

It was with these views that Maitland proceeded to inclose the forest within the manor of Loughton. He owned the forest rights formerly held by the Crown and there were ancient precedents in the court rolls of the manor for the inclosure of forest waste.¹¹ His principal tenants welcomed inclosure. In 1864 they agreed that the lord should have two-thirds of the inclosed land and the commoners one-third.¹² Grants of land or money were subsequently made to a number of tenants of the manor in order to extinguish their common rights. Maitland then inclosed some 1,000 acres of forest, started to drive roads through it and sold some plots for building and other purposes.¹³

The opposition to these inclosures will always be associated with the Willingale family. The story has, however, gathered some accretions of legend and the whole truth is difficult to determine. The inhabitants of Loughton had an ancient right of lopping wood from the forest from 12 November each year until 23 April following.¹⁴ They seem to have thought it necessary for the preservation of their rights that lopping should begin as the clock struck midnight on 11-12 November. They met in the woods for the purposes, usually at Staples Hill, and celebrated with a bonfire and beer-drinking.¹⁵ The other forest parishes had also possessed lopping rights.¹⁶ At Theydon Bois there was a lopping custom similar to that at Loughton. At Waltham Abbey and Sewardstone the lopping rights had been converted into fuel assignments attached to certain tenements in those manors.¹⁷ A polemical tract published in 1860, at the beginning of the inclosure controversy, claimed that the people of Waltham Abbey had been deprived of their ancient lopping rights by means of a 'general drunk and supper', on 11 November 1641 '... which was a snare' and caused them to forget and so to lose those rights.¹⁸ The writer of the tract stated that the same scheme was tried without success at Loughton: 'although many accepted the supper there given, an old man gave the signal, when he with others at once proceeded to the forest and duly secured their charter.'¹⁹ These stories may have some value as traditions explaining the different arrangements as to lopping at Loughton and Waltham Abbey. Their publication in 1860 must have increased the suspicion of the cottagers of Loughton that their rights were in danger. It is significant that it is from the 1860's that there comes the story that Thomas Willingale saved the lopping rights in Loughton in a manner similar to that described in the tract.²⁰ Willingale is supposed to have been one of the loppers who were entertained by the lord of the manor to a supper on 11 November 1860. As midnight approached he 'rose up hastily from the table, shouldered his axe, called to his fellows and went out to lop as usual', thus 'defeating the lawyers'. There is good evidence that he did something of this kind, in the belief that the continued existence of the lopping rights depended upon his action. But he has a more

serious claim to fame as one of the preservers of Epping Forest.

In December 1865 Thomas Willingale (c. 1793-1870), a woodman by trade, was summoned by J. W. Maitland before the Epping bench for injuring forest trees in Loughton.²¹ The case was dismissed. In March 1866 Thomas's son Samuel Willingale (1840-1911) with Samuel's cousins Alfred Willingale (1843-1934) and William Higgins (1842-70) were summoned at Waltham Abbey for a similar offence, and fined. All three refused to pay the fines and took the option of seven days' imprisonment.²² In October 1866 old Thomas Willingale filed a suit in Chancery against J. W. Maitland and others in support of the lopping rights.²³ He was advised and financed by the newly formed Commons Preservation Society, of which the leading spirit was E. N. Buxton (1840-1924).²⁴ The case was never brought to a final hearing and lapsed on Willingale's death in 1870. Soon after this the first Epping Forest Act²⁵ set up a Royal Commission to investigate the whole problem of the forest, and about the same time the City of London started legal proceedings in defence of common rights throughout the forest.²⁶ In 1875 the Epping Forest Commissioners made their preliminary report. They found that inclosures made within the 20 years before 1871 were illegal, since they contravened the rights of the commoners living in the forest parishes, and in some cases also the rights of the Crown.²⁷ In their final report (1877) the commissioners specifically recognized the lopping rights of the inhabitants of Loughton.²⁸ Meanwhile, in 1876 the City of London had purchased from J. W. Maitland the soil and the forest rights formerly held by the Crown in 992 acres of the open waste of the manor of Loughton.²⁹ This was the whole area inclosed in the 1860's within Loughton parish except for land actually built upon. In their final report the Forest Commissioners recommended that all the illegal inclosures should be retained by their occupants on payment of rent charges, but there was strong opposition to this proposal, led by George Burney, owner of a small estate in Loughton.³⁰ The objectors removed the fences of some of the inclosures and were largely responsible for causing the government to disregard the recommendation that the inclosures should remain.

The forest question was finally settled by the Epping Forest Act of 1878.³¹ This Act appointed the Corporation of the City of London to be Conservators of the Forest, with the duty of keeping the forest as an open space for public recreation. All illegally inclosed lands, except those actually built on, were to be thrown open. The owners of waste lands not thrown open were to pay for the quieting of their titles. The Conservators were to buy up the lopping rights of Loughton.

The forest was thus saved. The City of London paid £7,000 for the extinction of the lopping rights and with this money the Lopping Hall was built.³² The

¹¹ Ibid. 547-8.

¹² Ibid. 558.

¹³ Ibid. 561; Waller, *Loughton*, i, 107; W. R. Fisher, *Forest of Essex*, 357.

¹⁴ Fisher, *Forest of Essex*, 249 f. *Rep. of Epping Forest Com.* H.C. 187, p. 4 (1877), xxvi. By the original custom lopping began on All Saints Day (1 November) and ended on St. George's Day (23 Apr.). In 1753 the opening date was moved to 12 Nov. following the national adjustment of the calendar. For this custom see also below, Parish Government and Poor Relief.

¹⁵ Fisher, *Forest of Essex*, 249-50.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. 248, 251.

¹⁸ T. Maynard, *Concise Hist. of Epping Forest*, 45.

¹⁹ Ibid. 46.

²⁰ E.R. xliii, 120, 182; xlii, 192.

²¹ *Essex Naturalist*, xxi, 163.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. 166.

²⁴ Fisher, *Forest of Essex*, 358.

²⁵ 34 & 35 Vict. c. 93 (1871).

²⁶ The legal pretext for the intervention of the City was its ownership of a small area of land within the bounds of the

forest near Ilford.

²⁷ Fisher, *Forest of Essex*, 366.

²⁸ *Rep. of Epping Forest Com.* (1877), p. 4.

²⁹ Fisher, *Forest of Essex*, 367. Maitland received £30,000: *Speech of City Solicitor before Epping Forest Com.* Nov. 1876, p. 60.

³⁰ The 'Queen's Park' estate, which was broken up for building in 1886: see above, p. 112.

³¹ 41 & 42 Vict. c. 213 (priv. act.); Fisher, op. cit. 368-70.

³² See Social Life.

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lord of the manor and his principal tenants contended to the last that the inclosures of 1851-71 were beneficial to the parish by providing a larger rateable area and more work for the poor, and they continued to deny the existence of the lopping rights.³³ In the end, however, it was J. W. Maitland himself who performed the official opening of the Lopping Hall in 1884.³⁴ Though he has sometimes been severely criticized for his advocacy of inclosure he is in general a figure who commands respect.³⁵ He was a faithful priest and zealous public servant, prominent on the Epping Board of Guardians and the Rural District Council and first Chairman of the Loughton Urban District Council.³⁶ As for old Thomas Willingale it has been pointed out that he himself made illegal inclosures within the manor; but his general character appears to have been good.³⁷

Until the 19th century most of the inhabitants of Loughton were engaged in agriculture or forestry. Waller has suggested that the amount of forest land in the parish may not have altered greatly between

1086 and 1850.³⁸ If the hide is taken as 120 acres the eight estates in Loughton included 2,165 acres exclusive of pannage for 970 pigs.³⁹ In 1851 the parish contained 2,563 acres apart from forest, roads, and water.⁴⁰ If the calculations from the Domesday figures are correct only about 400 acres were taken from the forest between 1086 and 1850. Waller, however, doubted whether so much as 2,000 acres could have been cultivated by the small Domesday population.

Since most of the land in the parish descended from the 11th century as a single manor, information concerning the manor, its tenants, and land use has been included in the section on the manor. Apart from the forest most of the land in the parish, until built upon, seems to have been used for pasture. This was certainly the case in 1612.⁴¹ In 1850 it was estimated that there were 831 acres of arable, 1,551 acres of pasture, 131 acres of woodland, and 1,309 acres of common forest in the parish, exclusive of 45 acres of glebe most of which was grass land.⁴² A directory of 1863 listed 14 farmers in the parish.⁴³ In 1933 the chief crops were wheat, oats, peas, and roots, but the land was chiefly in pasture.⁴⁴ Since the building of the Debden estate very little agricultural land has remained but there are still two farms, Hill Farm and North Farm, in the extreme south of Loughton.

Strip cultivation seems to have existed in the Buckhurs: Hill area in the 13th century, but to have been discontinued after the land in question was acquired by Waltham Abbey.⁴⁵

In 1066 and 1086 there was a mill at Loughton on one of the manors held by Peter de Valognes.⁴⁶ Waltham Abbey had a mill in the parish in the 13th

century.⁴⁷ In 1336 the abbot was presented before the forest court for erecting a windmill within the covert of the forest in the vill of Loughton. This mill probably gave its name to Mill Hill, where the Warren now stands. It had disappeared by 1739.⁴⁸ The medieval court rolls contain several references to the mill and the mill-dam at Loughton Bridge.⁴⁹ In 1270 some of the manorial tenants were fined for going to a mill other than that of their lord.⁵⁰ In 1404 a fuller was charged before the manor court with spoiling some cloth given him to full in his mill.⁵¹

Before the 19th century those not engaged in agriculture followed the usual village trades or were domestic servants, notably at Loughton Hall and Goldings. The last class became more numerous after about 1830, when some middle-class houses were built. This was one of the main arguments urged in defence of the inclosures from the forest. 'They have built', said a witness before the Epping Forest Commissioners, 'large houses and greenhouses and so on. It employs a great deal of labour . . . the labour was 12s. a week in 1864 and now I do not think you can engage a man under 18s. or £1.'⁵² Domestic service of all kinds continued to be an important occupation in Loughton until the Second World War.

Wealthy residents required a wide range of goods and services. Many of these must have been obtained from London, especially after the completion of the railway. But in 1882 there was a much wider range of occupations than in 1848.⁵³ The shopping centre of Loughton grew very slowly until after 1918. North Loughton was badly served until this time. Before 1918 there were only three shops in High Road north of Bincombe House (now Messrs. Parrott's).⁵⁴ Between 1918 and 1939 the shopping centre was extended as far as Traps Hill. The shops now stretch for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile along High Road and provide a good range of commodities.

Industry in Loughton has been on a very small scale in the past. Brick- and tile-making was carried on at least from 1486, when a tile-house was mentioned.⁵⁵ There was a tile-kiln in 1556; it may have been the one at the foot of Albion Hill, whose history has been traced from 1673 to 1851, and whose last-recorded owner was Noah Heath.⁵⁶ Another kiln-house was also mentioned in 1851.⁵⁷ In the court roll for 1721 there is an order which suggests that there were potters in Loughton.⁵⁸

There has been much nursery gardening in the parish since about 1862, when Messrs. William Paul & Son of Waltham Cross established their Loughton nursery, which grew to be one of the biggest in Essex.⁵⁹

During the 20th century several small engineering works have been set up. One of the most interesting of these was the automobile assembly works of Leonard Wilson in Forest Road.⁶⁰ Wilson, the son of a Canadian

³³ *Essex Naturalist*, xxi, 159.

³⁴ W. Addison, *Epping Forest*, 222.

³⁵ *Essex Naturalist*, xxi, 166. For tributes paid to him at his jubilee as rector in 1906 see E.R.O., T/P 13 iii.

³⁶ E.R.O., T/P 13 iii.

³⁷ *Essex Naturalist*, xxi, 167. The papers of Cmdr. J. W. Maitland, M.P., of Harrington Hall, Spilsby, Lincs., include some material relating to the forest question; this was not examined for the present survey. There are also many documents about the forest question in the Public Record Office and the Guildhall, London.

³⁸ Waller, *Loughton*, i, 7.

³⁹ E.R.O., D/CT 225.

⁴¹ See Manor.

⁴² E.R.O., D/CT 225.

⁴³ *White's Dir. Essex* (1863).

⁴⁴ *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1933).

⁴⁵ E.R. lvii, 96.

⁴⁶ *V.C.H. Essex*, i, 537.

⁴⁷ Waller, *Loughton*, i, 159.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 22; cf. Chapman and André, *Map of Essex, 1777*, sheet xvi.

⁴⁹ Waller, *Loughton*, i, 24, 26, 75.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 75.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 25.

⁵² *Proc. of Epping Forest Com.* (1873), i, 567.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1882). Cf. *White's Dir. Essex* (1848).

⁵⁴ Will Francies, 'Memories of High Road', *West Essex Gaz.* 20 Mar. 1953; inf. from Mr. Francies.

⁵⁵ Waller, *Loughton*, ii, 72.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* ii, 76, i, 146. Heath was a bricklayer and builder: *White's Dir. Essex* (1848).

⁵⁷ E.R.O., D/CT 225.

⁵⁸ E.R.O., T/P 18.

⁵⁹ *V.C.H. Essex*, ii, 480, 482. For later nurseries see e.g. *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1933).

⁶⁰ Will Francies, 'My Loughton' (3), *West Essex Gaz.* 27 Feb. 1953.

mining engineer, bought a butcher's business in Smart's Lane about 1898. In 1906 he opened the motor works and accepted the sole Essex agency for Panhard and Levasseur cars. Only the chassis of these cars came over from France. The processes necessary for completing them, including the making of the bodies, were carried out at the Forest Road works. During the First World War the Wilson works produced munitions. Afterwards, in the 1920's, Wilson had an agency for another French car, the Citroën.

When completed the Debden estate will have several large factories, including one for making bank-notes for the Bank of England.⁶¹

Balthasar de Guercis, an Italian surgeon to Queen Katherine of Aragon, became a tenant of the manor in 1538.⁶²

WORTHIES AND SOCIAL LIFE

Early in the 17th century, when Sir Robert Wroth and Mary his wife lived at Loughton Hall, they were visited by Ben Jonson and other poets. James I was entertained at the hall in 1605 and the Prince of Wales in 1606 (see below, Manor). Sarah Adams (1805-48) author of 'Nearer my God to Thee' lived at Woodbury Hill.⁶³ Walter Kerr Hamilton (1808-69), Bishop of Salisbury, was the son of a Rector of Loughton and spent his early childhood there.⁶⁴ Sarah Catherine Martin (1768-1826) reputed author of 'Old Mother Hubbard', in its metrical form,⁶⁵ is buried in the old parish churchyard. She was the sister of Admiral Sir Thomas B. Martin (1773-1854). When she was 17 Prince William (later King William IV) fell in love with her. She and her parents handled the affair very discreetly.⁶⁶ The Martins were connected with Loughton through relatives, the Powells, who lived there.⁶⁷ Sir George Carroll (d. 1860) Lord Mayor of London 1846-7 and Contractor for State Lotteries, was owner of Uplands, and lived there.⁶⁸ W. W. Jacobs (1863-1943), the author, lived for many years at the Outlook, Upper Park Road. Soon after 1910 he moved to Feltham House, Goldings Hill.⁶⁹ Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) stayed when a boy at Goldings Hill Farm, opposite Goldings Hill Pond.⁷⁰ Sir Jacob Epstein lived at Baldwin Hill for some years after 1920. While there he carved his 'Rima' and 'Visitation'.⁷¹

During the late 19th and early 20th century Loughton was strongly represented in the Essex Field Club and the Essex Archæological Society, and it produced three local antiquaries of ability: H. W. Lewer (1859-1949), I. Chalkley Gould (1845-1908), and W. C. Waller, the historian of Loughton.⁷² Millican Dalton (d. 1947), pioneer camper and mountaineer, lived for a time at Baldwins Hill.⁷³

In the late 19th century there was a fairly sharp division in Loughton between Anglicans and the non-conformists, which coincided roughly with the political division between Conservatives and Liberals. It gave rise to controversy over the establishment of a school board⁷⁴ and was shown in the duplication of some local societies. In 1892 the president of the Loughton

Liberal and Radical Association was Julius Rohrweger, owner of Uplands, and one of the vice-presidents was Edward Pope, a prominent local Methodist.⁷⁵ The rector, J. W. Maitland, was a councillor of the Primrose League. Edward Pope was secretary of the Temperance League; the rector was president of the Church of England Temperance League. Julius Rohrweger was president of the Loughton Cricket Club; the Loughton Park Cricket Club had as its president Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Bt., Conservative M.P. for West Essex. There were also the Epping Forest Military Band (president the rector) and the Excelsior Brass Band (president H. H. Francis).⁷⁶ There were other clubs, for football, lawn tennis, and a number of charitable or provident purposes.

By 1900 Loughton was quite well provided with facilities for social intercourse and recreation. There were two parish churches and three nonconformist churches. The local Volunteers had a drill hall, and the Lopping Hall provided a valuable centre for all kinds of social activities. As already described,⁷⁷ the Lopping Hall had been erected out of £7,000 paid by the City of London for the extinction of lopping rights in Epping Forest. Out of that sum £1,030 was set aside as compensation to householders. The remainder formed the capital of the Lopping Hall Endowment Trust.⁷⁸ Land was bought at the corner of High Road and Station Road and the hall was built and furnished at a cost of £3,236. The official opening took place in 1884. The hall contained reading and lecture rooms and accommodation for parish meetings. In 1902 it was enlarged at a cost of £1,330 by a new wing of which the upper floor was let to the newly formed urban district council for a council chamber and offices and the lower floor to the Midland Bank Ltd. In 1933 proposals to improve the hall and stage accommodation at the expense of the reading-room provoked a public inquiry. It was decided that although the provision of books and a reading-room was one of the original objects of the endowment more people made use of the lecture and concert halls. A reading-room was retained, but it was smaller and contained only newspapers. In 1936 the library was sold. In 1937 further alterations to the hall were made at the cost of the Midland Bank. In 1951 the endowment consisted of over £2,400 stock in addition to the premises. The income was mainly used on general maintenance and improvement, wages and newspapers. There are six trustees, elected by ratepayers.

Two bequests have supplemented the original endowment of the Lopping Hall. In 1905 William F. Turner left £100 to be invested for the purchase of books.⁷⁹ When the library was closed this was diverted to the purchase of newspapers. In 1912 Henry Lincoln left £200 to be spent for the general purposes of the hall.⁸⁰ The hall remains a valuable social centre. It is a red-brick building with a tower, designed by Edmund Egan.

Opposite the Lopping Hall in Station Road is the Men's Club, built in 1901 by the Revd. W. Dawson

⁶¹ Inf. from Mr. Wm. Addison; *West Essex Gaz.* 18 Feb. 1955.

⁶² Waller, *Loughton*, i, 39, 40.

⁶³ *Ibid.* i, 136.

⁶⁴ *D.N.B.*

⁶⁵ For her claims to the authorship see I. and P. Opie, *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, 320-1.

⁶⁶ *Letters of Sir H. Byam Martin* (Navy Rec. Soc.), i, 21.

⁶⁷ *E.R.* xxv, 117, 171.

⁶⁸ *E.A.T.* n.s. xiv, 285.

⁶⁹ *E.R.* lii, 205.

⁷⁰ Addison, *Epping Forest*, 226.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 227.

⁷² For Lewer see *E.R.* lviii, 163; for Gould see *E.R.* xvii, 31.

⁷³ *E.R.* lvii, 55-56.

⁷⁴ See Schools, below.

⁷⁵ *Davis' Epping, Loughton and Ongar*

Almanack, 1892, 20-23; this almanack gives details of all local societies and clubs.

⁷⁶ Francis's religious and political affiliations have not been traced.

⁷⁷ See Preservation of Epping Forest, above.

⁷⁸ For the Lopping Hall Endowment see Char. Com. Files.

⁷⁹ Char. Com. Files.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*