

Isle of Wight Ancient Woodland Survey: Combley Great Wood

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LOCATION

The various woods in the Combley Area, including Combley Great Wood, are identified in Figure 1. Combley Great Wood is centred at SZ 543 889.

AREA INCLUDED IN THE PROVISIONAL INVENTORY OF ANCIENT WOODLAND (Figure 2)

Ancient Replanted Woodland: 71.5 ha. **Source** MAgiC website. Accessed 4 Oct 2013

Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland: 1.45 ha. **Source** MAgiC website. Accessed 4 Oct 2013

CURRENT WOODLAND EXTENT AND SHAPE (Figure 3)

The total area of Combley Great Wood is virtually the same as that which is included on the Provisional Inventory of Ancient Woodland except for a small area in the south-west corner of the site which is excluded from the Provisional Inventory (compare Figures 2 and 3). Combley Great Wood comprises two main areas that are joined together. **Area 1**, the larger of the two compartments, is roughly block-shaped with its north-western side having a slightly curving boundary, its western side having straight boundaries and its eastern edge having an indented profile. **Area 1a** comprises a projecting block of woodland with straight edges at the south-west corner of Area 1. **Area 2**, to the south of the main area, is sub-rectangular with rounded south-west and south-east corners. There are slightly curving boundaries on the west, south and east sides with the east side having a slight indentation at one point. The positions of Areas 1, 1a and 2 are indicated on Figure 3.

STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS & HABITAT

Combley Great Wood lies within the Isle of Wight AONB. Part of Area 1 lies within the Briddlesford Copses SSSI. Much of Combley Great Wood is a Deciduous Woodland BAP.

LAND OWNERSHIP: Forestry Commission.

SITUATION IN LANDSCAPE

Combley Great Wood lies on Hamstead Clay. Combley Farm lies about 200 metres to the south of the wood with the Island's central chalk ridge some 700 metres further to the south. Historically, Combley Great Wood lay within Arreton Parish and was sited some distance from the parish boundaries.

PLACE-NAME EVIDENCE

The woodland now known as Combley Great Wood was named as 'Combley Wood' on John Andrews map of 1769 and as 'Cumbley Wood' on a survey of the Fleming estates dating from 1771 (Figure 5). It appears to have been first named as 'Combley Great Wood' on a drawing derived from an Ordnance Survey of 1793-4, often known as the 'Mudge Survey' (Figure 7). The northern part of the wood (corresponding with Area 1 on Figure 3) was named 'Villangers Copse' on a plan of 1817 by John Whitcher (see Figure 8). The 1st edition 1:2500 and 1:10560 Ordnance Surveys of 1863 (Figure 9) name the entire woodland as Combley Great Wood, as do all subsequent maps including recent digital Ordnance Survey maps (Figure 1) and the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 series.

The name of Combley Great Wood is taken from the holding of medieval origin in which the wood lies. Mills (2001, 41) states that this holding was first recorded as *Combelia* in 1228-38 but a damaged charter of c. 1224 (Hockey 1991, Charter 110) seems to provide a slightly earlier date for the name. The derivation of the name is 'the wood or woodland clearing in a valley' from Old English

cumb and *lēah*' (Mills 2001, 41). Combley Farm lies about 200 metres to the south of the wood at the head of a combe or valley just to the north of the Island's central chalk ridge.

TENURIAL AND LAND USE HISTORY

In medieval times Combley was the largest grange of Quarr Abbey, a *grange* being defined as 'an outlying farm where crops are stored' (Mills 2001, 41). The northern boundary of Combley abutted the manor of Briddlesford which was owned by Walter de Parco in the early thirteenth century (Figure 4). Charters dating from c. 1224 to c.1240 deal with land granted to Combley by Walter de Parco, two of these referring specifically to the 'grange of Combley' and one to 'Combley grange' (Hockey 1991, Charters 111, 113 and 114).

A document listed by Hockey (1991) as Charter 108 appears to be the original grant of land by Walter de Parco. This grant comprised:

All the land lying between the road from Blakebrigge [Blackbridge] to Newport and the dyke beginning on the east towards the road, and extending through Tebbescroft, descending through Smithewelle into Staununeslake until it reached the land of Arreton and so returned to the said road, going up by the dyke which used to be the boundary between the land of Briddlesford and the monks' land.

The land described in this charter was on the western side of the grange as shown in Figure 4. Part of the dyke mentioned in the charter may correspond with what is now a short section of boundary along the north-west edge of Combley Great Wood in the area of Lynn Farm. Further charters of Walter de Parco (Hockey 1991, Charters 109, 110, 111, 113 and 114) may have extended the area of land granted to Quarr Abbey or may simply be confirmations of the original grant. Charters 111, 113 and 114 suggest that the 'road coming from Blackbridge' marked the boundary between the land of Briddlesford and that of Combley. This road may have been in approximately the same position as the present-day road which runs along the northern edge of Combley Great Wood between SZ 5573 8985 (Blackbridge Brook) and SZ 5404 8910. Figure 4 shows the medieval road as being inside the northern boundary of the grange but this may simply be a schematic representation. However, evidence from the 1771 Fleming estate map (Figures 5 and 6) raises some doubt about the northern boundary of Combley Grange. This map identifies the main part of 'Cumbley Wood' as a parcel of woodland marked with the letter 'I' but also shows a treeless enclosure labelled 'Plot 66' to the north of area 'I'.¹ The woodland parcels marked 'B' and 'C' on the 1771 map share common boundaries with Plot 66 and could therefore originally have been part of that plot. The word 'chargeable' is written inside the plot, indicating that it was subject to tithe. As Cistercians, the monks of Quarr would have been exempt from paying tithe on their lands (Hockey 1970, 30). This raises the possibility that the original boundary between Combley Grange and Briddlesford Manor may have been further to the south than the modern road and that 'Plot 66' may have been added to Combley Grange at a later date or even have become part of Combley Manor after the dissolution of the monasteries.

In addition to the charters concerning land granted by Walter de Parco, five other charters relating to Combley Grange are recorded by Hockey (1991, Charters 119-123). None of the charters transcribed by Hockey refer directly to Combley Great Wood. However, Charter 123 (31 January 1534/5) provides a general description of 'the grange of Cumbley', setting out the land and buildings which Quarr Abbey was leasing to George Mill as follows:

¹ This enclosure is also shown on the Ordnance Survey Drawing of 1793/4 (Figure 7) and the Whitcher Plan of 1817 (Figure 8).

A dwelling house, barn, sheppen and with any part of Arreton Down not leased to Richard Lee. Also the pasture and ground called Lynne [Lynn] and Lynehedde, and the closes called Rokkle, Typpaxe (alias Tibbescroft), Greneclose, Vyllygen, Scotlyllmore, Beaneclose, Margenclose, Saltmarche, Lynnfurlong, Cowlesure; also Hoggeleses and a close called Harpers barrowe with two fields Waltherhylls, with the grove around the house and all other lands.

Some of these places are shown on the reconstructed map of Combley Grange (Figure 4) and a few are marked on a modern transcription of the 1771 Fleming estate map (Figure 6).²

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Combley was granted by the Crown to Thomas Wriothesley in 1537. He sold it the next year to John Mill (Hockey 1970, 242-245). In 1609 Sir Thomas Fleming acquired the manors of Quarr, Combley, Newnham, Binstead, and Heasley together with other property from Sir Richard Mill (Hockey 1970, 250-251).

The earliest known documentary reference to woodland at Combley (other than to the 'grove' around Combley Farmhouse recorded in the lease of 1534/5) occurs in 1537 when a survey of Combley was made on behalf of the crown after the dissolution of Quarr Abbey. The survey stated that the 'farm of the manor' comprised 471 acres of arable and pasture, 10 acres of meadow and 50 acres of woodland (Webster 1975-95). This acreage does not appear to have included the tenements at Guildford and Blackbridge and other properties listed separately in the survey but does seem to have included Combley Lynn and may also have included Great Duxmore Farm. The 50 acres of woodland specifically mentioned in the survey is a surprisingly small amount when compared with the acreage of the woods listed in the Fleming estate survey of 1771 (IWCRO/AC 2013/099). This survey recorded 166 acres at Combley Great Wood (in three parcels), 32 acres at Hoglease Copse (probably an underestimate), 43 acres at Ramcroft Copse and Blackbridge Copse, 16 acres at Walkershill Copse, 7 acres in Wilderness Copse and 11 acres in different parts of Guildfordheath Copse. The land occupied by some of these woods in 1771 may not have been within the boundary of Combley Manor as recorded in the 1537 survey but most of the land shown as 'Cumbley Wood' in 1771 certainly was. As explained above, there is a possibility that the two small parcels of woodland adjacent to the enclosure marked as Plot 66 on the 1771 map may have been outside the area of the medieval grange but these two parcels only accounted for 12 acres in total.

There are various explanations which may account for the discrepancy between the acreage of woodland recorded in 1537 and that recorded in 1771. It is possible that the Crown reserved some of the woodland within Combley Manor for its own use after the dissolution of Quarr Abbey and thus did not include it in the survey. On the 1771 map of the Fleming estate (Figure 5) the woods were listed separately from the various farms on the estate because they were retained in hand for the use of the landowner. A similar arrangement may have existed in 1537 with not all the woodland being accounted for because some of it was retained in hand for the use of the Crown. However, in describing Wriothesley's sale of Combley to John Mill in 1538, Hockey (1970, 244-245) states specifically that he sold 'all the manor, with the various tithes and the woods'. If the Crown did retain some woodland on the Combley estate after the grant to Wriothesley, this must subsequently have been acquired by the Mill family or the Fleming family since it all fell within the Fleming estate in 1771. Another possible explanation for the relatively small area of woodland recorded in 1537 may simply be that the amount of woodland was underestimated. Alternatively, there could actually have been much less woodland in the early sixteenth century than in the late seventeenth century. The Royal Survey of the Isle of Wight (1559) refers to 'the ferme or grange of Combley of the lands of George Mille, gent., in occupation of William Colnet, gent., holden of the

² N.B. The field name 'Tibbix' (*alias* Typpaxe or Tibbescroft) has been incorrectly transcribed as 'Sibbix' in Figure 6.

Quene in capite upon which by sundrey coppices newly with certain trees imparketed to the value of 8 acres by estimation' (Webster 1975-1995). Thus, some new coppice was clearly being created in the sixteenth century and perhaps at a later date. The Flemings may have had good reason to extend the woodland at Combley since woodland was considered to be a valuable resource by Isle of Wight landowners. Jones (2003, 80) has pointed out that in 1630 the woodlands within Swainston Manor constituted the most 'commercially valuable part of the estate'. At a later date, the Oglander family at Nunwell made large profits by selling the timber in Whitefield Wood to the Royal Navy at Portsmouth. Nonetheless, the 50 acres of woodland recorded within Combley Manor in 1537 may well be an underestimate of what actually existed, particularly as landscape evidence in the Combley area hints at an ancient origin for much of the present-day woodland. Indeed, the shapes of the woods in this area suggest that they were *assarted* in the medieval period i.e. eaten into by the creation of fields within formerly wooded areas. The profile of Combley Great Wood is irregular, being eaten into by various closes which may have been part of the wood until cleared for cultivation (assarted) in the medieval or early-post medieval period. The names of these closes can be seen on the transcribed Fleming estate map of 1771 (Figure 6) including 'Calves Close' on the west side of the wood. Two closes on the east side of the wood are labelled 'Little Stubleys' and 'Great Stubleys, both names which are indicative of assarting.³ Another close on the eastern side of the wood, named as 'Villangens' in 1771, is first recorded under the name of 'Vyllygen' in 1534/5 and is marked as 'Willigen Mead' in Figure 4. The various closes described above are still identifiable in the present landscape as indicated in Figure 3.

The Fleming estate map of 1771 provides valuable evidence for the shape, extent and management of Combley Great Wood in the late eighteenth century and this is complemented by a near contemporary description which states:

The immense range of wood, called Combley Wood, continues from Combley Lyn to the length of a mile on the south, and to more than two miles on the west. ... Some large fields are intermixed among the brows of this extensive wood, which seem to invite the erection of a mansion-house, and from which nature alone has designed the moft magnificent vistas, that expand, through the descending woods, to the vallies below (Wyndham 1794).

Combley remained with the Fleming family until the late 20th century. It was offered for sale at auction on 8 June 1956 as part of the Downend Estate but failed to reach the reserve price. The sale prospectus stated that certain portions of the estate were let out including 'five farms from 158 to 378 acres, about 354 acres of woodland and three cottages let to the Forestry Commission' (Willis Fleming Historical Trust 2007). Combley Great Wood was almost certainly one of the woods let out to the Forestry Commission in 1956 but it is not known when they first took on the management of the wood.

A portion of Combley Farm, together with Downend Brickyard, formed Robin Hill Country Park from 1969. Combley Farm was sold in 1985 (Willis Fleming historical Trust 2009a).

MAP EVIDENCE

'Combley Wood' is named on John Andrews' *Topographical Map of the Isle of Wight*' at 2 inches to 1 mile scale (1769) and this name seems to cover the woods now called 'Combley Great Wood', 'Hoglease Copse', 'Guildfordheath Copse', 'Walkershill Copse', 'Blackbridge Copse' and 'Ramscroft Copse'. However, these woods are not depicted accurately. In contrast, all the woods in the southern part of the Fleming estate are depicted in great detail and with reasonable accuracy on the

³ Richardson (1986) defines the word *Stubbing* as meaning 'a clearing; land from which tree-stumps have been removed; land which is still covered by tree-stumps'.

General Plan and Survey of Several Farms called Guildford, Cumbley, Duxmoor and Heasley, in the Isle of Wight and County of Hants, Belonging to John Flemming Esq prepared by George Salmon in 1771 (Figure 5).⁴ The woods depicted on Salmon's map can be recognised as those that exist in the same locations today. The present-day area of Combley Great Wood is represented in the 1771 map by three separate woodland compartments labelled 'B', 'C' and 'I' and by a treeless enclosure marked 'Plot 66'. Compartment I is named as Cumbley Wood but compartments B and C are not named. Compartment I covered the majority of the present-day wooded area and comprised 154 acres, 2 roods and 29 perches. Compartments B and C were located to the north-east of Compartment I and had a combined area of 12 acres, 0 roods and 4 perches. Plot 66 had an acreage of 11 acres, 0 roods and 19 perches. These various areas add up to a total of just over 177 acres, slightly less than the 72.95 hectares (182.37 acres) of woodland identified in the Provisional Inventory of Ancient Woodland even though Combley Great Wood appears to have extended further to the west in 1771 (see Figure 5). The discrepancy in acreage could either be the result of some inaccuracy in the measurements given on the 1771 map or the result of self-sown trees colonising land immediately adjacent to the wood's historic boundaries in recent times.

Plot 66, the treeless enclosure that is shown on the 1771 plan, lies to the south-west of compartments B and C. The legend on the outside edge of the plan lists this area as being 'Chargeable' (see Figure 6). As explained above, this means that Plot 66 paid tithe and therefore may possibly have been outside the boundary of Combley Grange in the Middle Ages. If so, this plot may have been an enclosure of pasture or arable from the medieval period onwards. However, the wooded compartments B and C share common boundaries with Plot 66 (see Figure 5). This could mean that Compartment B, Compartment C and Plot 66 comprised a single block of woodland at one time and that the land within Plot 66 was subsequently cleared of woodland. This possibility is suggested by the existence of a thin strip of woodland along the northern edge of Plot 66.⁵ An alternative possibility is that compartments B and C represent plantations created within an open area that was formerly of larger size. It may be significant that a pencilled annotation within Plot 66 notes that the area was 'reserved for planting'. This indicates that new woodland was being planted on the Fleming estate in the late eighteenth century, assuming that the note is contemporary with the map.

Within the main part of Combley Wood, identified by the letter I on the 1771 plan, the boundaries of the wooded area are very largely the same as the boundaries of this part of the wood at the present day. The only substantial difference appears to be on the western edge of the wood. Here, the 1771 survey shows the edge of the wood extending further to the west than it does today. This difference can be observed at the boundary with Plot 76 (compare Figures 1 and 5). Plot 77 is named as 'Calves Close' and the acreage is given as 11 acres, 0 roods and 27 perches (see Figures 5 and 6). This acreage includes a 'spinney' occupying about one quarter of the plot. Calves Close can still be identified on modern OS maps (see Figures 1, 2 and 3) but the spinney had disappeared by 1817 (Figure 8).

The legend around the outside of the 1771 map lists the woods within the Fleming estate and identifies these woods by letters of the alphabet. The wood identified by the letter H is named as 'Hogleys Coppice'. Immediately below the entry for Hogleys Coppice is the entry for woodland parcel 'I' which is described as 'Cumbley Wood do.' The term 'do' is short for ditto and suggests that Cumbley Wood, like Hogleys, was managed as coppice. This supposition is strengthened by the existence of a substantial area at the northern end of the wood (just below the treeless enclosure

⁴ The extract from the 1771 Survey Plan reproduced as Figure 5 does not include the legend around the outside of the plan which gives a numbered list of all the fields belonging to each farm on the estate and also identifies various named woods by letters of the alphabet. The acreage of each named wood is shown.

⁵ This thin strip of woodland is also shown on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (Figure 7).

identified as Plot 66) where the vegetation appears to be thinner than in the rest of the wood, suggesting that it had been recently coppiced. A faint internal boundary that appears to run from the south-east corner of Plot 70 to the north-east corner of Plot 77 (Calves Close) may also demarcate another coppice compartment within the wood (see Figure 5).

The 1771 survey shows woodland in positions 'D' and 'U' that corresponds with parts of the present Guildford Heath Copse (see Figure 1). An informal scatter of trees is shown along the northern boundary of 'Villangers' (Plot 65), linking Combley Wood with Area 'U' which was named as 'Harts Rew' in the legend at the edge of the 1771 map.⁶

Eight Ordnance Survey drawings of the Isle of Wight in the British Library are based on a survey at a scale of 6" to 1 mile carried out in 1793-4 (Basford 2013, Appendix C). One of the drawings (British Library OSD 69) depicts the woods in the Combley Area (Figure 7). Combley Great Wood is named as such for the first time. The term 'Great' may have been used to distinguish it from the various other woods in the area which are labelled collectively as 'Combley Woods'.

The shape and size of Combley Great Wood as shown on the 1793-4s Ordnance Survey is very similar to that shown on the 1771 Fleming Estate Map and the enclosure marked as Plot 66 on the earlier map is also present. However, the profile of the wood is slightly different on the western side, to the north of 'Calves Close' (Plot 77 on 1771 Plan). The 1790s OS also suggests that the eastern boundary of the wood had been slightly straightened since 1771 where it abutted the fields of Guildford Farm (see Figures 5 and 7). Slightly further to the south, the 1790s OS shows a strip of woodland containing an avenue or ride which links Combley Great Wood with Guildford Heath Copse. This woodland strip appears to have developed from the informal scatter of trees shown on the 1771 Survey along the northern boundary of Villagers Close (Plot 65).

The map of Combley Farm reproduced as Figure 8 comes from a survey of the Fleming estates on the Isle of Wight prepared in 1817 by John Whitcher. It depicts the area now called Combley Great Wood as two discrete pieces of woodland. Parcel 162 is named as 'Villangers Copse' and Parcel 163 (to the south of Villangers Copse) as 'Combley Great Wood'. As recounted above, the name 'Villangers' had been associated with a close (enclosed field) on the Combley estate from at least the 1530s but the 1817 plan appears to be the earliest known document where the name is used in connection with part of Combley Wood itself. However, the name is also recorded in an early twentieth century account which states:

A wood on the Estate is called Villangers and was probably attached or part of the Manor of Combley which was on the Estate and I have always understood went with the Manor of Binstead. Parts of this wood were cultivated in comparatively recent times, I think about 1800 (Arnold 1928).

Arnold's reference to cultivation within the wood may refer to Plot 161 on Whitcher's plan which is depicted as a treeless enclosure corresponding with Plot 66 on the 1771 Fleming Estate Map and also shown on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (see Figures 5, 7 and 8).

⁶ The coppice grounds called Combley Mead Row and Harts Row are recorded in 1793 when William Taylor, took a new lease for seven years of Combley Farm (368a. 1r. 39p.), with the coppice grounds called Combley Mead Row and Harts Row, from John Fleming, Esq. of Stoneham Park, Hampshire (IWCRO/FLM/61).

A boundary marked on the 1817 Whitcher plan divides the area named as 'Villangers Copse' from the area named as 'Combley Great Wood'. This boundary is not marked on the 1771 Fleming estate map or on the OS drawing of 1793-4 but appears on the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1:10,560 map surveyed in 1863 (Figure 9) and on subsequent maps, including modern Ordnance Survey digital maps (see Figure 1). It appears to correspond with an earth bank recorded in the Historic Environment Record as HER 2321 (see below under HER Data). Despite the existence of this boundary from 1817 onwards, the profile of Combley Wood as shown on the 1771 map suggests that it was originally a single wood, particularly as Plot 77 (Calves Close) looks like an assart that had eaten into the western boundary of the wood (see Figures 5 and 6). It is possible that the original name of the whole wood was once 'Villangers Copse'.

Parcels 161 and 162 on the 1817 Whitcher map correspond with Area 1 as identified in Figure 3. Parcel 163 on the Whitcher map corresponds with Area 2 as identified on the modern Ordnance Survey map (Figure 3). Parcel 98 on the 1817 plan corresponds roughly with Area 1a as shown on Figure 3. However, the 1817 map shows the eastern end of the plot as having a curving edge and as stopping short of Guildford Heath Copse whereas on later maps the end of the plot appears to extend slightly further to the east, terminating at a bridleway abutted by Guildford Heath Copse. Plot 99 on the 1817 map corresponds to the strip of woodland along the northern side of 'Villangers Close' that is shown on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (Figure 7).

Combley Farm, including Combley Great Wood, lay in the parish of Arreton in the 19th century. However, Combley is not recorded on the Arreton tithe map of 1841 or described in the tithe schedule. This is because Combley had been a grange of Quarr Abbey in the medieval period and was thus tithe free.

The 1st edition 1:2500 (25 inch to 1 mile) Ordnance Survey of the Combley Area was carried out in 1863. Combley Great Wood is shown as two main parcels which are numbered on the 1:2500 Survey. The smaller-scale 1st edition 1:10,560 (6 inches to 1 mile) Ordnance Survey map of the Combley area, published in 1866, was based on the 1:2500 Survey but does not show parcel numbers. However, in the extract from the 1:10,560 Survey reproduced in this report as Figure 9 some of the parcel numbers from the larger-scale survey have been inserted.

The areas and land uses of the parcels shown on the 1:2500 Survey of 1863 are given in the OS Surveyors' Book.⁷ Parcel 515 corresponds to Areas 1 and 1a as marked on Figure 3. The land use is given as 'wood, roads etc' and the area is given as 119.104 acres. This includes the site of the treeless enclosure shown on the maps of 1771, 1793-4 and 1817 which had become wooded by 1863. Parcel 639 corresponds to Area 2 as marked on Figure 3. The land use is given as 'wood & road' and the area as 59.037 acres. Parcel 493 comprises a narrow strip of woodland along the north-west boundary of the wood to the south-east of the road, named on the map as 'Longround Rew'. The land use of Longround Rew is given as 'wood' and the area as 1.99 acres. Longround Rew appears not to have been shown on earlier maps. It does not seem to equate with the narrow strip of woodland shown on the 1771 map and the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing at the northern edge of the treeless enclosure since this lies slightly to the south of the position later occupied by Longround Rew (compare Figures 5, 7 and 9).

The total area of Combley Great Wood in 1863 amounted to about 178 acres excluding Longround Rew and to about 180 acres including Longround Rew. The outline of the wood as shown on the

⁷ Surveyors' Books' were compiled by the Ordnance Survey during the 1st edition 25 inches to 1 mile survey. A copy of the Isle of Wight Surveyors' Book is kept at the Isle of Wight Archaeology and Historic Environment Centre.

1863 Ordnance Survey maps corresponds closely to that shown on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing except on the western side of the wood to the south of Combley Lynn Farm (now Lynn Farm). Here, the 1863 Ordnance Survey shows a field which is marked as Parcel 460 on the larger-scale survey. Its area is given in the OS Surveyors' Book as 12 acres, 7 roods and 47 perches and its land use is given as arable. This field has clearly been taken out of Combley Great Wood.⁸ The boundary between Parcel 460 and Parcel 421 may represent the former edge of the wood (see Figure 9).

A block of woodland is shown on the 1863 OS extending eastward from the main part of Combley Great Wood (Parcel 515) as far as a track which abutted Guildford Heath Copse. This block of woodland corresponds with Area 1a as shown in Figure 3. The 1771 Fleming estate map (Figure 5) and the 1817 Whitcher map (Figure 8) had both depicted a curving eastern boundary to the edge of the wood in this area and had shown a small gap between the boundary and the track.⁹ However, on the 1863 OS, as on modern maps, Area 1a extends as far as the track and terminates in a straight boundary although the earlier boundary is still marked just inside the wood.

In the south-west corner of Area 2 (see Figure 3) the 1863 OS shows a small clearing beside Combley Lane for the first time. This clearing is marked as Parcel 638 on the 1:2500 Survey (see Figure 9). The Surveyors' gives the area of this parcel as 0.961 acres and describes it as 'house & garden'.

One feature that is absent from the 1863 OS is a strip of woodland at the north end of 'Villangens' Close which had formerly linked Combley Great Wood with Guildford Heath Copse. This had been marked as an informal scatter of trees on the 1771 Survey (Figure 5) and as a strip of woodland containing an avenue or ride on the 1790s OS drawing (Figure 7). On the 1817 Whitcher plan, this piece of woodland was identified as parcel 99b (Figure 8). However, the 1863 OS shows only a single line of trees beside a field boundary.

The vegetation within Combley Great Wood is depicted on the 1st edition 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey of 1863 (Figure 9) as 'Mixed Wood' and 'Brushwood' (for OS vegetation symbols see Oliver 1993, 137 and 141). The 'Mixed Wood' symbol indicates the presence of both deciduous and coniferous trees. However, the 1st edition 1:2500 maps of the Combley area held at the Isle of Wight Archaeology and Historic Environment Centre show only the 'Wood' symbol, indicating deciduous woodland. Oliver (1993, 30) states that from 1854 the mapping of cultivated areas at 1:10,560 scale was derived from the 1:2500 (25 inches to 1 mile) scale so both sets of 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps should show the same vegetation. Sometimes maps were re-engraved and reprinted at a later date. The extract from the 1:10,560 map reproduced as Figure 8 is taken from a paper copy surveyed in 1863, engraved in 1865 and published in 1866. The 1st edition 1:2500 maps held at the Archaeological Centre do not have a date printed on them. It is possible that these larger-scale maps were re-engraved and reprinted after 1866. If this is the case, it implies that some conifers may have existed within Combley Great Wood in 1863 but were later removed.¹⁰ The 1st and 2nd revisions of the 1:2500 scale Ordnance Surveys, published in 1898 and 1909-10, show only deciduous woodland within Combley Great Wood.

⁸ In fact, the loss of woodland in this area seems to have taken place by 1817 as can be seen by comparing the Whitcher plan of that date (Figure 8) with the 1790s OS drawing (Figure 7) and the OS 1863 (Figure 9).

⁹ The 1817 Whitcher map suggests that some trees were growing up, or had been planted, between the curving original boundary and the track.

¹⁰ N.B. The 1st edition 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey of 1863 shows many, but not all, of the woods in North Wight as having mixed woodland e.g. Fattingspark Copse, Quarrels Copse, Firestone Copse and Briddlesford Copse. This may indicate that woodland management in the 1860s favoured the planting of some conifers. It is also possible that mistakes were made in the indication of woodland types but this seems unlikely since considerable variation exists in the way woodland is indicated on the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey maps.

The 1863 Ordnance Survey is the earliest of the historical maps discussed above to show a network of rides within Combley Great Wood (see Figure 9). It also names and marks the course of Deadman's Brook. This stream flows from west to east through the south part of Parcel 515 (corresponding with Area 1 in Figure 3). It then flows through the projecting block of woodland corresponding to Area 1a as marked on Figure 3.

One feature shown on the 1863 Ordnance Survey and earlier maps but not marked on the 1st revision 1:2500 Ordnance Survey of 1898 was a strip of woodland extending eastward from Combley Great Wood on either side of a stream between the fields of 'Great Stubleys' and 'Broad Close' (see Figures 6 and 9). It appears that the stream had been straightened between 1863 and 1898 and that the trees had been removed. However, Google Earth reveals that there are trees along the field boundary at the present day. There is also a small triangular piece of woodland at the east end of the boundary which occupies an area shown as rough pasture on the 2nd revision 1:2500 Ordnance Survey of 1909-10.

The Ordnance Survey of 1909-10 is the earliest map to show 'Twenty Acre Plantation'. This new woodland had been created within a former field, shown as Parcel 459 on the 1863 OS and it also incorporated an existing wood called 'Long Row', shown as Parcel 458 on the 1863 OS (see Figure 9). The position of Twenty Acre Plantation is shown in Figure 3. This relatively young plantation woodland abuts Combley Great Wood on its western side.

The 1956 sale prospectus for the Downend Estate records that about 354 acres of woodland and three cottages were let to the Forestry Commission' (Willis Fleming Historical Trust 2007). Combley Great Wood was almost certainly one of these woods but it is not known when the Forestry Commission first took on the management of the wood. However, the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of c.1970 shows features typical of plantation woodland. A network of straight rides is depicted. The majority of these rides are different from those shown on the 1863 OS but a few curvilinear tracks seem to have survived from the 1860s. The vegetation shown on the survey of c.1970 is a mixture of deciduous trees and conifers as might be expected in a Forestry Commission plantation within an existing wood. However, the western part of Area 1 is depicted as containing only deciduous trees and deciduous trees also appear to predominate on the eastern side of Area 2 (see Figure 3).

The Ordnance Survey of c.1970 shows the outer boundaries of Combley Great Wood almost exactly as in 1863 apart from the addition of Twenty Acre Plantation on the west side of the wood. The only other difference is that the size of the garden plot attached to the house on the south-west edge of the wood (Plot 638 on the OS 1863) is smaller than in the 1860s. Longround Rew, on the northern edge of Combley Great Wood, is shown and named on the survey of c.1970 but, as on the Ordnance Survey of 1863, there is no trace of the enclosure depicted in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century surveys.

HER DATA

Various sites within Combley Great Wood are recorded in the HER and shown in Figure 1. The details of these sites are as follows:

HER 2321

Large bank noted by D. Tomalin and F. Basford [Field visit, 30-01-1994]

Monument Types and Dates

BANK (EARTHWORK) (Unknown date). Evidence EARTHWORK

Description

A large bank of varying proportions was traced from SZ 5473 8876 to SZ 5426 8874. At SZ 5426 8874 its dimensions are 2m high, about 2.5m wide. Shallow ditch either side, 2m – 3m wide, 50cm in depth. Further field visit required in order to determine its full length.

[Field visit, F. Basford, 19.02.1995].

This bank was observed from position SZ 5482 8875, where it abuts a stream, to SZ 5418 8870. The boundary probably extends further westward. However, on this occasion, due to excessive bramble growth, further fieldwork was not carried out.

[Field visit, F. Basford, 12.11.1997.]

Bank is represented by a field boundary on O.S. map.

[Ordnance Survey, 1:2,500 plan, sheet SZ 5488 5588, 1972.]

Sites & Monuments Record – 2321

Condition

Extant 1/01/1994

Extant 01/07/2010 Earthwork Condition Survey

HER 2445

Low linear bank of undetermined length

Monument Types and Dates

BANK (EARTHWORK) (Unknown date). Evidence EARTHWORK

Description

Low linear bank of undetermined length situated at SZ 5460 8949 in dense undergrowth within Forestry Commission woodland at Combley Great Wood. [Field visit, F. Basford, 3/11/1996]

Bank and ditch of varying proportions largely situated in dense undergrowth extends from SZ 54323 89323 to SZ 54702 89534. At these two points the earthwork merges with the present roadside bank. The feature was measured at the following locations using GPS:

SZ 54323 89323, SZ 54352 89360, SZ 54386 89379, SZ 54424 89400, SZ 54481 89428,

SZ 54543 89468, SZ 54647 89509, SZ 54702 89534

Max. Dimensions of bank is 1.5 m high and 3.0m wide. Ditch to north, 3.0m wide, 1.0m deep. This ditch has been re – cut in recent times. [Field visit, F. Basford, 12.11.1997]

Possibly the boundary associated with a grant by Walter de Parco to the Abbey of Quarr [c.1224] of a portion of his demesne in the Manor of Briddlesford. [PRO E329/223.]

Hockey, Dom. S.F.(ed), 1991. 'The Charters of Quarr Abbey'. P.26. Isle of Wight County Council.

HER 2586

Bank, maximum dimensions 1.4m high, 5.0m wide. Extends at least from SZ 54207 88699 to SZ 54188 88671

Monument Types and Dates

BANK (EARTHWORK) (Unknown date). Evidence EARTHWORK

Description

Maximum dimensions, 1.4m high, 5.0m wide. Extends from SZ 54207 88699 to SZ 54188 88671. At the time of recording the feature was covered in bramble and scrub. It may, in fact, be greater in length than these two positions indicate. [Field visit, F. Basford, 19.11.1997.]

National Grid Reference

SZ 5419 8867

Condition

Extant 1/01/1997

Extant 01/07/2010 Earthwork Condition Survey

HER 4942

Brick lined 'bottle well'

Monument Types and Dates

WELL (Post Medieval – 1540 AD to 1900 AD). Evidence STRUCTURE

Description

Brick-lined "bottle well" finished with corbelled brickwork to form a narrowed neck. This was probably a pump well. However, a pipe for raising the water was not evident. Diameter c. 2.0m. SZ 54532 89291. Probably Post-medieval but possibly modern. [Field visit, F. Basford, R. Salter, 28.2.2003 in response to a verbal report by Tom Ransom, Forestry Commission Forest Manager, 27.2.2003.]

National Grid Reference

SZ 5453 8929

HER 5094

Water tank (destroyed: DoB database)

Monument Types and Dates

WATER TANK (Modern – 1901 AD to 2050 AD). Evidence DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Description

Water tank. Lynn Farm, Havenstreet. Recorder C. Moore. Grid reference SZ 542 892. WW2. Condition destroyed. Recorder's reference IOW P/B 1 [Defence of Britain database. Non anti-invasion record 2978]

HER 8007

Earthwork bank

Monument Types and Dates

BANK (EARTHWORK) (Unknown date). Evidence EARTHWORK

Description

Low linear bank c0.50m in height and aligned approximately north-south identified where it is crossed by a modern access route. Extent and NRG not established at the time. Location only approximate. [Site visit by R. Edmunds with Mike Pittock – Forestry Commission 04/03/2011]

National Grid Reference: SZ 5433 8898

FIELD SURVEY (Figure 10 and Table 1)

DATE OF SURVEY: 25th January 2014

SURVEYORS: Vicky and Frank Basford

REPORT OF SURVEY

The objectives of the field survey were to investigate the archaeological evidence for the medieval land grants to Combley Grange recorded in Hockey (1991), to locate and evaluate other archaeological sites recorded in the HER, to identify and record any archaeological sites not recorded in the HER and to identify and to evaluate any physical boundary features between Combley Great Wood and the surrounding farmland. All features observed during the survey are described in Table 1 and their positions are marked on Figure 10.

The survey started with an examination of **Features 1-5** which may provide evidence for part of Combley's Grange's northern boundary. Land granted to Combley Grange between c.1224 and c.1240 by Walter de Parco of Briddlesford Manor lay to the west and north-west of the present area of Combley Great Wood. It included land in the area later occupied by Lynn Farm and Great Lynn Common and contained the closes of Tebbescroft and Smytheswelle (Figure 4). **Feature 1** comprises the possible remains of a bank at SZ 5419 8926. This forms the eastern end of a field boundary visible in cross-section on the north side of the road opposite its junction with the northern boundary of Combley Great Wood (see Figure 10). The bank was originally interpreted as the eastern end of a new section of boundary between Briddlesford Manor and Combley Grange following Walter de Parco's grants of land to Quarr. This medieval boundary may have run along the northern edge of Plots 67 and 68 as marked on the 1771 Fleming estate map (see Figure 5). However, it appears that the northern edge of Plot 68 does not correspond with the edge of the present-day field but lay further to the north, corresponding with the north side of a strip of rough ground marked on the Ordnance Survey of 1863 as Parcel 424 (see Figure 9). This parcel has now developed into a strip of woodland and the medieval boundary may lie on its northern edge rather than in the position of **Feature 1**. Further fieldwork is needed in this area.

The charters of Walter de Parco seem to provide evidence for the existence of a road along the northern edge of what is now Combley Great Wood in approximately the same position as the modern road and to suggest that this road lay along the boundary between Briddlesford Manor and Combley Grange. However, the existence of a 'chargeable plot of land in the northern part of Combley Great Wood, shown as a treeless enclosure on the 1771 Fleming estate map (Figures 5 and 6), throws some doubt on whether the original boundary between Combley Grange and Briddlesford Manor lay along the line of the modern road or along the southern edge of the enclosure.

Features 2-5, described below, may or may not be connected with the medieval boundary of Combley Grange.

Feature 2 is the remains of a bank running between the north edge of the wood and the south side of the road from SZ 5420 8926 to SZ 5432 8932. The bank has been truncated by the modern road which is at a far lower level than the northern edge of the wood. There are also possible traces of another bank running parallel to Feature 2 c.30 metres inside the wood.

Between SZ 5432 8934 and SZ 5470 8953 the modern road protrudes slightly to the north of its general line, following the northern edge of a strip of woodland identified as 'Longround Rew' on the 1863 OS. This strip of woodland is now indistinguishable from the main area of Combley Great Wood but modern Ordnance Survey maps show a boundary between Longround Rew and the woodland to

the south.¹¹ This is recorded as an earth bank (HER 2445) in the Historic Environment Record where it is suggested that it could possibly be a boundary associated with the grant of land by Walter de Parco to Combley Grange in c.1224. HER 2445 corresponds to **Feature 3** as recorded in the present field survey. However, the Historic Environment Record does not record HER 2445 to the west of SZ 5432 8932 whereas in fact it may continue as far west as SZ 5424 8927, overlapping slightly with Feature 2. **Feature 3** has an 'ancient' appearance, comprising a fairly low broad bank on the south side but with a steeper profile on the north side, dropping down to a ditch. The northern side of Longround Rew is marked by another bank which runs above the south side of the road and has been recorded as **Feature 4**. This bank has a fairly steep profile on its south side but is nearly vertical on its north side where it has been eroded by the passage of motor vehicles. **Features 3 and 4** have both been cut by the modern 'pull in' which allows Forestry Commission vehicles access to Combley Great Wood and by the Forestry Commission clearing to the south.

In assessing the possibility that **Feature 3 (HER 2445)** represents the northern boundary bank of Combley Grange, evidence for the historical evolution of the nearby road must be considered. During the late eighteenth century this route along the northern edge of Combley Great Wood appears to have been a fairly irregular track of variable width. On the 1771 Fleming estate map (Figure 5) there is an almost illegible annotation above woodland parcel 'B' which appears to read 'Guildford Lane'. An entrance is marked on the map, leading from the lane into 'Plot 66' (the enclosure within Combley Great Wood). The 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (Figure 6) indicates that the lane was very wide in the area to the north of the enclosure, apparently occupying an area that later contained both Longround Rew and the modern metalled road. Such wide sections of road were quite common before the enclosure of agricultural land, particularly where droveways led into commons. When lanes and tracks were improved in the nineteenth century, only a narrow 'ribbon' at the centre or edge of these wide droveways would generally have been metalled. The wide section of road shown to the north of Combley Great Wood on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing may have been a droveway leading onto Lynn Common. By 1863, when the 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey was produced, it would appear that the road had been subject to improvement and had become much narrower. It now occupied only the northern part of the area shown on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing whilst an area of woodland named 'Longround Rew' occupied a section of the former droveway to the south of the new road. This woodland may either have been deliberately planted during the early nineteenth century in a part of the broad droveway that was considered to be waste ground or may have grown up naturally. However, the bank and ditch on the south side of Longround Rew that seems to have demarcated the south side of the droveway and could possibly have marked the northern boundary of Combley Grange in the medieval period survived as **Feature 3**.

Feature 4, on the north side of Longround Rew, is an earth bank with a steep profile which suggests that it may be a nineteenth century earthwork constructed when the new section of road was laid out to the north of Longround Rew.

Feature 5 runs along the northern edge of Combley Great Wood from the eastern edge of Longround Rew at SZ 5470 8953 to the north-east corner of the wood at SZ 5495 8960. It resembles **Feature 2** on the west side of Longround Rew in that it comprises a bank whose northern side has been eroded by the edge of the modern road, thus altering its profile. The altered profiles of features 2 and 5 make it impossible to determine whether these banks are of ancient origin or were constructed during nineteenth century road improvements. The sunken character of the road along the northern edge of Combley Great Wood may indicate that it has retained its original medieval alignment on either side of Longround Rew. However, this supposition does not explain the overlap

¹¹ The boundary can be seen most clearly on the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey of c. 1970 but it is also shown on Figure 1.

between Features 2 and 3. Accurate field survey using GPS or LIDAR is required to plot these features accurately. This might allow a more confident interpretation of the earthwork features and the evolution of the landscape on the north side of Combley Great Wood.

The enclosure on the northern edge of Combley Great Wood which is shown on the 1771 Fleming Estate map (Plot 66) may at one time have been a somewhat larger plot of land which included the woodland parcels shown as 'B' and 'C' on the 1771 map (see Figures 5 and 6).¹² It has been suggested above that the original boundary between Combley Grange and Briddlesford Manor could possibly have lain on the south side of this enclosure and therefore any archaeological evidence for the enclosure, which had become wooded by 1863, may be significant. During the field survey a possible linear boundary (**Feature 36**) was identified to the south of a stream or ditch at approximately SZ 5434 8930. This feature was recognised as a change in level, dropping from the west to the east. It appeared to be running north-south but could not be followed further south into the wood because fallen trees blocked the way. It is possible that this feature could represent the western boundary of the enclosure but this is a purely speculative identification. **Feature 35** lies to the west of **Feature 36**. It is barely discernible but appears to be the remains of a hollow way located approximately 30 metres inside the north-west boundary of the wood and running in an easterly direction. If the original boundary between Briddlesford Manor and Combley Grange lay to the south of the enclosure shown on the 1771 map it is conceivable that **Feature 35** could represent a surviving fragment of a road running along this boundary.

The modern boundary of Combley Great Wood appears mainly to follow the outline of the wood as shown on the Fleming Estate map of 1771 except along part of the western side. It is therefore not surprising that wood banks were recorded along nearly the entire boundary of the wood. However, these banks varied considerably as to their height and profile and as to whether or not a ditch or ditches were present. During the field survey a new feature number was recorded wherever the character of the boundary bank changed (see Table 1). Along parts of the eastern side of the wood the bank representing the original edge of the wood lies slightly inside the present edge of the wood (e.g. Table 1: **Features 7, 8, 9 and 13**). In some areas the profile of the bank or ditch has been altered by the recutting of ditches on the edges of fields. **Feature 12** is a pond which is now just inside the eastern edge of the wood at SZ 5483 8913 and is marked on the Orienteering Map of Combley Great Wood (Wight Orienteers 2008). This pond appears to be marked on the 1771 Fleming Estate map where it is shown straddling the boundary between the wood and the adjacent field called 'Villagers'. At that time the pond was presumably accessible to cattle pastured within Villagers.

About halfway along the eastern side of the wood there is a projecting salient of woodland labelled **Area 1a** on Figure 3. **Feature 15** is a bank which crosses the 'neck' of this salient, dividing it from the main area of Combley Great Wood. Its presence indicates that Area 1a was at one time either a separate block of woodland or was treated as a distinct woodland compartment. **Feature 15** is not shown on the 1771 Fleming Estate map but is marked on the 1817 Whitcher Plan (Figure 8). Indeed, the 1817 Plan suggests that Area 1a was regarded as a separate wood from Villagers Copse (**Area 1** on Figure 3) since it has a different number on the plan. The 1771 Fleming Estate map depicts Area 1a as having a curving eastern end and this curving boundary is still marked on the OS 1863 although by that date the wooded area extended slightly further to the east as far as the bridleway. However, the original curving boundary is still marked on the modern Ordnance Survey map (Figure 1) and can be observed on the ground inside the wood. It is recorded as **Feature 17** on Figure 10. Banks recorded as **Features 16 and 18** were also observed on the north and south sides of Area 1a.

Feature 19 is a high bank with a steep profile and a ditch on either side. It corresponds to **HER 2321** and was observed within the main part of the wood at SZ 5449 8881, close to the junction with the

¹² The enclosure was also recorded on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing and the 1817 Whitcher Plan.

south-west corner of Area 1a. This boundary divides Combley Great Wood into two parts. It is first shown on the 1817 Whitcher Plan (Figure 8) which names the north part of the wood as 'Villangers Copse' and the south part of the wood as 'Combley Great Wood'. The boundary is also shown on the 1863 OS (Figure 9) and on the modern digital Ordnance Survey map (Figure 1). During the field survey it was not followed all the way through the wood but was observed on the west side of the wood at SZ 5419 8870 as well as on the east side. The steep profile of this feature, the existence of a ditch on either side and the fact that it is not shown on the 1771 Fleming Estate map (Figure 5) or the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (Figure 7) suggests that it may possibly be a management compartment of no great age although the possibility that 'Villangers Copse' and 'Combley Great Wood' were originally separate pieces of woodland with different origins must also be considered (see the discussion of this feature under 'Map Evidence').

The sections of bank forming the eastern boundary of Combley Great Wood to the south of Feature 19 (**Features 20, 21 and 24**) are fairly insubstantial and do not look very old.¹³ However, the nature of the woodland boundary changes at the south east corner of the wood. The section of boundary running from SZ 5437 8824 to SZ 5427 8817 is recorded as **Feature 25**. This consists of an inner bank (probably the original wood boundary bank) with a slight bank and ditch on the outside. The outer ditch is marked on the modern Ordnance Survey map (Figure 1). It appears to be a recent drainage feature associated with the properties called 'Combley View' which abut the southern edge of the wood. The section of boundary at the southern end of the wood has been recorded as **Feature 26**. It commences at approximately SZ 5427 8818 and continues to the south-west corner of the wood at SZ 5398 8817. This feature lies about 15 metres inside the wood at its eastern end and comprises a steep break of slope which descends towards the south edge of the wood. Further to the west it becomes a broad, substantial bank with a ditch on its south side. The bank is c. 1.5 metre high on the south side and is at least 3 metres wide. The feature gradually gets closer to the existing edge of the wood and merges with the present woodland edge at the south-west corner of the wood.

Between the south-west corner of Combley Great Wood and the property boundary at SZ 5393 8831, the western edge of the wood falls away to a ditch on the east side of Combley Lane with no bank present (**Feature 27**). Combley Lane is shown on the 1771 Fleming Estate map (Figure 5), the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (Figure 7) and the 1817 Whitcher plan (Figure 8) but is first named on the Ordnance Survey of 1863 (Figure 9). At SZ 5394 8830 it was necessary to make a detour around a property which is fenced off from the wood. This property is first marked on the 1863 OS and is recorded in the Surveyors' Book of the same date as 'house and garden'. A generously sized garden plot is shown on the 1863 OS, obviously cut out of previously-existing woodland, and the same size of plot is shown on the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps of 1897 and 1909-10. However, the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey of c.1970 shows a smaller sized plot with some woodland regeneration or replanting at its eastern end. There appear to be traces of the nineteenth century enclosure banks at the eastern end of the plot, now within the wood, and these have been recorded as **Feature 28**.

The western boundary of Combley Great Wood has altered considerably over the last two centuries in the area to the north of the property described above. The 1771 Fleming Estate Map and the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing show the wood as having a slightly curving profile in this area whereas the 1817 Whitcher map and the 1863 Ordnance Survey show a straight boundary. Twenty Acre Plantation had been created by 1909-10 and this now abuts the western side of Combley Great Wood. The 1909-10 Ordnance Survey map shows a broad ride or track with straight edges which separated Combley Great Wood from Twenty Acre Plantation. This feature is still marked on the modern digital Ordnance Survey map (Figure 1) but now now contains secondary woodland of recent date. The present-day western boundary of Combley Great Wood in this area (**Feature 29**) is

¹³ Earth bank s recorded as Features 22 and 23 lie just inside the wood in this area. They are thought to be relatively recent in date and may be Forestry Commission management compartments.

marked by a pronounced change in level with the ground sloping upward on the edge of the wood and then dropping to a very deep, steep-sided ditch which marks the eastern edge of the former ride or track.

At SZ 5394 8860 the boundary of Combley Great Wood turns eastward to run along the southern boundary of 'Calves Close' (see Figures 3 and 6). The boundary along the edge of the wood consists of a broad, low bank with a ditch on the north side and a field bank beyond (**Feature 30**). This feature varies in height and width but looks quite old. It peters out towards the east end of the field, changing into a much more recent-looking slight bank with a ditch to the north. Immediately to the south of this boundary bank there is another bank about 30 metres inside the edge of the wood, running in an easterly or north-easterly direction (**Feature 31**). This may be **HER 2586**. The boundary between the wood and the east side of 'Calves Close' consists of a fairly slight, recent-looking bank with a ditch on its west side (**Feature 32**) but the bank appears to be higher and more irregular in places.

To the north of Calves Close the western boundary of Combley Great Wood was altered between the 1790s and 1817 (compare Figures 5, 7 and 8). By the latter date an area of woodland appears to have been felled, moving the boundary of the wood further to the east. Thus, this section of the wood's boundary is of quite recent date. It abuts a field with nineteenth century boundaries. This field is shown as parcel 460 on the 1:2500 1st edition Ordnance Survey of 1863 (see Figure 9). The boundary on the edge of the wood (**Feature 33**) comprises a very slight bank (higher and more irregular in places) but this drops down to a very deep and steep-sided water-filled ditch on the west side. This ditch was probably created when the field shown as parcel 460 was first laid out.

The north-west boundary of Combley Great Wood, from SZ 5406 8910 to SZ 5417 8923, abuts Lynn Farm at its southern end and then runs in a straight line as far as the road along the south-east edge of a field recorded as 'Tibbix' on the 1771 Fleming estate map. This boundary may correspond to the position of a dyke recorded in c. 1224 when Quarr Abbey acquired extra land on the west side of Combley Grange from Walter de Parco. The charter of that date, describing the eastern boundary of the land that had been granted, records that it went 'up by the dyke which used to be the boundary between the land of Briddlesford and the monks' land' (Hockey 1991, Charter 108). This 'dyke' appears to have been situated along the south-east edge of 'Tebbescroft' Close which was mentioned in the charter and corresponds to 'Tibbix' Close as recorded on the 1771 Fleming estate map (see Figures 4, 5 and 6).¹⁴ The present-day edge of the wood appears to be in the same position as shown on the 1771 Fleming Estate map (Figure 5). It was therefore anticipated that the boundary in this area (**Feature 34**) might be ancient but in fact the bank, which is quite slight and drops down to a water-filled ditch on the north-west side, has a fairly recent appearance. Lynn farm house was built sometime between 1771 and 1793 and the boundary between Combley Great Wood and the area of rough ground to the north (within which Lynn farm house was set) may have been rationalised at the time, accounting for the recent appearance of the boundary (see Figure 7).

There was not sufficient time during the field survey to investigate various earthworks inside the wood which are marked on the Orienteering map (Wight Orienteers 2008). However, a few linear features inside the wood were recorded including **Feature 37**. This was recognised as a change in level with a ditch to the south. The feature ran from west to east and was recorded at approximately SZ 5468 8950, close to the northern edge of the wood and to the east of the vehicular pull-in. Only a short length of this feature was traced and its function could not be identified.

¹⁴ N.B. The field name 'Tibbix' (*alias* Typpaxe or Tibbescroft) has been incorrectly transcribed as 'Sibbix' in Figure 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON ANCIENT WOODLAND INVENTORY AREAS: COMBLEY GREAT WOOD

(BASED ON HISTORICAL EVIDENCE AND FIELD SURVEY)

There is no known documentary evidence prior to 1537 of a substantial amount of woodland in the area of the present Combley Great Wood and even at that date the recorded area of woodland was only fifty acres compared with about 182 acres (72.95 hectares) at the present day. Nevertheless, the indented shape of Combley Great Wood, eaten into by fields which appear to have been taken out of the wood, provides evidence for the probable existence of at least part of the present area of woodland in the medieval period and the derivation of the place-name 'Combley' suggests that the general area was well-wooded in the Anglo-Saxon period.

Discussion of Areas recommended for inclusion in the Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory

The areas recommended for inclusion in the Revised AWI have been mapped in Figure 10. Most of Combley Great Wood has been identified as Plantation Ancient Woodland (PAWS), following the designation in the Provisional AWI (Figure 2), but two small areas have been identified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW). These two ancient woodland types are identified by blue striped and purple striped shading on Figure 10.

The areas recommended for inclusion in the revised AWI represent the surviving parts of the woodland parcels 'B', 'C' and 'I' and the wooded fringe of Plot 66 as marked on the 1771 Fleming Estate map (see Figure 5). It has been suggested above under 'Map Evidence' that parcels 'B' and 'C' could have become wooded at a later date than parcel 'I' (which may represent medieval woodland). Nevertheless, there is no way of knowing whether these pieces of woodland existed in 1600 (the accepted cut-off date for ancient woodland) and they are certainly shown on the 1771 map and on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawing (Figure 7). They should therefore be included in the revised AWI.

Sections of the wood bank representing the original boundary on the eastern and southern sides of Combley Great Wood are sometimes located a very short distance inside the present-day woodland boundary as indicated in the field survey report and Table 1. However, it would not be possible to indicate the exact line of the historic boundary accurately without undertaking a GPS or LIDAR survey. **It is therefore recommended that the present woodland boundary is used as the basis for identifying the area to be included in the Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory except where areas are specifically recommended for exclusion.**

Discussion of Areas recommended for possible exclusion from the Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory

The current boundary shown on the Provisional Inventory of Ancient Woodland (Figure 3) includes three areas that have not been wooded continuously since 1771, the date when the earliest map of reasonable accuracy was produced (see Figure 5). These areas are identified on Figure 10 and are discussed below but only Area X is significant in terms of size.

Area X

This area on the northern side of Combley Great Wood corresponds with the enclosure identified as Plot 66 on the Fleming Estate Map of 1771 (Figure 5). The enclosure is also shown on the Ordnance Survey drawing of 1793-4 (Figure 7) and the Whitcher Plan of 1817 (Figure 8). The possibility that this enclosure may have been wooded at some time before 1771 has been discussed above. It certainly contained woodland in 1863 and it is wooded at the present day. Nevertheless, the open space depicted on the maps of 1771, 1793-4 and 1817 does not have the appearance of a temporary woodland clearance. The enclosure presumably remained treeless throughout the forty-six year period spanned by these maps (with the exception of the small strip of woodland shown on its

northern edge in 1771 and 1793-4) even though a pencilled annotation on the 1771 map states that the plot was 'reserved for planting'. This area would thus appear to fall outside the definition of Ancient Woodland as given in Benstead-Hume *et al* (2011, 16). **It is therefore recommended that Area X is excluded from the Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory if it is deemed not to meet the criteria for inclusion.** N.B. It has been demonstrated in Section 3 that 'Longround Rew' is probably of nineteenth century origin. Therefore, if it is decided to include Area X in the Revised AWI the boundary for the Revised AWI should be drawn to the south of 'Longround Rew' as it is in the Provisional Inventory.

Area Y

This very small area on the south-west edge of the wood is shown as woodland on all maps prior to 1863 but the Ordnance Survey map of that date depicts a cottage beside Combley Lane with a substantial garden clearing in the wood behind the house. On the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey this plot is marked as parcel 638 (see Figure 8). The Surveyors' Book gives the area of the parcel as 0.961 acres and describes it as 'house & garden'. On the Ordnance Survey map of c.1970 the size of the garden plot attached to the house is smaller than in the 1860s. Only this smaller plot is excluded from the Provisional Inventory of Ancient Woodland (see Figure 2). **However, it is recommended that the entire area of the 'house & garden' plot shown on the 1863 OS is excluded from the Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory since there has not been continuous woodland cover in this area**

Area Z

This tiny area represents the very end of a salient of woodland projecting east from the main body of Combley Great Wood. A curving boundary is shown at the eastern end of this salient on the maps of 1771, 1793/4 and 1817. The 1863 Ordnance Survey shows woodland continuing beyond this boundary (as it does at the present day) but the original boundary is still marked on the 1863 and modern Ordnance Survey maps within the wood. **It is recommended that the Ancient Woodland Inventory boundary follows the historic boundary of Combley Great Wood in this area.**

6: REFERENCES

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Figure 1: Map of HER Data supplied by Isle of Wight Council Archaeology and Historic Environment Service

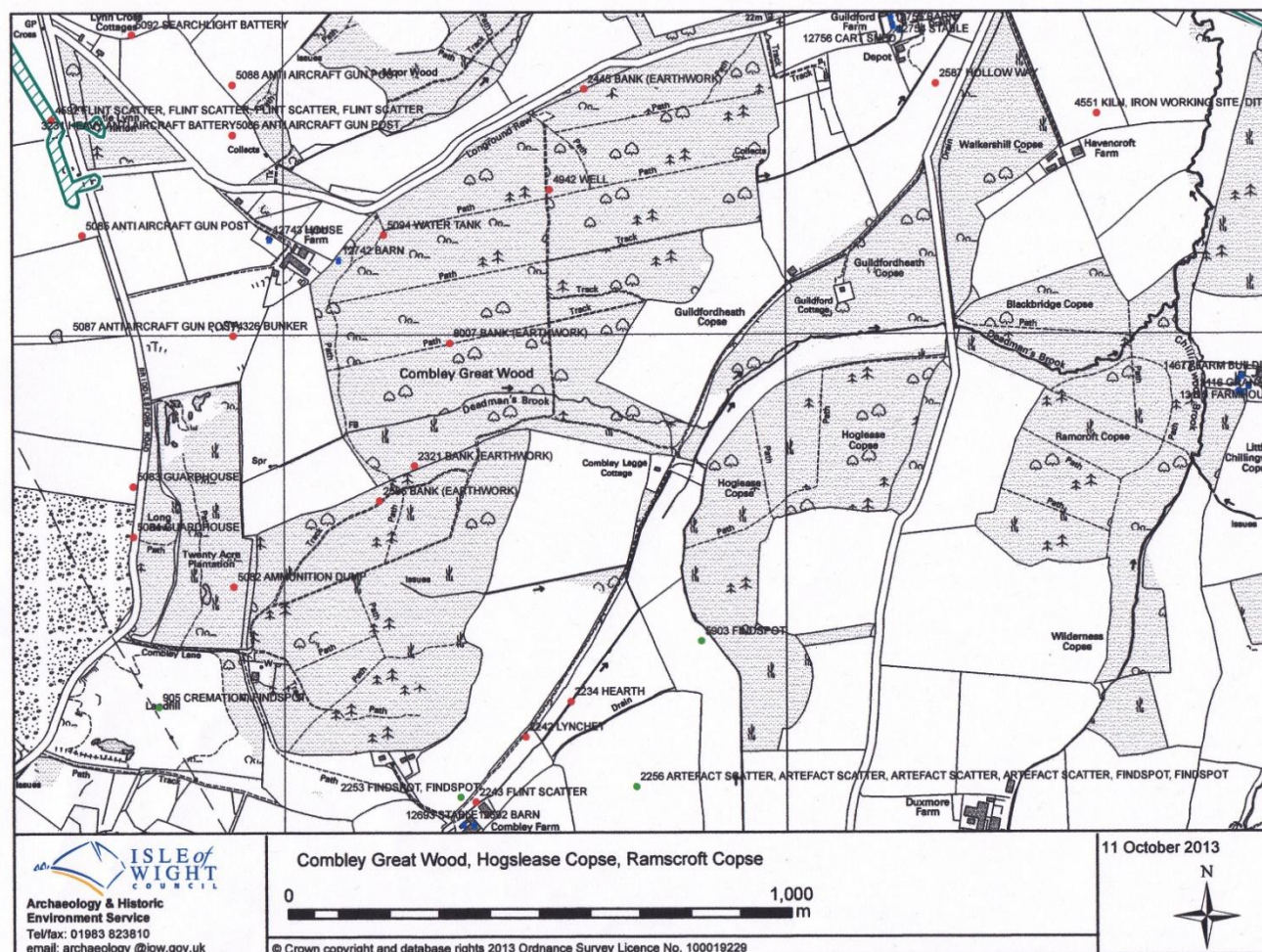


Figure 2: Area currently included in Ancient Woodland Inventory
(map not to scale)

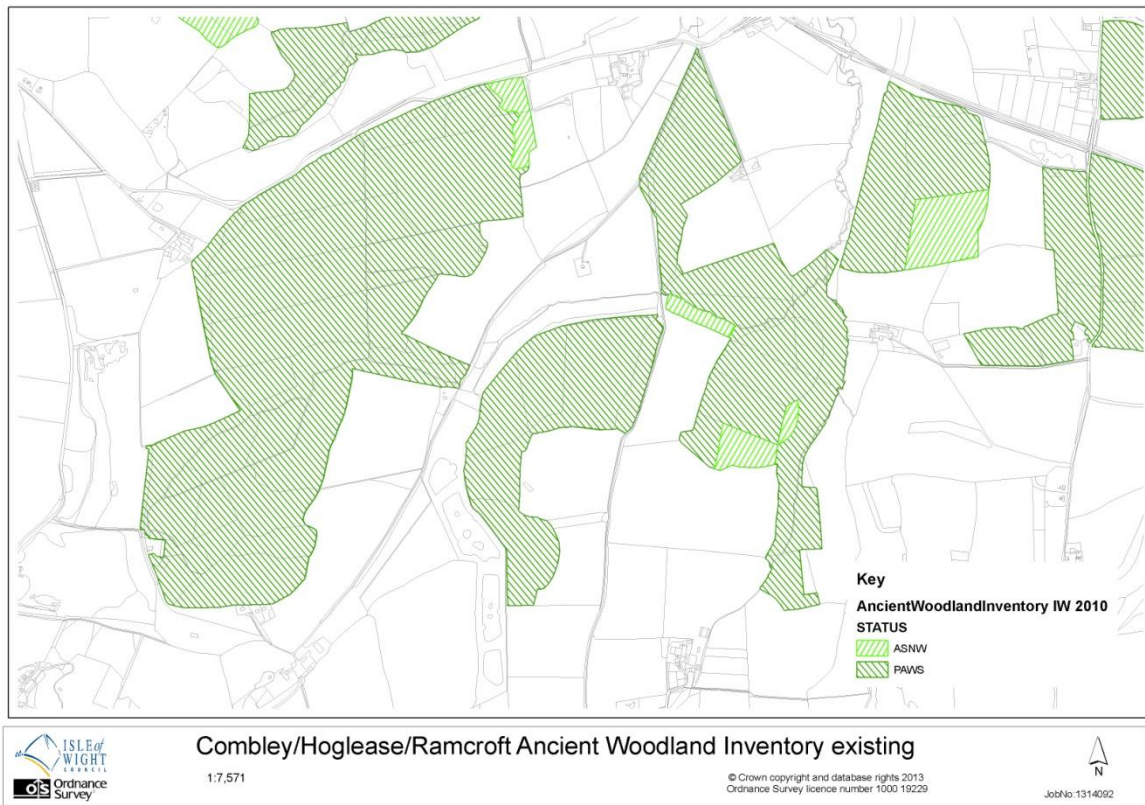


Figure 3: Present-Day Extent of Woodland
(map not to scale)

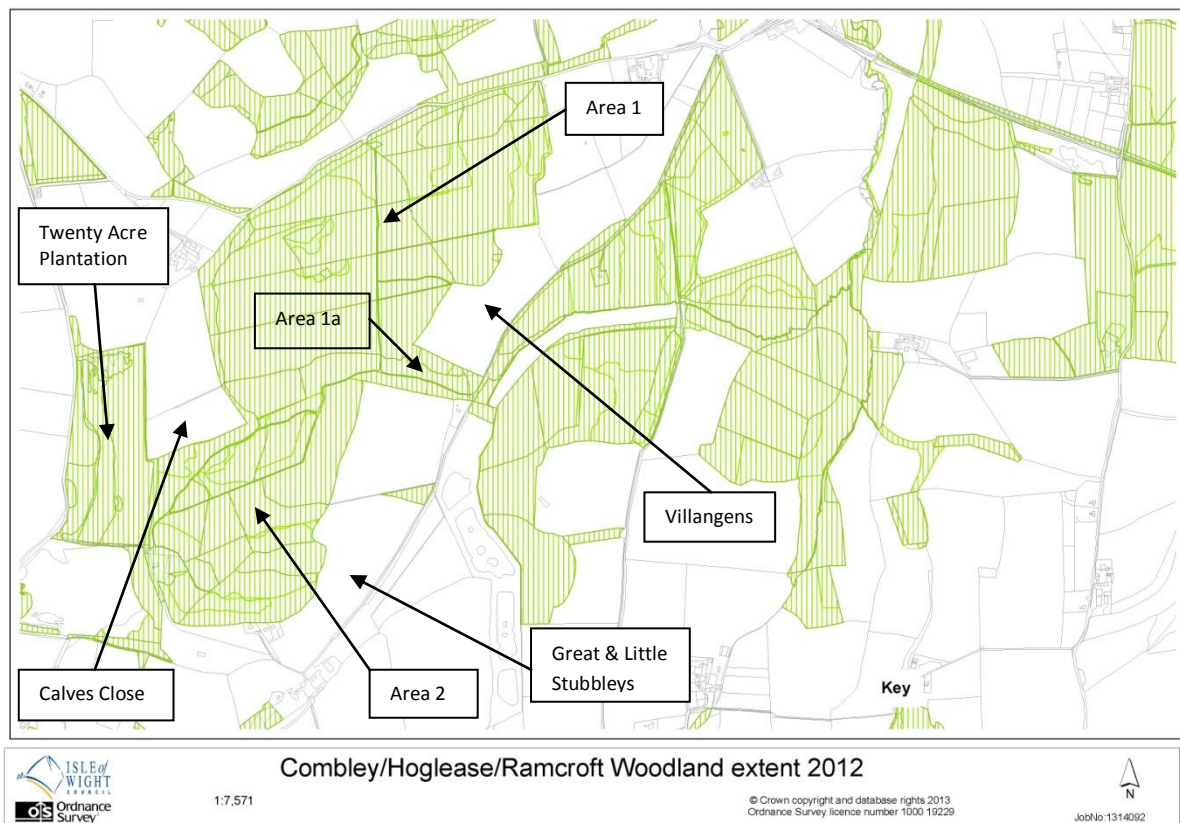


Figure 4: Reconstruction of the Lands of Combley Grange (Hockey 1991, Map 2)

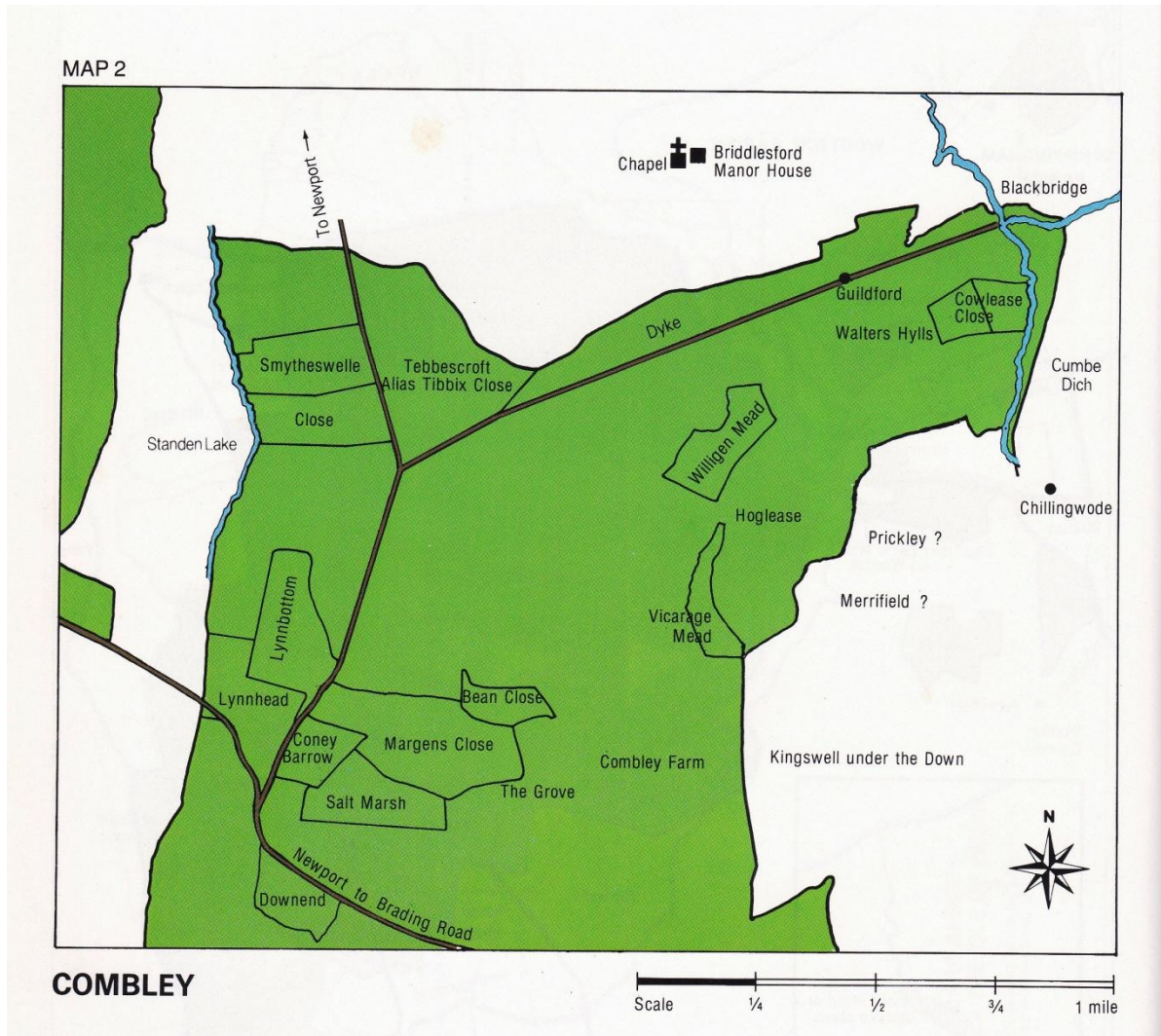


Figure 5: Extracts from Survey of Fleming Estates 1771

Scanned at reduced scale from photocopy at Archaeology and Historic Environment Centre
(Original: Isle of Wight Record Office/AC 2013/099)



[illegible]

Figure 7: Extract from 1793-4 Ordnance Survey Drawing showing Combley Great Wood
(map not to scale)



Figure 8: 1817 Plan of Villangers Copse and Combley Great Wood
 From a Survey of the Estates on the Isle of Wight, 1817, by John Whitcher
 Reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the Willis Fleming Historical Trust
 WF 2659

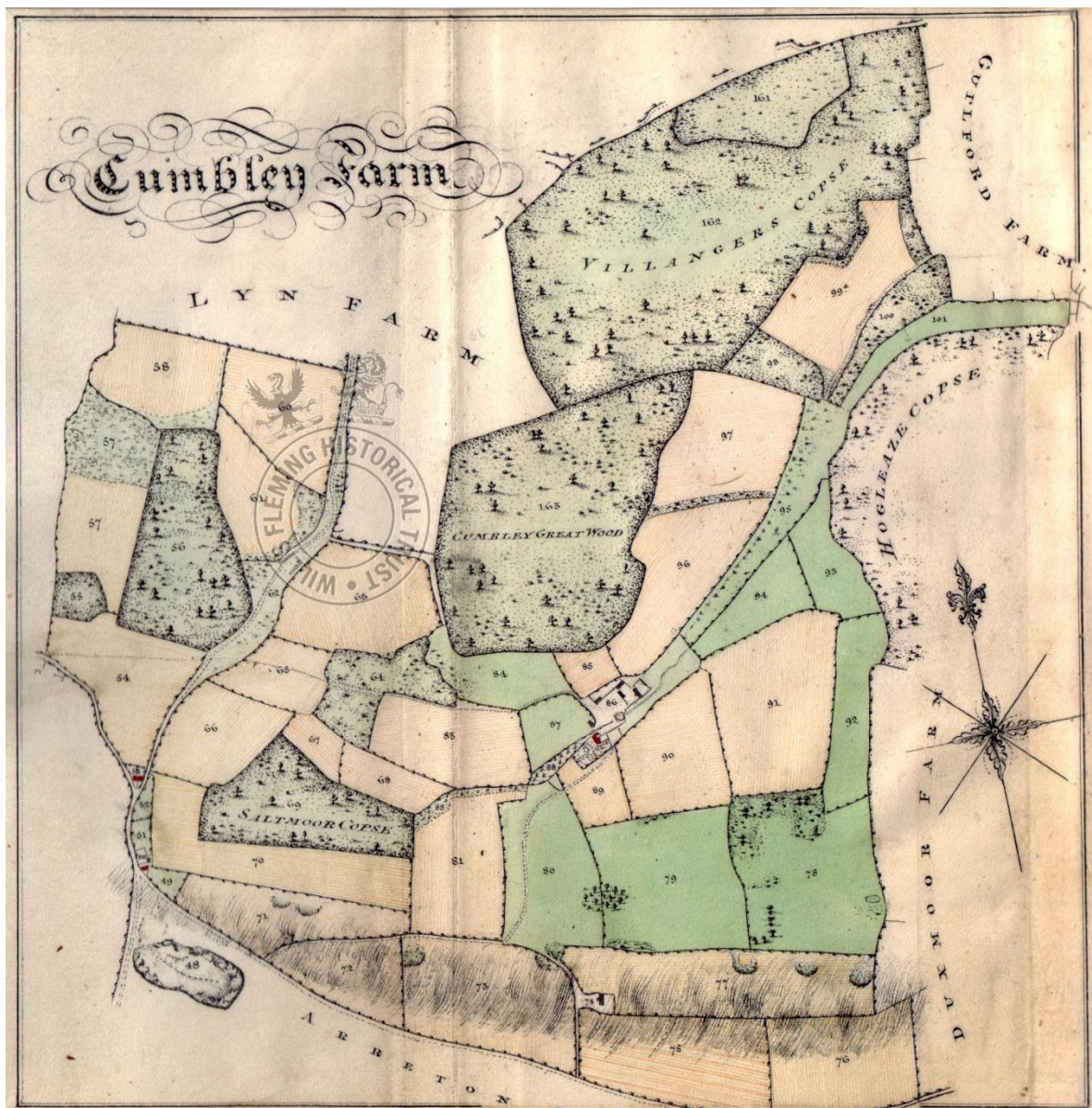


Figure 9. 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey: surveyed 1863, engraved 1865 & published 1866
 Scanned from a copy in the possession of Vicky Basford.
 Parcel numbers added from Surveyors' Book

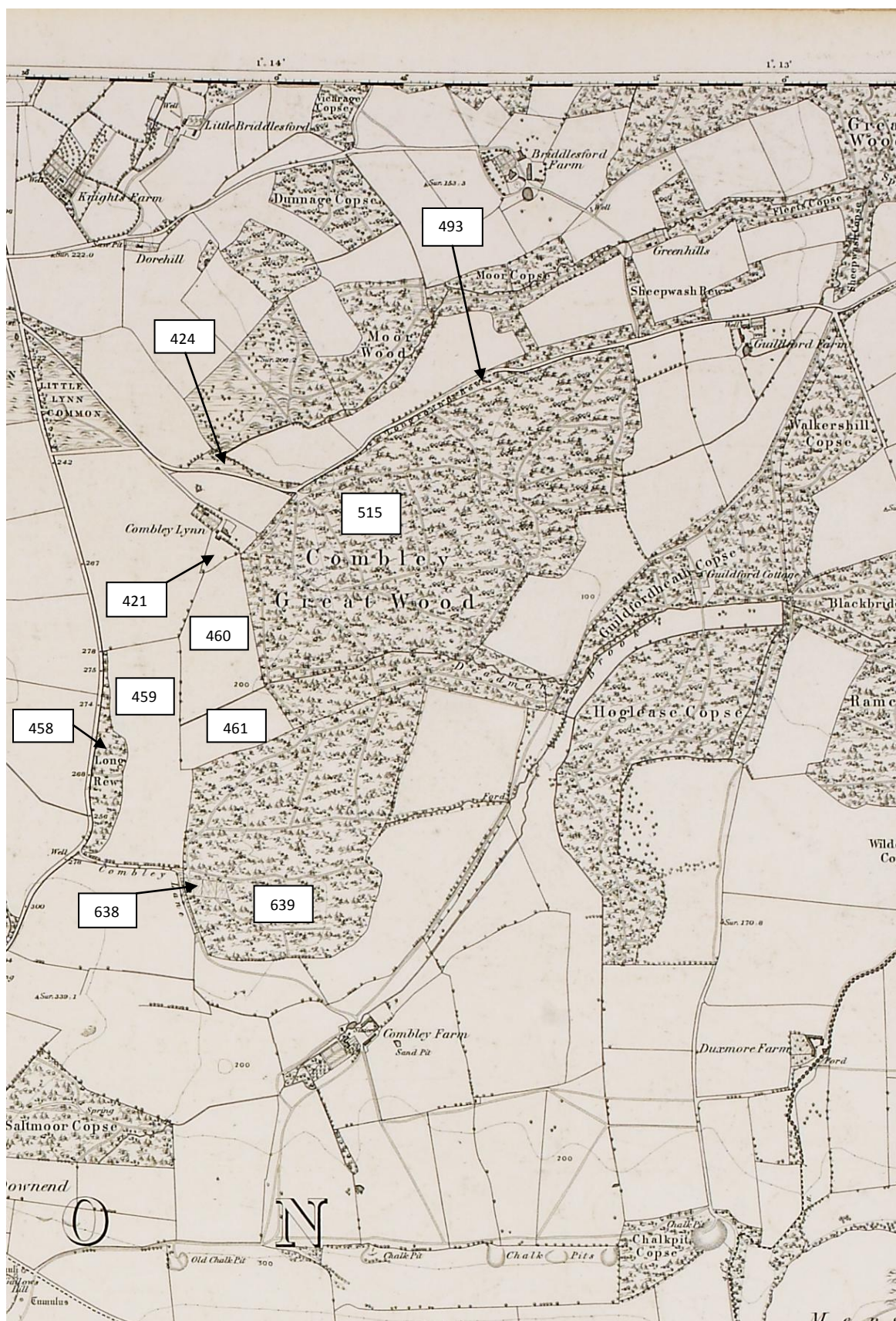


Figure 10: Sketch Plan of Features associated with Combley Great Wood

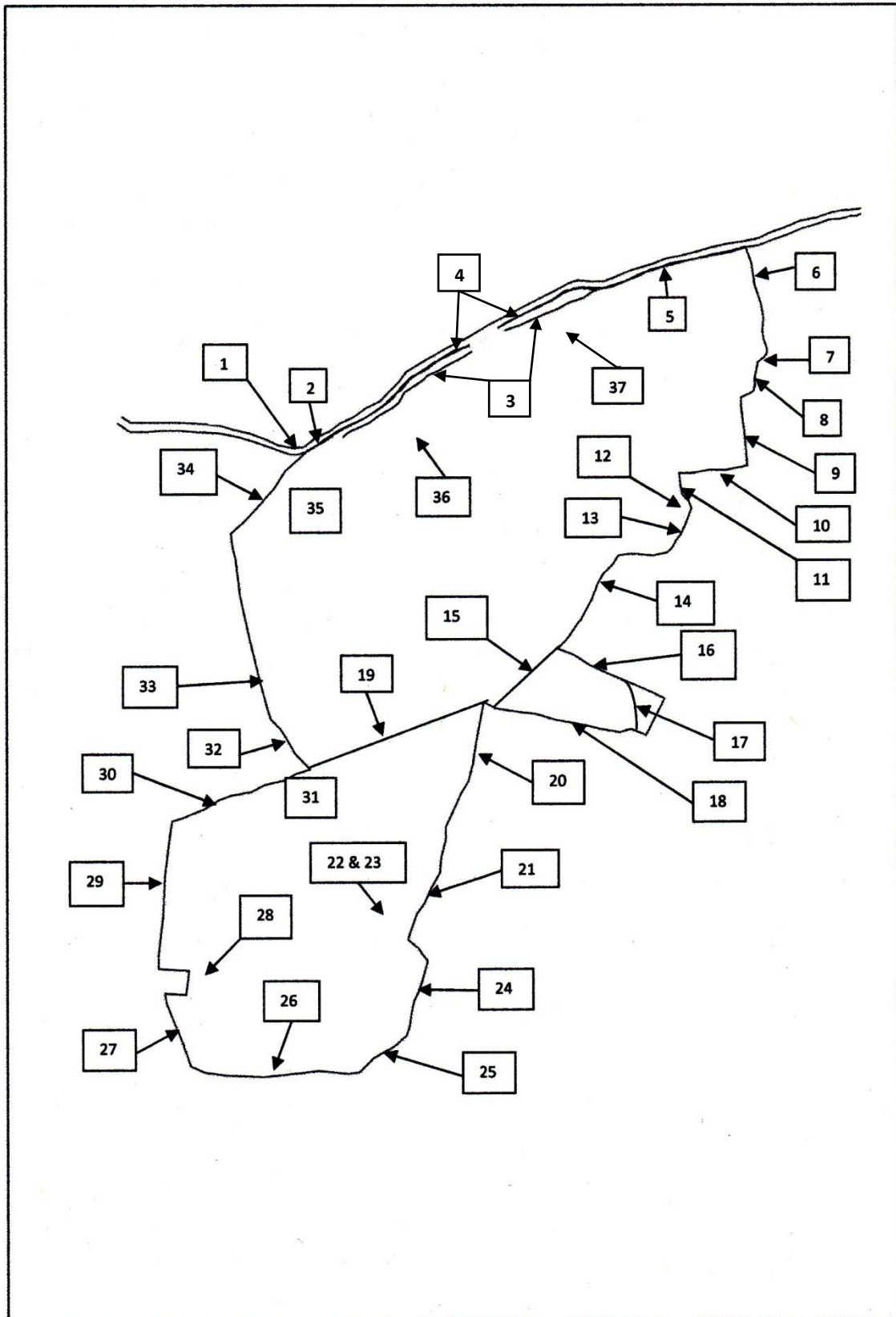


Figure 11: Recommended Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory Areas 2014
(map not to scale)

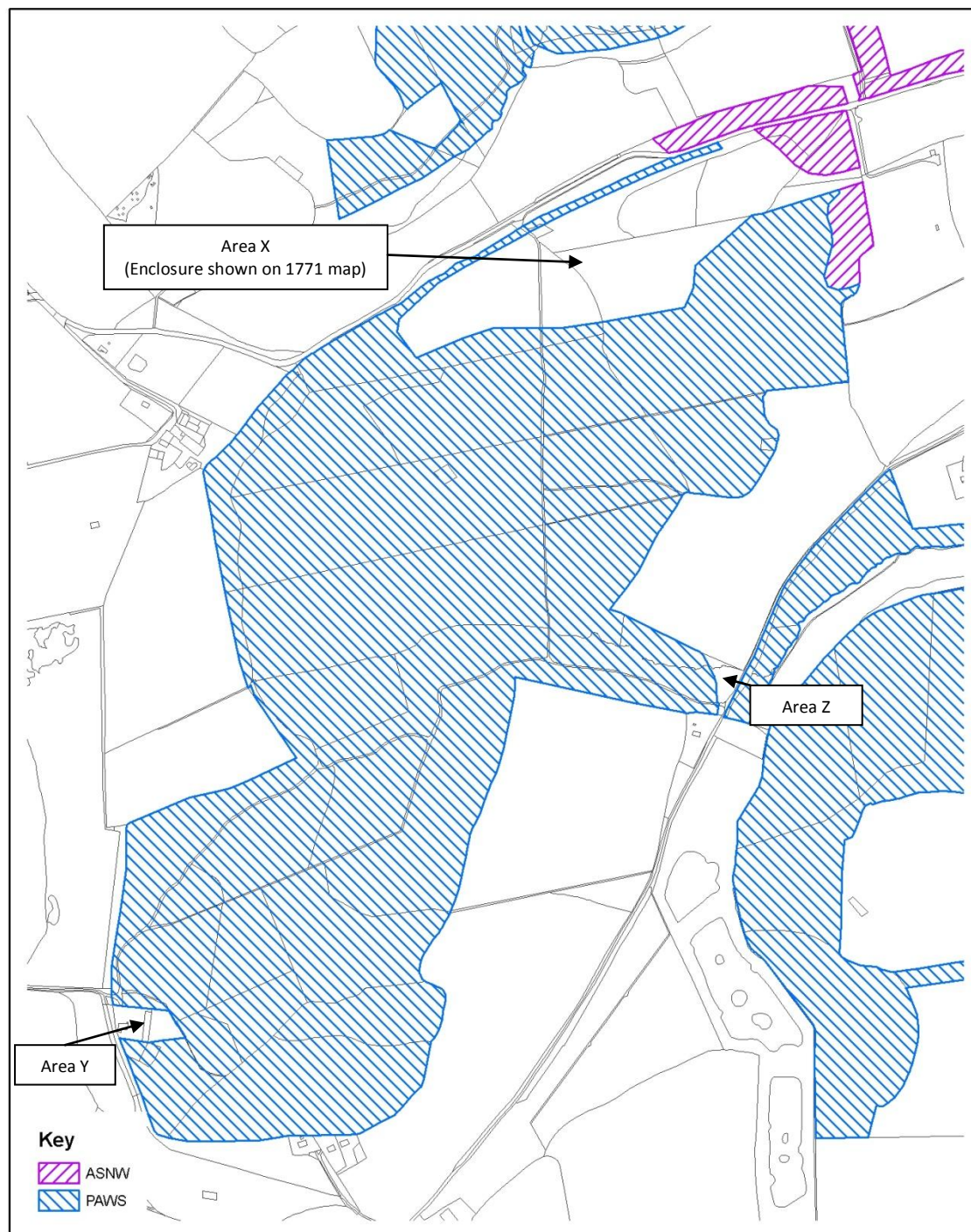


TABLE 1: FEATURES WITHIN COMBLEY GREAT WOOD

All features are marked on Figure 10.
Woodland Areas 1,1a and 2, referred to in this Table, are marked on Figure 3

Feature No.	Location	HER	Feature Type	Details/Interpretation	Category
1	SZ 5419 8926		Earth bank	Bank visible in cross-section on north side of road and cut by road.	Recent field boundary?
2	SZ 5420 8926 – SZ 5432 8932		Bank/ditch	This bank lies on the north side of Combley Great Wood. The north side of the bank and its ditch has been eroded or truncated by the edge of the adjacent road which is at a far lower level than the N. edge of the wood. Feature 2 overlaps with Feature 3. There are possible traces of another bank running parallel to Feature 2 c. 30m inside wood	Estate boundary?
3	SZ 5432 8932 - SZ 5470 8953	2445	Earth bank & ditch	This earthwork has already been recorded as HER 2445. It has been interpreted in Section 3 as the boundary between Combley Grange and Briddlesford created in c.1240. The earthwork lies between Longround Rew and the main part of Combley Great Wood. It comprises a fairly low, broad bank on the south side but with a steeper profile on the north side dropping down to a ditch.	Estate boundary?
4	SZ 5432 8932 - SZ 5470 8953		Earth bank	This bank runs to the north of Feature 3 but parallel with it. It forms the northern boundary of Longround Rew, a narrow strip of woodland which protrudes from the general line of Combley Great Wood's northern boundary and abuts the route of the modern road. The feature has a fairly steep profile on its south side and is nearly vertical on its north side where it has been eroded by traffic.	Wood/road boundary
5	SZ 5470 8953 – SZ 5495 8960		Earth bank	This feature comprises a bank which has been eroded or truncated by the edge of the road, thus altering its profile.	Estate boundary?

Feature No.	Location	HER	Feature Type	Details/Interpretation	Category
6	E. boundary of wood: Area 1 north end		Earth bank & ditch	This section of Combley Great Wood's eastern boundary is c.3m wide from its inside edge to the edge of the ditch on its east side. The ditch appears to have been recut in modern times for drainage purposes.	Wood bank
7	E. boundary of wood Area 1		Double earth bank	This section of Combley Great Wood's eastern boundary comprises a short length of double bank. After approx. 30m the inner bank veers slightly into the wood away from the outer bank before petering out just after being cut by the path around the edge of the wood.	Wood bank
8	E. boundary of wood Area 1		Earth bank	This section of Combley Great Wood's eastern boundary lies slightly inside the existing edge of the wood and has a modern drainage channel on its eastern side (marked on 1:2500 Ordnance Survey of c.1970)	Wood bank
9	E. boundary of wood Area 1		Earth bank	Along this section of Combley Great Wood's eastern boundary the bank is narrower, more upright and more modern-looking than sections to the north. It has a drainage ditch on its east side. Near the corner of the wood at SZ 5494 8924 there is a section of older, flatter-looking bank on the inside of the 'modern' bank.	Wood bank
10	E. boundary of wood Area 1		Earth bank	The edge of the wood is indented In this area, forming the northern boundary of 'Villangens' Close (marked on Figure 3). The bank is quite substantial. It has a relatively steep profile but this has been altered by the construction of a modern drainage ditch on the south side.	Wood bank
11	E. boundary of wood Area 1		Earth bank	This section also forms part of the boundary with 'Villangens' Close. The bank is not quite as substantial as Feature 6 and has been mutilated by a modern drainage ditch to the east.	Wood bank
12	E. edge of wood Area 1		Pond	This pond is located just inside the edge of the wood at SZ 5483 8914. It is shown on the Orienteering Map of Combley Great Wood produced by Wight Orienteers (2008). It also appears to be shown on the 1771 Fleming Estate Survey but is not marked on any other historic or modern maps.	Pond
13	E. boundary of wood Area 1		Earth banks	Immediately to the south of the pond there is a section of bank just inside the wood as well as a bank with a fairly steep profile on the edge of the wood. The inside bank could be the original wood boundary with 'Villangens' Close.	Wood bank Field- boundary bank

Feature No.	Location	HER	Feature Type	Details/Interpretation	Category
14	E. boundary of wood Area 1		Earth bank	This section is still part of the boundary with 'Villangens' Close and comprises a bank with a steep profile.	Wood bank
15	W. end of Area 1a		Earth bank	This bank crosses the 'neck' of woodland marked as Area 1a on (Figure 3). Its presence indicates either that this was once a block of woodland separate from Combley Great Wood or that it was treated as a separate woodland compartment at one time, perhaps being subject to a different cutting regime.	Wood bank or woodland compartment boundary
16	N. edge of Area 1a		Earth bank	Bank with ditch on north side, the profile of which has probably been altered by ditch cleaning. (N.B. No bank is present on the north side of Area 1a beyond Feature 16.)	Wood bank
17	E. end of Area 1a		Earth bank	Substantial bank in position corresponding to curving east boundary of Area 1a as shown on 1771 Fleming Estate Map. Since the mid-nineteenth century the wooded area has extended slightly further to the east as far as the bridleway but the 1863 OS still marks the position of the earlier boundary.	Wood bank
18	S. edge of Area 1a		Earth bank	A bank is present but its profile has been altered by a modern field drainage ditch to the south side and by a Forestry Commission drainage channel on the north side.	Wood bank
19	SZ 5419 8870 – SZ 5449 8881	2321	Earth bank	High bank with steep profile and ditch on either side corresponding to feature recorded as HER 2321. This boundary divides the north part of the wood (named as 'Villangers Copse' on the 1817 Whitcher Plan) from the south part of the wood (named as 'Combley Great Wood' on 1817 plan). It was not traced right through the wood but was observed at either end.	Wood bank or woodland compartment boundary
20	E. boundary of wood: Area 2		Earth bank	Low bank with ditch on east side – not very old looking. Bank is higher in places.	Wood bank?
21	E. boundary of wood: Area 2		Earth bank	Bank looks fairly similar to Feature 20 but possibly older. Rather insubstantial with profile altered by recutting of ditch on edge of field.	Wood bank?
22	E. side of Area 2		Earth bank	Bank with trace of ditch on south side running in NE –SW direction into wood from eastern boundary. Probably a Forestry Commission management compartment.	Woodland compartment?

Feature No.	Location	HER	Feature Type	Details/Interpretation	Category
23	E. side of Area 2		Earth bank	Bank at 90 degrees to Feature 22 – probably a Forestry Commission bank.	Woodland compartment?
24	E. boundary of wood: Area 2		Earth bank	Low bank with ditch on east side – similar profile to Features 20 and 21. Not very old looking.	Wood bank
25	SE. boundary of wood: Area 2		Earth banks and ditch	Here there is an inner bank (probably the original wood boundary bank) with a slight outer bank and ditch to the south-east. This is marked on Figure 1. The outer bank and ditch runs from SZ 5437 8824 to SZ 5427 8817. It appears to be a modern drainage feature connected with the properties called 'Combley View'.	Wood bank and drainage feature
26	S. boundary of wood: Area 2		Earth bank and ditch	This feature appears to represent the original southern boundary of the wood. It commences within the SE end of the wood at approx. SZ 5427 8818 and continues to the SW corner of the wood at SZ 5398 8817. At its eastern end this feature lies about 15m inside the present woodland edge but it merges with the present woodland edge at the SW corner of the wood. At its eastern end the feature comprises a steep break of slope which descends towards the present woodland boundary. Further to the west it becomes a broad, substantial bank with a ditch on the S. side. The bank is c. 1.5m high from the ditch side and at least 3m in width.	Wood bank
27	W. boundary of wood: Area 2		Ditch	Between the SW corner of the wood and the property boundary at SZ 5393 8831 the edge of the wood falls away to a ditch on the east side of Combley Lane.	Boundary ditch
28	Inside W. Edge of wood Area 2		Earth banks?	In the approximate location SZ 540 883 there appear to be traces of the C19 enclosure banks around the large garden plot shown on the 1863 OS (Figure 8) and associated with an adjacent property to the west which is still extant.	Property boundary

Feature No.	Location	HER	Feature Type	Details/Interpretation	Category
29	Boundary between Area 2 and Twenty Acre Plantation		Earth bank and ditch	The 1771 Fleming Estate map (Figure 5) and the 1793-4 OS drawing (Figure 7) suggest that in this area the original W. Boundary of Combley Great Wood had a curvilinear profile which had been straightened by 1817 (see Figure 8). By 1909-10 Twenty Acre Plantation had been created to the west of Combley Great Wood. One might expect to see a fairly insubstantial boundary between Combley Great Wood and Twenty Acre Plantation. In fact, there is a pronounced change in level with the ground sloping upwards on the W. Edge of Combley Great Wood then dropping to a very deep, steep-sided ditch which separates the wood from the plantation.	Boundary Bank
30	Area 2: south side of Calves Close		Earth bank and ditch	Bank on south side of Calves Close (see Figure 3). This is quite broad and low with a ditch on the north side and a field bank beyond. This feature varies in height and width but looks quite old. It peters out towards the east end of the field, changing into a more recent-looking slight bank with a ditch to N.	Wood bank
31	Inside Area 2	2586?	Earth bank	Bank about 30m in from edge of wood running in an easterly direction. This may equate with the feature recorded as HER 2586.	Bank: unknown function
32	Area 1: east side of Calves Close		Earth bank	Fairly slight, recent-looking bank with ditch on west side. Bank is higher in places.	Wood bank
33	W. boundary of Area 1		Earth bank	The western boundary of Combley Great Wood was altered In this area between the 1790s and 1817 (see Figures 5, 7 and 8). By the latter date an area of woodland had been felled, moving the boundary of the wood further to the east. Thus, this section of the wood's boundary is of C19 date. The boundary comprises a very slight bank but this drops to a very deep, steep-sided water-filled ditch on the west side. The bank appears higher and more irregular in places.	Wood bank
34	NW corner of Area 1 between Lynn Farm and road		Earth bank and ditch	SZ 5406 8910 to SZ 5417 8923. Slight bank with quite steep drop down to water-filled ditch. The edge of the wood is in the same position here as shown on the 1771 Fleming Estate map but the boundary bank does not look ancient.	Wood bank?

Feature No.	Location	HER	Feature Type	Details/Interpretation	Category
35	Inside NW boundary of wood: Area 1		Depression with slight banks on either side	This feature is barely discernible but appears to consist of a depression with slight banks on either side. It lies approx. 30m inside the NW boundary of the wood and runs for a short distance in a west-east direction. Possible hollow way?	Hollow Way?
36	North part of wood: Area 1		Change in level	A possible linear feature was identified at approx. SZ 5434 8930 to the south a stream/ditch. This feature was recognised as a change in level, dropping from the west to the east. It appeared to running north-south but could not be followed further into the wood because fallen trees blocked the way.	Boundary feature?
37	North part of wood: Area 1		Change in level	Linear feature to the south of Feature 3. This feature runs from west to east and is represented by a change of level with a ditch on the south side. Only a short section of the feature was traced, centred at approx. SZ 5468 8950.	Unknown feature