



Fairlop PlainTimes for Schools

## The Dissolution and beyond

### Background information

In 1539 Henry VIII dissolved Barking Abbey and took ownership of Hainault Forest, which still included Fairlop Plain. This area now became known as "King's Wood" but the management regime remained unchanged and so did the landscape. Future monarchs continued to value the Forest as a hunting ground and for its oaks in particular, which were used by England's Navy for shipbuilding. Indeed, Samuel Pepys, the late 17th century diarist, naval clerk and secretary to Charles II's Navy, passed nearby in search of suitable shipbuilding material.



**Samuel Pepys by John Hayls**  
(Courtesy National Gallery)

Products from Forest trees continued to support local industries, particularly wood for charcoal burning and bark for the leather industry. Nearby Collier's Hatch and Tanner's Lane reflect these industries in their names.

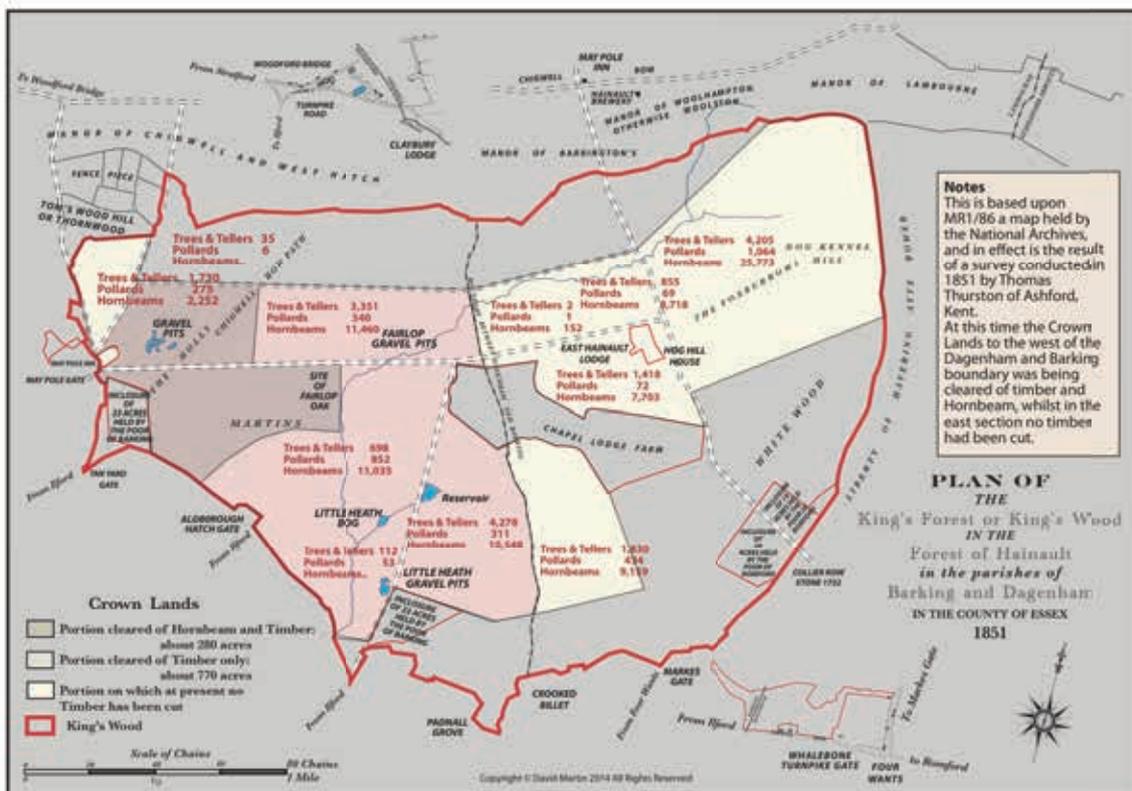
However change was in the air!



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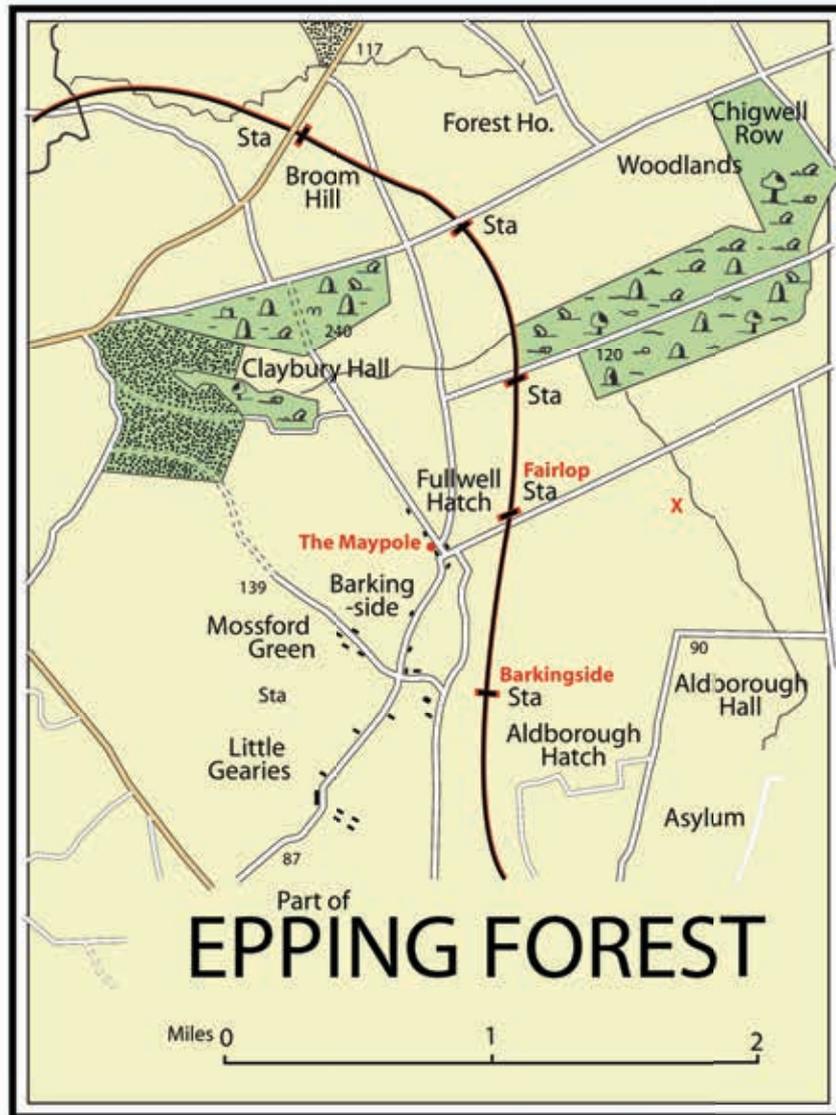
However, by the beginning of the 18th century, royalty no longer hunted locally. Enterprising locals began making illegal enclosures, then extracting topsoil, gravel and sand to sell. However, Deer continued to destroy crops and Forest Law was still in place although not so rigorously enforced unless trees were concerned!

In the following century, technological changes in shipbuilding meant that more and more ships were clad in iron rather than wood. The Crown's income from wood reduced dramatically and King's Wood became uneconomical to maintain.



In 1851, an Act of Parliament gave the Crown permission for the disafforestation of the King's woods. The land could now be used as agricultural land without tenants being in fear of unworkable Forest Laws. Contractors were engaged to fell and uproot all the Forest trees on Fairlop Plain.

Within a short space of time, all above ground evidence of King's Wood had vanished. Forest Farm and Hainault Farm were then built on Fairlop Plain, along with new roads and drainage. Ironically, profit from the new farm leases and the sale of bark and wood was absorbed by the huge costs of the enterprise. Fairlop Plain's landscape had now changed out of all recognition. Playing fields and small parcels of privately owned land on which small factory units would soon be built, bordered the mainly agricultural land.



In the style of George Philip & Son L<sup>td</sup> 1930

Marked are **Barkingside** and **Fairlop** Stations and **The Maypole P.H.**  
**X** marks the spot of where Fairlop Oak once stood. If a comparison is made with the maps of Hainault Forest in the 1800's, it is immediately apparent that most of the forest has been turned into farmland. Also there are buildings around what is now Barkingside High Street.

(David Martin)

