



St Margaret's to get £8m facelift

ST MARGARET'S Hospital in Epping is set to be redeveloped in a multi-million pound scheme to improve care.

The existing hospital site comprises 25 acres of land, but the ageing buildings are becoming uneconomic to run and restrict the scope to improve services.

The redevelopment is expected to include 42 elderly care beds, a 15-place elderly day hospital, therapy services and a community clinic.

Fourteen acres belong to the Health Secretary, with the remainder, including most of the buildings, belonging to Epping Forest Primary Care Trust.

The hospital buildings are a mixture of new and old, some dating back as far as 1837. Some of the "newer" are 60 years old, even though they

were "temporary" emergency service buildings constructed during the second world war.

The existing hospital buildings are uneconomical to operate and maintain, and their layout and condition restrict the quality of care that can be provided there. It is this that has led to the primary care trust's decision to redevelop some of the site.

Those services and buildings that remain will be the Mental Health Unit, Outpatients, Ashlar House, Spencer Close, Radiology, Breast Screening and Urology.

The services provided by Princess Alexandra Hospital Trust on the site, Oral Surgery and Pathology, will be reviewed separately.

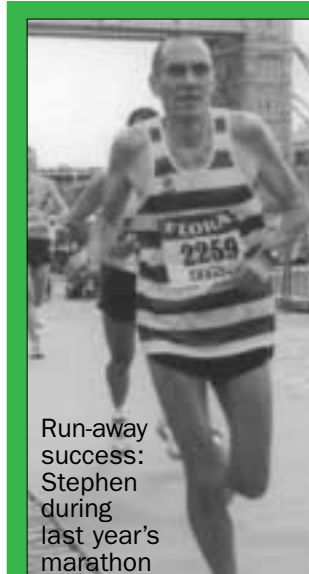
This scheme will release the land owned by the Health Secretary for disposal. Outline planning permission for a

housing development on this land has already been granted by Epping Forest District Council.

The process of redeveloping a hospital takes a considerable

time as there are a number of administrative and planning stages to complete before the first of the new buildings will appear. The target is for

continued on page 3



Run-away success: Stephen during last year's marathon

Stephen's on track

TOWN Council Chairman Cllr Stephen Murray aims to beat his 2hr 42min London Marathon best at this year's run on 22 April.

And he is looking to raise cash for two local causes: Oakwood Hill Senior Citizens Club, and the Mannock Drive Day Care Centre at Trinity Church.

Over the past two marathons, Stephen has raised £3,800 for four local charities. Anyone wishing to sponsor him should call 020 8508 7548.

Editor's notes

YOU can read below news of the Town Council's move to new premises. This is an exciting development in the life of the Town Council, which I am sure will be a great step forwards for us.

The government has recently published a White Paper called *A Fair Deal For Rural England*. It sets out a variety of proposals for improving life in the countryside.

You might think that, as Loughton is an urban area, there would be nothing to interest us in this. However,

there are plans to develop significantly the role of town councils.

"Quality" councils, so-called because they meet certain criteria relating to their relationship with their local communities, will be able to strengthen their role and participate in partnerships with other

bodies, including district and county councils.

Loughton Town Council will be closely monitoring the proposals' progress to ensure it is in the forefront of any new scheme which can benefit the local community.

Louise Fuller
Town Clerk

CONTACT NUMBERS

COUNCIL SERVICES

Loughton Town Council	020 8508 4200
Epping Forest District Council	01992 564000
Epping Sports Centre	01992 564564
Waltham Abbey Sports Centre	01992 716194
Waste Management Hotline	01992 564320
Essex County Council	01245 492211
Registrar of Births & Deaths	01992 572788
Registrar of Marriages	01992 572789
Education Office	01245 436231
Loughton Library	020 8502 0181
Debden Library	020 8508 5869
Social Services	020 8508 9311

POLICE & FIRE (dial 999 for emergencies)

Loughton Police Station (non-urgent)	020 8502 3881
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HEALTH & HOSPITALS

St Margaret's	01992 561666
Princess Alexandra	01279 444455
Whipps Cross	020 8539 5522
Health Information Service	0800 665544
King George	020 8983 8000
Oldchurch	01708 345533
Holly House (Private)	020 8505 3315
Roding Hospital (Private)	020 8551 1100
Loughton Hall Clinic (Rectory Lane)	020 8508 6297

SPORT

David Lloyd Centre	020 8559 8466
Essex School of Swimming	020 8505 9436
Loughton Rugby Club	020 8504 0065
Roding Valley Cricket Club	020 8506 1001
Roding Valley Tennis Centre	020 8505 4008
South Loughton Cricket Club	020 8530 2200

ADVICE, HELP & INFORMATION

Citizens Advice Bureau	020 8502 0031
Loughton Information Centre	01992 564808
Trading Standards Office	01245 341800
Loughton Job Centre	020 8258 4740
Department of Social Security (Wentworth House)	020 8532 4200
Samaritans	020 8520 9191
SSAFA, Forces Help	020 8508 8960
Epping Forest College	020 8508 8311

TRAVEL & TOURISM

Stansted Airport	01279 680500
Gatwick Airport	01293 535353
Heathrow Airport	020 8759 4321
Luton Airport	01582 405100
London Regional Transport	020 7222 1234
National Railways Enquiry Line	0345 484 950
National Express (Victoria Coach Station)	0990 808 080
Essex Traveline	08457 000 333
Thamesway	01245 353104
Arriva Herts & Essex	01279 426349
Arriva London North East	020 8595 3088
Tourist Information Centre	01992 652295

PUBLIC UTILITIES

British Gas	0645 555208
London Electricity	020 8298 9898
Thames Water	0645 200 800

COMMUNITY

Care & Repair Service	01992 564086
Churches Together in Loughton	020 8508 0811
Epping Forest Volunteer Bureau	01992 564256
Epping Forest CVS	01992 564178
Royal British Legion	020 8508 5044

CINEMAS

Odeon (Gants Hill)	020 8554 2452
ABC (South Woodford)	020 8989 3463
UCI (Lee Valley)	0870 603 4567
Virgin (Harlow)	0870 505 0007

BREAKDOWN SERVICES

AA	0800 887766
RAC	0800 828282

LOCAL AMENITY REFUSE POINTS

Chigwell (closed Bank Holidays)	Luxborough Lane
Waltham Abbey	Brooker Road
Ongar	Mill Lane

For enquiries and opening time details, call Epping Forest District Council.

Want to advertise in this magazine? Contact Elaine Dryden on 01787 237412, by fax on 01787 238388, or by email at: totalmedia@aol.com

Town Council on the move

THE Town Council is on the move, having purchased new premises at a new development called Buckingham Court.

Since its inauguration in May 1996, the Town Council has operated from Epping Forest District Council's Information Centre in Traps Hill.

Although glad of the accommodation at the time, the Town Council always knew the arrangement was a temporary measure and that it would need more space sooner or later.

When considering new premises, the Town Council had a number of desirable criteria, although it knew that it may not be possible to achieve all of them. The criteria were:

- **Central location**
- **Accessibility** – preferably served by public transport; accessible to disabled people
- **Ownership** – freehold status preferred to renting
- **Meeting room** facilities for council and committee meetings
- **Car parking** available



An artist's impression of Buckingham Court, in Rectory Lane

■ **Sufficient space** for staff requirements, with the possibility of expansion in the long term

The new premises form part of an office development in Rectory Lane and meet all the above criteria.

Although they have achieved a lot in their first term of office, council members have not been able to see through as many ideas as they would have liked. This has partly been due to the current lack of space, which has prevented recruitment of staff to work on the projects. The

Town Council's new premises will enable it to progress outstanding projects more quickly and continue with initiatives in the future.

Debate

Loughton Town Council Chairman Cllr Stephen Murray said: "This decision has been made after much thought and lengthy debate. It is essential to the Town Council's development and will allow us to work closely with the community on future projects".

At the time of writing, the move date is not known.

£8m hospital redevelopment

continued from page 1

building work to start in early 2003, with the new hospital opening in the spring 2004.

The redevelopment's strategic outline case was approved by North Essex Health Authority and the NHS Executive last year. Preparations for the scheme now move to the creation of a detailed outline business case. It is hoped this will be approved within two to three months.

"Briefing Teams" are helping to plan the new hospital. These teams consist of staff members, patients and service users. The total cost of the redevelopment is likely to be more than £8m.

The new building plans, design and layout will be made public as soon as they are available. Opinions and ideas from the public will be most welcome at any stage.

Anyone with specific questions or comments about the redevelopment should write to: Kay Ellis, Non-Officer Member, Epping Forest Primary Care Trust, Birchwood House, St Margaret's Hospital, The Plain, Epping, Essex CM16 6TN.

Seats and bins for everyday urban folk

AT LAST – the High Road has a full set of uniform seats and rubbish bins.

These may not be in the rustic design desired by the purists, but they are functional, and easy to clean and maintain.

The poor condition of seats and litter bins was debated at one of the first meetings of the new Loughton "Parish" Council in 1996.

Since then, both Town and District councillors persisted in their campaign to have

these items replaced, together with improvements to other sites around Loughton, and managed to obtain funding from Epping Forest District Council's Environmental Improvements budget.

Deadline dates

Edition	Copy deadline
June	20 Apr
September	20 Jul

Further copies of *Think Loughton* may be obtained from the Town Council Office, Traps Hill, or from Debden or Loughton libraries.

GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

Traps Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 1DP
 Tel: 020 8508 4200 Fax: 020 8508 4400 Web: <http://www.gateway.to/loughton-tc/> Email: loughton_tc@compuserve.com

BROADWAY WARD

Cllr Joyce M Barnett 020 8508 3180
 (Vice-Chairman, EH&L; Community Committee)
 59 Colson Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3RL

Cllr Joan Davis 020 8508 3180
 4 Barrington Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 2AY

Cllr Thomas G Owen
 (EH&L and Planning Committees)
 15 Lower Park Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4NB

Cllr Marion E Taylor 020 8508 5152
 (Vice-Chairman, Community; Planning Committee)
 52 Lower Park Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4NA

ST JOHN'S WARD

Cllr Kay F Ellis 020 8508 6018
 (F&GP, Community and Planning Committees)
 31 Algers Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4NG

Cllr Roger E Pearce 020 8281 1386
 32 Millsmead Way, Loughton, Essex IG10 1LR

Cllr Christopher C Pond 020 8508 2361
 (Chairman, EH&L Committee)
 Forest Villa, 7 Staples Road, Loughton,
 Essex IG10 1HP

Cllr Robert J Wilmot 020 8508 1987
 (EH&L and Planning Committees)
 50 Baldwins Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 1SF

DEBDEN GREEN WARD

Cllr Michael D Hogan 020 8502 5483
 (Chairman, Planning; F&GP Committee)
 3 Debden House Cottages, Debden Green,
 Loughton, Essex IG10 2NZ

Cllr Montague W Juniper JP 020 8508 5930
 (Chairman, F&GP Committee)
 31 Alderton Way, Loughton, Essex IG10 3EQ

Cllr Michael G Sellaars
 (EH&L Committee)
 76 Roding Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3EF

Cllr Victoria Wisenfeld
 (Community Committee)
 The Garden Cottage, The Warren, Loughton,
 Essex IG10 4RN

ST MARY'S WARD

Cllr Anthony T Lee 020 8508 7649
 (Vice-Chairman, Planning; Community Committee)
 33 Priory Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 1AF

Cllr Pamela Meadows 020 8508 4136
 (Chairman, Community Committee)
 98 Roding Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3EJ

Cllr Michael W Wardle 020 8508 2771
 (Community Committee)
 61 The Drive, Loughton, Essex IG10 1HG

FOREST WARD

Cllr Suzanne M Harper 020 8508 4770
 (Council Vice-Chairman and F&GP Committee)
 23 Algers Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4NG

Cllr Judith P Woodman 020 8502 0785
 (EH&L Committee)
 164 Forest Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 1EG

Cllr Leslie J Harris 020 8508 1333
 (Vice-Chairman, F&GP Committee)
 32 Upper Park, Loughton, Essex IG10 4EQ

RODING WARD

Cllr Edward V Boatman 020 8508 1890
 (F&GP Committee)
 24 Roding Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3ED

Cllr Larry M Ford
 (EH&L Committee)
 47 Stonards Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 3EH

Cllr Stephen W Murray 020 8508 7548
 (Council Chairman, and F&GP Committee)
 1 Avondale Court, Loughton, Essex IG10 3BT

Cllr Betty R Sagers 020 8508 2100
 (Planning Committee)
 10 South View Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3LG

EHL= Environment, Heritage & Leisure
 F&GP= Finance & General Policy

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ST MARY'S WARD

Cllr Ron V Heath 020 8508 3458
 46 Ollards Grove, Loughton, Essex IG10 4DW

Cllr Michael W Wardle 020 8508 2771
 61 The Drive, Loughton, Essex IG10 1HG

FOREST WARD

Cllr Ron Gow
 15 Albion Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 4RA

Cllr Leslie J Harris 020 8508 1333
 32 Upper Park, Loughton, Essex IG10 4EQ

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

ST JOHN'S WARD

Cllr Stan R Goodwin 020 8508 2821
 56 River Way, Loughton, Essex IG10 3LH

ST MARY'S WARD

Cllr Christopher A Harper 020 8508 4770
 23 Algers Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4NG

ST JOHN'S WARD

Cllr Brian W Moore 020 8508 7112
 6 Forest View Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4DX

Cllr Roger E Pearce 020 8281 1386
 32 Millsmead Way, Loughton, Essex IG10 1LR

Cllr Dorothy F Paddon 020 8508 2238
 12 Forest View Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4DX

DEBDEN GREEN WARD

Cllr Stephen W Barnes 020 8502 1152
 34 Durnell Way, Loughton, Essex IG10 1TG

Cllr Sue Lipscombe 020 8508 4938
 111 Grosvenor Drive, Loughton, Essex IG10 2LA

Cllr Colin J Huckle 01992 813520
 15 Middle Boy, Abridge, Essex RM4 1DT

PARLIAMENTARY & EUROPEAN

MP FOR EPPING FOREST

Eleanor Laing MP 020 7219 3000
 House of Commons,
 London SW1A 0AA

MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Robert Sturdy **Eryl McNally** **Jeffrey Tittford**
Andrew Duff **Bashir Khanbhai** **Richard Howitt**
Christopher Beazley **Geoffrey Van Orden**

Kay joins Charles' Abbeyfield bash

TOWN Councillor Kay Ellis was among a group of 300 Abbeyfield Society volunteers chosen to attend a reception at St James' Palace on Tuesday 6 February.

Prince Charles, Abbeyfield's royal patron, gave the reception to mark year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers.

The Abbeyfield Society is the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of housing and care for older people with 8,500 residents and 15,000 volunteers throughout the country.

It relies heavily on its volunteers who provide their knowledge, time and care at virtually all levels of the organisation.

The Loughton Society, whose

home is Rider House at 121 High Road, has nine residents who were thrilled that the work that is done on their behalf has been recognised in this way.

Honoured

Kay has been an Abbeyfield volunteer for more than 10 years, having started as a driver to take residents on outings.

She became a member of the

House committee and is now Executive Committee Chairman.

Kay said that she was honoured to have been one of Abbeyfield's representatives on this special occasion and that she was able to represent Loughton in this way.

Rider House provides very sheltered housing for the elderly.

There is a resident housekeeper who provides meals and care. Residents live independent lives in a family atmosphere with help from family, friends and volunteers.

For more information about the house and volunteering, call Kay on 020 8508 6018.

Someone please solve our Wymark plaque mystery

SINCE June 1998, one of Loughton Town Council's blue heritage plaques has held pride of place on the gatepost of 96 Goldings Road.

However, following a recent accident in which the top of the brick gatepost was knocked off, the plaque

commemorating the previous residence of story writer William Wymark Jacobs has disappeared.

Despite pursuing the matter, the Town Council has been unable to locate the plaque's whereabouts.

Any readers able to throw some light

on where the heritage plaque has disappeared to are asked to call Town Council Clerk Louise Fuller on 020 8508 4200.



Police numbers up, forum assured

THE Town Council holds regular meetings of the Community Forum, and these are generally very well attended.

Winners of the Council's Christmas card competition came along to the Forum in November to receive their prizes from the Chairman of the Council.

A photographer from the local *Guardian* newspaper was on hand to take photographs of the occasion (see page 15).

Sgt Bernie Toothill and PC Bob Berry came along as representatives of the

Community Policing team.

Sgt Toothill told the forum that the transition from Metropolitan to Essex Police had gone very well and that a greater presence was being maintained in the area.

He assured the meeting that Community Beat Officers actively patrol their areas and are available to help on any matter if approached.

The names of Community Beat Officers for each ward are displayed on Town Council noticeboards around the town and can be seen below.

Meanwhile, Jo Wincott, the

new headteacher of Roding Valley High School, was the invited speaker on this occasion. He spoke of his aims and aspirations for the school and answered questions from parents of current and future pupils.

The forum always includes a refreshment break, when there is chance to meet and chat over a cup of tea or coffee, and ends with an "open forum" when the Town Clerk and councillors answer questions from the public.

All local residents are welcome to attend.

Conservator John retires

JOHN Besent, Superintendent of Epping Forest for the last 23 years, retired on 31 January.

During his time as superintendent of the largest wooded site of special scientific interest in south east England, he has been instrumental in helping to conserve and protect the forest as a unique open space for current and future generations.

The new superintendent is Jeremy Wisenfeld, who will be the seventh person to have held the post since the Corporation of London became the owner of Epping Forest in 1878.

Jeremy has worked for the Corporation at Epping Forest since 1997, holding the post of Superintendent's Deputy and Forest Conservation Officer.

In this role, he has been responsible for several aspects of strategic management and conservation of the forest and its buffer lands.

Delighted

John Bird, chairman of the Corporation of London's Epping Forest & Open Spaces Committee, said: "We are delighted to announce that Jeremy has agreed to become the next Superintendent of Epping Forest.

"I am sure that he will be an excellent successor to John Besent, who has provided us with sterling service."

Local bobbies on your beat: who are they?

EACH ward in Loughton has at least one community beat officer of its own.

These officers actively patrol their ward and are always on hand to provide help where they can.

Anyone wishing to contact their community beat officer

should call Loughton police station on 020 8502 3881. For emergencies, dial 999.

Get to know your beat officers:

Broadway: PC Rob Cox

Debden Green: PC Bob Berry

Forest: PC Jason Childs

Roding: PCs Dave Wiggins and Ross Luke

St John's: PC Kirsty Thomas

St Mary's: PCs George Hartwell and Steve Turner

County launches millennium fund for community groups

TO CELEBRATE the millennium, Essex County Council has established an endowed fund to encourage voluntary and community activity throughout the county for generations to come.

The fund will provide an annual income for a grants programme to support locally-based initiatives which improve the communities' quality of life.

Projects which will be given special attention include schemes for carers, community support, enhancing the environment, and young people.

Any voluntary or community organisation which assists

people living in Essex may apply. Grants can be awarded from £100 to £10,000, but applications for £5,000 and above will need to show how such a grant will make a significant impact on the quality of life within local communities.

A special category has been included to allow funding of a flagship project which could be up to £20,000 a year and could be considered for multi-year funding.

Further information may be obtained from Essex Community Foundation on 01245 355947 (fax: 01245 251151), via email on: general@essexcf.freereserve.co.uk, or

the website at: www.essexcc.gov.uk/millenniumfund

Dates for the diary

■ **22, 23 & 24 Mar, 8pm:** "Make Way for Lucia", by John van Drucen. Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society, Lopping Hall, High Road, Loughton. Details: 020 8502 5843.

■ **7 Apr, 7.30pm:** "East Meets West" concert by the Roding Players Orchestra, Methodist Church, High Road, Loughton. Admission £4.50, £3.50 concessions, children under-11 free. Includes refreshments. Details: 020 8505 4329.

■ **First Sunday of month at 3.30pm:** Church Service, St Michael's Church, Roding Road, Loughton. Friendly, informal service, welcomes those who have learning difficulties and their friends. Includes a number of modern Christian songs, a talk and a few prayers. Lasts about half an hour and is followed by tea. All welcome.

■ **Every Monday, 7.15-9.15pm:** Roding Players Orchestra rehearses at Roding Valley High School, Alderton Hill, Loughton. New players welcome. No audition. Call Miles Harwood on 020 8505 4329 for details.

■ **Every Monday, 8-10pm:** Epping Phoenix Choir meets at Epping Methodist Church Hall. New members welcome, especially tenors and basses. Details: 020 8989 1551.

■ **Every Monday, 9.30pm:** Loughton Mountaineering Club, Victoria Tavern, Smarts Lane, Loughton. All hill walkers and climbers welcome. Call Jeff Harris 020 8508 2888.

■ **First Tuesday in the month, 8pm:** Royal British Legion Branch and Club meetings, 118 Church Hill, Loughton.

■ **Second Tuesday of month from 7.30pm:** The Forest Philatelic Society meets

in the Centenary Hall, Loughton Methodist Church, High Road. Call Margaret Browning on 020 8508 1244 for details.

■ **Every Thursday, 12.45pm:** The Rotary Club of Loughton meets at The Roebuck Hotel, North End, Buckhurst Hill. Membership enquiries on 020 8504 6367.

■ **Every Thursday, 7.30-10pm:** Modern Sequence Dancing at St John's Church Centre, High Road, Buckhurst Hill. Newcomers welcome. Details: 020 8508 7201.

■ **Every Friday, 10-11.30am:** Ladies Keep Fit, Theydon Village Hall. Details: 01279 723 700.

■ **Alternate Fridays, 1.45-3pm:** Toddler Time, St John's Parish Hall, Church Lane, Loughton. Mums, dads, carers with children up to school age – all welcome. Contact Carol on 020 8502 4739 for more details.

■ **Second Saturday in month, 10am-12 noon:** Acorns Junior Group of the Essex Handicrafts Association, Trinity Church, Mannock Drive, Loughton.

LABOUR COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES:

First Saturday in each month:

■ **9.15-10.15am:** Oakwood Stores, Longcroft Rise

■ **from 10.30am:** The Broadway shopping parade (under the walk-through)

Second Saturday in each month:

■ **9.30-10am:** outside Londis, Valley Hill

■ **10.30-11am:** outside the Mother Hubbard pub, Valley Hill

Copy date for next issue: 20 April 2001. Dates in next issue will cover June to mid-September

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

2001			
March	14	Wednesday	Community
	19	Monday	Planning
	28	Wednesday	Environment, Heritage & Leisure
April	2	Monday	Planning
	11	Wednesday	Finance & General Policy
	23	Monday	Planning
	24	Tuesday	Annual Town Meeting‡
May	2	Wednesday	Full Council
	8	Tuesday	Planning
	16	Wednesday	Annual Council±

See noticeboards, local press and the next issue of Think Loughton for details of meetings after 16 May 2001

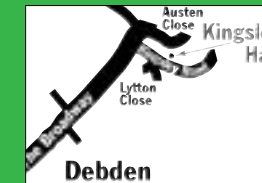
All meetings at Kingsley Hall, Kingsley Road, at 7.30pm unless shown otherwise.

‡ Wesley Hall, at 8pm * Meeting Room, Loughton Library

± Venue to be arranged

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meetings.

Copies of the agenda and minutes of meetings are held in the library, and can also be seen at the Town Council offices which are housed in the Information Centre, Traps Hill.



■ **The Annual Town Meeting** on 24 April is your opportunity to come along and hear what the Town Council has been doing over the past year, what it hopes to do in the coming year, and to meet councillors, ask questions and offer your views.

There will be an invited speaker – watch local press to find out who. Why not come along and join in with the discussions? After the meeting, there will be time for tea and biscuits and a chat.

The meeting will take place 8pm at Wesley Hall, Methodist Church, High Road, Loughton.



Songsters that bring life to the graveyard

Loughton Cemetery attendant Phil Kingham describes how the graveyard is a haven for so many species of bird

blackbirds, tits and pigeons, and of course my favourite, the robin, one of whom seems to be in a territorial dispute over my occupation of the cemetery office!

One of our more colourful residents is the jay, a member of the crow family.

Green woodpeckers, based in a cluster of four conifers, have given me quite a start when approached at ground level. Not so their great-spotted cousins, who are very shy.

Song and mistle thrushes pay the occasional visit – the former being fairly uncommon now – and the cold spell in January saw a small flock of redwing helping themselves to some berries.

Chaffinch and goldfinch arrive when least expected and just before Christmas last year, I observed a pair of longtailed tits being harassed and outnumbered by bluetits.

Stately

Flyovers can be a trial, but kestrels have hovered and a sparrowhawk swooped. Best was a stately heron, no doubt on his way to an easy lunch at one of Loughton's garden ponds.

I am sure that a more dedicated ornithologist than I would make more of the area;

so do feel free to come and look at the birdlife in the cemetery.

Please remember that, sadly, even the cemetery is not immune to criminal activity, so be sure to safeguard your belongings when visiting.



AT SCHOOL in the 50s, my best friend Mike Everett had the consuming passion of birdspotting.

I became addicted by association and we spent many happy days, at various venues throughout the county, stalking our objectives. After college, Mike went on to become a senior conservationist at the RSPB.

I must have retained some interest because on my appointment at Loughton cemetery, I found myself able to identify most of the species seen.

We have the usual birdlife such as can be seen in urban gardens, namely crows,

Bull's Head clean-up

BULL'S Head Pond, at the junction of Warren Hill and the High Road, is receiving an early spring clean from the Corporation of London as part of an ongoing programme of pond management work throughout Epping Forest.

The clean-up involves draining the pond, removing litter and clearing away much of the silt that has built up.

Once any fish have been removed to a safe haven, mechanical means are used to scoop out the silt which is then left on an adjacent part of the green to dry out. This process can take one to two years before the silt can be removed.

Meanwhile, the pond should re-fill with water and vegetation will grow around the fringes of the pond to provide once again an attractive feature for this part of Loughton.

Orchestral manoeuvres

THIS year, Roding Players are proud to be celebrating their tenth anniversary as an orchestra for amateur musicians in Loughton and the surrounding area.

Our aim is to be involved with whatever community activities call for live music, whether it is a classical or light music concert or playing carols round the town's Christmas tree.

In the process we hope to share our enjoyment and sense of achievement with our audiences. Our members range from experienced players to relative beginners and include young and not-so-young. We do not hold auditions, so nervous or rusty players can establish themselves easily.

We give three concerts a year and recently we have branched out to share our platform with



Take note: the Players are on the look-out for more members

others, such as a brass chamber music group and a choir from a junior school, as well as promoting our soloists. A group from the orchestra has held a musical workshop with local schoolchildren.

We have been greatly privileged to win an award from the Eastern Arts Board to enable us to commission ensemble music which we shall be playing in future concerts. We have also played music

composed by one of our founders, the late Paul Servis, and by our current musical director, Miles Harwood. Our biennial weekend courses at Wansfell College have enabled us to explore together different aspects of music that we do not have time for in our weekly rehearsals.

We are currently recruiting players, especially for the string, brass and percussion sections for our Spring Concert on Saturday 7 April, when the theme will be East Meets West, with a mixture of Russian and American music.

Anyone who would like to join us should call Miles Harwood on 020 8505 4329. Or, anyone who just enjoys live classical/light music, do come and support us – 7.30pm at the Methodist Church, Loughton (admission £4.50, concessions £3.50. Children under 11 free).

Could you help the CAB with their enquiries?

LOUGHTON Citizens Advice Bureau would like to recruit more volunteer advisers.

The CAB provides advice on a range of subjects, from consumer rights to housing problems, social security, employment or debt.

Manager Alison McBrayne says: "We know local people value our service. Last year, we dealt with nearly 10,000 queries. And, in a recent survey, 83 per cent of our

clients said they were very satisfied with the help they received."

The CAB relies on volunteers to staff daily advice sessions at St Mary's Parish Centre, High Road, and the twice-weekly service at Debden Library. Most find their work very satisfying.

Anyone interested who could spare two half-days a week should call Alison on 020 8502 0032.

Christmas competitions bridge generation gap



CHRISTMAS may be a distant memory, but it would be a shame not to report the outcome of the Town Council's Christmas competitions, given they provoked such a good response.

The Best Dressed Window competition generated lots of extremely creative entries, and the judging panel had a very hard time choosing the winners.

There were two categories:

- Local and independent shops; and
- Multiple and chain stores.

The Flower Shop in the High Road won the first category, and the winner of the second category was Barnardo's, in The Broadway.

Town Council Chairman Cllr

Stephen Murray presented each winner with an engraved cup, to keep for 11 months, and a cheque for £100 to go to their nominated charities – the Rhys Daniels Trust and Barnardo's respectively.

Runners-up were Loughton Nursery and Sense, both based in the High Road.

In addition, Lockey's, also in the High Road, and Laws the Bakers, in the Broadway, were highly commended. All received a framed certificate.

Congratulations to all the winners and thanks to all those who took part in the competition.

The Christmas 2000 card competition was an even greater success than the previous year's. The Town Council received a total of 150 entries, all of a very high standard, and

the following entries were adjudged the winners:

- Key Stage 1: Billy Moore
- Key Stage 2: Chelsie Rider
- Key Stage 3: Annie Skipper (overall winner)
- Key Stage 4: Melissa Lee
- Adult: Dorothy Thomas

All the winners received a £20 gift token from Stephen Murray at the Council's Community Forum on 23 November (see photograph). The overall winning entry, by Annie Skipper, was reproduced and used as the Town Council's official Christmas card.

And the Art Shop, in Brooklyn Parade, kindly framed Annie's work for her to keep.



Town Council Chairman Cllr Stephen Murray, back left, with (pictured clockwise) Annie Skipper, Dorothy Thomas, Chelsie Rider, Billie Moore and Melissa Lee

Town gets switched on



Christmas lights in the High Road

ON SATURDAY 25 November, Loughton became a blaze of colour as the Christmas lights in the High Road were switched on.

The Christmas 2000 scheme was extended to include Centric Parade and the maple tree in St Mary's Churchyard.

The lighting-up ceremony was performed by Town Council Chairman Cllr Stephen Murray before going on to another lighting-up ceremony at King's Green. There he turned on the Town Council's own Christmas tree lights.

Some of the lights were sponsored by local people in memory of a friend or relative as part of St Clare's Hospice "Light up a Life" scheme.