

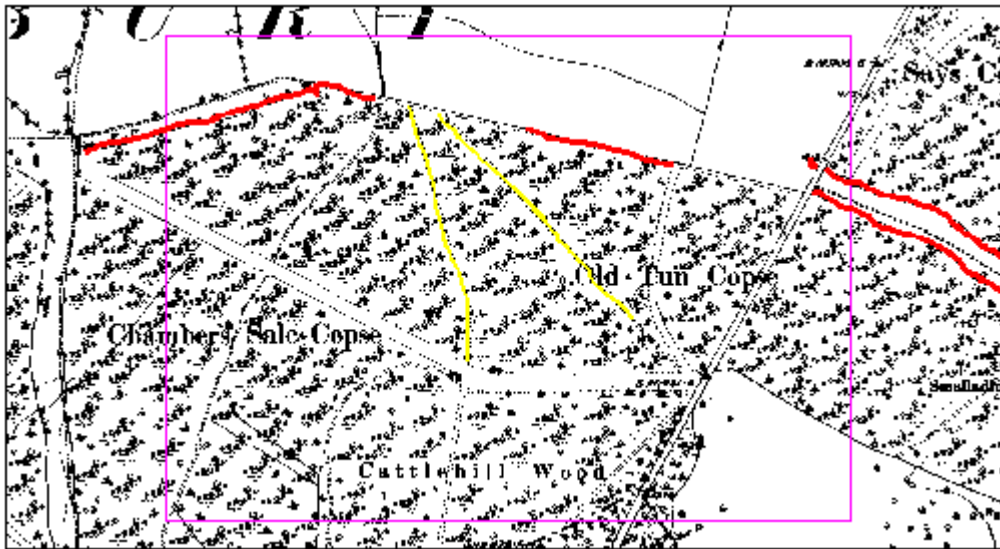
Woodland Survey 2001

Over eleven days, the woodland on the Wakefield Lodge Estate in the north-eastern quarter of the project area was systematically walked following transects spaced 50m apart. All man-made earthworks were noted and subsequently plotted. The results show a truncated but nevertheless surviving medieval coppice system which can be traced on the 1610 Whittlewood Map (NRO 4210).

The results can be summarized thus:

red lines = banks; blue lines = ditches; yellow lines = trackways; green blocks = ridge and furrow.

Old Tun Copse SP 715 4435 Whittlebury parish

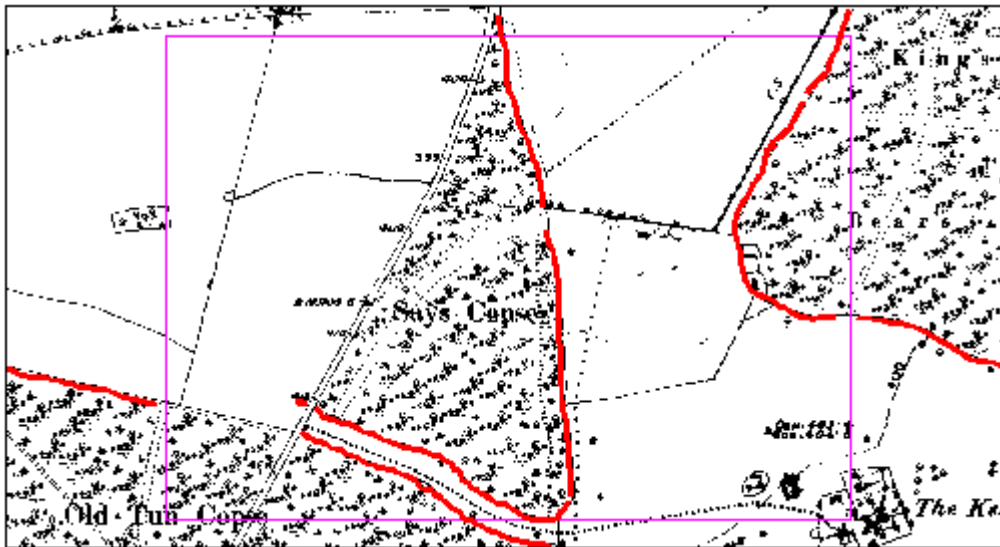


Old Tun Copse is now greatly reduced in size. It is made up of a surviving western and eastern block, separated by a recently cleared central section. The central section is now laid out to grass and appears never to have been ploughed. Linear features identified within the eastern part of the surviving wood can still be traced across this open field. The eastern block has been further reduced with the creation of a field bounding the road to Paulerspury. This is currently under the plough and no earthworks can be observed at ground level running through this field. The copse has also been truncated to the south along the whole of its length.

Parts of the medieval coppice bank and ditch do survive. A sequence of ditch, narrow flat strip, ditch and internal bank is in tact along the current northern boundary of the eastern block. In the western block the continuation of this feature appears within the current woodland, starting at SP 711 435 running east-north-east in a shallow curve before joining the current boundary at SP 714 436.

Two internal alignments can be identified running through the eastern block of woodland and into the parkland to the west. Both run follow a roughly NW-SE orientation. The most eastern is bound by small banks, approximately 10m apart with shallow internal ditches. The western alignment, best preserved within the woodland at SP 716 433, appears to be the more significant and is made up of two parallel banks with a shallow ditch. These alignments appear on the first edition 6" Ordnance Survey map but do appear on the 1608 Whittlewood Map.

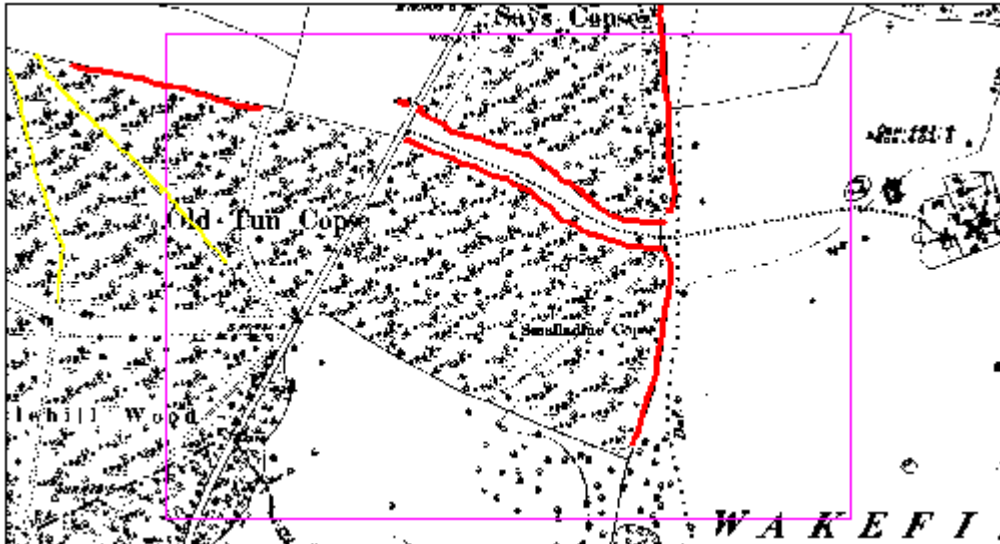
Say's Copse SP 724 436 Whittlebury parish



Say's Copse is now represented by a triangular block of woodland abutting west onto the Paulerspury road. This road was straightened in the nineteenth century. The medieval coppice formally extended west beyond this modern road alignment into fields which are now ploughed. The western continuation of the original southern bank and ditch can still be discerned on the verges on either side of the road, but not into the field (SP 722 435). The southern medieval coppice bank and ditch is well preserved along the whole of the wide ride separating Say's Copse from Smalladine Copse. The sinuous eastern boundary of the woodland is also medieval in origin and well preserved, with a large internal bank and external ditch. An early NS ride running parallel to the eastern boundary was clearly visible but this does not appear to have ancient origins.

It may be noted that immediately north of Say's Copse is Stollage Farm, lying on the unstraightened section of the Paulerspury road (SP 724 444). At this point the parish boundary between Paulerspury and Whittlebury follows the road. It is probable that farm name 'Stollage' preserves the fact that this route, possibly running down the eastern flank of Say's Copse, was formerly the Paulerspury stallage, providing access from this 'out town' to the forest. [Check to see whether this stallage appears on the 1608 map].

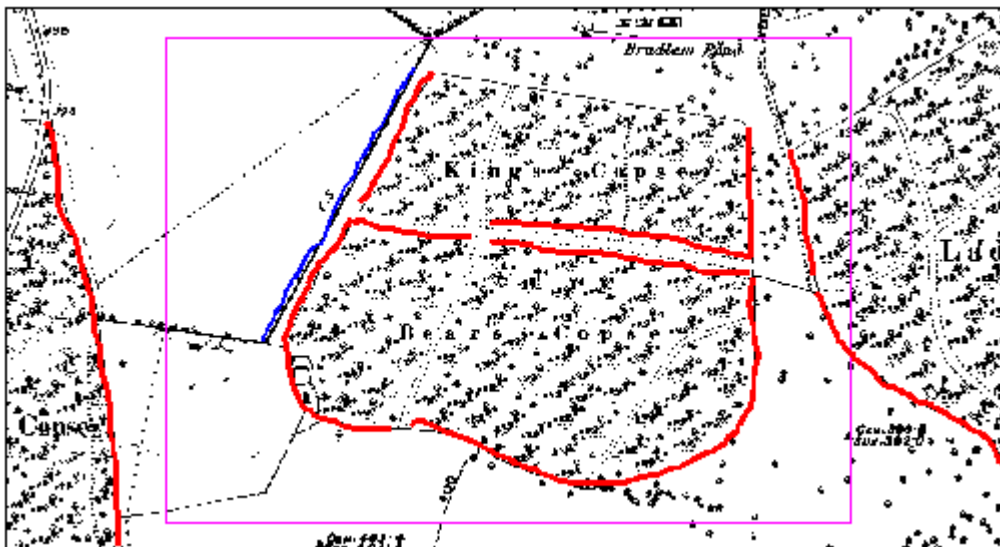
Smalladine Copse SP 724 433 Whittlebury parish



Smalladine Copse is Smallydene (smael, denu - narrow valley) in 1287 (Glover et al. 1933). This copse, like the majority on the Estate has been reduced in size: the western bounds have been destroyed by the straightening of the Paulerspury road, and the southern section has been truncated by the creation of arable fields. The original medieval coppice banks and ditches to the north and east do survive, although the eastern bank terminates just before leaving the woodland (SP 725 431).

The mention of Smallydene in 1287 should be taken as a terminus ante quem for the creation of the coppice system and not the date at which it was first created. That Wakefield Lawn appears in a document dated c. 1220 suggests that the coppice system, surrounding the open space, had already been created at this earlier date. A twelfth century or very early thirteenth century date would appear to be more probable. There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

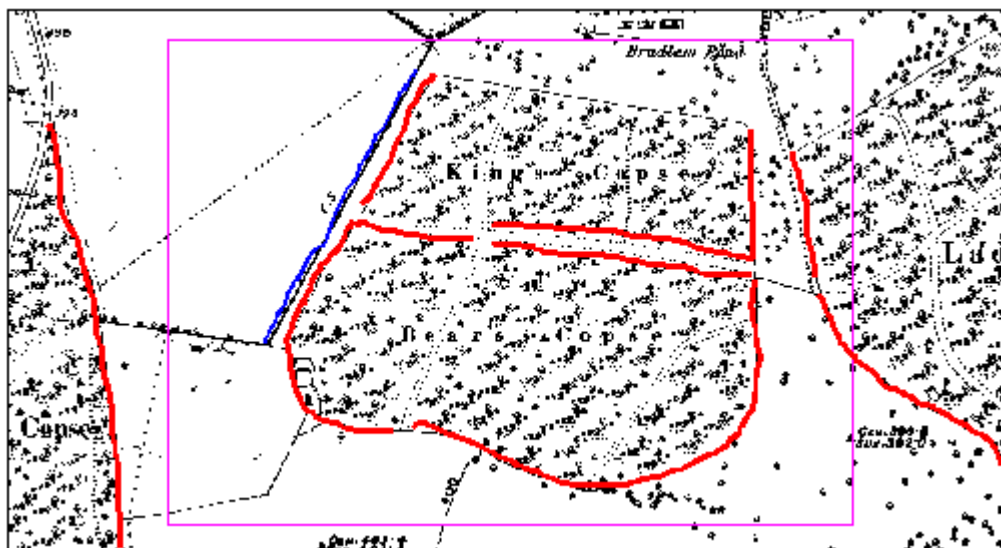
King's Copse SP 733 441 Potterspury parish



King's Copse is currently divided into two blocks, separated by a modern ride. The eastern, western, and southern bounds appear medieval in origin. The ride separating King's Copse from Bear's Copse has been straightened and narrowed, but the original sinuous coppice banks survives in large part just inside the woodland. The current northern boundary, however, is a recent creation. The western bank and ditch is the most impressive of all the

medieval coppice earthworks on the Estate. As elsewhere (see Lady Copse, East Waterslade Copse and Redmoor Copse) where the parish boundary follows the coppice boundary, the earthworks are more complex and of greater size. But it should be noted that the ground drops to a stream to the west which might exaggerate the height of the bank. It is possible that this was the former alignment of the Alderton stallage. There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

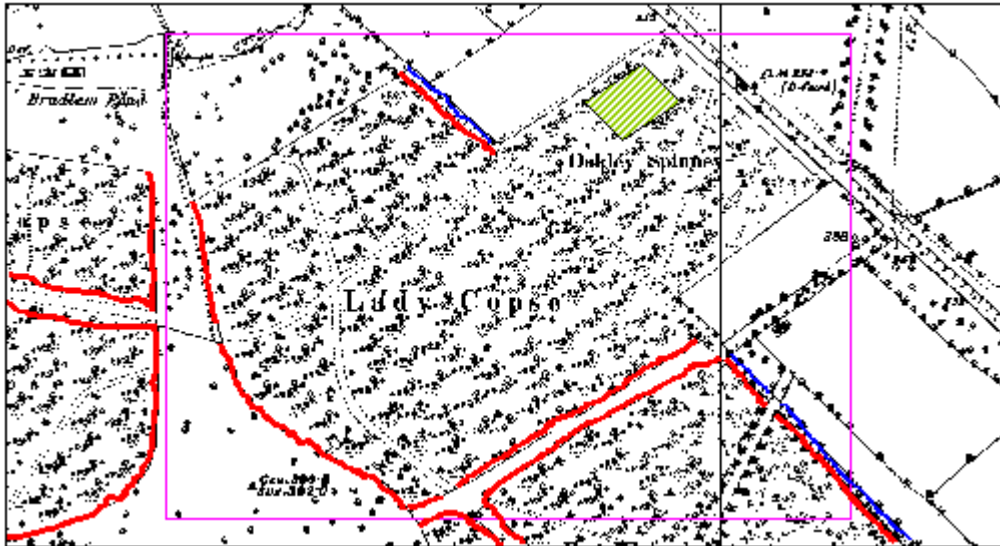
Bear's Copse SP 732 438 Potterspury parish



Bear's Copse (Bare's Copse on the 1608 Whittlewood map) is one of only three medieval coppices on the estate to survive complete (see also Hill Copse and Redmoor Copse). As with the neighbouring King's Copse, the western bank and ditch is the most impressive. To the north, the original coppice rampart is again preserved just within the woodland, running along the whole length of the modern ride. To the south the line of the coppice bank appears to have been preserved by the earthworks are severely degraded in parts.

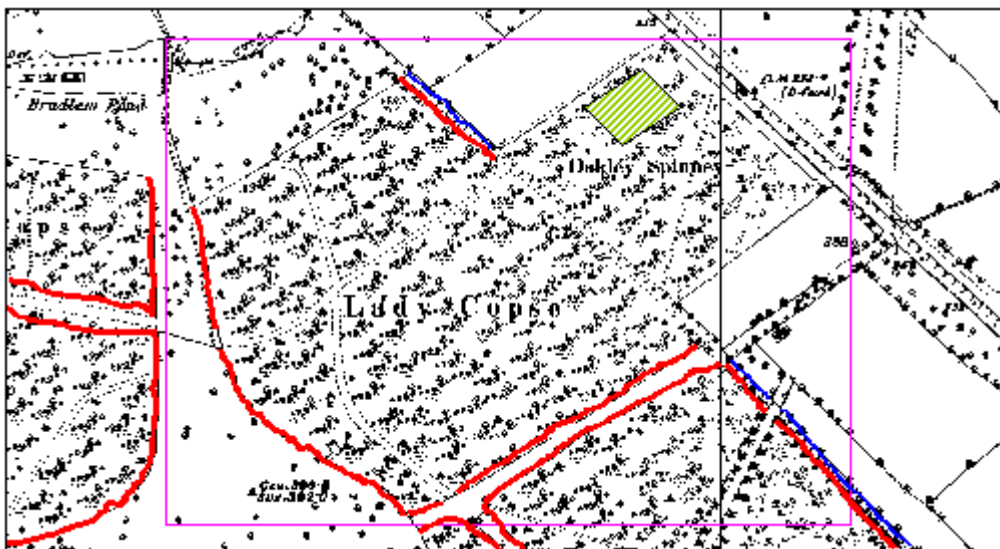
Internally, there are a number of small waterfilled depressions, particularly in the western block. These features are uncommon within the other woodland stands on the Estate. It is difficult to assign a function or origin to these features, but they may represent small bomb craters since they follow a regular alignment and appear all to be of the same regular oval shape.

Lady Copse SP 738 440 Potterspury parish



Lady Copse is one of the larger coppice blocks on the Estate. It is currently split into three blocks by curvilinear rides. The western and southern boundaries exhibit all the signs of medieval coppice management, with wide internal banks and external ditches. The northern edge, however, is a recent truncation and has neither bank nor ditch to separate the woodland from the modern fields. The north-eastern boundary, corresponding to a short section of the Potterspury-Yardley Gobion parish boundary, is the most impressive. It is made up of two parallel ditches set c. 10m apart with a flat area between. The internal ditch has a large bank placed on the woodland side. This feature is comparable to that found in East Waterslade Copse and is likely to be the continuation of the same. The straightening of the ride between Lady Copse and Oakley Spinney, however, appears to have removed the middle section of this linear feature. The southern ride or plain between Lady copse and East and West Waterslade Copse may well have been the Yardley Gobion stallage (see also Oakley Spinney). There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

Oakley Spinney SP 743 442 Yadley Gobion parish



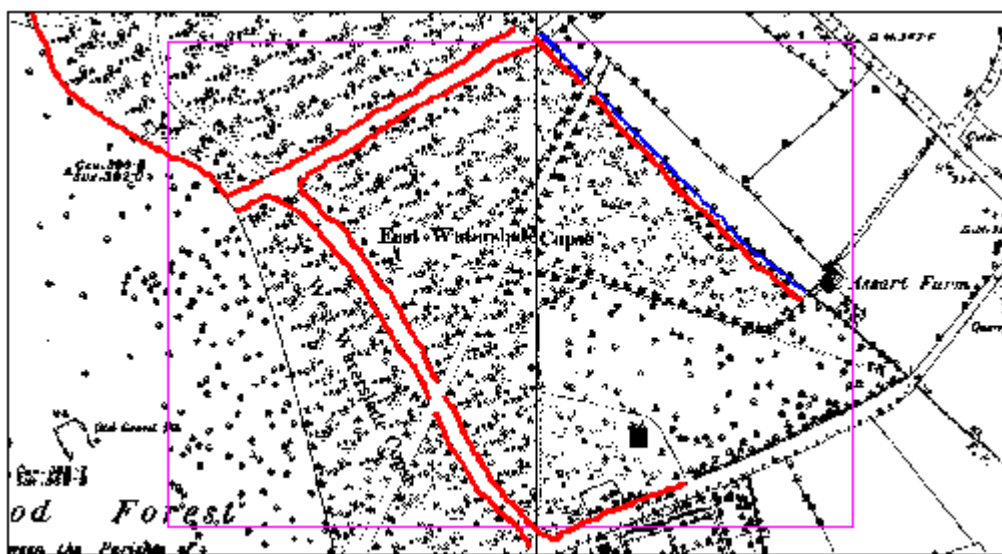
Oakley Spinney is the only parcel of woodland on the modern estate which does not appear as woodland on the 1608 Whittlewood map. It is formed within a peculiar rectangular salient of Yardley Gobion parish, the only part of that parish lying to the south-west of Watling Street.

The 1608 map shows this appear a set of small rectangular enclosures which might correspond to former furlongs within the Yardley Gobion open field system.

This cartographic observation is borne out by the archaeological survey. Surviving within the wood are areas of degraded ridge and furrow particularly in the northern half of the wood (centred on SP 743 443). The ridges are approximately 7m apart and aligned NE-SW parallel to the northern boundary. This is the only example on the Estate where ridge and furrow survives under the woods.

None of the current coppice banks and ditches can be considered to be medieval. However, it is likely that the south-western edge follows an original coppice bank and ditch line but this has been removed by the straightening of the ride separating Oakley Spinney from Lady Copse.

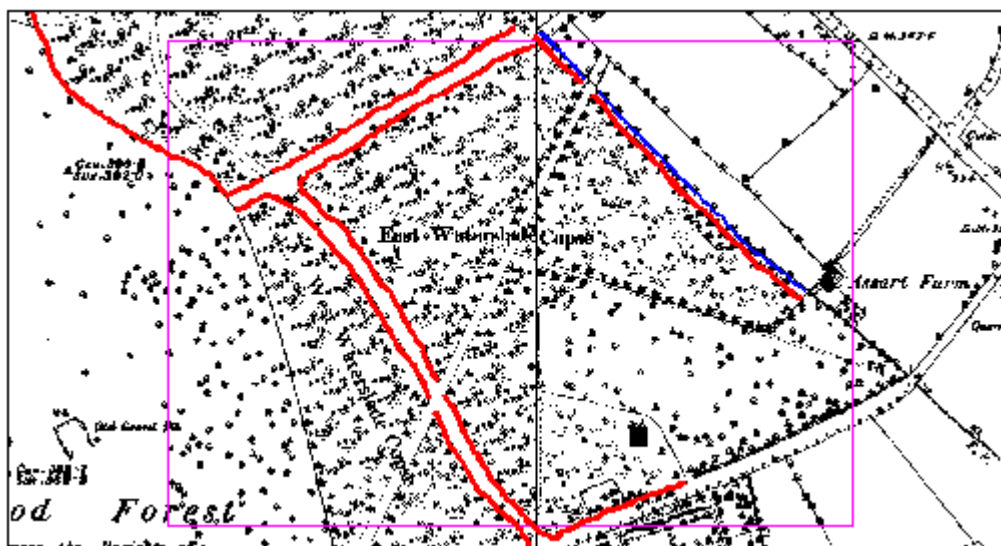
East Waterslade Copse SP 744 436 Potterspurys parish



East Waterslade Copse is now criss-crossed with a series of interlocking rides. This has split the copse into eight blocks of varying size. The most significant of these rides, running SSW-NNE aligns onto the current house and may be safely assumed to be parkland vista of eighteenth century origin. A field created in the south-eastern quarter of the copse has removed any original features here.

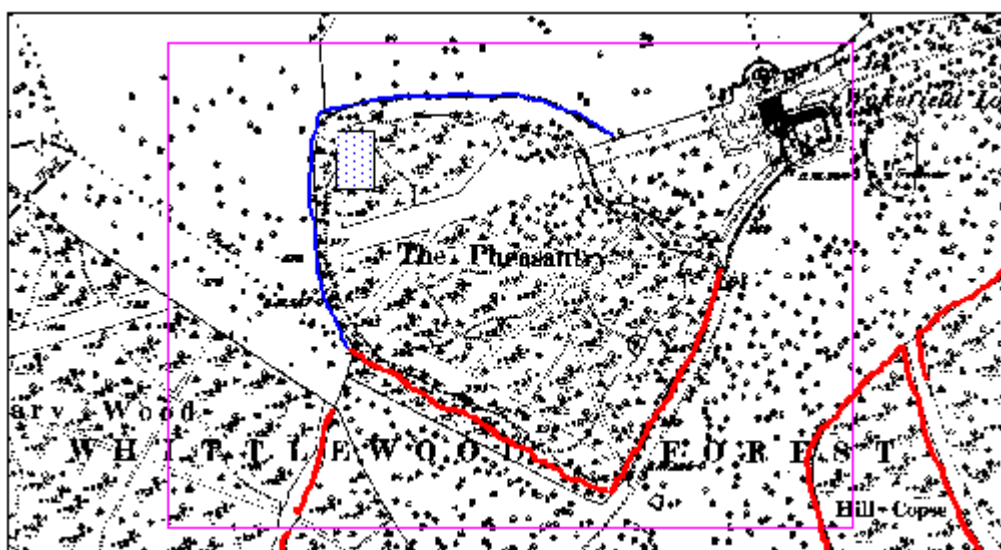
The northern and western bounds of the copse have, however, survived intact and are only mutilated where the modern rides meet the medieval plains. The southern coppice bank and ditch survives in part north of the Nursery (SP 744 433). To the east, the boundary of the woodland is formed by the double ditch and bank sequence also observed in Lade Copse. This feature is continuous along the whole of the surviving woodland. There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

West Waterslade Copse SP 741 433 Potterspurys parish



West Waterslade Copse is now split into two blocks by the eighteenth century vista. Only the eastern part of the copse now survives. The western boundary is insignificant and must have been formed at the time of woodland clearance when the fields were created. The eastern coppice bank and ditch, and that at its most northern point are clearly ancient. No bank or ditch exists at the southern bounds of the woodland, suggesting a more southern original extent, truncated with the creation of the Estate road and farm. There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

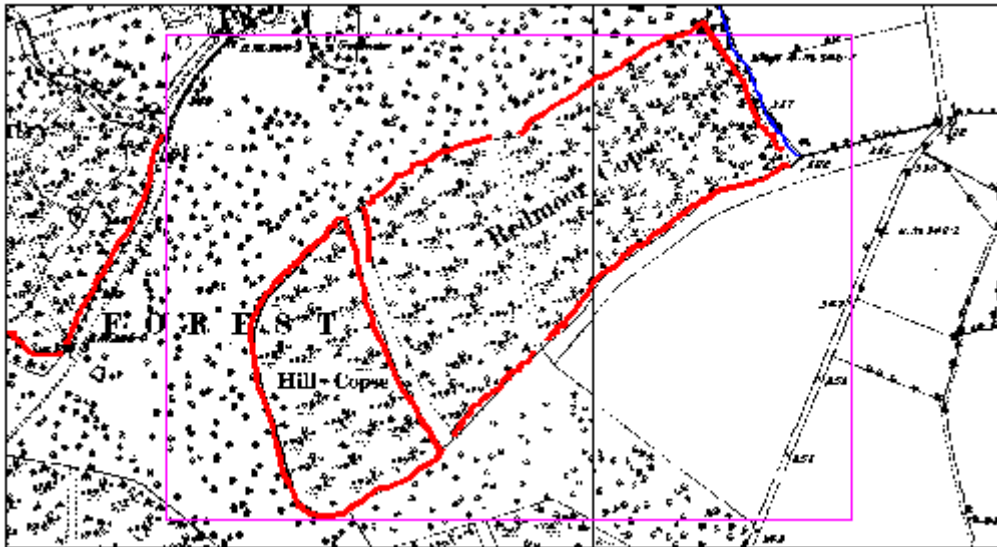
The Pheasantry SP 734 424 Deanshanger and Potterspurpy parishes



The Pheasantry is divided into two blocks, separated by a wide open lawn and vista forming the western approach to the Lodge. The southern contains a number of rides dividing it into six compartments of differing size. The wood appears to have been extended to the south-west, beyond its original boundary, which appears as a slight bank and ditch 40m into the woodland. This forms part of the Deanshanger-Potterspurpy parish boundary. This earthwork is best preserved at its western end (SP 732 422). The eastern boundary is the original medieval coppice boundary, again formed by bank and external ditch. Various slight earthworks can be seen to run from this block into the open space to the north but these are not coherent at ground level. The irregular northern edge of the current woodland does not relate to any medieval features and is probably a parkland creation.

The northern block is bound to the north and west by a significant ditch but without bank. Internally, this block contains a number of small drainage ditches which follow sinuous courses. The best preserved are in the western part of the woodland (SP 732 424). Close inspection was impossible because of the presence of a pheasant breeding pen. The drainage ditches do not appear to relate to modern drainage. Elsewhere these are invariably straight and regularly spaced, often draining into a main ditch on a herring-bone pattern. The Pheasantry ditches are no more than 1m in width and less than 0.3m deep and often turn sharp angles. No suggestion is currently offered for their function or origins, but they warrant a more accurate survey. A natural stream, dammed at its southern end to form a small pond lies within the eastern part of this woodland (SP 734 425).

Redmoor Copse SP 743 423 Deanshanger Parish



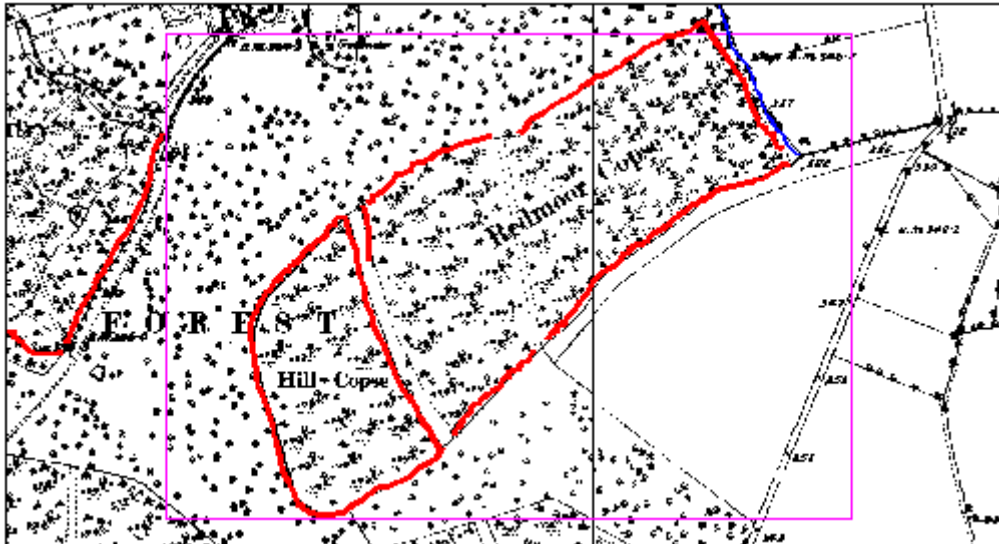
Redmoor Copse is Redmoor Coppice (hreed, mor - reed swamp) in 1790 (Glover et al. 1933). A natural stream drains north-east parallel to the south-eastern boundary to pond at SP 746 424. This pond appears to have been recently landscaped. The ground, despite a drainage system, remains very wet and corresponds well to the original coppice name.

Redmoor Copse is divided into two blocks by a straight and relatively recent ride. This, however, appears to be the only addition. To the south, east and north, the medieval coppice banks and ditches are well preserved. On the eastern front, where the edge of the woodland corresponds to the Deanshanger-Potterspury parish boundary, the earthworks once again take the form of a double ditch and bank with a flat space between the ditches. This varies in width from 10-20m along its length.

To the west, Redmoor Copse is divided from Hill Copse by a medieval ride. Only the northern part of the large bank and ditch survives. It is possible that this ride was straightened at some point, to align onto the ride through Point's Copse, to provide a southern vista from the Lodge.

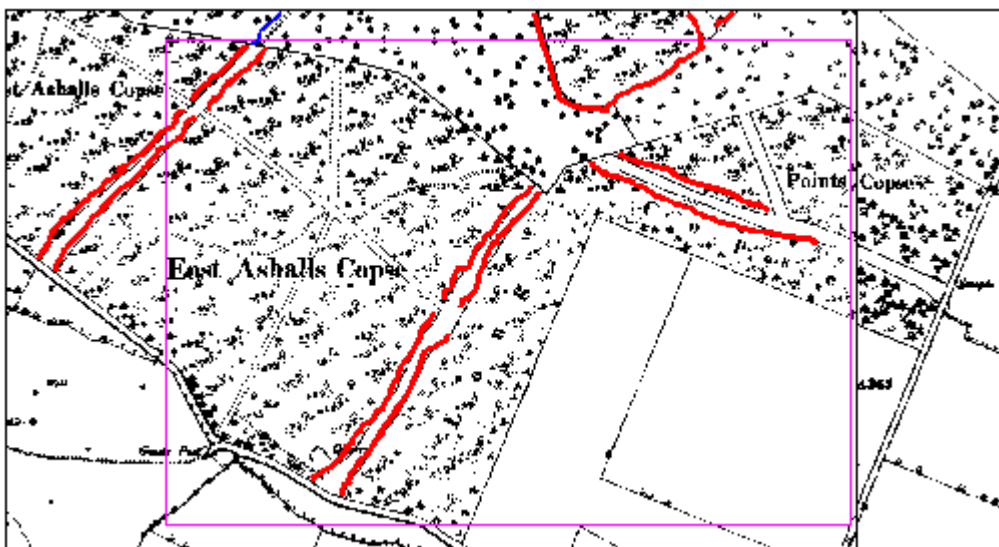
At SP740 424 a second bank, outside Redmoor Copse, can be traced on the ground running into the paddocks in a westerly direction. There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

Hill Copse SP 739 419 Deanshanger parish



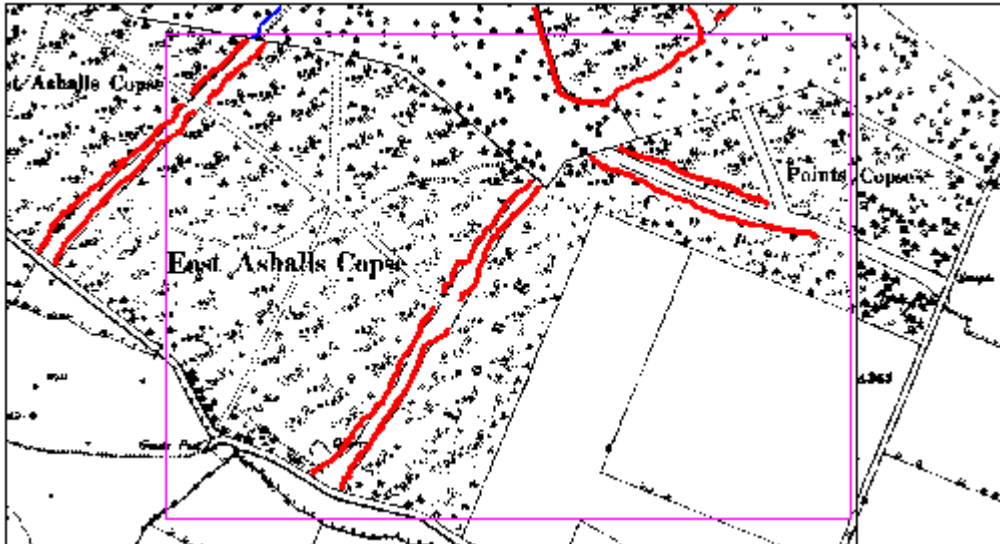
The eastern medieval coppice bank and ditch of Hill Copse, abutting the ride between this block of woodland and Redmoor Copse, is large and well preserved along the whole of its length. The remaining boundaries to north, west and south are less significant and in parts severely degraded. Nevertheless, the current woodland extent appears to mirror the original extent. This is one of the few coppices to survive intact on the Estate. There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

Point's Copse SP 744 417 Deanshanger parish



Point's Copse has been radically remodelled. It is now made up of two blocks divided by a straight ride which aligns onto Wakefield Lodge. It is likely that this is was an eighteenth century vista created by Capability Brown. The north-eastern and north-western edges of the copse area also modern and relate to the creation of the fields immediately to the north. To the east, the copse abuts the Potterspury road. This road also appears to have been straightened, removing any evidence of medieval coppice banks and ditches here. Only the southern boundary now carries the original bank and ditch. (See Long Copse for discussion of the origins of this ride) There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

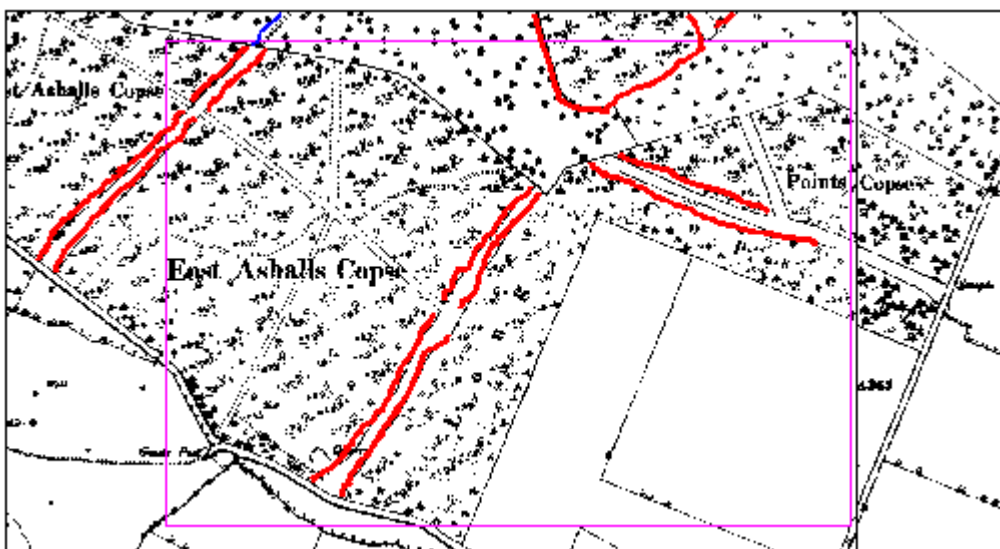
Long Copse SP 739 417 Deanshanger parish



Long Copse has been severely truncated by the creation of fields around Forest Farm (formerly Victoria Cottages) in the mid-nineteenth century (pers. comm. John Starsmore). Now only narrow woodland strips representing the extreme western and northern parts of the original coppice extent survive. The small banks and ditches bordering the fields provide well-dated examples of nineteenth-century woodland boundaries which can be compared with many other examples on the estate and can be clearly distinguished from their medieval antecedents. The western edge abuts the broad ride dividing Long Copse from East Ashalls Copse. This appears to align along the south-east edge of Hill Copse and Redmoor Copse. At the north-west corner (SP 738 417) this large bank been removed with the formation of the fields to the north. This part of the copse contains a natural stream draining south-south-west towards the road. A modern pond has been excavated on the ride (SP 737 415) which has also removed a short length of the medieval coppice bank.

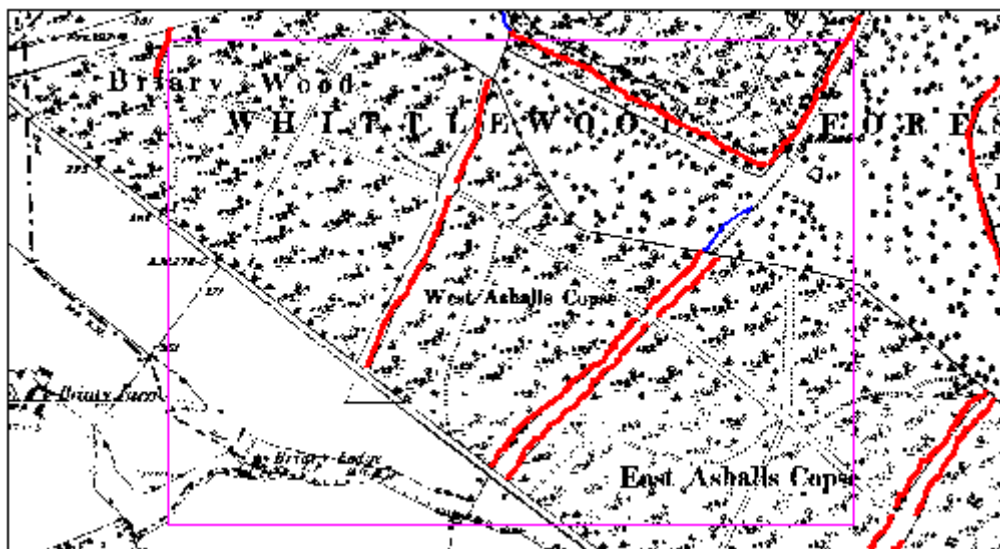
The ride between Long Copse and Point's Copse has been straightened and narrowed. The original medieval coppice bank and ditch do survive, however, within the woodland. This may be the former Deanshanger stallage. If continued beyond the Potterspury road to the south-east, this alignment would pass by Stollage Lodge (Stalladge yate in 1591; Glover et al. 1933). There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

East Ashalls Copse SP 735 415 Deanshanger parish



East Ashalls Copse is split into three blocks by two rides. These are not medieval in origin. The northern boundary is not original and appears to have been truncated by the creation of the field to the north. The eastern and western boundaries are medieval survivals. To the east the large bank and ditch abuts the ridge between this woodland and Long Copse, while to the west, another medieval ride separates this block from West Ashalls Copse. To the south the straightening of the Whittlebury road in the nineteenth century has also removed evidence for the original extent of the woodland. [Check to see whether the original extent reaches the stream to the south on the Whittlewood map] There are no internal features of archaeological features of significance.

West Ashalls Copse SP 732 417 Deanshanger parish

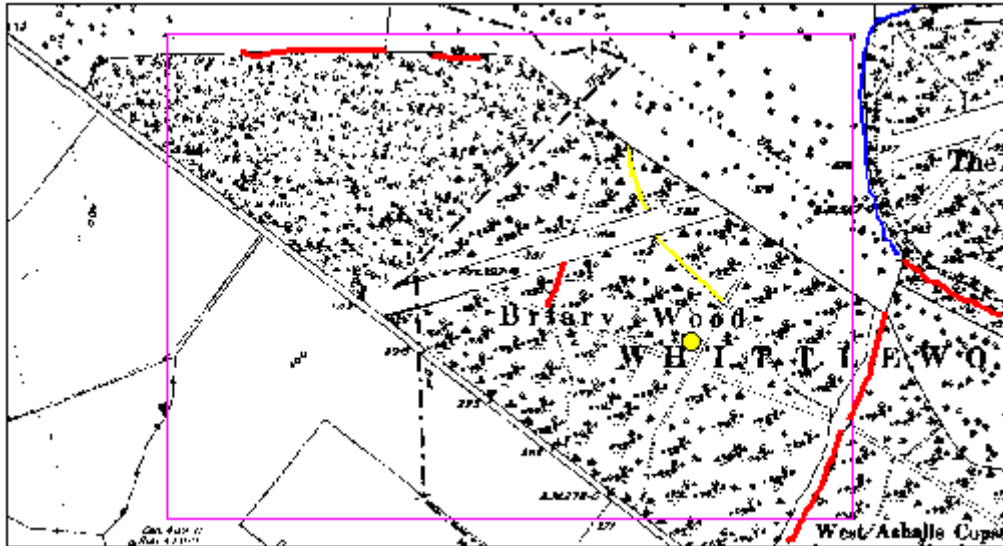


The eastern and western boundaries of West Ashalls Copse are original. But the woodland has been cut back to the north to form a field. Whilst any continuation of the eastern bank north beyond the present woodland towards The Pheasantry has now disappeared, the line of the ditch is still clearly visible in the verge of the estate road leading to the Lodge. The northern extent, however, is not visible within the field.

As with East Ashalls Copse, the southern boundary has changed and any original features have been removed by the straightening of the Whittlebury road. Within the woodland at SP732 416 there is a large depression which appears to be a nineteenth century limestone quarry. This is now waterfilled. Oral tradition states that this was the quarry from which hard core was obtained in the creation of the new road in the mid-nineteenth century. Immediately to the north of this quarry there is a very small bank which runs east-west over a distance of more than 100m. This may relate to nineteenth-century activity or may have more distant origins.

Visibility in the southern part of West Ashall Copse was poor. It remains possible, therefore, that internal features may have been obscured and not recorded during the survey.

Briary Wood SP 726 423 Lillingstone Lovell and Deanshanger parishes



Briary Wood, along with other woods in Lillingstone Lovell parish were afforested in the later twelfth century (VCH Bucks, 1927). Briary Wood has been greatly reduced in size. It is now made up of a series of compartments separated by narrow rides, and the wide western vista from the Lodge. The small detached western block of woodland preserves the medieval coppice bank and ditch on its northern side but nowhere else. The central block also preserves the original coppice bank 10m within the current woodland over a short length (SP 725 424). None of the other sides are original.

Likewise the south-eastern block, which was once entirely contained within the medieval coppice. Internally this block contains three important features. The first is a major bank and ditch, comparable in size to the medieval coppice banks and ditches observed elsewhere. This bank and ditch runs from diagonally through the woodland in a NS orientation (SP 727 422) The second feature appears to be an old ride which runs NNW-SSE within the northern part of this woodland. The third, a long mound of earth, approximately 30m x 7m x 3m, lies in the southern corner of the woodland. Whilst there was much modern detritus spread on this mound, including tree loppings, and its origins appear to be very recent, there is the possibility that it has more ancient origins. No depression from which the earth might have been excavated could be seen.

At the most southerly corner of Briary Wood (SP 728 421) large worked limestone blocks with chisel marks were observed. This do not appear to be in situ and have most probably been taken off the adjacent field, the site of a known Romano-British settlement (SP 729 420)