

AREA 9: PARISH OF WESTON UNDER WETHERLEY: WESTON WOOD
PARISH OF CUBBINGTON: WORNOUKS WOOD, NORTH CUBBINGTON WOOD,
SOUTH CUBBINGTON WOOD and RUNGHILLS
PARISH OF HUNNINGHAM: HUNNINGHAM COPPICE

ECOLOGY (1)

Weston Wood is one of the largest areas of birch wood in the county, with woodcock and turtle dove recorded in 1977. The uncommon earth star fungi are present here (2) and dormice were recorded from 1991 to 2013 by the Forestry Commission (17). The southern part called **Wornouks Wood** is in the parish of Cubbington.

North Cubbington Wood is mixed ancient woodland and plantations with impeded drainage and includes a derelict coppice area with ash standards, some birch and oak.

South Cubbington Wood is ancient semi-natural mixed woodland in the north, with oak and ash and an understorey of hazel. In the south trees are younger, with aspen, birch, and also elm. Monterrey cypress is planted throughout. Records include wild service tree in 2000, a pair of nightingales in 1980, and purple hairstreak and white admiral butterflies in 1986.

Runghills is an 80-year-old ash plantation on ridge and furrow with some derelict hazel coppice.

HISTORY

PARISH OF WESTON-UNDER-WETHERLEY

In 1279 **Weston Wood** was part of the Stoneleigh Estate and approximated to the present wood, joining **Wethele** (the current **Waverley Wood**, see **Area 6**) as it still does now. In the Leger Book of Stoneleigh Abbey, written c.1392, it is stated that the wood of the lord of Weston was 'in ancient times parcel of Wetherley and that the part of Wetherley in which the men of Weston had common was a wood called **Westonwode** which adjoined the wood of Wetherley' (4:p38).

The Leger Book also names fields brought into cultivation from the '**bruillum**' of **Wetherley** (see **Area 6**) extending the wood to both east and west of the present Waverley Wood. Marked on a Stoneleigh estate map of 1726 is **Stewards Peece** (or **Pece**) of unknown shape, to the east of the current wood in the adjoining parish of Weston (4:p37/38).

Glebe terriers of 1727, 1742, and 1745 record payments to the Vicar by Lord Clifford including £7 paid for 'demands and woods' (including **Weston Wood**); in 1736 the same sum was paid for his 'inclosure' and woods.

By the time of the enclosure of Weston-under-Wetherley in 1778 **Weston Wood** (162 acres) was still part of the Stoneleigh Estate with Lord Leigh's name is on many of the enclosures. As Weston Wood is only 118 acres today perhaps this larger area included the now lost wood of **Bradley** in the parish of Stoneleigh (see **Area 6**). The Enclosure Award map of 1780 shows no woods but names the Rt. Hon. Lord Clifford at the location of **Weston Wood**. (3).

PARISH OF CUBBINGTON

Wornouks Wood in the southern part of **Weston Wood** is not ancient. It does not appear as a wood on the Cubbington Enclosure Award of 1768 but is shown as the north part of an enclosure belonging to Elizabeth Wise. The location of **The Wood** (3 acres) is unknown; listed as 'in hand' in the 1771 Leigh Estates map, meaning part of the Leigh 'homeground' not apportioned to tenants, it was possibly not included in the Award (3).

North Cubbington Wood is marked in the Award when it was **Shortley Wood** in the north and **Horse Grove** in the south (also belonging to Elizabeth Wise). A tiny wood (again Elizabeth Wise) between **North Cubbington Wood** and **Weston Wood** is part of **North Cubbington Wood**, making it a bit larger than it was (3).

South Cubbington Wood is shown in the Award as **Woods** in the north and **Foot Grove** in the south, also as the **Wood** of Elizabeth Wise. The two woods are shown on the Award map separated by a track (the current B4453) so have always been separate (3). In 2020 the wood was bisected by the route of the HS2 railway with substantial felling of woodland. The 250 year old Cubbington Pear that stood at the top of a hill near the wood, thought to be the largest wild pear tree in Warwickshire and the second largest in the United Kingdom, was also felled (15).

The Runnhills is a field enclosure in the Award of 1766, hence the underlying ridge and furrow markings, but is marked as woodland on Victorian maps (16).

PARISH OF HUNNINGHAM

Hunningham Coppice is shown on the Enclosure Award c.1750 and part of it is still present (16).

Sources of information:

1. *Ecosite notes (Habitat Biodiversity Audit, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust)*
2. *Tasker, A. (1990) The Nature of Warwickshire*
3. *Local Record Office, Warwick. (Moffatt, R. 2017/18)*
4. *Wager, S. J. (1998) Woods, Wolds & Groves: the woodland of medieval Warwickshire, British Archaeological Reports British Series 269.*
15. *Warwickshire Biological Record Centre*
16. *Ross, A. (2020) Dunsmore Woodlands GIS project*
17. *Moffatt, R. (2017) The Status of the Hazel Dormouse (Muscardinus avellanarius) in Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull in 2016*