Mike Hacker, Jim Fitzwilliam, and Alan Munt and special needs volunteers Graham Cox, David Andrews and John Fennel. During 2002, these volunteers managed to clock up a staggering 354 volunteer man-days between them. Mike Hacker, a long standing volunteer gave up an impressive 117 man-days, coming out from the Borough of Hackney to work with the Trust.

Also during the year, the Trust was able to provide opportunities for work experience for twelve students from various schools and colleges around the Forest. Each work experience placement involved learning and taking part in practical conservation work, working with people with special needs, and carrying out environmental education for young children.

On the Conservation Project there are five regular special needs groups working in the Forest and one mainstream school group. All have worked hard, carrying out a range of sensitive practical management tasks, mainly concentrated on the Forest's heathlands. Other groups helping with the conservation work included Scouts and Hertford Regional College. During 2002 a total of 44 different groups comprising 819 individuals visited the Forest to take part in the Conservation Project.

The Trust's new project, 'Forest Hands', is proving to be a success. It is aimed at bringing local people, particularly families, out into the Forest to take part in family activity days, as

well as practical conservation work, craft activities and wildlife watching. During 2002 eight of these events were held, with a total head count of 278 individuals with the youngest being 4 years old and the oldest in their 70's. As well as learning practical conservation skills, people were able to learn how to make bird feeders, besom brooms, shelters and bird boxes. This project has now become a regular feature of the Trust work and takes place one weekend a month.

The Awareness Programme complements the Conservation Project in that it offers young people an informal approach to the countryside and the environment and provides an alternative to the more traditional and academic focus to field studies. The Programme targets groups with special needs, of ethnic origin or those considered deprived of a countryside experience, notably from the Inner City of London. There are a number of projects that reach out to these groups within the programme. Through each project, groups are invited to the Forest to take part in sessions that explore areas of the Forest through a series of activities that are designed to suit the needs of the group, whilst stimulating environmental awareness.

2002 was a satisfactory year for the Awareness Programme, with 121 groups taking part, a slight rise from the 118 visiting groups in 2001.

92 of the visiting groups were from primary schools, 10 secondary and the remaining 19 made up of special need groups, play centres and community groups. The individual head count was recorded at 3,231 for 2002 compared to 2,883 in 2001.

These encouraging figures begin to show the role of the Awareness Programme as a major contribution to the work of the Trust, introducing as it does young people into the Forest, particularly children between the ages 3 – 11.

Projects linked with the Awareness Programme:

- **The Epping Forest Experience.** A day or half day of exploration of the Forest for groups from the Inner City of London. During 2002 the focus was to target the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney, specifically nursery, primary and special need units. 121 groups took part in the programme throughout the year, a good result. Of the 121, 74 were from within the two catchment boroughs. 44 of the visits were from local schools around the Forest and the remaining 3 visiting groups were from around the country.
- **Environmental Outreach.** This project seeks to create awareness of the Forest, providing groups wishing to visit the Forest with a range of services that suit their needs. Throughout 2002, a number of projects took place ranging from tree planting, wildlife watching, guided walks and overnight camps. The biggest events of the year were the Mencap activity week, a three-week summer nature club and the Winter Wonderland.

It was observed during the later part of 2000 that a large number of school children were unaware of the various flora and fauna species that could be found in a woodland environment. For 2001 a programme took place where visits were made to local schools surrounding the Forest and a natural history slide show was given to children of upper primary level aged 8 – 11. The interest by schools has grown with

many schools making bookings to fit in with the curriculum. And as for the children, a lot more are aware that you do not get tigers in Epping Forest!

Working with schools and clubs surrounding the Forest, the Environmental Outreach project involves linking the Forest to each group's needs, such as creating wildlife gardens, training of young tree wardens, nature and conservation badges for scouts and guides, informal slide shows and sensory walks for elderly community groups.

- **Study Support.** The running of environmental clubs (out of school hours learning) for primary and secondary schools that surround the Forest. The focus is on an interactive lunchtime and after school session that uses the Forest as a teaching tool and means of building self-confidence and self-esteem in young individuals.

Last year, the Trust, in partnership with the London Wildlife Trust ran its second 'Epping Forest Summer Experience'. This project, based at Fairmead Campsite adjacent to the Forest, comprised three separate weeks of environmental education for sixty children aged 8 - 16 from Waltham Forest. Funded by the New Opportunities Fund, the Scheme gives children, including special needs and mainstream school children, the opportunity to take part in various environmental games and activities such as shelter building, conservation work, deer stalking and archery. At the end of the week, the children went home with a broad knowledge of Epping Forest and its wildlife and environmental issues in general.

Scout Project 814

The Scout Conservation Week progressed into its fifteenth year with Scouts from all over the country, some as far as Scotland, participating in four conservation tasks throughout the forest. The tasks included:

- Clearing an overgrown section of the London Loop trail on Yardley Hill
- Removal of the boundary fence at Copped Hall
- Pond restoration at Lord's Bushes
- Heathland restoration at Long Running

THE WREN CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE GROUP

Practical work happens in Wanstead Park the first Sunday of the month for approximately 3 hours, with several volunteers most months. The group concentrates on the clearance of overgrown paths; smaller fallen trees after autumn and winter gales; areas where bramble threatens to overrun Bluebells and Wood Anemones; and on ensuring that the Daffodils on Lincoln Island thrive. The group is fortunate in having access to a boat for this. The particular priority for the group is the encouragement of Bluebells and Anemones, which are such a feature of the park, and trying to extend the areas they occupy.

In August 2002 the Wren Group did one joint session with the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers in the park which was very productive, given they are larger and have access to more specialised tools. The joint session concentrated on removing the ever rampaging Sycamores, thereby opening up another area for Bluebells.

The group is always happy to see new volunteers join them at 10am at the Keepers Cottages.

THE WOODFORD GREEN AMENITY GROUP

During the year, the Woodford Green Amenity Group undertook the following tasks in their area of the Forest :-

24 th April	Repainted water pump and rails at Johnston Pond including a litter pick of the area
27 th April	Litter Sweep of Woodford Green with cubs and scouts from Bancroft School
29 th April	Repainted water pump at The Roses, Salway Hill. Cleared scrub away and general litter pick of area including the large traffic island
7 th August	Cleared scrub and wooden posts and chains from High Elms and general litter pick of the area.
7 th September	Litter Sweep of Woodford Green
8 th September	Attended Forest Festival
26 th October	Litter sweep of Woodford Green

OTHER GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

Numerous other groups and individuals once again contributed in many ways, in particular litter clearance, to the management of Epping Forest during the year. Appreciation is extended to all those involved.

RESEARCH, RECORDING and MONITORING

Forest management needs to be founded on information from monitoring and survey work. There are three main ways in which research and monitoring are carried out:

- i) commissioned reports from specialists;
- ii) surveys and monitoring projects carried out directly by Forest staff;
- iii) projects carried out by academic institutions or others under licence, including students.

This year no projects carried out under licence were completed that relate directly to Forest management and so section iii is absent this year. However, under the other two headings there were some very important studies that will have implications for management for many years to come.

Commissioned reports

A Pilot Investigation of vegetation health and air pollution issues by Imperial College London

Imperial College scientists were engaged to examine vegetation health of Beech trees, Heather and lichens and to evaluate the potential problems with pollution of the Forest by oxides of nitrogen (NO_xs), two-thirds of which in London are now emitted by vehicles. The examination of Beech trees showed that the health of mature Beech in the Forest – standard trees of around 100 years old – is very poor and has declined over the last 10 years. The growth has been reduced for a very long time period and the decline in condition appears to be worse at Epping Forest than at the New Forest or Burnham Beeches. The Beech of Epping Forest are amongst the least healthy of any trees of this species in the UK and air pollution may be a key factor in this.

Examination of the foliage from a small sample of Heather plants from the Forest heathlands revealed that the traffic of local roads was probably contributing significantly to the nitrogen concentrations within the plants. High nitrogen levels are detrimental to heathland plants like Heather and could be contributing to the species' decline in the face of other species such as Birch and Purple Moor-grass.

The only welcome findings from the report concerned the lichens. A total of 65 species was recorded, a third of which were new to Epping. Although much of this new flora represents species common in urban environments and probably adapted to higher nitrogen levels, there were several new lichens which are only known from ancient woodland sites. So after a long delay compared with other sites around London, the Epping Forest lichen flora seems to be recovering from earlier pollution problems.

Much more work remains to be done. It is very pleasing to be able to report, therefore, that a PhD Research study based at Imperial College will begin in autumn 2003 to examine the problems of vegetation health and links with pollution in greater depth. This 3-year study is supported financially by The Conservators of Epping Forest, The Environment Agency,

English Nature and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). The Forest's Conservation Officer has been appointed as a co-supervisor of this PhD studentship.

Pollard survey in Lords Bushes and Knighton Woods

Lords Bushes, although separated physically from the rest of the Forest, is one of the most important relics of Oak pasture-woodland. On its own this single site is of national significance containing hundreds of ancient trees; in the whole of the UK there are only about 40 sites with populations of more than 100 ancient trees each. Until recently it was not certain what number of ancient pollards survived on the site. Over the last year the Forest's Ecologist mapped the positions of all the pollards using the Forest's Global Positioning System (GPS). From this preliminary survey and mapping exercise over 150 Oak pollards were recorded and at least 160 Hornbeam pollards.

A specialist consultant was then brought in to provide an independent audit of individual tree condition of the ancient Oak population. He found that 25% of the Oaks had died in the last 25 years, a rate of loss of at least 1% per annum. Of the surviving 152 living pollards one third still showed high vitality, but two thirds were in various stages of disintegration or decline. Nine of the Oaks were at a considerable risk of imminent failure. Since the report 4 of these trees have had crown reduction "surgery" carried out on them by our skilled tree-climbers to improve their chances of survival. Many more of these trees will receive arboricultural attention from our staff over the next two years or so.

Sunshine Plain vegetation survey

A survey of the vegetation of this remarkable fragment of heath was conducted in late summer 2002 in anticipation of grazing in 2003. Sunshine Plain is one of the most important heathlands botanically in the region. Random quadrats were sampled within a marked-out grid and the cover of ericaceous species and other important constituent plants was recorded. Further recording work will be carried out following several years of grazing to measure the changes in the heathland vegetation.

Long-term Insect monitoring

The long-term study of insect numbers in the Forest, which started with the Forest Insect Survey in 1998, continued this year with collections from the two main Malaise Traps (interception traps) at Epping Thicks and The Warren. At the end of the year the Epping Thicks trap was closed to allow effort to be concentrated on The Warren trap. A consultant has been engaged to sort through the thousands of insects caught over the last 5 years' work.

Song Thrush Survey

The second year of this survey and thrush numbers were found to be similar to those recorded in 2001 with over 50 singing males heard over the central 580 hectares of the Forest. Full analysis of the data collected is planned after the third year of survey work. For now it seems that the numbers are holding up which is encouraging. More habitat improvement work on rejuvenating the scrub and opening up the glades and ride edges continues and this should benefit this species and many other declining woodland bird species too.

Copped Hall Estate Winter Bird Survey

The margins of much of the arable land at Copped Hall have been managed for wintering birds for several years now by the planting of seed-crops such as Sunflowers and Oats. Over the winter of 2002 - 2003 the second winter bird survey was conducted to look at the success of these crops in attracting and sustaining a variety of song-birds through the winter.

Compared to the figures from the previous winter's survey, 2002-2003 showed a very large increase in Yellowhammer numbers as had been hoped. The Yellowhammer is a species of conservation concern because it has declined dramatically in numbers over the last decade and it now features on the UK Red List for Birds. In 2001-2002 this species was only found in ones and twos across the farmland at Copped Hall. In 2002-03 winter there were in excess of 30 Yellowhammers throughout the winter months.

In addition there was a big flock or "charm" of Goldfinches, a species on the Amber List of Conservation Concern, attracted to a new crop of Teasel near Cobbins Brook. There were regular sightings of more than 50 Goldfinches and numbers reached 125 in January 2003 – a lot of charm!

Many other species are benefiting from the conservation margins on Copped Hall. Foremost amongst these is the Brown Hare, the recorded numbers of which have risen threefold in the last 3 – 4 years with up to 20 recorded on one day of survey across the whole estate.

Fisheries survey work

The annual programme of fish population surveys carried on across the Forest although in the absence of Wyn Wheeler whose ill-health prevented him from leading the work as he has done for over a decade. The populations of Crucian Carp, the scarce native fish of Forest ponds which Wyn Wheeler did so much to rescue from terminal decline, seem to have stabilised in the ponds where the species has been protected in recent years.

Staff research and survey

Loughton Manor Vegetation Survey (April – September 2002)

A six month survey of this 250 hectare area of the Forest lying in the old Manor of Loughton (now Loughton Parish in Essex) was the main field work carried out in the Forest in 2002. Carried out by a French Forestry intern student, Christophe Rousson, with the Conservation Officer, it allowed the area to be completely mapped for vegetation and the structure and composition of the tree cover. One of the most important results was an accurate estimate of the density of veteran pollards. In 1880 the Corporation carried out a survey that produced an estimate of an amazing 400 pollards to the hectare. Despite over a century of thinnings and losses of pollards through ageing and collapse this new survey discovered over **60 per hectare on average** – most being **Beech**.

In Loughton Manor this translates into at least 12,000 trees whilst over the Forest, which has around 1,200 hectares of pasture woodland with pollards, this extrapolates to a possible **72,000 veteran pollards in total**. Further survey work needs to be carried out elsewhere in the Forest but this estimate is based on the most intensive fieldwork ever carried out in the Forest and corresponds with the 1985 Forest-wide survey which produced an estimate of 45,000 pollards.

Extensive Grazing project

Following an absence of 6 years from the main body of the Forest 13 Commoners' cattle were returned to a core area of **300 hectares** of ancient wood-pasture and open plains, around Fairmead and Chingford Plain. In this first year general assessment of the flora was undertaken, with mapping of rare plant species, and butterfly counts were carried out (see below). Ideas for more detailed monitoring of the impacts of the cattle grazing are still being developed further and, to date, have included the preparation of a project for the assessment of grassland insect diversity.

Butterfly Counts

As part of long-term monitoring of Forest habitats, which will also contribute to a national climate-change monitoring scheme, weekly counting of butterflies was continued along two transects through the Forest: at Fairmead and Woodford Golf Course. The Fairmead transect will also be used to monitor the effects of the extensive grazing by commoners' cattle in this area.

Gypsy Moths

Pheromone trapping carried out by the Forest's Keepers was conducted over a wider area than in previous years with 14 traps set out across Forest land, the furthest south near Hollow Ponds and the northernmost adjacent to Highams Park Lake. The area of coverage had been broadened because moths have been found several hundred metres from the original outbreak point and seem to be moving further afield.

Year	Caught in Forest	other catches*	TOTALS
1995	4	37	41
1996	18	12	30
1997	2	6	8
1998	3	8	11
1999	5	12	17
2000	1	4	5
2001	0	1	1
2002	0	1	1

The results were encouraging within the Forest as no moths were trapped here for the second year running. However, the moth continues to survive. One individual was caught at Churchfields School trap in South Woodford (set up by the DEFRA Plant Health inspectors), at least 1km east of the original outbreak in 1995 and over 1.5km east of last year's (2001) lone record at Woodford County High School.

Study tours

In addition to research and survey on the Forest the Forest's Conservation Officer took part in two study tours abroad in this year. The first involved a return visit to **Sweden** following on from the success of the Naconex Project (see last year's Annual report) where the focus was

the management of grasslands and old wood-pasture systems. Further dialogue and exchange of data on the impacts of different types of cutting machinery on flowers will follow from this visit.

The second visit involved the Superintendent and the Conservation Officer participating in a major study tour of grazing sites in the **Netherlands** organised through English Nature and the Forestry Commission. This provided valuable examples of the ecological impacts of extensive grazing. The tour also provided the catalyst for developing the *Green Arc* partnership between land-managers in London's Green Belt including the Corporation of London, Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust, and Thames Chase Community Forest.

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NATURAL HISTORY

Fungi

The rare and legally-protected **Oak Polypore** was recorded again on the same Oak pollard where it was first discovered in 2001. However, despite further searches it was not found on any other trees in the area.

Lichens

The Imperial College survey (see Research, Recording and Monitoring) yielded a total of 65 species of lichens – more species than have been found in the Forest for over 30 years. Lichen diversity has improved at last but it is still well below the list of species that would be expected on such an ancient site as Epping Forest. There were 17 species new to the Forest amongst the total of 65. Of these some were species adapted to the more nutrient-enriched conditions found near roads and car parks, such as *Xanthoria polycarpa*. However, there were also some relatively rare lichens found including *Gyalideopsis anastomosans*, *Micarea peliocarpa* and *Opegrapha ochrochela*. The last of these species is only found in ancient woodland sites and its discovery at the Lower Forest was perhaps the highlight of this survey. More work on lichens will now continue through both the Natural History Museum and Imperial College.

Higher Plants

The most interesting record was a newly-discovered plant of **Petty Whin** (*Genista anglica*) at **Almshouse Plain**. This discovery is an entirely new location for this rare plant of heaths and acid grasslands. In addition **Burnet Saxifrage** was in flower at this site for the first time in at least a decade underlining the continuing improvement of this grassland, which after being restored over 10 years ago is now one of the most diverse damp grasslands within the Forest.

Another damp grassland is Theydon Green at Theydon Bois. Here the Parish Council kindly agreed to vary its mowing regime on the Green to allow the patches of **Cuckoo-flower** (*Cardamine pratensis*) to flower and set seed. The flowers made a great show and the longer grass areas around them provided good habitat for many Meadow Brown butterflies. The management work will be refined for 2003.

Elsewhere the acid grassland areas at Fairmead seem to be improving and the extensive grazing by Longhorn cattle, which was focused on this area of the Forest, will continue to improve this sward. Species that should benefit include **Tormentil** and **Birds-foot Trefoil**.

Invertebrates

Butterflies & Moths

The only moth-trapping carried out within the Forest was at **Long Running** in April 2002. This was the beginning of a long-term survey of this special heathland site. This first night of trapping provided some good records including **a new species of micro-moth for the UK**. In addition amongst the larger moths were many individuals of the uncommon **Nut-tree Tussock**.

Also at **Long Running** during the spring there had been very good numbers of the day-flying moth **The Orange Underwing** recorded. This moth, the larvae of which feed on Birch, is only known from 4 sites in Essex.

Around the edges of the Forest there were other exceptional records of moths deriving from the Forest. Best amongst these were the catches of two **Scarce Prominents**, a new moth for Essex which is still only known from Epping Forest. Another new species to the county was the **Dotted Chestnut** which was recorded at Chingford and Theydon, 2 of only 3 records of this new colonist in Essex.

Flies

Although no summer survey was carried out our Malaise traps continued to collect insects. A reappraisal of the **fungus gnats** (species of fly that live inside fungal fruiting bodies) caught as part of the Forest Insect Survey project over the last few years revealed that **12 species new to Britain** (including the 1 new to science from 4 years ago) have been found at Epping Forest over the last 5 years. There are now over 200 fungus gnat species in the UK.

Reptiles & Amphibians

Adders were seen at all the main sites with several observations of males displaying and courting females. Encouragingly young adders were seen at two of these areas in August.

Birds

The year was an interesting one for birds. A **Hobby** family spent much time over Bury Wood during late summer, although unfortunately proof of breeding in the Forest was not possible. Other Schedule 1 birds, protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act, did breed in the Forest. Amongst these was the **Firecrest** breeding for at least the third year in succession in the north of the Forest. The **Barn Owl** also continues to breed adjacent to the Forest, hunting over the western grasslands and Honey Lane Plain.

Other birds are still in steep decline however. The **Willow Tit** now seems to be extinct in the Forest and the **Marsh Tit** seems to be following it rapidly. Only a few pairs of this latter species were seen at The Lower Forest and near Piercing Hill. The **Tree Pipit**, whilst holding on at the Forest's heaths and confirmed as breeding successfully at Sunshine Plain has not appeared at Chingford Plain for the second year running. There remain many other woodland bird species, such as the **Nuthatch** and the **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, that are giving cause for concern as their numbers seem to be dropping measurably.

Non-breeding birds passing through the Forest included many interesting visitors. Prominent amongst these were the winter flocks of **Bramblings** in Bury Wood which in March 2003 reached several hundred strong. **Crossbills** were also seen more regularly than normal, although mostly flying over. Other unusual records included a **Mediterranean Gull** at Connaught Water and a **Red-throated Diver** at The Heronry, Wanstead Park, the first record of this species in the Forest for 100 years.

Mammals

Fallow Deer continue to be seen further south in the Forest than for almost 30 years. Particularly significant were records of does during June, a time when the fawns are born, in areas like **Fairmead** and **Almshouse Plain**. Unfortunately one fawn born at **Deershelter Plain** was found dead a few hours after it had been born.

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EPHING FOREST INFORMATION & MUSEUM SERVICE

It is pleasing to report once again that the activities of the Information Service have been well received by the public. Clare Eastwood, the Interpretation Officer, produced an illustrated programme with details of an increased number of guided walks, occasional lectures and activities for children. These programmes were distributed to local libraries and other venues to encourage as many visitors as possible to join in these activities. A number of general information leaflets about aspects of the Forest were also prepared to inform the general public about the Forest's Deer, its Archaeology, Fungi, Grazing and facilities for Angling. Information leaflets were also produced about Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and Knighton Woods.

May saw the launch of a slim volume of poems written by Sir William Addison entitled **Winter Forest**. This selection of poems, which were edited by Verderer Richard Morris and illustrated by Clare Eastwood, convey Sir William's skilful use of words to encapsulate his love of the Forest through its varied seasons.

A circular Walk, **The Jubilee Walk**, linking the Hunting Lodge and the Information Centre was prepared by the Information Assistants and provides visitors with a chance to explore aspects of the Forest between Chingford and High Beach.

The annual Forest Festival was held on Sunday, 14 September when over 2,000 visitors were able to enjoy the various interesting displays and exhibits including watching juggling or play environmental games. Once again, the event was considered to be an outstanding success.

The Guided Ride was held on a pleasant October day, when four Mounted Forest Keepers showed different aspects of the Forest to riders some of whom had travelled some distance to join local residents who were more familiar with the area.

Information Centre

Although there were fewer visitors than in previous years, some 27,540 have called into the Centre through the past 12 months and staff have been busy dealing with a wide range of queries from students and the general public.

This year Father Christmas, alias Tony Bumfrey, was able to visit for two weekends in December. On the first occasion, families were able to follow a trail of clues through the Forest which led them to his grotto, where the children collected a present. On the second weekend, he was in much warmer conditions inside the Information Centre!

The major refurbishment of the displays within the Centre was planned and completed by the end of March using in-house expertise. Many favourable comments have been received on its fresh new look and the reinterpretation of the Forest's story.

Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge

Visitor figures for the Hunting Lodge have seen a pleasing increase this year. This is due to a number of factors: the decision to remove the entrance fee, greater publicity and an increase in the number of public events and groups visiting the Lodge as well as small improvements

in its interpretation. Visitors have included a wide range from overseas and all have been delighted with the various activities.

Rachael Boddie, the Education Officer has built up a good rapport with local schools and provided an opportunity for children to learn about the Tudors as well as their special preparations for Christmas. Tales about Guy Fawkes have also been popular with the pupils.

Table of Visitor Numbers: Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge

MONTH	TOTAL NO OF ADULTS	TOTAL NO OF CHILDREN	CHILDREN ON GROUP VISITS (INCLUDING TEACHERS)	ADULTS ON GROUP VISITS	NO OF GROUP VISITS	TOTAL VISITORS
April	437	154	29	64	6	591 (718)
May	560	184	57	93	8	744 (611)
June	405	170	130	53	7	575 (885)
July	489	387	359	30	12	876 (798)
Aug	624	190	32	83	4	814 (923)
Sept	1,389	557	10	37	4	1,993 (1,836)
Oct	426	157	201		7	814 (677)
Nov	237	37	387	7	14	668 (372)
Dec	190	36	412		12	638 (57)
Jan	693	238	31		1	960 (417)
Feb	444	168	68		3	680 (281)
March	717	178	136		4	1,031 (585)
Total	6,611	2,456	1,850	367	90	11,284 (8,160)

Figs in italics are for 2001-2

Public events at the Hunting Lodge have included a Poetry and Music evening as well as talks on Cross Bows, Tudor Cookery and 16th Century Music. Some of the free family events have been creating Tudor spoon dolls, making heraldic shields, pomanders and producing a collage of the Green Man. The Tudor New year celebration on the 5th of January was very successful with over 500 people enjoying the various entertainments provided by Rachael Boddie and the Information Assistants. The Colchester Waits Marching Bands were a successful attraction and the Thameside Mummers were extremely popular – playing to an enchanted audience in the winter sun on the grass outside.

The Temple also hosted two very popular events for families: one on Toys and Games of the 18th Century and the other making posies for Mothering Sunday. In addition, a lecture about the History of the Park was given in May as part of Adult Learners Week. Visitors were able to tour the Temple during the Open House Weekend in September.

The members of the Bancroft's Branch of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts continued their work in preparing splendid fabric heraldic banners in bright colours for display within the Lodge.

A number of artefacts from the Department's collection were digitised for inclusion on the Essex Museums' Website to encourage a wider appreciation of the hidden treasures with the County as a whole.

The collection may be viewed on: www.essop-e.co.uk.

The Lodge was used to provide a venue for parts of a film about a well documented story of 16th century intrigue and treason produced by QUARK TV for the Public Record Office.

Staffing

Anne Quade retired in June having worked at the Information Centre since it opened in July 1993. She had a formidable understanding of the history the Forest and had gathered together material about some of those associated with the Forest. She had also been responsible for preparing a number of historical exhibitions including one to celebrate past Royal Visits to the Forest which formed part of the Jubilee Display at the Hunting Lodge. We wish her well in her retirement.

Tony Bumfrey replaced Anne and quickly became involved with the varied activities of the Service. Luke Valentine was also recruited to help with weekend work.

Rebecca Latchford, who had joined as a seasonal Information Assistant, left to further her career in the museum world as she joined the staff of the Redbridge Museum. We wish her well in her new role. Angela Collins was appointed as her replacement.

Several additional volunteers have offered to help at the Hunting Lodge, where they have become involved with some of the general activities as well as assisting with sorting through some of the archaeological material.

Two long serving volunteers decided to retire, Norman Gower, who had helped the Information Centre for a number of years and Gwen Coombes who had enthusiastically shared her love of the Tudor with visitors at the Lodge. We wish them both well.

It has been a productive and eventful year and grateful thanks are extended to all staff and volunteers who have played an invaluable part in achieving this success.

Table of Visitor Number to Information Centre for 2002-3

Month	Adults	Children	Total	Comments
April	2056	836	2892	
May	1614	779	2393	
June	1749	793	2542	
July	1868	558	2426	Centre closed for 1 day (Personal Safety Training).
August	2601	989	3590	
September	2189	685	2874	
October	1998	487	2485	
November	1102	418	1520	
December	908	401	1309	
Jan	1358	344	1702	
Feb	1332	508	1840	
March	1467	500	1967	Centre closed 8 days for refurbishment
Total	20242	7298	27540	

EPPING FOREST EDUCATION SERVICE 2002 Report (April 2003)

(The Field Studies Council on behalf of the Conservators manages the education service at the Epping Forest Field Centre).

Environmental experience and learning programmes were delivered to more than 750 groups in 2002 and income generation from teaching activities was an all time record. The Centre continued to provide courses for a wide range of youngsters (key stage one to advanced level) and adults. Included in this mix were 'Gifted & Talented' students, pupil referral units, home taught groups and religious schools. New initiatives included providing activity sessions for Job Centre staff, a 3 day Youth Summer Scheme in conjunction with Epping Forest District Council and also a 3-day pilot summer play scheme offering day-care with environmental activities.

The Centre's reputation for outstanding customer service was maintained with 92% of teachers from visiting schools indicating the highest possible level of satisfaction overall on a 5 point scale. (The tables at the foot of this report show visitor evaluations with past year comparisons). There were no injuries to staff; 24 students received minor injuries from estimated 67,000 visitor contact hours.

The Centre is accredited as an Eco Centre and continuously strives to improve its environmental impacts. In this regard paper consumption was reduced with the extended use of electronic mail for external and internal communications utilising a new pc network. Electricity supply for the residential accommodation was switched to N-Power Juice (green energy). A new Grounds Management Plan was prepared and a new Beetle Mound added to the features surrounding the Tom Connor Memorial Bird Garden.

Holly House Hospital continued its sponsorship of natural history and local interest courses and The Epping Forest Centenary Trust continued to sponsor Winter Wonderland Week, which enabled disabled and special needs groups to visit the Centre free of charge for the seventh successive year. The Ford of Britain Trust gave a grant that helped to meet the costs of six school group visits to the Centre.

The Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre funded numerous items including a battery for the ride on mower, a new soil augur stand, the wildflower meadow, organic garden and the Tom Connor Memorial Bird Garden. All Centre staff are most appreciative of the support of the Associates, especially Committee Chairman, Caroline Friedman. In response to a request from the Associates three Commoners of Epping Forest generously made donations that will be used to enable more special needs groups to visit the Centre.

Birthday Party evaluations: % of parents giving highest possible satisfaction rating

	2000	2001	2002
<i>Booking</i>	84	89	88
<i>Joining info</i>	84	84	87
<i>Friendliness</i>	96	99	95
<i>Activity leader</i>	96	96	95
<i>Safety</i>	92	94	98
<i>Equipment</i>	80	84	87
<i>Facilities</i>	88	88	88
<i>Activities</i>	93	92	93
<i>Value for money</i>	89	93	93
<i>Overall</i>	95	93	97

Courses for all evaluations: % of participants giving highest possible satisfaction rating

	2000	2001	2002
Booking	66	71	74
Joining info	60	71	68
Friendliness	93	88	89
The tutor	87	89	89
Equipment	59	64	65
Facilities	63	67	69
Fieldwork	75	78	78
Food	67	60	46
Classwork	63	66	72
Safety	70	74	79
Handouts	60	67	67
Sites visited	73	80	78
Rel. of day	75	82	82
Value for money	77	78	81
Overall	73	77	78

Teacher evaluations: % of teachers giving highest possible satisfaction rating

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Telephone	-	73	79	81	81	89
Staff Help	-	82	86	86	84	91
Info sent in Post	72	63	73	67	66	76
Pre course Liaison	65	64	70	73	70	80
Friendliness	89	86	92	92	95	98
Relationship with Pupils	72	77	83	84	88	92
Discipline	67	77	79	77	82	84
Safety	-	89	92	91	95	99
Fieldwork	80	81	86	83	88	89
Classwork	71	71	77	71	80	85
Handouts	82	81	79	80	84	88
Sites	79	78	79	84	84	84
Rel. of day	87	86	88	84	90	91
Equipment	72	74	78	75	83	79
Facilities	67	65	77	78	83	82
Cleanliness	62	58	71	71	79	79
Value/money	72	58	74	72	82	70
Overall	75	70	85	83	87	92

LIAISON WITH FOREST SUPPORT AND USER GROUPS

The Friends of Epping Forest

Originally founded in 1971, but re-constituted in its present form in 1973 to help fight the proposals for the M25 motorway, this charitable body has some 2,000 members and a sustained record of support for the Forest. Although independent of the Conservators, the group maintains regular contact between its officers and the Conservators through the Verderers and the Superintendent.

Several members helped staff the Forest Information Centre. Further support was given by way of representations to the planning authorities in respect of planning applications for development on land neighbouring the Forest and potentially damaging to it.

Each November The Friends hold a Forest Supper for their members. There are a number of invited guests. Included amongst these are representatives of the Conservators and the Epping Forest Department's staff. This kindness is much appreciated and affords an excellent opportunity for informal liaison in a convivial atmosphere.

Epping Forest Centenary Trust

The Trust is also a charitable body independent of the Conservators. It was established in 1978, the centenary year of the Epping Forest Act. The objects of the Trust are to supplement, for the benefit of the community, measures designed to conserve the Forest, educate young people in the need of conservation, encourage Forest research and assist the public in their enjoyment and understanding of the Forest, but not to undertake the statutory obligations of the Corporation of London, nor the education service provided by the Field Studies Council.

Mention is made within this Report of the Trust's significant contribution to the conservation of the Forest through its conservation project and to its role in combating social exclusion through the development of its Awareness Programme.

Liaison was maintained between the Trust and the Conservators through my attendance at the Trust's Board Meetings, and by regular contact between my staff and the Trust's officers.

Epping Forest Riders' Association (EFRA)

Liaison with EFRA provides a consultative link between Forest management and those who use the Forest for horseriding, and encourages responsible riding in the Forest. During the year EFRA held two open Forum meetings for its members and each was followed by a meeting between Corporation officers and EFRA committee members.

Jubilee Pond

The year saw the completion of work on restoring the former Model Yacht Pond, now renamed Jubilee Pond. Special thanks are due to the efforts of the Lakehouse Lake Project, whose members have taken and continue to take a keen and active interest in this important amenity. The new pond will be formally opened during 2003.

CHINGFORD GOLF COURSE

Whilst continued competition from numerous local Golf Courses had an impact on the number of rounds played during the year, it was encouraging that the total number of rounds was significantly up on the previous year. It is anticipated that this trend will continue and strengthen further.

Course play since 1990 is set out below:-

Year	Club	Public	Courtesy of the Course+	Total
1990	34,215	34,320	45	68,580
1991	34,494	31,534	69	66,097
1992	31,498	22,444	89	56,031
1992/93 ^o	30,557	21,431	65	52,053
1993/94 ^o	31,189	20,134	51	51,374
1994/95 ^o	31,348	20,114	92	51,554
1995/96 ^o	31,499	21,786	103	53,388
1996/97 ^o	32,125	20,631	67	52,823
1997/98 ^o	29,714	18,680	298	48,692
1998/99 ^o	26,187	14,792	38	41,017
1999/2000 ^o	26,016	17,060	47	43,123
2000/2001 ^o	19,426	14,091	49	33,566
2001/2002 ^o	21,546	12,747	10	34,303
2002/2003 ^o	21,515	14,931	10	36,456

+Professionals only

^o1st April to 31st March

WANSTEAD FLATS PLAYING FIELDS

Wanstead Flats Playing Fields were laid out on Forest land by the London Playing Fields Association during the early 1880s. In 1957 the Wanstead Flats Playing Fields Committee were formed and they have managed the Playing Fields on behalf of the Corporation of London ever since. The Committee comprises of 9 people, 5 lay members, 2 Verderers, the Superintendent and the Warden. Meetings are held regularly throughout the year to discuss issues and make recommendations to manage the facilities. Edward Caton has joined the Wanstead Flats Playing Fields Committee in place of John Harvey who has stood down due to ill health. John Harvey had been a Committee member since 1981 and made a very valuable contribution to the running of the Flats during that period. Wishes have been expressed to him for a speedy return to full health.

For the second time in the last 3 years rain has had a major impact on the ground conditions during the season. Thanks to the splendid efforts of the staff, disruption was kept to a minimum and to accommodate loss of time a number of teams had the season extended in order to complete their league fixtures.

Following the PMP Consultancy Report contact was made with the Essex County Cricket Club and the Gujarati Metropolitan Cricket League to explore the re-provision of cricket on the Flats. Discussions are currently being undertaken.

During the year consultation took place with football clubs regarding provision of evening training and floodlit facilities. Following consultation with the clubs, public consultation with our neighbours was carried out to seek their views of the proposed facilities. However, responses showed a number of organisational areas needed to be improved before progressing further.

The Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Challenge Shield was held on the 18th August. 32 teams took part in an all day knockout competition for mini football ranging from under 8s to adults. The day was a great success and enjoyed by all and is hoped to be repeated in 2003.

Football

Demand for football continues to fluctuate and this year 47 adult and junior pitches were provided and the 5 mini pitches were increased to 9 making a total of 56 pitches in all. East London & Essex Junior Football League continues to expand with the introduction of both adult and mini football.

Cowley Boys FC continue in partnership with the Corporation of London at Harrow Road and carry out the administration of pitch allocation there.

Local Schools continue using the facilities. The main use is football in the winter months but is predominantly arranged through St Bonaventures and Forest Gate with more local schools tending to use the facilities for athletics and sports days during the summer period. There is a major cross country event held at least once a year. Last year Cambridge Theatre Group held a theatre softball tournament in August on the Capel Road site.

Other activities

The site was used on a number of occasions for filming Bad Girls and Footballers' Wives.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES HELD ON THE FOREST

Reference has already been made in this report to a number of events which were held during the year. In addition to these, the following events and activities took place:-

Single Events **2000/01** **2001/02** **2002/03**

Armed Services/TA/Police/Fire Brigade:-

Training activities	6	18	1
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Clubs, Brownies, Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade

Sponsored Walks	1		2
Cross Country/Orienteering	2	4	9
Miscellaneous	7	1	7

Schools/Other Groups/Individuals

Geographical/Ecological Studies	41	86	56
Cross Country	16	19	16
Orienteering	12	9	11
Sponsored Walks/Runs	6	7	5
Horse Events	4	4	3
Photography/Filming	42	52	35
Miscellaneous	<u>64</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>62</u>
	<u>201</u>	<u>266</u>	<u>207</u>

Period Permissions

Police/Armed Services/TA/Cadets

Various Training activities	4	8	9
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Schools/Other Groups/Individuals

Ecological Studies	17	18	1
General Activities	<u>2</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>26</u>
	<u>23</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>36</u>

Fairs and Circuses

As usual the traditional Bank Holiday fairs were held at Wanstead Flats in March, May and August. Chingford Plain hosted fairs in March and May. Visitor numbers appeared to be good. The closing of the fairs was as usual policed by the Forest Keepers each night to ensure that licences were being adhered to.

The Moscow State Circus visited Chingford Plain in July and Zippo's Circus was on Wanstead Flats in October.

PUBLIC CONTROL

The dumping of tyres and fly tipping is again becoming a major problem and car parks are having to be closed at night. Forest Keepers are undertaking joint late patrols with local police to try and address this problem.

A fungi picking licensing scheme has been introduced to help preserve the stocks on the Forest. The scheme is run by the Information Centre staff and policed by the Forest Keepers. The success of this scheme in this year has been hard to judge because of the dry Autumn and resultant scarcity of fungi to pick.

The problem of abandoned and burnt out vehicles continues, with numbers seeming to rise annually. In this year over 100 vehicles have had to be removed. Any presenting a public or fire hazard are requested to be moved immediately. All other vehicles are reported to the Police then the appropriate Local Authority informed to get them removed, usually within 7 working days.

During the year there were 5 successful prosecutions at local Magistrate Courts. In addition 19 warning letters were sent.

ACCOUNTS

The table below shows the actual net revenue expenditure for 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003

ACTUAL 2000/2001	ACTUAL 2001/2002	SERVICE	ACTUAL 2002/2003		
NET EXPENDITURE £000	NET EXPENDITURE £000		GROSS EXPENDITURE £000	INCOME £000	NET EXPENDITURE £000
3,424	3,912	EPPING FOREST	4,973	1,080	3,893
40	23	CHINGFORD GOLF COURSE	231	274	(43)
144	172	WANSTEAD FLATS PLAYING FIELDS	140	38	102
3,608	4,107	TOTAL	5,344	1,392	3,952

The entire net revenue expenditure is met by the Corporation from City's Cash with no contribution from the public purse.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Organisation	Tel. Number
Conservators of Epping Forest, Corporation of London	020 8532 1010
Epping Forest Information Centre	020 8508 0028
Epping Forest Centenary Trust	020 8508 9061
Epping Forest Field Centre	020 8508 7714
Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers	020 8505 4876
Epping Forest Riders' Association	020 8539 8100 or 01992 763982
The Friends of Epping Forest	020 8504 8271
Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge	020 8529 6681
Wren Group	020 8989 4195

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The Warren
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