

AUGUST - 2010

Firstly, A Fond Farewell

It is with regret that the Epping Society has to say goodbye to a couple who will be sorely missed not just by the committee and its members, but also by many people in the town. Ted and Mavis Ellis have moved to Hampshire to be closer to family members. Mavis with her knowledge of the town, its trees and footpaths will be a hard act to follow, as will Ted with his love of the countryside and walking, and what are we to do at the Society's AGMs without Ted and the Cine Clubs films showing the past years events in the town.

We wish them much happiness in their new home and we hope that they will return to visit us not just soon but often. Those who know Mavis will remember her as a one off - there could never be another and as such she will always have a place in our hearts. Our committee meetings and social events will never be quite the same again!



THE (TYRES &) TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING*

The evocative photograph in the next column is in the Society's archive. It is a moment in time captured forever. One can imagine several scenarios revolving around the scene. The shop next to Pynes is Rowlands (still recognisable as Holland & Barretts). Pigot's trade directory of 1831 shows it as a chemist & druggist (and stationer and oil and colourman)!

If you have any photographs whether they are local buildings or street scenes or anything you feel may be of interest to the society and its members please contact us.

*apologises to Bob Dylan

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This edition of the newsletter marks the first under the chairmanship of Sue Allison, who bravely agreed to take on the post after recently moving to the district.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I accepted the role as Chairman for the Epping Society in February this year with some misgiving. Being a newcomer to Epping and therefore unfamiliar with the town and its surroundings, I did wonder how I could contribute to a Society that had been founded nearly 40 years ago by many long term residents of the area. However, with enthusiasm and determination (and research) I believed I could learn about past events and the history of both Epping and the Society. This I am attempting to do by familiarising myself with names, places and past planning outcomes, as well as current applications, and much walking in the town and its environs.

What I lack in background knowledge, I hope to counterbalance with dedication and an unshakeable belief that the original basis for founding Epping Society, which was to conserve and improve, still remains a significant purpose and one which I will strive to achieve with the help of our committee and all our members. Individual reports from our committee members will give you an overview of what we have been involved in during the last six months.

One matter we are still all trying to get more information on is what proposals there are for the now closed Epping Primary School and related buildings in St Johns Road. The promised brief for the end of 2009 from the EFDC has still not materialised but we are keeping on the case!

Sue Allison
Chairman

Committee Updates

Treasurer's Corner

For many years now the Epping Society's annual expenditure has exceeded its annual income, and we have run at a loss. Although the Society has a healthy bank balance (the result of previous fund raising) the £1 annual subscription, £10 single/£15 couple life membership which members now pay, nowhere near covers the Society's outgoings.

The choice before the Society is whether to raise the annual and lifetime subscriptions, indulge in fund raising activities, or leave things as they are and watch the Society's reserves dwindle.

What do you think? We would appreciate your input, please let us know.

John Hill

Planning Appraisals

Your Committee continue to monitor all the planning applications submitted to Epping Forest District Council for building works in our area and to submit objections to those which we consider to be inappropriate. However, in the six month period since our last edition, we have objected to only about half a dozen applications, a further indication of the low level of larger applications which we mentioned in our last report.

One change which has taken place is that Epping Forest District has ceased to issue their weekly planning bulletins. One has now to look them up on their web site, no doubt saving a considerable sum of money. This has the advantage that anyone can look at the site and see current applications and also access the Planning Committee's decisions and reasons for them - see www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ipian

One matter about which we think everyone will be pleased is that one of the first actions of the new Government has been to revoke the Gypsy and Traveller Direction. This has been confirmed by Coalition Minister Greg Clark, MP in response to calls by EFDC Leader Di Collins. Full details can be found by following the links on the home page of the EFDC web site. A Local Authority will no longer have to find suitable sites for new encampments. - see

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/news/2010/ **Gypsy and Traveller Direction Lifted**

One scheme which we previously mentioned was the work going on at either end of the Bell Common tunnel on the M25. This has now been completed and is perhaps not too intrusive, as yet there does not seem to be much evidence of the planting they proposed to disguise it.

A number of our members have drawn the committee's attention to several matters which are of concern. There is inappropriate and un-approved signage on a number of premises in the High Street, also the violent colour scheme of a certain premises. We have discussed these matters with a representative of the Planning Dept at EFDC and are assured that they are aware of all these matters and will take action where appropriate. However they apparently have no jurisdiction over colour schemes outside the Conservation area.

Iain Wallace

Publicity

Into the 21st Century - and beyond!

I have taken on the responsibility for publicity from Mavis Ellis. In order to further this, the committee has endorsed my suggestion of setting up a web site. We hope to create an archive of local photographs. The Epping Society has some 700 members so I am sure there will be a wealth of information. There will be a section with information on planning as well as links to other local organisations. The web address is: www.eppingsociety.org.uk - this is still **under construction** but is available for review on the web.

I would appreciate your comments on the site, so do please email me at web@eppingsociety.org.uk.

Loans of historical photographs of our town to history@eppingsociety.org.uk. These would be copied and returned.

Charles Geddes - 01992 573706

Walks

On the last Sunday of each month the Society shares a walk with The West Essex Ramblers. The walk starts from Epping Station at 10.00am. The routes are all circular and vary from month to month. The finishing time back in Epping is usually around 2pm. An average distance is 10 miles, covered at a brisk pace. There is also a stop for drinks only at a public house. Boots or strong shoes are recommended. The leaders are volunteers with experience of rambling. The walks planned for the coming months are as follows:-

29.8 Epping Green - Leader Rodney Want - 9 miles

26.9 Upshire - Leader Cecilia Gonzalez - 9 miles

31.10 North Weald Bassett - Leaders Ray & Jan Latham
10 miles (**End of British summer time**)

28.11 Loughton - Leader Bola Baruwa - 10 miles

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

London Green Belt Council

At a recent meeting of The London Green Belt Council there was discussion on the possible new Hon. President of the Council as the previous President Therese Villiers is now a member of the Cabinet.

A Report headed Green Belt: A Greener Future, survey commissioned by CPRE and Natural England was issued earlier this year but is only available on-line and runs to 139 pages! A summary of the report indicates that Green Belt policy continues to be highly effective in terms of its purpose of preventing urban sprawl and maintaining a clear physical distinction between town and country. Fresh evidence has been presented on the benefits Green Belt land is delivering and how these relate to the ecosystem services they provide. See - www.londongreenbeltcouncil.org.uk

Arthur Walker

The District of Epping Forest

An important document dated May 2010 written for the EFDC by specialist strategists was prepared for public consultation purposes to fashion the planning policy documents affecting the future of our district.

Like the Daily Mail columnist I staggered through the 141 pages of 'legalese' and national statistics not understanding what part I could play for the future of my town. Should you too wish to tackle this daunting tome it is titled **The Sustainability Appraisal & Habitats Regulations Assessment Scoping Report**, and is available from the Planning Dept of EFDC or is available on-line.

EFDC covers a large and diverse area. High density communities such as Waltham Abbey, Loughton, Buckhurst Hill to towns as Epping and Ongar, large villages of Roydon and North Weald together with rural villages and hamlets.

We are blessed with many conservation areas, woodlands and glorious countryside. Somehow reading the Scoping Report leaves me with a cold, factual "greyness" - it is as if the authors reside in Central London, surrounded by statistics, management plans, pollution information, spatial strategy documents and every other piece of collated information.

The Scoping document may look impressive it is impressive, but in its present form, I for one am lost to offer an intelligent comment. I think I shall pass it over to our new Parliamentary Communities Secretary - Mr Eric Pickles!!!

Ken Miller

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

Since the last issue of the Newsletter, we have had a change of government; changes are proposed which will help the environment. Eric Pickles, the Communities Secretary and a local MP, is writing to Councils in areas where the Green Belt has been threatened saying that they (the Councils) are now free to block such developments. It will no longer be possible to concrete over swathes of the country without regard to local people. And Gregg Clark, the Communities Minister is due to announce a change in planning regulations that will allow Councils to take garden land out of the brown field category rejecting applications to build on such land (garden grabbing). Both moves are welcomed by CPRE.

Other issues are of concern to CPRE. One is the increasing blight of the countryside by "clutter" comprising road signs, electricity pylons and phone masts. Another, is light pollution especially that caused by all night street lighting. Essex County Council has run trial schemes in Dunmow and Saffron Walden where street lighting was switched off during the night; surprisingly the fears of increased crime were not realised - crime rates actually fell! Another concern is noise. Many residents noticed a marked reduction in noise levels when aircraft flights were suspended due to Icelandic volcanic dust clouds. Graeme Willis, the Senior Rural Policy campaigner at CPRE National Office said "Perhaps the time is right to consider a "National Quiet Day" to remind us all of what we are losing in our rush to be somewhere else".

A bright light on the CPRE local scene is the news that the second runway at Stansted will not now be built.

Finally, the new chairman of CPREssex, Tom Holme, attended a recent meeting of the Epping Branch of CPREssex. He was impressed by the dedication and hard work of its members confirmed that CPRE remains committed to the preservation of the green Belt. He warned that the threat to the Essex countryside has never been greater than it is now.

Trevor Roberts

www.cpre.org.uk

Social Events

Town Show

We must congratulate the Town Council for organising the Town Show, a lot of hard work and hours go into the preparation, and on the day they are there to help, so a big thank you to everyone involved. It was a slow start regarding visitors no doubt due to the chilly weather, which did eventually improve, and people started to arrive. We had a display of photographs from the Society's archives, and books supplied by the Epping Bookshop of local interest were sold. We also had 2 children's games which proved to be fun, with every child participating taking away a prize. We would like to thank Geoff Walton, a founder member, for providing not only the fishing game but also the prizes which the children won on it.

Visit to Hill Hall

The Society organised 2 successful trips to Hill Hall in May and June, with Anne Padfield as our guide. There was much to take in on the history of the house and the occupiers who were various. Ranging from an Ambassador to France under the Tudors - Thomas Smythe, to, be it ever so briefly inmate, whilst it was a women's prison - one Christine Keeler. It appears to be a miracle that the wall paintings have survived the Hall's chequered past and the fire which nearly resulted in the Hall's demolition. The Society and our President Denys Favre along with other Epping town residents played an important part in saving the building from the bulldozers, and the paintings from obliteration due to water and weather damage. We were able to visit the nearby church of St Michael's where tea and cakes were provided. The church is truly worth a visit. It's interior quite belying its humble exterior and full of interesting memorials that relate to the history of the Hall and its occupants.

Members Christmas Luncheon

Owing to the need to get this newsletter out earlier than usual, may I remind you, that we are once again holding our members Christmas luncheon, which as always will be in December. We look forward to seeing you all, it is such an enjoyable member's event and for me it always marks the start of the Christmas season. Forgive me for having to mention that word, while we still have some summer sun to look forward to. We, the committee look forward to seeing you there.

Date - 5th December - Venue - Pelly Court, Hemnall St, Epping - Time 12.30 for 1p.m.

Cost - £18.50

Contact: Doreen Tarling, 8 Lynceley Grange, Epping, CM16 6RA Tel: 01992 574754

Membership News

Once again we are able to report a rise in membership. As well as picking up a few along the way, we were able to sign up 13 new members at the Town Show. We now have 699 members. As you may have read there is some discussion about the need to raise the subscription. For those who are annual members perhaps now, before subs are due again in January, you may consider the alternative of Life Membership, £10 for single life membership/£15 per couple. There are good reasons for choosing life membership too, not only good value, but it puts an end to the "postman" knocking every year to collect your £1. By subscribing for life it also means you have the alternative of receiving your copy of the newsletter by email. Should you choose to make the change either tell your postman or contact me.

HELP, I NEED SOMEBODY*

If you enjoy taking a stroll though Epping, would you consider becoming a "postman" for the Society. Twice a year newsletters are delivered and subs collected. We have recently "lost" a couple of postmen. It can be a pleasant task, getting to know other members and getting a chance to view a few front gardens along the way! If it appeals to you, please contact me:

De Spence - contact details on Page 1

* apologises to The Beatles

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

2010

Wednesday 15th September

Members Meeting

The Future of Our Forest

A talk by Catherine Cavenagh

Pelly Court, Hemnall Street, Epping

8pm for 8.15pm - doors open 7.30pm

Refreshments will be served from 7.45pm - Free entry for members - Open to non-members 50p

Sunday 5th December

Members Christmas Lunch

12.30p.m. for 1p.m.

Pelly Court, Hemnall Street, Epping

Cost: £18.50 includes welcoming drink

2011

Wednesday 23rd February

AGM -

Pelly Court, Hemnall Street, Epping

8p.m. for 8.15p.m. - doors open 7.30pm

Free refreshments will be served from 7.45. This meeting is a member's only event.

Letters to the Editor

In the last newsletter we asked for your comments and views and below is printed the one reply we received. We welcome you to reply to this or other considerations you may have on the Society, its interests and concerns.

EPPING SOCIETY some thoughts

In the early days of the Society, those people who cared about what was happening to their environment,

Particularly locally, were regarded as members of the long haired, sliced bread, sandal clad brigade. I recall demonstrating, with others, against the threat to our countryside of the M25, much protest over the proposal to erect the enormous Civic Offices in the High Street and some of us marched to save the A&E at St Margaret's. Not a lot was achieved except we got a cut and cover at Bell Common instead of a cutting.

However due to our local efforts, and those of similar groups across the UK and Europe, people and more importantly, governments national and local, began to show interest in environmental matters. The Green Party was formed in Germany and we have a UK equivalent. Generally now the public are more concerned with environmental matters than they were in the early days of the Epping Society.

Where does this current situation leave the Society ?

I suggest that the only locals who are aware of the existence of the Society are its members because it has such a low profile.

Many of the founder members are not as young as they used to be and unable to go out into the countryside erecting posters or chaining themselves to trees to prevent their demolition so that an architectura' monstrosity can be erected.

This is the age of the Action Groups i.e. NIMBYs, who will be very much concerned with what is happening in their immediate vicinity but unconcerned by some environmental disaster that is a mile away.

I suggest that the Society will have to adopt a support role to these groups and where necessary try to coordinate action across our area of interest. We have lost the local newspaper which was more Epping focussed than the current version. Hence I would suggest that the Society newsletter becomes more informative of local environmental activities that will be of concern to the membership. Perhaps significant planning applications could be listed,

I am sure members will have areas of environmental concern that they wish to communicate hence encourage them to air their views in the newsletter.

I suggest that The Way Ahead for the Society or a mission statement is something that should be given urgent attention by the Committee

A. F. LOY

Newsletters by email

I apologise to those members who may not be turned on by the recent technological revolution, but as you will read the Society is attempting to move into the 21st century. This issue is the first that will be available by email. We are hoping that many life members take the decision to receive future copies in this way. Should you decide to receive your copy by email, please contact me at eppsocmembership@live.co.uk. I will send an email in reply, testing the address, so please look out for it. Remember though, that should you change your email address unless you advise us, future newsletters will not get through.

Looking Back -

Alas there is insufficient space for this item in this issue space permitting we will return to it in the next issue.