



Monday, November 23rd, 11a.m. on the green Lindsey Street, a large group of members (some 50 in number), gathered to see a flowering cherry tree being planted, in memory of Janet Walton, a founder member of the Society who died while in office as membership secretary. The members showed how well thought of and respected Janet was by attending on such a rainy November day. The photograph above shows President, Denys Favre assisting in the planting. The Society paid for the tree and plaque, its location was chosen as it is close to Janet's home and where her family will be reminded often, of how well thought of she was by the Society.



Janet with affection.

Geoff her husband who likewise is also a founder member, is pictured having aided in the planting of the tree. Janet's son & daughter along with their families were all there to see the tree being planted. Refreshments made available by Geoff, enabled members to chat over coffee and cake, and remember

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

After four years as Chairman of the Epping Society I will, with great regret, be standing down at the Annual General Meeting, in February. It was an honour to serve the people and town of Epping in this capacity and I will deeply miss the work, colleagues and general flow of events.

I am deeply grateful to all the committee members who have helped the Epping Society so much during my time in office.

Because of our enviable geographic position, at the end of a main Underground Line, within 20 minutes drive of a London Airport, and immediately adjacent to the Home County motorway network, yet still retaining the look and atmosphere of a country Village, many want to live here. If they live here they will need accommodation and therein lies the problem. Because of high demand, developers will pay huge sums for building land, buying up scarce bungalows to develop their large gardens or buying large family houses to convert into flats. Another alarming trend is for national chain stores to buy up high street commercial premises, thereby driving out small commercial undertakings.

Whilst we cannot counter natural trends such as this, we are still able to inject the arguments for preservation and conservation into the planning debate. By means of logical argument and assembling a watertight case the planning authorities will often be sympathetic to our requests.

The Epping Society is grateful to the Epping Town Council, and Epping Forest District Council planning departments for the help and facilities provided to us.

Finally, may I ask any member who might be interested in the work of the Committee or standing for the vacant post of Chairman please contact me.

DAVID SÉBIRE

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Committee Updates

Treasurer's Corner

The Epping Society's financial year end has been changed from 31st October to 31st December to make life easier for the treasurer. Now all subscriptions collected in one calendar year can be accounted for in the same financial year, and the tax relief on Gift-Aided subscriptions can be claimed that much sooner.

This change in the Society's financial year end is the reason for the Annual General Meeting being put back to 24th February 2010, thus giving the treasurer more time to cook the books before presenting his audited accounts to members.

John Hill

Planning Appraisals

In the spring 2009 edition of this news letter I explained the work undertaken by the Committee in monitoring all the planning applications submitted to Epping Forest District Council for building work in our area. In the six month period prior to that edition, we objected to 20 applications which we considered inappropriate to the area, of which nearly a third were refused approval by the planners. In the 12 month period since then, we have objected to only about a dozen applications of which again about a third have been refused permission.

This drop in objections has nothing to do with a drop in controversial applications but is caused by a general drop in applications for more major proposals. While there continue to be many applications for small domestic alterations and extensions, there have been few larger commercial applications – a sign of the economic difficulties the country is going through?

One of the more major local schemes which we have been keeping an eye on is the work going on at either end of the Bell Common tunnel on the M25. At first it was difficult to find out what was going on as neither EFDC nor Essex CC had any details as, apparently, work on the motorways is not subject to any local planning laws! For the same reason we were unable to object to their proposals! However, after contacting the Highways Agency, we obtained a summary of the works being carried out and copies will be available for members' information at the a.g.m., or by email contact editor details page 1. It will be interesting to see if they manage to disguise it with the planting they propose when all the work is eventually completed.

Iain Wallace

Walks & Trees

On the last Sunday of each month there is a walk organised by The Epping Society. All the walks are circular and commence from Epping Station at 10a.m. An average distance covered 9 miles, at a brisk pace so that the finishing time is usually around 2p.m.

There is a refreshment stop lasting 20 minutes at a public house for drinks only.

Boots or strong shoes are recommended. The leaders are volunteers with experience of rambling.

The walks provide opportunities to explore the beautiful countryside around Epping. They enable the society to help in keeping the Public Rights of Way open.

31st January To: Garnon Bushes
Leader: Eve Gentilhomme 9 miles

28th February To: Epping Green
Leader: Rodney Want 9 miles

28th March To: Theydon Bois
Leader: Linda Harris 9 miles

Further information on the walks can be obtained from:
Ray Latham
Telephone: 01992 560469.

Mavis Ellis

Civic Trust - NO MORE TRUST!!

The Civic Trust collapsed in April 2009 and like all the conservation societies in the Country we at Epping shall miss their expertise and advice.

The Civic Trust was a central association with considerable authority, town planning and legal know-how. It monitored the Governments town planning proposals and kept all associated Societies advised and in many instances forewarned of detailed variations. They published most schemes showing improvements to town conservation projects illustrating and encouraging others how they can improve their City and Town by good design and planning.

Epping, a relatively small town, had few opportunities to enter the City centre schemes so often promoted by the Civic Trust. However, the constant feedback received will be missed. Perhaps the Civic Trust was over ambitious or perhaps it should not have been so reliant on grant aid. Whatever the underlying reason for its demise, the Civic Trust with Griff Rhys Jones at the helm was the conservationists champion and as such will be nationally missed.

The Epping Society will "plough its own furrow" as before the Trust, but regrets the lack of conservation watchdog to challenge any wayward scheme by the Government.

Ken Miller

London Green Belt Council

The London Green Belt was set up to prevent the continuing spread of the urban area into the surrounding countryside. It does not need to be an area of outstanding natural beauty just an open area with minimum existing buildings. Although an Act of Parliament to set up the Green Belt was passed in 1938 it was not implemented until after WWII. Under Government planning guidelines new building in Green Belt areas should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.

All the major political parties support the Green Belt policy in principle but pressure on Councils to provide more sites for housing means that the Green Belt is being eroded as can be seen in two recent examples in the Epping Forest District.

The London Green Belt Council is an independent voluntary organisation made up of residents associations, amenity groups etc. who wish to protect the Green Belt. It provides help to any local groups on planning matters and also comments on Government and Regional planning proposals.

Epping Society is a member of the LGBC and attends the Council Meetings which are held in Westminster three or four times a year. Further information can be found on their new website on:-

www.londongreenbeltcouncil.org.uk

Arthur Walker

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

The CPRE was founded in 1926 and is a registered charity which campaigns for a sustainable future for the English countryside as a vital but undervalued environmental, economic and social asset to the nation. The work of the CPRE is focused on countryside issues of landscape, planning, development, farming and food. The President is Bill Bryson and the current emphasis is on the clean up of the countryside.

The Epping Society is an affiliated member of CPRE as an individual organization and is also represented at CPREssex county and Epping Forest Group levels. Both the ES and EFG are represented on the Advisory Council of CPREssex which meets bi monthly in Chelmsford.

Although the ES is mainly concerned with matters relating to Epping Town and the immediate locality, when necessary the ES will raise issues of major importance directly with CPREssex, the EFG, or both.

Through its CPREssex connections, the ES keeps a watching brief on matters elsewhere in the County which are of current concern to CPREssex and which might affect the Epping area. These include proposals for the Stansted Airport second runway, town centre redevelopments, substantial and excessive housing developments, gypsy and travellers sites, soil dumping on golf courses, waste treatment/collection centres and power generation sites, both nuclear and wind farm, to name but a few.

Trevor Roberts

Social Events

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL – December 2009

I do hope you visited the festival, it always starts the Christmas festivities for me, and it's as if by magic, the church takes on a warm glow. We know that a lot of hard work and thought goes into the decorating of the trees, by local people, clubs, societies and schools etc.

We appreciate the hard work involved in organising and manning the event, and so we take this opportunity of thanking those who make it all possible, for without their input this event would not be able to take place.

As usual we entered a tree and this year our theme was "The Fruits of Epping" all the fruits, berries and seeds used in decorating the tree, were collected on walks in the town of Epping and its open spaces. We look forward to having the opportunity of taking part, as it is such a wonderful occasion and a lovely way also for local charities to benefit and it certainly helps to bring the community together.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH – December 6th 2009

This year was my first year of organising the lunch, in the past it was successfully organised by Jacky Smith and her husband Dennis. They helped me tremendously and guided me to what I hope was a successful lunch. It was a wonderful way to meet with members socially and chat. We had a very enjoyable meal and to end the afternoon Norman Lansdown Davis entertained us on the piano with carols and songs - he asked for 5 men to volunteer and join him at the piano for a singsong, it was fun with everyone joining in, and was a great way to end the afternoon, so, a big thank you to Norman Lansdown Davis and his excellent choir.

May I also take this opportunity to wish you all a healthy and happy new year.

Doreen Tarling

Membership News

It has been a good year for increasing the Societies membership. After the success we had last year increasing membership at the Christmas Market, we had a stall at The Town Show with games for the children, photographs from the Society's archives, books of local interest and Epping memorabilia. We were able to increase our membership that day by 36. It was wonderful to see that many who joined were of the younger generation.

Our total membership is now annual members 408, life members 287 grand total 695.

For those of you who are annual members perhaps you will consider the benefits of life membership. The cost is not outrageous £10 single, £15 per couple. No more "postman" knocking on the door requesting subscriptions. Should you choose to make the change either tell your postman or contact me: De.Spence contact details on page 1

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES 2010

Wednesday 24th February

Annual General Meeting
Followed by a film from The Epping Cine Film Club
Pelly Court
8pm for 8.15pm - doors open 7.30pm
Refreshments will be served from 7.45pm

Wednesday 21st April

Members Meeting
"Hill Hall" - Theydon Mount
A talk by Anne Padfield on the history of a local building of historical importance, which The Society in its early days, campaigned for it to be saved from the threat of demolition.
Pelly Court
8pm for 8.15pm - doors open 7.30pm
Tea, coffee and biscuits available from 7.45pm

Non-members are welcome to attend the Members Meetings.

OUTING TO HILL HALL – Theydon Mount GUIDE - Anne Padfield

As many of you know The Society had some problems "filling" a coach on our last outing to Michelham Priory in spring 2008. The committee are proposing to arrange something a little different for this year. Whether you are able to attend the talk or not the visit will be of interest.

Hill Hall is owned by the crown and is in the custody of English Heritage. It is a substantial country house, with a chequered history and is a listed Grade 1 building. Private apartments sold on long leases now finance the upkeep of the building. As a result it is open to the public by arrangement only, on Wednesday afternoons March – October. Anne is the authorised guide for these open days and is prepared to show us both the interesting exterior, and those parts of the hall open to the public, including the rooms containing the famous wall paintings.

We have 2 possible dates –

Wednesday - May 4th

Wednesday - June 1st

Numbers are limited to 15 – 20. Cost £5 Concessions £4.30 & children £2.50. per person.

As the Hall is so local, it is thought we should be able to arrange transport among ourselves by those members willing to provide transport for those who will need "a ride".

If you are interested in the outing please complete the form below and return it with a cheque to cover the admission charges, either at the AGM or by post to:-

Doreen Tarling,
8 Lynceley Grange, Epping CM16 6RA

Places will be made available on a first come first served basis, please state preferred date and delete as appropriate if you are able to provide a lift or are in need of transport.

We will arrange a pick up point when we know transport availability.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No. _____

*Delete as appropriate

*Wednesday 4th May/*Wednesday 1st June

*Can provide transport/*In need of transport

Looking Back –

We are hoping to have an item of interest in each newsletter relating to the history of Epping, its characters or its buildings.

Charlie Geddes, a member, has kindly submitted for publication an article about Geoff Brewer a "local boy and his exploits growing up in Epping during World War 2" – Sadly there is not the room to include it in this edition of the newsletter, but copies of this article will be available at the AGM, Members meeting or from the editor. Contact details page 1.

Sense of Community

The Concise Oxford Dictionary shows one of the definitions of the word community to be – "the condition of having certain attitudes and interests in common". By being a member of The Epping Society you share with other members an interest in the wellbeing of the town. In order to have a "sense of community" it seems to me, that you have to make an effort to belong - it just doesn't happen – one has to become involved and it has to be worked at.

The committee updates have hopefully given you some idea of the work the Society involves itself in. We would welcome some new committee members - the only talent required is enthusiasm.

If you think you would find this interesting please contact Chairman David Sabire details page 1.

We, the committee hope that you have enjoyed the "new look" newsletter and that you have found the committee updates interesting. We would be interested in hearing from you our members – perhaps, if you have a concern over a planning issue, or there is something about the town that niggles and that you think the Society may be able to help, please inform us as otherwise we will never know!

We would also be pleased to "publish" within these pages your letters and views, to share with our other 694 members.

Contact Editor: De Spence details page 1