

The History of Horse Close Wood, Wimbledon Park

Dr D.G. Dawson, February 2025

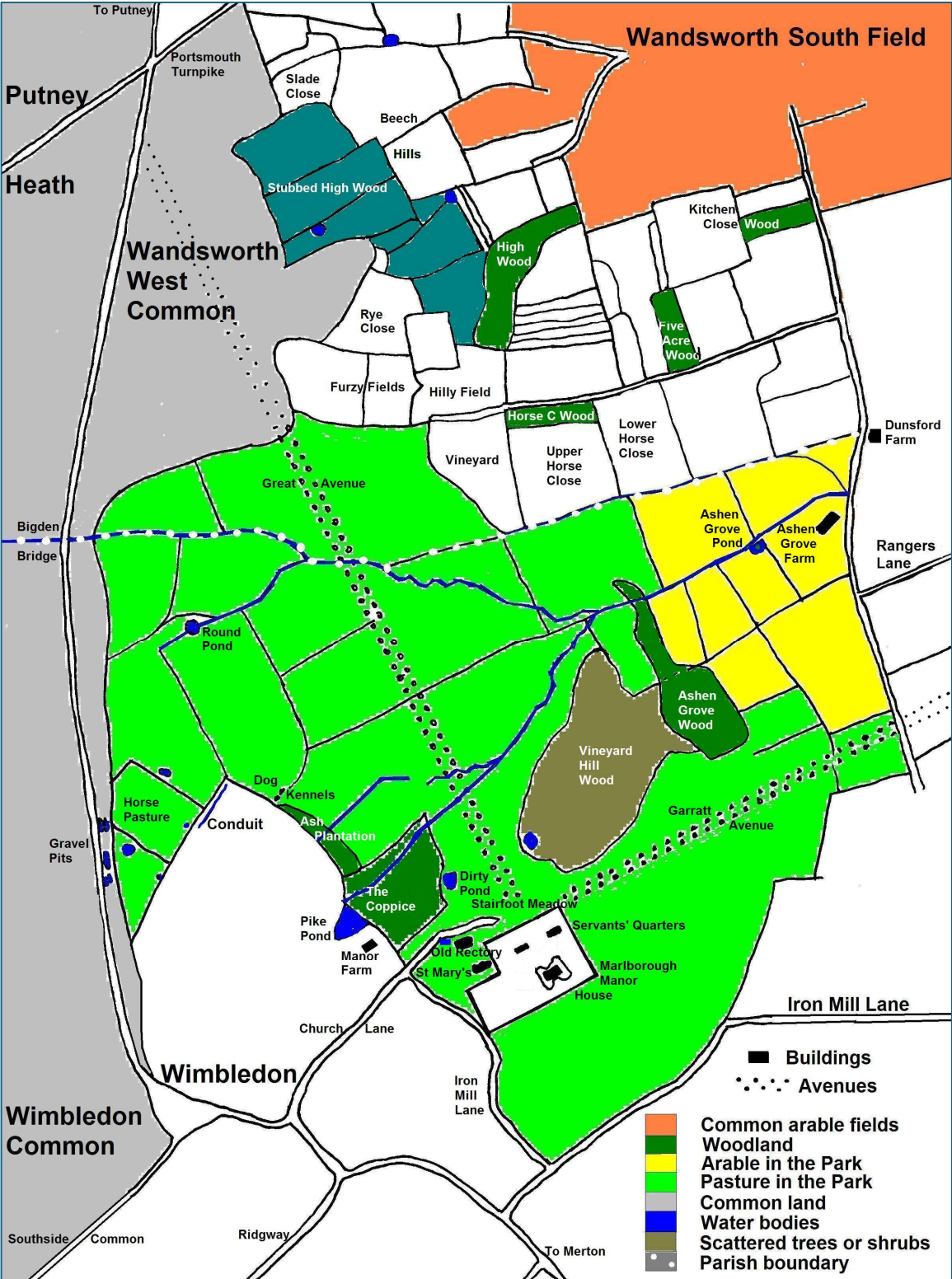


Figure 1. Heritage Wimbledon Park in 1750¹

Summary

Horse Close Wood dates back at least to 1700 AD, but probably not right back to the wild wood that established after the end of the last glaciation. Rather, it was planted on land enclosed from previous agriculture use. If it was planted before 1600, it would be one of the few ancient planted woodlands, if later, it would be considered an old planted woodland. Today, the wood has a considerable value as one of the few old woods in this part of south-west London, with a woodland soil and its accompanying plants.

It was incorporated into Wimbledon Park when acquired by the first Earl Spencer in the 1750s and included into the landscaping of the park by Lancelot Brown in 1765-66, when it came to sit between open pasture to the west and south and arable fields to the north and east.

The boundaries of the wood are remarkably similar today to those first recorded in 1740. Pasture lay beyond the western edge until that was squared-off around 1940, when housing came on Wimbledon Park Road and a little woodland was lost in the north and gained in the south of that edge. The northern boundary was originally a lane running west from Merton Road. This was replaced by a carriage drive in Brown's landscaping, which in turn was lost when the Spencers rented the land to a local farmer in 1827. A small area of open field was added to the eastern end of the wood in 1889. This came about because the newly constructed District Line was there, and it became the new eastern boundary. Apart from strips of tree planting in the last 10-years, the southern boundary remains the same today as in 1740.

In the early 19th century, the management of the surrounding farmland moved to the new buildings of Lake Farm, constructed in a clearing in the south-west corner of the wood. In the late 19th century, housing development came to the north of the wood and a polo ground to the south, so Lake Farm became stables for the polo. The stables then became a piggery in the First World War and the polo grounds became allotments. The wood was saved from development when the remnant of Wimbledon Park was purchased by the Wimbledon Corporation in 1915. The allotments were replaced by the Great Field of the public park in the 1920s. The piggery buildings were lost during the Second World War, when allotments returned to the Great Field to the south of the wood. By the 1950s, woodland had recolonised the site of the piggery, only to be cleared again for a car park that remains there today.

In 1970, National Grid buried high-voltage cables under the eastern end of the wood and this area subsequently was disturbed several times for maintenance of the cables. Finally, in 2019, the now redundant cables were removed. The cleared area was retained as the Dave Lofthouse Glade, managed as a meadow.

Starting in 2016, local volunteers began tree planting around the edges of the wood to protect old oaks and restore lost areas. They hope to be able to plant up the car park, so returning the wood to its previous extent.

Ancient or not?

Horse Close Wood was one of the several pre-existing woods that were incorporated into the landscaping of Wimbledon Park for the first Earl Spencer in 1765-6, see Figure 1. The earliest map showing it was a plan of the Down and Dunsford Manorial holdings dating back to around 1742 (Figure 2) and it is shown on every reliable map of the area since then. So, it has been there continuously since around 1700, but is it “ancient”?

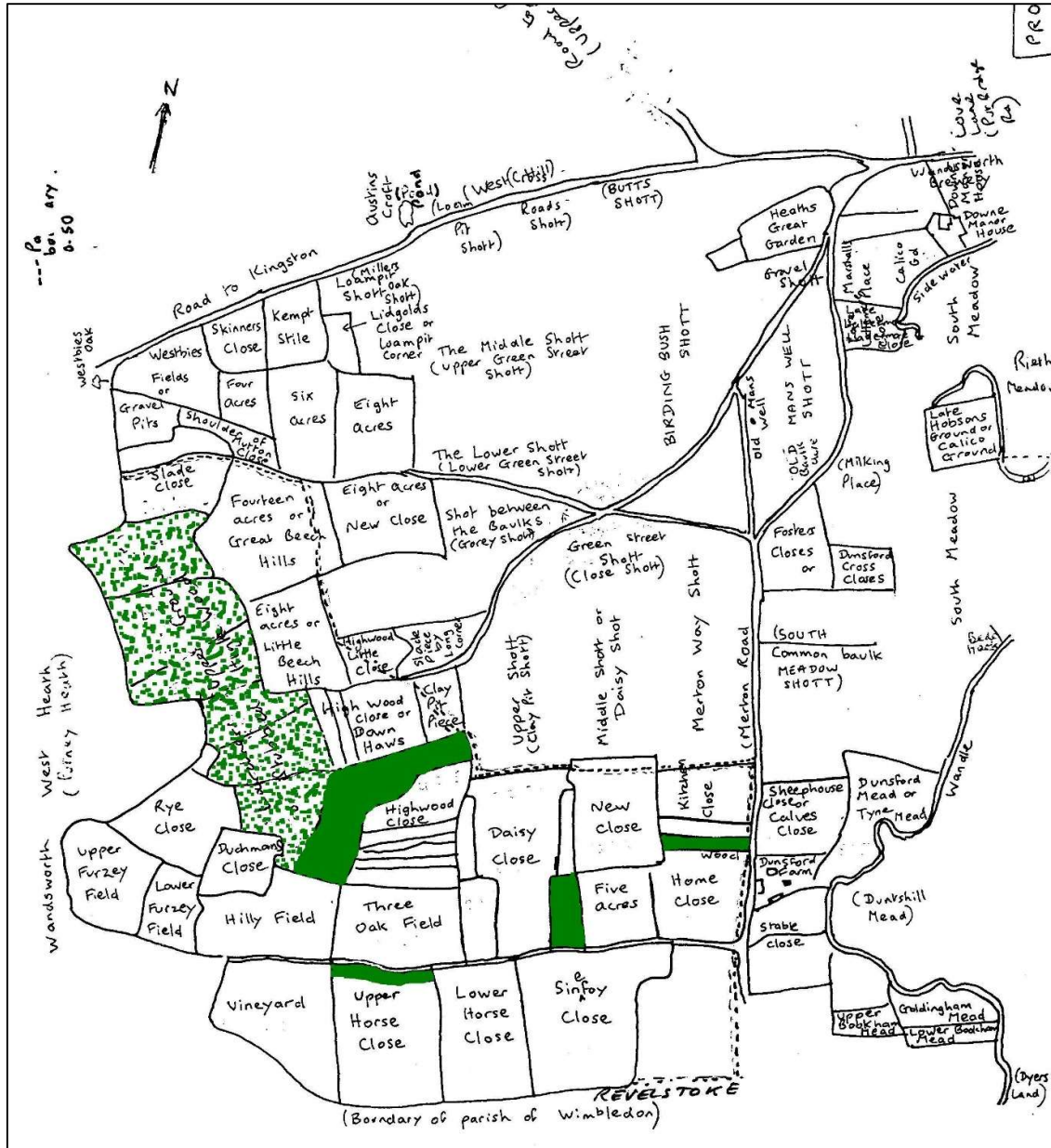


Figure 2. Horse Close and nearby woods, c1742. Map by Rita Ensing², based upon a Bedford estate plan in the Public Records Office, with some names from subsequent maps. The wood lies across the northern edge of “Upper Horse Close” on the southern edge of the map. See Figure 1 for the names of woods not given on this map.

Ancient Woodland is defined as having been continuously wooded since 1600 and is specially protected in national planning guidance³, but it is uncommon for documentary evidence to confirm presence so early, so inventories of ancient woodland have employed correlative or indirect evidence⁴. At 1.7ha in area, Horse Close Wood falls below the usual threshold for inventory and is not marked as ancient on Natural England's official inventory. We may, nevertheless, check it against the usual criteria:

- 1. Recorded history:** A survey of 1540 showed that the common fields of Wandsworth South lay north of the position of the wood, and the land to the south of there as far as the Wimbledon parish boundary was one large demesne field, but no mention was made of woodland⁵. Sadly, this is the case also for all documents up until the Bedford map of 1742, so the recorded history gives no extra information on when the wood originated.
- 2. Present on an old map:** The presence of the wood on the estate map of around 1742 (Figure 2) might suggest an ancient origin, but there were some 100 years after 1600 when the wood could have been planted and been mature enough to be mapped in 1742, so an old planted origin cannot be ruled out.
- 3. Name:** "Horse Close" Wood has the ring of an old naming, and the word "close" indicates a planted origin, so the wood was planted. However, the name does not assist with the date of planting, so this criterion does not carry any much extra information.
- 4. Shape and internal features:** The rectangular shape also indicates a planted origin. Not only this wood but all its surrounds, except for high wood (Figure 1), have rectilinear boundaries. This pattern was identified by Oliver Rackham (in his 1986 book, *The history of the countryside*.) as "planned countryside", and the result of the enclosure of open agricultural fields. There are no internal features to assist further with the judgement. So, the shape does not suggest an origin as part of the original "wild wood" but nor does it rule out the planting of an old enclosure; it provides nothing conclusive the date of planting.
- 5. Number of ancient woodland indicator species:** Some woodland specialist species are known to be poor colonists and so they are found much more often in ancient woodlands than elsewhere. The number of such species is commonly used to indicate whether any particular wood may be ancient. The wood has 6 to 12 possible indicators, which is less than good evidence, so these are far from conclusive evidence of an ancient origin⁶.
- 6. Age of trees.** The girth of a tree can be translated into an estimate of age⁷. Unfortunately, the traditional use of woodland was coppice with standard trees, mainly to yield fuel, so that few individual woodland trees lived beyond 100 years, even though the woodland might be ancient. So, it is unsurprising that no existing tree began life before 1670, again telling us nothing new about the age of the wood.

We conclude that the wood is very likely of planted origin, and so a "secondary" wood, perhaps from the 17th century, which would not be ancient, but that it could date from before 1600 and

so be one of the minority of ancient planted woodlands. Either way, the wood has a considerable value as one of the few old woods on alkaline soils in this part of south-west London, with a woodland soil and its accompanying plants. The nearest comparable woodland is on the western slopes of Putney Heath two kilometres away to the west and there are none to the north and east.

History since 1740

John Spencer purchased the wood in 1758 when he acquired a large block of land in today's Southfields. There seems to be no written evidence of the history of the wood in the Spencers' time (the 83 years from 1744 to 1827), nor up until Dave Lofthouse's⁸ Horse Close Wood management plan of 1989. There are many maps available, however, which confirm that the boundaries remained essentially the same as in 1768, with just a few alterations.

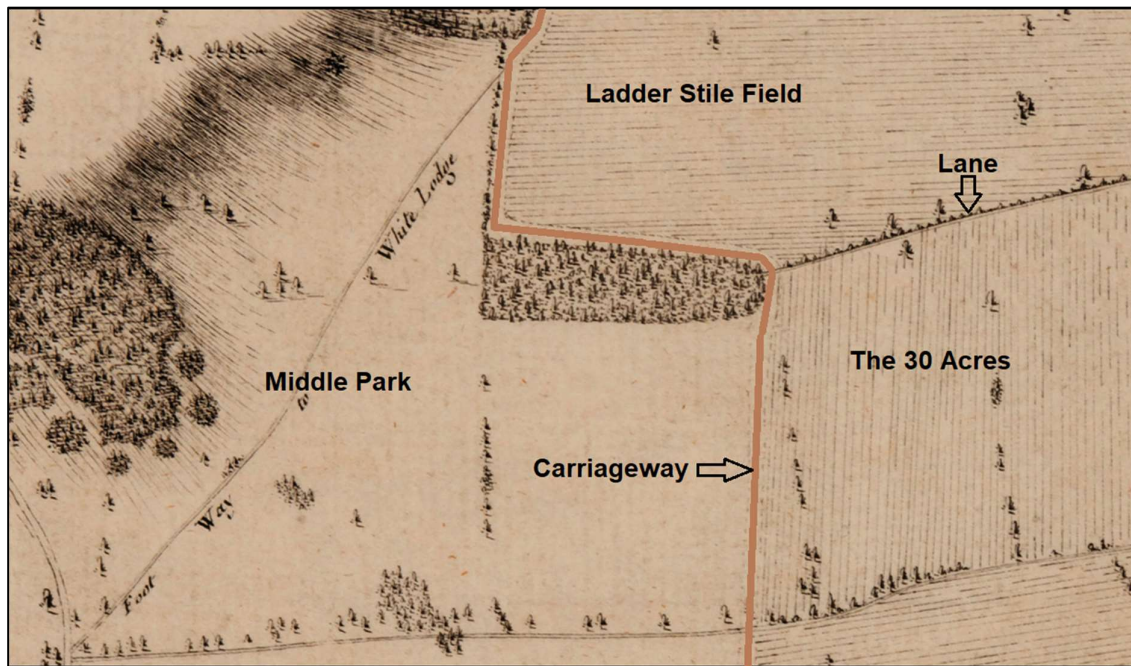


Figure 3. Horse Close Wood in the 1780s. Excerpt from the Montreal Map, with annotations based upon the Corris Map⁹.

In the 1780s, midway through the Spencers' time using Wimbledon Park (figure 3), the wood was surrounded to the west and south by the open pasture of the "middle park". To the east and north it was bounded by a carriageway, beyond which lay the arable fields of the park. The narrow lane of the 1742 map now terminated at the north-east corner of the wood¹⁰. This is the first map to show the wood as slightly wider in the west than the east. We do not know what the Spencers used the wood for: perhaps as a game cover, given their enthusiasm for field sports.

After the Spencers became absentee landlords in 1827, the surrounds of the wood were managed by tenant farmers. The carriageway was lost and the management of the nearby

In 1889, the Wimbledon and Fulham Line (now the District Line) was opened, passing within 20 metres of the eastern end of the wood, and housing development came at the turn of the century in the “Grid” to the east of there and on a new road, Southdean Gardens, on the northern boundary of the wood (Figure 5)¹⁴. Lake Farm became the club house and stables of a polo club, with a bandstand and pavilion in the great field just to the south of there. The small portion of open field between the wood and railway was fenced off and was colonised by woodland, partly compensating for the loss at Lake Farm. The polo club buildings were converted into a piggery as part of the war effort¹⁵. Postwar aerial photographs confirm that the polo field was used for allotments in the first world war but there were still no houses to the west of the wood in the OS map of 1924 and no record of the use of the rest of the wood.

The wood was saved from development when it was purchased by the Wimbledon Corporation in 1915, making the wood the northern end of a new public park developed in the 1920s¹⁶. It was now used for public recreation.



Figure 6. Horse Close Wood in 1938.



Figure 7 Horse Close Wood in an RAF photograph of 1946 (English Heritage).

By 1938, housing was being developed on Wimbledon Park Road at the western end of the wood, most of the buildings of the piggery had gone but the pavilion and bandstand remained (Figure 6). Those were soon to be lost to allotments in the Second World War.

Aerial photographs from the mid 1940s (Figure 7) confirm that war-time allotments displaced the bandstand and pavilion on the Great Field of the public park. The new housing on Wimbledon Park Road had involved a small land swap, with the wood gaining a triangle in the south and the houses gaining a triangle in the north. The last building in the wood was still present in 1946, but demolished by 1947. Following this, woodland finally re-established over the area originally cleared for Lake Farm, 100 years earlier. The perimeter path of the public park was first seen just south of the wood in 1945. An OS map from 1951 shows continuous woodland cover, and the woodland was now at its maximum size.

Around 0.2 hectares of the eastern end of the wood was cleared in the 1960s or 1970s for the construction of a link in the national electricity grid in a cut and cover trench (Figure 8). The link was 12km long, of 275kV oil-cooled cables, running from the substation beside the River Wandle in Collier's Wood to Willesden. There was a small grassy strip there when I first saw the wood in 1983.

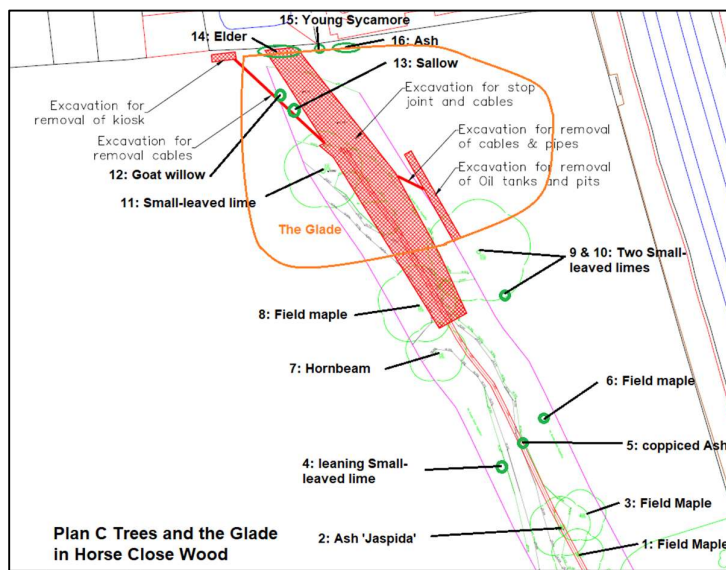


Figure 8. The position of the National Grid cables in Horse Close Wood, showing nearby trees in bold¹⁷.

Also around 1970, the new, virulent strain of Dutch Elm Disease killed around 15 mature Elm trees. Suckers sprouted from surviving tree roots only to succumb to the disease again, as bark beetles carried it to the 20-year-old trees, condemning the Elms to perpetual youth. A 20-year cycle of death and replacement has followed and we are now in the third, less-synchronous die-off.

When I first saw the wood, in 1983, it was used for public recreation, mainly by those walking with or without a dog. The rotting stumps of the lost Elms were still visible. At some time before my first visit, a car park was developed on the site of Lake Farm, a significant reversal of the woodland recovery there. I could find no documentation to show when, in that 30-year period, this was done. Perhaps it was associated with the development of the athletics area in the 1950s. The car park remains today.

Around 1990, LB Merton constructed many new paths and planted new trees. The eastern half of the main path and a few trees survive from that time, but most has been lost¹⁸.

In February 1992, local school children planted a new hedgerow on the north-eastern boundary of the public park, the northern end of which merged with the wood at its south-east corner. The hedgerow remains today¹⁹.

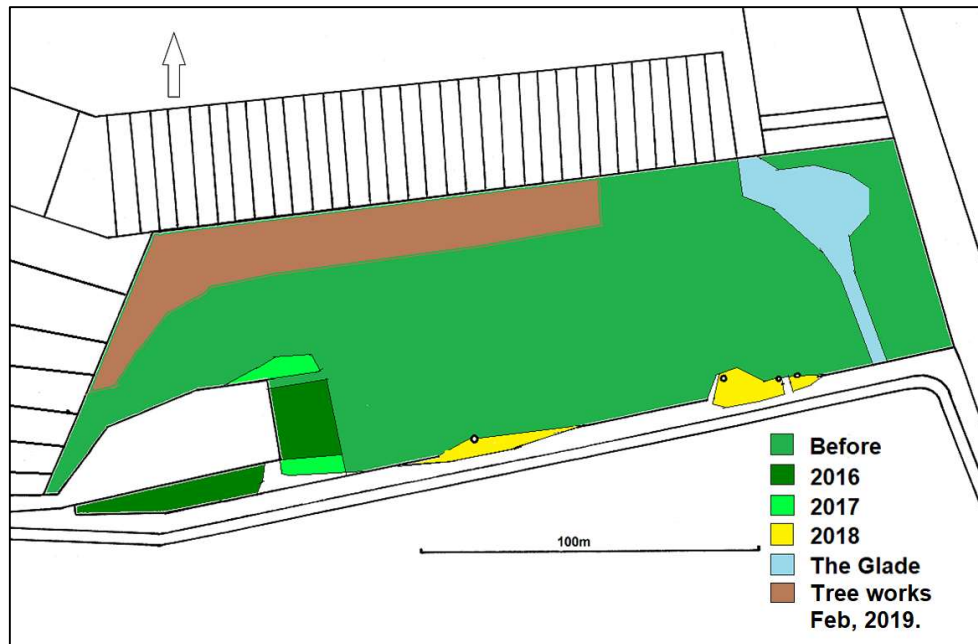


Figure 9. Tree planting and safety works in the 2010s in Horse Close Wood.

In the winter of 2006/7 repair works were undertaken to National Grid’s underground facilities at the eastern end of the wood. Trees were planted nearby to compensate for the losses²⁰. Eight years later, this area had been reclaimed by nature. In the first two years of regeneration, the plants consisted mainly of low-growing annual species²¹, young perennials, woodland edge plants²², arable weeds (thistles) and, surprisingly, plants typical of wet woodland²³. There were few woody species (Buddleia, Bramble and Goat Willow) or climbers.

In 2015, National Grid undertook two maintenance sessions on their facilities. Five trees were lost to gain access for heavy lifting gear²⁴. Given the history of habitat destruction there, the Friends of Wimbledon Park proposed managing the area as the Dave Lofthouse Glade²⁵. This has been managed as a traditional meadow ever since and provides a habitat not otherwise present in the heritage landscape (Figure 9).

In 2019, National Grid removed almost all of their redundant cabling and associated subterranean structures. A new 400kV cable in a deep tunnel elsewhere, had been constructed in 2010-2018. This removal disturbed the Lofthouse Glade, we hope for the last time.

In 2008, the Friends of Wimbledon Park joined with Merton Tree Wardens’ Group for the first of several years’ tree planting (Figure 9). This planting was to screen the car park from view and to protect old oaks from barbeque coals and other damaging activities²⁶. Also shown on Figure 9, is an area where many Ash trees were “copparded” in February 2019 as they were at risk of

falling over the boundary onto residential properties in Gartmore Gardens and Wimbledon Park Road. Unfortunately, this essential safety work allowed a rapid growth of existing brambles, ivy, hedge bindweed and nettles which shaded out most other native species.

As is typical of suburban woodlands in London, residential properties border two boundaries, resulting in some damage to the woodland. My observations over the last 42 years found much disposal of waste over the fences, which smothered the woodland vegetation and encumbered it with hardware. More significant is permitted development on, or over, the boundary, so replacing adjacent green gardens with hard structures, shading the nearby wood and affecting its drainage and fertility. The most significant harm came in January 2007 when, in the course of developing a swimming pool, the owner of 367 Wimbledon Park Road demolished their fence and dumped large volumes of clay into the north-west of the wood. Whilst much of this was removed and the fence repaired, some 150m² of woodland was destroyed and remedial planting was inadequate. In 2025, LB Merton planted a row of Firethorns on the northern edge of the glade in an attempt to deter access over the boundary there.

Neighbours' attitudes to the wood were disparate. Some objected vehemently to the new paths beside the rear of their properties in 1990, leading to these being obstructed with new planting, and others disagreed as they thought that Ivy or Bramble were a threat to the integrity of their fences and gardens. There were complaints about Ivy in November 2017, and about Brambles in 2024. Many boundary fences have been renewed, with nearby vegetation in the wood cleared, but the vegetation has recovered within a few years.

Public use of the woodland increased greatly during the COVID lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, as it provided for recreation close to home. A great increase in dog-walking peaked then as well. This heavy use led to significant soil compaction and erosion of the ground cover of the wood. The wood is also used increasingly by groups of nursery children for "Forest School" outdoor education.

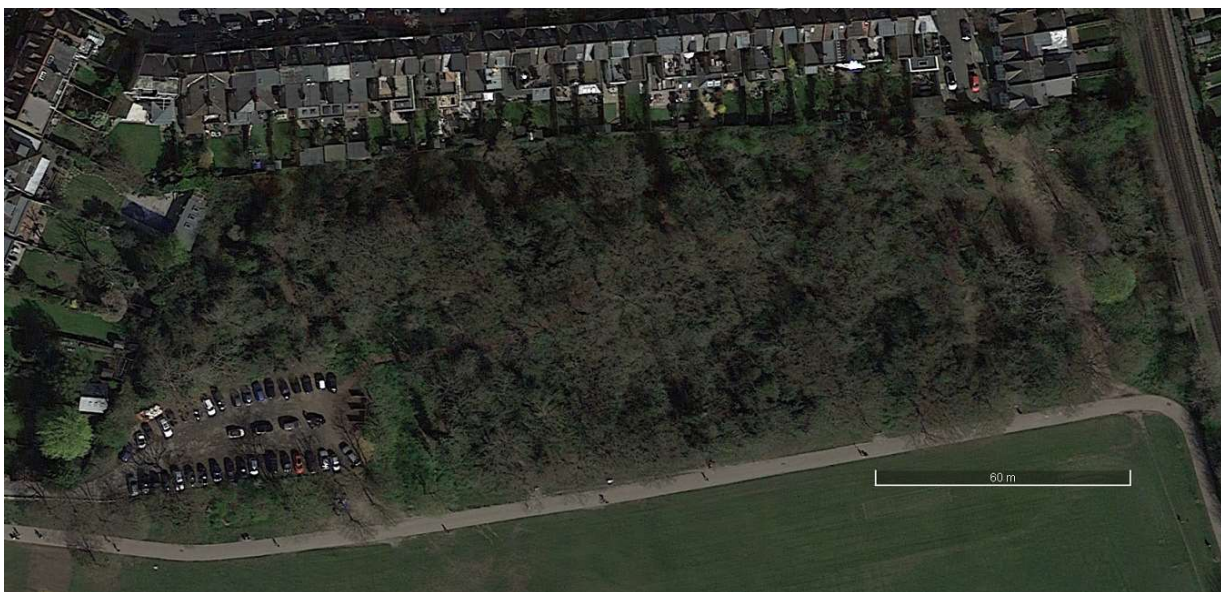


Figure 10. Horse Close Wood in March 2021 (Google Earth)

¹ This map was prepared by the author mainly on the basis of the first good map of Wimbledon Park by Thomas Richardson, held in the archives of the London Borough of Lambeth. Richardson's map was for the first Earl Spencer and dated 1768, just two years after the completion of Lancelot Brown's landscaping of the park for the Earl, but the detail in my map is based on earlier sources, ground contours and existing features on Richardson's map that were clearly retained by Brown. In the north, my map follows a map from around 1742 of the manors of Downe and Dunsford as interpreted by local historian Rita Ensing (Figure 2). Elsewhere, the best map source was the notoriously inaccurate map of 1746 by Jean (John) Roque of London and surrounds. Other details are from a pair of Etchings of "Wimbledon Palace" made by Henry Winstanley in 1678 for Lord Danby. Readers should not be misled by the, often-reproduced, plan by Bowness and Milward of the extension of the park in 1751-58 (on display in the Wimbledon Museum, and reproduced in two books published in 1996: p22 of Milward's *The Spencers in Wimbledon* and p8 of Rondeau's book *Wimbledon Park, from private park to residential suburb*), which has many errors (for a few of these see Dawson, D. *The game cover*. Wimbledon Society Newsletter, March 2021).

² Copy given to the author in the 1990s. The dashed line is the subsequent boundary of Spencer's Wimbledon Park and the dotted line is the eastern end of the parish boundary. At this time, the manorial land of Downe and Dunsford was held by the Duke of Bedford, for whom the map was made. His holdings were called Dunsford Farm (with the farmhouse on the site of the present-day RM Barricks Wandsworth). Rita documented the history of this land in articles for *Wandsworth Historian* (see below) which are my source for the history of the wood at that time.

³ The date threshold for ancient woodland is placed about 1600, before which secondary woods were rarely created by planting (Peterken 1977). The glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2023, defined Ancient Woodland as: "An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD", and paragraph 186 c requires that "development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists". Ancient woodland is important because its long continuity has enabled the survival of woodland soils and the specialist plants these support, and they are uncommon, being around 610,000 hectares, 2.5% of UK land cover and 20% of all woodland, according to the Woodland Trust and Forest Research.

⁴ Most inventories were based on old maps and confined to woods of over two hectares (Spencer, J. and Kirby, K. (1992) An inventory of Ancient Woodland for England and Wales. *Biological Conservation* 62, 77-93). Even the recent updates of the inventories, which take into account information about the wood's name, shape, internal boundaries, location relative to other features, ground survey, and aerial photography, are lamentably incomplete.

⁵ This Tudor survey is discussed by Rita Ensing (1985, *Wandsworth Historian* 42: & 44:8-14). The land from the Wimbledon Parish boundary north to, and including, the wood was held by Dunsford Manor in one 60-acre block, called Cowslease and, north of the wood, ownership and use was compound and included many common fields. So, the position of Horse Close Wood fell within a single large block of land, Cowslease, before 1540, but was not noted as wooded then. "Dunsford Farm" (Cowslease and some of the land to the north of there) was owned by the Smith family for over 100 years, 1569 to 1678, and then by the Howland family of Streatham. So, we know that land in the position of Horse Close Wood was owned by the Smith family in 1600, the threshold for defining an ancient woodland, but have no record of when the wood was planted. In 1698 Mrs Howland acquired, also, the holdings in the Downe Manor, so getting control of almost all of the land around the position of the wood. This land came to the Bedfords, through the marriage of Howland's daughter and Wriothesley Russell, who became the 3rd Duke of Bedford. So it was that John Spencer, soon to become the first Earl Spencer, was able to extend his park well north of the parish boundary. On 14th March 1758 John Russell, 4th Duke of Bedford, sold to John Spencer 100 hectares (247 acres 6 perches) of the Downe and Dunsford land.

⁶ This was first suggested by George Peterken on the basis of an extensive survey of isolated ancient woods in Lincolnshire (Peterken, G.F., 1974. A method of assessing woodland flora for conservation using indicator species. *Biological Conservation*, 6, 239-245) and lists of indicator species have been developed since. The utility of such lists has long been known to depend upon the nature of the landscape within which the woodland is set, and regional lists have accommodated some of this variation, but the isolation of a woodland is obviously also important. A recent evaluation confirmed the utility of such lists despite such confounding factors (Kimberley, A., Blackburn, G. A, Whyatt, J. D., Kirby & K., Smart, S. M. 2013. Identifying the trait syndromes of conservation

indicator species: how distinct are British ancient woodland indicator plants from other woodland species? *Applied Vegetation Science*, 16:667-675). Here, I compared Francis Rose's indicators of ancient woodland (*British Wildlife* 241-251, 2010) for the south-east (including London) with the plants of Horse Close Wood. The wood has 12 indicators, none of them abundant (Field Maple, Pendulous Sedge, Hornbeam, Hybrid Hawthorn, Giant Fescue, Bluebell, Holly, Stinking Iris, Crab Apple, Wild Cherry, Small-leaved Lime and Guelder Rose - see the appendix for Latin names of species). Some of these, however, may have been planted: the maple, apple, cherry, lime, Hornbeam and Guelder Rose were all young when first seen, and so the list could be as small as six. Wood Sedge occurs, but is known to have been planted. An unidentified Sorrel, probably Wood Sorrel, was seen in 2024 and would bring the number up to 13, if confirmed. A list of 12 indicators in a small wood would suggest an ancient origin, but six perhaps not, so again the evidence is equivocal.

⁷ Here I use the relationships provided by White in his 1998 Forestry Commission advice note: *Estimating the age of large and veteran trees in Britain*. White's cumbersome calculation is readily simplified to a simple algorithm. Unfortunately, the method assumes that the growing conditions have remained constant for the life of the tree, whereas the oldest trees in the wood have signs of old spreading lower limbs, such as occurs for trees without nearby competition, whereas these trees are now surrounded closely by other trees, so the woodland canopy has long been closed. Whether a tree is open grown or a woodland tree greatly affects the estimate. For example, the largest tree in the wood is estimated as 355 years old if regarded as a woodland tree, but only 190 years if open-grown. But, either way, this oldest tree began its life after 1600, so it is not an ancient tree.

⁸ Dave was a tree officer for LB Merton. This management plan was written by him to guide path improvement and planting works at that time.

⁹ The Montreal map dates from around 1785 (see Dawson, D. *The game cover*. Wimbledon Society Newsletter, March 2021), and the names of some of the fields are from the much-reproduced Corris map of 1787. Remnants of the hedgerows of the previous fields, including Horse Close to the south of the wood, are to be seen, as is the footway leading from Park Road north to White Lodge on the edge of the park. Ladder Stile Field and The 30 Acres are indicated as arable. The area is given on the Corris map as 3 acres (1.2 ha), significantly smaller than today.

¹⁰ The lane was marked clearly on the 1740 map, but was shown as a very narrow feature in the Montreal map. One might call it "Lavenham Lane", as its route was near to that of the present-day Lavenham Road in the "Grid".

¹¹ This subdivision was illustrated on a map held in the Wimbledon Museum, and reproduced on page 12 of Bernard Rondeau's *Wimbledon Park, from private park to residential suburb* (1996).

¹² Ordnance Survey.

¹³ As described on page 78 of Rondeau's book (see note 11).

¹⁴ For the railway, see *The Wimbledon and Putney Railway*, by John Smith, 1986, *Wandsworth Historian* 49:8-13.

¹⁵ Again described in more detail in Rondeau's book (note 11).

¹⁶ To prevent further loss of the Park to development, the Wimbledon Corporation Act was passed in 1914. This allowed the purchase of 155 acres of remaining park land from Lady Lane, 33 acres in Wandsworth and 122 acres in Wimbledon. Although the purchase went ahead in 1915, the war and the need to raise money to develop the public park and golf course meant that the public park was not developed until the late 1920s. For details of the purchase, see Pages 82-83 of Rondeau's book (note 11)

¹⁷ The map was prepared by the author when commenting on the plans for works to remove the cables in 2020. The light text is irrelevant, as it applies to the proposed works only.

¹⁸ The first management plan for the wood (Lofthouse, D. 1991. *London Borough of Merton, Wimbledon Park Woodlands Management Plan, revised February 1991*) was prepared to guide these works. In 1990 one main path through the length of the wood from the car park to the south-east corner and a path around the north and west perimeters were created or improved. Young Oak, Ash, Hornbeam, Hawthorn, Hazel, Wayfaring Tree and Blackthorn were planted, mainly around the car park and the northern and western perimeters of the wood. Much

of the perimeter planting was to reverse the perimeter path, in response to virulent comments from neighbours about use just over their boundary fences. Most of the planting failed over the following ten years, but some survives today. A glade was kept open for a few years in the middle of the wood, but was soon overtaken by Bramble. The eastern half of the main path was wholly lost when trees fell across it, leading to disuse.

¹⁹ In February 1992, 100 school children planted a hedgerow beside the stark tube line embankment. The edge of the park was then bare, with just a double line of Railway Poplars. This event was organised by Cecile Raynes-Bridgens of Wimbledon Park Residents' Association and Dave Lofthouse, LB Merton Tree Officer.

²⁰ London Conservation Services planted around the edges of the area damaged by National Grid: Hazel 25, Hawthorn 50, Spindle 10, Wild Privet 20, Blackthorn 10, Dog Rose 20, Goat Willow 17, Guelder Rose 10, Pedunculate Oak 25, Grey Willow 20 and small numbers of Crab apple, Field Maple and Rowan, almost all of which failed.

²¹ Such as Spear-leaved Orache, Fat-hen, Petty Spurge, Guernsey Fleabane, Prickly lettuce, Nipplewort, Redshank, Knotgrass, Hedge Mustard, Bittersweet, Black Nightshade and Smooth Sow-thistle.

²² Black Horehound, Cock's-foot, Hogweed, Wall barley, Perennial Rye-grass, Common Mallow and Broad-leaved dock.

²³ Great Willowherb, Bur-marigold, Pendulous Sedge, Yellow-flag Iris, Toad Rush, Water-cress and Nettle.

²⁴ Two Ash, two lime and one oak.

²⁵ The name was chosen to celebrate Dave's great contribution to the woodland and hedgerows of the park and his active involvement of the local community (see Wimbledon Society Newsletter, September 2023).

²⁶ The species planted were chosen to reflect the composition of the existing woodland, as described in a March 2022 report agreed by L.B. Merton Greenspaces. The existing old woodlands of the heritage landscape fit National Vegetation Classification W8d, which is indicative of moist, fertile, base-rich soils, characterised here by a canopy of English Oak and Ash with a sub-canopy of Elm suckers. Other trees and shrubs appropriate to the soils include Field maple, Hornbeam, Hazel, Hawthorn, Bramble, Dog rose, Yew, Holly and Elder. Ash, Bramble, Holly and Elder self-seed readily and so do not need to be planted. Blackthorn would be appropriate but only well away from the woodland edge, because it suckers out into grasslands. The non-native Sycamore, Norway Maple, Bay and Evergreen Oak have spread in Horse Close Wood and will probably colonise planted areas as well, but these are near-native, being found in mainland Europe nearby and so are not inappropriate here. Following rain, Horse Close Wood has standing water in places and a wet woodland shrub, Grey Willow (or Common Sallow), has colonised in the Glade. The wood lacks three other trees of wet woodland: Native Alder, Downy Birch and Rowan, but these three would also be appropriate on seasonally wet soils. Ground flora indicative of wet woodland includes Figwort and Yellow flag iris, The table below summarises the appropriate tree and shrub species to plant.

Species	Latin name	Dry places	Wet places
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>		✓
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>	✓	
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	✓	
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	✓	
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	✓	
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	✓	
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>		✓
English oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	✓	
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	✓	
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	✓	✓
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	✓	✓
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	✓	✓
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>		✓

Small-leaved lime	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	✓	
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	✓	
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	✓	

As planted areas become established, they are colonised by Ivy, Bramble, seedling trees and shrubs and ground flora, such as Cow parsley, Garlic mustard, Cuckoo pint, Pendulous sedge, Stinking iris, Great willowherb, Herb Robert, Hogweed and Wood dock. Horse Close Wood has a good range of ground flora but lacks two nice species suited to these soils: Primrose and Wood anemone. Any wet woodland has the potential for introducing a wider range of wet woodland species that are currently missing. The table below lists appropriate additions to the ground flora which could be introduced to established planted areas.

Species	Latin name	Dry places	Wet places
Broad buckler-fern	<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>		✓
Creeping soft-grass	<i>Holcus mollis</i>		✓
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	✓	✓
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	✓	✓
Lady fern	<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>		✓
Lesser celandine	<i>Ficaria verna</i>	✓	✓
Lesser spearwort	<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>		✓
Male fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	✓	✓
Marsh marigold	<i>Caltha palustris</i>		✓
Marsh thistle	<i>Cirsium palustre</i>		✓
Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>		✓
Moschatel	<i>Adoxa moschatellina</i>	✓	
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	✓	
Red campion	<i>Silene dioica</i>	✓	✓
Remote sedge	<i>Carex remota</i>		✓
Soft rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>		✓
Sweet violet	<i>Viola odorata</i>	✓	
Valerian	<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>		✓
Wild angelica	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>		✓
Wood anemone	<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	✓	✓
Wood sedge	<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	✓	
Wood sorrel	<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>		✓
Yellow-flag iris	<i>Iris pseudocorus</i>		✓
Yellow pimpernel	<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>		✓