

A PROVISIONAL LIST OF THE MEDIEVAL WOODLANDS OF LEICESTERSHIRE (EXCLUDING RUTLAND) *c.*1200–*c.*1530 PART II

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In *TLAHS LXIX* (1995), the writer put forward a list of 187, mostly named, woodlands for which at least one documentary reference relating to the middle ages had been established. All the woodlands were, or were believed to have been discrete entities i.e., each had been hedged or fenced to form 'islands' set within, for the most part, an agricultural landscape of arable, pasture, meadow and 'waste'. All were actively managed for wood and timber which formed a vital mainstay in the lives of our ancestors. Not surprisingly, such woodlands remained one of the more enduring features of the local medieval landscape.

The problems involved in compiling the list were described. These included the difficulties of identifying and tracing the fortunes of a single woodland over the ages as its form, area, name, and nature changed (or did not change), usually undocumented, as a result of local and wider social and economic forces. The relationships between woodlands recorded for the medieval period and those described in Domesday Book (1086) were also noted.

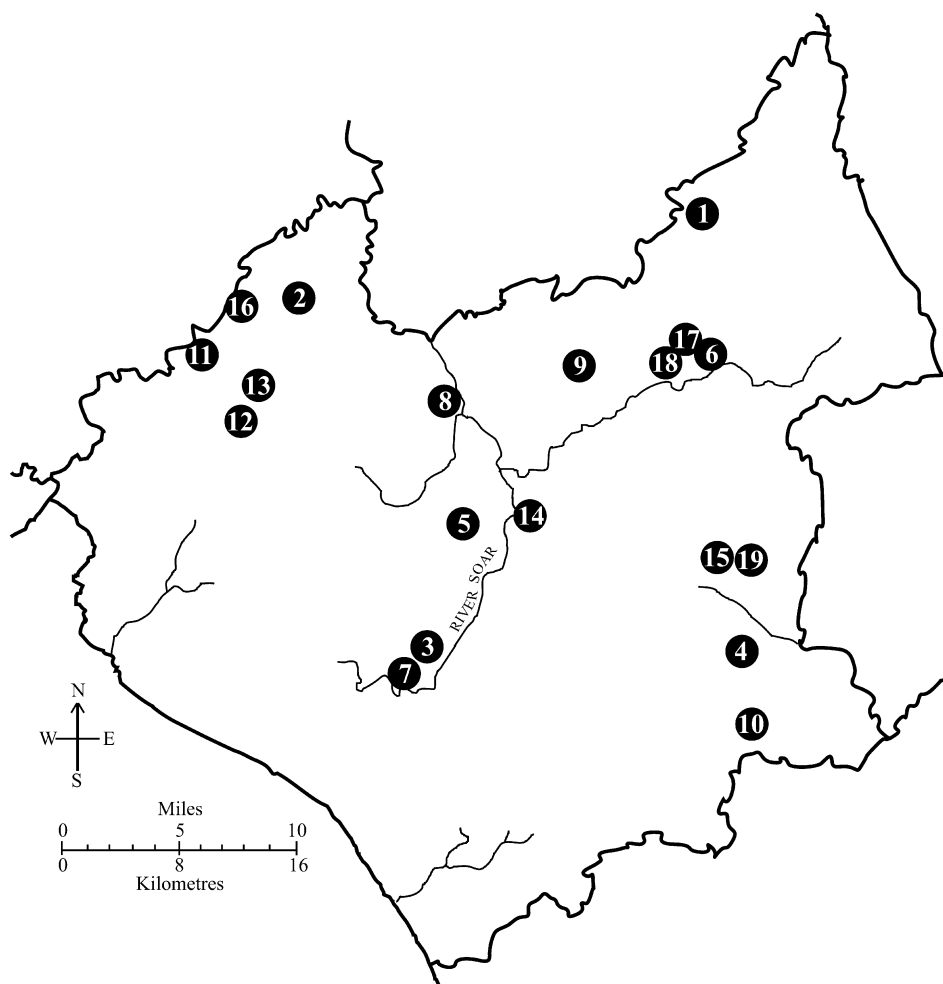
Over the last decade or so 19 more records which meet the original criteria have been assembled. The names concerned are shown on the map which locates them approximately according to the manor, parish or township for which they are recorded. Their distribution should be added to the map on page 40 of Squires and Jeeves which was compiled from the original list. It will be seen that these latest additions have had little effect on the overall pattern of woodland in the county. The great majority of woodlands lay to the west of the River Soar with a much smaller but marked cluster in the south-east along the border with Rutland. At the same time a huge swathe of land, accounting for most of east Leicestershire, from Bottesford in the north to Lutterworth in the south was largely devoid of woodland.

A further point in the earlier article was that many of the woodlands listed appeared to have firm links with the establishment of medieval parks recorded for the same localities. Whereas none of the records of woodlands require removing

from that list, the idea of a park at Stockerston is no longer tenable. At the same time, reference to the 'the lord's wood' at Melton Mowbray in the record of 1400 mentions 'Orger park'. (Cal IPM 1399–1405, 97) which must now be added to the list of parks in Cantor and Squires pages 77–78.

Both lists of woodlands should, of course, be regarded as provisional and the writer will be pleased to receive further references for consideration for inclusion. Work on a provisional list of medieval woodlands for Rutland is in progress and a guide to medieval woodlands from minor place names for both counties is also in hand.

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| AASRP | <i>Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers.</i> |
| Acheson | Eric Acheson. <i>A Gentry Community, Leicestershire in the Fifteenth Century, c.1422-c.1485.</i> Cambridge University Press, 1992. |
| Cal. IPM | Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and other analogous documents preserved in the National Archive. London HMSO. |
| Cox | Barrie Cox. <i>The Place Names of Leicestershire.</i> English Place-Names Society, Nottingham.
<i>Part I The Borough of Leicester, 1990</i>
<i>Part II Framland Hundred, 2002</i>
<i>Part III East Goscote Hundred, 2004</i> |
| LMVN | Farnham, G.F. <i>Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes.</i> 6 Vols. Privately printed, 1933. |
| Hilton | R.H. Hilton. <i>The Economic Development of some Leicestershire Estates in the 14th and 15th Centuries.</i> Oxford University Press, London 1947. |
| Nichols | J. Nichols. <i>The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester.</i> 4 Vols. In 8 parts. London : Nichols, 1795–1811. |
| ROLLR | Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. |
| Squires and Humphrey | A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey. <i>The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest.</i> Sycamore Press, Wymondham, Leicestershire. 1986. |
| TLAS | <i>Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society.</i> |
| TLAHS | <i>Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society.</i> |
| VCH Leics. | <i>Victoria County History: Leicestershire vol. 2. 1954.</i> |
| 1. Barkestone | 'the wodd(e)' 1579 Cox II, 200 |
| 2. Diseworth | 'upwode' 1314 AASRP MDCCCXCV, VOL XXIII, part 1, 228 |
| 3. Enderby | 'the wood of Haldanebi' 1199 TLAHS XI, 362
This wood was probably a surviving element of the Domesday wood of 'Hereswode', part of which later became the royal forest of Leicester. |



4. Keythorpe '12 acres of wood' 1512 *TLAS XVII, 78*
It is noted that in the same manor '200 oaks each worth 2s' together with '40 ash trees each worth 16d' were cut down. Whether or not these losses were connected to the 12 acres is not clear.
5. Leicester St, Mary's Parish. The wood of Joseylyn Marshall 12th c. Nichols 3,2,1080
This woodland was a gift to the Abbey of Leicester in its early days.
6. Melton Mowbray 'the lord's wood' 1400 *Cal IPM Hen IV vol XVIII, 97*
This wood is additional to and separate from 'la Spyne' [=the Spinney] recorded in the earlier list. The wood is also associated with a deer park called 'Orger Park'.

7. Narborough 'a wood containing 40 acres' 1437 *LMVN* 3, 252
At the time of Domesday Book (1086) this well-wooded area was part of 'Hereswode'. See Enderby above.
8. Quorn 'Farnhamwode' 1477 Nichols 3,1 App. 72
This wood almost certainly lay within the bounds of the defunct park of Barrow at Quorn. It may have been a section of the Domesday Wood of Buddon. See Squires and Humphrey 68–84, figure 8, 45 and plate 17, 49
9. Ragdale and Willows '30 acres of wood' 1518 Acheson, 61
10. Slawston and Othorpe The wood of Sir Edmund Brudenell 1586 Nichols 2,2,801
11. Staunton Harold 'Hobnokewood' 1425 *ROLLR DE* 170/71
This wood lay within the (great) deer park, the boundaries of which and the location of the wood are under active review.
12. Swannington 'Welchewood' 1543 *LMVN* 2, 43
A further addition to a complex landscape
13. Thringstone '80 acres of wood' 1286 *LMVN* 6, 97
The woodland is mentioned in connection with the right of the prioress of Grace Dieu to graze cattle therein.
14. Thurmaston 'Leicester Abbey's wood in Thurmaston' 14thc Hilton, 45
15. Tilton 'Boscus de Riseberwe' 1266 *COX* III, 247
It is possible that this reference indicates the place where Henry I hunted and from which he ordered the royal forest of Rutland to be established some time before 1130. (*VCH Leics.* II, 265)
16. Tonge 'the wood of Lucleford' 13thc. Nichols 3, 2 ,728
Tonge later became part of the large and well wooded parish of Breedon.
17. Welby 'monkke wode' 1439 *COX* III, 20
18. Welby 'la Walwode' 1439 *Ibid*
19. Whatborough 'Herewardes w(o)de' Temp Hen II *COX* III, 273

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