

Sue's Scribe

We have had another good spring with a variety of tasks and have been joined by some new and old members.

The AGM was pretty well attended this year - thanks to all those who made it - I hope that you enjoyed the talk from Adam of Hatfield Forest. It will be good to have a couple of tasks there this Autumn to get to know the Forest a bit better. Not much has changed on the committee front - John and I are still sharing the chair and Lisa has joined us, `volunteering` to produce the newsletter - thank you.

John and Val have now sold their house in Essex (ask them about the spiders!) and moved up to Yorkshire permanently. They will still be taking part in the group and will be joining us for tasks and socials when they can.

Our main tasks this autumn will be in Danbury - coppicing and scrub bashing and hopefully some bonfires. We have also arranged some socials including a night at the dogs in Romford. The Christmas meal will be in January for a change - hope this is ok with everyone - more details to follow and Richard has kindly invited us all to share a pre-Christmas drink and nibbles at his after the task in December. I am still in the process of arranging a weekend task, probably for Spring 2010 so keep some weekends free!

Anyway enough from me! I am looking forward to seeing you out in the Essex country side over the next few months.

Sue

Thanks for everyone's contributions to this, my first newsletter (I have to say it is easier getting homework out of year 11 kids!!) Photos are courtesy of the internet and Kim – check out the 'arty' staircase shot!

The winter newsletter will feature 'calendar girls' style shots so get snapping!!!

YOUR COMMITTEE

Joint Chair	Sue	Publicity	Sue
	John	Newsletter Editor	Lisa
Secretary	Kim	Tools	Tim
Treasurer	Tim	Socials	Pauline & David
Membership	Gary	Midweek Task Coordinator	Colin
Task Coordinator	Sue	Committee Member	Keith

Next committee meeting - Monday 7th September 2009 at Gary's

newsletter

'What's been . . .

Grange Barn (Tidy Up) - 22nd March 2009

- 13th-century monastic barn
- Associated with a local Cistercian abbey
- Beautiful 'cathedral like' interior
- Interesting collection of farm carts
- Collection of local woodcarving tools and materials

This is all fantastic until you try cleaning the place! I thought my house collected the dust!! At least the sun was shining and we were surrounded by stunning artefacts and a beautifully restored building. A highlight after spending winter tasks in Danbury was a 'proper' toilet but I didn't realise it was possible to wear a feather duster out!!

Lisa



Copt Hall (Fencing) 26th April 2009

Today was a day of accidents!! It all started with Janet deciding the task wasn't hard enough with both hands intact that she needed to slice one open on a dirty barded wire fence. If that wasn't bad enough Pauline had to administer first aid with the contents of an exhausted first aid kit (you know what I mean – 14 triangular bandages and an eye patch!!) not what you need when the blood won't stop flowing!! Whilst all this was going on; Lisa, finding the task equally undemanding decided the only way too effectively dig a hole was whilst performing a backwards roll down the nettle covered slope!! The lack of a proper gymnastic style finish bought the awarded tariff down to 5.8 from the assembled judges. Why weren't they doing any work – I hear you ask? Luckily no one was seriously hurt but Stuart did spend the day wondering why these things didn't happen when Richard was in charge! Fortunately a new first aid kit has since been purchased and is still (as I write) intact!!

Lisa

Thorington Hall 10th May 2009

This was the first time we'd had a task at Thorington Hall (a Suffolk farmhouse built around 1600, located just to the west of Dedham).

The task was to slash back the nettles in the front garden and cut back and clear the overhanging branches of the mature trees. Although there were only four of us we made short work of clearing the nettles and I narrowly managed to avoid beheading a bunny that was hiding in the undergrowth!



After lunch, Dave gave us a tour of the house which is very quirky and boasts it's very own slaughter room ~ now there's something you don't often see in estate agents details nowadays!! It also has two staircases, once of which is Jacobean and the other is just plain treacherous with steps that slope at crazy angles!! Until last year the house was occupied but, although the National Trust has spent a considerable amount refurbishing the Tudor chimney pots, the whole house still needs much more spent on it to bring it back to its former glory.

Kim





**Tom and
Paula's
wedding**

**18th May
2009**



**The Old Armoury – Danbury Common
31st May 2009**

A lovely sunny day so lots of sun-block and hats were needed. About eight of us met with the main task being to repaint the Armoury. Richard, as usual gave us an informative introduction to the history of the building before we set to work on the painting - there was also some clearing of brush, painting of the barrier and bench (a lovely battleship grey) and some splitting of posts to be done.

We were joined a little later by three others, one of whom had had a late night being entertained at the British Legion- see Sarah for more details!!

Much applying of paint and climbing of ladders by the brave amongst us and we had soon completed the job. We then tried to dismantle the honesty box, but even the tractor could not solve that problem!! Another good day.

Sue



The original 'Old' Armoury was built in 1802 as a military store to support troops stationed on Danbury Common at a time when an invasion by Napoleon was thought possible. The original Armoury was destroyed by fire in 1996; this replica building is now used as a base for the National Trust Warden (Chelmsford District).

**Walk along Southend Pier
Sunday 19th April**

Instead of coppicing or fencing, we decided to put on our walking boots. About ten of us met up at the beginning of the pier. As we were strolling down, the train went past, and we waved at two of our members that couldn't walk, due to John previously having a fight with a bowling ball.

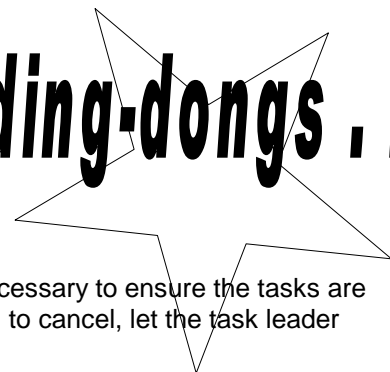
It was a lovely sunny day, but very breezy especially at the end of the pier. After strolling back, it was decided to amble along to the café's under the arches at Westcliff where we all had some lunch. Very enjoyable.

It made a change being along the coast, instead of working in the countryside.

Pauline

... going on?'

.. upcoming **TASKS** and **SOCIAL** ding-dongs ..



WEEKEND TASKS

Please contact the task leader by the Wednesday before the task. Prior notification is necessary to ensure the tasks are suitable, the correct number of tools is taken and to arrange any lifts needed. If you need to cancel, let the task leader know as soon as you can.

date	weekend task	task leader
Sunday 26 th July 2009	Copt Hall – fencing	Pauline and David
Sunday 16 th August 2009	Northey Island – tidy up	Gary
Sunday 30 th August 2009	Ray Island – scrub clearance	Kim
Sunday 12 th September 2009	Heritage Open Day	tbc
Sunday 27 th September 2009	Northey Island Open Day	Sue or John
Sunday 4 th October 2009	Hatfield Marsh regeneration	tbc
Sunday 1 st November 2009	Hatfield Marsh regeneration	tbc
Sunday 15 th November 2009	Blake's Wood/Danbury – coppicing or scrub bashing	tbc
Sunday 29 th November 2009	Blake's Wood/Danbury – coppicing or scrub bashing	tbc

MIDWEEK TASKS

If you are free midweek please join us on . . .

- The **first Monday** of each month (unless it's a bank holiday, then it's the second Monday) we meet at Melford Hall where we usually do gardening and a general tidy up around the estate.
- One **Wednesday** a month (19th August, 16th September, 21st October, 18th November, 16th December). Call Colin to find out the venues of the Wednesday tasks.

TASK LEADER NOT CONTACTABLE?

If you can't get hold of the task leader, please phone Sue and she will advise you of the arrangements.

SOCIALS

If you would like to come along to any of our socials, please contact Pauline or David to let them know you're coming.

date	social
Saturday 18 th July 2009	BBQ at Sue's House (bring your own food and drink)
Saturday 5 th September 2009	Romford dogs
Saturday 19 th September 2009	Go Ape – Kent (www.goape.co.uk)
Sunday 18 th October 2009	Autumn walk – circuit of Blake's Wood via Paper Mill Lock, approx 6 miles
Saturday 7 th November 2009	Fireworks at Danbury



If you'd like to attend a task or social, please contact the task leader or social coordinators in advance to let them know you're coming.
Thanks!