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Editor’s note - For those still musing over the whereabouts of the milestone on the front cover of the last issue of the newsletter - it is on the old Southampton Road at Cadnam, not far from the Sir John Barleycorn pub.

The Dome, Buxton - venue for the 2010 National Park Societies’ Conference hosted by Friends of the Peak District. See Chairman’s Report, p7

Photos: W Ziegler

Minstead Post Office
Christmas Eve 2004

Photo: G Babey

Forest Floor in Autumn

Photo: G Babey
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## Diary Dates 2011

**AGM & Member’s Day - Sat.16th April - Minstead Hall**

More details of events, with latest information and timings, on the Association website:

[www.newforestassociation.org](http://www.newforestassociation.org)
NEW EDITOR SOUGHT

This is the last issue of the Newsletter that I will be editing. I have rather over-stretched myself of late in the ‘volunteering’ compartment of my life, to the detriment of earning a living, and something simply had to give. As my work for the Association - in the capacity of Council Member, M&D Chairman and Newsletter Editor - took up by far the majority of my volunteer time, I made the decision this summer to tender my resignation, to take effect at the end of 2010. My commitment to the New Forest, and to the NFA as an organisation, is, of course, undimmed and as I am a Life Member I hope to keep in touch with matters affecting the future of both.

This means, however, that there is a vacancy for Newsletter Editor with immediate effect. If you feel that you, or anyone you know, may be able to help in any capacity with the production of a newsletter (it doesn’t have to look like this), please get in touch with any of the Council Members listed on page 20 of this issue.

I have edited the newsletter since the winter/spring 2006/07 number and my grateful thanks are extended to members who have responded to it so positively. For my final M&D committee report, please see page 12.

Georgina Babey

left - Foxlease Park when it was the seat of Henry Wayland Powell in the 1830s

For a report of the Autumn Event at Foxlease see page 12
Dear Editor

I very much enjoyed the latest NFA newsletter* but with reference to the picture on the inside front cover, I have this to say:

Ponies are ponies
Horses they are not.
It might seem immaterial
But it matters A LOT.

If they are loose in the water
At East End or wherever
They are ponies not horses -
New Forest ponies forever!

Daphne Du Pre
(email)

Ed. - I couldn’t agree more - so glad you picked up on my ‘deliberate’ mistake!

Dear Georgina

If I read correctly between the lines of your report on p.7*, I was very pleased to see that you gave short shrift to the suggestion that action should be taken to increase the number of people from ethnic minority groups visiting the New Forest.

I feel that the Mosaic Project should figure high in any list of useless, unjustifiable activities. The Forest is completely open to everyone. If ethnic minorities choose not to visit it that is up to them. Frankly, I cannot see that it matters a damn what mix of people visit us. In fact, I cannot understand why anybody even bothers to monitor it.

Dennis Lyle
Emery Down

Ed. - To clarify my position (and I stress that this is not necessarily the view of the NFA as a whole), I believe that the Mosaic project, irrespective of its merits, should be the brief of government-funded National Park Authorities (as, indeed, it is), but not the National Park Societies, such as the NFA, whose resources are often at full stretch.
NEW FOREST HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

Chris Caswell

Since first announced in this publication a year ago the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLS) for the New Forest, is fully in being and making a difference with 50 projects to be completed in Year 1. It replaces and subsumes the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS). Various descriptors are now associated with our scheme, but none is more pertinent than that of ‘unique’. External observers of the EU and Defra acknowledge our HLS scheme as unique because of the magnitude of this scheme to manage 20,000 hectares and the complexity of the conservation issues present. Within the New Forest the scheme is unique because of the Partnership forged between the Verderers of the New Forest, the Forestry Commission and the National Park Authority to implement this scheme. Our unique situation will become ever more important over the next months as the threat to sell off national woodland is met.

On 1 March our HLS scheme was officially launched with £1.6m available per annum to the New Forest to meet the 5 objectives of the HLS scheme; namely to enhance nature conservation and biodiversity, for landscape management, protection of natural resources, the protection of the historic environment and to enhance access and promote the education of people about the New Forest. Whilst the Verderers of the New Forest signed the agreement with Natural England, it was on the understanding that a Partnership would form to ensure that the monies would be spent not only by the Verderers on grazing related payments, to follow on from those of the CSS to commoners, but also, for £750,000 to be available for wetland restoration. Natural England encourages flexibility in the manner with which the New Forest meets the 5 conservation related HLS objectives so I ask you to be imaginative and bold with your ideas.

On my appointment as the Programme Manager in June I set about immediately to re-establish some working groups. Three were set up and modelled on those that were so successful in November 2009, when many of you helped source over 250 ideas and proposals for potential projects. It is early days as these new groups settle down into their modus operandi,
but their purpose remains the same – to source conservation projects for our HLS scheme. Ownership is key - the working groups enable every member of our community in the New Forest to have the opportunity to contribute to our HLS. Thus, the groups are fully transparent in their dealings as ideas and proposals come forward from both the public and institutions. The Board will make the final decision on merit and as to whether a spend is legitimate against the scheme principles set by Natural England. Finally, the working groups are accountable for each is chaired by a Partner’s officer, with at least one representative from each Partner to be present at a working group. The message from Natural England is clear, the New Forest either uses this money or loses it. In these uncertain economic times the success of our scheme rests in your hands. Not only is this cash injection vital to support and develop sustainable commoning but also, it enables a variety of other conservation projects. Already the range includes stream restoration, a new Commoners Census due in January 2011, bracken control work, support to eradicate non-native alien plants and new vehicles for the Agisters. Moreover in 2011 a full Laser Indicator and Infra-red (LIDAR) survey will be made of the New Forest by overflights that for the first time will give detailed data for conservation and work on historic features.

The progress of our New Forest HLS scheme will be reported in these pages, meanwhile if you have an idea and wish to take part in the working groups then do contact me for further advice, at chris.caswell@forestry.

Important notice from the Membership Secretary
We have now introduced a category of joint membership. If you and your spouse are both members of the NFA you will currently be receiving your own copy of each newsletter and every other mailing. If you would prefer to receive only one, and become joint members, please do contact me. With many thanks, Mrs Hilary Harper, Membership Secretary, Manor Farm, Plaitford, SO51 6EG, 07966 528406, hilary@harper.net
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Forestry Commission Cutbacks

As you may well have read or heard, up to 50% of the Forestry Commission’s holdings are to be considered for possible sale to private operators. This came as no great surprise to me, especially in light of the severity of the cuts being proposed to the DEFRA budget. What has not yet been made clear (at the time of writing) is whether the Forestry Commission in the New Forest will be included in the 50%. Personally I suspect it won’t, given the complexities of trying to sort out the ownership and running of the Crown lands for which they are responsible, but this does not mean we can afford to be complacent about the possibility.

I acknowledge that this country’s finances are in a mess and that cuts are unavoidable, but the New Forest is a special case due to its amazing and unique conservation value and cultural heritage. Qualities which, if lost, could not be reinstated once the funds start flowing again. These qualities are recognised not only in this country, with the recent change of status to National Park, but also the International recognition of its importance as demonstrated by the numerous layers of conservation-based legislation applied to it. The delicate balance between commoning, conservation, recreation and commercial forestry is easily disturbed and it is vital that whatever management expertise has been gained over the years is retained for the benefit of the New Forest and the nation. To achieve this I feel there is only one viable option available now, being an adequately funded local Forestry Commission. It may come as a surprise to some to hear me making such a statement, as over the last 140 years the Association has, on many occasions, taken issue with the FC (and its predecessors) over how the Forest should be managed. However, in recent years, these have tended to be about individual incidents as opposed to general policy.

My other area of concern is the housing stock held by the FC in the Forest. 38 of their houses are occupied by tenants exercising rights of common. In total they are responsible for the depasturing of 780 cattle and ponies, which represents just over 10% of the present total number of animals for which marking fees have been paid. It is widely acknowledged that the stock that graze the open areas of the New Forest are its true architects and vital to the maintenance of its conservation and ecological value.
Given that maintaining suitable levels of stock on the open Forest is crucial, we must also maintain the community of people who own and look after them. The problems facing commoners, especially younger ones, in finding affordable premises from which to carry out the practice of commoning is well documented, and this block of housing represents a vital contribution to the well-being of the Forest and must, under no circumstances, be disposed of for short term monetary gain.

There are precedents for the New Forest being made a special case and I believe that this should be the case now, thereby allowing the status quo to continue and helping to ensure the future viability and health of these internationally important lands. Hopefully, by the time this newsletter is published, we will have more detail on DEFRA’s proposals and my fears will be unfounded. If not we may have a fight on our hands - a fight the Forest can ill afford to lose.

2010 National Park Societies’ Conference
This year the conference was hosted by the Friends of the Peak District at the Dome in Buxton. The Dome is a fascinating building (see inside front cover for photos), which started its life as a magnificent 18th century stable block, built to house the 5th Duke of Devonshire’s horses and servants, and now forms part of the University of Derby. Built by John Carr of York the Devonshire Dome is supported by 44 pillars over a 150ft diameter, covering 1,300 square feet, making it the largest unsupported dome in Britain. Inside the overall visual effect is quite staggering as are the acoustics which are positively bizarre, especially if you stand in the very centre of the Dome. An experience I find impossible to accurately describe.

Buxton itself is a fine example of an 18th century Spa town modelled quite obviously on Bath. Originally settled by the Romans who called it Aquae Arnemetiae (or the spa of the goddess of the grove) it came to prominence in the late 18th century when developed by the local landowners, the Dukes of Devonshire. Having never been there before I was surprised by the charm and elegance of its buildings and gardens. The conference ran from Friday afternoon to Suday lunchtime, during which time we were well looked after and involved in numerous meetings and debates on subjects ranging from “What the Public Sector needs to do
better to help Rural livelihoods” to “Fundraising – Success and failure in raising money”. Not the most exciting sounding subjects I will admit, but interesting none the less, and of relevance to the Forest.

When I attended my first conference I was sceptical about their value, but as I attend more and get to know some of the other personalities involved, my opinion of their value increases. They are an excellent opportunity to swap views and experiences with others who are often struggling with similar problems to those that we are experiencing here in the New Forest. My sincere thanks to the Friends of the Peak District for hosting the event. NFA hosted the event in 2008 so I am well aware of the amount of work involved in organising such an event.

**Governance & Strategy**
The NFA Council has recently set up a working group to review all aspects of the Association’s work and documentation, including our rules and agenda. This is being done as not only does the Charity Commission expect us to be able to prove our relevance and efficacy so as to justify our charitable status, but also as we need to review how we operate, our relationship with our members and what they expect of us. What the outcomes will be is too early to tell, but I am confident that by the AGM we will have completed our work and be in a position to present to you, the members, our findings and recommendations for any changes that we feel need to be made.

William Ziegler

right - a postcard from the New Forest Centre collection titled “When shall we meet again” dated 1908. None of the people are named
No, not Obama and Hague, or even Bush and Miliband, for this walk took place on 9 June 1910 and involved President Theodore Roosevelt and Sir Edward Grey. Roosevelt was on his valedictory year tour following his second term in office and had requested a walk in the British countryside to hear bird song so that he might compare it with North American birds. Grey, an amateur naturalist, felt that he would be an appropriate companion.

Grey, who had a simple cottage beside the River Itchen, and had enjoyed stays at Brockenhurst with W H Hudson, decided that their walk should involve both areas. They took the train from London to Basingstoke and were then driven by car to Tichborne where they walked for seven miles along the Itchen to near Kings Worthy. From Kings Worthy they were driven to Stoney Cross and, following tea, walked a further seven miles, mainly along the course of the Highland Water, to the Forest Park Hotel at Brockenhurst, where they spent the night before Roosevelt sailed home from Southampton.

They saw a total of 41 species of bird, 22 of which they also heard. Roosevelt was particularly impressed by the song of the blackbird, the quality of which he fondly compared with the finest notes of the North American thrushes. As the light faded near the end of their walk they heard their last species – a nightjar.

An important conservation development in North America, often cited as an outcome of this walk, was the Migratory Bird Treaty, which the British Government – on behalf of the Dominion of Canada – co-signed with the USA in 1916. The Treaty was then passed by an Act of Congress in 1918 and has maintained the protection of migratory birds in North America ever since. Whilst Roosevelt was President he was responsible for the creation of the first National Parks, but it took until the 21st Century for Britain to follow suit in the New Forest and the Itchen Valley.

Various re-enactments have taken place since 1910. In May 1921 Lord
Grey (ennobled as Viscount Grey of Fallodon in 1916) did the Roosevelt Walk with Dr Frank M Chapman, Director of the Bird Section of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Then in 1932 Dr Chapman and Lord Grey selected a New Forest locality near Lyndhurst as the inspiration for Chapman to create a habitat group for display at his museum. The 41 species seen on the 1910 walk plus a further 10 species were then painted onto a background mural. It is understood that this exhibit still remains on display in New York. I have recollections that a local New Forest book collector, Marjorie Triggs, visited this exhibit, probably in the 1980s.

Lord Grey became Chancellor of Oxford University in 1928: he knew of the work of the young Oxford trained ornithologist E M (Max) Nicholson and supported his work as the principal founder of the British Trust for Ornithology. Max Nicolson went on to become Director-General of The Nature Conservancy and, in 1960, organised a commemorative walk for the 50th anniversary of the original walk. This only involved the New Forest section of the walk and took place on 10 June. It was co-hosted by Arthur Cadman, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, and followed closely on the signing of a New Forest Agreement, in 1959, between The Nature Conservancy and the Forestry Commission, which established three Forest Nature Reserves (Matley and Denny, Mark Ash, Bramshaw) and also referred to an additional number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Notable British conservationists attending included Peter Scott, James Fisher, Sir Julian Huxley and Dr Frank Fraser Darling. There was a strong US representation as its six participants were in Britain en route to the Warsaw meeting of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, together with the President of the Canadian Audubon Society. They were also joined by a very recently appointed local officer of The Nature Conservancy, Colin Tubbs, who was to undertake surveys of important species of birds in the New Forest as a temporary summer warden. He went on to work in the New Forest for a further 37 years and to champion its unique importance.

It is likely that this occasion provided an opportunity to discuss the planned creation of the World Wildlife Fund, which was formally created in September 1961, since all three of its principal founders, Nicholson,
Huxley and Scott, were present on the walk.

So, this is the background to the centenary celebration of the Walk, which took place on 9 June 2010. The instigators were Alan Cox of the Hampshire Ornithological Society and Steve Lankester of the New Forest RSPB Group. I had a copy of the booklet produced for the 50th anniversary walk and also had wondered how we might celebrate the 100th. After an enormous amount of work, virtually all carried out by volunteers, the event duly took place and we walked part of the Itchen Valley and then the whole of the New Forest section, ending with a meal at the Forest Park Hotel.

We were lucky to have relatives of both Roosevelt and Grey present for the walk, together with a representative from the US Embassy in London, and representatives from all the major conservation organisations in Britain. These included the newly appointed CEO of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the CEOs of the British Trust for Ornithology, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust; the Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, the New Forest National Park Authority, Southern Water, WWF, the Edward Grey Institute, Natural England, Hampshire County Council. The NFA was represented by Peter Frost. The occasion provided a unique opportunity to foster relations between the USA and the UK and for all these organisations to ‘network’ with each other.

Remember that only two people took part in the 1910 walk. (Imagine how many there would have to be today if the US President and the UK Foreign Secretary took a walk.) Many more also took part in this 2010 walk, including some very good birders who led the three groups. Thus, a much higher number of species were seen and heard - 67 species were seen in the Itchen Valley and 58 in the New Forest, making a combined total of 82 species (precisely double the number seen in 1910). However, some species seen in 1910 were no longer likely: the red-backed shrike which became extinct in its last British stronghold in the New Forest in the 1980s and the wryneck has been lost as a Hampshire breeder. Three further species seen in 1910 – grey partridge, turtle dove and nightingale – have declined so sharply in Hampshire that they were unlikely to be seen on the 2010 walk. But there are now species present that were not known in 1910 – mute swan, gadwall, tufted duck and Cetti’s warbler in
the Itchen Valley and firecrest, siskin and raven in the New Forest.

Acknowledgement: much of this information is taken from a booklet compiled by Alan Cox for the 2010 walk (Grey-Roosevelt Walk Centenary 2010).

MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

The summer season got underway with Copythorne Rally on June 13th and the NFA ‘roadshow team’ visited the Ringwood Festival, New Forest Show (3 days), Burley Show, Hamptworth Country Fayre, Nomansland Fête and the Romsey Show thereafter. 12 new members were recruited and over £1000 worth of merchandise sold. Grateful thanks are extended to the stalwarts who give unstintingly of their time to set up, man and dismantle the stand.

The Autumn Member’s Event at Foxlease on October 23rd, attracted a smaller number than the committee had hoped, but was, nevertheless, very much enjoyed by all. The weather was bright, and dry when it needed to be - i.e. for the tour of the grounds. Suzie Moore, our speaker and guide for the day, did a tremendous job in conveying her enthusiasm for Foxlease, both in its historical and current contexts. The staff at Foxlease produced an excellent buffet lunch and were as attentive to detail as they have been in the past. As you will know if you attended the event, or from recent press reports, the future of Foxlease as a centre for guiding hangs a little in the balance. We wish them all well. My thanks again to all those who supported on the day, especially Sylvia Edwards.

Whilst I have no wish to pre-empt the findings of the Governance & Strategy discussions (see p8) which are taking place within Council, the M&D Committee format may well undergo changes in the future.

Georgina Babey
HIGHTOWN COMMON COMMEMORATION

Peter Roberts (with thanks to Kate Ashbrook)

At the end of June a new seat was unveiled on Hightown Common commemorating links with our predecessors and other influential organisations. The old seat had fallen into dis-repair and has been replaced by the National Trust.

There is believed to be only one environmental body older than the New Forest Association. The Open Spaces Society was founded in 1865 as the Commons Preservation Society. Its founders and early members included John Stuart Mill, Lord Eversley, Sir Robert Hunter and Octavia Hill. The last two founded the National Trust in 1895 along with Canon Rawnsley.

Eversley, the last of the founders, died in 1928 when Hightown Common was under threat from building. He was a Hampshire resident and had taken a great part in the preservation of the area including the surrounding commons. Much of the early story is told in his book Commons, Forest and Footpaths (Cassell & Co., 1910). Rather than fight the potential developer it was decided to try and purchase the common as a memorial to his name. This was achieved and the area added to by a number of generous donations including one by our current chairman’s ancestor, Mr Dick Ziegler. The whole package was then presented to the National Trust in 1931 who have maintained the area ever since.

The original seat was designed by architect Elizabeth Scott whose niece

On the seat - Georgina Burrows, middle, with Ian Bradwell of the National Trust and Kate Ashbrook
Georgina Burrows was present to hear Kate Ashbrook, the general secretary of the Open Spaces Society make a speech reminding those present of the importance of the work of our forefathers in protecting the area. Kate is well known to many of the New Forest Association’s members as a former chairman of Campaign for National Parks (CNP).

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Core Strategy
Graham Baker represented the Association at the Inspector’s Inquiry in to the NPA’s plans – the Core Strategy - in September. We are grateful to him for the time and effort he put in, not only in attending but also for the considerable work required in producing the appropriate paperwork. This is detailed and time consuming work most often undertaken by professionals with a commercial axe to grind. In countering the latter’s views we believe that the inspector was able to better understand the need for restraint.

Following on from this we were pleased to note many changes that the NPA made to their plan prior to submission to the Inquiry. Although this is a weaker plan than we had hoped for originally we believe these changes have improved it. All new planning applications will now be adjudged on the basis of the Core Strategy which it is assumed will be nodded through by the NPA Members during their December meeting.

Liaison
We have invited representatives from the NPA and CPRE to our meetings in order to improve understanding and achieve better co-ordination where appropriate. Concerns remain about the working of the Commoners Housing Scheme which we hope to express at meetings with the NPA who have been asked to conduct a review of the Scheme.

Applications allowing holiday lets in inappropriate areas of the New
Forest remain a concern, and one we have raised directly with senior NPA officers. The weakness of the underlying legislation in regard to Conservation Areas was exposed by a builder at Warrens Cottage, Undershore Road, Boldre. He caused untold damage to the majority of the original historic building knowing that there was only the possibility of a minor fine. We have suggested to the NPA that ‘beefing-up’ the legislation should be a priority.

Peter Roberts

BEES AND BEE GARDENS

Anne Biffin

The only time my father was attacked by his bees, or “brownies” to give them their old Forest name, was when he visited them for a chat following a trip to his local. They objected to his unfamiliar smell and chased him off! Certain ancient cultures fasted, cleansed and were celibate before approaching the bees, and some religions allowed only priests or shaman to gather honey. This was to appease the spirits of the rock or tree where nests were found. The church believed bees had descended from heaven, and until the Reformation felt entitled to claim their honey and wax. Candles made from beeswax burn more cleanly than those made from tallow.

In 3500 BC bees were regarded along with snakes as sacred, but where snakes could represent good or evil, bees were always beneficient. Pythagoras attributed his longevity to regularly eating honey, and his home, the island of Samos, is famous for its fine produce. Circe seduced Ulysses and his crew with honey and strong wine. In Egyptian mythology bees were thought to have been created by tears from the eyes of Ra the sun god, writing, “Again Ra wept, the water from his eye fell on the ground and became a bee. When the bee had been created to work on the flowers of every plant, that is how wax came to be, from Ra’s tears.”
Superstition surrounding bees caused them to be exchanged rather than sold, unless bought for gold. The preference was to exchange them for wheat or the owner would not prosper. “Telling the bees” was another superstition which no doubt is still observed today. If the bees are not informed of a death in the family it is believed they will desert the hive.

Britain was known as the “Honey Island”, and the New Forest with its sweeping acres of heath has long been an important source of honey production. Skeps, or bee pots, were placed on the edge of the heath in bee gardens. These were small oblong or circular embankments, usually ditched and topped by a hedge to protect the skeps from inquisitive livestock. Early skeps of woven wicker were eventually replaced by ones made from coiled straw. They stood on little wooden platforms and were capped with straw bee hackles, or hakes, to protect them from rain. Heywood Sumner’s *Cuckoo Hill, the Book of Gorley* has a delightful watercolour of James Bush’s cottage at Woodford Bottom. It is a perfect illustration of a cluster of skeps standing on their platforms topped with straw hakes. In the same book Sumner describes three circular bee gardens in Chibden Bottom near his home at Cuckoo Hill, which are also shown on his map of the area.

The practice of bee-keeping in the New Forest is reflected in some of the place names. Examples are Hive Garn (Garden) near Pitt’s Wood, and Anthony’s Bee Bottom on Goatspen Plain near Burley. As recently as the 1930s a bee garden was still in use near Boldre. On bee gardens, C Butler wrote in 1609, “See that it be safe, and surely fenced, not onlie from cattaile but also from the violence of the windes, that when the bees come laden and weary home, they may settle quietlie.”

Forest bee gardens and their foreign counterparts differ through necessity. In countries where predators include marauding bears, the hives are enclosed behind thick stone walls. Other less clement countries erect wattle fencing under thatched roofs, and place the hives on weatherproof shelves. The production of honey was central to local economies and had many functions, including the preservation of corpses! Cosmetically it was good for the skin and the treatment of wrinkles, and honey water was used for washing hair. It was medicinally beneficial, and is still a wonderful soother for a sore throat. Fruit and vegetables were preserved in it, and mead fetched several times the price of common beer. Honey’s most important use was as a sweetener; sugar was forty times more expensive in the 13th century, and five times more in the 17th century. It comes as no surprise that honey was the popular option until the mid 19th century when
sugar became much cheaper.

Despite the importance of honey, bee gardens were an encroachment on the King’s demense, and offenders were fined for erecting them. Records of New Forest documents of the 17th century show many instances of Forest folk being fined for setting up bee gardens on the King’s land. The fine was five shillings irrespective of the number of skeps enclosed. Considering the centuries bee gardens were in use, it must have been lucrative enough to warrant the risk.

The great Abbey at Beaulieu had no such worries. In the 13th century it boasted twenty five apiaries comprising three hundred hives scattered across its lands. The Abbey account book for 1269/70 shows sales of over half a ton of honey that year. Within the Royal Forest the Crown had rights to the bees’ nests with their honey and wax, though in Elizabeth I’s reign Forest keepers were allowed to take honey found in the trees. As late as 1852 the Lord of the Manor of Minstead was entitled to claim the honey from his woods. Anyone caught illegally removing it would be fined plus the cost of the honey.

It was important currency. Hives of bees were a valuable commodity and often willed within the family. Many women became bee-keepers on inheriting their husband’s hives. A certain King Ide of Wessex took an annual rental of ten vats of honey on ten hides of land, and Domesday shows Manors paying dues in honey as well as coin. This policy seems to have been common practice through the ages.

Currently there is a worrying decline in the honey bee population along with other pollinators. Several theories have been propounded, recent poor summers, varroa mite, or signals from mobile phone masts upsetting the bees navigation. More serious consideration is now being given to the use of pesticides, in particular the neonicotinoids which act on the nervous system of insects and is now thought to be responsible for honey bee colony collapse. The use of these pesticides has been suspended in some European countries, and their suspension here is being urged by environmental groups including Buglife and the Soil Association. Man’s affinity with bees and their produce is ancient and enduring, and the devastation which would result from their loss is immeasurable.

Sources:
Stagg, D J., A Calendar of New Forest Documents, HCC, 1983.
Sumner, H., Cuckoo Hill, the Book of Gorley, Bellow, 1987.
OF BRICKS AND BRICKWORKS - A FOOTNOTE

Jack Sturgess

Having read and enjoyed the article ‘Of Bricks and Brickworks’ by Anne Biffin in the last issue, I thought a footnote on the Brook brickworks might be of interest to readers.

There was another brickworks in the Forest at Brook on the Warrens Estate. These were quite extensive and, according to Monica Giles, the granddaughter of Briscoe Eyre in the biography of her mother, Dorothy Crosthwaite Eyre ( Dio, Orphans Press, nd), provided tiles, drainage pipes and flower pots as well as “very good bricks from the local clay used on the estate for over a hundred years.” The equipment, she says, “was almost medieval; an old horse harnessed to a beam trudged round and round in a circle, which puddled the clay.” The kiln was enormous, heated by three long tunnels under the floor with a coal fire burning for thirty-six hours. It fired up to three thousand bricks at a time.

Charles Hall, son of the agent on the estate from 1895 to 1925, believes that the Brook brickyard “never turned into the thriving business it could so well have been. The bricks produced by the foreman, John Pointer, and his assistants were some of the hardest and best in the country, as also were the pots. Here I feel my father was not entirely blameless and at no time was there any initiative towards a sales campaign. Mr Eyre was not bothered and my father’s main interests were in the home farm and estate affairs in general. The yard has now been derelict for many years.”

An attempt was made by Dorothy Crosthwaite Eyre in the 1930s to diversify the brickworks. She engaged a skilled potter, Bert Way, from the Poole Pottery. A small kiln that could fire glazed pots was installed and some attractive tableware was produced, some of which can still be found in the village. As the local clay was not suitable, china clay was brought in from Poole. The late Lady Crosthwaite
Eyre spoke of the pleasure she got from making her own pots, under Mr Way’s guidance.

At its peak the brickworks was employing some dozen workers. It survived until after the Second World War but with changes required by the 1948 Factories Act it ceased to be a viable enterprise. There is a trade sample, in the form of a miniature brick marked *Brook*, at the Hampshire Brickworks Museum at Bursledon.

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**Biodiversity in the New Forest**

*edited by Adrian C Newton*

*published by Pisces Publications*


This book has emerged from a conference organised by Bournemouth University and held at the Balmer Lawn Hotel, Brockenhurst in September 2007. The conference was supported by the British Ecological Society, the New Forest National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission. The aim of the book is to bring together the ‘widely dispersed and difficult to access’ information on New Forest species and habitats. Each of the twenty chapters deals with a specific area – our own Neil Sanderson, for example, produced the paper on lichens, Martin Noble on reptiles and amphibians and Clive Chatters co-authored *Vascular plants*, and provided the *Afterword*. Well referenced and indexed. 248pp packed with information, graphs and tables. 16pp colour plates. Pb. £17.50

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