THE CONYERS FAMILY OF WALTHAMSTOW and COPPED HALL

There were three Copped Hall mansions on this site. A Medieval building, a Tudor building and a Georgian Building.

This exhibit is a short history of the buildings together with an explanation of the connection with the Conyers family of Walthamstow and details the archaeological work undertaken at Copped Hall by the West Essex Archaeological Group.

The present day Copped Hall site is owned by the Copped Hall Trust. The site is situated in the parish of Upshire near the M25 and is just off Crown Hill, Epping CM16 5HS.

Tours of the Georgian Building at Copped Hall and the grounds take place at 10am on the third Sunday in each month except December. Tours cost is £7 and last 2½ to 3 hours.

For further details please see: www.coppedhalltrust.org.uk and www.weag.org.uk
John Conyers (1650 – 1725)

John Conyers, born in 1650, was the first son of Tristram Conyers, MP for Walthamstow. His family were considerable landowners in the Walthamstow area. He was a London barrister at Middle Temple and his roots can be traced back to Horton, the ancient seat of Sir Christopher Conyers, and to the North of England Conyers' seats in Layton, Sockburn, and Bishopston. He owned lands in East Grinstead, and served as MP there twice (1695 to 1708 and 1710 to his death in 1725) and for West Looe (1708 to 1710).

Edward Conyers (1693-1742)

Edward Conyers was born in 1693, son of John Conyers of Walthamstow.

He married Matilda Fermer, the younger daughter of William Lord Lempster, and they had two children John and Sophia.
Edward Conyers was educated at Oxford University and Middle Temple. He succeeded his father as parliamentary candidate for East Grinstead constituency in 1725 and served as an MP from 1725 to 1727 and from 1734 to 1741.

Edward Conyers bought property in Walthamstow and other places. In 1739 he bought the Manor of Epping which included Copped Hall and Copped Hall Park.

He died three years later on 23 April 1742 and Copped Hall then passed to his son John.

**John Conyers (1717 - 1775)**

John Conyers was born in 1717, son of Edward Conyers. His first wife, Hannah, died in 1745. He married his second wife, Lady Henrietta Fermor in 1747 (third daughter of Thomas, 1st Earl of Pomfret) they had thirteen children of which eight survived.

John was educated at Oxford University and made the Grand Tour. From 1747 to 1754 he was MP for Reading and MP for Essex from 1772 until his death in 1775. He was a Verderer of Waltham forest and
Essex. In 1742 he was made governor of the Foundling Hospital to which he donated £1,000.

John Conyers demolished the Tudor Copped Hall and replaced it with the Georgian mansion.

He died in 1775. In that year Copped Hall was burgled and much of the plate was stolen. The thieves were traced to Brick Lane, Shoreditch where Lambert Reading was found with the plate and executed for his crime.

John Conyers II (1748 - 1813)

John Conyers II was born in 1748, first son of John Conyers. In 1773 he married Julia Catherine Matthew the daughter and heiress of William Matthew. They separated in 1812 after having had several children.

John was educated at Oxford University and made the Grand Tour as his father had done. He was a Verderer of Epping Forest and he was interested in developments in agriculture. The most dramatic events during the life of John Conyers II were the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars.

He inherited Copped Hall on the death of his father in 1775. He died in 1813
Henry John Conyers (1782 - 1853)

Henry John Conyers was born 1782, son of John Conyers II.

Henry John Conyers became Deputy Lieutenant of Essex and Verderer of Epping Forest. He married Harriet Steel and they had three daughters.

He inherited Copped Hall on the death of his father in 1813, though he was rather more interested in hunting than in the maintenance of Copped Hall. He died in 1853 and as he had no sons, this Conyers line ended.

However Henry John Conyers had three daughters and the eldest, Julia, continued to live at Copped Hall with her husband the Hon Anthony John Ashley. She outlived her husband, and later sold Copped Hall to George Wythes in 1869.
WALTHAMSTOW AND
THE CONYERS FAMILY

The Conyers family, originally from Yorkshire, had been settled in the Walthamstow hamlet of Hoe Street since before 1600. On the west side of Hoe Street, facing east, was the house, later called Grosvenor House, built around 1600 by Tristram Conyers (died 1619).

In a deed of 1623, William Conyers conveyed a rent-charge of £7 10s. from his lands at Hale End to the churchwardens of Walthamstow to provide bread for 12 poor persons every Sunday, in memory of his uncle, Tristram Conyers.

By 1699 much of Hoe Street south of Marsh Street (now the High Street) belonged to the Conyers family, along with land in West Ham and Bishopsgate. John Conyers (1650–1725) had also gained through marriage an estate at East Grinstead, and his son Edward was MP for East Grinstead in 1725–7 and 1734–41.

Despite their property and political presence in Sussex, the Conyers family remained firmly based in Essex, with their family tombs and memorials in Walthamstow parish church. Edward purchased the manor of Epping in 1736, and in 1739 he acquired
Copped Hall from Thomas Webster in exchange for property in Sussex.

In 1795 six alms-houses were built to the west of St Mary's Church in Walthamstow, on land given by John Conyers II.
THE MEDIEVAL COPPED HALL
(1165 - 1568)

The land on which Copped Hall stands was a forest managed by the Abbey of Waltham and used by the king for hunting deer.

In 1165 Henry II granted Richard Fitzaucher two acres of forest clearing on which to put up a building. He built a timber framed hall with service rooms.

By 1258 the estate had expanded with meadows, pastures and 22 rent-paying tenants and the name "Copped Hall" was in use. Over the next century various members of the Fitzaucher and the De shardlowe families held Copped Hall.

In 1350 it was sold to the Abbot of Waltham Abbey who kept the mansion exclusively for his own use. In 1374 the estate was enlarged by 120 acres. During the Abbot's time at Copped Hall, Henry III, Richard II and Henry VIII used it frequently for hunting and spiritual refreshment.

1535 the Abbot gave Copped Hall to Henry VIII in exchange for other lands. The mansion was by now a brick built three storey building.

In 1548 Mary Tudor (later Queen Mary) inherited the Copped Hall estate.
In 1564 Elizabeth I granted Copped Hall to Sir Thomas Heneage. By July 1568, when Queen Elizabeth I visited, he had incorporated the Medieval mansion within a new grand Tudor mansion.

Elements of the design of the Tudor Copped Hall suggest that the southern part of the building was constructed first c1500 (i.e. part of the medieval building). The east wing, west wing and the colonnade on the north side of the courtyard were added later, perhaps in the 1570s.
In 1624 Lionel Cranfield, first Earl of Middlesex, bought Copped Hall and following his death it first passed first to his son James and later to James brother Lionel, third Earl of Middlesex.

Lionel (the third Earl) was a royalist during Cromwell's rule and was one of the party of gentlemen who travelled to the Hague to invite Charles II (son of the beheaded Charles I) to ascend the throne of England. Thereafter the king visited Copped Hall on several occasions.

In 1674 Charles Sackville, grandson of Cranfield, later Earl of Dorset, inherited Copped Hall. He often entertained both Charles II and James II at Copped Hall. In 1688 Charles Sackville gave refuge at Copped Hall to James II's Protestant daughter Anne (later Queen Anne) when she fled London, afraid that her Catholic father James II might return from exile in France. Anne eventually became Queen following the reign of William and Mary (William III and Mary II) who ascended the throne after the abdication of James II. William III also took refuge at Copped Hall following an attempted kidnap.

In 1701 Sir Thomas Webster purchased Copped Hall and towards the end of his ownership it suffered storm damage.
In 1739 Thomas Webster exchanged Copped Hall for lands held by Edward Conyers near Battle Abbey. Conyers moved to Copped Hall with his family but died only three years later.

In 1742 John Conyers inherited Copped Hall. He had the famous Walled Garden built in about 1745.
Paintings of Tudor Copped Hall in 1746 (Now demolished)
In 1748 John Conyers, son of Edward, demolished the Medieval Copped Hall and uses much of the material in building the Georgian mansion.

In 1775 John Conyers II inherited Copped Hall and undertook redecoration and improvements.

Engraving of Georgian Copped Hall 1807:
In 1813 Henry John Conyers inherited Copped Hall. He was very keen on hunting on which he spent over £100,000.

In 1869 George Wythes bought Copped Hall. The Wythes family made their fortune as contractors during the rapid expansion of the railways. His son George Edward Wythes lived at Copped Hall but died before his father.

In 1887 Ernest James Wythes inherited Copped Hall and was its last resident. He set about expanding and ornamenting the house and garden. He added a new wing to the house and an elaborate conservatory. He laid out the Italianate garden, the parterres and many other features. The magazine Country Life photographed Copped Hall in 1910.

On Sunday 6th May 1917 a fire broke out and the building was very severely damaged. Many people helped to save valuable paintings and assets during the fire.

The Wythes abandoned Copped Hall and moved to Wood House. Although the servants wing, estate and gardens of Copped Hall were kept up until the couple died. In 1952 the estate was sold to the Talbot Trust and from then onwards everything of value was removed.
Various unsuccessful plans were put forward for the site, including a golf course, hotel and conference centre.
Subsequently, the Conservators of Epping Forest purchased the land around the mansion as buffer land and in 1995 the Copped Hall Trust became the owners of the Copped Hall mansion, associated buildings and gardens.

Thus began the impressive efforts to restore the mansion, its gardens and the walled garden (purchased 1999).
ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE TUDOR COPPED HALL

The Tudor Copped Hall (also known as Old Copt Hall) was demolished and some of the materials used in the building of the Georgian Copped Hall in 1748. The Georgian building is still standing.

For over 12 years Tudor Copped Hall has been the subject of an archaeological investigation undertaken by the West Essex Archaeological Group under the auspices of the Copped Hall Trust Archaeological Project.

These panels and exhibits show some of the work undertaken during this investigation.
Floor plan of the Tudor Copped Hall
SOME OF THE TECHNOLOGIES IN USE AT COPPED HALL

Ground Penetrating Radar

Magnetometry
Surveying (Levels)

Resistivity

Wet sieving
ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE TUDOR COPPED HALL

Spiral Staircase

The Rose Garden
This ground penetrating radar trace was taken at Copped Hall. The round feature was unexpected.

Below is this feature after Excavation - it is the floor and wall foundations of a dovecote.

The dovecote was used to rear domestic pigeons for eggs, feathers and meat.

The half-metre thick walls had deep holes on the inside to house the birds.
ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE TUDOR COPPED HALL

The only part of the Tudor Mansion left standing after its demolition was this pillar:

Finds, cleaning and processing:

![Image of finds and cleaning process]

![Image of artifacts]

![Image of coin found at Copped Hall, May 2008]

Edward IV, Second Reign, 1471-1483, Silver Penny
Site: UPCH008 Trench G Context 250 Small Find 1 Actual Size 17mm Dia. Approx.