

**From:** campaigning@woodlandtrust.org.uk

**Sent:** 15 October 2021, 11:57 AM

**To:** Aldridge, Steven

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From: Aldridge, Steven <SAldridge@worcestershire.gov.uk>  
Sent: 12 October 2021 07:58  
To: campaigning@woodlandtrust.org.uk <campaigning@woodlandtrust.org.uk>  
Subject: FW: Ancient Woodland Adjacent to Lea Castle site, Wolverley, Worcs

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Please note I have also consulted the County Ecologist, County Landscape Officer, District Ecologist and Woodland Trust.

Kind regards

Steve

Steven Aldridge  
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From: Bob Williams <[aldermill@btconnect.com](mailto:aldermill@btconnect.com)>  
Sent: 11 October 2021 20:32  
To: Aldridge, Steven <[SAldridge@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:SAldridge@worcestershire.gov.uk)>  
Subject: Ancient Woodland Adjacent to Lea Castle site, Wolverley, Worcs  
Importance: High

Hi Steve

As I advised, I have asked one of my colleagues to look into the ancient woodland issue and his findings are below.

If your colleagues are still of the opinion that the woodland is ancient, perhaps they will send their proof of this to us so that we can look at the issues again.

Regards  
Bob

Robert Williams



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From: Mark Singlehurst  
Sent: 11 October 2021 19:19  
To: Bob Williams <[aldermill@btconnect.com](mailto:aldermill@btconnect.com)>

Subject: Ancient Woodland Adjacent to Lea Castle site, Wolverley, Worcs  
Importance: High

Hello Bob,

I have now looked into the Ancient Woodland question at Lea Castle, Wolverley, in some detail and this is an account  $\hat{Y} \hat{A} \bullet \check{d} \check{A} \uparrow \text{I} (\hat{i} \hat{A} \check{d} \hat{A} \check{c} \hat{A} " \in \emptyset - \text{æRfG X}$

Wood, but Wolverley Carr was just marshland! That was still the case on the 1938 OS map, so the current woodland there can scarcely be called 'ancient'!

Similarly, Axborough Wood, at some distance to the east and on the edge of Wolverley parish, is classed as ancient semi natural woodland in the county inventory and elsewhere (such as the 'Kidderminster North Green Infrastructure Concept Statement'), yet the Victoria County History of Worcestershire states that Axborough Wood was first planted after the Enclosure of the parish fields in 1775 – so, again, that fails to qualify as ancient woodland (ASNW) by the 'pre 1600' criterion.

Since the mapping evidence is not of much help, I looked at the general history of Wolverley and Cookley. It appears that Burgred, King of Mercia, granted a charter in AD 866 which allowed pasture for 70 pigs in the wooded common known as 'Wulferdinleh' [= Wolverley, Worcs.] and the gathering of timber for building purposes and as firewood. Wolverley was then one of the most wooded parts of England although the regular practice of large scale coppicing and compartmented wood pasture were already in existence at that time. An incidental side effect of the coppicing activity was the establishment of woodland flowers such as primroses and violets.

At the time of the Domesday Book (1086), Wolverley had no woodland available for pannage (i.e., grazing pigs), but after the Manor of Wem was created, the Lord's tenants were granted various rights, including pannage, in the Lord's 'North Wood'. The settlement of Wolverley may have involved the clearance of the western margin of North Wood, which was mentioned in 1304. North Wood is believed to have lain on the eastern boundary of Wolverley.

The account of Wolverley in the Victoria County History of Worcestershire (VHCW) states that there was some 372 acres of woodland in the parish. Some of this was ancient, i.e. Birch Wood, Bodenham Wood and Cookley Wood (made up of Spring and Solcum Coppices). The draft version of the Wolverley Conservation Area Character Appraisal also calls Middle Wood "semi ancient", although where this is I have not been able to ascertain. Birch and

According to the archives of the Worcester Journal, the Lea Castle Estate included commercial woodland grown for timber by February 1818, which grew near the Staffs. & Worcs. Canal and was mostly fir and elm, with some sycamore, poplar and small numbers of other species. This does not, therefore, sound like a SNW. The Morning Chronicle for 27/11/1819 included a sale advertisement for the Lea Castle Estate, referring to a total size of over 1,300 acres and the inclusion of ornamental plantations and woodland. "The property is finely wooded and the plantations are in a very thriving state." This suggests recently planted trees rather than pre-existing. Finally wpD 0 P

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