

Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge - and Pewter

We were with the Worshipful Company of Educators on a guided walk in Epping Forest. We've lived near the Forest for over thirty years but while we have driven through it on several occasions, we have never been there. We knew that it had been fought for, and then saved, by the City of London in the late nineteenth century and that it is now



maintained and preserved by them under The Epping Forest Act, 1878. Many of you will know that the City also acquired, and now maintains, many other 'lungs of London'.

But, for the sheer beauty of the beeches in the Forest, and the views over London from the obelisk and TE Lawrence memorial up at Pole Hill, we were wholly unprepared. It turns out that Lawrence had bought land up here, intending to build a retreat from which he could write.

Lunch was at Butler's Retreat, converted from a nineteenth century barn, adjacent to Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge - a 16th century lodge built by Henry VIII and now beautifully restored.

They say that the architects of Shakespeare's Globe on Bankside came here to study the staircase and to incorporate the design into the Globe's own stair towers.

After the Superintendent, Paul Thomson, had given us a brief, but entertaining, 'hats I wear' talk about his hugely varied rôle managing the Forest, Sophie Lillington, Heritage and Interpretation Officer, finished the education part of the day by showing us the reconstituted kitchen - 'what the people would then have eaten'. It was just before our own lunch, so she had to be quick!

The replica food on display was on a number of tables, sitting on replica platters and chargers, many of which were pewter. It is always



interesting to come across unexpected collections of pewter - though pewter in a sixteenth century hunting lodge was, I suspect, to be expected!

It was difficult to look for pewter marks - that would have meant turning food-laden plates upside down, with, even with replica food, possibly disastrous results. But one of the plates was clearly stamped 'AEW' - AE Williams of Birmingham.

I hope our visit might inspire Ms Lillington to arrange for a catalogue of their pewter to be prepared.

Alan Williams

[Note: Some of the pewter was acquired quite recently from a company called Merchant Adventurers which may or may not be <http://www.merchantadventurers.com>
Others may have been acquired in the 1990s by Ms Lillington's predecessor.

How many pieces are there? Let's see how inspired Ms Lillington is! Ed]

Forest Focus: a free magazine about events in and around the Forest.

Epping Forest: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/eppingforest

For a view of the Elizabethan fireplace at the Lodge: <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/heritage/Pages/default.aspx>

Photos: taken with the permission/consent of the Heritage and Interpretation Officer

TE Lawrence and Pole Hill: Wikipedia reports: "He [Lawrence] purchased several small plots of land in Chingford, built a hut and swimming pool there, and visited frequently. The hut was removed in 1930 when the Chingford Urban District Council acquired the land and passed it to the City of London Corporation, which re-erected the hut in the grounds of The Warren, Loughton, where it remains (neglected) today. Lawrence's tenure of the Chingford land has now been commemorated by a plaque fixed on the sighting obelisk on [Pole Hill](#)."

Thanks to Sophie Lillington, Heritage and Interpretation Officer in the Open Spaces Department, for her help and advice in preparing this article. Of course, any remaining errors are entirely mine!

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