THE HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF QUEEN'S WOOD

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July 2017

Frontispiece: Queen's Wood - three year coppiced hazel and hornbeam with oak standards.[1]

[1] image © Michael Hacker 2016

Summary

Queen's Wood is one of four areas of ancient woodland in Haringey that have been wooded for at least four hundred years. But little is known of the early history and development of the wood; was the land always wooded, what was the nature of the early woodland and how has it changed over time?

This account of the history of Queen's Wood reviews the results of a series of small-scale archaeological evaluations carried out in Queen's Wood and the nearby Coldfall Wood between 2010 and 2012. It relates the results of these evaluations to information derived from documents and maps as well as recent botanical surveys.

The land has been continuously wooded for at least the last thousand years, and possibly since prehistoric times. For much of this time the wood was not untamed wildwood but was managed for its timber and firewood, and grazed by cattle and pigs. This has lead to radical changes in the nature of the wood.

Initially, the prehistoric woodland was probably dominated by lime with elm and oak. By the late Saxon period this had been replaced by open grazed wood-pasture dominated by hazel and oak. During the Middle Ages the woodland became degraded through over- exploitation and what was to become Queen's Wood was enclosed by a woodbank to protect it from grazing and trespass. Following its enclosure the wood was managed as coppiced woodland with oak standards and an understory of coppiced hornbeam, grown for firewood and charcoal.

Traces of the woodbank enclosure can still be seen in wood. The evaluation of sections of the woodbanks that enclosed both Queen's Wood and Coldfall Wood has established that they were probably constructed in the mid sixteenth century.

It is widely believed that there is a seventeenth century plague pit in the wood. Though no physical evidence has been found, documentary evidence indicates that if there is such a pit, it is not located in the wood but on former common land outside the wood.

Proposals in the second half of the 19th century to develop the wood as housing were met with public opposition and protest. As a result the wood was purchased by the Hornsey Borough Council and opened to the public in 1898.

Table of Contents

Section	Page
1. Introduction	4
2. Geology	8
3. Geo-archaeology. Organic remains and sub-fossil pollen.	8
4. Prehistoric environment and activity in Queen's Wood	10
5. Roman and Saxon Period	12
6. Early woodland management	12
7. The Domesday Survey	14
8. Wood-pasture	16
9. The ancient woodbank boundary	23
10. Churchyard Bottom and the plague pit	26
11. The decline of woodland and the battle to save Queen's Wood	27
12. Conclusion	34
13. Acknowledgements	35
14. Selected bibliography and further reading	36

List of figures

Figure	Page
Frontispiece: Queen's Wood - three year coppiced hazel and hornbeam with oak standards.	1
Fig.1. Sketch map of Highgate and Queen's Wood showing bedrock and superficial geology	7
Fig.2. Fragment of worked flint from Highgate Wood	11
Fig.3. Map of the Bishop of London's Manor of Hornsey in the 17th Century, annotated to show the location of Queen's Wood and Coldfall Wood.	16
Fig.4. Calendar scene for November from the 14th century Queen Mary Psalter.	17
Fig.5. Decorated page from the 14th century Lutteral Psalter.	18
Fig.6. A surviving portion of the woodbank boundary	21
Fig.7. Map of Queen's Wood showing outline of ancient coppice enclosure and common land.	22
Fig.8. Diagrammatic reconstruction of the woodbank.	24
Fig.9. Photograph of Churchyard Bottom Wood *c.*1884.	29
Fig.10. Post card of the 'big pond' and drinking fountain, c.1920.	31
Fig.11. Postcard of Queen's Wood looking north across open pasture towards Alexandra Palace, c.1898, prior to the provision of the iron fence.	32
Fig.12.Proposed park keeper's lodge *c.*1898.	33
Fig.13. Postcard of the rustic bridge over the Priory Brook at the Priory Gardens entrance to Queen's Wood, *c.*1920.	33

1. Introduction

Queen's Wood[2] is one of four areas of 'ancient woodland' in Haringey, land that has been wooded since at least 1600.[3] The closely spaced mature trees and the dense under-wood give the impression of a wood unchanged by time. It has probably been continuously wooded since shortly after the last Ice Age but the wood of today bears little resemblance to the original wildwood. The history of the wood reveals a story of dynamic and constant change, change driven in part by nature but more importantly by the human exploitation of the rich resources that the wood provided.

This history of the wood is based on a number of small-scale archaeological evaluations carried out in Queen's Wood and the nearby Coldfall Wood between 2010 and 2012. It relates the evidence obtained from these evaluations to information gleaned from publications, documents, maps and botanical surveys. It also considers how changes in ownership and management have affected the ecology of the wood.

Queen's Wood is an area of dense mixed woodland. The landscape of the wood is characterized by steep slopes and deeply incised stream valleys. The most significant historic feature is a boundary bank that traverses the wood from north to south.

Four main aims lay behind the archaeological assessments: to investigate the geological processes that created the dramatic landscape of the wood; to establish whether or not the land had always been wooded and if the mix and density of trees and plants has changed over time; to discover to what degree the wood had been managed or exploited in the past and the effect of this on the vegetation; and finally to establish the purpose and date of the woodbank.

The history of the wood is closely related to its proximity to London. It was part of the Bishop of London's extensive estates from early Saxon times.[4] The Bishop was Lord of the Manor of Hornsey and the estate included a large hunting park in Highgate that extended from Muswell Hill Road to the Spaniard Inn on Hampstead Lane.[5] In addition to the park, there were extensive areas of woodland. What was to become Queen's Wood was part of this woodland and lay outside and just to the east of the park. The Bishop's estate of Hornsey also included substantial areas of meadow, pasture, heath and cultivated land.

Queen's Wood was once part of an extensive area of woodland covering the clay-lands north of London. Today oak and hornbeam, dominate the wood. In contrast, the prehistoric landscape was mixed woodland dominated by lime, with elm, oak and hazel. Later, lime and elm declined and oak and hazel became dominant.[6] Whilst many of the trees and plants that grew in the wood in the past can still be found in the

[2] The wood has been known under a variety of different names in the past, but to avoid confusion, this note generally refers to the wood as Queen's Wood.
[3] Bevan 1992.
[4] Taylor 1976.
[5] Stokes 1984.
[6] Sidell *et al* 2000.

wood, the analysis of ancient pollen preserved in deposits in the wood has identified over twenty plants that are no longer found in the wood.[7]

The landscape of the wood and the different soils and habitats are directly related to the local geology.[8] Whilst some of the land on the sandier, high ground surrounding the wood may have been cleared for agriculture at an early date, the steep slopes and heavy clay of the lower parts of the wood were unsuited for agriculture and remained wooded.

Contrary to popular belief, Queen's Wood is not a remnant of an untamed forest that covered most of Middlesex in the Middle Ages, the 'Forest of Middlesex'.
The evidence indicates that it was semi-open, grazed wood-pasture situated in a mixed and varied agricultural landscape.

Having been managed as wood-pasture for many hundreds and perhaps thousands of years, by the beginning of the 16th century the wood had become degraded through over-exploitation. To ensure the protection and regeneration of the trees the Bishop of London enclosed both Queen's Wood and the nearby Coldfall Wood with woodbanks, traces of which can still be seen in the woods. The woods were then managed as coppiced woodland, with oak standards grown for timber and an understory of hornbeam, grown for firewood and charcoal.

The long continuity of ownership by the bishops of London was interrupted in the 17th century. This was a politically and socially turbulent time and during Cromwell's Commonwealth, the woods were seized and sold to a City businessman, Sir John Wollaston.

After the restoration of the Monarchy, the woods were passed back to the Church. Shortly after this, in 1665, the population of London was decimated by an outbreak of plague. It is widely believed that some of the victims of this plague were buried in the Queen's Wood, previously known as Churchyard Bottom Wood. This belief is based on 19th century accounts of the discovery of human remains. However, there is no recent evidence for a plague pit and the accounts indicate that if there was a plague pit in the area it was not located in the wood itself, but on former common land adjoining the wood.

The wood continued to be managed as coppiced woodland well into the 19th century. Towards the end of Queen Victoria's reign, the demand for timber and firewood had fallen. The population of London was rising rapidly, and the then owners of the land, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, earmarked the wood for housing development. This was met with public opposition and protest. As a result, the wood was bought by the Council, renamed Queen's Wood to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee and opened to the public in 1898.

It is now a public open space, a haven for wildlife and a place of leisure and relaxation. It has been further protected by being designated a Statutory Local Nature Reserve, a Site of Metropolitan Importance and recognised as a Regionally Important

[7] Scaife 2013.
[8] Clements 2015.

Geological Site (RIGS). It is no longer managed to provide timber, fuel and food, but managed to sustain and enhance its biological diversity.

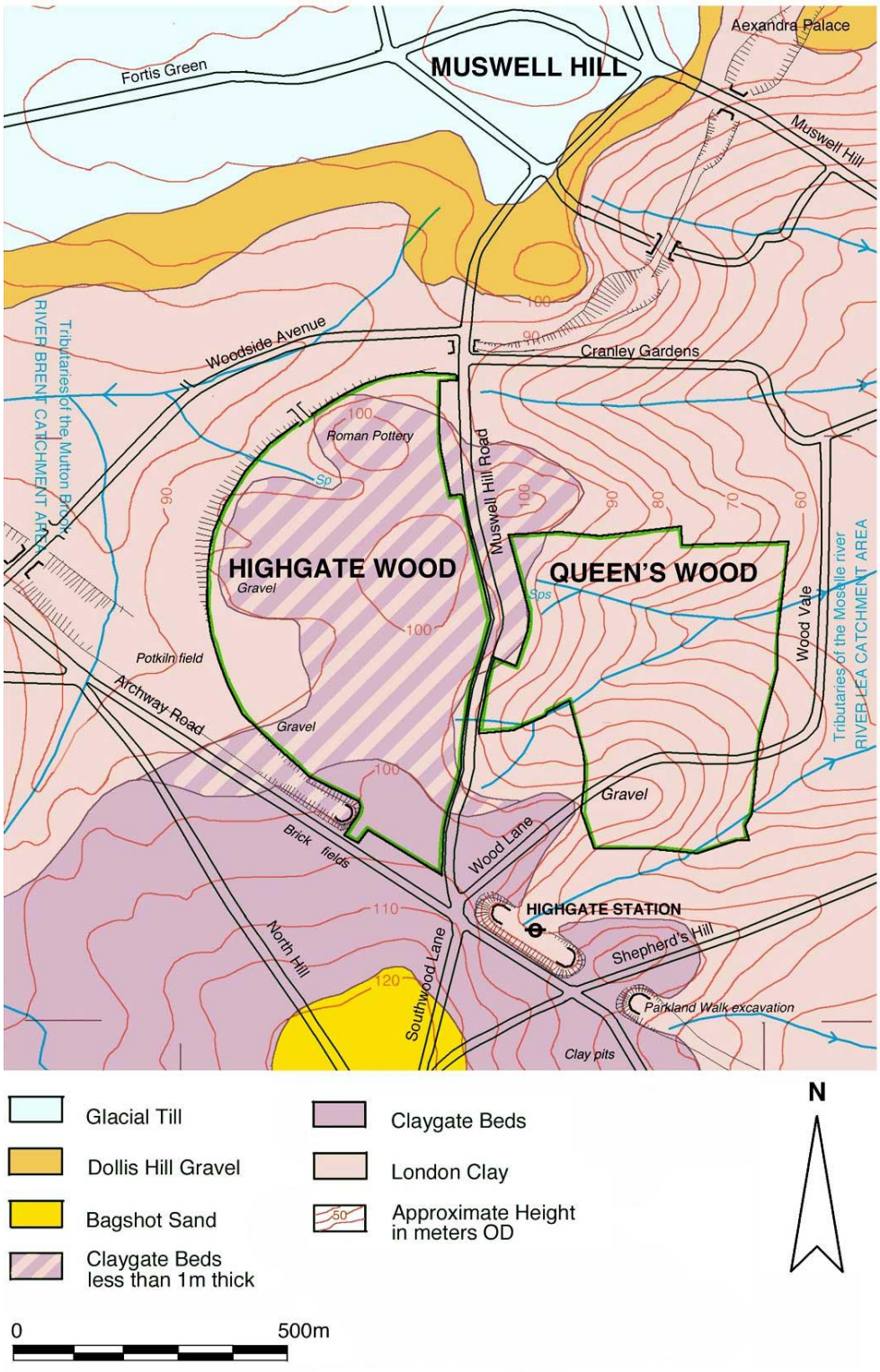

Fig.1. Sketch map of Highgate and Queen's Wood showing bedrock and superficial geology[9]

[9] Drawing; Michael Hacker 2013. Based on: OS 6" 1875 field proof, British Library Board, shelf mark OSCP maps, Mddx 12; and BGS map 256, 2006, North London 1:50,000, by permission of the Geological Survey, © NERC all right reserved.

2. Geology

The dramatic landscape of the wood and the wide variety of habitats are directly related to the geology underlying the wood and the geological processes that have shaped the ground. The following brief description of the geology it is based on a fuller description and explanation by Diana Clements, available on the London Geodiversity Partnership website.[10]

The underlying 'bed-rock', the London Clay Formation, was deposited in a sub-tropical sea some 55 million years ago. About 450,000 years ago, during the Anglian Ice Age, rivers and streams fed by glacial melt waters cut down this relatively soft rock to create the steep slopes and valleys that characterize the landscape of the wood and the eastern flank of Muswell Hill.

The higher ground of the wood and its immediate surroundings is situated on sandier, upper strata of the London Clay, known as the Claygate Beds (fig 1). The Claygate Beds were deposited in the shallower waters at the edge of the sea and are composed of alternating layers of sands silts and clay and because of the sand content they are slightly porous. The springs that rise in the wood and form some of the sources of the River Moselle[11] are located on the transition between the permeable Claygate Beds and underlying impervious London Clay. The better-drained soils on the high ground, based on this sand and silt rich soil, would have been suitable for early cultivation. However the acidic soil and the high mineral content mean that the land is prone to iron panning. This inhibits drainage and the land would have had a tendency to degrade to heath-land and to be colonized by plants such as heather and bracken.

3. Geo-archaeology. Organic remains and sub-fossil pollen.

A number of small-scale archaeological evaluations were carried out in Queen's Wood between 2010 and 2012. These included: observation and recording of the demolition of a 1930s paddling pool and the construction of the new nature pond; measured and geophysical surveys; and the excavation and recording of sections of the woodbanks in both Queen's Wood and the nearby Coldfall Woods.

Over the millennia layers of sediment up to 4m (12ft) deep have accumulated in the valley bottom. To obtain evidence of the history of the vegetation in the wood, soil samples were taken from the sediments under the nature pond and a boggy area near the head of the valley. Samples were also taken from the woodbanks in Queen's Wood and Coldfall Wood.

The soil samples from these deposits contained preserved ancient pollen grains. By careful analysis of the individual pollen grains it has been possible to identify the range of plants that grew in the wood in the past and their relative abundance.

So far, only the upper part of the valley sediments has been sampled. This has revealed a detailed picture of the changing nature of the wood from the early

[10] Clements 2015 (see: http://www.londongeopartnership.org.uk/reports.html)
[11] Pinching & Dell 2005, p.29.

medieval period to the present. It is possible that evidence of the Anglo-Saxon, Roman and prehistoric environments may survive in the lower parts of the deposits.

As well as pollen, the deposits also contain seeds, fragments of wood and evidence of fresh water pond life, such as the shells of pond snails and microscopic crustacea. Using advanced radiocarbon analysis of fragments of wood preserved in the sediments it has been possible to establish a dating framework for the sequence of changes in the woodland vegetation.[12] This has also made it possible to confirm a documented date for the construction of the woodbanks in Queen's Wood and Coldfall Wood.[13]

From the analysis of the soils samples a securely dated sequence of the changing nature of the vegetation in the wood over the last thousand years or so has been established.

Four main phases have been identified.[14]

Phase 1.

The deepest, and therefore earliest part of the deposit sampled was laid down in the late 12th or early 13th century. At this time the wood was open woodland dominated by oak and hazel but with other trees such as lime, beech, ash and holly. The wood was within an area of mixed agricultural land with evidence of cultivation and significant areas of pasture. There were also patches of heathland with heather. The streambed was open and well lit, fringed with water marginal plants, with areas of standing water.

Phase 2.

In the late 15th or early 16th century there was a dramatic change in the nature of the woodland. It became more open and tree density was at its minimum. Whilst some oak was still present, hazel was removed. Fossil pollen and spores from the London Clay, which was significant in the earlier deposits, reduced and became insignificant. Agricultural activity in the immediate surroundings increased and there are indications of cultivation of cereals and hops or hemp, with associated grasses and weeds of cultivated and disturbed land. The organic evidence of standing open fresh water, indicate that a pond was created at this time.

Phase 3.

Between the end of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century there are signs of woodland regeneration and a reduction in agricultural activity. Oak recovers and there is a greater variety of trees, particularly ash and beech. Importantly, hornbeam becomes significant at this time. Hazel pollen is still present but subordinate, possibly from hedgerow planting.

[12] SUERC-49789 (GU32355) and SUERC-49790 (GU32356)-2014 unpublished radiocarbon reports.
[13] VCR p. 38-55.
[14] Scaife 2013.

Phase 4.

The final phase of development covers the late seventeenth century to the present. The London plane acts as a marker for this phase. The wood becomes denser, oak and hornbeam increase and become dominant; lime, holly, yew and beech are important as well as some non-native trees such as Norway spruce, cupressus, and horse chestnut. By this time, agriculture has becomes less important and there is a corresponding reduction in herbs and grasses.

Recent botanical surveys of the wood have recorded the wide range of different trees, shrubs herbs and ferns that currently grow in the wood.[15] The evaluation of the sub-fossil pollen from the valley deposits has identified over twenty plants that are no longer found in the wood which reflect the changes that have occurred in the vegetation of the wood and the immediate surroundings. These include trees such as alder and pine; heathland plants such as heather and bracken; plants associated with grassland and cultivated fields such as buckwheat, mint, narrow leaf plantain, cornflower and knapweed; and plants associated with marsh-land and open fresh water including, reed mace, sphagnum moss and pond weed.[16]

4. Prehistoric environment and activity in Queen's Wood

So far it has not been possible to obtain direct evidence of the early prehistoric vegetation of Queen's Wood. However, evidence from the Thames Basin, West Heath, Hampstead and Epping Forest shows that after the last ice age the early woodland in the London area was dominated by native, small-leaved lime, together with oak, elm, hazel, alder and birch.[17]

In the London area, elm declined dramatically in the Middle to Late Neolithic period (*c.*5,000 BP), probably as a result of disease. A progressive decline in lime began in the Middle to Late Bronze Age (*c.*3,000 BP). The lime decline occurred at different times in different places and is associated with indications of woodland clearance and early agricultural exploitation of the land.[18]

The earliest evidence of human activity in Queen's Wood and Highgate Wood are some 800 prehistoric flint tools and waste chippings found as surface scatters and during the excavation of the Roman pottery-manufacturing site in Highgate Wood.[19] These date from the late Mesolithic to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age (*c.* 4,000-2,000 BC). [20] Similar isolated finds and scatters of flint tools have been found on Hampstead Heath and a prehistoric seasonal hunting camp as was found on West Heath. The characteristics of the flint tool assemblage indicate that it dates from the Mesolithic period.[21] As well as the Roman evidence, the excavation of the Roman

[15] Bevan 1992, Graham-Brown 2006.
[16] Scaife 2013.
[17] Scaife R, in Barnett et al 2010 p.9.
[18] Girling and Grieg (1977), Grieg (1990); Sidell *et al*, 2000, p. 19, 84, 113-4, Grant *et al* 2011.
[19] Rust , 2001.p.1.
[20] Cotton & Lacaille 1986.
[21] Girling and Grieg (1977); Lorimer,1979; Collins & Lorimer 1989, Dresner 2016.

pottery-manufacturing site in Highgate Wood identified fragments of coarse pottery dating from the Middle Bronze Age to the early Iron Age (*c*.1,500BC - 43AD).[22]

These prehistoric finds from Hampstead Heath, Queen's Wood and Highgate Wood are all concentrated on the better-drained, sand-rich high ground. The pollen and other organic evidence from the excavations at West Heath showed that during the late prehistoric period these areas were not dominated by woodland but included areas of grassland and heath. This would have provided an attractive habitat for the wild animals hunted by the early settlers, such as red deer, roe deer, elk, aurochs, and pig. Grazing by these animals may have contributed to the reduction of woodland cover and the clearance of the land.[23]

The extent and nature of early woodland cover in lowland Europe is a matter of some debate. Whilst some argue that it was dominated by dense forest, others argue that it was maintained as open wood-pasture by herds of grazing animals, and this may have been the case, at least in this part of north London.[24]

Fig.2. Fragment of worked flint from Highgate Wood[25]

[22] Brown & Sheldon, in preparation.
[23] Davis 1987, p.175; Legge &Conway 1988; Connor & Sykes 2010.
[24] Vera, 2000, Rotherham, 2013; Hartnel and Plieninger, 2014; Birks (in press).
[25] Image © Michael Hacker 2016

5. Roman and Saxon Period

A single fragment of Roman pottery is believed to have been found in Queen's Wood.[26] Other than this there is no evidence of Roman or Saxon activity in the wood. However, the Roman pottery-manufacturing site excavated in Highgate Wood is only some 500m to the north west of the wood. Whilst the layout of the pottery indicated that it was situated in an area free of trees, the potters would have needed to exploit local woodland to provide fuel for their kilns. Charcoal from the site shows that they used oak, hornbeam and hawthorn, some of which may have been obtained from what is now Queen's Wood.[28]

6. Early woodland management

It is widely believed that the ancient woodlands of Haringey are remnants of a medieval wildwood that once extended from the outskirts of City of London to the Chilterns, the 'Forest of Middlesex'. This belief seems to be largely based on the writings of two medieval chroniclers, William FitzStephen (d.1191), a cleric to Thomas Becket, and Matthew Paris (d.1259), a monk at the abbey of St Albans.[29] However, archaeological and documentary evidence indicates that though there were extensive areas of woodland in the area, they were not part of a wildwood forest, either in the sense of a continuous tract of unmanaged wildwood or as a domain subject to Medieval Forest Law.[30]

By the end of the Iron Age (43AD) most of southeast England had been tamed by early farmers and cleared of much of its original woodland cover.[31] It has been suggested that 'By the Norman conquest of England (1066AD) there was little or no 'natural woodland' (wildwood) left in England. Virtually all the woodland recorded in the Domesday survey was there because a conscious decision had been made to retain and manage it as a resource.' [32] The pollen evidence indicates that by the early Middle Ages Queen's Wood was part of an area of wood that was one element of a mixed agricultural landscape, a landscape that included cultivated land, meadows, pasture and heath.[33]

That there were areas of heath-land on the commons and in Queen's Wood is confirmed by 17th century references to the cutting of 'furze' (gorse) and the collection of bracken. Both had restrictions placed on when they could be cut. Bracken could only be cut up to the 24th day of August and gorse from the 29th day of September to the 1st day of May. Gorse would have been used as fuel and bracken as bedding for animals and surprisingly, to maintain roads '*appointed for the repaireinge the highway''*[34]

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[26] Brown A, pers. com.
[28] Brown & Sheldon 1969-74.
[29] FizStephan, Antiquary, 1772, p.26); Paris M. (in Ridley 1867) p.39-40; Prickett 1842, p.4; Lloyd 1888, p.4; Sharpe 1919.p19; Marcham & Marcham 1929, p.xii; Madge 1938, p.25-26
[30] Sullivan 1994, p.36-37.
[31] Dark 2000, p.34, 45.
[32] White 1972, p.41.
[33] Scaife, 2013.
[34] Bishops Court Rolls1671, quoted in Silvertown 1973, p.11.

Timber and wood underpinned almost every aspect of pre-industrial society. Three types of tree that were particularly important to the pre-industrial economy dominate the archaeological record from Queen's Wood: oak, hazel and hornbeam. These three trees provided a wide variety of resources but each was valued primarily for a specific range of application: oak mainly as timber for the construction of buildings and ships, hazel mainly for wattle and fencing panels, and hornbeam for firewood and charcoal.[35]

As well as the primary production of timber and wood, these trees were also valued for a range of secondary products.

Oak provided acorns for pig feed and oak galls for ink. Oak bark was particularly valued for tanning. A lease of 1820 stipulated that 'barkable' trees should be felled between the first of April and the last day of June to allow the bark to be easily removed.[36]

Hazel is the only native British tree to produce edible nuts. The nuts keep well and are highly nutritious. Large quantities of burnt hazelnut shells have been found on many Mesolithic, Neolithic and early Bronze Age sites.[37] The long, straight flexible shoots from pollarded and coppiced hazel trees were widely used for fence panels, wattle and a wide range of woven products.

As well as providing firewood and charcoal, hornbeam was valued for its strength and resistance to splitting making it suitable for specialised purposes, such as yokes, cogwheels, chopping blocks and kitchen tools.

A distinction needs to be made between the management of woodland for timber and its management for wood. Trees grown for timber also provided firewood from trimmings, known as lop-and-top. But 'wood' was mainly the product of trees that were periodically cut back to stimulate the growth of multiple shoots to provide round-wood rods and poles. Trees can be cut two or three meters above ground level, just above browsing height, as pollards, or cut down to ground level as coppiced stools. Hazel, hornbeam and oak all respond well to both pollarding and coppicing. As well as producing rods and poles, pollarding and coppicing will stimulate the production of hazel nuts and acorns and in times of drought, leafy shoots can be fed to cattle as fodder.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both pollarding and coppicing. Pollarding above ground level protects the new shoots from grazing animals and allows the ground to be used productively as wood pasture for grazing. The short trunks of pollarded trees (bollings[38]), deprived of side shoots by grazing, produce straight-grained, knot-free timber suitable for splitting or cleaving into planks, roof shingles and staves. However, the crowns of pollarded trees are prone to rot, vulnerable to storm damage and as the crown is between 3-5 m above ground level (6 -15 ft) the rods and poles are difficult to harvest.

[35] Evelyn, 1662, passim
[36] Guildhall MS 12,395, 1820.
[37] Pryor 2010 , p.32.
[38] Rackham 2003, p.33

The rods and poles from coppiced trees are easier to harvest and are less prone to storm damage. The cut coppice stools are resistant to rot and can remain productive for many hundreds of years. But the new growth needs to be protected from browsing and the land cannot be used productively for grazing for some years after the stools have been cut.

The timing between cycles of cutting coppiced woodland is determined to a large extent by the type of tree and the required size of rods and poles. As a result, managed woodlands tend to be dominated by a limited range of trees. Queen's Wood and West Heath were initially dominated by oak and hazel and more recently by oak and hornbeam. Epping Forest was initially dominated by lime, oak and hazel and only later by its present cover of beech and birch.[39] The woodland in one of the Bishop of London's other parks, in Crondon (Stock, Essex), was dominated by oak and birch.[40]

Some surviving leases specify how often the woods were to be coppiced. In the seventeenth century the trees in Queen's Wood were expected to be coppiced every five years.[41] Leases in the eighteenth century stipulate that the woods should be cut every eight years[42], and a lease of 1820 stipulated that the underwood should be cut every eight to ten years.[43]

7. The Domesday Survey

The Domesday survey of England (AD1086-7) provides a great deal of valuable information on land use in the early Middle Ages, including information on the extent and type of woodlands. It has been interpreted by some as documenting a landscape dominated by wood-pasture.[44]

Queen's Wood was situated in the ancient manor of Hornsey and had been part of the extensive land holdings of the Bishops of London since the Saxon period.[45] The Bishop's lands were managed to produce a wide variety of agricultural products to supply the needs of the Bishop's estate and for sale in London. The products of the woodlands would have made a particularly important contribution to the economy of the manor. 'All rights to the woods were always reserved, and these included not only the large enclosed woods but also any wood growing anywhere on the manor…'. [46] There are records of large quantities of timber and firewood being taken from the woods for use directly by the Bishop as well as for sale.[47]

[39] Grant, 2002.
[40] Robey 1991.
[41] Marcham & Marcham 1929 p154
[42] Brown & Sheldon –in prep.
[43] Guildhall MS
[44] Rotherham 2013, p.3.
[45] Madge, Early Records, 1939, p.36.
[46] Taylor, 1976, p.308.
[47] Silvertown 1978, p.16.

Unfortunately for the local historian, Domesday does not include any specific mention or detail for Hornsey. It is generally assumed that Hornsey was subsumed in the records for the Bishop of London's holdings in Stepney.[48]

The entries for Stepney include substantial areas of woodland. They are generally described as 'woodland for x pigs' (e.g. *'silva a quigentis porcis'* – wood for five hundred pigs), with the exception of one parcel, presumably coppiced, which is described as 'wood for fencing' (*nemus ad sepes*[49]), [50]. It seems reasonable to assume that much of this woodland would have been concentrated on the heavy clay soils, land that would have been difficult to cultivate. But the Bishop's land was not exclusively devoted to woodland. The entry for Stepney also includes mention of cultivated land: (land for 25 ploughs), land for haymaking (meadow for 25 ploughs) and grazing land (pasture for the livestock).[51]

It seems clear that by the time of Domesday some of this agricultural and grazing land was located in the Manor of Hornsey as there are a number of Saxon derived local place names that refer to clearings or enclosures amongst the woods.[52] In 1303, 54.5 acres (22.06 ha) of winter crops were planted on the demesne land in the manor of Haringay (Hornsey). There were eight oxen, which would have been used as draft animals to pull ploughs and carts.[53]

[48] Marcham & Marcham 1929. P.xvi, Madge 1938 p 26
[49] Google Translate interprets '*nemus*' as a grove and '*silva*' as a wood.
[50] Madge 1936, p.36-7.
[51] Williams &Martin 1992, p.358-359.
[52] Madge, Early Records, 1939, p.36.
[53] Taylor 1976, p .274 and 277

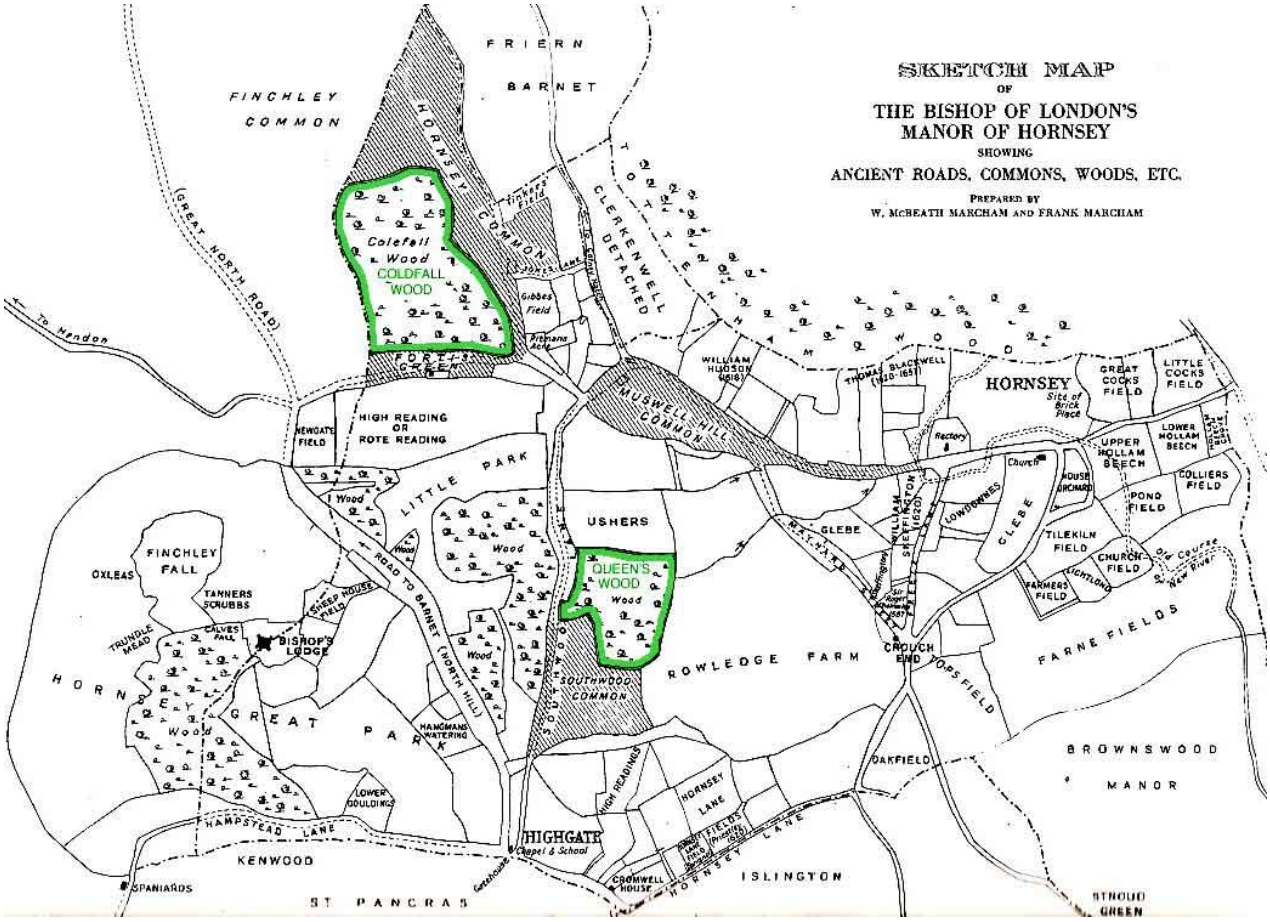

Fig.3. Map of the Bishop of London's Manor of Hornsey in the 17th Century, annotated to show the location of Queen's Wood and Coldfall Wood. [54]

A number of areas of cleared arable land (Little Redings, High or Rote Reading) are mentioned as early as the 14th century. These field names are of old English derivation from 'Redings' or 'Readings' (Rydings=cleared land).[55] The suffix '…leah', '….ley or '….. lea' also indicates a clearing as in 'Finchley'. Oxleas is mentioned in 1540, and is indicated on a map of the Bishops Manor in the 17th century (fig 3.).[56] It comprised meadow-land and was part of the herbage of the Bishops Park.[57] The same map shows a large field between the northern boundary of the park and Fortis Green as 'High Reading or Rote Reading' and a smaller field to the south of Southwood Common as 'High Readings'.

8. Wood-pasture

Turning to the nature of the wood, there is documentary evidence that shows that much of the woodland was wood pasture with selected trees grown as standards for timber and pollarded trees managed for wood. In 1242 there was a gift of five pollards from the Bishop's woods to the Kings clerk for his hearth. [58] The pollen evidence

[54] after Marcham and Marcham 1929.
[55] Silvertown 1978, p.13.
[56] Marcham and Marcham 1929.
[57] VCR 1980,V.6, p.55.
[58] Silvertown 1978, p.16.

confirms that in contrast to the present dense woodland, dominated by oak and hornbeam, at the time of Domesday the wood was open wood-pasture, dominated by oak and hazel, together with some lime, beech, ash and holly. There was a wide variety of ground-cover plants and pollen from aquatic plants such as arrowhead and water violet show that the stream flowing through the wood was in an open well-lit environment. As well as woodland plants the pollen evidence includes plants indicative of open and cultivated land, meadow, pasture and heathland.[59]

Fig. 4. Calendar scene for November from the 14th century Queen Mary Psalter showing swineherds beating pollarded oak trees to knock down acorns for pigs. [60]

[59] Scaife 2013.

[60] © British Library Board, Royal 2 B VII, f. 81v. England (London?); *circa* 1310-1320.

Fig.5. Decorated page from the 14th century Lutteral Psalter showing (left margin) swineherd scaling a lopped oak standard to knock down acorns for pigs. [61]

[61] © British Library Board, Add. MS 42130, fo. 59v. Page 8.
Lincolnshire, c.1320-40.

Pigs were of great significance in the medieval economy. After beef, pork was the second most important meat in aristocratic households and bacon and ham were the most significant source of meat and dietary fat for the poor.

Medieval pig husbandry was closely related to the distribution of woodland. Pannage, the right to charge for permission to graze pigs in woodland was an important source of income, but to limit damage to the trees and land access was restricted to the winter months.[62]

The Domesday reference to the woodland as 'woodland for pigs' is significant as it implies that the woodland was wood-pasture, rooted by pigs and grazed at other times of the year by other animals. The Reeves account for a period in 1284 recorded the receipt of £1.13s. for the pannage of pigs belonging to Hornsey and Finchley in the bishop's park.[63] . The Bishop derived income from pannage and there is a record of 1,000 pigs in the park in 1359. [64] Prior to 1816 there was little distinction between Finchley and Hornsey, [65] and there is a record that herbage rights had been established in 'Finchley wood' by 1410.[66]

That Queen's Wood was used for pannage is supported by a seventeenth century reference to Queen's Wood as 'Sowwood' and the adjacent common as 'Sowwood Common'.[67] Another indicator that the wood was used for pannage is the type of oak that predominates in Queen's Wood. There are two primary varieties of English oak, sessile and pedunculate oak. Pedunculate oak is the predominant variety of oak in Queen's Wood, [68] and it has been suggested that swineherds favoured pedunculate oak, as the acorns are larger and easier to harvest (figs 4. & 5.). [69]

Grazed wood-pasture may persist as woodland for many hundreds of years, but it is not sustainable as woodland in the long run, particularly if pigs root the land. Whilst grazing encourages grass and meadow plants, it inhibits the regeneration of trees. The felling of trees for timber and fuel, storm damage and rot will gradually reduce the density of the mature trees and land will tend to revert to open pasture. In 1579 the bishop was accused by the crown of neglecting his woods and unlawfully felling and selling some 400 trees. In his defence he claimed that the trees 'were not timber trees, but pollards, doted and decayed at the top'.[70] In his review of agriculture in Middlesex, John Middleton commented on the condition of Finchley Common: 'On this common there are several thousand pollards, of hornbeam and oak, which never can produce a shilling to the lord of the manor, so long as they are permitted to occupy their present situation. Their number must annually decrease, as no new ones are permitted to rise, and I observed that several had lately been grubbed up.'[71]

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[62] Albarella, *Pig husbandry and pork consumption in medieval England*, in Woolgar et al 2006, p.72-87
[63] Silvertown 1978, p.16.
[64] Brown & Sheldon, in preparation.
[65] The boundary between Finchley and Hornsey was only finally settled on the enclosure of Finchley common in 1816.Stokes 2006, p.8.
[66] VCR p. 38-55.
[67] Marcham & Marcham, p.164.
[68] Jorgensen 2003, p.394
[69] Graham-Brown, 2006, p.60.
[70] Stype 1771, p.47.
[71] Middleton 1798, p.100.

The reduction in the density of woodland is reflected in the pollen record. By the late 15th or early 16th century there had been a dramatic change in the nature of the woodland. It had become more open and tree density was at its minimum. Whilst oak was still present, hazel was no longer significant. One or more open freshwater ponds fringed with reeds and rushes had been created in the streambed, perhaps as drinking ponds for cattle. Agricultural activity had increased and cereals were being cultivated, probably on the lighter sand-rich soils derived from the Claygate Beds (fig 1.). [72]

[72] Scaife 2013.

Fig.6. Queen's Wood 2017. A surviving portion of the woodbank and the explanatory information board. [73]

[73] Image © Michael Hacker 2017,

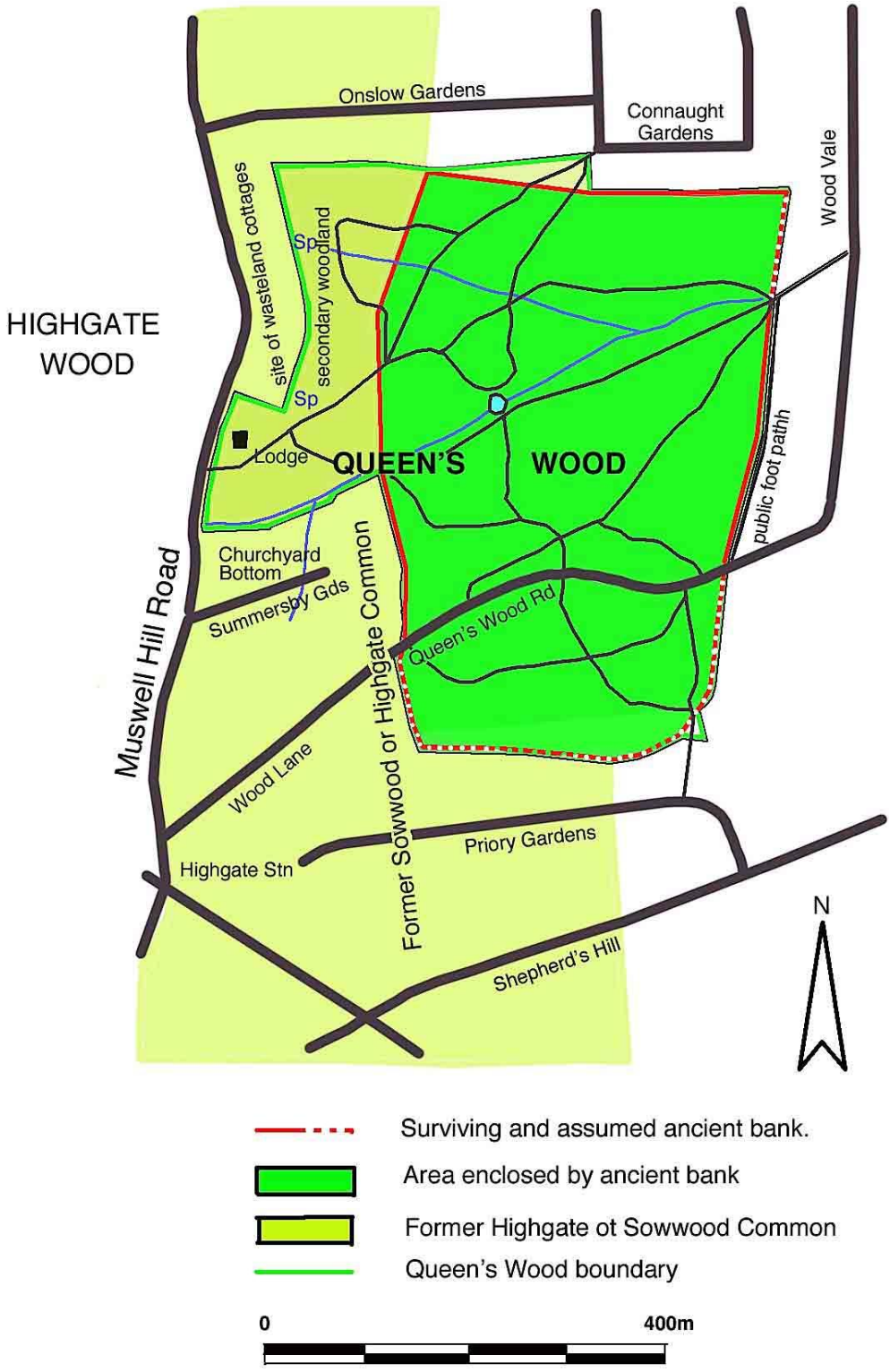

Fig.7. Map of Queen's Wood showing outline of ancient coppice enclosure and common land. [74]

[74] Drawing Michael Hacker 2016, Based on OS 6" 1936, © British Library Board Maps.

9. The ancient woodbank boundary

By the mid 16th century the widespread degeneration of woodland and the shortages of both timber and wood had become a matter of national concern. During the reign of Henry VIII, Parliament enacted 'The Bill for the Preservation of Woods ' (1543). The bill required all managed woodlands to be enclosed for a period of seven years after coppicing to protect the new growth on the coppiced stools from browsing animals.[75]

The most prominent historic feature in the wood is the remains of a woodbank that was probably built in response to the Bill. It enclosed some 16 ha [40 acres] of the wood with a perimeter of about 1.5 km [*c*.1mile] (fig.7.). Laboratory evaluation of the original soil buried under the bank has established that it was constructed in the 16th century. [76] There is a similar enclosure bank in the nearby Coldfall Wood built for the same reason and at the same time. [77] (See footnote.[78])

[75] Pickering, 1763, p.212.
[76] French 2013.
[77] Stokes 2006, p.208.
[78] In the mid-sixteenth century the Bishop of London enclosed some of his woodland on Finchley Common (Coldfall Wood). This followed a long running dispute with the people of Finchley over their commoner's rights:
'In 1533 Finchley men asserted their traditional right to coolts for swine in Finchley wood, which they said had been destroyed by the bishop's woodward, who had also taken away their hedging bills. In 1562 they defended their claim to common of pasture 'from time immemorial' against the lord's proposal to divide and separate a quarter of his woods. Judgment was given for the bishop, in accordance with the Act of 1543 for the preservation of woods (35 Hen. VIII, c.17). Possibly Great Colefall (later Coldfall) was the quarter so inclosed: when it was leased in 1645 with the other demesne woods it was called 'the wood in Finchley common'.' (*L. & P. Hen. VIII*, vi, p. 129). VCR p.38-55.

At the time of the judgment (1562) the Bishop and lord of the manor, Edmund 'bloody' Bonner (d.1569), was confined to the Marshalsea prison for refusing to recognize the supremacy of the English church and continuing to celebrate Mass [http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02675a.htm].

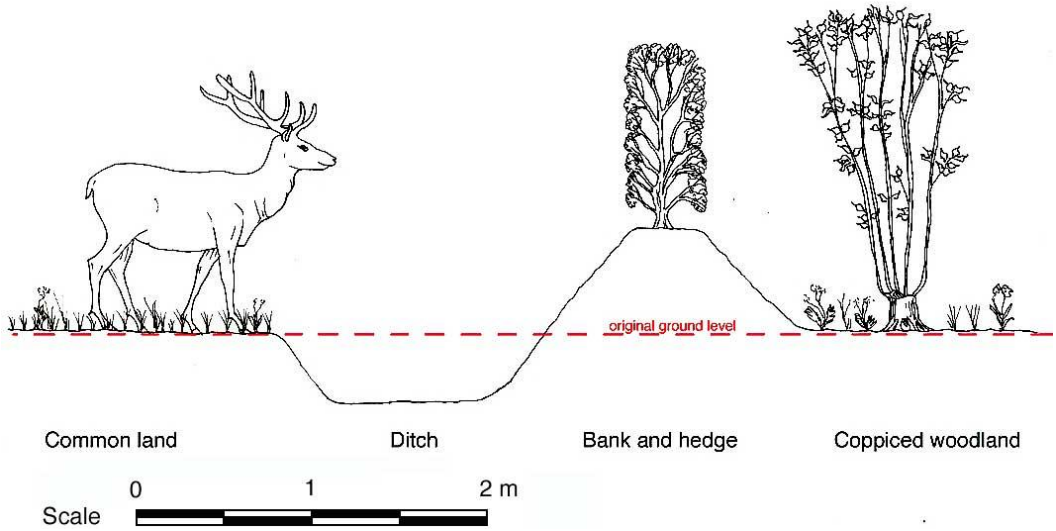

Fig.8. Diagrammatic reconstruction of the woodbank (based on archaeological excavation and survey). [79]

Archaeological evaluations of sections through the woodbanks in both Queen's Wood and Coldfall Wood have shown that they were of a similar design and dimensions. The surviving remains of the woodbanks have been greatly reduced by erosion over the years, but they represent what would have been a formidable barrier, designed to prevent deer and other browsing animals from entering the wood. They consisted of an external ditch backed by an earth bank. This would have been topped by a fence or hedge. The total height from the base of the ditch to the top of the hedge would have been about 2m (*c*.6ft.). (fig 8.) The banks are marked in places by gnarled and wizened pollarded hornbeams that probably started life as hedgerow trees.[80]

The ditch would have needed to be cleared from time to time and the bank-top fence or hedge would have required regular maintenance. Access would have been easy from the adjoining common land, but where the wood adjoined other land a path or track on the outer edge of the ditch would have been provided. The public footpath on the eastern boundary of Queen's Wood may be a relic of an access track.

Prior to the enclosure of the wood, grazing and rooting by pigs would have promoted soil erosion on the steeper slopes of the wood. This is confirmed by the significant presence of fossil pollen derived from the underlying London Clay in the valley deposits. At about the same time as the woodbank was constructed the pollen record shows a dramatic reduction in this fossil pollen, which may have been a direct consequence of the exclusion of pigs and grazing animals from the wood.[81]

[79] Drawing © Michael Hacker 2016
[80] Silvertown 1978, p.21.
[81] Scaife 2013.

The enclosure of the wood and the control of grazing caused the nature of the wood to change once again. The pollen record shows signs of woodland regeneration. Importantly, hornbeam, which is one of the dominant trees today, becomes significant. Hazel pollen is still present but subordinate and possibly derived from hedgerow planting. There are significant changes in the proportion of pollen from ground cover plants as the density of trees increases, pollen from ground cover plants decreases. [82] Recently a number of areas in Queen's Wood have been coppiced to encourage regeneration of the trees and to increase bio-diversity. Following the coppicing of one area in 2007 over a hundred additional plant species were recorded two years later.[83]

The wood had been dominated by oak and hazel for hundreds of years, but from the late16th century hornbeam replaced hazel as the dominant underwood. Hornbeam has the highest calorific value of all the native British hardwoods and would have been grown mainly for firewood and charcoal. Charcoal may have been produced in the wood before the bank enclosing the wood was constructed as the soil sealed under the boundary bank contains finely divided charcoal.[84]

The early names of the woods confirm that they were coppiced and used for charcoal production. Coppiced woodlands in Middlesex were known as a 'falls'. By the mid seventeenth century Queen's Wood was referred to as 'Sow woodfall alias oldfall with little fall adjoining' and the nearby Coldfall Wood, was known as 'Great Colefall' alias 'Finchley Coalfall'.[85] By the eighteenth century Queen's Wood was also known as 'Little Cole Fall' and Coldfall Wood is shown as 'Coal Fall' on the inclosure map of 1815.[86]

The land between the woodbank and Muswell Hill Road had been common land. (fig.7.) This was an extension of Sowwood Common (later known as Southwood or Highgate Common).[87] An early map shows that part of this common land had been incorporated into the wood at least by 1757, [88] well before the inclosures of 1815.[89] This part of the wood probably only became wooded after its annexation and is categorized as 'secondary woodland'.[90] However, a lease of 1820 states that part of this secondary woodland, had been grubbed up and fenced. This is an area of comparatively flat land and is referred to in the lease as 'a strawberry field'.[92] It was located on the highest part of this section of the wood and is underlayed by the Claygate Beds. The sandier, well-drained soil would have been suitable for this form of horticulture. Later it became known as the 'tent field' and survived as a grassy clearing up to the 1970s.[93]

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[82] Scaife, 2013.
[83] Bevan 2017.
[84] French 2013.
[85] Calandar Close Rolls 1647, quoted in Silvertown 1978, p.17.
[86] Hornsey inclosure map 1815
[87] Silvertown 1978, p.20
[88] Roque map 1757
[89] Hornsey inclosure map 1815
[90] Graham-Brown, 2006, p.53.
[92] Guildhall MS 12395, 1820.
[93] Chivers 1982, p.7.

10. Churchyard Bottom and the plague pit

One of the most significant events of the 17th century was the resurgence of bubonic plague, the Great Plague. Plague had affected the population of London from time to time since the Black Death of 1348. In 1665/7 it returned and decimated the population.

There is a widely held belief that some of the victims of the plague are buried in Queen's Wood. This seems to be solely based on the writings of two local, 19th century, antiquarians.

Prickett (1842) describes; *'…….immense numbers of contagious corpses bought from the metropolis and buried in Highgate Common. This depository is a hollow near Muswell Hill Road adjoining the Wood, which with the spot itself still retains the name of Church-yard Bottom and where a few feet from the surface have been found vast quantities of human bones, intermixed with darkened strata of earth'.* [94]

Lloyd (1888) has a slightly different description of the site; *'At the back of the west side of Wood Lane there is a deep dell lying between it and the Muswell Hill Road (Southwood Lane). This is an old plague pit where in 1665 large numbers of corpses were carted across the fields from London and shot into a hole. Highgate Common then adjoined the wood, which the spot itself, still retains the name of ' Churchyard Bottom' and where a few feet from the surface have been found quantities of human bones intermixed with a darkened strata of soil.'* [95]

Later in the same volume Lloyd comments on the comparatively small number of burials recorded in Highgate in 1665, which were about the average for a year. He notes: *'These small numbers are the more remarkable considering the number of infected corpses carted from the metropolis and shot into a pit in Highgate Common. This pit is in a hollow on the right side of Muswell Hill Road adjoining the wood and it still goes by the suggestive name of "Churchyard Bottom" where a few feet from the surface have been found vast quantities of human bones intermixed with a darkened strata of earth."* [96] ,

Responsibility for recording deaths and organizing burials lay with the numerous parishes of London. They organized the provision of numerous mass burial pits for the victims of the plague, some in existing church graveyards, others on the outskirts of the city.[97]

Notwithstanding the dramatic descriptions in Defoe's fictionalised account of the plague years, social order did not collapse and detailed parish records of deaths were maintained. Archaeological excavation of plague pits show that though closely packed, often without coffins, the bodies were buried with respect and in an orderly fashion. [98]

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[94] Pricket 1842 p.2.
[95] Lloyd 1888, p.168.
[96] Lloyd p.396.
[97] Tindall, 2016, p.130-134.
[98] Keily, 2017.

Given the extensive provision of burial sites in and close to the city it seems most unlikely that anyone would have taken the trouble to cart corpses over 8km (*c*.5 miles) across what was then largely open countryside to dump them in a pit in Queen's Wood without anyone recording the event.

There is no mention of a plague pit in the surviving Bishop's Court Rolls for the period and nearly a hundred years after the plague, an eighteenth century lease still refers to the wood as 'Southwood otherwise Sowe Wood' (1746). [99] It was not until the early 19th century that the wood became known as Churchyard Bottom Wood. Somersby Road is shown as Churchyard Bottom on a map of 1898.[100]

The 19th century accounts do not say when the bones were found, who found them or what happened to the bones after they had been discovered. There seems to be no other evidence for a plague pit. Geo-archaeological investigation of the soil adjacent to the area formerly known as Churchyard Bottom did not find any indication of human remains.[101]

The 19th century accounts make it clear that the bones were not found in the wood itself but in the adjoining Highgate (Sowwood) Common. If there was plague pit in the area, the most likely site for it was identified by the late Joan Schwitzer as the area under the present builders yard, between the southern edge of Queen's Wood and Summersby Road.[102] (fig 7.).

11. The decline of woodland and the battle to save Queen's Wood

After the woods had been enclosed in the 16th century the pollen evidence shows that the vegetation becomes denser and the variety of plants and trees begins to reflect the present nature of the wood. Oak and hornbeam increase and become dominant; lime,[103] holly, yew and beech become more important together with some non-native trees such as Norway spruce, Cupressus, and horse chestnut. [104] Agriculture becomes less important and there is a corresponding reduction in herbs and grasses.[105]

By the late 16th century coal had largely replaced wood as a fuel. The extent of woodland in the Bishop's manor declined from 700 acres in the mid 17th century to 278 acres in the late 19th century.[106] As early as 1579 Bishop Aylmer (b.1521-

[99] Brown & Sheldon in preparation
[100] Beresford 1998, fig 6.
[101] Hacker, 2004
[102] Schwitzer, 1979, p.8.
[103] The lime tree pollen found in the most recent part of the deposit is not an echo of the small-leaved lime that once dominated the prehistoric woodland. It is probably derived from two other varieties of lime that grow in the wood today: the hybrid common lime and the native, large-leaved lime (Bevan pers.com.). The pollen record indicates that they were probably introduced to the wood sometime after it was enclosed in the sixteenth century.

[104] The London plane tree pollen probably derives from trees planted in the early 20th century. There is an avenue of plane trees along the valley path leading to the nature pond, and there are a number of plane trees on the 'tent field' on the north eastern edge of the wood.

[105] Scaife 2013.
[106] Beresford 1998, p3.

d.1594) was using coal rather than wood to heat his houses in London and Harnsey (Hornsey). [107] In the 17th Century during the Commonwealth, Cromwell himself gave £40 to the poor of St Giles to buy coal as wood had become too expensive.[108]

The wood had formed part of the Bishop of London's extensive estates from early Saxon times. But this long continuity of ownership was interrupted in the 17th century. This was a politically and socially turbulent time. During the interregnum of Cromwell's Commonwealth (1647-1660), the manor of Hornsey was seized by Parliament. The Bishop's estates, including Queen's Wood, were then sold to Sir John Wollaston (d.1658), a city merchant, alderman and Lord Mayor in 1643.[109]

After the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 Hornsey manor was returned to the church and in 1868 the land was passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The land was then leased to a series of lessees, the last of whom was William Murray, later Earl of Mansfield of Ken Wood. In1884 the earl's trustees were persuaded to sell their rights back to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.[110]

But by the mid 19th century the woodlands had become economically less important and large areas had been grubbed up.[111] Highgate Wood and Queen's Wood survived but appear to have become neglected and valued more for their potential for housing development than their woodland products. Though regarded as trespassers by the owners, the growing urban population of London had adopted the neglected woods as a popular pleasure spots; *'On bank holidays the traffic along the Archway Road & the other main roads is very large & the trespassers in the Woods are very numerous'*[112]

The woods were somewhere to escape from the smoke and grime of Victorian London and had been made more accessible by the construction of the Archway Road in 1813 and the opening of the Highgate railway station (1867).

In1884 the Earl of Mansfield's trustees were persuaded to sell their rights back to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.[113] Having regained possession of the estate from the Earl the commissioners intended to see them developed for housing. A footpath across Queen's Wood that had been used by the public for at least 25 years was closed[114] and the commissioners put up signs prohibiting access to both Queen's Wood and Highgate Wood. (fig.9) [115]

[107] Stype 1771, p48.
[108] Tindall 2016, p.157.
[109] VCR p140, fn 8.; Guildhall MSS, 12386, 12399; Marcham & Marcham, pp. xix-xxi
[110] VCH p.154
[111] Brown & Sheldon in preparation
[112] letter to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Jan.1885, quoted in Bersford, 1998, p.6-7.
[113] VCH p.154
[114] Beresford, 1998, p 9.
[115] Hammerson 2014, p.89.

Fig.9. Photograph of .[116]

The prospect of losing access to the woods aroused considerable public concern and protest. Eventually, in 1885, the Commissioners agreed to give Highgate Wood (then known as Gravelpit Wood) to the Corporation of London. But having given up Highgate Wood to the people, the Commissioners felt justified in proceeding with their plans to develop Queen's Wood.

Henry Williams (1822-1897), a prominent local politician, led a campaign for Queen's Wood to be acquired for the public and in 1886 the local Council passed a resolution authorising the purchase of the wood.[117] The Commissioners had agreed to sell the land but the council could not raise the money and nothing came of this.

But in 1893 the campaign to have the wood made accessible to the public was renewed. The trigger was a proposal by the Hornsey Charity Commissioners to build houses on former common or wasteland between the Queen's Wood and Muswell Hill Road. The Lord of the Manor had originally made the land available for parish almshouses and a group of cottages, known as 'Wasteland Cottages', had been built for the 'deserving poor'. The Hornsey Charities asked the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to transfer part of the wood to them to make their site large enough to build a terrace of new houses. In exchange they offered to allow the Ecclesiastical

[116] Photograph, *c.*1884, ldbcm:1978.399 (Haringey Archive & Museum Service)

[117] The part of Middlesex in which the wood is situated has been administered by a number of different authorities. The Hornsey Local Board was established in 1867 and was succeeded by the Hornsey Urban District Council (1894), The Hornsey Borough Council (1903) and eventually, the London Borough of Haringey (1965).

Commissioners to build two roads across the land to provide access from Muswell Hill Road to the wood so as to open up the land for development.[118]News of this proposal aroused great opposition, letters and leaders in the Times and the local press.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners were willing to sell the wood for £25,000. Hornsey UDC had only resolved to give £10,000 towards the cost of purchase and other sources of finance needed to be found to meet the shortfall. In the second half of the 19th century a number of voluntary bodies had been established to campaign for the preservation of land for public use, particularly for the growing urban population of London. These were approached by the council for assistance, together with influential local residents and also other local authorities whose residents would benefit from the wood.

A committee was formed with the aim of securing the purchase and preservation of the wood for the public, the Churchyard Bottom Wood, Highgate Joint Committee.[119]

Eventually a consortium was established to fund the purchase of the wood comprising; the Hornsey UDC, the London County Council, the Middlesex County Council, the City Parochial Foundation, the Islington Vestry, The St Pancras Vestry and private individuals. [120]

However, these councils did not have the powers to purchase the wood. The matter was raised in the House of Commons and in 1897 an Act of Parliament, the Highgate Woods Preservation Act, was enacted; *'An Act to authorise the acquisition of the lands known as Churchyard Bottom Wood Highgate for the purpose of a public open space.'*

As well as authorising the Hornsey council to acquire the land, and all three councils to fund the purchase '*with a view to their being preserved for ever as an open space'* the Act stipulated that if the District Council did purchase the wood, then it '*shall preserve so far as practicable the natural conditions and aspects of the Wood and protect the trees shrubs plants and brushwood therein and shall keep the same open unaltered unenclosed and unbuilt on …'.* [121]

After the act was passed, Churchyard Bottom Wood was finally conveyed to the council in March 1898[122]. The wood was opened to the public on the 23rd of July 1898 by the Duchess of Albany and renamed as Queen's Wood, to commemorate sixty years of Queen Victoria's reign.

The occasion was marked by great show of municipal pomp and ceremony, including a parade through the decorated streets of Crouch End and Muswell Hill attended by the Middlesex Yeomanry Band. A reception was held in a tented pavilion to seat 1000

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[118] The land was eventually developed, without the proposed access roads, as a terrace of houses, Nos 44-96 Muswell Hill Road.

[119] The Churchyard Bottom Wood, Highgate Joint Committee included; the Commons Preservation Society, the Kyrle Society, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association and the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty.

[120] Beresford 1998, p.12.

[121] Highgate Wood Preservation Act, 6th August 1897(Hansard Ch.ccl.).

[122] Conveyance 31 March 1898, Guildhall MS 12380

people erected on the ‘tent field’, the area of grassy land between the wood bank and Muswell Hill Road, formerly used as a strawberry field. (See section 9, above).[123]

A full account of the battle to save Queen’s Wood can be found in Jack Whitehead’s book ‘The Growth of Muswell Hill’ [124]

In the following years work was carried out to make the wood suitable for use as a public open space. The wood itself was largely left as it was, although several small areas were enclosed as bird sanctuaries. The work included surfacing the paths with ash/clinker, adding storm water drains, seats, lighting, signposts and the enclosure of the wood with an iron fence. The recently restored finger signposts, much of the original enclosing iron fence and some of the cast-iron gateposts survive.

Two ponds were provided, one, the ‘little pond’, more recently known as the ‘dog pond’, the other, the ‘big pond’. The big pond, on the site of an earlier woodland pond, was lined with concrete and was provided with an adjacent drinking fountain (fig.10).[125]

Fig.10. Post card of the ‘big pond’ and drinking fountain, c.1920. [126]

[123] Beresford 1998, p15.; Nth. Mddx. Chronicle, July 28, 1898. No 278.-Vol.VII, p.473-474. (Haringey Archive & Museum Service)
[124] Whitehead 1996, p.208-221.
[125] Chivers, 1999, p 6.
[126] Post card, Hornsey Historical Society archive, GG30.

Fig.11. Postcard of Queen's Wood looking north across open pasture towards Alexandra Palace, c.1898, prior to the provision of the iron fence. [127]

The park keeper's lodge was completed in 1890 and provided accommodation for the head keeper and a tearoom to serve the public (fig.12). A stone plaque in the covered terrace of the Lodge proclaims:

'This Wood comprising 40 Acres was opened for the use and enjoyment of the public as an open space for ever on July 23rd 1898 by her Royal Highness the Duchess of Albany'. [128]

As well as the head park keeper there were three other park keepers and the wood was regularly patrolled and locked at night.[129] At the time Queen's Wood was established it was still surrounded by farmland and there were few neighbouring houses. Queen's Wood Road was constructed through the wood in 1900, but not extended as Wood Vale until 1930.[130]

[127] Post card, *c.*1884, courtesy, Michael Hammerson, see also Hammerson 2014, p. 89.
[128] Commemorative plaque, Queen's Wood Lodge.
[129] Chivers 1999 p.4.
[130] Note on postcard, Hornsey Historical Society archive, No GE 1

Fig.12. Proposed park keeper's lodge c.1898. [131]

Fig.13. Postcard of the rustic bridge over the Priory Brook at the Priory Gardens entrance to Queen's Wood, c.1920. The uniformed park keeper is Edwin Sparrow (1869-1947). [132]

[131] Nth. Mddx. Chronicle, July 28, 1898. No 278.-Vol.VII, p.474. (Haringey Archive & Museum Service)
[132] Post card, *c.*1920, courtesy, Michael Hammerson

In the early 1920s there were some minor additions, a new path was provided in the northwestern part of the wood and a rustic bridge was built across the Priory Book at the Priory Gardens entrance (fig.13). The biggest change came in 1933-7, when the 'big pond' was replaced by a purpose-built paddling pool, with changing rooms and toilets. [133] At some stage the clinker and gravel paths were resurfaced with asphalt.

By the 1970s the wood was no longer staffed by dedicated park keepers. The paddling pool and changing rooms were no longer used and had fallen into disrepair. The changing rooms were vandalized, damaged by fire and finally demolished in 2001.

In 2010 the derelict paddling pool took on a new lease of life when it was broken up and a wildlife pond was constructed on the site. Archaeological observations during the construction of the nature pond revealed the detail of the construction of the 1930's paddling pool, as well as the remains of the earlier Victorian park pond. Under this, traces were revealed of the woodland pond that had previously existed on the site. The analysis of pollen and other organic remains preserved in the sediments under this pond provided some of the evidence for the past vegetation of the wood.

In 1993 the Borough Council announced proposals to sell the park keepers lodge. Following objections from the community and The Friends of Queen's Wood [134] the lodge was saved and renovated in 1998. The 'tea room' is open once more as a café and the lodge garden has been restored as an organic vegetable garden.[135]

12. Conclusion

This note on the history of the wood is based on the results of a series of small-scale archaeological interventions, selected reading of books articles, and early documents and manuscripts. The information and evidence is limited and the conclusions must be regarded as preliminary. In particular there is scope for more detailed archaeological investigations and a wider study of original documents and manuscripts.

The picture that has emerged, though lacking complete clarity, is one that is consistent. It shows that the nature of the wood and its surroundings is not static, but dynamic and subject to constant change. Since at least the late prehistoric period, the wood was exploited and managed to sustain pre-industrial society. The changing character of the wood, the variety and density of trees and other plants has been driven not by the forces of nature but by human intervention.

Since it was adopted as a public open space in the late 19th century Queen's Wood has entered a new phase in its history. Parliament authorised the acquisition of the wood for use as a public space for ever. In accordance with the spirit of the Act the wood is managed to '*preserve so far as practicable the natural conditions and aspects of the Wood and protect the trees shrubs plants and brushwood'* . A management plan has been adopted that includes a number of measures to sustain and increase the biological diversity of the wood, such as coppicing areas of the wood, providing bird and bat boxes, creating ponds for frogs and other amphibians and the use of dead

[133] Chivers. 1999 p.7.
[134] see: www.FQW.org.uk
[135] Roots 2011.

hedges to encourage insects and birds.[136] The wood is designated as a Statutory Local Nature Reserve, a Site of Metropolitan Importance and is recognised as a Regionally Important Geological Site. Queen's Wood is no longer managed to provide timber, fuel and food. It is now a haven for wildlife and a place of leisure and relaxation.

13. Acknowledgements

This short report draws on the results of a series of archaeological and geoarchaeological evaluations carried in Queen's Wood between 2003 and 2012.

Specialist and technical support

The costs of specialist laboratory analysis was supported by a grant from the City of London Archaeological Trust (COLAT) and contributions from the Friends of Queen's Wood and private individuals.

Pollen analysis was carried out by Prof. Rob Scaife (Visiting Professor of Palaeoecology, Geography and Environment, University of Southampton. Honorary Research Associate of The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge.)

Micro-morphological soil analysis was carried out by Prof. Charles French, (Director, McBurney Laboratory for Geoarchaeology, University of Cambridge)

Radiocarbon dating analysis was carried out by the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC).

A resistivity survey of part of the wood was carried out by John Avis of the West Essex Archaeological Group (WEAG). [138]

In addition to the above, the following provided professional support and advice: David Bevan, (Former Conservation Officer, London Borough of Haringey, Honorary Vice-President, London Natural History Society), Dr Nicholas Branch, (Associate Professor School, of Archaeology and Environmental Science, Reading University), Diana Clements, (Hon. Sec. the Geologists' Association, GA representative on the London Geodiversity Partnership), Jon Cotton, Dr Jane Sidell, (Historic England, previously English Heritage) and Graham Spurr, (Geoarchaeologist, Museum of London)..

The following individuals and members of the Hendon and District Archaeological Society (HADAS) the West Essex Archaeological Group (WEAG), the City of London Archaeological Society (COLAS), and the Friends of Queen's Wood (FQW) participated in and contributed to the work; Nicholas Bateson, Peter Collins, Nik Daines, Yvonne Edwards, Liz Henton, Geraldine Missig, Jim Nelhams Sigrid Padel, Emma Robinson, David Robinson, Guy Taylor, David Warren, Alison Weisskopf, and Michael Hacker (project manager).

[136] Game 2000, Riley 2010; Haringey, 2015.
[138] Avis 2004.

The author is particularly grateful to Michael Johns, David Warren and Anne Saunders for their help and advice in the preparation of the text.

The author wishes to acknowledge:

-The British Library Board, the British Geological Survey and the Ordnance Survey for permission to base illustrations on their maps

-The librarians and archivists of; the British Library, the Society of Antiquaries, Haringey Library Service, Bruce Castle Museum, the Hornsey Historical Society and the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution for their help and assistance.

- Harvey Sheldon and Tony Brown for access to sections of their forthcoming report on the Roman pottery production site in Highgate Wood (LAMAS special paper; in preparation).

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