

Botanical Survey of Round Wood

Round Wood, nr Great Ashby, Stevenage

Client:	Croudace and Seebohm
Document No.:	0410
Revision:	P02
Status:	Information
Print Size:	A4
Date:	10/05/2024

NICHOLAS PEARSON ASSOCIATES

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | ECOLOGY | VISUALISATION

npaconsult.co.uk npavisuals.co.uk +44 (0)1225 876990

The Farm House, Church Farm Business Park, Corston, Bath BA2 9AP

Document Control

Project: Round Wood

Project No: 10666

Document Title: Botanical Survey of Round Wood

Document No: NPA 10666 0410

Original document

X

Revision

P02

Revision letter

	Name	Signature	Position	Date
Prepared by:	A Irvine	AI	Senior Ecologist	25/04/2024
Checked by:	D Harvey	DH	Associate Ecologist	29/04/2024
Approved by:	D Harvey	DH	Associate Ecologist	29/04/2024

Revision Record

Rev letter	Date prepared	Prepared by	Checker / Approver	Description of changes
P02	10/05/2024	AI	DH	Addition of information relating to history of unnamed woodland parcel at Parsons Green.

© Nicholas Pearson Associates Ltd. All rights reserved. Nicholas Pearson Associates assert (unless otherwise agreed in writing) their rights under s.77 to 89 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This document has been prepared in good faith, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, based on information provided or available at the time of its preparation and within the scope of work agreement with the client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by Nicholas Pearson Associates Ltd., unless otherwise expressly stated in the document.

We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. The document is provided for the sole use of the named client. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of Nicholas Pearson Associates.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | ECOLOGY | VISUALISATION

npaconsult.co.uk npavisuals.co.uk +44 (0)1225 876990

The Farm House, Church Farm Business Park, Corston, Bath BA2 9AP

Nicholas Pearson Associates Ltd. Registered Office: as above. Company Reg. No: 02715105. VAT Reg. No: 398 1148 22



Contents

1.0 Introduction.....1
Background..... 1
2.0 Methods2
3.0 Results3
Boundaries 3
Botanical Survey..... 3
4.0 Discussion5

References

Figures

- 1: Woodland Parcel Locations

Appendices

- 1: Species Lists
2 Photographs

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Nicholas Pearson Associates (NPA) was instructed to carry out a botanical survey at Round Wood with the aim of providing information which could help inform a question of whether the woodland is ancient or not.
- 1.2 Round Wood comprises a woodland approximately 2.1ha, situated at TL249276. The location of the wood is shown on Figure 1. It is situated between an arable field to the east and pasture to the west. A narrow road (Back Lane) forms the southern boundary. To the north is a block of broadleaved plantation woodland which is approximately 20-30 years old.

Background

- 1.3 The definition of ancient woodland is provided below from Natural England 2012.

Ancient woodland in England is defined as an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD¹. If woodland has been through a long phase in the last 400 years when the land was open, for example as grassland, heath, moor or arable, then the site is classed as recent woodland. It may still have high value for nature conservation, but it is not ancient woodland.

Continuously wooded' in the above definition does not require there to have been a continuous physical cover of trees and shrubs across the entirety of a site. Open space, both temporary and permanent, is an important component of woodlands. Habitats such as glades, deer lawns, rides, ponds and streams, as well as gaps created by natural disturbance, may all occur within woodland and add to its diversity.

In most, if not all ancient woods, the trees and shrubs have been cut down periodically. The time between the felling occurring and the tree canopy being re-established will vary depending on the management regime, and regrowth may be delayed by deer grazing or other factors. Provided that the area has remained as woodland, the stand is still considered ancient. Since it may have been cut over many times in the past, ancient woodland does not necessarily contain old trees.

Ancient woodland includes both ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites:

- *Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)*

...

- *Plantations on ancient woodland sites (or PAWS, also known as ancient replanted woodland)*

. ...

Both ASNW and PAWS are ancient woodland, and thus both types should be treated equally in terms of the protection afforded to ancient woodland in the NPPF. ...

Wood-pastures, even if there is only a thin scatter of trees, can be a distinct form of ancient woodland. ... Where ancient wood-pastures are identified they should receive the same consideration as other forms of ancient woodland.

¹ *Spencer & Kirby (1992) An inventory of ancient woodland for England and Wales. Biological Conservation, 62, 77-93.*

- 1.4 Where the term "recent origin" is used, this means not ancient.
- 1.5 In considering whether a woodland may be ancient or not, the initial step is the review of historical mapping. Historical mapping for this area is provided in the Heritage Statement (Stantec 2023, for Croudace Homes).

2.0 Methods

- 2.1 An experienced botanist (FISC level 4) carried out a survey of the woodland on the 18th April 2024. The woodland was walked over and notes were made of signs to the presence or extent of ancient woodland such as banks or evidence of historical management. The woodland was split into parcels. A species list, particularly focussing on Ancient Woodland Indicators (AWIs) or other indicators of woodland condition was produced for each parcel.
- 2.2 AWIs were defined as being those listed in Kirby, 2004 Table of Ancient Woodland Indicator Plants, south-east list.
- 2.3 The location of the parcel edge was recorded using mobile phone based GPS. Tree cover interferes with GPS and so the GPS reading was taken within the adjacent arable field.
- 2.4 Nearby established woodland blocks were visited to help place the botanical survey in context, including an area of known Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (Tilekiln Wood ASNW) and an area of Ancient Replanted Woodland (Stonesley Woods PAWS). These woods were viewed from roads and

public footpaths so species listed are only those that could be seen, therefore species lists cannot be directly compared. The locations of survey areas are shown on Figure 1.

- 2.5 Areas of recent plantation were not included in the survey.
- 2.6 The survey was carried out in mid-April. This is early in the season but is considered acceptable for botanical survey of woodland (Sansum & Bannister 2018). Species were identified vegetatively where required, although without flowers it could not be determined if the Meadow-grass which was vegetatively present throughout the woodland was Wood Meadow-grass *Poa nemoralis* or Smooth Meadow-grass *P. pratensis*.
- 2.7 The Natural England Ancient Woodland Habitat Inventory was viewed through Magic Map (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) and last accessed on 25 April 2024.

3.0 Results

Boundaries of Round Wood

- 3.1 Ordnance survey mapping shows Round Wood to be split into three parcels. On the Site visit it was evident that there were changes of level between the parcels with a small bank present, additionally the botanical composition the blocks varied. It was considered that the OS mapping aligned with the field mapping within the expected tolerance levels (5m accuracy). Survey parcels are shown on Figure 1.

Botanical Survey

- 3.2 Species lists with scientific names area are provided in Appendix 1.

Round Wood

- 3.3 Round Wood is an area of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (Priority Habitat). The woodland had been replanted in the past with three parcels with differing plant communities. Throughout the woodland there was little regeneration and the woodland was evidently subject to heavy browsing pressure by deer. Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi* were present during the survey and Roe deer are also known in the area. The eastern edge of the woodland had a high cover of Nettle, likely due to eutrophication from adjacent arable farming activity.

Round Wood – central parcel

- 3.4 The most frequent trees in this parcel of the wood were Sycamore and Beech but a mixture of broadleaved species were present. The Elm and Wild Cherry were reaching the end of their lifespan and contained holes and features which could provide nesting/roosting habitat for wildlife, but large/old trees weren't present. Six or seven AWIs were recorded and there was a dense cover of Bluebell with Meadow-grass sp. Present throughout. Wild Cherry was present on the eastern side of the wood, other AWIs were only rarely recorded, these were Field Maple, Pignut, Three-nerved Sandwort, Primrose. The woodland was fairly heterogenous and seemed dry. A crater/small quarry was present but didn't significantly increase plant diversity.

Round Wood – northern parcel

- 3.5 The northern parcel of Round Wood was dominated by Dog's Mercury with only Occasional Bluebell and Meadow-grass sp. Present. The third AWI recorded was Holly but all bushes were quite young. It was accompanied by non-native Snowberry, it is possible that some understory planting had taken place. Tree species were similar to the central compartment.

Round Wood – southern parcel

- 3.6 The southern section of Round Wood comprised Beech with Larch and Elm. Several mature Oaks were present at the edges of the woodland. Holly was present in the understory, including some mature Holly shrubs. Non-native Snowberry was also present. Bluebell cover was abundant but less dense than in the central parcel of the wood. Three or four AWIs were recorded, Bluebell, Holly, Three-nerved Sandwort and Meadow-grass sp.

Unnamed woodland parcel

- 3.7 The woodland present to the north-east of Roundwood, at Parsons Green and opposite Tilekiln wood, was damper with ponds. Oak formed a significant constituent of the canopy. Holly was scattered across the wood but bushes were immature. Bluebell was rare, potentially due to the woodland being damp, but sedges regularly present in the understory. A total of four or five AWIs were recorded in this woodland, Bluebell, Holly, Remote Sedge, Wood Sedge and Meadow-grass sp.

Tilekiln Wood ASNW

- 3.8 This woodland is shown on the Natural England Ancient Woodland Inventory as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and is a Local Wildlife Site (Tilekiln Wood and Parsons Green Woods LWS). The woodland

comprises Oak and Hornbeam woodland with a mixture of other native trees and shrubs present. Seven AWIS were visible from the roadside however it is expected that more would be present if a detailed survey was undertaken. The woodland was evidently more natural and less impacted by planting than the other woodlands surveyed. The AWIs recorded were Bluebell, Hornbeam, Wood Millet, Remote Sedge, Wood Sedge, Wild Cherry and Woodruff.

Stonesley Woods PAWs

- 3.9 This woodland is shown on the Natural England Ancient Woodland Inventory as Replanted Ancient Woodland. It is a Beech and Sycamore woodland with Bluebell dominant in the understory, the viewed area appeared dry. The woodland appeared relatively similar to the central section of Round Wood. Three or four AWIs were recorded from the footpath at the woodland edge however it is expected that more species would be found if a full survey was carried out. AWIs recorded were Bluebell, Pignut, Wood Melick and Meadow-grass sp. One species, Wood Melick, was present at Stonesely Wood but not in the central parcel of Round Wood.

4.0 Discussion

- 4.1 There was a higher species diversity in the areas mapped as woodland on the 1838 Tithe mapping which is the earliest mapping available – ie the central portion of Round Wood and Tilekiln Wood ASNW (note that the northern parcel of Tilekiln wood is not shown as it is outside of the mapped area, which is limited to the parish of Gravely in 1838).



- 4.2 The central portion of Round Wood contained a range of ancient woodland indicators, though the list of indicators wasn't particularly long and it was missing species present in other ancient woodlands nearby. Reasons for this could be include a more recent origin, management history, or the relatively small size of the woodland, combined with a fairly heterogenous and dry interior. There was evidently a high density of Bluebells and this parcel woodland appeared similar to Stonesley Woods Replanted Ancient Woodland. This woodland is shown on the 1838 Tithe Mapping. While it isn't certain whether or not this woodland is ancient, in the absence of further information it is recommended that this area is treated as potential Replanted Ancient Woodland.
- 4.3 The northern portion of Round Wood contained few ancient woodland indicators, had a low cover of Bluebells and is not shown on the Tithe mapping. It is considered likely that this woodland is of recent origin.
- 4.4 The southern portion of Round Wood had a low-moderate number of ancient woodland indicators (3/4 recorded) and an abundant cover of Bluebells (ie a good Bluebell cover but noticeably less than the central parcel). Holly, an AWI, was present throughout the area although its unknown if it was naturally occurring or planted. It is possible that the lower Bluebell cover and lower diversity of AWIS is due to a more recent origin, however is it also possible that the Larch included in the tree mix planted on this area could have negatively impacted the ground flora, or that this part of the wood had been subject to more severe disturbance. The easternmost edge is shown on the 1838 Tithe mapping but as

this area in particular had a high cover of eutrophication indicators (eg Nettle) and was likely impacted by the arable farming next to it, it wasn't possible to distinguish a difference in plant community attributable to woodland age. Based on the above it is unclear how long the strip mapped on the 1838 map had been wooded at the time of mapping and if this area could be considered ancient woodland.

- 4.5 Four or five AWIs were recorded in the unnamed woodland parcel to the north-east, this area was undulating, contained damp habitat and was next to Tilegreen Wood ASNW so it would be expected that the area would contain a greater diversity of species than homogenous woods. This area is not shown as having tree cover on the 1838 Tithe mapping and is described as 'waste'. The area is also shown without tree cover on later 1898 mapping, a chalk pit is mapped in the northern end. Given that both older maps within the Heritage Statement don't show woodland, the woodland parcel is thought to be of recent origin.

References

Natural England 2012 Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland. Version 3. A revision of the ancient woodland Standing Advice issued by Natural England 30 May 2012.

Kirby, 2004. Table of Ancient Woodland Indicator Plants. In Rose F. (2006). The Wildflower Key. Updated by O'Reilly C. Penguin Group.

Sansum, P. & Bannister, N.R. 2018. A Handbook for updating the Ancient Woodland Inventory for England. Natural England Commissioned Reports NECR248

Stantec, 2023. Heritage Statement, Roundwood, North Stevenage. Report produced for Croudace Homes.



Appendix 1: Species Lists

Table 1: Round Wood - central parcel Species List

Common name (frequency if recorded)	Scientific name	Ancient Woodland Indicator (Kirby 2004, South-east)
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	Y
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	
Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	
Lords and Ladies (R)	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	
Pignut (R)	<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Y
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus sp.</i>	
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	
Lesser Celandine (R)	<i>Ficaria verna</i>	
Cleavers (F)	<i>Galium aparine</i>	
Ground Ivy (R)	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	
Bluebell (D/A)	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Y
Dogs Mercury (O)	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	
Three-nerved Sandwort (R)	<i>Moehringia trinervia</i>	Y
Meadow-grass (A/F)	<i>Poa nemoralis or pratensis</i>	If <i>P. nemoralis</i>
Primrose (R)	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Y
Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Y
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	
Creeping Buttercup (R)	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	
Gooseberry (R)	<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>	
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus (O)</i>	
Dock (O)	<i>Rumex sp.</i>	
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	
Hedge Woundwort (R)	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	
Common Lime	<i>Tilia × europaea</i>	
Elm	<i>Ulmus sp</i>	
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	
		6/7

Table 2: Round Wood - northern parcel Species List

Common name (frequency if recorded)	Scientific name	Ancient Woodland Indicator (Kirby 2004, South-east)
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	
Garlic Mustard (F)	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	
Lords and Ladies (R)	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus sp.</i>	
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	
Cleavers (F)	<i>Galium aparine</i>	
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	
Bluebell (O)	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Y
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Y
Dogs Mercury (D)	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	
Meadow-grass (A/F)	<i>Poa nemoralis or pratensis</i>	If <i>P. nemoralis</i>
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	
Elm	<i>Ulmus sp</i>	
Nettle (F)	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	
		2/3

Table 3: Round Wood Parcel - southern parcel. Species List

Common name (frequency if recorded)	Scientific name	Ancient Woodland Indicator (Kirby 2004, South-east)
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	
Horse Chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	
Garlic Mustard (O)	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus sp.</i>	
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	
Lesser Celandine (R)	<i>Ficaria verna</i>	
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	
Cleavers (F)	<i>Galium aparine</i>	
Herb Robert (O)	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	
Bluebell (A)	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Y
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Y
Larch	<i>Larix sp.</i>	

Common name (frequency if recorded)	Scientific name	Ancient Woodland Indicator (Kirby 2004, South-east)
Three-nerved Sandwort (O)	<i>Moehringia trinervia</i>	Y
Meadow-grass	<i>Poa nemoralis</i> or <i>pratensis</i>	If <i>P. nemoralis</i>
Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	
Bramble (O)	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	
Dock (O)	<i>Rumex</i> sp.	
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	
Nettle (R)	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	
		3/4

Table 4: Tilekiln Wood, mapped Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland. Species List. Viewed from publicly accessible areas.

Common name (frequency if recorded)	Scientific name	Ancient Woodland Indicator (Kirby 2004, South-east)
Lords and Ladies (R)	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	
Remote Sedge	<i>Carex remota</i>	Y
Wood Sedge	<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	Y
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Y
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus</i> sp.	
Tufted Hairgrass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	
Lesser Celandine	<i>Ficaria verna</i>	
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	
Woodruff	<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Y
Bluebell (F/A)	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Y
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	
Wood Millet	<i>Milium effusum</i>	Y
Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Y
Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	
Rose	<i>Rosa</i> sp.	
Dock	<i>Rumex</i> sp.	
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	
Common Dog-violet	<i>Viola riviniana</i>	
		7 visible

Table 5: Unnamed woodland to north-east of Round Wood, opposite Tilekiln Wood.

Common name (frequency if recorded)	Scientific name	Ancient Woodland Indicator (Kirby 2004, South-east)
Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	
Lords and Ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	
Remote Sedge	<i>Carex remota</i>	Y
Wood Sedge	<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	Y
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus sp.</i>	
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	
Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	
Wood Avons	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	
Bluebell (R)	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Y
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Y
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	
Dogs Mercury	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	
Meadow-grass	<i>Poa nemoralis</i> or <i>pratensis</i>	If <i>P. nemoralis</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	
Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	
Dock	<i>Rumex sp.</i>	
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	
Slender Speedwell	<i>Veronica filiformis</i>	
		4/5

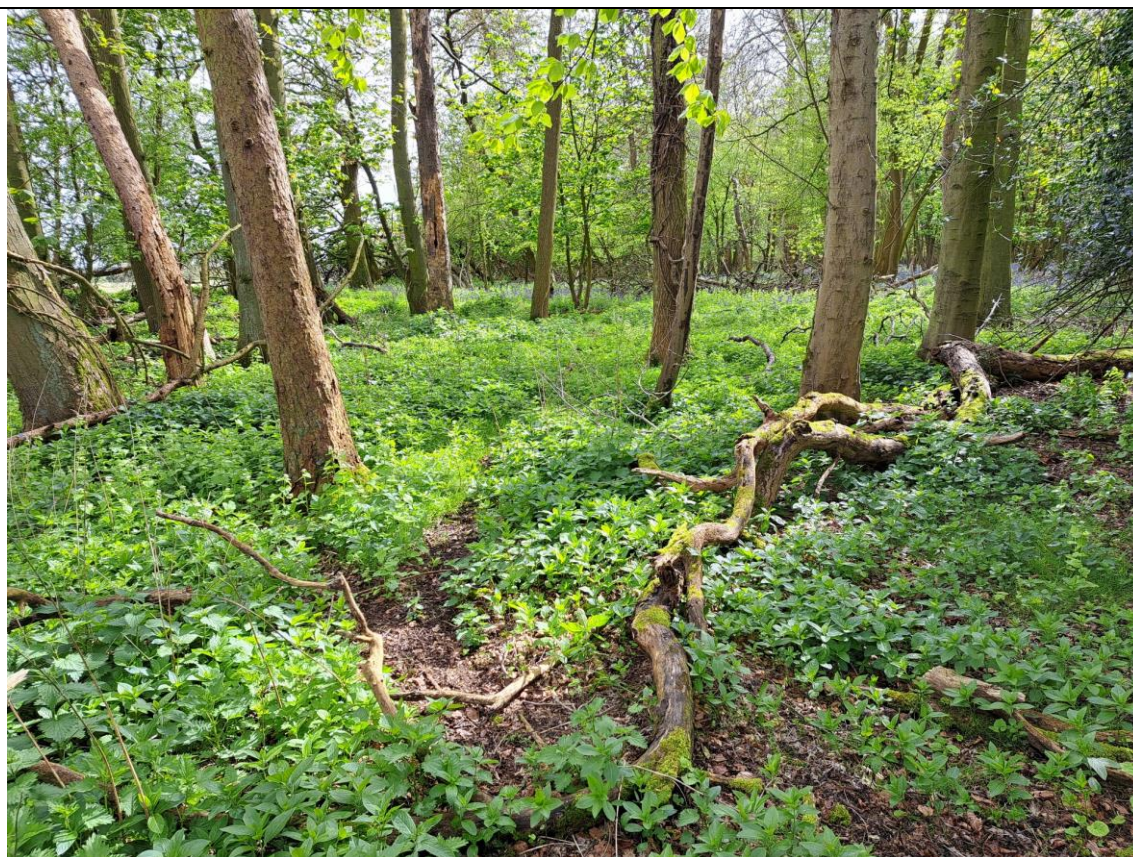
Table 6: Stonesley Woods, mapped Ancient Replanted Woodland. Species List. Viewed from publicly accessible areas.

Common name (frequency if recorded)	Scientific name	Ancient Woodland Indicator (Kirby 2004, South-east)
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	
Garlic Mustard (O)	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	
Lords and Ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	
Pignut	<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Y
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus sp.</i>	
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	
Lesser Celandine	<i>Ficaria verna</i>	
Cleavers (F)	<i>Galium aparine</i>	
Bluebell (D)	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Y
Wood Melick	<i>Melica uniflora</i>	Y
Dogs Mercury	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	
Meadow-grass	<i>Poa nemoralis or pratensis</i>	If <i>P. nemoralis</i>
		3/4 visible

Appendix 2: Photographs

Photo	
1	 Central Parcel of Round Wood. Effects of grazing evident.

2



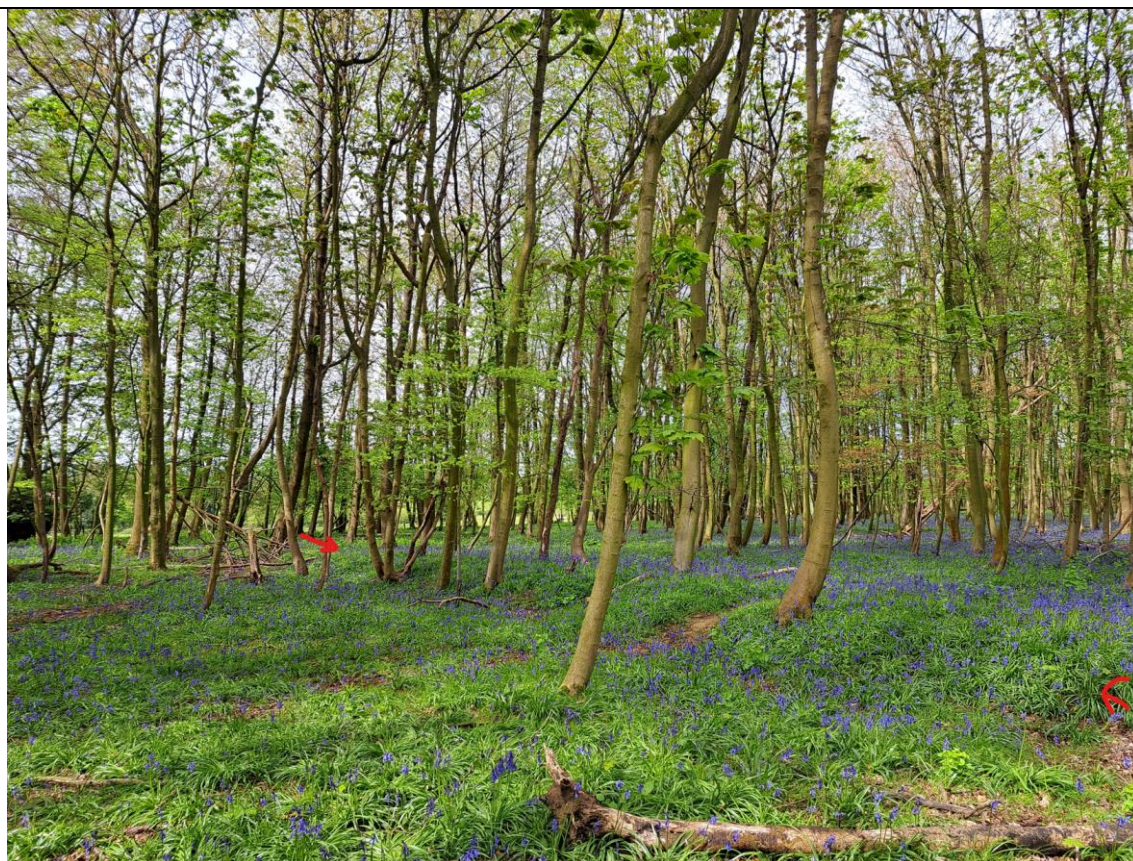
Northern Parcel of Round wood. Bluebells in central parcel just visible in background.

3



View of division between northern and central parcel of Round Wood, note Bluebells visible in central parcel on left, and absence in northern parcel on right.

4



Bank marking boundary between central parcel of Roundwood (right) and southern parcel of Roundwood (foreground).

5



Southern parcel of Round Wood.

NICHOLAS PEARSON ASSOCIATES

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | ECOLOGY | VISUALISATION

npaconsult.co.uk npavisuals.co.uk +44 (0)1225 876990

The Farm House, Church Farm Business Park, Corston, Bath BA2 9AP