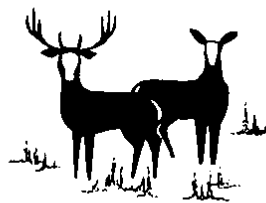


# *Theydon Bois and District Rural Preservation Society*



Hugh Meteyard

View across the Village Green, late afternoon in January.

## **Newsletter and Notice of AGM 2020**

On **Friday 3rd July 2020** at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall there will be an illustrated talk: *From Hospital to Field Centre; Suntrap its History & its Future* by Kerry Rolison, Head of Suntrap. This will be followed by refreshments and the **Annual General Meeting** which will start at approximately 9.00 pm. All are invited to attend. Please see page 12 for the Notice of Meeting.

On **Friday 9th October 2020** at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall there will be an illustrated talk: *Essex Landscapes Near and Far* by Tricia Moxey. Admission free – all welcome.

For further details of the proposed talks see page 11.

In view of the current Coronavirus situation the Society has decided not to distribute the newsletter or collect subscriptions this year. The position regarding the Society's future events is uncertain and up-to-date information can be found on the Society's page on the Village website, [theydon.org.uk](http://theydon.org.uk)

## Officers for 2019/2020

PRESIDENT	Michael Chapman, Goosebury Hall, Epping Long Green	575451
CHAIRMAN	Peter Newton, 26 Hornbeam Road	813708
VICE-CHAIRMAN	Martin Boyle, 9 Elizabeth Drive	813132
SECRETARY	Jim Watts, 69 Hornbeam Road	812027
TREASURER	Martin Boyle, 9 Elizabeth Drive	813132
MINUTES SEC'Y	Valerie Suckling, 85 Dukes Avenue	812418

## Executive Committee

Liz Burn	Barry Frankland	John Everett	Robert Levene	Caroline Lowe
Nicola Maher	Hugh Meteyard	Anthony Purkiss	Trevor Roberts	

## The Society

It was founded in 1943 to improve, protect and preserve Theydon Bois village and the surrounding countryside. Since then the Society has intervened where undesirable development was proposed and has, in some cases, helped to prevent ugly overdevelopment and the destruction of our rural environment. This is not solely a negative exercise and where possible constructive comments and suggestions are made. The Society also joins with other organisations such as the Parish Council and the Epping Forest Conservators in discussing and seeking solutions to matters of common concern.

If you feel strongly about the future of Theydon Bois, let us know your opinions by contacting a member of the Society's committee. And, of course, the larger our membership the better able we are to represent the interests of the Village. Help us to do this by joining the Society.

For the latest information visit the 'Preservation Society' page on the Village website - [www.theydon.org.uk](http://www.theydon.org.uk)

## Chairman's Report

Every year I appeal for new Committee members and the good news is that since the last AGM John Everett has joined us! Only three vacancies to go! The Parish Council Planning Committee meets twice a month and as these are open to the public we try to ensure that the Society is represented as local planning applications are discussed. We are fortunate that John Everett is interested in these matters and has helped out in this way.

As part of our regular monitoring of planning applications for the village, the Society puts up a list of the current ones for you to see on our noticeboard next to the estate agents. Each one has a number that you can look up on the Epping Forest Website where details of the plans are set out and then you have three weeks to make a comment if you so wish. Over the year the Society has objected to a number of applications that we thought were incompatible with the Green Belt, which the Society was set up in 1943 to support, or that were out of keeping with the ambience of the village as a

“forest village”. Details are in a later article headed “Planning Matters”.

The way in which local housing and infrastructure develops is governed by the rules set out in the Local Plan and as many of you will know it has to be revised and updated from time to time and the current New Local Plan is in the final stages of being completed and adopted. During its preparation the number of new houses earmarked for Theydon Bois was 57 and one of the sites for a few of them in the village was on the corner of Coppice Row and Orchard Drive where Wain and Green Hedges are at the moment. At the time of writing, February 2020, it looks as though this is the first one to be applied for and the plans indicate it will be similar to Pavilion Court on the opposite corner. Incidentally, last year I mentioned that the replacement for the Sixteen String Jack Public House was under way and this has now been finished and is called Chestnut Mews. The site is less crowded than first envisaged and the flats and house are in the process of being sold.



Hugh Meleyard

Chestnut Mews on the site of the Sixteen String Jack pub

During 2019 the Society organised four guided walks in the countryside around the village led by various members of the Committee and these were well supported and enjoyed by those taking part. We had planned to do the same again in 2020 in April, May, (now cancelled) June and September. In addition we have made arrangements with The City of London for a walk to include a visit to the Deer Sanctuary. All the walks are free and there is no need to book except for the one to the Deer Sanctuary, where the numbers will be limited to make them manageable, and there will be a requirement to book a place in advance. Detail about all the walks is on page 11.

At our AGM in July Catherine Hammond, the museums Education Officer, enthralled the audience with her illustrated talk about Walter Spradbery. The Epping Forest Museum has a collection of the paintings of the late, local artist Walter Spradbery many of which were used by the London Underground in days gone by and in fact the Epping Forest Sign on the village green is based on one of them. This year at our AGM on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July we will have a talk by Kerry Rolison on ‘The Suntrap Forest Centre’.

In October an appreciative audience attended our talk by Vic Knope who outlined the life and times of Boudicca/Boadicea with illustrations of her life and times in the Iron Age of which our local Ambresbury Banks is an example. This coming Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October we look forward to an illustrated

talk by Tricia Moxey FBNA on 'Essex Landscapes Near and Far'.

The village Donkey Derby is always a notable event in the life of the village and the Society put on its usual exhibition of pictures of the origins of the Donkey Derby that date back to the 19C. Sadly the man who revived our village Derby, Peter Simmance, died earlier this year. We plan to do the same this year and make our usual contribution to the Scout Group by paying for a page in the Donkey Derby Brochure. It will be held on the 12<sup>th</sup> July.

In keeping with the Society's aim to maintain the Green Belt we have agreed to make a donation towards the restoration of the 'hoppit', the open grassland on the corner of Coppice Row and Piercing Hill, that the Parish Council plans to restore in conjunction with the Church and the City of London.

The Society was founded in 1943 during the last war when villagers were anxious to preserve the countryside around the village when post-war building restarted. So far that objective has been met for the most part but the threat remains and the Society needs active Committee members to carry on the fight. As I wrote at the beginning we still have three vacancies; we meet six times a year on a Tuesday evening in the Village Hall from 8pm to about 10pm – the dates are on our page in the village website and on our noticeboard in the garden of The Bull public house.

Finally I would like to thank the members of the Committee for all their support in maintaining the aims and objectives of the Society in its 76<sup>th</sup> year and to the volunteers who valiantly distribute our Newsletter and collect subscriptions.

Peter Newton

## Plant Histories 10 - Candles and Conkers

The horse chestnut tree (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), a native of the Balkans, was introduced to Britain in the late 16th C. It is a large wide-spreading tree which can reach up to 38m in height. At first it was planted in the grounds of big houses with chestnut avenues surviving to this day; but it is now a familiar sight in town parks, churchyards and village greens as well as by roadsides and in waste ground. As stated by Richard Mabey in his *Flora Britannica* the 'spreading chestnut tree' has become a symbol of village tranquillity as well as the theme of music-hall songs and dances. A feature of the tree is its sticky winter buds which burst in spring to reveal the large digitate leaves each with 5 to 7 leaflets.

The horse chestnut was originally placed in the family Hippocastanaceae but in 2010 modern taxonomists decided on the basis of DNA analysis that this family should be



Horse chestnut in blossom, Coppice Row. May 2019.

Barry Frankland

merged into the Sapindaceae (the soapberry family). The same fate has befallen the maple family (Aceraceae). The word 'horse' in the name probably signifies that its 'nuts' are inferior to those of the unrelated and more palatable sweet or Spanish chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), a member of the beech family and the original holder of the name 'chestnut'. However, the tree is called 'horse chestnut' in Turkey where its seeds have long been used as food and medicine for horses suggesting another reason for the name. There is also a 'horse sign' in the tree: when the leaves fall in autumn they leave behind a horse-shoe shaped scar with small nail-like marks.

Flowers, produced from mid April to mid May, have five fringed petals which are white with a blotch of red or yellow at the base. They are grouped in stiffly erect conical inflorescences often referred to as 'candles'. There was an old tradition of Chestnut Sunday when people had picnics under the blossom laden trees. This was revived by enthusiasts in 1977 to be held on the nearest Sunday to 11th May.

The fruits which eventually develop are green and globular, about 6cm in diameter with short, sharp and flexible spines. When ready to fall in September they split to release one large globular seed (or sometimes 2 or 3 seeds with flattened sides). These glossy red-brown seeds are the 'conkers', the material for the most widely played children's game involving plants. They are the origin of the colour 'chestnut' used to describe both hair and horses. Although frequently referred to as nuts they are strictly speaking seeds, a nut being a single-seeded fruit with a hard covering. The edible chestnuts from the sweet chestnut tree are true nuts. Conkers are usually gathered from the ground or those higher up the tree knocked down with sticks or stones. A hole is made through the conker with a skewer and threaded on to a knotted string. Two players have alternate strikes at each other's conker with the winner being the one who breaks his or her opponents 'nut' so that no pieces remain on the string. If both conkers were new ones then the winner becomes a 'one-er'. If, for example, a two-er were to defeat a tenner it would become a twelver. Perhaps unsportingly, some conkers were hardened by baking in an oven or soaking in vinegar. According to Richard Mabey a World Conker Championship has been held since 1965 at the village of Ashton in Northamptonshire. The first record of the game of conkers was in 1848 but in earlier centuries children were playing 'conquerors' with hazel nuts and snail shells.

Conkers are mildly poisonous but there are no records of



Horse chestnut candles (inflorescences).



Horse chestnut fruits in August. Note browning of leaves damaged by leaf-mining caterpillars.

Barry Frankland

Barry Frankland





Conkers: large seeds of horse chestnut. Collected near Greensted Church early October.

children suffering ill effects from nibbling the hard bitter flesh. Conkers contain soap-like chemicals called *saponins* which have sometimes been used in shampoos. In Victorian times there were recipes for making a 'flour' by grinding the conkers and leaching out the bitterness with hot water. More recently scientists have discovered that *aeosin* extracted from the seeds is an effective remedy for sprains and bruising.

In summer whitish patches often appear on leaves; these turn brown

making the tree look as if autumn has come early. This browning of the leaves is caused by a tiny alien species of leaf-mining moth (*Cameraria ohridella*) whose caterpillars eat the leaves from the inside. This is not in itself fatal to the tree but does weaken it and make it susceptible to a bacterial disease called 'bleeding canker'. The pathogen (*Pseudomonas syringae aesculi*) can overwinter in the soil and spread to the bark of the tree by wind and rain. This relatively new disease has increased rapidly in the UK since 2003 and now half of our horse chestnuts are infected. Research is underway to develop treatments for infected trees (eg heat treatments by Wageningen Plant Research in The Netherlands) as well as management procedures to reduce the risk of infection.

There are several species in the genus *Aesculus* many of which occur in eastern North America. Most are called horse chestnuts but some are known as buckeye trees because the large seed resembles the eye of a deer. An example is the American or Ohio buckeye (*A glabra*). The 'spreading chestnut tree' of Longfellow's famous 1842 poem *The Village Blacksmith* is probably the American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*), a relative of the sweet chestnut; this has been devastated by the spread of the fungal disease 'chestnut blight'. The red horse chestnut (*A x carnea*) often grown in parks in the UK is a hybrid of the European horse chestnut (*A hippocastanum*) and the American red buckeye (*A pavia*). The Indian horse chestnut (*Aesculus indica*) is also grown in this country.

Barry Frankland

## Forest Fungi

As John Fry said in the February Church Newsletter Theydon Bois is a place where we are surrounded by the beauty of the natural world. We are indeed fortunate to have Epping Forest on our doorstep. When most of us think of Epping Forest we think about the trees, over 500,000 of them with at least 50,000 veteran or old trees. But most of these trees could not exist without the benefit of mycelium. These are thread-like, underground fungal webs that exist beneath every forest and wood sometimes called the "world

wood web". In many ways these threads are the glue that ties the forest together and many trees are thought to communicate via the web. Things such as pests, disease, water and more that researchers are yet to discover.

It is the flowering body we call fungus or sometimes toadstools or mushrooms (this last term is one I try to avoid, particularly with children, as they are used to seeing mushrooms as an edible item in the shops) and of course many types of fungi are either inedible or outright poisonous.

Epping Forest, which is now a charitable trust, is owned and managed by the City of London at very little expense to the local community and is protected from development by its own Acts of Parliament including the Epping Forest Act 1878 & 1880. What you may not know is that most of the forest is also protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with parts protected as a European Site and it is hoped that soon it may be designated a World Heritage Site. The reason for this is not just the trees, but the massive range and variety of fungi found in the forest.

By some counts there are over 1,600 different varieties of fungi to be found in the forest, but it is quite possible for even a non-expert to spot dozens of varieties, mainly in the autumn, in our local woods.

In autumn 2019 I led a walk just off Jack's Hill and we spotted literally dozens of varieties of fungi of practically every colour of the rainbow from bright red, orange, yellows to every shade of brown, grey and blue.

Unfortunately some people illegally pick the fungi, thus destroying or weakening the biodiversity. It is unfortunate that many of these people were picking edible and inedible types by the kilo in the hope of selling some. The forest keepers were kept busy confiscating the fungi and prosecuting the people.

So next autumn why not go for a walk, often just off the main paths, and look at this wonderful tapestry, being careful not to tread on them or touch them.

*Robert Levene*

## Planning Matters

As usual the Society continues to monitor planning applications and comment on any that adversely effect Theydon Bois or our Green Belt. Epping Forest District Council received 3,094 planning applications for the whole of the district during 2019 which was a reduction of nearly 500 in



Shaggy Inkcap  
(*Coprinus comatus*).

Hugh Meleyard



Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria* var. *muscaria*).

Hugh Meleyard

comparison to 2018. Theydon Bois saw a small reduction of approximately 7% in the applications for our parish. The Society continues to produce its weekly list of the Planning Applications for Theydon Bois that it extracts from the full Epping Forest District list. We post this on our Notice Board adjacent to Butler & Stag Estate Agents at 4 Forest Drive so that villagers can easily check applications that may affect them.

There were **94 planning applications for Theydon Bois** registered in 2019 and this is only **7 fewer** applications than the last year that saw a return to more typical levels for our parish after a previous few years of gradual decline. The **Society only wrote 10 letters directly to EFDC** with regard to the planning applications for Theydon Bois, or in our surrounding Green Belt, that gave us cause for concern during the year (we wrote 39 in 2016). There were a number of factors involved in the reduction of our submissions to EFDC over the last year including illness of our usual planning committee member. As our Chairman mentioned in his report we now have a new committee member in John Everett who joined us following the last AGM and he has taken a particular interest in the planning issues affecting Theydon and its Green Belt and is now ably contributing to our planning team so we have now strengthened our team here. A further factor in the reduction is the continued increase in the number of people using the ‘easing’ of Permitted Development Rights by the government a few years ago that has now encouraged many villagers to just build within these rights without submitting a formal planning application. Permitted development now allows the building of a single storey rear extension out to 8 metres on a detached house or 6 metres on a semi-detached house without a formal planning application. It is though sensible, but not a legal requirement, to submit an application for a ‘Certificate of Lawfulness’. We are seeing an increasing number of these ‘Certificate of Lawfulness’ applications that are still of concern as, in theory at least, the Parish Council and the Society are not allowed to submit objections to these applications as it is up to the District Council alone to decide if the proposal is ‘lawful’. In spite of this we have continued to write to EFDC on a few occasions indicating with the benefit of our local knowledge why a particular application may not be lawful, but unfortunately in some cases the approval has come prior to our input. We are also fortunate that Cllr Liz Burn who sits on the Parish Council committee is also a Society Committee Member and previously one of our ‘planning team’. As a member of the Parish Council’s Planning Committee she is not allowed to discuss any planning applications with us prior to the PC Planning Meeting as she is ‘fettered’ by the rules, but she brings a lot of expertise to that committee.

Our Parish Council holds regular Planning Committee Meetings, usually every two weeks, to consider the applications made for Theydon Bois. At least one of our committee members, but usually two or more attended all of these Parish Council Planning Meetings during 2019 to add our contribution to the discussions. The Parish Council Planning Meetings are open to all members of the public and the dates of these meetings in 2020 can be found on the new Parish Council Website (<https://theydonbois-pc.gov.uk/>).



PC Agendas can be seen on the Parish Council's Notice Board or obtained from the Parish Clerk. If you have made an application to EFDC or are a neighbour who has concerns about a nearby application it is well worth attending these meetings and it seems that recently more people are taking up this opportunity.

As we mentioned last year that EFDC have toughened the rules and this now allows Planning Officers alone to decide on applications **unless** the Parish Council attends the Area Plans Meeting and speaks against the application. The rules for 'Interested Parties' have also been toughened. Sometimes it is not always possible to find a speaker on the particular night of the meeting and then the Planning Officer's recommendation is automatically accepted. This is of concern as in the past we have found that a number of these recommendations for approval were wrong and they were subsequently refused by the Area Plans Committee after reading the objections and debating the merits. The correctness of some refusals has often been validated when the Planning Inspectorate dismisses the appeal if made by the applicant following the refusal. In our case the deciding committee is EFDC Area 'Plans East' and we are grateful that our Parish Council Planning Committee made a real effort during 2019 find someone to speak on the night, usually Cllr. Peter Gooch or Cllr. Liz Burn. Our Society committee members also try if possible to attend and speak at these EFDC Area 'Plans East' and 'District Development Control' committee meetings in support of any objections we have made in addition to the Parish Councils objection. Three representatives are allowed to speak at the committee meeting prior to the councillors debating and deciding on an application – the applicant, or their agent, the Parish Council and one other objector. Applicants then still have the right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate if they believe a refusal by EFDC is not justified.

### **Major Issues in 2019:**

**Local Plan** – EFDC submitted the New Draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 21st September 2018 for independent examination. The Public Hearing sessions finally got under way on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The sessions specific to Theydon were towards the end of the Hearing Dates in 2019 and some of our Committee Members attended these meetings. During its preparation of the Submission Version of the Draft Local Plan three sites were selected for development in Theydon and the total number of new houses earmarked for Theydon Bois was 57. This was a considerable reduction in the initial number proposed following some many excellent submissions defending Theydon and our Green Belt from all quarters of our community. The submitted New Local Plan continued to accept that the railway line to the east of our village acts as one of the defensible boundaries of our Green Belt, but attempts at development harmful to the openness of the Green Belt continue along and around the Abridge Road (see below). At the hearings the Inspector gave very little weight to the submissions made by the developers, their agents and legal

teams who attended and pushed hard to further increase the number of sites and homes to be built. The next opportunity for residents to make further comments on any Main Modifications to the proposed Local Plan required by the Planning Inspector is likely towards the second half of 2020. An issue was raised by Natural England and the Conservators of Epping Forest at the Examination in Public about the impact of housing development, traffic movement and air pollution on the integrity of Epping Forest (SAC – Special Conservation Area) and its habitats led the Planning Inspector to action EFDC to provide evidence “beyond reasonable scientific doubt” that the effects of increased development would not be adverse in this respect. At present over 200 new builds in the Epping Forest District are awaiting final planning approval because of this lack of evidence.

As we prepare this for press the first of EFDC selected development sites (THYB-R3) is on the

**corner of Coppice Row and Orchard Drive** now has a submitted planning application (EPF/3001/19) that proposes a 9 apartment block, similar to Pavilion Court on the



opposite corner, but much larger and with only 6 parking spaces for the 9 apartments that include a large penthouse. In its present form the Society is of the opinion that this proposal on this sensitive site between the listed Grade II Baldocks Farm House and The Green is unacceptable and we have submitted a strong objection. It should be noted that the Draft Local Plan (see above) suggested that 6 dwellings were a possible suitable maximum number for this site.

**Mossford Green Nursery, Abridge Road** we submitted a strong objection to this proposal to build 19 new homes in this non sustainable Green Belt location. EFDC have not yet decided on this application.

**Blunts Farm, Coopersale Lane** we submitted a strong objection to the construction of 3 new dwellings including basements on this Green Belt site. We are glad to note that EFDC has refused this application.

**Bowlands Meadow, Theydon Road** we submitted a strong objection to this proposal to build two large new dwellings within the garden of the property on this Green Belt site. EFDC has not yet decided on this application.

*Jim Watts*



## Talks

### **Kerry Rolison, *From Hospital to Field Centre; Suntrap its History & its Future*, Friday 3rd July**

Kerry Rolison, Head of Suntrap, will give a talk on the history of Suntrap Forest Centre, Lippits Hill, where she has over 30 years experience of leading environmental educational activities for forest visitors.

### **Tricia Moxey - *Essex Landscapes Near and Far*, Friday 9th October**

The Essex landscape is surprisingly varied and has been modified over time by human intervention. This illustrated talk will encourage you to explore some of hidden gems of Essex.

Tricia has lived in Essex since 1970 and since then has discovered its rich history and expansive landscapes. She is a member of the Essex Gardens Trust and is currently involved in helping with the research into the designed landscapes around Colchester. She was awarded a Fellowship of the British Naturalist Association last summer.

## Walks

As usual, all the walks will be on Sunday afternoons starting at 2.00pm from the Village Hall. Please note that the Village Hall car park may be closed if there are no other events at the Hall that day and even if there is, we do not suggest parking at the Village Hall as you could get locked in.

All the walks will be at a moderate to medium pace and last around 2 hours. These walks are intended to be an enjoyable way to see parts of the Village and its surroundings that you might not normally notice and to learn a little bit about the history. Children are welcome on all of the walks as are dogs, (except in the Deer Sanctuary) providing they are on a lead and well behaved. Please wear appropriate footwear and clothing.

- Sunday 5th April - **An Iron Age Fort - make your stand against the Romans.** A walk to Ambresbury Banks which according to legend is the site of the last stand by Boudicca against the Romans in 61AD - although there is no evidence to support this.
- Sunday 3rd May - **Theydon Wood with an 'Earth Sculpture' and views.** A walk to the new Theydon Wood via Theydon's Sheep & Goat Farm. We can see (and walk) the 'Earth Sculpture' by Richard Harris and from there have views across London. Binoculars worthwhile.\*
- Sunday 7th June - **A Walk to Theydon Garnon & its Church.** A walk across the Blunts Farm site and a visit to Theydon Garnon Church.
- Sunday 6th September - **The Oak Trail with a Hill top View.** A walk through the Epping Forest Buffer lands on the Theydon Bois section of the trail.\*

\* These walks have stiles.

In addition there will be a walk including the Deer Sanctuary on 28th June. This is restricted to ticket holders and all tickets have already been allocated.

## Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Theydon Bois and District Rural Preservation Society will be held in the Village Hall on Friday 3rd July 2020 at approximately 9.00 pm. It will follow the talk by Kerry Rolison, which starts at 8.00 pm.

### Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 5th July 2019.
3. Chairman's Report – see page 2.
4. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement – to be tabled.
5. Election of Officers.
6. Election of Committee.

(A list of Officers and Committee Members is set out on page 2. All are available for re-election. Any other nominations for election as an Officer or Committee Member must reach the Secretary (see slip below) by 26th June 2020, duly signed by the nominee, proposer and seconder.)

7. Any other business, which must be notified to the Secretary by Friday 26th June 2020.

*J. Watts, Hon. Secretary*

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To: The Secretary, Theydon Bois and District Rural Preservation Society,  
69, Hornbeam Road, Theydon Bois.

Nomination for \_\_\_\_\_ (Officer/Committee Member)

Signed by: Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Proposer \_\_\_\_\_

Secunder \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_