

A LANDSCAPE HISTORY OF WOOTTON MANOR, WOOTTON DEER PARK, FATTINGPARK AND THE SURROUNDING COMMONS ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

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Abstract

This paper traces the landscape history of former heaths and commons to the east of the Medina Estuary from the early Anglo-Saxon period until enclosure in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The relationships between the medieval parishes of Arreton, Whippingham and Wootton are explored. Particular attention is given to Wootton Manor and its deer park and to Fattingspark which belonged to Wootton Manor and lay within a detached part of Wootton Parish. The commons surrounding Wootton Manor within Whippingham Parish and Arreton Parish are described and the enclosure of these commons is documented. Briddlesford Common was often referred to as Wootton Common, although the whole area of the common lay in Arreton Parish: the reason for this anomalous name is discussed. The paper concludes by examining the ecology and archaeology of Fattingspark Copse.

Keywords: Landscape History, Intercommoning, Deer Park, Commons Enclosure, Historical Ecology of Woodland

1. Origins of the Commons east of the Medina Estuary

In the medieval period, a large block of land on the east side of the Medina Estuary formed an area of settlement-free, largely unenclosed grazing land on heavy Hamstead Clays. This was divided between Fairlee Common and Alverstone Common (alias Whippingham Common) in Whippingham Parish; Standen Heath, Lynn Common, Staplers Heath and Briddlesford Common (alias Wootton Common) in Arreton Parish; and Fattingspark in Wootton Parish (Basford 2013, 282-284). These medieval parishes survived largely unchanged into the 19th century and were mapped in 1863 as sheets XC and XCV in the 1st Edition six-inch Ordnance Survey (henceforth OS 1863). Boundaries of Isle of Wight parishes in north-east Wight are shown in Fig. 1.

The heaths and commons of Whippingham, Arreton and Wootton may have had very ancient origins, possibly originating as a single extensive area of clay heath in the prehistoric period, although without clear palaeo-environmental evidence, we cannot be certain when this land was first cleared of woodland. The linear 'Motkin Boundary' on Standen Heath, of possible Iron Age/Roman or Early Medieval date, yielded a few identifiable plant macrofossils, consisting primarily of wild plant taxa from habitats such as waste ground and hedges. Although the creation of the 'Motkin' bank and ditch implied significant contemporaneous human influence, there were no crop plants or other remains to suggest domestic or agricultural activities in the vicinity (Hayes, 2012).

Revealingly, the area containing the heaths and commons of Whippingham, Arreton and Wootton is largely devoid of Old English place-names (Fig. 2). Some archaeological material has been found but this has been mainly prehistoric flint and artefact scatters with a few sub-surface features. However, there has perhaps been less fieldwork than elsewhere on the Island, other than a pipeline watching brief in 2000. This recorded scattered Late Iron Age and Romano-British features indicative of domestic activity about 200m south-west of Briddlesford Lodge Farm, though the sparseness of

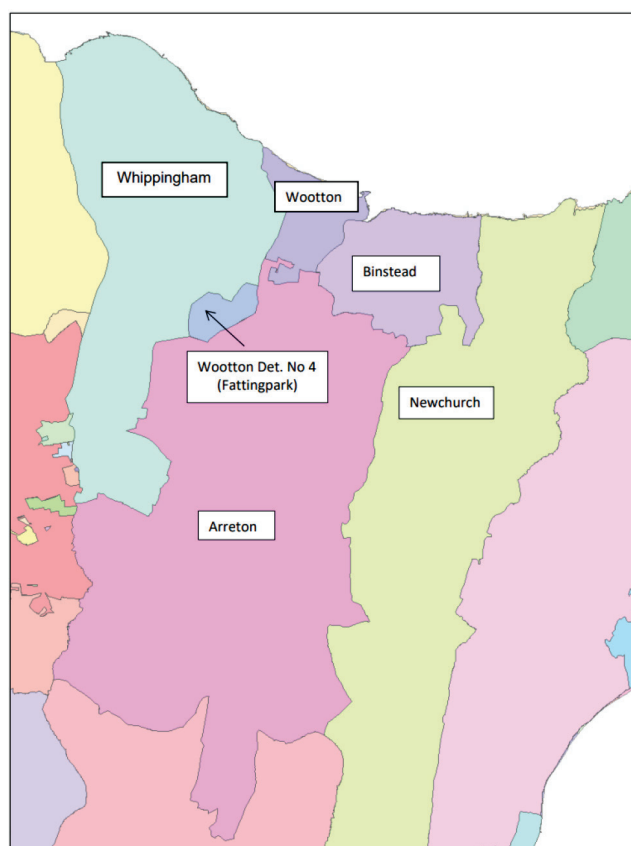


Fig 1: Parishes of North-East Wight with boundaries from six-inch Ordnance Survey 1863

these features suggests that they were not within a substantial settlement (Network Archaeology 2005, 38-40, 48). Data from metal-detecting reveal some discrete clusters of finds within the area devoid of Old-English Place-Names, but many of these are later medieval or post-medieval in date (Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), 2014). There are no recorded PAS finds within a significant part of the area, but this may mean only that detectorists have not had access.

Oosthuizen (2013, 43) has written about early 'collective pastures', identifiable as 'empty zones' devoid of prehistoric or Romano-British fields and settlement. The commons of Whippingham, Arreton

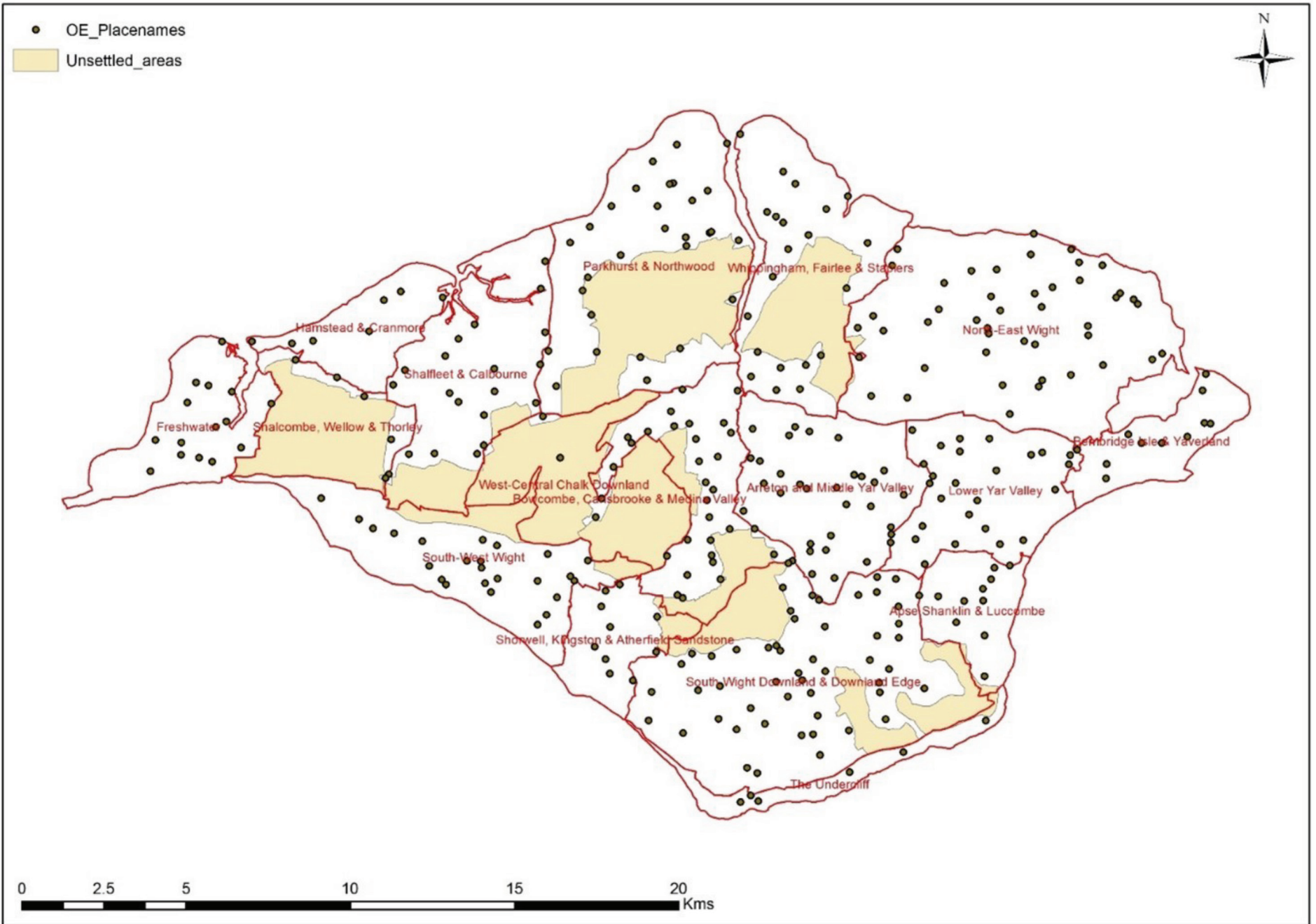


Fig. 2: Areas devoid of Old English Place-Names (from Basford 2013, Fig. 9.12)

and Wootton exemplify this type of land use. The practice of 'intercommoning' continued into the early medieval period. It reflects a period when rights of common pasture existed over extensive areas of 'waste' before parish boundaries became fixed in the 12th century. Early medieval intercommoning has been identified elsewhere on the Isle in certain areas of chalk downland on either side of later parish boundaries e.g. on Bonchurch Down (Margham, forthcoming, Chapter 10) and in lower-lying landscape regions both north and south of the chalk such as the adjoining commons of Thorley and Wellow (Basford 2013, 132).

2. Medieval parishes and manors

In the early Anglo-Saxon period, the area devoid of Old English place-names may have functioned as a single expanse of open grazing, but in the Middle to Later Saxon period, it was divided between the estates of Whippingham and Arreton. It is possible that there was a minster church at Arreton serving the area covered by the later parishes of Whippingham, Arreton, Wootton, Godshill, Niton and Whitwell (Margham, 2000, 122-123). By the time of Domesday Book, in AD 1086, Whippingham and Arreton were distinct parishes, each with a parish church (Hockey, 1982, 2). Wootton still formed part of Whippingham Parish but Wootton Manor was recorded in Domesday Book as Odetone and was in the hands of the king (Page, 1912, 204). The manor of Wootton was probably allotted a part of the open grazing land hitherto shared by Whippingham and Arreton. Wootton's share of this grazing land seems to have comprised an area known as Fattingspark which became a detached part of Wootton Parish and evolved differently from the surrounding common land.

Wootton Manor appears to have been granted to Jordan de Lisle by King Henry I in the early 12th century (Webster 1975-99) and the church at Wootton may have been built at that time as a small manorial chapel for the de Insula, alias de Lisle, family since the earliest fabric of the present building has been dated to the first half of the 12th century (Margham, 1997, 93-94; Margham, nd, 8-9). The medieval parish of Wootton included the lands of the de Lisle family around the manor house and chapel. However, the lands of the family also included the manor of Chillerton some eight miles distant from Wootton, which was in the hands of the de Lises from the 12th century. This formed a detached portion of Wootton Parish and there were two smaller detached areas equally distant from the church. The fourth detached part of the parish was the district of Fattingspark (Fig. 1). This was separated from the nucleus of Wootton Parish by a tongue of Arreton Parish, at one point only some 800 ft wide (Hockey, 1970, 160-161; Hockey, 1982, 3).

Wootton was a 'daughter church', one of a number on the Isle of Wight which started life as manorial chapels after the Norman Conquest. These chapels

NB. The Isle of Wight County Record Office is abbreviated as IWCRO.

¹ The original map is held at the IWCRO/ WHP.2237A. It is on parchment and is signed RMK 1818 in the bottom right-hand corner. A note stitched to the side of the map reads 'Family at Wootton Farm 19 Men Women & Children. Quantity of Acres Coppices Included 620'. A later paper copy held by the IW County Archaeology & Historic Environment Service contains subtle differences from the original map. A note in the bottom right-hand corner of this copy, probably of later date, reads 'PRE 1762' but this must be incorrect as the original map seems to have been drawn up in connection with the Wootton Tithe Dispute of the early 19th century.

were required to pay tithes or other parish dues to the 'mother church'. The mother church of Wootton appears to have been Whippingham, as this parish abutted Wootton Parish to the west. Even in the late 18th century Wootton, still paid an annual fee of ten shillings to Whippingham (Worsley, 1781, 229). However, there is also evidence for an ancient connection with Arreton Parish before the Norman Conquest, in the form of the interlocking boundary with that parish to the north and south of the modern main road from Lushington Hill to Wootton Creek. Some fragments of Arreton Parish abutting the boundary with Wootton Parish corresponded with land that had been granted to Quarr Abbey after its foundation in AD 1132 (Figs. 1 and 3).

The interlocking lands of Wootton, Arreton and Quarr Abbey led to disputes about tithes, the payments in kind which were intended to support the church within each parish (Hockey, 1970, 160-161). There was a dispute in the late 15th century, settled in 1488, which involved the abbot of Quarr and the vicar of Arreton against the parson of Wodyton. This dispute concerned the tithes and certain closes in the manor of Wootton viz:

Godyscroft, Smyhes Clos, Style croft, Quarles, Cley clos next to the Abbott's ground called Bech Place, Fattyng Park, all to the north west of the road which lead from the pound of Wootton towards Pakesfield; Also the tithes of Church acre and Splettes held by Robert Hayles. With the advice of Sir Nicholas Lyle, patron of the church of Wootton and other gentlemen set out below it was agreed that the parson of Wootton was to receive all tithes to the north west of the aforesaid road and of other lands of the manor of Wootton, paying a pension of 5s. to the abbey and 5s. to the vicar of Arreton at Easter. (Hockey 1991, Charter No. 117).

3. Wootton Manor and Wootton Park

Wootton Manor was held by the de Lisle family from the 12th century until the early 19th century. Webster (1994) states that 'it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Lisle family in the development of the Isle of Wight, they being the major family here under the paramount Lord at Carisbrooke Castle'. Wootton itself was a relatively small estate, but the de Lises also held the manors of Appleford, Roud, Chillerton, Shanklin, Bonchurch, Wath, Blackpan, Hardingshute and Westcourt. The manor of Wootton *alias* Wootton Farm was mapped in 1818 in connection with a tithe dispute (Fig. 4).¹ At that date the manor farm included some land in the parishes of Arreton and Whippingham, but most of its land lay in Wootton Parish, comprising a block of land around the manor house and a smaller block of land at Fattingspark.

Hawise, the widow of Jordan de Lisle and their son, Geoffrey fitz Jordan, granted the mill of *Escaudeflot* to the Abbey of Quarr in about 1141 (Hockey 1991; 1, 20). This mill is described in a confirmation charter

MAP 1

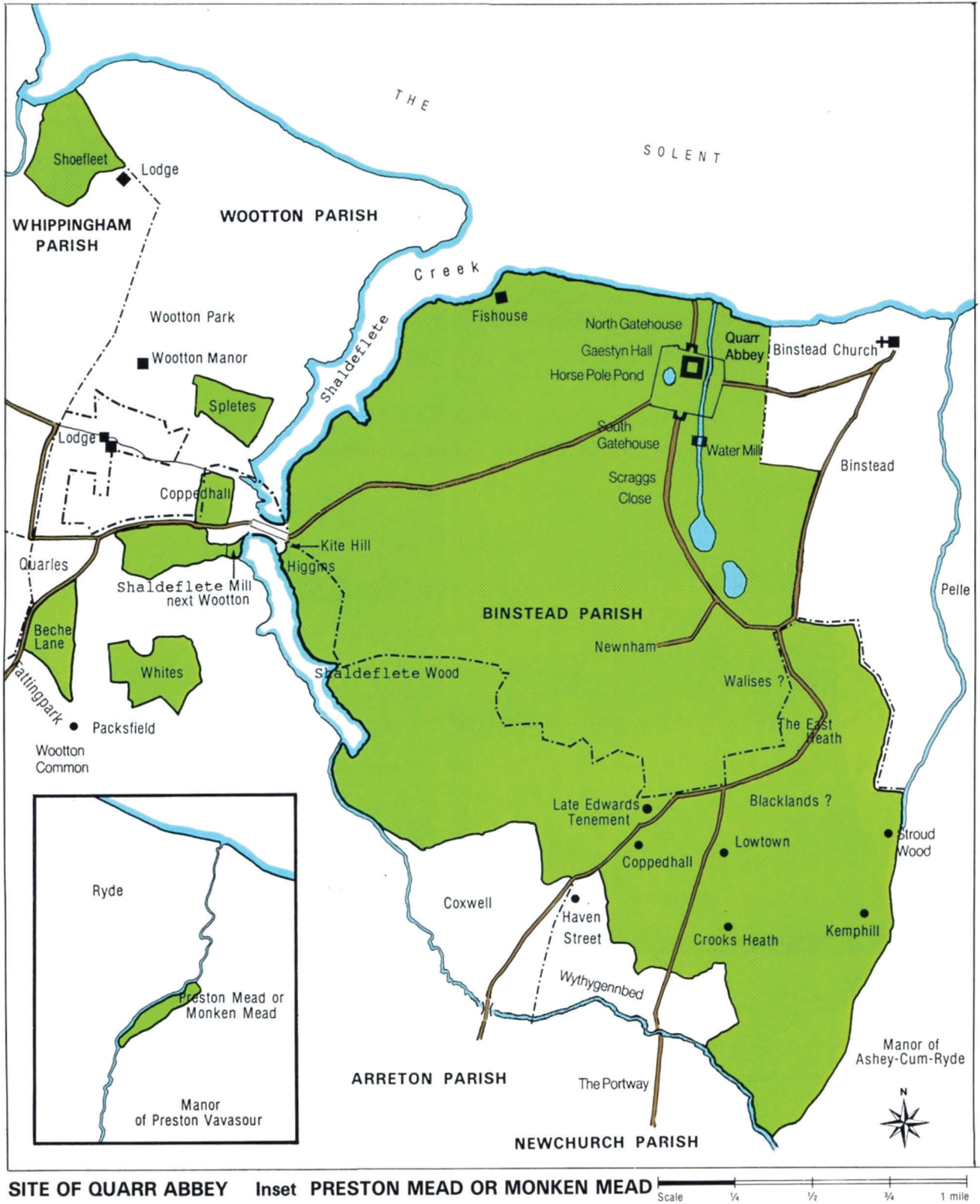
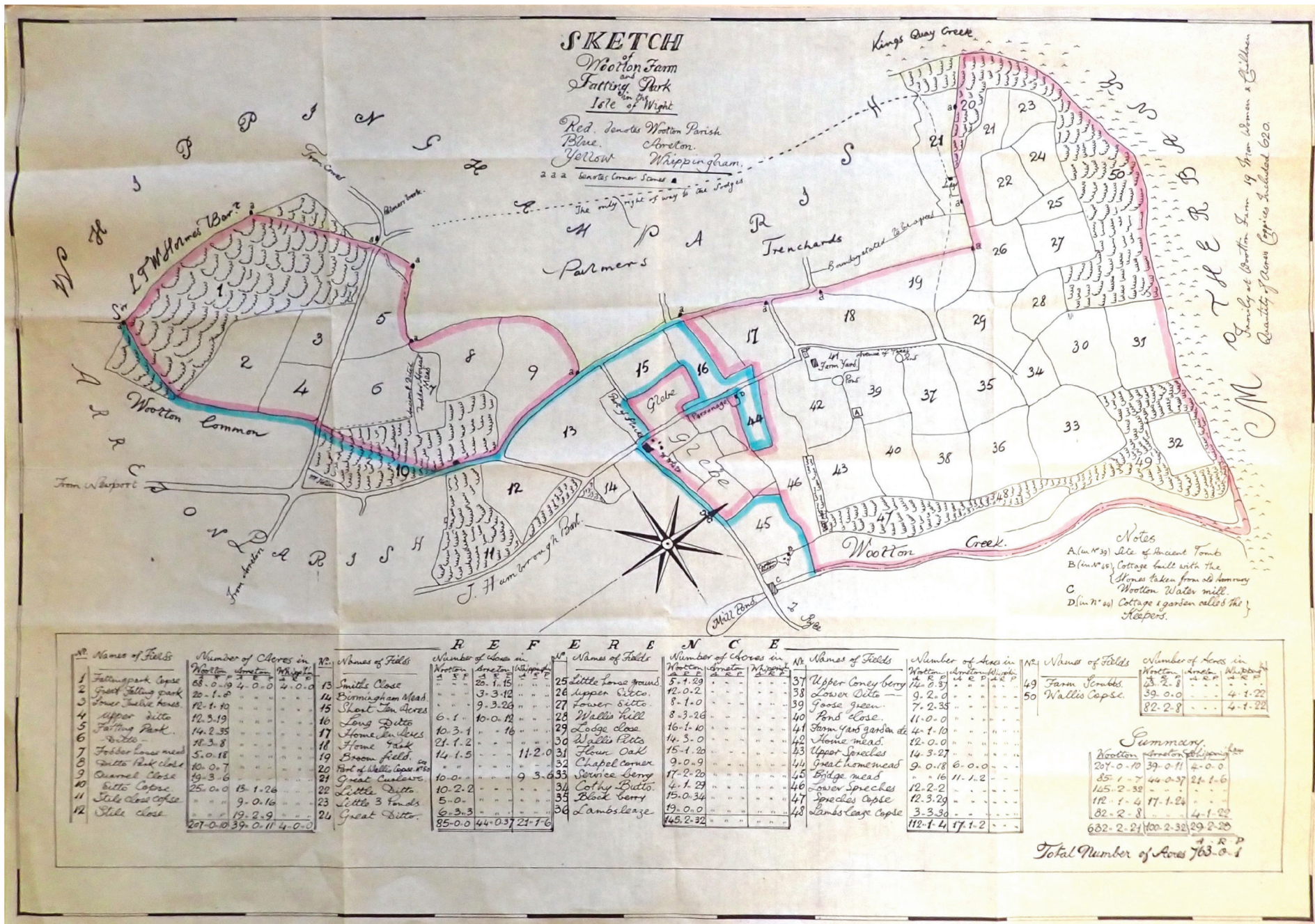


Fig. 3: Lands of Quarr Abbey. Reproduced from *The Charters of Quarr Abbey*, Hockey 1991 by permission of the Isle of Wight County Record Office

Fig. 4: 'Sketch of Wootton Farm and Fattingspark in the Isle of Wight' 1818
 Copy held by Isle of Wight County Archaeology & Historic Environment Service.
 Original in Isle of Wight County Record Office (WHP.2237A)



granted to the abbey by Isabella de Fortibus in 1272-1277 as the mill of Schaldeflet next Woditon (Ibid, 3-4). Hockey (1970; 41, 160), makes it clear that it was a tide mill, referred to in 14th and 15th century documents as a *semulle* or *molenindum maritimum*. However, it appears that there may just possibly have been two mills at Wootton, both on the west bank of Wootton Creek, one belonging to Quarr Abbey and the other belonging to Wootton Manor. In 1263, Sir William de Lisle brought an action against the abbot of Quarr with regard to the mill at Wootton which Llewelyn, son of Griffin, with accomplices, had invaded and destroyed (Webster, 1975-1999). In 1331, an inquisition post mortem on the death of John de Lisle stated that the manor of Wodyton contained one mansion house, one water mill, 400 acres of arable, 100 acres of pasture, underwood to the value of 50s per annum, a fishery and a rabbit warren.² Furthermore, a modern map of Quarr Abbey lands (Fig. 3) marks the position of Quarr Abbey's 'Shaldeflete Mill next Wootton' as being to the south of the causeway or bridge over Wootton Creek. In a note on the confirmation charter to the abbey by Isabella de Fortibus, Hockey (1991, 3-4) states:

the de Lisles mill on the north side of Wootton Bridge has only recently been pulled down, but Quarr owned a small plot of land on the south side of the bridge, which is almost

certainly the site of their mill.

In terms of milling technology, it is hard to understand how two mills could have operated in such close proximity to each other. Although Quarr certainly owned the plot of land on the south side of the bridge, Hockey may be incorrect in placing Quarr Abbey's mill in this location. Perhaps there was only one mill site to the north of Wootton Bridge which Wootton Manor leased back from Quarr Abbey. This is a plausible explanation since Hockey (1970, 40) states that by 1215, Cistercians were not permitted to exploit mills directly. Wootton Tide Mill definitely seems to have been located north of the bridge by the late 17th century and the 1818 map (Fig. 4) shows it in this position, marked at position 'C' on the map.³ It is recorded in this position on the Isle of Wight Historic Environment Record (IWHHER 1564 - MIW1667).

Another puzzle concerning Wootton Manor is its appearance in the accounts of Isabella de Fortibus, who held the lordship of the Island from 1262 to 1293. Wootton, Appleford and Chillerton are all listed in her accounts, yet these three manors were possessions of the de Lisle family. Hockey (1982, 124-135) analysed the accounts for 1269-70 and pointed out that there was 'no minority of the heir just then which would have created a wardship, yet everything seemed to be completely at the disposal of the

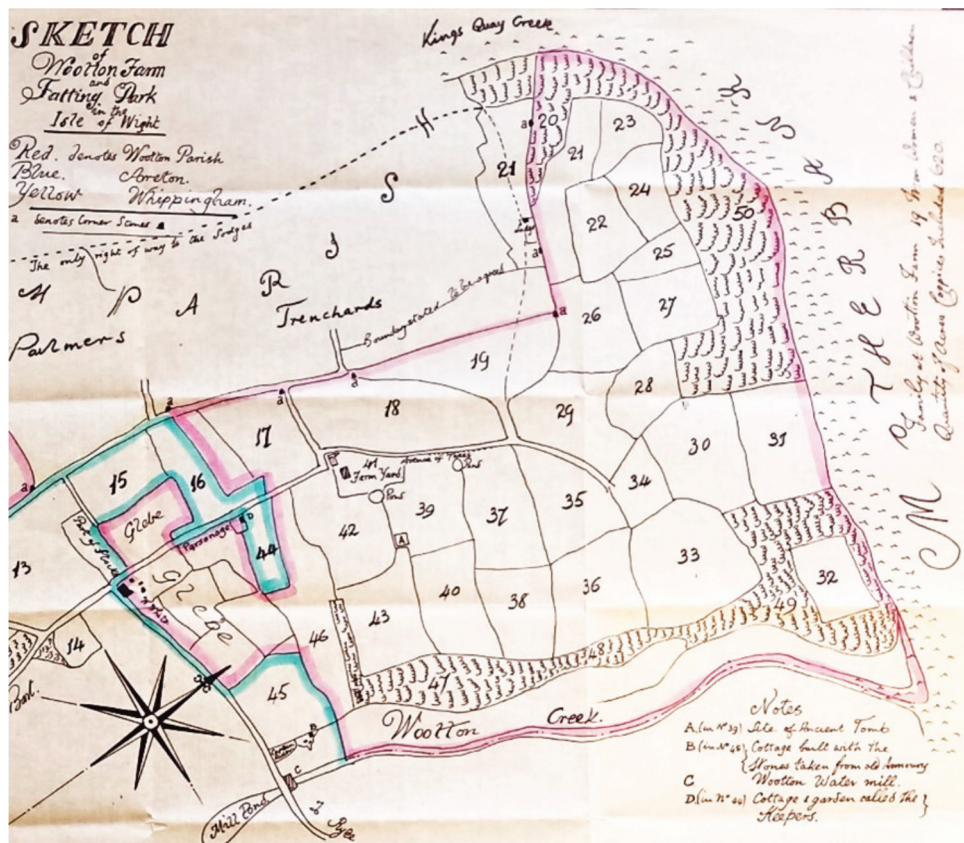


Fig. 5: Extract from 1818 Sketch Map showing Wootton Farm.

² The text of the inquisition is taken from a letter written by William Hearn in connection with the Wootton Tithe Dispute of 1813-1821 (IWCRO/WHP/2213). This entry was originally recorded in Cal. Inq. p.m. 1-9 Edw III, 262 and is cited by Page (1912, 204).

³ Fig.3 indicates that land to the north-west of Wootton Bridge and west of Wootton Mill, called 'Bridge Mead' on the 1818 map, was in Arreton Parish and may have been owned by Quarr Abbey in the medieval period although wrongly identified as Coppedhall on Fig.3. However, the land on which the mill itself stood was possibly not owned by the Abbey. The 1818 map shows a boundary dividing the land on which the mill stood from Bridge Mead. Land to the south of the bridge, bounded by a small tributary stream flowing into Wootton Mill Pond, was held by Quarr Abbey until the Dissolution. It was later known as 'Bulls at Wootton' and from about 1775 was owned by John Cooper, who operated Wootton Tide Mill (Webster 1975-99). This land' is shown on a plan of 1800 (IWCRO/1691/92) but the supposed site of Quarr Abbey's mill indicated in Fig.3 lay just to the east, where a pond is shown on the 25-inch OS of 1898. This pond could conceivably have been the mill pond associated with Quarr Abbey's mill but is much more likely to have been associated with the landscape park of Fernhill.

countess'. The accounts for Wootton include references to its fishpond and to the scouring of the mill pond. The fishpond mentioned in Isabella's accounts may correspond to the 'fishery' recorded in the 1331 inquisition post mortem. Page (1912, 204) states that the fishery 'was in an arm of the sea'. This probably refers to Wootton Creek as suggested by Hockey (1970, 50).

Many features of Wootton Manor are recorded in the Isle of Wight Historic Environment Record (IWHER). The de Lisle family seem to have acquired a grant of free warren at Wootton Manor before 1298, when a John de Lisle complained that 'Robert de Harslade, with a multitude of malefactors, cut down and rooted up his trees in his wood of Woden, and hunted in his free warren there'.⁴

Rights of free warren were grants by the king permitting local lords to hunt small game such as hare, rabbit, woodcock, partridge and pheasant on their estates (Bond, 1994, 116). A grant of free warren was also recorded for Wootton Manor in 1306.⁵ One of the modern meanings of warren, a place for raising rabbits for their meat and fur, was often covered by medieval terms such as *coneygarth* and *coneygre*, since rabbits were known as 'coneyes' in the medieval period. However, the 1331 inquisition post mortem mentioned above refers specifically to a 'rabbit warren'. The 1818 'Sketch of Wootton Farm and Fattening Park in the Isle

of Wight' (Fig. 4) named fields 37 and 38 to the north-east of the manor house as 'Upper Coney berry' and 'Lower Coney berry'. These field names may indicate the area of the rabbit warren which was the precursor of a deer park (IWHER 959 - MIW1011) first recorded in 1492-3 (Page, 1912, 205). Field 18, beside the manor farm, was named 'Home Park'. Deer parks were a status symbol coveted by gentlemen and members of the aristocracy in the medieval period and there is evidence for several on the Isle of Wight (Basford, 1989, 13-17). The chief function of Wootton Park would have been to provide grazing for deer, although it probably also contained other grazing animals such as cattle.

The de Lisle's 'great castellated manor house at Wootton, complete with moat and deer park, was a feature of the Island landscape remembered by old people in the Wootton tithe disputes of 1815 and 1820' (Webster 1994). In October 1815, John Wallis of Whippingham, labourer, aged 82, said on oath:

*That he remembered an old tower standing on Wootton Farm and forming part of the present farm house, in which tower there was an armoury and that he had seen therein helmets, iron caps and boddices, greaves for the legs and armour and curtlasses and warlike instruments.*⁶

The 1818 'Sketch of Wootton Farm and Fattening Park' (Fig. 5) marks 'Site of Ancient Tower' at 'A' to

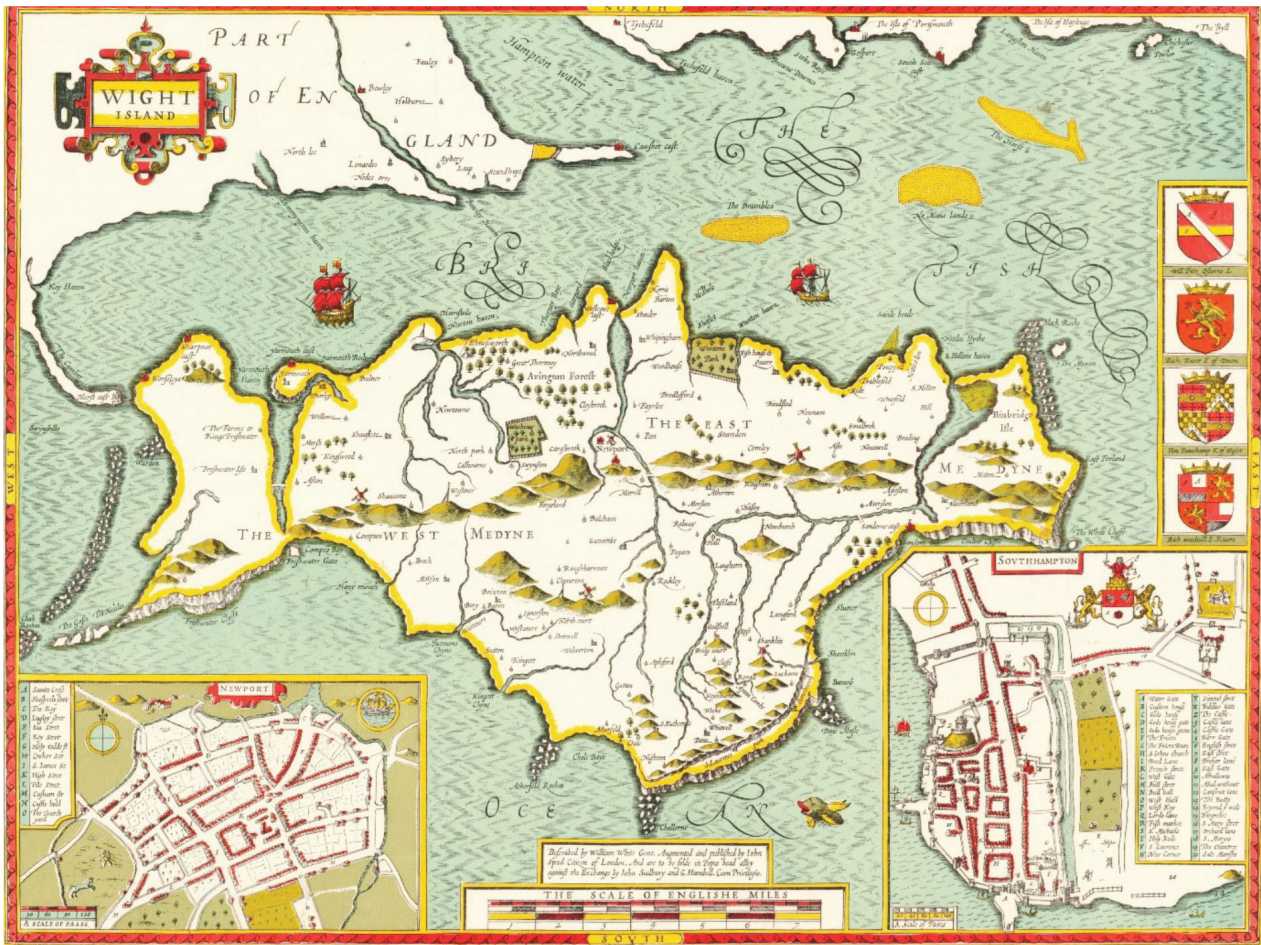


Fig. 6: John Speed's map of 1611 Image reproduced by permission of the Isle of Wight County Record Office

⁴ CAL PR Ed.I, 1292-1300 cited by Webster (1975-1999).

⁵ Cal. Chart. R. 1300-26, 68 cited in Page 1912 (204).

⁶ IWCRO/WHP/2228.

the east of Wootton Manor Farm and this is in the same place as an earthwork marked on the 1860s 25-inch Ordnance Survey as a rectangular platform with a central mound (IWHER 2896 - MIW4411). The OS map also marks another earthwork between the site of the tower and Wootton Manor Farm. This earthwork, identified on the OS map as Plot 58, occupies about a quarter of the garden area to the east of the farmhouse, and appears to be the moated site mentioned by Webster (IWHER 15160 - MIW15797). It corresponds with the position of a pond marked on the 1818 map, and a pond can still be seen in this position on Google Earth. Manor houses were often set within moats in the medieval period but sometimes moats were set around gardens. There are local examples of moated sites at Wolverton Manor in Shorwell and at Stenbury Manor (Basford, 1980, 147). It is curious that the medieval manor house complex at Wootton seems to have included both a moated site and a tower. The tower may have been a place of retreat during French raids in the medieval period or even the beacon site recorded at Wootton in 1324 and 1638 (IWHER 957 - MIW1009), although the 1324 reference to *Woditone* at *La Ode* and the 1638 reference to *Wootton Poynt* suggest that the beacon was near the mouth of Wootton Creek in Woodside Bay (Kökeritz, 1940, lxxvii-lxxix). It is possible that the tower was a watch tower to oversee the medieval rabbit warren, fishery and deer park as a deterrent against poaching.

In the Royal Survey of the Isle of Wight 1559-60, reference is made to the 'manor house of Wutton with the Parke' but the survey also reported that:

Wootton church is without a service, saving a lay man reading epistles and gospels, the patron being the lord of the manor, Thomas Lysley, gent. The parsonage hath been granted out by the lord of the manor and there is belonging to the said parish church but the manor house only, which is now wholly decayed and no abode had there these many years, nor like to be.

The manor was leased out at this time. In fact, the Lises had made Thrupton, in north Hampshire, their chief seat as early as about 1390 (Webster, 1994). The creation of the deer park a hundred years later may indicate that Wootton was treated as a 'recreational' estate. According to Sir John Oglander, when Henry VII visited the Isle of Wight he spent a night at Wootton and the deer park may have been an attraction (Long, 1888, 63). It was Lancelot Lisle who leased out the manor in 1542 and it did not come back into family hands until 1562/3 when Anthony Lisle refurbished or rebuilt the manor house (Webster 1975-99).⁷

John Speed's map of 1611 depicts 'Woottone Park'

enclosed on its south side by a park pale (Fig. 6). His map shows the deer park stretching from Wootton Creek in the east to Palmer's Brook in the west but there is evidence that the park did not extend as far as Palmer's Brook on the west side. The area of Wootton Manor and Wootton Parish only extended a short distance to the west of the manor house with the land beyond being in Whippingham Parish and containing other tenements. However, at the time of the Royal Survey in 1559-60, four of these tenements, including Palmers and Trenchards, were in the hands of Anthony Rogers who had married the widow of Lancelot Lisle and was also holding Wootton Manor. Webster (1975-99) considers that the Lisle family must have owned these four tenements 'from early times'. The holding which lay on the north-east side of Palmer's Brook beside the coast was known as Shoufflete or Shefleet (Fig. 3). This holding in Whippingham Parish was only added to the Wootton estate in 1519, when the abbot of Quarr granted his tenement in Shoufflete to Sir John Lisle for 40 years (Hockey 1991, 92-3). The holding of Shofleet included the land now known as Curlews Copse.⁸

Additional evidence that the park did not extend as far as Palmer's Brook is provided by the 1818 'Sketch of Wootton Farm' (Figs. 4 and 5) which in the paper copy reproduced here includes the legend 'a a a denotes corner stones' although the original map reads 'a. a. a. denote bound Stones'. These stones are positioned roughly along the western and northern boundaries of Wootton Parish and Manor where they abut Whippingham Parish. Furthermore, the 1818 map shows another boundary line between the western edge of Wootton Manor and Trenchards. The attached legend on the paper copy of the map reads 'Boundary stated to be agreed' but on the original map it reads 'Boundary stated to be against the park'. A track further to the west is shown on the 1818 map, running northward from Fattingspark to 'Great Curlews' (Plot 21) and then eastward through Great Curlews. This track is labelled 'the only right of way to the lodges' and seems to have been outside the park.⁹ The lodge itself (IWHER 14588 - MIW13143), lying within Plot 21 and labelled 'Lodge' on the 1818 map, was on the Whippingham side of the northern boundary between the parishes of Whippingham and Wootton as marked by the boundary stones on the 1818 map. It was thus probably just outside the park, forming a controlled entrance. This building is named on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (OSD 74) as 'Park Lodge'.¹⁰ The lodge has now been demolished, but a recent study established that it originated as a modest, two bay lobby-entry dwelling of 17th century date (Archaeology South-East, 2022). The evidence

⁷ The present building on the site of Wootton Manor Farm (IWHER 12812 - MIW3678) is described as 'of early C18 date, altered and extended to the south c.1840' THE COTTAGE WOOTTON MANOR WOOTTON MANOR AND THE COTTAGE, Wootton Bridge - 1034468 | Historic England.

⁸ Shofleet had been granted to Quarr in about 1248 by Walter Elof and his brother, Henry, as: *Ten and a half acres in Shoesfleth or Scoflute, with a messuage called Pinnukeshaye, and another on the north side of the said Henry's messuage; with Two acres in Othelle furlong, next to the marl pit, One acre on the east side of Othelle furlong near the dyke, One acre called Broadacre, and Four and a half acres nearby, and Two acres between the dyke of Geoffrey de Lisle, and the road.*

⁹ Part of this track can be traced on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (Fig. 10), connecting the north-east corner of Fattingspark with the west side of Lushington Copse then continuing northward beyond Brocks Copse Road along the western edge of a now-vanished piece of woodland called Blankets Copse before continuing to Curlews Copse. Disconnected sections of the track were still shown on the OS 1863.

¹⁰ OSD 74 is available at OSD-074.JPG [Accessed 03 April 2024].

The name Fattingspark is first recorded as *Vattyncroft* in 1440 (Kökeritz, 1940, 241). The Survey of English Place-Names by Nottingham University does not record the name 'Fattingspark' but lists 29 names containing the element 'Fattig', including 'Fattig Close', 'Fattig Ground' and 'Fattig Pasture' (English Place-Name Society 2023). There are concentrations of these names in Berkshire, Durham and Gloucestershire, but the national database does not yet contain records for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, which are still being researched.¹³ The Survey does not give a definition of the place-name element 'Fattig', but it probably relates to the fattening of cattle. Since Fattingspark in Wootton lay on relatively infertile land, the name could possibly have been ironic¹⁴ but it is also quite likely that the lords of Wootton Manor decided to use this area for the fattening of stock. This use would have required the area to be securely fenced, so perhaps Fattingspark became a ring-fenced enclosure in the late medieval period.

The 1818 'Sketch of Wootton Farm and Fattingspark' (Fig. 4) shows all the lands of Wootton Farm and Fattingspark. Fig. 9 is an enlarged extract from this map showing the ten land parcels of Fattingspark. This area, edged in pink and amounting to 197 acres, corresponds to Wootton Parish Detached area No. 4 as shown on OS 1863 when it contained 205.727 acres (Fig. 8). The Sketch map of 1818 shows the Fattingspark area at a late stage in its history, when what may originally have been an unenclosed area of common land within Wootton Parish had been divided into a number of fields with coppice woodland within Fattingspark Copse and Quarrels Copse. Nevertheless, the map provides clues to the earlier history of the area and its evolution through time. The table below uses information from the 1818 map but lists only the lands within Fattingspark.

It is possible that the ring-fenced enclosure at Fattingspark may have occupied only land parcels 1-6 which comprised an area of just over 137 acres

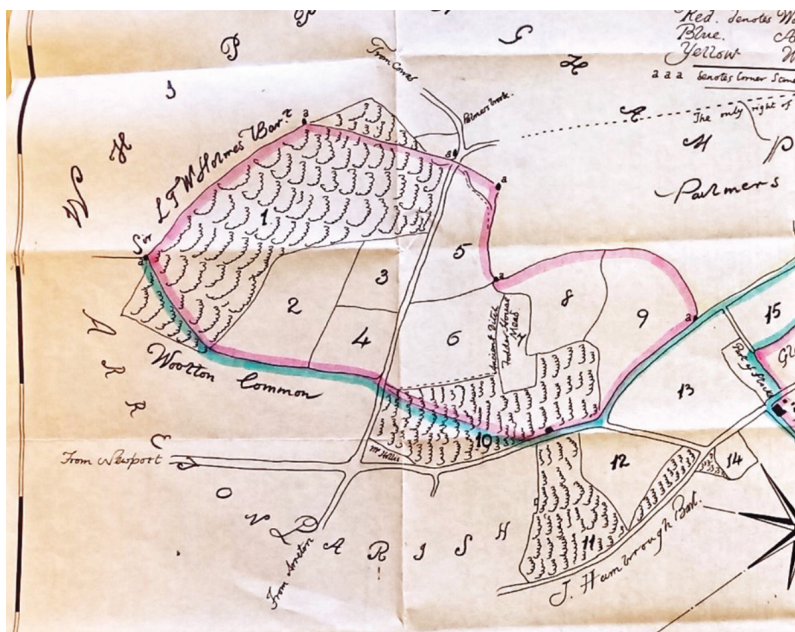


Fig. 9: Extract from 1818 'Sketch of Wootton Farm and Fattingspark' showing Fattingspark area (looking north-west)

Table 1: Fields and Woods within Fattingspark from 1818 Map

Number	Names of Fields	Wootton	Arreton	Whippingham	Area ¹⁵
1	Fattingspark Copse	58.0.19	4.0.0	4.0.0	66a 0r 19p
2	Great Fattig Park	20.1.8			20a 1r 8p
3	Lower Twelve Acres	12.1.10			12a 1r 10p
4	Upper Twelve Acres	12.3.19			12a 3r 19p
5	Fattig Park	14.2.35			14a 2r 35p
6	Fattig Park	18.3.8			18a 3r 8p
7	Fodder house mead	5.0.18			5a 0r 18p
8	Fodder Park close	10.0.7			10a 0r 7p
9	Quarrel Close	19.3.6			19a 3r 6p
10	Quarrel Copse	25.0.0	13.1.26		38a 1r 26p
	TOTAL AREA	197.0.10	17.1.26	4.0.0	218a 1r 36p

¹³ Two other names on the Isle of Wight with the element 'Fattig' are known to the author. There was a relatively small enclosure called 'Fattig Ground' quite close to Wootton's Fattingspark in the parish of Whippingham. This is parcel number 630 on the Whippingham Tithe Map and lay to the north of Lushington Hill and to the east of Lushington Copse (Whippingham Tithe Appt IWCR0/JER/T/335 1847 & Tithe Map IWCR0/JER/T/336 1845). John Dunne's 1773 Survey of the Nunwell Estate, Brading lists two fields as 'Fattig Lands' (WCR0/OG/PP/13).

¹⁴ A statement taken from John Wallis of Whippingham in October 1815, in connection with a dispute between Richard Walton White, rector of Wootton, and Charles Lisle, owner of Wootton Farm, included his reminiscence of the enclosure of '100 acres called Fattingspark in derision' IWCR0/WHP/2219-2256 catalogue entry.

¹⁵ There are four roods (r) in an acre (a) and forty perches (p) in a rood.

within Wootton Parish. This area included all four 'Fattingspark' field names and would have formed a more coherent sub-oval shape for a ring-faced enclosure than the entire area within the detached part of Wootton Parish. The conjectural enclosure may have excluded the area of Quarrels Copse and Quarrel Close as well as 'Fodder House Pasture'. It is unclear whether it would have included land parcel 7, shown on the 1818 sketch map as 'fodder house mead'. However, the sketch map marks an 'Ancient Ditch' between land parcels 6 and 7 and this may have formed part of the boundary to the putative ring-fenced enclosure, in which case 'fodder house mead' (land parcel 7) would have been outside the enclosure. Fodder House Mead can still be identified on the modern 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map at SZ 5329 9158 as a small rectangular field with an apsidal north-western side.¹⁶ This is an unusual shape and the field clearly had a specific function, perhaps providing an early 'bite' of spring grass for the cattle pastured in the area.

The planting of woodland in Fattingspark seems to have started in the 17th century. Concrete evidence is supplied by legal documents relating to an action in which Dame Mary Lisle, widow, was sued by her sister-in-law, Dame Alice Lisle, and the latter's son, John, for the restoration, to them, of the manors of Wootton and Chillerton on the Isle of Wight. Sir John Lisle, the husband of Dame Alice Lisle, had supported Oliver Cromwell in the Civil War and shortly after the restoration of the monarchy in 1661 his estates had been confiscated. Charles II gave these estates to his brother James, Duke of York who shortly afterwards granted them to William Lisle, brother of Sir John. William Lisle was knighted in 1665 but died that year, leaving his estates to his widow, Mary. Dame Alice brought her first action against Mary in 1670.¹⁷ This was unsuccessful but she sued again in 1674¹⁸ and Webster (1975-99) states that she must have been successful in recovering Wootton Mansion House and farm because in 1703 her son, John Lisle of Dibden, Esq., leased it for 21 years to Thomas Jolliffe, for £160 a year.¹⁹

The 1674 court case is described in the National Archives catalogue as

Alice Lisle, widow, John Lisle. v. His Royal Highness Jas. Duke of York, Henry Earl of Peterborough, Richd. Earl of Burlington, Lady Mary Lisle, widow.: Capital messuages, &c. of the manor of Wootton alias Wooditon, and of Chellerton Farm, and closes or grounds called "Stileclose Coppice" (in Atherton parish), "Curlews" (in Whippingham parish), "Barnes Coppice," and "Quarles Coppice,; and "Fattings Park Coppice," in Wootton aforesaid; formerly belonging to Sir William Lisle and John Lisle (plaintiff's late husband). Of what kind or nature were the grounds on 1st May

1643, or during the four years immediately preceding 1643, to what manors belonging. By whom inclosed. Metes and bounds, &c., &c.

Statements were taken from various witnesses including David Sanders of Binstead, yeoman, aged 57. The testimony of David Sanders stated:

He doth know a close or ground in Atherton aforesaid called or known by the name of Stileclose Coppice and that the grounds doth containe by estimacion six acres or thereabouts and he doth know another close or ground in Whippingham aforesaid commonly called by the name of Curlews containing by estimation four acres or thereabouts and another Coppice in Wootton aforesaid commonly called or knowne by the name of Barnes Coppice containing by estimacion thirty acres or thereabouts and another close or ground in Wootton aforesaid comonly called or knowne by the name of Quarles Coppice conteyning by estimacion ten acres or thereabouts and one other close or ground in Wootton aforesaid comonly called or knowne by the name of Fattingspark conteyning by estimacion foureteene acres or thereabouts and hath knowne every of the said closes or grounds by the space of five & forty or fifty yeares now last past and this Depon[ent] further saith that about thirty yeares now last past the said close or ground called Quarles Coppice was inclosed and made into a Coppice by the said John Lisle deceased who caused the same to be sowed wth acrons & nutts except onely foure acres thereof wch was coppice ground ever since this Depon[en]t doth remember and that the said ground called Fattingspark coppice was inclosed and made into a Coppice about tenn yeares now last past by Alitia Lisle the Compl[ainan]t to the best of this Depon[en]ts remembrance And this Depon[en]t further saith that the said closes or grounds called Quarles Coppice & fattingspark Coppice on the first Day of May one thousand six hundred forty three and for foure yeares and many more yeares before the twentieth day of Aprill one thousand six hundred forty three were furze heath and feeding grounds except onely (the said foure acres) and were inclosed & made into Coppices as aforesaid and that the said ground called Stileclose Coppice hath been Coppice ground since this Deponents remembrance ...

One apparent problem with the testimony of David Sanders is that he refers to 'Fattingspark coppice' being 'inclosed and made into a Coppice about tenn yeares now last past by Alitia Lisle the Compl[ainan]t' which would correspond with a date of 1664, three years after Wootton Manor had been

¹⁶ Fodder House Mead was fed by a spring on its north side and was surrounded on three sides by a watercourse flowing from Palmer's Brook. The south-eastern end of Fodder House Mead was truncated in the late 19th century and the 25-inch Ordnance Survey of 1898 shows a three-sided embanked earthwork beyond the truncated field edge, encroaching into Quarrels Copse at SZ 5342 9149. This earthwork may possibly be connected with the Isle of Wight Central Railway which had been constructed just to the south of the field.

¹⁷ National Archives C6 145/69.

¹⁸ National Archives E134/25 and 26 Chas.II/Hilary15

¹⁹ IWCRO/WHP/2207.

confiscated from Alice Lisle's late husband in 1661. It is possible that the witness got mixed up with his dates or that his statement was incorrectly recorded.

At first glance, the testimony by David Sanders appears to provide a date for the planting of the

present-day Fattingspark Copse (Plot 1 on the 1818 sketch) but the area of fourteen acres given in his statement is much smaller than the extent of Fattingspark Copse in 1818 when it had an area of 58 acres within Wootton Detached and a total area of 66 acres. There is a possibility that Sanders could



Fig. 10: Extract from six-inch Ordnance Survey drawing of 1793-4 (OSD 73)
Downloaded from the British Library Open Gallery

be referring to Plot 5 on the 1818 sketch map which contained fourteen acres. However, no woodland is shown there on the Ordnance Survey drawing of 1793-4 (Fig. 10), the 1818 sketch map or the OS 1863 map. It is more likely that Fattingspark Copse formerly occupied a much smaller area and that additional planting took place in the late 17th century or 18th century. By the 1790s, the entire 66 acres of Fattingspark Copse is shown on the Ordnance Survey field drawing and on the slightly later finished drawing OSD 73 (Fig. 10). Quarrels Copse also seems to have expanded since the time when it was first planted as coppice woodland in about 1643. In his deposition of 1674, David Sanders stated that 'Quarles Copse' had an area of 10 acres although this may only have been the part of the copse within Wootton Parish. By the time of the Ordnance Survey drawing in 1793-4 Quarrels Copse was much larger and similar in size and shape to the area of copse shown on the sketch map of 1818 and on the OS 1863. In 1818 the copse occupied 25 acres in Wootton Parish and over 13 acres in Arreton Parish. The relationship of the wooded area, (Plot 10) with the small, enclosed field called Fodder House Mead (Plot 7) suggests that the land to the east and north of this field was planted at a later date than the area to the south of the field.

A key part of David Sanders' testimony was his statement that for many years before 1643 the 'closes or grounds called Quarrels Coppice & Fattingspark Coppice' had been 'furze heath and feeding grounds'. It would therefore seem that the mid- 17th century was a period of landscape change when new woodland was being planted in the Fattingspark area. It is clear from the court case between Dame Alice Lisle and Dame Mary Lisle that coppice woodland had become well established in the Fattingspark area by 1674. The court documents refer to 'Stile Close Coppice in Arreton Parish and 'Barnes Coppice' as well as 'Quarles Coppice and Fattingspark Coppice' in Wootton Parish. This local planting was part of a general drive on the part of Island landowners in the 16th and 17th century to establish and manage woodland, which was a valuable resource. The Royal Survey of the Isle of Wight in 1559-60 provides evidence of woodland and trees on several holdings close to Wootton Manor including Palmers, Fernhill, Hayste, Woodhouse, Great Briddlesford and Staplehurst (Webster 1975-99). The Royal Survey also provides evidence for new planting and young timber in the Centon of St Helens (Jones 1978, 15-17). Combley Manor, about 3km south-east of Fattingspark in Arreton Parish, has been well-wooded since at least the 18th century but there is some evidence that there may have been much less woodland in the early 16th century than in the late 17th century. There is also evidence that some new coppice was being created there in the 16th century and perhaps at a later date

(Basford 2014a, 2-4).²⁰ The fashion for woodland plantations was not confined to the Island but was nationwide and accelerated after the publication in 1664 of John Evelyn's *Sylva* which encouraged plantations of this type (Rackham 1976, 96-98).

5.The Enclosure of Fattingspark and Wootton Common *alias* Briddlesford Common

Heathland is associated with 'waste' and common land. Heathland landscapes accounted for a little over 10 % of the Island in about 1600, including acid heathland overlying the chalk downs (Chatters 2021, 39). This had declined by the 1790s when there was an estimated 4.4% of non-downland waste, commons and rough ground (Basford 2013, Table 5.3). Today there is very little heathland as a result of the enclosure of commons, agricultural improvement and the creation of forestry plantations.

The enclosure of commons and open land on the east side of the Medina Estuary started in the early 18th century and was well underway by the end of the century. The agricultural writer, William Marshall (1798, 265), recorded 'a suite of commons in the northeast division between Newport and Wootton Bridge' but in 1791 he had observed that these open lands were:

progressively undergoing the profitable change, from a state of rough, unproductive, wet unhealthy commons, to that of drained and cultivated inclosures: not, however, by calling in costly aid of Parliament; but by general consent (Ibid).

Evidence of this process taking place at Fattingspark is provided in a statement taken from John Wallis of Whippingham, labourer, aged 82 in October 1815, in connection with a dispute between Richard Walton White, rector of Wootton, and Charles Lisle, owner of Wootton Farm.²¹

John Wallis stated:

That about 80 Years since the lands were called the Fattings Park being Plots 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. & 6 in the Plan and composing about 100 acres were first enclosed from the adjoining Common called Wootton Common and their lands broken up and brought to tillage - that he could recollect the Enclosure having torn his first pair of Breeches in getting over the new fence - that he has heard many old people now dead say that the the Lisles bought up the Common Rights on the Fattings Park to add it to Wootton Farm and make two farms of it - that it was made into two farms and Farmer Rd Brown leased one and Farmer John Brown the other - that he recollects after this the Lisles attempted to take in more of Wootton Common but having begun to make their fences the same were thrown down by the Commoners who would not allow these to be enclosed (IWCRO/WHP/2206).

From his evidence we can calculate that Fattingspark

²⁰ However, despite the documentary evidence for there being a much smaller amount of woodland within Combley Manor in the 16th century compared with the late 18th century, landscape evidence hints at an ancient origin for much of the present-day woodland with the shapes of the woods suggesting that they were assarted in the medieval period i.e. eaten into by the creation of fields within formerly wooded areas.

²¹ IWCRO/WHP/2219-2256.

was broken up for agriculture in the 1730s. The area described by Wallis (Plots 1-6) corresponds to the possible ring-fenced enclosure at Fattingspark discussed in Section 4 (Fig. 9). It also appears to be the area over which he alleges that common rights existed before these rights were bought up by the Lises. The two farms he refers to were presumably Wootton Manor Farm and Fattingspark. He recollected that the farms were leased to two separate farmers with the surname 'Brown'. In 1748 and 1758 a 'Farmer Brown' paid poor rates on Curlews and part of Wootton and in 1759, 1766 and 1767 Farmer Brown is listed as paying for Curlews. The holding of Curlews (Plots 21 and 22 on the 1818 map) was in Whippingham Parish but had been leased with Wootton Farm since at least 1748 (Webster 1975-99). It is puzzling that the area said by John Wallis to have been enclosed for agriculture did not include Plots 8, 9 and 10 although these plots were shown on the 1818 map as part of Fattingspark and were definitely included within Wootton Manor and Wootton Parish. Plot 10 was the 38-acre Quarrels Copse, 25 acres of which were in Wootton Parish. Plot 8 (Fodder House Pasture) and Plot 9 (Quarrel Close) may have been cultivated as part of Palmer's Farm in Whippingham Parish. Palmers Farm was adjacent to plots 8 and 9 and had been owned by the Lisle family until sold to Nicholas Pyle in 1728 together with Pratts, Trenchards and Matthews.²² One of the fields belonging to Palmers Farm, located between Quarrels Close and Palmers Farm, was

named 'Fattening Ground' on the Whippingham Tithe Schedule of 1844.²³

John Wallis stated that the Lises had tried to enclose a larger area of Wootton Common but were prevented from doing so by the Commoners. This area must have been common land forming part of Briddlesford Manor which, like Fattingspark, belonged to the Lisle family but was in Arreton Parish. Briddlesford Common was frequently treated as part of Wootton Common in post-medieval documents, on maps and by local people. The area of Briddlesford Common can be reconstructed from evidence for rights of common associated with farms around the common going back as far as the Royal Survey of 1559-60 (Webster, 1975-99). An entry in the Royal Survey for the copyhold tenement of 'Culls' stated that the tenement lay 'on the west side of Wootton Common *alias* Briddlesford Common'. In the 1608 Survey of Crown Lands, under the manor of Arreton, it was stated that 'Edmund Bull holds by copy dated 17 October 1600, a tenement and 12 acres in Wootton', including 'pasture for six cows, a mare and her foal on Wootton Heath'.²⁴ This smallholding, known as Bulls and later as 'Williamses Farm' became part of the Fernhill estate in 1795.²⁵ References from 1608 also include common land associated with the farms of Urries, Littleton and Mousehill (or Mousehold), now on the east side of Briddlesford Road a route upgraded by the Highway Commissioners in 1818.²⁶

The tenants of Mousehill had 'common on Wootton



Des. & Engr. by Geo. Brannon, June 1830

Cottage on Wootton Common, Isle of Wight.

Fig. 11:

Cottage on Wootton Common.
George Brannon 1830
Reproduced by kind permission of
Shanklin & District History Society

²² F.F. Hants. Hilary 1727/8.

²³ National Archives IR 29/31/273.

²⁴ National Archives 315/359.

²⁵ It is represented on the Arreton Tithe Map by plots 50-52, 54-56, and 67-70.

²⁶ I.W. Highway Commission Vol. 1, p. 229.

Common for 4 rudder beasts or 20 sheep yearly and a mare and her colt every third year'.²⁷ 'Rudder beasts' or 'rother beasts' were cattle.

In 1742, Edward Lisle sold the manors of Wootton, Bridlesford, Appleford and Chillerton, with the advowson of Wootton, to Simon Burton, Doctor of Physic of the parish of St. Georges, Hanover Square, London. However, the sale did not include Wootton Manor House and Farm. In 1743 Nicholas Pyle was one of the eight commoners on Wootton Common who surrendered commoners rights there to John

Burton, D.D., lord of the manor of Briddlesford, in return for enclosures on the common.²⁸

The area in Arreton Parish named as 'Wootton Common' on the Ordnance Survey field drawing of 1793²⁹ was the main surviving unenclosed part of Briddlesford Common at that date. The field drawing shows an area of rough ground to the south-west of Quarrels Copse. On the six-inch Ordnance Survey 'fair drawing' of 1793-4 (derived from the field drawing) this part of the common is depicted in a light green wash but is not named (Fig. 10). It looks

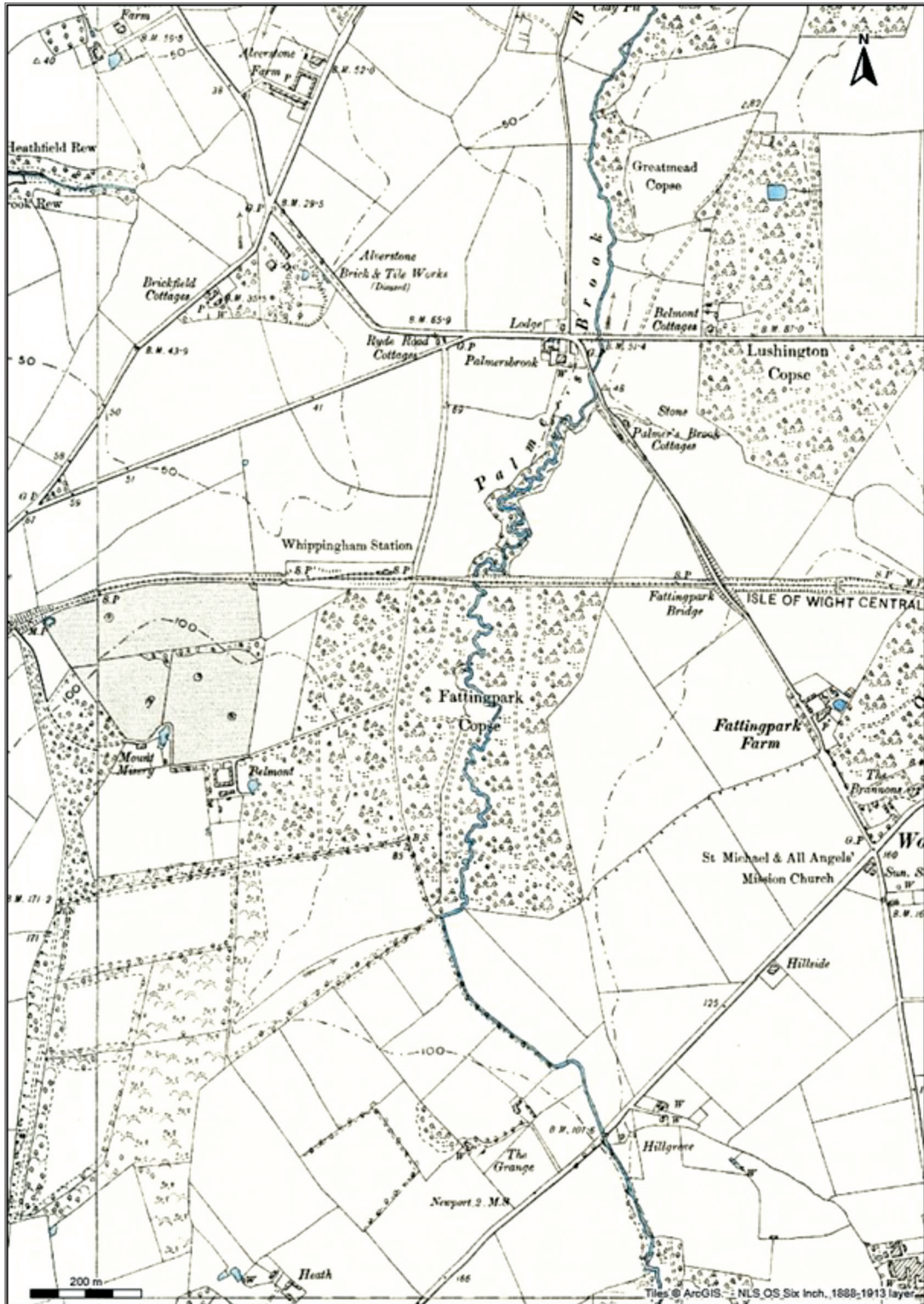


Fig. 12: Hampshire & Isle of Wight XC.SE, Revised: 1896, Published: 1898
 Re-use: CC-BY (NLS). Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

²⁷ Hants. RO 1608 B65/1-3; IWCRO Ac/85/89/74.

²⁸ F.F. Hants. Trin. 1743.

²⁹ National Archives MR 1/489.

as if a 'bite' has been taken out of its north-east corner, suggesting that part of the common had been planted up as an extension to Quarrels Copse by the 1790s. Five acres of the remaining common (Plot 216 on the Arreton Tithe Map) were leased by the Rev. Richard Walton in 1794. This is described as:

*formerly part of Wootton Common alias Briddlesford Common, but lately fenced in and added to Dennett's Hurst Farm, which close abutted north and west on to other late parts of Wootton Common, south on to Mousehole, and east on to Packsfield, part of Briddlesford.*³⁰

The eastern boundary of Plot 216 seems to have been an ancient boundary of Wootton Common, preserved today as Littletown Lane (right of way Newport 4).

The 1818 map shows only a small triangle of unwooded land at the south-west corner of Quarrels Copse, bounded by tracks which later became Park Road and Station Road. (Fig. 8). Mrs Hollis had a cottage here in 1818 (Fig. 11) but by 1826 it had become the home of the engraver George Brannon and his family (Thomas, 2020, 9). An engraving by Brannon of his home dated 1 June 1830 is entitled 'Cottage on Wootton Common' (Fig. 11). In the Arreton Tithe Schedule of 1842 just over 10 acres of land are listed under the heading of 'Wootton Common'. This land was divided into seven plots, all belonging to Ann Dennis and all on the east side of Park Road.³¹ Plot 153, comprising about 4 acres, was named 'Common' and lay within the area of Wootton Common shown on the 1793-4 drawing. Plots 145, 152, 154 and 155, adjacent to Plot 153, contained cottages and gardens. Plots 220 and 223, to the east of Wootton Common, were enclosed fields named Packsfield and Lower Packsfield, each of just over two acres.

The process of enclosure and the creation of new farms gathered pace in the early 19th century with the construction of improved roads running from Wootton Common to the top of Staplers Hill and from the Hare and Hounds at Downend to East Cowes. These routes became Whiterails Road and Park Road. Whiterails Road ran diagonally across the former Wootton Common from north-east to south-west. An area to the north-west of Whiterails Road was named as 'Part of Fattingspark' in the 1842 Arreton Tithe Schedule. It comprised plots 156-162 and 199, belonging to Robert Stayner Holford and leased to William Lambert. Holford had purchased the Wootton Farm estate in the parishes of

Wootton, Arreton and Whippingham in 1825.³² Plots 156-160 lay within the area of Wootton Common shown in 1793.³³ A version of the tithe map in the Isle of Wight County Records Office labels this land as 'Pt. of Palmers or Fattingspark'.³⁴ No farmstead is shown on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (Fig. 10) or the 1818 map (Fig. 9) but the holding cannot have been worked from Palmer's Farm in Whippingham Parish since James Rolph rather than William Lambert was listed as the tenant of Palmer's Farm in the Whippingham Tithe Schedule of 1844. It must have been worked from Fattingspark Farm in Wootton Parish, which is first shown on the OS 1863 map (Fig. 8) on the right side of Park Road, lying within the field marked as Plot 6 on the 1818 map. The farmstead almost certainly existed by the time of the tithe surveys in the 1840s, but no tithe data is available for Wootton Parish since Wootton Manor Farm and Fattingspark (Wootton Detached) did not pay tithe, being subject to a *modus*.³⁵ William Lambert is recorded as 'Farmer' of Fattingspark in Post Office directories of 1852 and 1855 and as at 'Fattings Farm' in White's Directory of 1859. Today, the farmstead, located at SZ 5316 9125, is known as Park Farm (IWHER 12807 - MIW3673, IWHER 12810 - MIW3676, IWHER 12811 - MIW3677, IWHER 8842 - MIW14316).

Another former area of Wootton Common to the south-east of Whiterails Road also belonged to Robert Stayner Holford, and is shown as plots 212-215 on the Arreton Tithe Map.³⁶ The Tithe Schedule lists these plots as forming part of the new 112-acre farm of Briddlesford Lodge, owned by Robert Stayner Holford and leased to Michael Morgan.³⁷ This farmstead replaced a tenement called 'Culls' lying on the western edge of Wootton Common which belonged to the manor of Briddlesford and was recorded in the Royal Survey of 1559-60. The farmhouse was demolished in 1822 and the new house, Briddlesford Lodge, was built about a quarter of a mile further east on the west side of the upgraded route running from the Hare and Hounds at Downend across Wootton Common to East Cowes (Fig. 8). After the creation of Briddlesford Lodge Farm, the name 'Culls' was transferred to a small portion of the old Culls holdings (2 acres) lying on the south side of the road leading from Wootton Common to the top of Staplers Hill. This little settlement was called Hill Grove on the Arreton Tithe Map and comprised plots 200-208 (Webster, 1975-99).

Fattingspark Farm and Briddlesford Lodge Farm are among the relatively small number of Isle of Wight

³⁰ IWCRO/WHP/612

³¹ National Archives IR 29/31/10.

³² IWCRO/WHP/2060/3.

³³ The Tithe Schedule also lists Plot 10 and Plot 199 as being part of Fattingspark but these were detached from the other plots and lay further to the north.

³⁴ IWCRO/JER/T/27.

³⁵ The *modus* was an arrangement whereby Wootton Manor paid a fixed sum to the Rector of Wootton Parish every year in lieu of tithes.

³⁶ St Michael and All Angels Mission Church was built in 1885 in the north-east corner of Tithe Plot 215. The burial ground was consecrated in 1893. The church was demolished following the opening of St Mark's, Wootton in 1909, although the cemetery appears to have remained in use until the 1930s Wootton Common Cemetery in Wootton Common, Isle of Wight - Find a Grave Cemetery [Accessed 12/04/2024].

³⁷ A history of Briddlesford Lodge Farm is available at Wootton Bridge Historical - North Arreton - Briddlesford Lodge Farm (woottonbridgeiow.org.uk) [Accessed 11/04/2024]. The Farm is at bottom right corner of Fig. 12'.

farmsteads dating from the 'enclosure period' of British agricultural history. Such farms were commonly established in the English Midlands after open fields and common pasture lands were enclosed by Acts of Parliament in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, enclosure on the Isle of Wight was a piecemeal process which took place over many centuries, and most farmsteads have origins pre-dating the 18th century (Basford 2013, 86-110; Basford, 2014b).

Enclosure affected not only Arreton Parish but also the landscape in the area of Whippingham Parish abutting Wootton and Fattingspark. The Whippingham Tithe Map³⁸ shows that by 1845 Lushington Copse had been cut in two by the construction of a road, now the A3054. This ran from the Racecourse up Lushington Hill to the boundary with Wootton Detached No. 4 (Fattingspark) before cutting through its northern end (Figs 7 & 8). The OS 1863 shows that rationalisation of plot boundaries had taken place between 1845 and 1863. A ruler-straight boundary is shown on the 1863 map to the north of the new road up Lushington Hill between the east side of Lushington Copse and the adjacent field. This field, in turn, had a similar ruler-straight north-south boundary dividing it from a field further to the east. The new layout replaced the former arrangement of Plots 623, 629, 630, 631 and 632 shown on the Whippingham Tithe Map. The line of the parish boundary between Wootton Detached and Whippingham marked on the 1863 map now protruded incongruously into these fields. Another ruler-straight line is shown running along the south-east edge of Lushington Copse and this also formed part of the parish boundary between Wootton Detached and Whippingham.

Although the commons surrounding Fattingspark had been enclosed by the 1840s, it is possible to trace a network of surviving ancient boundaries and routes within what would once have been a single interconnecting area of common pasture lying within the medieval parishes of Arreton, Whippingham and Wootton and divided between the manors of Arreton, Staplehurst (a grange of Quarr Abbey), Alverstone and Wootton.

The boundary along the western edge of Fattingspark Copse separating the historic parishes of Wootton and Whippingham survives as an earthwork bank dividing Fattingspark Copse from the late 19th century woodland of Belmont Copse (Fig. 12). A track following this boundary (Rights of Way N111 and N113) does not appear to be shown on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (Fig. 10). Equally, the continuation of N113 in a westerly direction to the junction with N116 is not shown on the 1793-4 drawing but both tracks run along historic parish boundary divisions between Wootton, Whippingham and Arreton which are indicated by dashed lines on the drawing. In 1793-4, the former common land through which N113 now runs had

already been enclosed from Whippingham Common *alias* Alverstone Common and Staplers Heath. Right of Way N116 is an ancient route called 'The Ridgeway', running north-south and dividing Staplers or Staplehurst Heath, in Arreton Parish and lying within the grange of Quarr Abbey, from Fairlee Common in Whippingham Parish (Hockey, 1991, map 9). The northern part of 'The Ridgeway' can be seen on Fig. 10 as a wide grassy track. Today, the route of 'The Ridgeway' continues to the south of N116 as 'Mews Lane' which, historically, led onto a part of Staplers Heath to the south of Staplers Road. Even the improved 19th century roads of Briddlesford Road/Park Road and Station Road/Whiterails Road were based on routes traversing and connecting former commons.

6. The Historic Landscape, Archaeology and Ecology of Fattingspark Copse

Fattingspark Copse lies on the heavy clays of the Hamstead Beds. Palmers Brook runs through the length of the copse from south to north. Today, the area of Fattingspark Copse is 46.2 acres or 18.69 ha³⁹ (BCM 2020) but at its greatest extent, just prior to the construction of the Ryde and Newport Railway in the 1870s, it had an area of about 69 acres, mostly in a detached part of Wootton Parish but including seven acres in Arreton Parish and four acres in Whippingham Parish. Today, the modern civil parish boundary between Newport and Wootton Bridge runs through the middle of Fattingspark along Palmers Brook. Fattingspark Copse is classified as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.⁴⁰ It contains red squirrels, 150 recorded species of plants, and many different species of butterflies.

Fattingspark Copse lay within the area known as Fattingspark which formed a detached part of Wootton Parish until the late 19th century (Fig. 8). A witness statement by David Sanders in 1674 alleged that in 1643 the whole area was "furze heath and feeding grounds". David Sanders also stated that approximately 14 acres of Fattingspark had been 'inclosed and made into a coppice' in about 1664. This is a much smaller area than the extent of Fattingspark Copse within Wootton Parish in the late 18th century and it seems likely that an initially small area of planted coppice was increased over time (see Section 4). It may have reached its largest extent by 1769 when the first edition of John Andrews' map was published but this map is not accurate in its depiction of woodland.⁴¹ The 1793-4 OS drawing (Fig. 10) and all later maps show the eastern boundary of Fattingspark Copse as being sharply angled with a straight southern section. This eastern boundary may have been first defined in about 1735 when the formerly unenclosed 'furze heath' of Fattingspark was divided up into closes according to a witness statement from John Wallis (see Section 5). The area of woodland shown on the 1793-4 OS drawing corresponds to that shown on the 1818 map (Fig. 4) where the total area of the copse is

³⁸ National Archives IR 30/3/273.

³⁹ In this section, measurements taken from historical sources are given in acres but modern measurements are expressed in metres and hectares.

⁴⁰ Register of Sites of importance for Nature Conservation Available from SINC register August 2015 (wildonwight.co.uk) [Accessed 22 April 2024].

⁴¹ *Topographical Map of the Isle of Wight, in Hampshire on a Scale of 2 Inches to the Mile*. John Andrews 1769. London

given as approximately 66 acres although a slightly larger size of 73.5 acres can be calculated from the 1897-8 25-inch Ordnance Survey.

Fattingpark Copse is included in the Revised Inventory of Ancient Woodland on the Isle of Wight (Brownscombe, 2014). Strictly speaking, 'Ancient Woodland' is classified as such if it has been in existence since 1600, but in the Isle of Wight, all woodland shown on the Ordnance Survey six-inch drawings of 1793-4 is included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. A 17th century date for the earliest planting within Fattingpark Copse is consistent with the herbaceous and shrub species present. The current structure of the woodland is coppice with oak standards which is the usual form of old enclosed and managed woodlands on the Isle of Wight. The existence of Narrow-leaved Lungwort (*Pulmonaria longifolia*) is generally an indicator of ancient woodland on the Island (Pope *et al*, 2003, 51). Its presence within Fattingpark Copse indicates that the area has been wooded for some considerable time, but documentary evidence and boundary morphology both point to a post-medieval date for the establishment of the copse. Moreover, *Salix repens* or Creeping Willow, a plant typical of damp or the wet heath, was found in abundance on the southern edge of Fattingpark Copse in 1966 (Bevis, Kettell & Shepard, 1978, 63) and a few plants survived within the copse in 1997 (Pope *et al* 2003, 95).⁴²

Colin Pope has provided an updated commentary on Fattingpark for this article:

Fattingpark Copse had an extremely rich woodland flora when actively coppiced, characteristic of an ancient coppice woodland. However, it also has distinctive floral components which are more typically heathland species. These include Creeping Willow (Salix repens), Chaffweed (Anagallis minima), Sneezewort (Achillea ptarmica), Meadow Thistle (Cirsium dissectum), Bristle Club-rush (Isolepis setacea) and Water Purslane (Lythrum portula), although not many of these species are currently present. Narrow-leaved Lungwort is very much a plant of ancient woodlands, but in the New Forest it is also a heathland species and it may have been with us in the past. I could imagine that Fattingpark Copse was an old coppice woodland established over heathland. There would undoubtedly have been ancient woodland fragments already present. Wootton Common cemetery, where Lungwort is present, probably owes its origin to heathland rather than woodland. Staplers Heath, to the immediate south of Fattingpark Copse, had a rich heathland flora up until the 1990s.

The wider area of Fattingpark could have been a partly wooded common originally, until the late medieval period, when it may well have been enclosed by the lord of the manor for cattle grazing.

However, the present area of Fattingpark Copse seems to have originated, at least partly, through deliberate plantation (see Section 4).

In addition to the 58 acres of Fattingpark Copse in Wootton Parish, the 1818 map lists four acres of the copse in Arreton Parish and about four and a half acres in Whippingham Parish (Fig. 4). However, the Arreton Tithe Schedule of 1842 records seven acres of Fattingpark Copse within that parish. The landowner of the seven acres in Arreton was Robert Stayner Holford, who also owned Wootton Manor Farm in the 1840s. Today, the land at the south-west corner of Fattingpark Copse, formerly in Arreton Parish, remains part of the copse. The woodland at the north-west corner of Fattingpark Copse lay in Whippingham Parish although it was shown as part of Wootton Manor Farm on the 1818 map. In the Whippingham Tithe Schedule of 1844, this area of the copse is listed as Plot 648 'Part of Fattingpark Copse' in the ownership of the Reverend Richard Walton White.

The construction of the Ryde to Newport railway line, opened in 1875, seems to have resulted in the clearance of part of Fattingpark Copse to the north of the railway track, as shown on the six-inch Ordnance Survey of 1896 (Fig. 12).⁴³ The land to the north of the railway line amounted to nearly 23 acres and consisted of two fields on either side of a remaining strip of woodland beside Palmers Brook. In November 1959 Newport Borough agreed to construct a crematorium and superintendent's house within the field to the west of the stream. The foundation stone was laid on 19th May 1960 and the first cremation took place in 1961 (Isle of Wight Council, 2024, 3). Today, the road on the western edge of the cemetery defines the earlier boundary of Fattingpark Copse with the cemetery itself lying on land which had been within the copse until the 1870s.

Fattingpark Copse contains several archaeological features. The earliest feature is possibly the earthwork bank which runs along the western edge of the copse. This bank separates the historic parish of Wootton, in which the copse lay, from the adjacent parish of Whippingham and is clearly marked on Fig. 8 (see Section 5). The line of the boundary may date from the medieval period when a previously undivided area of common grazing became divided between manors in different parishes (see Section 2). However, the steep profile of the bank for much of its length suggests that it was modified at a later date, perhaps when a forestry track was laid out between Fattingpark Copse and Belmont Copse in the late 19th century (Fig. 12). The bank is followed by Right of Way N111 for much of its length from the north end of the copse. However, south of the junction with N113, there is no right of way along the western side of the copse and the original woodland edge is no longer clearly defined, due to the presence of some relatively recent secondary woodland between the former copse boundary and a field containing solar panels on its

⁴² A specimen of *Salix repens* or Creeping Willow was found on a nearby heath to the west of Lynn Farm in 1863 and preserved in a herbarium (Hampshire Cultural Trust 2024).

⁴³ This land to the north of the railway track included the four acres of land which had been in Whippingham Parish.

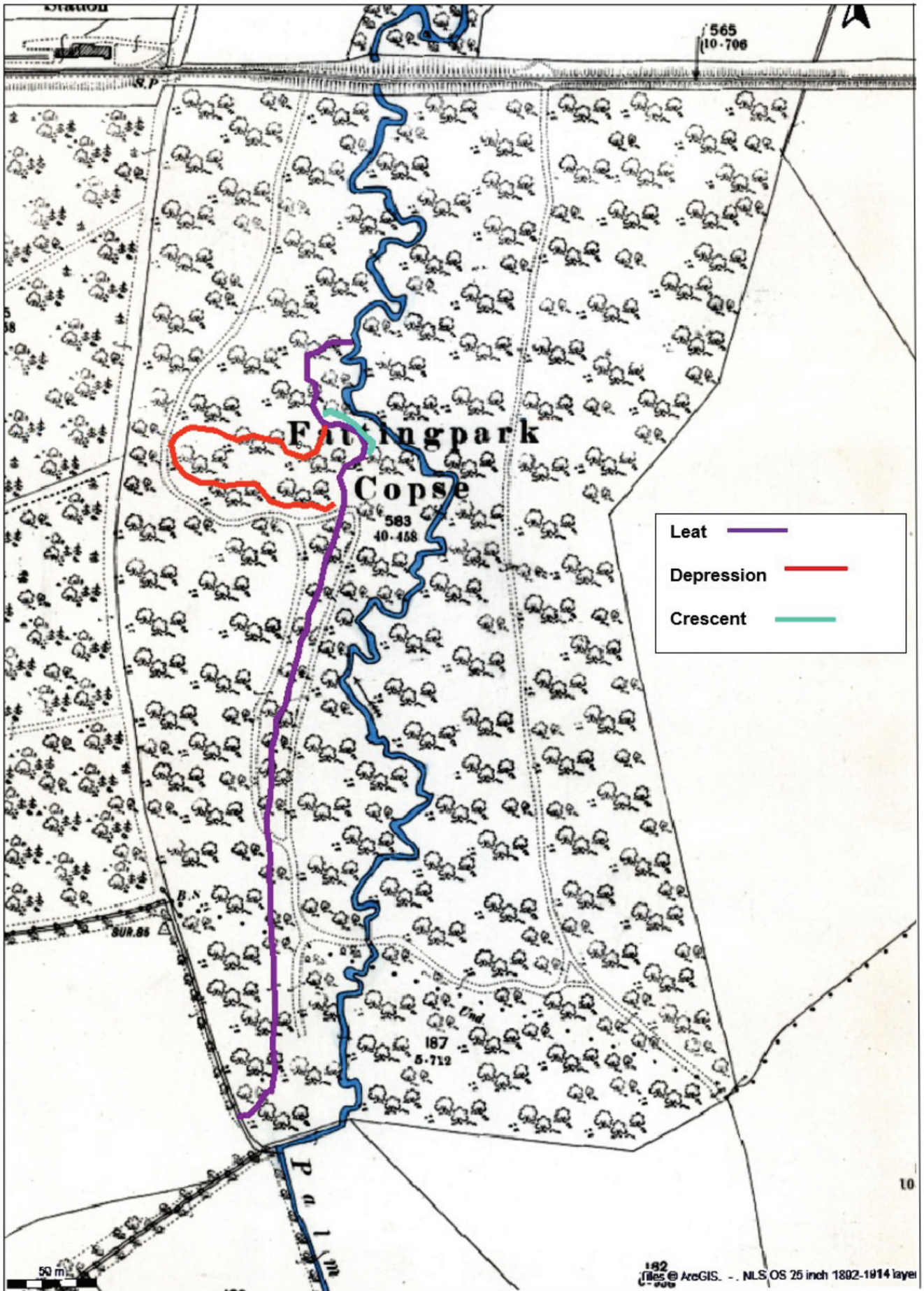


Fig. 13: Archaeological Features in Fatteningpark Copse sketched from LIDAR
 Map Base: Hampshire and Isle of Wight XC.15, Revised: 1896, Published: 1898
 Re-use: CC-BY (NLS). Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

western side. The earth bank can still be traced in this southern part of Fattingspark Copse and has a profile that is more typical of the late-medieval or early post-medieval period than the section of boundary bank at the northern end of the copse.

Three features recorded in the Historic Environment Record (IWHER) and sketched in Fig. 13 are somewhat enigmatic in character. These features are a water channel or leat (IWHER 15046 - MIW15682), a crescent-shaped bank at the northern end of the leat (IWHER 15047 - MIW15683) and a possible pond or extractive pit (IWHER 15048 - MIW15684). The leat lies to the west of Palmers Brook and runs from a point near the south-west corner of Fattingspark Copse for about two-thirds of the copse's length. Initially, it runs WNW, but for most of its length it follows a fairly straight course in a northerly direction with a woodland ride on its eastern side. It then passes to the west of the crescent-shaped bank and continues northward for a short distance before joining Palmers Brook. This northern section of the leat is much more sinuous than the long, straight section to the south of the crescent shaped bank. It is unclear whether the leat is connected to the very large, irregular depression to the west of the crescent-shaped bank. The area of the depression is about 2750 m² or 0.275 ha.

It is difficult to date the three features recorded in the HER or to suggest what purpose they served. They are not shown on the 1793-4 OS drawing or the 1818 sketch map, but this does not necessarily mean that they did not exist at that time. The leat is marked on the six-inch and 25-inch Ordnance Survey maps of 1863. It must therefore be earlier than the modern forestry drainage ditches that run from west to east in the western part of Fattingspark Copse. The large depression at the northern end of the leat and on its western side does not seem to be recorded on any maps although it is clearly visible on LIDAR and has been sketch-plotted from LIDAR evidence (Fig. 13). It has been suggested that the leat may have fed a fishpond or a pond providing power for a watermill before Fattingspark Copse existed. However, it has been shown in Section 3 that the manorial lords of Wootton who owned Fattingspark had access to a tide mill and a salt-water fishpond on Wootton Creek. By the late medieval period, Fattingspark appears to have become a ring-fenced enclosure perhaps used exclusively by the lord of the manor for fattening cattle (see Section 4). There are, therefore, historical objections to the suggestion that IWHER 15048 - MIW15684 was a fishpond or millpond but there is also the question of morphology. The shape and size of the depression is not consistent with an artificial pond of either medieval or relatively modern construction. The sides of the depression cannot be interpreted as earthwork banks, such as can be observed at other medieval and post-medieval fishponds on the Island, for instance those near Newnham Farm in Puckers Copse IWHER 1077 - MIW1129 (Basford 2012) or Plaish Farm IWHER 1488 - MIW1591 (Trott, 2023). Rather, it would appear that large quantities

of clay have been excavated from the natural land surface. The edges of the depression have an irregular, ragged profile very dissimilar to that of artificial ponds. One possibility is that there was a pond in this area at some time before the present depression was dug. This hypothetical pond could have been fed by the leat and have been associated with the crescent-shaped feature near the north end of the leat (IWHER 15047 - MIW15683) which might have been a dam to help divert water into the pond. At some later date, the area of this supposed pond could have been destroyed by the extraction of clay, leaving the large, ragged-edged depression visible today. A botanical survey of nearby Briddlesford Woods recorded a scatter of small pits in Hurst Copse, Stockers Hole Copse and Upper Sheepwash Copse which were interpreted as probable clay pits. There was also a feature in the centre of Briddlesford Copse which was interpreted as a possible watering hole for stock before the wood was enclosed (Sanderson, 2008). It is possible that IWHER 15048 - MIW15684 in Fattingspark could have originated as a similar pond, although if that was the case, its present outline suggests later disturbance and enlargement of the area. Alternatively, the leat, crescent-shaped dam and pit could all be of the same period and have been associated with the extraction of clay.

If the depression (IWHER 15048 - MIW15684) is the result of clay extraction, it is necessary to suggest a date for this activity and the use to which the clay was put. One possibility is that clay from the pit was used for brickmaking. 'Brickmaking has taken place on the Isle of Wight for over four hundred years' and over thirty brick houses, stables and barns constructed in the 17th century have been recorded (Gale, 1987, 45). This 'was a period of opportunity for itinerant brickmakers who opened clay pits and established kilns wherever there was a demand for bricks' and 'it is likely that the manors and farmhouses in the rural parishes were constructed of bricks made on site in temporary kilns' (Ibid, 50). The first documented evidence of brick making in Wootton is dated 1703.⁴⁴ It is conceivable that the depression in Fattingspark Copse could have been a very early clay pit associated with Wootton Manor Farm or Briddlesford Manor Farm. However, it cannot be linked with any records for a brick kiln and if bricks were required for the two manor farms then they would surely have been made in the immediate locality, as good clay is available at both sites. The site is also some distance away from where building work was taking place at Wootton in the 19th century. Another explanation might be that the clay was a source of material for roadmaking when the Improved roads were laid out around the Fattingspark area in the early 19th century but, as with possible brick making activity, there would have been good sources of clay on the land over which the roads ran.

A further question to be considered is that any clay extraction must surely have taken place either at a time when trees were not present in this part of

⁴⁴Wootton Bridge Historical - Wootton - Brickmaking (woottonbridgeiow.org.uk) [Accessed 22 April 2024].

Fattingpark Copse, or when they had been cleared from the area of the pit to allow for the work of extraction. Planting at Fattingpark appears not to have started before the 17th century and there may have been tree clearance within certain areas even after the copse reached its greatest extent in the 18th century. Indeed, the surveyors' drawings for the 'fair copy' of the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey appear to show an area of unplanted land roughly in the area of the depression but also extending across much of the copse's width, although this clearing is not shown on the 'fair drawing' (Fig.10). The six-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1896 (Fig. 12) also indicates an area largely devoid of trees in the area of the possible extraction pit although the earlier OS 1863 does not show any differential tree cover. Substantial amounts of hornbeam and poplar are found in the vicinity of the depression and nowhere else in the copse (pers. comm. Luke Davis). This may indicate 19th century clearance of trees in this area and subsequent repopulation or replanting of this part of the woodland with different tree species. A 19th century date for the depression might reinforce the idea that it was created by the extraction of clay. The presence of Alverstone Brick and Tile Works (disused) on the 1896 map, about 500 metres north of Fattingpark Copse, and some distance from a settlement centre, indicates that brick and tile-making could take place away from areas where building work was taking place. A final possible use of clay from an extractive pit might have been in the construction of the Ryde to Newport Railway in the 1870s but the pit is not recorded in any of the documents preserved by the Isle of Wight Steam Railway (pers. comm. Roger Silsbury). Deposited plans of the railway which accompanied the bills presented to parliament are now in the National Archives and have not been examined. However, it is thought unlikely that the depression in Fattingpark Copse was connected with the Ryde and Newport Railway. The 1896 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 12) shows a track running around the south side of the depression, and then along its western edge before continuing north as far as the railway line. This suggests a possible link between the pit and the railway but the suggestion may be misleading since the OS 1863 records that the track previously continued northward through the part of the copse which was cleared of woodland in the late 19th century.

Ultimately, it would seem that the earthworks recorded as IWHER 15046 - MIW15682, IWHER 15047 - MIW15683 and IWHER 15048 - MIW 15684 must remain as archaeological enigmas. What is not in doubt is the *timedepth* exhibited in Fattingpark Copse. This embraces the early origins of land now within the copse as part of an extensive area of commons, its likely later medieval usage as part of a ring-fenced fatting ground used by the lord of the manor, the planting of coppice from the 17th century, the truncation of the copse in the late 19th century and its present identity as a haven for biodiversity.

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