Public resource or private sanctuary?: Access patterns and narratives from the woodland of North East Derbyshire

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Key to abbreviations:

[*]	Content redacted to preserve anonymity of participants	**FC**	Forestry Commission
BAME	Black and Minority Ethnic	**MPV**	Mechanically Propelled Vehicle
BW	Bridleway	**OS**	Ordnance Survey
BOAT	Byway Open to All Traffic	**PRoW**	Public Right of Way
CJPO	Criminal Justice and Public Order Act	**RB**	Restricted Byway
CLA	Country Landowners Association	**RFS**	Royal Forestry Society
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England	**RSPB**	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
CRoW	Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)	**SSSI**	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Abstract

Set against a backdrop of a long and turbulent debate on access to the countryside, this thesis addresses gaps in knowledge on lived experience of access to woodland. The approach is geographically situated in ordinary wooded landscapes in North East Derbyshire and uses an approach which analyses physical evidence, archives, observation and interview narratives from a range of stakeholders.

Using a sample of 58 woodlands the study finds that official access is limited, especially in privately owned woods. However, in almost half of the larger woods the public were roaming freely regardless of who owned the site. Observational evidence showed that more than 40% of the participants were using unofficial paths and were potentially trespassing. However, the definition of trespass is critiqued in this study. The public were largely using paths, oblivious of their status without reference to maps though some were utilising new media, such as on-line walks or YouTube videos. Interviews showed that the majority of people were using woodlands in a pursuit of calm, quiet or peace and valued having woodland close to their homes. However many were anxious about losing the wood to development though illegal use by motorcycles was a greater negative theme across all participant groups. Landowners were mixed in type with country estates owning the largest proportion of woods. However, the largest group of landowners were private individuals who usually owned just a small woodland plot. Changes in ownership caused conflict in some case study sites with members of the public showing resistance to new restrictions on access. However, landowners were universally resistant to the idea of any new rights for woodland users and themes of privacy and control were common to many of them. In addition many of the owners were motivated by the same pursuit of peace and tranquillity common among the public participants. This may be translating into a desire to exclude the public from what they may see as their private sanctuary. Attitudes to public liability risks were also analysed and though this was a concern in around half of the participant landowners it was less important overall than privacy and control.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This PhD concerns a central theme in geography: people and the environment (Holloway, Rice & Valentine, 2006), specifically public recreation and woodland. The approach of the study is place centred and ethnographic, and fits with modern, more qualitative approaches in the field of rural geography (Hughes, Morris & Seymour, 2000). Examining narratives of everyday lived experiences from multiple angles around a central theme of place is a novel take in the field of ordinary geographies, as described by Halfacree (2007). The topic incorporates conflicts over rural space and identity, which are also important dimensions in rural geography (Holloway & Kneafsey, 2004). In addition the study traverses into the realm of urban geography, complimenting a growing literature on the social geography of urban greenspaces (for example: Bell et al., 2003 and Carrus et al., 2017). Lambert (2008) emphasised the importance of geographical and social backdrop when assessing where priorities must lie for individual woodlands. This project aims to address knowledge gaps on the nature of public access to woodlands on a more practical, geographically focussed level than previous literature has attempted.

1.1 Aim and Objectives

Aim: Focussing on the Derbyshire ex-coal mining districts of Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire and Bolsover, this PhD aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of public access to woodland on the ground.

Objectives:

- Examine official and informal access to woodland in North East Derbyshire. Analyse practical access (both official and informal) by using historic, photographic and observational evidence to determine the nature of a group of randomly selected woodlands and how they are accessed. Examine the usability of routes used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists.

- Use a series of geographically contrasting case studies to facilitate a holistic examination of place, investigating the inter-related motivations and opinions of woodland users, local residents and landowners on access issues.
- Investigate the objectives, motivations and opinions of a wider set of landowners and directly relate this to current rights of way law and policy.

1.2 Background to the research

The word 'access' can evoke multiple meanings. Often when a facility is described as *'accessible'* this is a reference to provision for people with disabilities or for families using pushchairs. Although this PhD will consider these issues, it interprets access in a wider sense. This incorporates both the physical access to the woodland and the level of access landowners are willing to permit.

The level of access the public should have a right to is a highly controversial and emotive subject and the debate has a long and turbulent history (see chapter 2). The debate continues to this day with the Woodland Trust launching a Charter for Trees, Woodland and People (2017) which includes a call for better access to English woodlands.

In the late 1990s there was an opportunity for woodland access to be increased dramatically as a parliamentary bill was negotiated to give a freedom to roam in the English countryside. The eventual result was the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW, 2000) which granted public access to '*open land*' including mountain, moor, heath, down and common. However, the definition of '*open land*' was changed from the 1968 Countryside Act to specifically exclude woodland. Meanwhile, in Scotland, separate negotiations resulted in the Land Reform Act (2003). This granted access to a much wider range of open spaces, including woodland.[1] Woodland was excluded in England on the grounds that they are too diverse and

[1] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/2/contents

fragmented[2], leaving legal access to woodland largely restricted to specifically designated public rights of way (PRoWs), such as public footpaths and bridleways. However, no academic literature relating to the exclusion of woodlands from CRoW has been found.

Coverage and distribution of PRoWs is extremely variable, they originated from historic transport routes, and are not designed to reflect current recreational needs. A substantial proportion of woodland in public and charitable sector ownerships allow access beyond the PRoW network. Organisations such as the Forestry Commission, local authorities and the county wildlife trusts have encouraged public use of woodlands under their control (Woodland Trust, 2015). However, the majority of woodland in England is in private hands (Watkins, 1983) and as England has amongst the lowest levels of woodland cover in Europe, (Atkinson & Townsend, 2011) access to private woodland becomes particularly important. However, the nature of access to privately owned woodland remains poorly understood. There is no comprehensive information source on who owns these woodlands, let alone any data on the nature of the public access occurring in these settings.

Why is access to woodlands important?

Woodland recreation has increased in popularity over recent years (Church & Ravenscroft, 2008) however there is an acknowledged mismatch between supply and demand, particularly close to settlements where it is argued that most woods are privately owned and poorly accessible (Jones.,2012). It is now widely accepted that nature is good for people's physical and mental health and well-being (Ives et al., 2018). Research in this area has been conducted across a number of academic disciplines including social, historical and children's geographies (Linzmayer & Halpenny, 2014), leisure studies (Mulder et al., 2006) health research (Kessel et al., 2009) and education (Cachelin et al., 2009). In addition, schemes promoting

[2] Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 [online] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents

participation in outdoor recreation have now formed part of UK health policy (Morris & O'Brien, 2011). In the case of woodland specifically, the same principle holds but much of the research has been conducted by those with connections with the Forestry Commission, an organisation with a specific objective to '*enhance quality of life'* through access to woodland (Forestry Commission, 2015). Independent academic research on the benefits of access to woodland is hard to find.

A second argument supporting the importance of access to woodland centres on the idea that woodland has a deep set, specific and unique cultural history in British society. Watkins (2014) cites incidents such as the 2011 campaign against the sell-off of Forestry Commission land, demonstrating the place of trees and woodland in the English psyche. Watkins sets out a strong tradition of woodland in art as well as religious and fictional cultural traditions such as the Legend of Sherwood Forest, popularised by mediaeval stories of Robin Hood and later by Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe. Indeed, in recent research by Lisewski-Hobson & Watkins (2018), specific modern cultural themes emerged relating to woodland specifically. These were often evoked by films such as *The Hobbit* and computer games such as *Minecraft.* If researchers who link significant health benefits with participation in outdoor recreation are right (Lambert, 2008), and the unique experience offered by woodland is acknowledged (see Watkins, 2015), then public access to woodland in a post-industrial landscape, such as North East Derbyshire, where the need for health improvements are significant (see chapter 3) is a topic well worthy of study.

1.3 The Structure of this thesis

This thesis will explore access issues in North East Derbyshire using the following approach:

Literature review

The literature review (Chapter 2), will expand on the background to the research in both geographical and subject-specific terms. It will explore historical issues in the

access debate. This aims to set out how the present access situation has come about. Further to this an exploration of more contemporary access research drills down through international, national and local perspectives to explore unresolved arguments and tease out areas in need of further research. The review also includes a summary of historic and contemporary access law affecting the subject of the thesis. This is central to understanding the legal basis underpinning modern access attitudes and behaviours.

Methods

Chapter 3 explains how the empirical aspects of the research were approached and implemented and includes a reflexive critique of the study.

The empirical chapters

The empirical chapters are designed to build layers of understanding on contemporary access issues from the ground upwards. Chapter 4 examines a random sample of woodlands and focuses on comparing theoretical access with actual activity occurring.

Chapters 5-7 examine case study woods in urban fringe, peri-urban and rural locations. They consider the views and behaviours of three major stakeholder groups: users, residents and land owners. These chapters embed interview material firmly within its geographical backdrop aiming to deliver a holistic view of the lived experiences of those affected by and affecting the wood.

Chapter 8 provides a comparative analysis of the case studies and adds the perspectives of non-pedestrian users who could not be interviewed in sufficient numbers.

Building on the evidence from the case studies and the evidence of cyclists and equestrian users, Chapter 9 users a wider set of landowner interviews to pan out into issues nationally relevant to the access debate, such as what lies behind their attitudes to access provision.

Chapter 10 sets out the discussions and conclusions reflecting on the results of the empirical chapters and placing them within the context of the literature. The results are used to highlight areas of particular importance and identify further potential research avenues.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

The access debate in England has a long and complex history. Therefore, as well as looking at contemporary literature on access, it is important to examine some of the belief systems and historical background that have cumulated to form today's access landscape, as Ravenscroft (1996) explains:

> *Analysis of the system of rights…requires an understanding of the historical circumstances under which putative rights over land have evolved* (p.70).

Underpinning the access debate is historical and contemporary access law, which is crucial to understanding access in practice. It is also necessary to briefly examine the social and cultural history of North East Derbyshire to allow an understanding of the geographical context of the study.

This literature review is structured as follows:

2.1 Examining literature with a historical focus

2.2 Current rights of way law in England

2.3 Recent research on access to woodland and the wider countryside

2.4 The cultural and historical geography of North East Derbyshire

2.5 Summary of literature

2.1 Examining literature with a historical focus

2.1.1 The History of the access debate in England

In 1976 Prynn (later echoed by Donnely in 1986), described an unprecedented rise in recreational demands on the countryside, particularly from the working classes, which occured throughout the 20th century. Prynn argues that politically left leaning groups such as the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers made a pivotal contribution to the rising profile of access issues early in the 20th century which eventually led to acts of civil disobedience during the 1930s. Hollett (2002) later went on to present an explanation for the rise in demand for countryside access arguing that it was as result of an increase in leisure time created by the introduction of statuary holidays and improved access to affordable transport.

There are a number of texts on the subject of access published from the 1980s onwards. These were often written by individuals with some link to the pro-access lobby. The first notable account came from Hill (1980), with many of his views later echoed by Donnely (1986), Holt (1987), Shoard (1987), Stephenson (1989), Hollett (2002) Anderson (2011), Hey (2011) and Walton (2013). Hill presents a long, complex, social, cultural and political struggle in fairly simple terms. He portrays a David and Goliath relationship between a group of socially oppressed ramblers and a few privileged members of the landed classes. In common with the more recent texts he describes confrontations between landowners seeking to protect game keeping interests and ramblers' organisations. In 1985 Walker (and later Holt in 1987), expanded the subject of access explaining how the rise in demand for countryside access spanned a range of recreational pursuits. Walker charts the sharp rise in the popularity of activities such as cycling, camping and mountaineering.

However, the single most prolific writer on the subject of access during this period was Marion Shoard, who has authored three books (*Theft of the countryside*, 1980, *This land is our land*, 1987 and *A right to roam?,* 1999), a book chapter (Robbers vs revolutionaries, 1996) and a number of articles devoted to the subject (such as The Guardian article '*The fight to save our forests isn't won,* 2011). Shoard is a campaigner for the rights of ordinary citizens to access the countryside both on and beyond the network of public footpaths (Shoard, 2018). Her case that the '*character of land ownership in Britain needs to be re-defined*' (1987, p.539) is made most convincingly in '*This land is our land*' by undermining the assumptions underpinning modern land law (though this argument was previously made by the historical geographer Butlin, 1982). Shoard frequently cites like-minded writers such as Stephenson and Hill, using her history of access and land use to build her argument. Her history starts in the Stone Age and takes the reader on a chronological tour of land use allocation and rights, identifying the Norman Conquest, and its obsession with, what Shoard quite deliberately refers to as, '*blood sports'* as the origin of modern assumptions around land law and the holder's

absolute right to control land. This includes the all-important, putative, right to exclude ordinary people from privately owned land. Shoard's narrative continues through a succession of rights and customary losses such as the non-parliamentary and parliamentary enclosures of commons and waste, the game laws and later statute law attempting to remedy imbalances in the availability of land for popular countryside recreation, such as the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Mountains Act. Shoard includes commentary on customary practices in woodland, such as nutting and gathering of firewood, claiming that prior to the game laws woodlands were seen as '*partial, unofficial extensions of the commons*' (p.68).

Shortly after Shoard published '*This land is our land*', the historical geographer, John Sheail (1988) wrote, '*The Great Divide'*. The book highlights divisions between lobby organisations who are often motivated by single issues and do not recognise their place in the big picture (such as the Smoke Abatement Society and the Footpath Preservation Society). He describes personal motivations falling into one of three categories: nature conservation, landscape conservation and recreational interests. He describes them as:

> *Many smaller groups, each pressing for what are related aspects of the same issue.* (p.2)

Sheail calls for co-operation between interest groups and in particular for conservationists to see recreationalists as allies:

> *Nature preservation [to be] perceived as part of a larger movement to preserve rural amenity and promote opportunities for outdoor recreation*. (p.3)

Stephenson (1989) adds to the debate on lobby groups, from a rambler's point of view, giving further insight into the politics between groups with subtly different agendas such as the Open Spaces Society and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). He also argues that flashpoints, such as in 1932 when thousands of ramblers participated in a mass trespass in the Peak District, had a sizable impact on the struggle for access.

Jeans (1990) demonstrates a degree of sympathy with landowners not detected elsewhere in the literature. He concentrates on the behaviour of recreationalists and describes how during the first half of the 20th century county folk felt '*invaded and affronted by urban culture'* (p.259). He also describes the role of the CPRE, and how a range of threats to the countryside, including urban sprawl and the rise of the motor car led to the formation of this landscape preservationist organisation in 1926. Figure 2.1 illustrates Jean's point and how fear of urbanisation was portrayed in the early twentieth century (taken from Hodson, 2002).

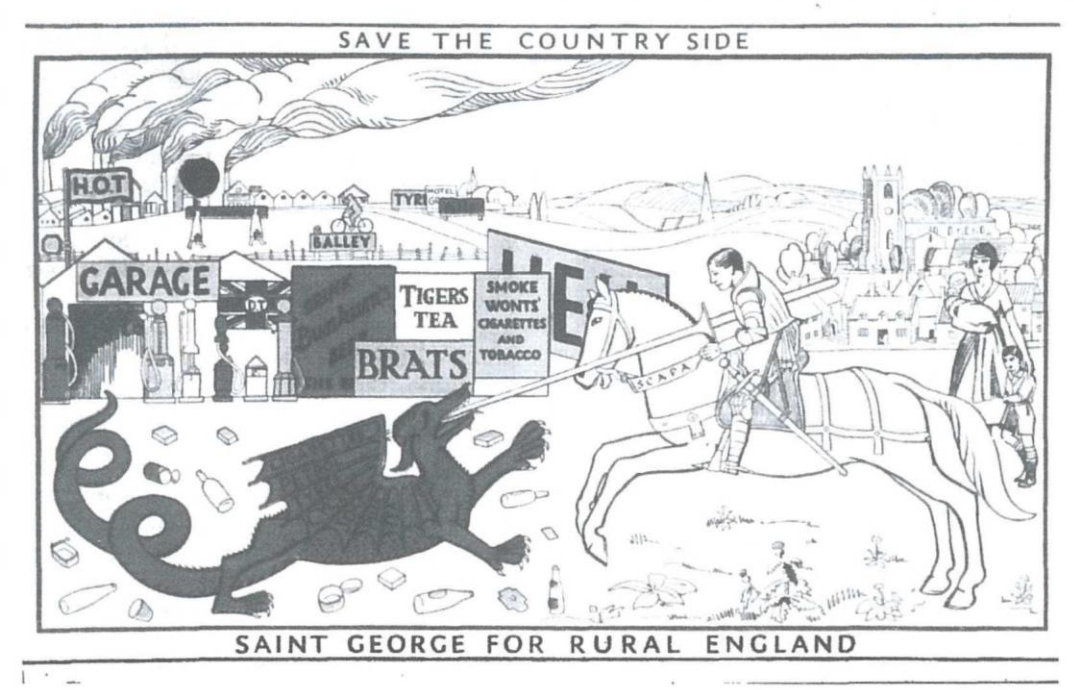


Figure 4. 'Saint George for Rural England'. Postcard produced for the 'Save the Countryside' exhibition (1928). Reproduced by permission of the Keeper of the Public Record Office. PRO MT 39/129

Figure 2.1: A pictorial representation of the perceived threats to the countryside contributing to the formation of the CPRE in 1926. Urbanisation is depicted as a direct threat to rural families who protect their green and pleasant land from litter, pollution and excessive signage (Hodson, 2002).

The rural environmental geographer Carolyn Harrison (1991) returns to the subject of landowners versus ramblers. She describes how these two opposing forces interact. As demand rises, be it as a form of escape from a rapidly industrialising urban landscape or as part of a rising taste for countryside pursuits, supply may be cut off by landowners fearing anti-social behaviour and a loss of control over their land. This is an argument also emphasised later by Curry (1994). Harrison's history

of the twentieth century has a policy focus. Politically aligned with the interests of rambling organisations, she states (p.XIV):

> *Public policy...has served to ensure that the balance of interest continues to lie with the private landowners.*

Harrison highlights the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act as the time from which the public sector became involved in countryside recreation. Like Shoard (1987), she identifies landowners' attitudes and putative property rights as an issue to be addressed directly while recreation has been treated as a '*discretionary function'* (p.2). She continues to describe a large influx of town dwellers participating in countryside recreation and her belief that the authorities, landed interests and conservationists were allied in their belief that this was a problem in need of careful management and led to the policy of country parks creation as part of the Countryside Act of 1968.[3] Often described as '*honeypot sites'*, the policy to create country parks was a concession to demand from landowners and conservationists aiming to divert city recreationalists to specific sites, usually situated towards the edge of towns and away from other rural settings (Mansley, 2003).

Mabey, writing in 1993, continues the arguments put forward by Shaeil in 1988. He takes the view that conservationists and recreationalist share many common objectives and any historically negative outcomes from access (such as littering or other anti-social behaviour) are dwarfed by those of uncontrolled conifer afforestation and woodland clearance for agriculture (an argument that was made earlier by both Rackham, 1976 and Shoard, 1987).

The cultural geographer David Matless (1997) presents a complex social history which builds on earlier work such as Hill (1980) and Harrison (1991). He highlights a cultural divide between rural and urban populations and describes a disparity between values on how to behave in the countryside. He argues that new, more sociable, values emanating from townsfolk keen on picnicking and dancing

[3] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/41

challenge what Harrison (1991, p.2) refers to as the traditional values of the '*countryside aesthetic'* and quieter forms of enjoyment. He also describes the formation of an '*anti-citizen'* (p.41) who drops litter and causes a commotion and describes how traditional rambling organisations, inspired by the prose of Wordsworth, sought to police a new, noisier and more numerous wave of what Anderson (2011) later refers to as '*Hikers*'. However, Anderson keeps his account simple, concentrating on confrontations between landowners seeking to protect game keeping interests and ramblers' organisations, including public demonstrations like the 1932 mass trespass. Hey (2011) expands on the subject of the mass trespass, critiquing Stephenson's (1989) account, arguing that direct action such as this has been glamourised into legend.

There is little in the literature from the standpoint of the pro-access lobby. Where this perspective is represented (such as with Jeans, 1990) it does not discusses the issue of rights. Even more contemporary rhetoric from organisations such as the Country Landowners Association prefer to focus on practical issues claiming that '*issues of ideology are irrelevant*' (Slade, 2012 p.5). It could be that the topic is avoided as it is too politically sensitive and therefore debating from a more practical standpoint is more likely to be successful. In addition, as fundamental assumptions about property rights have not been seriously challenged in law, the landed may perhaps feel this is a subject best left alone.

Access and Public sector forestry

The Forestry Commission, established in 1919, was primarily created as a utilitarian public resource provider. However, as Revill and Watkins (1996) explain, an early twentieth century backlash prompted by rapid coniferisation of the British landscape led the forestry commission to seek to re-gain positive public relations. One manifestation was the publication of Edlin's forest guides, filled with romanticised imagery (see figure 2.2), the guides aimed to promote a quiet, educated enjoyment of the countryside:

> *The freedom given to the public…carries with it the obligation to observe the byelaws and to act in the spirit of the country code*. (Edlin, 1961 p.VI)

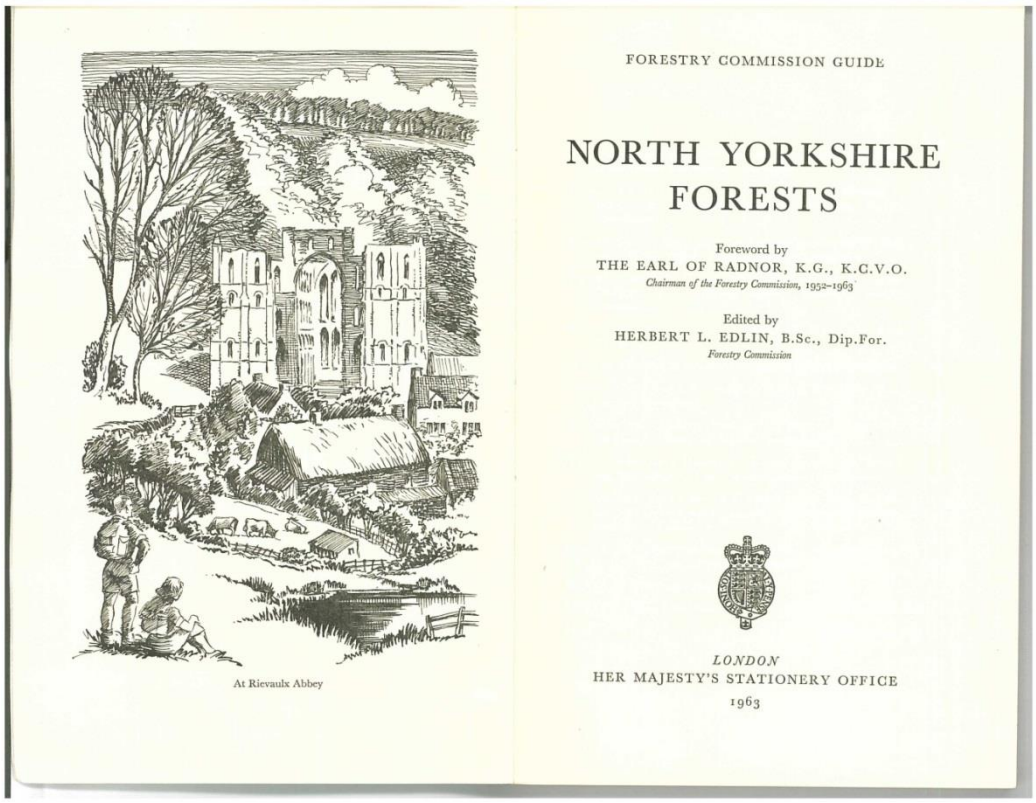


Figure 2.2 The inside cover of Edlin's (1963) North Yorkshire Forests guide. In common with several other images from Edlin's guides a young couple are depicted in the foreground, quietly enjoying a domesticated countryside scene.

In the year 2000 Tsouvalis wrote 'A Critical Geography of Britain's State Forests'. The publication charts the history of Forestry Commission woodland noting important acts of parliament and changes in its remit. Tsouvalis (as earlier described by Watkins (1990)) sets out the impact of Forestry Commission policy on ancient woodlands between the 1950s and 1980s resulting in an unprecedented loss. She attributes the cessation of this loss to Oliver Rackham (1976) and George Peterken's (1993) work in bringing the issue of ancient woodland to the forefront of policy.

Across two similar publications (2005 and 2008), which concentrate on the public sector, Lambert gives a history of forest and woodland recreation in the second half of the twentieth century describing a post-productivist period where there was a diminishment in relative importance of woodland timber utilisation compared to recreational use. Like Revill and Watkins (1996), he also gives an account of the

public relations exercise embarked upon by the Forestry Commission going on to explain an emphasis on attracting day trippers. Commenting on the need to protect sensitive areas, Lambert argues for a solution which caters for public demand without allowing it to completely dictate provision. He argues that the degree to which recreation should be the priority must consider the interests of recreation and conservation in light of each woodland's geographical and social backdrop.

2.1.2 The History of English Access Law

Most large historic pieces of statue law in the twentieth century have, by some measure, attempted to improve access for ordinary citizens, however, before this point new laws tended to favour land owners. Major examples are the Game laws of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and Victorian legislation under which parliamentary enclosures accelerated the detachment of the people from traditional commons and waste.

More recent legislation includes but is not limited to:

- 1925 Law and Property Act. (Gives public right of access to urban commons, Card & Ward, 1996)
- 1939 Access to the Mountains Act
- 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act
- 1968 Countryside Act (Created the Countryside Commission responsible for both conservation and recreation)
- 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act
- 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW).

Most historic law-making is covered in many of the general texts on the history of access such as Shoard (1987). More specific texts on the enclosures are numerous, for example Dukley & Neeson (1993) and Clarke and Clarke (2001).

The first notable legislation of the twentieth century was the 1939 Access to the Mountains Act, which created a mechanism by which the public could apply for access. The effectiveness of this act is debated, most notably between Hill (1980) who described the act as a '*landowners protection bill*' (p.81) and Sheail (2010) who describes the situation as a compromise. No applications were ever made under the legislation, which was overshadowed by the Second World War.

The 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (NPAC) and specifically the creation of the definitive map system is the subject of Hodson's (2002) paper. Hodson, a cartographic historian, is highly critical of the act stating that:

> *The 1949 act must rank as one of the most naive pieces of legislation of the twentieth century. (*p. 119)

Hodson recognises the historic context of enclosures and footpath closures. However, in this detailed piece, she criticises the implementation of the act, arguing that the lack of vigorous guidelines, use of volunteers made officially recorded access inconsistent.

Halfacree (1996) writes on the subject of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPO). Primarily aimed at curtailing the activities of travellers, environmental protesters and ravers, the act criminalised some forms of trespass for the first time. Halfacree describes the act as '*out of all proportion*' (p.180) and disputes the countryside's image as a '*rural idyll*', describing the heterogeneous nature of historic land use.

Card & Ward (1996), also discuss the CJPO in a detailed paper released in the same year. Discussing the act in the context of civil rights, they too find it disproportionate and although not a direct threat to rural recreation, they feel that confusing rules around when trespass becomes a criminal rather than a civil matter prevent some lawful and peaceful use of the countryside. Card and Ward continue to describe a legal system that:

> *fails to pay sufficient heed to the fact that legitimate public interests exists in the use of the countryside for recreation, protest or as a place to live.* (p.448)

The rural geographer Gavin Parker (1999) agreed arguing that although CJPO was largely a symbolic gesture, it gave credence to the cause of private property rights at the expense of civil rights.

Parker and Ravenscroft (2001) write on the CRoW act of 2000, seeking to understand how the act fits into historic power relations between the landed and non-landed. They describe a modern culture where land ownership no longer offers the status it once did and the increased relative economic importance of leisure and tourism. They believe the act to be a compromise, where, in return for greater freedoms over open land, concessions were made over existing public rights of way (PRoWs). These include the cut-off date of 2026 for new PRoWs based on historical evidence and a mechanism for existing PRoWs to be diverted or extinguished on security grounds. Referring back to the land right debates of the early twentieth century, Parker and Ravenscroft criticise the act on the grounds that it only benefits walkers and debate whether it actually provides statutory rights or even a greater freedom to explore, highlighting issues around the recording and dissemination of access land information.

2.2 Current rights of way law in England

An understanding of the main points of law affecting access to English woodlands is essential to this research and is summarised below. Unless otherwise stated, the information is drawn from Riddall and Trevelyan (2007) with modifications to take account of more recent changes. This section is grouped into topics rather than taking a chronological approach to the multitude of acts of parliament which have cumulated in access law as it stands. Many clauses pertinent to access rights are buried in acts that are otherwise concerned with unrelated affairs. An example is the Police Reform Act of 2002 which was mainly concerned with general police matters but granted the police powers to seize vehicles causing annoyance. This has implications for motorcyclists who illegally use their vehicles on footpaths or bridleways.

The law will be summarised using the following headings:

2.2.1 Types of legal access

2.2.2 The definitive map

2.2.3 Landowner responsibilities

2.2.4 Mechanisms for change to access: Creating and extinguishing rights of way or changing designation

2.2.5 Trespass and the law

2.2.1 Types of legal access

There are four main types of legal access available in woodlands. These are: Public Rights of Way (PRoWs); Permissive (concessionary) routes; Greenways and CRoW access land.

Public rights of way

PRoWs are routes across land, including private land, where the public can legally pass. There are four main types of public rights of way. These are: public footpaths (PFPs), bridleways (BWs), byways open to all traffic (BOATs) and restricted byways (RBs).

Strictly speaking, PRoW users only have the right to *pass and re-pass* and not to forage, picnic or engage in any manner of otherwise lawful activities on a PRoW. Despite this, such activities are not specifically prohibited unless there is a local bylaw setting that out. However, owners who allow their dogs to wander off PRoWs are committing trespass against the owner. PRoWs are maintainable by local authorities and must be signposted at any junctions with a tarmacked road. Way-marking is not compulsory but Derbyshire countryside services do include on-route signposting as an important part of their monitoring programme. Local authorities have a duty to ensure PRoWs are kept clear of obstacles and must submit rights of way improvement plans every five years. This must be

supplemented with consultation from an advisory panel drawn from members of the public. These are known as Local Access Forums. (CRoW 2000)[4]

Public footpaths are only available to people walking on foot and their *normal accompaniments.* Normal accompaniments can include dogs, pushchairs or motability vehicles. Riding a bicycle or a horse on a PFP is trespass against the land owner as is pushing a bicycle along a PFP as it is not considered to be a normal accompaniment. A public footpath legally should be 1.5m wide with height clearance of 2.5m.

In addition to pedestrians bridleways allow the passage of cyclists and horse riders. Pedestrians take precedence, though cyclists must by order of law give way to both people on foot and equestrian users. Electrically assisted pedal cycles are permitted as long as they conform to the Pedal Cycle Regulations. (2010[5]) BWs must be 2.5m wide and have 3.5m head clearance to allow for taller horses.

Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) allow for use by mechanically propelled vehicles (MPVs) such as 4x4s, quad bikes or motorcycles. Restricted byways are downgraded BOATs where use of one transport mode has been prohibited by local bylaw. This usually affects MPVs. Cycle tracks are another designation theoretically available to members of the public, though these are few in number. The public are also permitted to use publically maintainable streets and these can be useful to link up other routes.

Permissive (concessionary) routes

Landowners can give permission for members of the public to use a certain route. This can be as a permissive footpath or a permissive bridleway. These are created with *'the intention that they should not become a public right of way'* (p.30, Riddall & Trevelyan, 2007).

[4] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents
[5] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/198/contents/made

Landowners of permissive routes, often referred to as concessionary routes, can opt to have them included on OS maps, however this is rarely done. Many may be concerned about the OS maps not keeping up to date with closures of paths but it is also probable that some landowners would not enjoy any increased usage the publicity might encourage. The result is that it is difficult for the public to plan routes to include permissive access because information on their whereabouts is not published anywhere except for signs in-situ.

Grant funded access

Many permissive routes have been created as a result of grant funding. There have been many iterations of woodland grant schemes, administered by the Forestry Commission (FC), since they were first launched in 1988 (Hunt, 2018). The latest version was the *English Woodland Grant Scheme* (EWGS). Commencing in 2004, it continued a tradition of encouraging public access that began in the early 1990s. Applicants could apply for woodland creation grants which came with a 30 year permissive access obligation or a woodland management grant. Access obligations under woodland management grants varied from ten to 30 years depending on the value of the grant.

However, until 2016 new landowners taking over woodland with ongoing access obligations could refuse to succeed the scheme without the FC seeking to recover grant money. This changed after the EU revised its regulations, but has undoubtedly resulted in some loss of access in the meantime (Hunt, 2018).

The EWGS scheme closed to new applicants in 2015 and was merged into Natural England's countryside stewardship scheme. However, access obligations have quietly disappeared from the new schemes, affecting both woodland and other types of land. No public announcements have been found explaining why this policy has changed and local access forums were not notified.

Greenways

Greenways are medium or long distance routes created by local authorities. They are designed as multi-use, wheelchair accessible, trails aimed at walkers and cyclists. Horses are permitted on most but not all routes. Greenways are not always listed as public rights of way and are therefore not always viewable via OS maps.

CRoW access land

CRoW gives access to open land (Mountain, Moor, Heath, Down, Common and Coastland). The definition of *'open land'* was changed from the 1968 Countryside Act to exclude woodland. Though CRoW excludes woodland there was a mechanism built in to the act to enable landowners to designate woodland as open access voluntarily. However, with the exception of the FC and some charities (such as the Woodland Trust), voluntary dedication, especially in the private sector, is rare.

The FC and the Woodland Trust have their own policies concerning public access, for example both organisations allow horses along certain routes and the FC do not discourage cycling, nor do they encourage it except on specified trails.

More generally, access land provided under CRoW allows a right of access on foot only and bans other kinds of activity including making fires and camping. There are also other stipulations that are more restrictive than the public might expect. These include: Intentionally removing any part of a tree or other plant, which has implications for foraging; letting dogs off the lead; and *'annoying'* landowners (Riddall & Trevelyan, 2017 p.671).

Owners or managers of access land are permitted to apply '*Restrictions and Exclusions'* in order to close their land for a variety of reasons including management and safety. This mechanism has been widely used according to Ravenscroft and Gilchrist (2011). A member of the public seeking to use access land would need to consult an OS map to see which land is classed as '*access land'* but

they would in addition need to check for exclusions via the Natural England Website which provides a list of areas affected by closures.

Occupiers (land owners or their tenants) have a lowered liability on CRoW land. This was enabled by amending the Occupiers Liability Act of 1984[6] to redefine the word 'visitor' to specifically exclude users of access land. Further to that CRoW specified that occupiers were not liable for risks associated with natural features unless they had been deliberately interfered with by the occupier or their representative to intentionally create risk. Occupiers are also not liable for injury caused by improper use of stiles, gates or barriers (for example, climbing walls). However, there is still some room for concern on the part of landowners as they remain liable for both visitors and non-visitors if they have failed to resolve or warn about a *reasonably* foreseeable risk (including natural risks) when they know or *reasonably* should know members of the public are likely to be in the vicinity. The word '*reasonably*' is italicised to highlight a word which can provoke a level of uncertainty. What is and is not *reasonable* can only be finally determined by a court of law.

2.2.2 The definitive map

The idea of a definitive map was introduced by the National Parks and Access to the Mountains Act of 1949[7]. Each county created their own maps over the two decades that followed using teams of volunteers. The maps contain a record of existing PRoWs, though some may exist but remain unrecorded. Therefore, if a route is not on the map it does not necessarily mean it does not exist as a PRoW. Most counties now maintain an on-line version of the definitive map. Derbyshire's can be viewed alongside a host of other pieces of useful geographic information such as the cycle network and SSSIs.[8]

[6] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/3/contents
[7] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97
[8] https://maps.derbyshire.gov.uk/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=Ordnance_Survey_Maps

2.2.3 Landowners' responsibilities

As discussed in the section on CRoW access land, landowners may be liable for accidents taking place on their land under the Occupiers liability Act (1957)[9], even if the complainant was trespassing at the time. Previous literature has outlined (see section 2.3.5) that there is a large degree of uncertainty as to the circumstances under which a landowner (or occupier) is deemed to be liable. Landowners are expected to take a *reasonable* duty of care but not have an *unreasonable* burden of responsibility. It can be understandably difficult for landowners to know where the line is between these two positions. Certainly a sensible landowner would need to inspect well-used routes for natural and man-made hazards and document these inspections. Taking these precautions protected the FC from a claim involving a mountain biker who suffered serious injury in the Dalemere forest in 2015.[10] Less well used routes are not expected to have the same number of checks as it transpired in the case MacLellan vs Forestry Commission in 1999.[11]

In addition to these considerations land owners are responsible for the maintenance of gates and stiles on their land where they cross a PRoW and must seek permission from the local authority before erecting any new ones. Any deliberate obstructions placed by landowners or occupiers on PRoWs without '*lawful authority or excuse'* (Riddall & Trevelyan, 2017 p. 239) can be interpreted as '*public nuisance'* and can lead to criminal prosecution under section 137 of the highways act (1980).[12] Ignorance or inconvenience cannot be used as a valid defence.

Landowners also have a duty to trim back any overhanging vegetation, which for bridleways is to a height of 3.5 meters. Local authorities have powers to compel landowners to comply with these rules. If landowners wish to clear any litter, fly tipping or other items left by members of the public this must be done at their own expense.

[9] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/5-6/31/contents
[10] Hewett vs Forestry Commission (2015), A63YJ660 (CC)
[11] MacLellan vs Forestry Commission (1999), BS250655 (HC)
[12] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66

2.2.4 Mechanisms for change to access:

Creating new rights of way

PRoWs added to the definitive map may be existing rights which are yet to be recorded or entirely new routes. There are three main mechanisms for adding a route to the definitive map:

- Proving 20 years of unopposed use
- Providing historic (pre-1949) evidence that the route is a PRoW
- Express Dedication at Common Law (EDCL)

The 20 years of use rule relies on the principle that if a route has been used by the public for 20 years it is deemed to be a dedicated highway. The onus is on the landowner to prove otherwise as according to Riddall and Trevelyan (2017, p. 40):

> *The law presumes that in the past the landowner dedicated the way as public either expressly or impliedly by making no objection to use of the way by the public*

Therefore if members of the public can get together and claim a route so long as they have used it '*without force, without security and without permission*' (p.41). Permission is important as using a path with permission would give evidence that the route was permissive and therefore no claim could stand (see section on permissive routes). Members of the public are required to fill out evidence forms and testify at a public enquiry or they can make a statutory declaration through a solicitor.

Landowners can defend themselves against any claims using the 20 year rule by granting permissive access, by displaying signs prohibiting access (which must be replaced if removed) or by completing a statutory declaration under section 31 of the Highways Act 1980. The statutory declaration makes a clear statement that the landowner has no intention to dedicate. Land areas subject to section 31 declarations are viewable on Derbyshire's mapping portal.

Providing historic evidence of a PRoW relies on the principle '*once a highway, always a highway*' (Bucks & Wadey, 2012) and requires users to present evidence that the route was an official PRoW before 1949. Documentation that might be used to support a case could include enclosure awards and historic maps.

However section 53 of CRoW set out a cut-off date of January 1st 2026 after which all existing rights not on the definitive map will be extinguished. Without further definition there was concern from local access forums and other stakeholder groups that this also affected the 20 years of use rule but the matter was finally clarified by a Natural England Spokesperson at the 2017 LAF conference who stated:

> *The cut-off date only applies to claims that rely on pre-1949 evidence and to BOAT claims.*

The Deregulation Act (2015) allowed local authorities to use a speedier, mediation, based approaches to clearing the backlog of claims in the run up to 2026. However, the additional funds promised under CRoW to help local authorities administer extra claims have not been delivered, nor has the approach of this cut-off date been brought to public attention in any significant way. Guidance on how to implement the cut-off date and the faster processing of claims are yet to be released and no date has been given for their issue (Office of Strategic Services, 2018).[13]

The final mechanism for creating new rights of way is EDCL. This is a straightforward process without public enquiry allowing landowners to dedicate routes as statutory PRoWs voluntarily. There are very few instances of landowners actually choosing to use this mechanism.

Extinguishing PRoWs

There are several circumstances under which it is theoretically possible to extinguish a PRoW, however gaining permission is an onerous procedure and

[13] https://www.oss.org.uk/what-we-do/rights-of-way/the-deregulation-act/

requests are only granted under exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances might be for developments of national economic importance such as the HS2 proposals which affect the very East of Derbyshire[14] or for developments where interference with PRoW is unavoidable (quarries, for example).
However, local authorities do have the power to extinguish PRoWS for the following other reasons:

- They are not needed by members of the public (Highways Act 1980)
- Health and safety affecting schools (CRoW 2000)
- Preventing or reducing crime (CRoW 2000)

Local authorities also have the power to divert paths in the interests of the owners and the public.

Changing designation

Members of the public can apply for upgrades (for example from a PFP to a BW) using either of the mechanisms applicable to making new claims and land owners can upgrade using EDCL. Local authorities also have the power to upgrade footpaths to cycle paths (Cycle Tracks Act 1984).[15] However, any conversion to a cycle path results in removal from the definitive map.

Many bridleways have been converted to BOATs using historical evidence that they were used by all traffic. However, this approach has been criticised as the routes were never intended to take MPVs only horses and carts. As a result many local authorities have sought to convert BOATs into restricted byways using traffic regulation orders (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984).[16] Traffic regulation orders can also affect equestrian users, though this is unusual.

[14] https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/public-transport/news-notices/hs2/high-speed-rail-hs2.aspx
[15] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/38/contents
[16] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/27/contents

2.2.5 Trespass and the Law

According to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (c.33), a trespasser is a person who enters or remains on land without lawful authority. Cyclists or horse riders using public footpaths are also committing trespass.

However there is confusion and contradiction around when trespass applies. The 20 years of use rule states that dedication is presumed unless landowners have expressed their opposition, therefore there is a grey area where permission has not been gained but the land owner has not objected. In any case trespass is a civil rather than a criminal matter and the police can only be called if a group of two or more people have been asked to leave by the occupier and refused or have caused damage or aggravation. Trespassers can only be subject to criminal prosecution in the following circumstances:

- Where deliberate damage has occurred (resulting in a charge of criminal damage)
- Where the trespasser has been intimidating to the occupier, their family or representative or has obstructed or disrupted the occupiers' activities (resulting in a charge of aggravated trespass)
- Where they are driving a MPV without lawful authority (Road Traffic Act, 1988).[17] In 2002 the police gained powers to cease vehicles causing alarm, distress or annoyance (Police Reform Act, 2002)[18]
- Where trespassers are assembling and causing a public nuisance (resulting in a charge of trespassory assemblage)

The last of these circumstances was introduced as part of the Public Order Act of 1986[19] (Section 14A) and was intended to control raves. However, there was concern that this could be applied to groups out walking, such as ramblers (Card & Ward, 1986). However, in a 1999 landmark case, Director of Public Prosecutions vs Jones, found in favour of a group assembled for a peaceful protest. The judge ruled

[17] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/contents
[18] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/30/contents
[19] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/64

that trespassory assemblage was not applicable unless the group were causing a public nuisance.

2.3 Recent research on access to woodland and the wider countryside

2.3.1 The access debate – International perspectives

The contemporary land rights debate is very much an international issue. A number of papers have taken a step back, comparing the British system of access and land rights to other countries. Segrell (1996) explains the concept of *allemanstratten* in Sweden. Allemanstratten is a right to roam with limitations. Segrell explains that, in Sweden, rights for individuals crossing private land have always had a stronger legal basis than in Britain and landowners are more accepting of these rights.

Mansley (2003) writes on British land rights with reference to Canada. He disapproves of the British system and attacks it from multiple angles. He depicts a highly urbanised Britain, over-populated and lacking wilderness areas. He believes this has contributed to a '*get off my land*' mentality not seen in other countries (p.287). Mansley describes British rights of way as a *'fossilised historical transportation network'* (p.284) which he believes are unfit for both modern land use and recreational needs. He is highly critical of the lack of public information surrounding access, including informal and permissive access, neither of which appear on OS maps. After describing a piecemeal and confusing system of voluntary access schemes Mansley continues:

> *Anyone wishing to navigate the minefield of legislation, historical struggles, private landowners, subsidy and honeypot sites would realise how ad hoc and confusing access is. It is no wonder that the potential of the system is not fully realised* (p.287).

Although complimentary to organisations such as the National Trust and the Woodland Trust, he characterised a policy structure that directs recreationalists towards country parks and under-funds access to more secluded parts of the countryside. Writing in the Norwegian Journal of Geography, Sellar (2007) analyses the impact of the Scottish Land Reform Act. He explains how it granted both a right

of responsible access while providing a right for traditional communities to buy back land that had fallen into private hands. Commenting that '*The sky has not fallen in'* (p.107) he views the act as an overall success, a view that Shoard (2018) very much agrees with.

2.3.2 The contemporary access debates in England

Academic discussions on the contemporary access debate in England are set against the back drop of lobby organisations all arguing their positions. On one side is the pro-access lobby including organisations such as the Woodland Trust and The Ramblers Association. Pro-access organisations are increasingly co-operating with one another and have also become allied to conservation organisations including the National Trust and the CPRE. On the other side of the argument sit the Country Landowners Association (CLA) and the National Farmers' Union who oppose any increase in access. However, there are some organisations, such as the Royal Forestry Society (RFS) who take a much more pragmatic approach. A full summary of the major stakeholder organisations and their standpoints on access is provided in The Appendix.

For the purposes of this study we will begin the contemporary access debate in the 1970s, a time when the landed lobby were voicing concerns about further rising demands on the countryside for access. In 1972 the Timber Growers Organisation ran a conference entitled '*Recreation and the Woodland Owner*'. The conference papers describe and atmosphere of extreme nervousness fuelled by a perception among landowners of a looming public takeover of rural space. Parker-Jervis' (1972) contribution, for example, offered a personal comment from the perspective of a private woodland owner in which he clearly viewed the public with great suspicion, repeatedly referring to them as '*all and sundry'* (p.52). Further worry emanated from the nature of visits especially from car users:

> *What about all those people in motor cars who seldom leave their vehicle and would probably get lost in the woods if they did* (p.53)

Concerns about the mode of access were echoed by Hubbard (1972) who elaborated on his opposition to any right to roam:

> *How and what with? Motor cars, motor bikes, caravans, tents…..? A glorious idea but utterly impractical* (p.73)

Other objections were raised by Parker-Jervis to '*the problem'* (p.50) of public access to woodland, these included: Parking; Landowners' putative rights '*we will not be bribed to open our woods to all and sundry*' (p.52); Compromise of sporting amenity (meaning game shooting); '*Offence to good taste'* (p.53); High insurance premiums and Privacy. He goes on to suggest that forests for the specific purpose of public access should be planted near to towns. Of course, with the implementation of the 1968 Countryside Act which initiated the creation of new Country Parks this was already taking place (Harrison, 1991). Later the community forest initiative added to the portfolio of new, urban fringe recreational sites (Bull, 1996).

Shoard (1976) attacks the idea that the recreational needs of townsfolk should be accommodated in towns or in country parks designed to cater for the masses. Using the case study of a 19 year old unemployed man from central London she argues that all people, whether urban or rural, need the peace and quiet of the countryside. She insists that instead of trying to protect the countryside from people, recreation should be embraced as a new future for the countryside. However, Fitton (1977) demonstrates how unready the landed lobby were to accept that idea. He talks of a '*moral panic'* (p.57) where three different countryside conferences warned of the destruction of the countryside from '*millions of townsfolk…exploding over the countryside'*.

After a quieter spell in the literature on the subject of contemporary access debates a number of pieces were written in 1996 as part of Charles Watkins' book '*Rights of Way: Policy, Culture and Management*'. Parker & Ravenscroft (1996) criticise recent market-based approaches to access management (such as countryside stewardship schemes), believing that rights may be lost or capitalized upon if not

countered by legislation. Crabtree (1996), accepting land rights in their current form, assesses potential options for creating access such as legislative changes or payment on an individual basis, eventually advocating what would now be termed as a payment for ecosystem services approach.

Curry (1996) takes issue with the way the current system works, believing that landowners do not fully understand access rights and systems for publishing access made available through payments such as tax relief and grants. He feels that responsibility for access needs to be given to an independent centralised body. Curry is the only writer on this subject to acknowledge the role of informal access as well as legally sanctioned routes.

Matless et al. (2010) discuss how the challenges of balancing the interests of access and nature conservation have been overcome. They examine how nature trails have been used to simultaneously divert visitors away from sensitive areas while encouraging environmental education and respectful use of the countryside. However, they recognise remaining tensions between conservation and recreation, acknowledging that prescribed trails do not offer the solitary experience with nature that some people seek. Shoard, In her 2011 article in *The Guardian*, argues that the law needs to be changed to allow public entry to the more accessible privately owned woodlands that most people live near. A step that would allow similar open access rights to those sanctioned for '*open land'* under CRoW.

The effect of CRoW on access provision is the subject of Ravenscroft and Gilchrist's (2011) critique of the legislation. This is an interesting follow up to Sydenham's (2002) piece written for the Environmental Law Review. Sydenham describes the act as a compromise between access and conservation rather than access and private property interests. This is an interesting choice of words given her former employment as the chief legal advisor to the Country Landowners Association and perhaps reflects a wish to avoid evoking historical sensitivities around land rights. Her reassuring tone predicts there is '*unlikely to be a major influx of new people'* (p.100) and that CRoW restricts '*behaviours not compatible with the quiet exercise*

of the right'. (p.91). Her summary details the complexity of the act, most notably the large number of exceptions to open access rules possible in both time (temporary closures) and space (permanently excepted land).

By contrast Ravenscroft and Gilchrist argue on the behalf of citizen's rights. They begin by describing the political atmosphere before CRoW passed through parliament:

> *The period between 1997 and 2000 witnessed the elitist superstructure of rural exclusivity seemingly being torn down in favour of a legal 'right to roam'.*

However, in this politicised piece they characterise CRoW as a '*sordid deal'* (p.58) under which many have lost out. They boil tensions down to the political left and right and warn of *'encroachment by landowner interests'* (p.47) Ultimately they conclude that CRoW gives a few additional freedoms but it relies on the public having the ability and inclination to use and interpret live mapping systems to ensure the location they plan to visit is available to them. In agreement with Sydenham's (2002) earlier findings, Ravenscroft and Gilchrist conclude that:

> *The act retains several discretionary rights to exclude the public in the interests of safety and to protect economic activity. (p48)*

They argue that the ramblers gained something from CRoW but other recreationalists lost out, including pedestrians wishing to access non-CRoW land. Although other authors have not discussed woodland specifically in relation to CRoW, Ravenscroft and Gilchrist highlight the fact that woods were excluded leaving the option for owners to dedicate land in perpetuity. However, as they point out, no private sector woodland owners are known to have done so. They also emphasise the access problems that can occur when ownership changes, stressing the difficulties local authorities have experienced when trying to keep sold-off Forestry Commission land open.

Shoard continues to argue that further legislation is needed to ensure landowners grant access. She writes in *The Times* (2018), arguing that landowners receive a large public subsidy and therefore should acknowledge the public stake in their land

by ceasing to oppose access, without need for any further incentivisation. Shoard believes that access on foot to lowland woodlands cannot be delivered under the current law.

2.3.3 Research focussed on public recreation and its benefits

Though recreation, especially rambling, has been the focus of the contemporary and historical access debate there is a well-established body of research linking access to greenspace with positive health and well-being benefits. Related to this research are a number of publications discussing the social benefits of access to woodland. In addition some papers concentrate in particular recreational groups and the interactions between them.

Health and wellbeing

Most of the recent research on the benefits of access to woodland has been dominated by those with links to the FC with the occasional publication in the Quarterly Journal of Forestry (linked to the Royal Forestry Society). Elizabeth O'Brien is by far the most prolific writer in this area producing a range of pieces around the broad topic of public participation in forests and woodland. These are all launched from the platform of a well-evidenced link between public interaction with the outdoors and improved physical and mental health and well-being (O'Brien, 2003 and 2005, Morris & O'Brien 2011). O'Brien is a social scientist specialising in qualitative studies and is deeply critical of more quantitative approaches to analysing demand for woodland recreation (Morris & O'Brien, 2011) such as those adopted in the past by, for example, Scarpa (2003). In a recent literature review on the topic of woodland access O'Brien and Morris (2014) make the point that the success of woodland policy should be measured in terms of well-being and not purely in economic terms. They point to a range of well-being benefits from woods including health, nature connectedness and education.

Outside of O'Brien's work many other pieces have focussed on the importance of urban woodland. Toohey et al. (2013) and FC Scotland (2016) concentrate on dog

walkers. Toohey et al. surveyed older dog walkers and found improved physical health and a greater sense of community if they walked with dog in their local neighbourhood. FC Scotland interviewed 300 relatively inactive dog owners, ran focus groups with mixed activity level dog owners and interviews with vets. The found that 62% of the people interviewed were not aware of their local urban woodland and only 11% had actually visited them. In addition they identified an array of social and health benefits from dog walking. In common with earlier research by Collinson (2005), Binner et al. (2017) expressed the importance of urban woodland to personal wellbeing. Outside of the forestry sector Carrus et al. (2017) also emphasised the importance of Urban woodland.

The social value of woodland

A number of studies have looked at public preferences and the value to society that woodlands and greenspaces can provide. Tartaglia-Kershaw (1982) Interviewed 100 local residents in Sheffield about their local urban wood. Only a third visited the woods as adults but 72% said it had a personal significance for them mainly because of its aesthetic character. 10% had nostalgic views of their local woods and talked about how they played in them as children. People had a problem with those riding motorcycles, lighting fires and damaging trees. In 1995, Bennet et al. conducted a survey of 200 woodland users. They found the public valued peace and quiet most highly; then fresh air; then visual aesthetics.

Coles and Bussey (2000) Find a:

> *severe undervaluing of the social importance of woods by professionals in favour of general nature conservation guidelines which fail to recognise the nature of urban woodland/community interaction (p.181)*

Their study was based in a well wooded location where woods were in public ownership. Using household questionnaires and in-wood interviews they analysed the emotions of those in urban woodlands. They found location to be important with people wanting woods within 5 minutes walking distance. Another finding was that participants disliked conifer plantations and narrow strips of woodland or woods of less than two hectares that they could not explore or make a circular

route. Favourite aspects of woodland among the participants were dappled shade, noise, smell, grandeur and a sense of timelessness. Coles and Bussey conclude their paper by arguing that distant '*honeypot*' woodlands were no substitute for local community woodlands' (p.188).

Ward Thompson et al. (2004) conducted a large scale survey for the FC in the centre of Scotland. They also found that people prefer woodlands to be readily accessible and frequent users preferred something within walking distance from home. The most popular reported activities were seeing wildlife, spending time with family, getting fresh air and walking dogs. They elaborated that people felt at peace with woodland and did not generally feel fearful. Most people strongly disagreed with the idea that woodlands were scary or hazardous. However women and older people were slightly less confident. Bell et al.'s paper (2004), in common with other pieces on a similar topic, found that visitors prefer a natural appearances and freedom from litter/fly tipping. Visitors wanted to relax, feel at peace, feel free and at one with nature. Again proximity to their homes was found to be important.

O'Brien (2006) conducted group interviews with residents living close to woods. She found that they often had negative comments including issues of safety, fly tipping, vandalism and car dumping. People were also concerned that overgrown vegetation could conceal loiterers especially if it was close to housing. However, they appreciated that the trees gave their urban environment a more rural feel and overall felt that they benefitted from living close to woodland.

Alongside the debate on the social importance of woods more generally, some papers recognised that the public have not been universally benefiting from access to local woodland and that demographic factors need to be taken into account. Kinsman (1996) raised the issue of the low rates of participation among Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME) in countryside recreation. Bell et al. (2004) also found an under-representation of BAME groups in green spaces. They additionally reported a lower proportion of women (44.4%) and especially lone women who were half the number of men. This contrasts with Cordell (2008) who looked at

secondary visitor data and found a recent increase in female participation in woodland recreation.

The value of woodland to young people

Owens (1988) used interviews and observations with teenagers to examine their relationships with outdoor space. He found that 70% valued being in nature, 66% wanted to get away from other people and 30% wanted to socialise. 64% said they wanted to be able to look out and not be seen, making woodland an attractive setting, a finding repeated by the social geographer Samantha Wilkinson (2017). Owens examined outdoor settings where young people consume alcohol. He goes on to argue that that the needs of teenagers have been ignored and that planners tend to avoid making places attractive to teenagers because other people don't want them there.

O'Brien (2006) analysed how young people use greenspace close to their homes and suggested that natural greenspace is more popular than parks if it is closer to homes and buildings. It was especially important for young people without gardens, and as other researchers have found with the adult groups, proximity was vitally important. Ward Thompson et al. (2006) go further and suggest proximity is even more important for young people who tend not to have their own transport and do not want to be dependent on adults.

In a later paper Ward Thompson (2007) offered the view that young people are seen as a deterrent to retirement age people, who felt vulnerable around them. However, in agreement with Bell et al. (2003) who made the same point, she argued that both of these demographic groups are more likely to visit woodland for social reasons.

Recreational groups and the management of their interactions

Many publications have devoted attention to inter-recreationalist conflicts particularly between different recreational types rather than by social demographic. As is argued in the literature focused on the access debate, Butler, in

his 1998 paper comments on contemporary conflicts of interest, such as cyclists verses pedestrians and off road motorcyclists alienating all other countryside users. In line with Sheail's (1988) comments on campaign organisations in the context of the wider countryside, Butler expands to talk of fierce competition between single interest recreational lobby groups competing for access, with little co-ordination or compromise.

However, Blenkinsop (2002), gives a good insight into how a number of organisations with similar interests have worked together to promote woodland recreation. Giving an example from the North of England, he explains how organisations such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (now '*The Conservation Volunteers'*), Sustrans (a campaign organisation promoting non-motorised transport) and the FC (via their woodland grant scheme) were able to deliver woodland recreational opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians. Security concerns and conflicts between walkers and cyclists were highlighted, these were challenged by Sustrans who conclude that well used routes provide improved security and that careful planning can avoid intra-recreational conflicts.

Other papers discuss how some groups of users have poor perceptions of others either through direct experience or through imagined difficulties. Clark et al. (1994) make the point that negative reactions to mountain bikers are related to the fact that it was a relatively new sport that has grown rapidly (a sentiment later echoed by Cessford, 2003). They argue that the rapid growth of mountain biking, coupled with an out of date infrastructure, unable to keep up with demand, has caused conflict between recreational groups.

Carothers et al. (2001) found that conflicts between walkers and mountain bikers were interpersonal and not a matter of social values. Mountain bikers annoyed walkers for practical reasons such as going too fast or not warning on an approach, there was no ideological conflict as may be the case with motorcyclists when loud noises disrupt their pursuit of peace.

Cessford (2003), in another large survey, also studied attitudes towards mountain bikers. He found that perceptions of mountain bikers was related to experience, those who had encountered mountain bikers actually perceived them more positively that those who hadn't. Therefore those without experience seemed to have negative expectations based on imaginaries of conflict.

Brambilla and Mafei (2006), looked at a range of recreational pursuits and found that participants expectations of sounds affected their level of irritation. They found that incongruous noises such as loud engine sounds in a natural environment caused the most irritation.

Arguing the case for increased access for off-road cycling

During a special edition of the Outdoor Recreation Network's journal in 2015 both Palmer (who works for Open MTB) and Hall (From the FC) argue the case for increasing access for mountain bikers. Palmer argues that the current bridleway network is woefully inadequate and advocates allowing cycles on public footpaths. He believes that those unsuitable for cycles would be seldom used.

Cycling UK (2017) conducted a survey of eleven and a half thousand off-road cyclists. They found that the top overall motivation for cycling off road was health and fitness followed by the technical challenge. For women (just 13% of the respondents) the second motivation was enjoying nature. Woodland was the most popular environment to cycle in with 78% saying they enjoy cycling in woodland a lot. They also found that people were not always limiting themselves to officially sanctioned routes with a third admitting to using footpaths on a weekly basis. Reasons cited were a lack of choice, avoiding traffic danger and being unable to create a workable legal route. 74% of the entire sample believed that the current rights of way system is unsuitable with more than half of the respondents considered that campaigning to increase access should be the number one priority for Cycling UK. Similarly to the majority of other reports that concentrate mainly on pedestrians, Cycling UK also found proximity to be important with two thirds of respondents saying they cycle from their door rather than drive to cycle.

The general narrative of the report takes a collaborative approach and ensures it considers the perspectives of others:

> *We acknowledge that some footpaths are too narrow, fragile, crowded or steep for cycling to mix acceptably with other users or the environment… (P.6)*

They continue:

> *The ramblers and the British Horse society…are with us in calling for a Scottish-style right of responsible access to the countryside. (P.6)*

They go on to make the point that the current rights of way system is based on the demands of centuries ago and bears no relation to today's needs. They additionally criticise the CRoW act for failing to benefit most people.

Arguing the case for improved equestrian access

The Equestrian access forum (2012) claims that cyclists and walkers have been provided for liberally over the last few decides while horse access has been eroded. They argue that the horse industry is worth billions to the economy but is being hampered by inadequate rights of way forcing riders to risk their lives on the road. Continuing, they claim that many ancient bridleways were incorrectly classified as footpaths when the definitive map was first set up. They also complain that horse riders have to buy a permit to use FC land when walkers and cyclists can use it for free. They feel that use of anti-motorbike barriers has prevented access for horses in places. They propose a single status for all footpaths, bridleways and byways and call for an independent legal recording authority to be in charge of PRoWs and not local authorities. They also suggest reducing the 20 years of use to 10 years of use and that members of the public should be allowed to apply for a way where there is demonstrable public need. The document continues along an exhaustive list of suggestions, many of which could be seen as unreasonable given the damage that horses can cause to unsuitable routes.

More in line with the perspectives of the British Horse Society (see. appendix 1), who are seeking voluntary dedication of bridleways through Express Dedication at Common Law, Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forum (2017) propose more

modest measures. They suggest that land owners should be paid to link up rights of way so that recreational users can avoid dangerous traffic.

2.3.4 Conservation

In 1994, the CPRE sponsored a report by Clark et al. The CPRE have been subtly changing their stance on access since around the 1970s, gradually becoming more amenable to a range of quiet forms of access. The report sought to summarise conflicts between leisure and the countryside aesthetic. Highlighting problems between new recreational interests such as mountain biking and paint balling and traditional pursuits such as walking and rock climbing, the report was critical of the Countryside Commission's ability to provide appropriate facilities for new forms of leisure. They cite damage to ground flora caused by paintballing activities. Although they generally advocated public access for all, the authors felt that large government surveys concentrated too heavily on what people do and not what kind of experience they are seeking. This is an important point, what people actually take part in is restricted by what is available to them.

Bishop (1996) also took the stance that sensibly managed recreation is good for conservation. Predicting future rises in demand for countryside leisure, and considering different levels of environmental sensitivity, he sought sustainable solutions balancing the interests of residents, visitors and nature. He stated:

> *A policy that attempts to conserve through exclusion is unlikely to be sustainable in political or practical terms as it divorces those who are paying for conservation (taxpayers) from the benefits of their investment. (*p.267)

Collinson, writing for the Woodland Trust in 2005, summarised a study assessing how many people live within close proximity of woodland with permissive access. He found that less than half of the population of England lived within easy reach of an accessible woodland. Easy reach was defined by the Woodland Trust's '*woodland access standard*' which requires people to live within 500m of a woodland of at least 2 hectares and less than 4km from a woodland of 20 hectares or more. Collinson concluded that adding privately owned woodland would

increase accessibility by 26% with further gains only achievable by the creation of tens of thousands of hectares of new woodland.

In a further development to the CPRE's pro-access stance, they commissioned a pamphlet by Spiers (2009) where they argue that public participation increases support for their cause. They particularly advocated more public access and recreation in the green belt in order to protect it by increasing its value to people. They described a:

> *huge increase in engagement with the countryside…extending beyond the middle classes…their engagement influences their purchases, their volunteering and their voting. (p.21)*

They continue, quoting Shoard who stated that:

> *Recreation [is] the key to the survival of England's countryside…Instead of trying to protect the countryside against our fellow man we must turn it over to them, so that their recreation becomes one of its major roles.'*

Marzano and Dandy's (2012) literature review on issues around the effects of recreation on conservation is one of very few discussing general issues of the extent to which recreationalists disturb woodland ecosystems in Britain. They argued that disturbance depends not only on the type of recreation but also on established social norms such as allowing dogs to roam freely on walks. They balanced reports of disturbance with evidence that participation in woodland-based recreation may lead to more constructive environmental attitudes, potentially leaving a positive net effect on nature.

The National Trust also argue this point strongly in a paper by Moss (2012) who quotes David Attenborough:

> *No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced (p.11)*

The view that the interests of conservation go hand in hand with public access, especially educated access, is now a central principle for most large UK based conservation organisations, including the Wildlife Trusts (2016). Even organisations

such as the Royal Forestry Society (2016), who represent their landowner membership, provide information to facilitate public access.

The Woodland Trust, has recently intensified its drive to promote access. A charity whose main objectives are to '*preserve, restore and protect woodland*' they also aim to:

> *inspire people…..to enjoy the overwhelming benefits that woods and trees offer to our landscape and lives.'*
> *(The Woodland Trust, 2016)*

Most woodland in the public and third sector is fully accessible on foot (for example, land owned by the FC and Wildlife Trusts). However, the Woodland Trust has been active in attempting to assemble information on private woodlands with permissive access, available to the public through an interactive map (Woodland Trust 2018).

In 2017 the Woodland Trust launched their *Charter for Trees, Woods, and People* to mark the 800th anniversary of the charter for the forests. Their new charter sets out principles including managing woodlands sustainably, planting more woodlands, making woodlands accessible for all and encouraging health and wellbeing improvements through enriching environments with trees. At the time of writing the charter had been signed by more than 136,000 individuals and organisations. Organisations signed up include the CPRE, The National Trust, The Royal Forestry Society, The RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts and the Church of England.

2.3.5 Landowners

A number of research pieces on landowners general attitudes to access have involved qualitative approaches via interviews. Firstly, Shoard (1987) conducted landowner interviews for her book '*This land is our land*'. She found that landowners tended to voice practical concerns such as health and safety, however she interpreted their reluctance to allow access as being motivated by wealth, power and privacy.

Raley et al. (1998) who were writing during the build up to the CRoW Act conducted face to face interviews with land managers and farmers in response to the CLA's '*access 2000*' initiative which campaigned for a non-compulsory approach to the proposed legislation. They concluded that a voluntary scheme would be too expensive to administer and would provide little additional access. They found that many farmers resisted providing access because of worries about loss of privacy, interference with livestock and property as well as potential liability issues. However, some farmers were happy to move footpaths crossing farmyards into areas of interest, such as woodlands, if a less bureaucratic system for doing so could be developed. Raley et al. (1998) concluded that the overwhelming theme among the landowners was one of control over their property.

Post CRoW, Mulder et al (2006), in their paper on rights of way and key issues of supply, also sought the opinions of landowners on public access. This publication takes a more descriptive approach, with little of the authors' own interpretations evident. Reasons cited for an overall negative attitude to access include perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour, disturbance of wildlife and interference with game keeping, all of which are contested by the recreationalist lobby. The paper accepts without question the often discredited perception (Blenkinsop, 2002) that increased access leads to crime. However, it is useful for understanding the views landowners wish to convey to researchers, whether these are real risks, perceptions or political manoeuvring.

The CLA are the largest lobby group representing landowners (see appendix 1). Slade (2012) sets out their policies on access. The document is absolutely opposed to any new rights for the public whatsoever and insists that all issues should be resolved with a presumption in favour of landowners. He continues that there should be limitations on the public right to appeal against decisions, advocating that members of the public should pay the legal fees for failed PRoW claims.

Slade claims to be following a sensible and pragmatic approach but appears to have no intention of making any compromises. He goes on to comment that England's networks of PRoWs are *'admired throughout the world'* (p.3) but criticises the system for being complicated, expensive to administer and incomprehensible to the ordinary person. He criticises the resource spent on opening historic routes as a waste of money and disapproves of footpaths through gardens and people's farmyards. He is in agreement with the 2026 deadline for footpath claims on historic grounds going further to call for an immediate implementation of the measure. He lambasts the CRoW Act as encouraging claims for further improvements in access. His document is full of case studies where landowners have lost out because of public rights of way claims or strict implementations of existing PRoWs. Commenting on the public he states that:

> *There is a growing disregard for private property and increasing incidents of trespass and anti-social behaviour*

He continues, talking of constant trespass along field margins and in woods arguing that:

> *The government should enable the temporary or permanent closure of paths where persistent illegal or anti-social use occurs…access policies and practice must not adversely affect commercial activities and opportunities*.

Slade advocates permissive access as a better solution, arguing that people respect paths more if they know their access can be taken away. However, he does concede that permissive access should be better advertised and information should be available on an on-line definitive source and on OS digital maps.

Types of landowner

A number of publications have recognised that landowners are not a homogenous group. Broadly there are three sectors involved in woodland ownership: public, charitable and private. However the reality is much more complicated. In 1983 Charles Watkins studied a 15% sample of woodland in Nottinghamshire finding that 70% of woodland was owned privately and was inaccessible other than via PRoWs. Watkins emphasises the importance of land ownership in both shaping the ecology of the wood itself and in determining the level and nature of any public access. He

states the importance of public control measures such as public ownership, tax incentives, grant aid and control measures. However, he does concede that access can bring a number of negative issues such as vandalism. In his 1987 publication, involving 72 landowner interviews, Watkins categorised ownership under: Forestry estates; Farms (where most of the land is owner-occupied); Non-agricultural (including charities, private corporations and small private estates) and Agricultural (where most land is let). He comments on a break up of established woodland estates since the post-war period and gives an example of a large woodland, previously owned by a single estate, which by 1980 was split into six ownerships. Most of these woodland lots had been purchased by timber merchants and were subsequently sold or leased to the FC, though one was retained for conservation purposes.

Karpinnen & Hänninen (2006) used a sample of almost 9000 landowners who were contacted by postal survey. They describe shifts in ownership from farmers to absentee or urban owners.

Julie Urquart is involved in three similar recent papers all attempting to categorise landowners. Urquhart et al. (2010) used national statistics and 20 landowner interviews to discuss recent changes in landowner types in England. They describe a trend away from traditionally orientated landowners and towards those with urban values with no farming or forestry background. They estimate that 47% of England's woods are owned by private individuals with just 6% in public ownership. They assert that most urban woodlands are in private ownership with FC sites tending to be on higher ground away from centres of population. Arguing that many private individuals buy woods with urban wealth driven by a desire to provide for their own private amenity they suggest these individuals outbid more traditional owners because of low timber values. They also suggest that these newer owners have different interpretations on their property rights, which is central to their attitudes on public access. They continue to categorise private owners into farmers, private estates, investors and hobby owners. Hobby owners, they suggest, are not motivated by profit but privacy, control and personal amenity. These

motivations are not compatible with increased access, therefore recreation is an under-supplied public good due to the dominance of private ownership and their reluctance to provide it. Private landowners often objected to the noises recreationalists made and liability was also highlighted as an issue. A final finding was that owner types had different objectives, with traditional estates and farmers least likely to prioritise conservation.

Urquhart & Courtney (2011) produced another paper, based on the same empirical work as the previous one, but this time they offered slightly different categories:

1. The Investor: Financially orientated and prioritises investment and forestry;
2. The Individualist: Values privacy and private amenity, not financially motivated so unlikely to be incentivised by grants;
3. The Private consumer: Values privacy, enjoys engaging in forestry and might take up grants;
4. The Amenity owner: Supportive of public access and conservation;
5. The Multifunctional owner: Not financially motivated, may try out forestry, conservation and may be amenable to public access;
6. The conservationist: Not financially motivated, prioritises conservation and has an anti-access stance.

In their third paper, Urquhart et al. (2012) make broadly similar comments to the 2010 version but again they offer an updated version of their landowner categories. This time the categories are influenced by their analysis of landowner motivations. They are

1. The Multifunctionalist: Believes multi-functionality is possible, tries to make a living out of the wood tolerant of public access;
2. The Individualist: Has a strong belief in private property rights, no particular motivation from conservation, custodianship or personal enjoyment;
3. The Hobby conservationists: Not constrained by time or money, did not buy the wood as an investment;
4. The Custodian: Wants to maintain the wood for the next generation, has plenty of time, limited money and is most likely to be worried about liability.

Private Landowner motivations

As previously discussed, Shoard (1987) summarised landowner motivations as wealth, power and privacy. However, though privacy is frequently cited, wealth and power are not major motivations put forward by the main literature written more recently. Rickenbach & Kittredge (2009) conducted a large scale quantitative study. They highlight a trend for parcelisation of forests into lots claiming that this can cause communication problems when co-owners of large forests often live a long way from each other. They associate parcelisation with deleterious ecological, economic and social outcomes including decreased recreational opportunities and lower timber production. They found that the smaller the land holding the greater place attachment the landowner felt. People who live on or near their woods were also found to have a greater need for control.

Helliwell (2016) wrote a personal piece in the Quarterly Journal of Forestry describing his own reasons for buying a woodland close to his home. His motivation was almost exclusively based on control and privacy. He feared that the wood might be used for industry, built on or used for recreation. He states:

> *It is comforting to know that no-one is likely to build there, remove the tree cover, or create a footpath or recreational area with views into our house and garden.*

Most writers offer a commentary on the transition to a post-productivist era (as has already been suggested by Urquart et al., 2010 and 2012). Rison (2017), in agreement with Hugosson & Ingemarson (2004) and Rikkenbach & Ketteridge (2009) and Urquhart et al. (2010) finds that there is a growing trend for small woodland owners who are motivated by conservation and personal amenity. However, he concurs with Mather et al. (2006) and critiques arguments that woodlands are in a post-productivist era by citing the rise in woodland management conducted to capitalise on a growing demand for domestic woodfuel in the UK.

Access incentivisation via grant schemes

A lot of attention has been given to assessing the effectiveness of grant schemes as an incentive for landowners to increase access to their woods. Ravenscroft (1995) objects to the idea in principle on the grounds that he feels it legitimises a right to exclude. However, other writers on the subject take this putative right as a given and focus on more practical matters. Even the Ramblers Association (2014) promote the use of agri-environmental schemes to encourage private owners to open up access.

Watkins et al. (1996) studied community forests and government incentivisation schemes aiming to encourage afforestation on farms. They note the policy aims of the schemes to: provide additional recreational opportunities; to improve landscape quality and to enhance nature conservation. Concentrating on Nottinghamshire's Greenwood community forest area Watkins et al. found that economic factors were the dominant barriers to participation in such schemes. However, public access clauses in these schemes were a major issue for almost a third of farmers interviewed. As with Blenkinsop (2002), security and particularly concerns over vandalism were highlighted. They quote Bishop (1996)

> *The idea of woodland creation, especially when linked to increased public access…is a complete anathema to many private landowners.* (p.154)

Other barriers included a poor knowledge of grants and insufficient funding to overcome the fact that forestry is a long term and inflexible investment. Bull, also writing in 1996, arrived at similar conclusions.

Church & Ravenscroft (2008) used questionnaires and interviews with private woodland owners in South East England. They found that grant incentivisation only works on owners whose motivations are not in conflict with the idea of public access. Therefore many private owners do not consider grants although woodland contractors often encourage them to apply. They argue that woodland recreation is becoming more popular but there is an under-supply of informal recreational

opportunities close to where people live as most woods near built up areas are private.

Jones et al. (2012), writing for the Independent Panel on Forestry, conducted a large survey of woodland owners. They found that 30% would allow access if they were incentivised and claim that the woodland grant scheme in England has provided access for 750,000 people in new or existing woodland. However, they recommend longer access agreements or ones that lead to access in perpetuity. Recognising the under-supply of woodland recreational opportunities close to centres of population Jones et al. support the acquisition of woods close to people's homes and advocate increasing tree cover on local authority land.

Landowners and liability

One aspect of landowners' concerns receiving special attention is their potential liability for the safety of the public, irrespective of whether they are lawful users or trespassers. Jones (1984), comments on the subject of the Occupier's Liability Act (1984) in the *Modern Law Review.* He discusses the spirit of the act which ensures a duty of common humanity towards recreational uses. However, he highlights a grey area around potential danger to children who may not be expected to understand any risks they are taking. He examines the ambiguity around some of the language used such as '*reasonable expected risks'* and '*reasonable care'*. Jones goes on to conclude that the act was an attempt to clarify the situation but only more case law would confirm its interpretation by the courts.

In two papers written for the *Quarterly Journal of Forestry,* Griffin & Watkins (1986 a & b) discuss the implications of the 1984 act. They described it as a '*complicated, almost bewildering, web of laws*' (p.23). The first paper outlines liabilities for dangerous trees (1986a), including the occupiers' responsibilities to monitor and remedy risks associated with trees. They highlight complications in how the law might be interpreted. The second article deals with duties of care to all those using the land, including trespassers, using historic case law to illustrate ambiguities in

the law. Like Jones, they emphasise the opaqueness of the law with respect to liability and children.

Probert's (2005) piece for the *Quarterly Journal of Forestry* aims to address woodland owners' fears about their liabilities to the public. He quotes statistics on the type of circumstances where litigation has most often occurred and concludes that almost all recorded incidents have related to open countryside, especially quarries and farmland containing cattle. Incidents in woodland, he explains, very rarely relate to walkers, more often cyclists or children using play areas. He examines two incidents of case law directly relating to woodland. The first is a claim against the RSPB where a member of the public injured himself tripping over a tree stump. The courts deemed that the removal of protrusions from all of its footpaths would constitute an unreasonable burden and that members of the public should expect such obstacles in woodland. In another case filed against the FC, a user of a public footpath was injured by a falling tree, this case was again dismissed on the grounds that the event was unforeseeable. In both cases the defendants had kept records on how they monitored their woodlands for safety, Probert believes this was critical. On the whole he addresses most of the issues that landowners might be concerned with, however, he does concede that there are still questions around how landowners are expected to mitigate against risks to unsupervised older children (younger children, he believes, can be reasonably expected to be supervised).

More recently the legal geographer Luke Bennet has concentrated a great deal of effort on studying landowner perceptions of public liability and its potential role as a barrier to access (Bennet and Crowe, 2008, Bennet, 2010 and 2011). In his literature review written with Lynne Crowe (2008) they argue that actual landowner liability risk is low but perception of the risk is exaggerated. They assess that research on fear of liability is limited but it appears to be a less important factor to landowners than privacy and control. However, they cite evidence that there is a growth in anxiety levels about liability in England, especially as the access tussle has been brought to public attention in the light of CRoW, leading to

landowners feeling insecure and vulnerable to change. They compare this to Scotland where landowners are less fearful as they now have a more settled access regime. English anxieties also centre on tree inspection standards and perceptions of a *'compensation culture'* (p2). They conclude that in reality the relative rate of compensation claims for accidents has actually started to fall after the Tomlinson vs Congleton borough council case in 2003, which centred on a liability claim after a man paralysed himself jumping into a body of water. Particularly relatable to risky sports, such as mountain biking, the judge ruled that the law was not there to protect the reckless or foolhardy at the expense of the rest of society's ability to enjoy natural environments. However, Bennet and Crowe (2008) argue that landowners are still wary of how the law can be interpreted and how they will be affected in the case of new access legislation. In their own scoping study they found that large public sector landowners did not change their access policies because of liability.

In his 2011 paper, Bennet cites data from telephone interviews to conclude that fear and misinformation is widespread among landowners. Bennet links his research to a report by the consultants Outplan (2011) who found that public expectations of landowners' responsibilities are relatively low. This finding was confirmed by O'Brien's (2012) study with a range of public focus groups. Her participants expressed that individuals were responsible for being aware (and making their children aware) of the hazards associated with woodland especially in relation to natural hazards such as tripping on tree roots. Risks associated with human management, such as tree felling, were expressed to be the occupier's responsibility. However some specific mitigation against certain hazards were deemed appropriate, such as warnings of mineshafts or deep ponds.

Hall (2015), who works for the FC, citing the Tomlinson vs Congleton Borough Council case, argues that most health and safety risks can be mitigated and any litigation avoided through good management practice. She feels strongly that small risks affecting a tiny minority should not be allowed to prevent enjoyment for the majority.

2.4 The cultural and historical geography of North East Derbyshire

2.4.1 The regional context

The North East of the English County of Derbyshire has been chosen as the focus of the study. So far very little has been written in academic circles relating to any aspect of woodland in North East Derbyshire. This contrasts with surrounding areas such as Sheffield (Rotherham, 2011), North Nottinghamshire (Watkins, 1983) and the Peak District National Park (Merton, 1970, Essex, 1985).

Since the Local Government Act (1972) North East Derbyshire has consisted of three district authority areas: Chesterfield; Bolsover and North East Derbyshire district (NED district) (see figure 2.3). Bolsover is a semi-rural district with a turbid history of industrial boom times and a sudden and steep decline, leaving it one of the most deprived areas in the United Kingdom (Riden & Fowkes, 2008). However, more affluent villages can be observed between the larger ex-mining communities. Major towns in Bolsover district can be viewed in figure 2.3.

Chesterfield is a large market town, with a population of over 100,000 (Office of National Statistics, 2016). It is well connected by the M1 motorway and to neighbouring Sheffield and within commuting distance of Derby and Nottingham. Contained within the boundary of Chesterfield district authority is the industrial town of Staveley.

North East Derbyshire district shares a common history with parts of Chesterfield and Bolsover districts with a similar industrial past on its eastern flanks. Although mostly rural, there are significant urban reaches in the popular commuter belt between Chesterfield and Sheffield to the North East of the district. Further West, approaching the Peak District National Park, neighbourhoods become more affluent. This district has a lower unemployment rate, better health statistics and a more highly qualified workforce than either Chesterfield or Bolsover (see table 3.1).

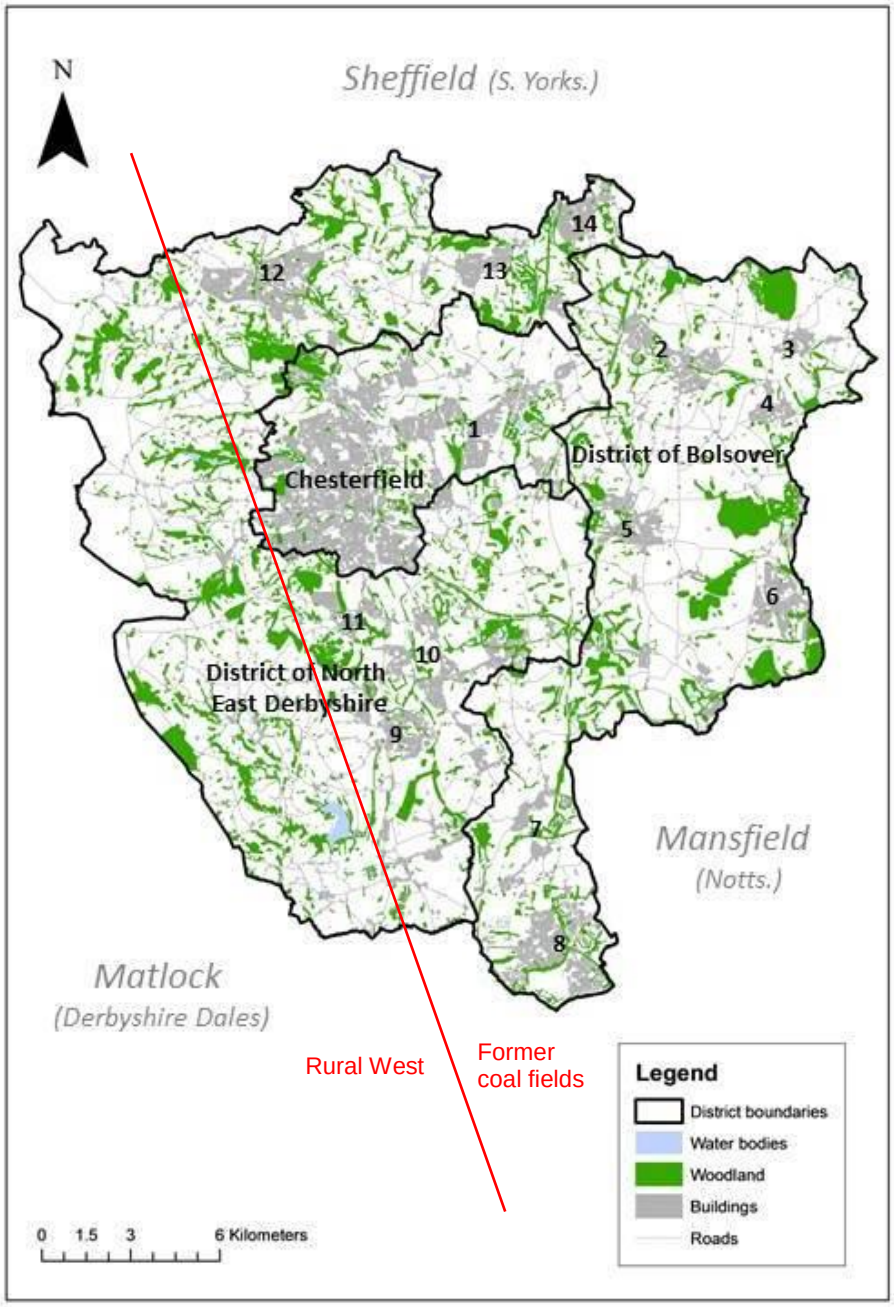


Figure 2.3: Study area map showing district boundaries, built up areas and woodland. Major settlements, other than Chesterfield, are labelled as follows: 1) Staveley; 2) Barlborough and Clowne; 3) Whitwell; 4) Creswell; 5) Bolsover; 6) Shirebrook; 7) Tibshelf and Newton; 8) South Normanton and Pinxton; 9) Clay Cross; 10) Tupton and North Wingfield; 11) Wingerworth; 12) Dronfield; 13) Renishaw and Eckington; 14) Killamarsh. The line drawn between the former coalfields and the rural west is an estimate based on the literature review, there are exceptions both sides of the line. All data is from Edina (2016)

2.4.2 The History of North East Derbyshire – A review of general texts

The landscape of North East Derbyshire is, in many places, characterised by its industrial past (Smith, 2008) and most historical texts concentrate on the period

post 1800. Derbyshire is far from being a homogenous county, and its social characteristics seems to have been somewhat determined by its physical attributes, including minerals (lead and limestone in the West and coal and Ironstone in the East, Smith (2008)), topography (as in the Peak District) water bodies and transport links (such as the Chesterfield canal and more latterly the M1 motorway).

The three districts in the North East of Derbyshire, in common with neighbouring parts of Southern Derbyshire, South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire, lie on a large coalfield (although for NED district, this is only partially the case, see figure 2.3). Smith's (2008) book *Industrial Derbyshire* charts the transition of many communities in North East Derbyshire from farming into industry, where workers, he believes, were attracted by subsidised housing and free fuel. In common with numerous other authors (see, Hopkinson & Hopkinson, 1994 and Riden & Fowkes, 2008) Smith reports a widespread population explosion in the Derbyshire Coalfields, particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, where a doubling or even tripling of a population over 30 years was not unusual. Reports of national population trends over the same period (Jeffries, 2005) confirm that such increases massively outstripped background population growth. For North East Derbyshire this was tied to the rise throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries of the symbiotic (according to Wright, 1992) industries of iron smelting and coal mining. He presents coal mining as a hard and dangerous occupation with numerous fatal accidents (such as Renishaw Park 1975 and Creswell 1950), child labour and long working days. Smith also acknowledges other industries in the area such as brewing and glass making, although he tells of a general decline towards the end of the 20th century with the closure of many prominent manufacturers including the Dema glass factory in Chesterfield and the Staveley Chemical works. The Sheffield Star Newspaper (2003) quoted a Chesterfield MP Paul Homes on the subject of Chesterfield's industrial decline:

> *On top of wholesale pit closures we have seen firms like Markham Engineering, Dema Glass and now Trebor close while former major employers like Robinsons and Donkins have been reduced to a shadow of their former strength.*

The last of the North East Derbyshire coal mines closed in 1993, but evidence from all sources considered suggests that the legacy of the area's industrial past is very much still in evidence (Riden & Fowkes, 2008).

Local economic histories of Chesterfield Borough

The borough of Chesterfield expanded in 1974 to include the industrial town of Staveley on its North Eastern Edge. From some of the general reference texts, such as Bestall, 1978 and Wright, 1992, it is possible to ascertain an impression of the diversity of Chesterfield's 19th century industry, for example the manufacture of silk, lace and hosiery. Sadler (2001) attributes much of Chesterfield's industrial success to its transport links, including the many railway lines and the (now largely disused) Chesterfield canal which was completed 1777 (Hopkinson & Hopkinson, 1994). Sadler attributes the later decline in manufacturing to the closure of all but the main line railway, depriving the coal industry, in particular, of an easy transportation route to its domestic and overseas markets. These closures formed part of a widespread axing of local railway routes during this period (Holland, 2013), and a wider decline in industrial production throughout the North of England. Markham industries, which diversified into plant manufacture after the decline of coal, is reported to have completed its last big project supplying boring equipment for the channel tunnel. It shortly thereafter closed in 1997. Sadler advises the town to rise to the challenge of capitalising on the service sector including leisure and tourism.

Sadler's (2002) book '*Aspects of Chesterfield*' offers a range of essays on culture and industry throughout North East Derbyshire. Preece's piece in the book is one of the few written about an area within the modern Chesterfield district boundary and examines Spital in detail. Spital, now town-ward of Chesterfield's Royal hospital, is described as a former farming community which industrialised following the enclosures of the Georgian era. Emerging business described by Preece include a lace mill, tobacco factory, tannery and a large Iron foundry which expanded to produce furnaces and machinery for local collieries. He contrasts this industrial past with today's landscape of housing and retail.

Staveley, like Chesterfield, had a huge economic boom during the industrial period. Staveley Enterprise, whose business included coal, iron and chemicals, expanded so rapidly that its owner Richard Barrow built a 'model community' in 1852 on the outskirts of the town to house its workers (Smith, 2008). A number of these model towns were built in the area demonstrating one of the solutions to housing shortages associated with such a rapid population expansion (Austin & Ford, 1983).

David Ghilchik produced a series of paintings on local industry, many of which are displayed at Chesterfield museum. Figure 2.4 shows the bleak painting 'End of the Day' depicting home time at the Devonshire Iron and Chemical works (Staveley) in 1947. Note the railway link deemed important by Sadler (2001) and extensive air born pollution, referred to in Smith (2008).



Figure 2.4: 'End of the day' by David Ghilchik (1947) shows home time at the Devonshire Iron and Chemical works in Staveley. The original painting is housed at Chesterfield Museum, the image is reproduced by the BBC in partnership with the Public Catalogue Foundation (2016).

One of the largest industrial employers in the area was Staveley Chemicals (West, 1947). The closure of the chemical plant in 2005 came as a relief to many, despite the job losses as Smith (2008, p.171) reports, quoting a local councillor:

> *Its safety record has caused a lot of concern for residents. The vast majority of people I have spoken to are glad to eventually see the back of it.*

Bolsover district

Bolsover district contains two of the most famous stately homes in England. Bolsover Castle, originally built as a Norman fortress by William Peveril, was converted into a seventeenth century castle by the prominent land owner William Cavendish. Hardwick Hall, in the South of the district of Bolsover was built by the Elizabethan aristocrat, Bess of Hardwick (Riden & Fowkes, 2008 and 2009). Despite this rich heritage the district is today one of the most economically and socially deprived areas in the country (Riden & Fowkes, 2008 and see census data in table 3.1).

Bolsover district has a subtly different background to Chesterfield, being much more rural it lacks the major transport routes available to Chesterfield such as the Chesterfield canal and the railway network (although paradoxically it could easily be its lack of transport connections that kept it rural). Riden & Fowkes (2008) argue that the district was heavily dependent on coal and lacked the industrial diversity of Chesterfield ensuring that the decline of the coal industry left a huge vacuum of jobs and people in its wake.

Riden & Fowkes paint a bleak picture of mid-20th century Bolsover and surrounding areas:

> *An ugly sprawl of colliery buildings…and spoil tips, the film of coal dust that seemed to adhere to everything, the air pollution caused by both pits and coalite, the poor quality of much of the 19th century housing and the depressing appearance of settlements that had been built quickly 50 years earlier at minimum cost [and] with little statutory control*. (p.157)

They go on to describe how the coalite plant, the British Coal Board headquarters and several other industries closed down at the end of the 20th century leaving a '*gaping hole – economic, social and physical*' (p.164). However, since the publication of this book an additional junction (J29a) has opened on the M1 motorway offering better transport connections for the town and connecting it to an enterprise zone at Markham Vale. In addition a new railway link to Nottingham connects to towns such as Creswell and Shirebrook.

Riden & Fowkes' (2009) book on Hardwick discusses the house, the family and surrounding villages. The history of this locality tells a familiar story, a largely cultivated landscape with common grazing land before much of it was enclosed. The first coal mines were sunk around 1700. They show that the estates income from coal overtook that from land around 1900 by which time entire villages (such as Glapwell) had been built to accommodate the workers. On the closure of the collieries this and similar accommodation was later transferred to the local authority. Riden & Folkes comment on some of the villages surrounding Hardwick:

> *Holmewood at the end of the twentieth century was a deeply deprived one class community characterised by poor housing, poor services and poor health*. (p.169)

They contrast such places with villages on the Hardwick estate, such as Heath, which apparently house relatively affluent commuters. Around 5 miles to the North East is the town of Shirebrook. This is the topic of Sadler's 1994 book, which give a pictorial account of the town's industrial history. Again, the coal mining heritage common to all local histories covered so far is repeated. However, he points out that Shirebrook is worthy of note as its population grew very sharply to more than ten times its previous size in a single decade (between 1891 and 1901 census) following the sinking of its colliery. The colliery closed in 1993. Shirebrook is now home to an enormous on-line distribution centre for the controversial sports retailer Sports Direct. This employer has been berated in the press for providing insecure jobs with poor working conditions (The Guardian, 2015).[20] Specific books

[20] https://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/dec/09/sports-direct-warehouse-work-conditions accessed 28th September 2019

on the South of the district are few, however, they share the same coal mining heritage (Smith, 2008) so are likely to have followed a similar historic pattern.

North East Derbyshire District

So far the literature has outlined histories of Bolsover district, heavily dependent on coal, and Chesterfield with a more diverse industrial past. North East Derbyshire is not so easy to summarise, the West of the district is rural and largely agricultural (see figure 2.1 for map) and has little available literature. Much more is written on the former coal fields and on the neighbouring Derbyshire Dales.

Dronfield lies between Chesterfield and Sheffield and is the subject of a book by Austin and Ford (1983) covering a very short period of history from 1873 to 1883 when an enormous steelworks was built in the town creating hundreds of jobs. Using school records as evidence they comment on the impact on the town when the plant was closed ten years later. The text sets Dronfield in the context of the same coal mining heritage as its neighbours and comments on its new identity in the 1980s as a dormitory town where most people commute to Sheffield for work.

Hopkinson & Hopkinson (1994) write on Killamarsh, they again repeat a similar pattern of agriculture eventually being replaced by coal mining and also comment on the role of the Chesterfield canal in the industrial success of the town. Still in the coalfields but South of Chesterfield, texts were reviewed for Clay Cross and Arkwright. Williams' (2000) piece on Clay Cross shows a Clay Cross street built for the mineworkers overlooked by a large spoil tip (figure 2.5).



Figure 2.5: John Street, Clay Cross taken in the second half of the 20th Century. The housing was built to accommodate mine workers (row on the left built in 1900) and their gaffers (row on the right built in 1920) note the large spoil tip at the end of the street. Taken from Williams (2000) p.120.

Edwards' (2002) piece on Victorian Wingerworth sets a subtly different scene of a town benefiting from the revenue of nearby coalfields while imposing strict population and planning regulations at a time when other settlements were expanding rapidly. He attributes this difference to the Hunloke family of Wingerworth Hall who owned the vast majority of the village in 1843 and wished to keep its agricultural character. However, according to Edwards (1994) the area did not escape industrialisation entirely with a red lead mills hidden in local woodland from as early as 1724.

2.4.3 Local histories of leisure

General local histories are focussed on economics and not the leisure activities of those living in North East Derbyshire. Countryside pursuits are only hinted at. Hopkinson & Hopkinson (1994), Sadler, (1994), Williams, (2000) and Dickens, (2002) all discuss participation in colliery associated clubs including football, cycling, tennis and pigeon keeping.

In Williams (2000) largely pictorial account of Clay Cross a whole chapter is devoted to leisure. Along with clubs sports, scouting was also highlighted as well as large organised camping trips to destinations such as Cannock Chase and the Peak District. Figure 2.6 highlights the scale of these camps, and contributes to an understanding of how the countryside might have felt invaded by a culture which differed from the romantic ideal of quiet enjoyment of the countryside (Jeans, 1990). Interestingly none of the literature mentions any local countryside recreation, let alone countryside recreation in woodland. Riden and Fowkes (2008) remark on the incorporation of community and leisure facilities within model villages creating a hub of activity for the miners and their families.

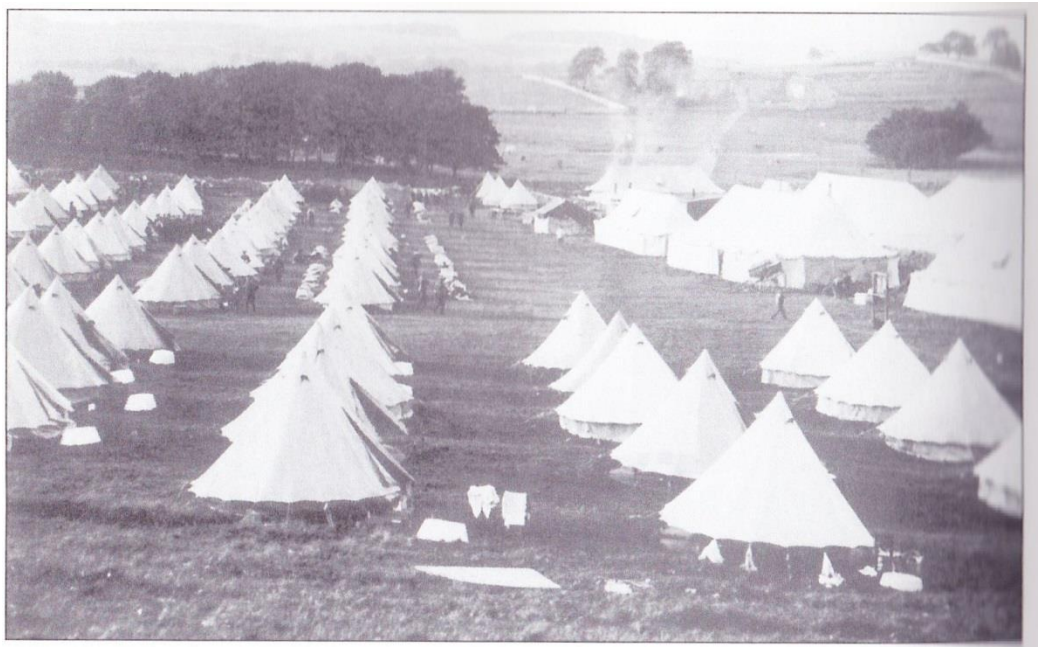


Figure 2.6: The Derbyshire miners' camping club on a 1912 outing to the Peak District. From Williams, (p.92).

2.4.4 Historical references to woodland and access in North East Derbyshire

Woodland is barely mentioned in historical texts relating to the region. Hopkinson and Hopkinson (1994) add a note about the enclosures of the late 18th century and how 10 new public footpaths were created as part of the enclosure acts in Killamarsh. These are now largely built upon, and one diverted for a colliery. There is no evidence presented that any passed through woodland, in fact a map

presented to accompany the book (an Ordnance survey 1st edition dated to 1883) contains practically no woodland, see figure 2.7.

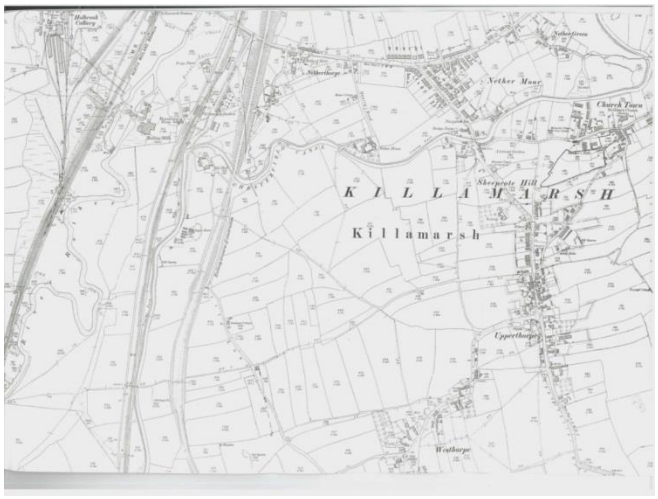


Figure 2.7: Part of the Ordnance survey 1st edition (County Series 1:10560) printed in 1883. It shows Killamarsh, note the complete lack of woodland.

Further examinations of maps as a source of historic access and woodland cover evidence are analysed as part of the case studies in chapters 5-7. However, old county-scale maps can be useful to give an overall impression of woodland cover (see figure 2.8)



Figure 2.8: 1695 map of Derbyshire from Robert Morden's Camden Britannica. Prominent woodlands and hills are visible but the map's small scale prevents any detailed analysis of smaller areas of trees.

There are sources of information on woodland archaeology. In Neighbouring areas of Sheffield and the Eastern Peak District, Christine Handley and Ian Rotherham have been active in promoting and researching what they refer to as '*Industrial Treescapes'* (Rotherham et al., 2008 and Handley et al., 2012). Sheffield and the Eastern Peak do share many industrial features with areas of North Eastern Derbyshire, especially Lime Kilns and white coal hearths, which were used in smelting processes (Rotherham et al., 2008). Rotherham et al. also describe the importance of oak woodland to provide bark for the tanning industry. Oak woods may have held some significance around the Eastern edge of Chesterfield, where many tanneries were documented (Preece, 2002).

Overall it can be concluded that there is a significant geographical knowledge gap in academic literature relating to North East Derbyshire woodland, recreation and rights of way. Local histories focus on the region's industrial past while general literature on access and recreation comments nationally or focusses its attention on other localities such as the Peak District. The area has also been overlooked when planning the location of large community forests, while neighbouring areas have benefited such as the South Yorkshire Forest (Sheffield), the National Forest (West Midlands) and the Greenwood Forest (Nottinghamshire) (Dickinson et al. 2005).

2.5 Summary of the literature

The national historical works summarised have provided an important background to the access debate, while the local historical pieces have given a valuable social backdrop to the study. Work reviewed with a contemporary focus has debated a range of aspects on the subject of access. There have been a number of works concentrating on public views of local woodlands and preferences for greenspace though nothing substantial could be found on public attitudes to access. In addition the role of informal access goes almost unacknowledged.

There is also no mention in the literature of public perspectives on the potential loss of access through either restriction on public use or re-development of sites for

housing or industry. Similarly nothing in the literature concentrates on what tools are used to inform decisions about where to access. For example, the use of OS maps or online resources.

Considerable effort has been directed at assessing landowner motivations though never their attitudes towards specific aspects of the current rights of way system. Nor have landowners been asked to provide responses to potential but specific increases in access such as a right to roam in woods or specific expansions in access for mountain bikers or equestrians.

Importantly, no research has been found that ties the opinions of the public (both woodland users and local residents) and landowners together around specific geographic locations, understanding multiple sides of the same issue. This is an important approach in the field of geography and allows a more complex interpretation of the challenges that face access almost 20 years since the commencement of CRoW.

In contrast to most previous studies, this research provides a rare opportunity for a deeper analysis of access situated in ordinary places and carefully examined against its social and geographical backdrop using a series of case studies. As Lambert (2008) expresses, divorcing recreational access issues from their context also removes a considerable amount of meaning. It also considers the needs of non-ramblers and compare analyses of landowner motivations with previous literature, while, in addition, considering landowners attitudes to specific aspects of English access law.

Chapter 3 Methods

3.1 Methodological approach

This study takes two main methodological approaches. Firstly an analytical approach, examining field evidence in order to build up a picture of the physical characteristics of woodlands in North East Derbyshire and their access provision. This investigation does employ some quantitative methodology. However, the emphasis is on qualitative descriptions of place allowing a portrayal of affective atmospheres such as soundscapes and visual surroundings. The remainder of the study is based on qualitative studies of people, focusing on personally significant themes (Barazza, 2006) offering insight into landowner, resident and recreationalist motivations.

This research is designed to be mindful of post-human and more than human approaches to geography (Gibbs, 2009) and recognises the complexities and inter-subjectivities between research participants and their environment as set out by Panelli (2008). A place-centred study of this kind on the subject of access has not previously appeared in the literature. Therefore, following the approach of Riley (2016), interviewing was planned using an open, inductive approach to allow the most significant themes to appear without artificially manufacturing the parameters of the research. Similarly to Bryan's (1977) methodology, recreational participants were interviewed in-situ, where possible, while taking part in their activities.

The research design used initial evidence from site visits as building blocks to predict likely subjects of interest and to direct the focus of the study towards potentially significant themes. However, the approach retained its openness, allowing new themes to emerge throughout the process of data collection.

3.2 Selecting a geographical study area

In addition to the fact that North East Derbyshire is particularly poorly studied (see chapter 2), the area also offers a range of communities, urban and rural, working and middle class. It contains areas of above average deprivation with census data revealing higher than average unemployment and reported 'bad' health (see table 3.1) yet has not benefitted from any large government afforestation schemes such as community forests.

Statistic	Bolsover	Chesterfield	NED district	Derbys. Avg.	Eng. Avg.
Unemployment rate %	4.7	4.7	3.7	3.9	4.4
No qualifications %	32.9	27.6	26.9	25.7	22.5
Qualified to degree level %	15.8	21	22.2	23.7	27.4
No access to own vehicle %	23.4	27.1	18.7	20.1	25.8
'bad' general health %	8.6	7.6	6.9	6.2	5.5
White British %	96.3	94.9	96.9	95.8	79.8
Overall population	75,866	103,788	99,023	-	-
Population increase since 2001 %	5.7	5.0	2.1	4.8	7.9

Table 3.1: A Selection of comparative statistics from 2011 Census data (Office for National Statistics, 2016). Bolsover has higher rates of unemployment, poorer educational attainment and an increased likelihood of residents reporting general bad health than both the county and national averages. The pattern for Chesterfield is similar but less extreme. North East Derbyshire has a lower unemployment rate but still has poorer than average educational attainment rates and increased likelihood of reported 'bad' health.

3.3 Data Sources

This is a mixed methods study with a range of data sources. Background data was gained through archival and internet research while the remainder of the project took an empirical approach. Data from documentary sources supplemented site visits where physical evidence of woodland composition and recreational activities were recorded. Participant observation, interviews and focus groups are integral to chapters 5-9 in particular. The mixed methodology approach offered triangulation

which improved the reliability of the findings. This is an approach endorsed by Southwell and Findlay (2007) who found that observations combined with interviews revealed differences between how participants reported their own behaviour in the countryside compared to how they were observed to behave.

The emphasis on qualitative interview data across all the main stakeholder groups in chapters 5-9 gives an important opportunity to understand the feelings and motivations behind decision making. Including elements of personal oral histories and analysing interactions between different individual participants and contrasting stakeholder groups can offer a deeper understanding of the role of community (Riley, 2004). Further descriptions of the methods employed are explained on a chapter by chapter basis.

3.4 Woodlands in North East Derbyshire: Nature, History and Access

Using random sampling techniques to incorporate contrasting levels of rurality and historic land use, the geography of North East Derbyshire's woodlands was examined. Patterns of official and informal access and recreation were analysed utilising mixed methodologies. Field surveys and observational techniques were supplemented with archival and internet research.

3.4.1 Site selection

In order to sample some of the variation in the woodlands of North East Derbyshire a set of 13 random grid squares were selected. Sampling stopped when a good geographical coverage was established and when all major woodland ownership types had been included. This approach avoided arbitrary decisions. An Ordnance Survey 1km grid square shape file was used to identify 580 possible grid squares using ArcMap. Microsoft Excel was used to generate random numbers between 1 and 580. These numbers were then matched against the grid squares' ArcMap object ID. Each selected grid square was accompanied by three additional grid squares chosen in a clockwise direction. Therefore, for each group of four grid

squares the North Westerly square was the one chosen in the original random sample.

Figure 3.1 shows the spatial distribution of the random sample on a map of North East Derbyshire. The selection gives a good mix of urban, semi-urban and rural areas and also spans the diversity of cultural histories and contemporary socio-economic range as set out in chapter 2. It includes some of the more prosperous West, the peri-urban commuter belt between Chesterfield and Sheffield, the urban and urban-fringe borough of Chesterfield and the rural coal fields areas of Bolsover district. From these 13 grid squares 58 woodlands were isolated for study.

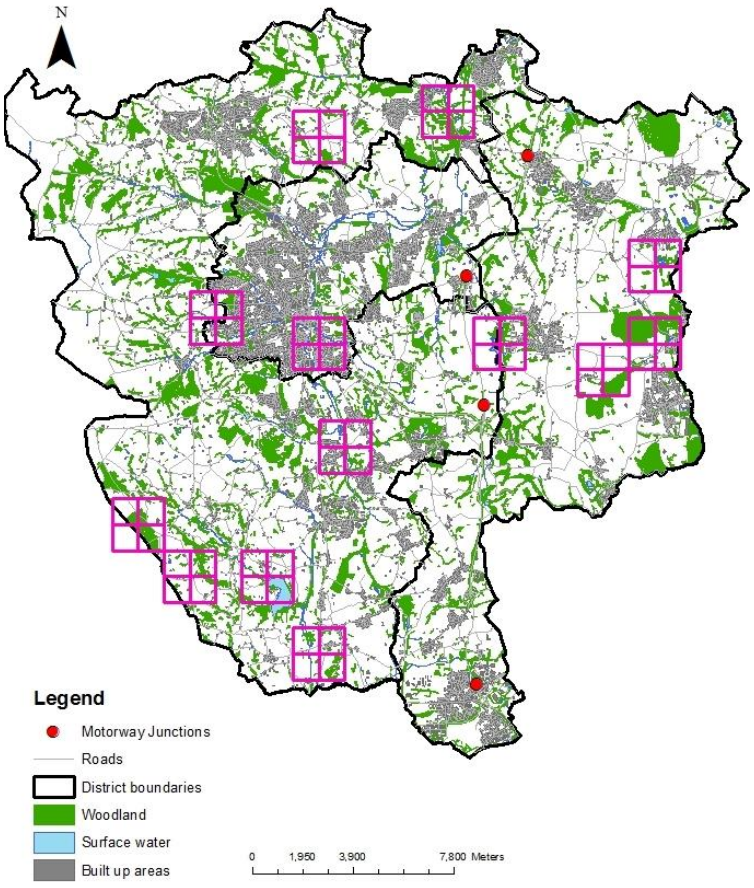


Figure 3.1. Map displaying the random grid square sample against its overall backdrop of North Eastern Derbyshire including woodland and built up areas.

3.4.2 Longitudinal observation approach

In order to understand the physical nature and the potential issues in the sampled woodlands a year-long observation exercise was conducted. This aimed to add diachronic reliability (Kitchin & Tate, 2000) conducting research in a range of seasons and weathers and accommodating observations of change over a period of time.

3.4.3 Examining woodland characteristics

Woodland dimensions and sizes were measured using the Google Earth Pro 7.2. Historical maps were sourced from Edina's collection of OS maps available via Ancient Roam. Where evidence of past industrial land use was found this was investigated during site visits with reference to Handley et al. (2012) and documented using georeferenced photographs. Additional information was also gained from documentary sources via local libraries and on-line. Map data showing the locations of ancient woodlands was sourced from Natural England via Edina and downloaded into ArcMap (v.10.4.1).

The ecological nature of the woods was recorded in two ways. Firstly an overview of dominant trees species and ground flora was recorded using a form designed to be compatible with the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). In addition a checklist of Ancient Woodland Indicators for Derbyshire, as described by Wilmot & Moyes (2015), was used to help capture the nature of the woodland setting. Natural factors likely to affect enjoyment of woodland as suggested by Lee (1990) and Lisewski-Hobson (2015) were added as well as descriptions of soundscape. This was used to add to a rich analysis of the affective environment of each wood.

The research design accommodated multi-zoned woodlands, acknowledging that most woods have different stands of trees within them, for example, a largely deciduous wood with a section of planted conifers. These different zones were recorded on an accompanying map. The sampling approach was based on the 'general walk around' technique as outlined by Glaves et al. (2009). This technique

gives a better overall impression of the woodland (Hall et al., 2004) and is considered appropriate for research largely concerned with the perspectives of members of the public who access woodland via footpaths.

3.4.4 Establishing ownership

In England there is no comprehensive repository of land ownership information available. As a result a number of techniques were used to establish ownership. These included:

- Approaches to the main private country estates
- Approaches to local authorities
- Approaches to the main land-holding charities
- Interviews with woodland users, residents, local farmers and land owners
- Documentary sources such as village green applications and freedom of information requests
- Land registry

All of the private country estates, local authorities and charities approached gave information on their land holdings freely. Documentary sources helped to add details of a few more owners. '*Asking around*' was an extremely fruitful source of landowner information but needed to be verified as intelligence gained by this means was sometimes unreliable. Land registry was used when all other means were exhausted, however notification of sale to land registry only became compulsory in 1998 (Bucks and Wadley, 2012). This meant that the owners of six of the woods still could not be identified.

3.4.5 Recording Official access

The term official access refers to all routes legally sanctioned for use by the public (see section 2.2 for more detail). Official access was recorded using the Derbyshire County Council's official mapping service, which is available on-line.[21] This service

[21] https://maps.derbyshire.gov.uk/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=Ordnance_Survey_Maps

also provides other information utilised during the study including the locations of SSSIs, national nature reserves and county registered Tree Preservation Orders. Information on permissive routes was gathered during site visits as these are signposted in situ only. Figure 3.2 shows a sign for a permissive (concessionary) bridleway in Blackcrag wood:



Figure 3.2: Sign used in-situ to mark the route of a concessionary bridleway.

Not all official or permissive routes were available at all times. Using the official county guidance (Derbyshire County Council 2017), rights of way condition assessments were undertaken on all official and permissive routes to determine which routes were useable and which were not. This took into account factors such as overgrowth, excessive mud, poor signposting and deliberate blockages. Routes were monitored on an ongoing basis with site visits occurring in every season over the course of at least a year.

3.4.6 Assessing practical access

Practical access is the actual access available to members of the public. This includes official, permissive and informal routes. Informal routes and interesting features (such as mountain bike ramps) were mapped during site visits using a handheld GPS device and added to Edina base maps (processed in ArcMap) using paint.net software (v.4.0.21). These data were supplemented with additional information from *Open Street Map* (www.openstreetmap.org.uk). Open Street Map is a free to use website licensed under the terms of the creative commons. Paths and other routes are added by local contributors. Anybody can add routes

whether they are official rights of way or more informal paths. All open street map routes were subjected to on site ground-truthing. Paths or tracks with prohibitive signs were not investigated unless landowner permission could be gained. However, other informal routes were included in the study using the assumption in law that consent is assumed if landowners have not indicated otherwise (see section 2.2). No research took place off public rights of way or unmarked informal paths (unless specific permission was granted).

Observing recreationalists and physical evidence of recreation

Of the 58 woods isolated in the random sample, 21 of the largest woodlands were chosen for more detailed study, using a minimum width criterion of 150m. Width, rather than overall area was chosen as a minimum criterion because of the common occurrence of long narrow strips of trees. These strips do not offer the same experience of feeling immersed in woodland that larger woodlands can provide (Coles & Bussy, 2000).

Evidence from the Forestry Commission (TNS, 2008) suggests that recreational patterns are significantly different on weekdays compared to weekends, with Sunday usually being the busiest day. The research also concludes that the busiest hours are between 10am and 4pm. Therefore participant observations were all conducted on both a Sunday and a weekday within these peak hours. Careful attention was paid to the weather, rainy days or high winds are likely to see depressed visitors numbers so these were avoided for this reason as well as on the grounds of health and safety. The following information was gathered from the observations: broad details of recreationalists observed; physical evidence of recreation and facilities and artificial features.

An observation form was used with a clip board. The observation was conducted while walking the paths through and/or around the woodland for a minimum period of half an hour in small woodlands but for longer in larger woodlands where it took longer to walk all of the paths. The walk started from the most accessible

part of the wood (determined by proximity to car parking, bus routes or paths from nearby settlements).

A number of options were considered before the walk around method was chosen, including use of a counter. However, counters severely limit the detail of the information that can be collected. Some studies have used camera traps or video evidence to analyse visitor numbers and types (Arnberger, 2006 and Panter & Liley, 2016), however this option was not taken forward. It was considered to be impractical to use in 21 different woodlands especially as, in some cases, ownership was still being established. In addition it was viewed to be unethical to capture images of people without their prior knowledge and permission. It was also a methodology inconsistent with the approach employed in this PhD. Careful observation, experience and discussion with members of the public allows the researcher to become immersed in the place, and therefore gain a much deeper understanding than counting visitors on a camera trap.

The implications of holding a clipboard was also considered, but it was decided that it would not evoke any changes in behaviour relevant to the research as only presence and static characteristics were being recorded. The methodology does not pose any significant ethical challenges as data was completely anonymous and no individual could be identified from it. Any slight unease caused by the presence of a researcher with a clipboard was mitigated by the observer not adopting a static position where recreationalists are 'watched' but maintaining a steady walking place and pausing to look at the clipboard. Watch points, in any case, are impractical in woodland, where an overall vantage point cannot be achieved due to tree cover. Some members of the public did ask questions. These were answered honestly in the following manner: *'I am collecting information about how people use woodland for my PhD research.'* Following advice from the School of Geography's ethics committee, participant information sheets were made available to woodland users who wished to find out more about the research, stating the aims of the research and emphasising the participants' anonymity. Participant

observation was undertaken at the same time as other investigative work on the site such as the surveys on flora, access and leisure facilities.

Physical evidence was also collected and is defined as the traces people leave behind after visiting the woods. These included the creation of informal paths and use of official paths. Beside evidence of pedestrian use, bicycle tyre tracks and horse hoof prints were also noted, see figure 3.3. Other forms of physical evidence included litter, extinguished fires, mountain bike ramps and fly tipped waste. Evidence of landowner activities was also noted for their presence or absence such as the use of signage.

Physical evidence was photographed and documented in order to highlight some of the issues worth pursuing at the interview stage of the research. The evidence documented technically over-represents illegal or anti-social behaviours. Those who follow the letter of the law, merely passing and re-passing, will, if they follow the countryside code, leave no trace of their visit (Natural England, 2016).



Figure 3.3: Evidence of use by horses and cyclists was collected in addition to pedestrian use. *(Lisewski-Hobson, December 2016)*

3.5 Gathering data for chapters 5-9: Research with people

Chapters 5-7 build on the previous chapter by examining case studies of six sites selected from the twenty-one large woodlands identified. These were chosen to represent a good mix of the urban, peri-urban and rural and to span a range of popular recreational pursuits including walking with or without dogs, mountain biking and riding horses.

Historical and observational information was examined in detail at each site and triangulated with interviews of landowners, woodland users and local residents. As a supplement, chapter 8 details the outcomes from focus groups with mountain bikers and horse riders. Landowners' views in chapter 9 were drawn from the wider group of 58 woodlands.

3.5.1 The participants

Table 3.2 gives a list of participants involved in the research with response rates where applicable.

Participant group	**No. in sample/ no. asked to participate**	**No. involved in research**	**Participation rate (%)**
Landowners **No. of woods owned**	38 58	25 (19*) (41.9**)	65.8 (50) (72.3*)
Local residents: **Doorstep** **On-line via leaflets**	 100 92	 70 8	 70 8.7
Woodland users	105	102	97.1
Equestrian users	18 (via gatekeeper)	10	55.6
Mountain bikers	Not known	16	Not known

Table 3.1: Research participants * No of owners taking part in semi-structured interviews. **These fractional numbers reflect the fact that many woodland owners own parts of woods .

Landowners

While the views of some landowners are represented by organisations such as the Country Landowners Association and to a certain extent the Game and Wildlife Conservation trust and National Farmers Union, official views from such organisations can only provide a background to uncovering the issues local to the study area. Large lobbying organisations do not always provide an accurate representation of the range of individuals and the opinions likely to exist beyond their membership. Therefore it was considered important to gain the views of landowners in the study sample directly.

Of the 38 landowners in the study 32 were identified and asked to participate in the research, Of these 25 responded positively with 19 agreeing to semi-structured interviews, 4 were interviewed more informally and another 2 provided a written statement (see table 9.1 for a full list of participants). The landowners involved represented ownership of 72.3% of the woods selected in the study. This is a higher percentage than the percentage of landowners involved because of the involvement of large estates, the largest of which owned 10 of the 58 woods. Many of the other owners possessed woodland lots rather than whole woods.

Individual interviews, rather than group interviews were chosen for three main reasons. Firstly, landowners, their agents or land occupiers are often busy and geographically dispersed. Therefore gathering them in a central venue was expected to be difficult, and may reduce recruitment levels significantly. The second issue was one of power relations. Some landowners have little to gain from the research when they already have the law on their side to exclude access when they see fit. Therefore, because the motivations for landowners to take part were likely to be less strong than for access lobby organisations, the researcher was in a poor negotiating position and therefore needed to ensure that the interviews took place at a time and place to suit each landowner. Thirdly research ethics was a consideration as the attitudes and motivations of some landowners are potentially controversial. In a group situation any such issues may not be raised or may cause embarrassment or argument.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen in line with the overall methodology of this research. Easy background questions were used initially, to break the ice, progressing onto broad open questions, which were used to understand the participants' underlying motivations and value sets. As the interviews progressed questions became more specific, however care was taken not to over-prompt. Though it is acknowledged that such interviews are co-produced, with the researchers influence inevitably present, efforts were taken not to raise issues likely to influence the direction of the remainder of the interview. For example, the question of landowners' liability for accidents was left until the very end of the interview in order to avoid influencing more open questions. All landowners were given a participant information sheet in advance of the meeting and signed a consent form at the commencement of interview.

Interviews were around an hour in duration. The use of public places was encouraged as a choice of interview location and personal addresses were avoided. However, in some cases landowners' or University offices were used at the landowners' convenience. Interviews in the woodlands themselves were encouraged, following Riley (2016). This gave the advantage of adding context to the landowners' comments, for example Pamela demonstrated where her wall had been damaged by members of the public. Interviews with landowners were voice recorded and transcribed within three days of the meeting, data is stored in a secure location.

Local residents

The views of local residents were deemed to be particularly important. Firstly because they are in close proximity to the wood, day and night, and are in a good position to give information on what kinds of activities are occurring outside of the researchers' routine hours (10am to 4pm). Secondly, many of them have resided close to the wood for a number of years and are able to comment on how the woods have changed. Finally, they offer a closer reflection of the general publics' attitude to woods, as opposed to the woodland users who necessarily find visiting woods a positive experience otherwise they would go elsewhere.

A local residents' face to face questionnaire was developed following Coles and Bussy (2000) and utilising advice from McLafferty (2010). It was specifically designed for people living close to the six wooded sites chosen. The population sample was selected based on proximity. All adjacent or opposite houses, very close to each woodland site were included in the sample. The idea of inviting local residents to formalised focus groups was rejected on the grounds that a self-selecting sample would miss many important groups including less proactive individuals and those with little interest in the woods (Morris & O'Brien 2011). The focus group approach was also judged to be more likely to encourage those with specific agendas which do not reflect the ordinary lived experiences of the majority of people. However, it is acknowledged that a representative sample is not the aim of qualitative human geography (Longhurst, 2012).

Qualitative questionnaires were conducted via face to face surveys at doorsteps with one attempted contact made on a week day and a further attempt at a weekend. Where nobody answered after the second attempt, a letter was left signposting to an on-line version of the survey. The on-line survey was developed using the academic survey builder *'Online surveys'* for which the University of Nottingham holds a license.[22] Signs on doors prohibiting unsolicited calls were respected.

As a preference, face to face interviews were chosen over postal or on-line questionnaires as they tend to have a higher level of response and therefore the level of self-selection should be lessened. Face to face techniques should also improve the chances of including those whose internet use is limited and so used in combination with internet techniques for those less often at home but more likely to use the internet (for example busy families) this approach intended to maximise the socio-economic spread of participants.

[22] https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/

Doorstep participants were introduced to the researcher (as a student researcher) and the project. They were provided with a participant information sheet and given the opportunity to examine a student ID card (if they needed to be put at ease). No personal details were taken from the participant other than their gender and an estimate of broad age category (Young adults, under 30s; 30-65 year olds and over 65s). Ethnicity was noted but participants were overwhelmingly white British except for two members of the public who both declined to take part in the study.

These short, informal interviews were designed to be qualitative in nature and aimed to tease out issues, views, experience and personal understandings of local woodland. Printed maps were used to aid conversations about other woods the participants had visited. The interviews generally took 5 to 15 minutes to complete, though in some cases, where the participants had a lot to say 30 minute interviews were not unusual.

Interviews with doorstep participants were not voice recorded. Recording was felt to be an unacceptable invasion of privacy and might lead to great unease during the interview process. This was particularly the case as participants were requested to take part without prior notice. Paper-based note taking on a questionnaire proforma was used as an alternative, using the exact words of the participant whenever possible.

78 local residents were interviewed in total. Participation rates on the door step were excellent with 70% of the 100 people asked agreeing to participate in the research. Leaflets dropped for those who did not answer were much less effective with just 8 responses from 92 leaflets, a response rate of 8.7%.

Woodland users

Woodland users were interviewed in situ while out on their usual walks, this contrasts with the approaches criticised by MacPherson (2016) who argues that

arranged walks create a manufactured affective environment. 105 woodland users were approached and asked to participate in informal interviews. Only three people declined interview requests, the vast majority seemed to enjoy talking about their experiences. Interviews were conducted both with individuals and groups. As with the door to door surveys it was felt that the addition of information from users on site offered a much wider range of perspectives than can be achieved from assembled user groups, where only a small, self-selecting, representation is likely to be achievable.

The sample of woodland uses was selected based on visits to the woods of week days and Sundays. Each person encountered in the woods was invited to participate in the survey on a face to face basis. However, potential participants were not asked to stop if they were riding horses or actively cycling (not dismounted). There were other instances where asking for participation seemed inappropriate and would have caused stress for the participant or potential danger for the researcher. For example, a couple who had a crying baby and a man with an aggressive dog were not asked to participate. It is accepted as a limitation that the impracticality of asking horse riders or cyclists to take part will affect the data gathered. However, around ten cyclists and two horse riders were interviewed while on foot.

As with the door to door surveys, these interviews were not voice recorded for ethical reasons, however all were taken through a participant information sheet. The survey is very similar to that aimed at local residents, with an extra section asking about the participant's perceptions of the law and of provision for public access.

Additional research with cyclists and equestrian users

Early observations determined that walkers, dog walkers, cyclists and horse riders were the most prevalent groups of people using the woodland. The opinions of

cyclists and horse riders were under-represented from the woodland user surveys, due to the impracticality of stopping them during woodland visits. It was, therefore, appropriate to address this gap. An approach of theoretical sampling was adopted (Burgess, 1997, Crang and Cook, 2007) with these groups. Partly to create a robust triangulated study and partly because of its ability to start a debate, focus groups were chosen.

However, one difficulty with using focus groups over a relatively large area was motivating people to travel to a central venue. The aim was to recruit individuals who use the sampled woodland. It eventually became apparent that arranging a focus group for people to travel to would not yield the participants needed, therefore a more flexible approach to recruiting participants was needed. For equestrian users there was a gatekeeper available who was willing to ask members of her local society to participate. The focus group was added to the end of a routine meeting. This offered horse riders a convenient way to contribute to the research at a time and place that suited them.

For the cyclists there were no such organisations with a willing gatekeeper, so a small focus group was run, in a local civic centre. It transpired that some cyclists were reluctant to talk about access, especially in front of others. This issue is explored more fully in chapter 8 but according to Murray (2016), others have had difficulties communicating with cyclists:

> *We often hear…how challenging it can be for them [researchers] to engage with the off-road cycling and mountain biking communities, so their views tend to be overlooked and under-valued*

As a result of this reluctance to participate the cyclist focus group was assembled from personal networks, where trust was less of an issue. The focus group data was supplemented with separately arranged informal interviews with other participants recruited on site visits and via web forums. These were done via telephone or social media as well as in-situ with cyclists as they were encountered in the woods.

Focus groups were designed consulting literature such as Conradson (2005), the work of the social geographer Peter Hopkins (2007) and Bosco and Herman (2010). Questioning techniques followed the same principle as the interviews, starting with very general and open questions and leaving specifics until the end. An additional technique employed for the focus groups was to add a very short qualitative questionnaire at the beginning. This served two purposes, firstly to introduce participants to the kinds of topics to be discussed but mainly as a measure to counteract any orthodoxies that might develop within the group. When participants write down their viewpoints these can be handed in at the end and can also prompt the participants themselves to make sure their perspectives are heard, even if they contrast with the predominant feelings of the group.

Both focus groups were run in neutral public places. Participants were talked through the participant information sheet and all signed consent forms. Conversations at formal interviews and focus groups were sound recorded, facilitating accurate creation of interview transcripts. Transcripts were written up manually and in full. Though time consuming, this was considered to be an important part of the research process, allowing time to gain a more intimate understanding of the data than can be achieved via automated systems.

3.6 Pilot studies

All empirical data collection was piloted, including the observations. Pilots took place in similar locations with similar groups to those targeted in the main study. This helped to establish whether the aims of the methods were achievable and practical. For interviews and focus groups, timings were assessed and responses to questions were analysed and checked for understanding.

3.7 Analysis

Transcripts were thematically coded manually to allow attention to nuances and therefore gain a more thorough understanding of the data. Following advice set out in Jackson (2001) and Crang and Cook (2007), the coding process was

systematic yet iterative with initial open emic codes assigned and later translated into etic codes. Initial codes were organised into themes and then further clustered into over-arching themes (meta-themes) using electronic mind mapping software (Simplemind desktop pro v.1.9.8). Codes assigned to transcripts were revisited to ensure consistency and reliability before the thematic hierarchies were finalised. In addition, inter-relationships between themes were analysed. An example is where participants dislike motorbikes they usually also seek a sense of peace and calm from their woodland experience. Careful attention was also paid to what was not said by some participants and how this relates to other themes. An example of this would be the reluctance of participants to mention the travellers' site at Tanner's plantation and the effort made by the equestrian users groups to not criticise cyclists, even though privately many have issues they chose not to mention.

Analysis was presented by examining themes but also by exploring the linked motivations of individual participants, particularly in the case of landowners who determine the nature of access available outside of the statutory rights of way network. As Crang (2005) points out, using a cut and sort approach alone risks detaching themes from their contextual backdrops. The addition of case studies helped to explore the complexity of inter-relating themes against their situational backgrounds.

Being a qualitative study with a relatively small sample size, statistical analysis was deemed inappropriate. However, some illustrative percentages are given during the results sections. This is intended to aid the reader's understanding of the group (Boyatzis, 1998), and not to be extrapolated to further groups outside of this study.

3.8 Risk management and research ethics

The School of Geography's ethics and health and safety procedures were followed throughout the project.

3.8.1 Risk management

Risk assessment procedures highlighted risk factors, which were mitigated. Particularly prominent issues to be addressed were those of lone working and of risks from working in a wooded environment.

Risks from working in a wooded environment can be minimised by wearing appropriate clothing, avoiding very wet or windy conditions and having clear emergency procedures.

Lone working was not avoidable however steps were taken to minimise risks in line with advice from Bullard (2010). These included but were not limited to:

- Restricting hours of research to peak daylight hours (10am to 4pm)
- Adopting a tracking buddy system using Google + and live locations
- Updating a live database, visible to a buddy, when conducting house to house surveys
- Avoiding entry to private residences
- Carrying a personal security device

3.8.2 Ethics

Ethics is paramount for work with people and was central to the planning of this research. Ethics have at least two components and need to be considered both from a procedural point of view and from the perspective of everyday practice (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004).

From a procedural perspective, participant information sheets, developed in line with the school of Geography and ESRCs guidelines, were made available to all participants encountered in the woods during both the observations and the informal interviews. For those attending formal interviews or focus groups, participant forms were sent in advance. Consent forms were used for formal interviews. Use of consent forms at informal interviews on doorsteps and in the woods was considered to be inappropriate but verbal consent was gained.

The anonymity of participants is taken very seriously. All names of people and any other data leading to the identification of people are changed, including names of woodlands and place names. To ensure anonymity remains intact, some of the references, particularly those from local sources, such as newspapers, are partly redacted, redactions are marked in the document using the following symbol: [*].

Informal interviewees were entirely anonymous with absolutely no identifiable personal data taken or known to the researcher. This avoided issues of personal data consent and anonymity. Other specific ethical considerations have been explained in the main methodology section. Ethics in practice was considered at all points during research using the over-arching principle that research should do no harm.

3.9 Limitations

There were some practical limitations within this study. Firstly, site visits were confined to the hours of 10am to 4pm and this undoubtedly meant that certain woodland users were under-represented in the data. Examples of such users might be early morning dog walkers or joggers out before work (Arnberger, 2006), children walking to school but also evening visitors to the woods such as young people socialising and doggers.[23] Visits on Sundays went some way to compensate for missing out on those individuals working regular office hours. For the evening visitors, photographed physical evidence taken during the day and testimonies from woodland users, landowners and residents were used to make suggestions as to the nature and extent of this activity. In a larger study with more research staff it may have been possible to examine out of hours activities without the same level of lone worker safety restraints.

Another limitation of being a solo researcher on this project is related to the interpretation of data during analysis. As Jackson (2001) reminds us, there can be

[23] People who participate in or observe sexual activities in public places.

many readings and interpretations of the same data and collaboration during the process of analysis may have produced a slightly different emphasis on the main collection of themes.

A more fundamental limitation is one that all studies using testimonies from people have in common. That is the inability to represent a true ethnography from the participants' perspective. Participants have agendas they wish to communicate either consciously or subconsciously. This can be affected by the agency of the researcher and the research environment. In addition there may be specific emotive sentiments participants feel are socially unacceptable and so wish to conceal these beneath more acceptable or rational explanations of their feelings (Shoard, 1987). Added to the subjectivity of the researcher's analysis of the results this creates a co-produced interpretation of experiences and situational factors.

3.10 Reflexive critique

I will first address positionality as this is one of the most fundamental aspects of my research in need of examination. My own positionality is something I have devoted a lot of thinking time to. I would consider myself middle class but my family has working class roots. Some of my family, including my own grandfather, worked the collieries in the study region. My great grandfather and his brother were both members of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers at the beginning of the 20th century (though I only discovered this in the archives while researching for this thesis). Though I am not a Rambler, or a member of the working classes of North East of Derbyshire, I undoubtedly have sympathies for ordinary people seeking to access the natural beauty of their own country. However, during the decades leading up to this study I have also spent time working and socialising with those who own land, including members of the political elite. This has helped me to somewhat curtail my natural urges to consider landowners who oppose access as selfish. In addition to this, through the process of speaking to the landowners involved in this research, I have found most of their perspectives easy to appreciate on a personal level.

For me the subject of this thesis is not a political, but a moral issue about improving health and well-being for the public and conserving nature. However, I feel strongly that progress can only be made from a platform of mutual understanding of the personal motivations and objectives of all parties involved. Representing stakeholders' *'real'* perspectives is never achievable (Pini, 2004) but getting as closely as I can to this ideal is a genuine aim. These perspectives are undoubtedly affected by a number of factors. These include the 'affect' of research settings, the participants' personal agendas and my own inadvertent filters affecting both the formulation of the research approach and the interpretation of the results (Kitchin & Tate, 2000; Jackson, 2001; Rose, 1997). Another feature of 'affect' was the influence of my personal agency on the participants and how the way I am perceived, whether that be as a neutral researcher or a local girl all grown up, could influence the tone or content of the answers given.

During my study I have been frustrated by the level of concern I have received from some academic colleagues for being a lone female working in the woods, while male colleges, working alone in situations at a much higher statistical risk have been left to work without question. However, I have found the agency of my gender and my mature age (I'm in my 40s), to be a considerable advantage while working in the woods and also during doorstep surveys. This is because I was clearly not considered to be a threat to the public and therefore approaching people was much less ethically problematic. I feel comfortable and so do the participants. My age has also offered credibility to my position as a researcher rather than being considered '*just a student'*. Experimentation early on in the research demonstrated that participants respond more positively if I presented myself as a researcher, possibly because it persuades them that they are contributing to a body of work with wider implications rather than just the pursuit of individual study.

Power relations were never an issue for the public participants as I was careful to present myself as an ordinary citizen making enquiries into something I cared about. For landowners, there was a potential for power relations to become an

issue, especially with those responsible for large estates (such as Gareth) or individuals for whom their land ownership gave them a sense of superior status (such as Roger). However, I have worked with elites frequently in the past and find that exuding respectful confidence and finding common ground early in the process seems to neutralise any issues this may cause.

However, though I do possess good social skills, I undoubtedly have biases further to those already discussed. Woodlands are a personally significant place, forming an important part of my childhood. For me, woodlands are special, magical, places that evoke feelings of connectedness, both to nature and to human history. They are places where solitude and peace are achievable without straying too far. Though I advocate woodland for all, I value quiet and my own views are in line with Harrison's (1991) view of the countryside aesthetic and Jean's (1990) description of quiet enjoyment of the countryside. Some recreational pursuits, especially those involving mechanically propelled vehicles, are difficult to place in this ideal.

Another issue to reflect on throughout the research process was ethics, and the importance to do no harm. Guillemin & Gillam (2004) express the importance of reflexivity in ethics in practice. Moral dilemmas did occur during this study such as whether to signpost members of the public to organisations that might help them to claim footpaths. After much thought, signposting to websites that might allow them to speak to supportive organisations was done after interviews, if the subject came up. It was felt that this didn't offer them any privilege outside of what they could have researched themselves.

There were also instances where the content of some landowners' interviews had a potential to cause conflict with other landowners who might be able to identify them even without any information on the location or name of the wood. This was particularly the case for the Brook Forest case study where all 6 landowners were interviewed and were not always polite about one another. Steps will be taken to ensure that any content that might risk compromising anonymity or may cause anxiety on the part of these landowners is not included in any reports to

participants or any future publications. All of the participants were given the opportunity to review their contributions and understand the steps taken to protect the anonymity of individuals.

Chapter 4: Woodlands in North East Derbyshire: Nature, History and Access

4.1: Introduction

The objective for this chapter is to examine official and informal access to woodland in North East Derbyshire. Practical access (both official and informal) is analysed by using historic, photographic and observational evidence to determine the nature of woodlands and how they are accessed. The usability of routes for walkers, horse riders and cyclists is also considered.

The objective is approached using the following categories:

- **Woodland Characteristics:** The characteristics of a sample of woodland in North East Derbyshire are analysed, noting landscape context, size, antiquity, floral composition and ownership patterns.
- **Official Access:** Access via officially sanctioned routes from public rights of way to permissive paths is analysed to form a picture of the access that should be available in theory.
- **Practical Access:** The nature of the actual access available and used in practice is examined. This includes an analysis of any blockages to rights of way and additional informal routes.
- **Woodland facilities:** The extent and nature of facilities available for public use in woods is examined

4.2 Woodland characteristics

Figure 4.1 shows a map of woodland cover in North East Derbyshire. The 13 sampled grid squares used were measured as 10.7% wooded (see chapter 3 for details of samples). This is reasonably consistent with the English average of 10% (FC, 2018).[24] The sampled grid squares yielded 58 woods. These included urban

[24] https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/statistics-by-topic/woodland-statistics/

fringe as well as peri-urban and rural areas in both the peak fringe and the post-industrial East.

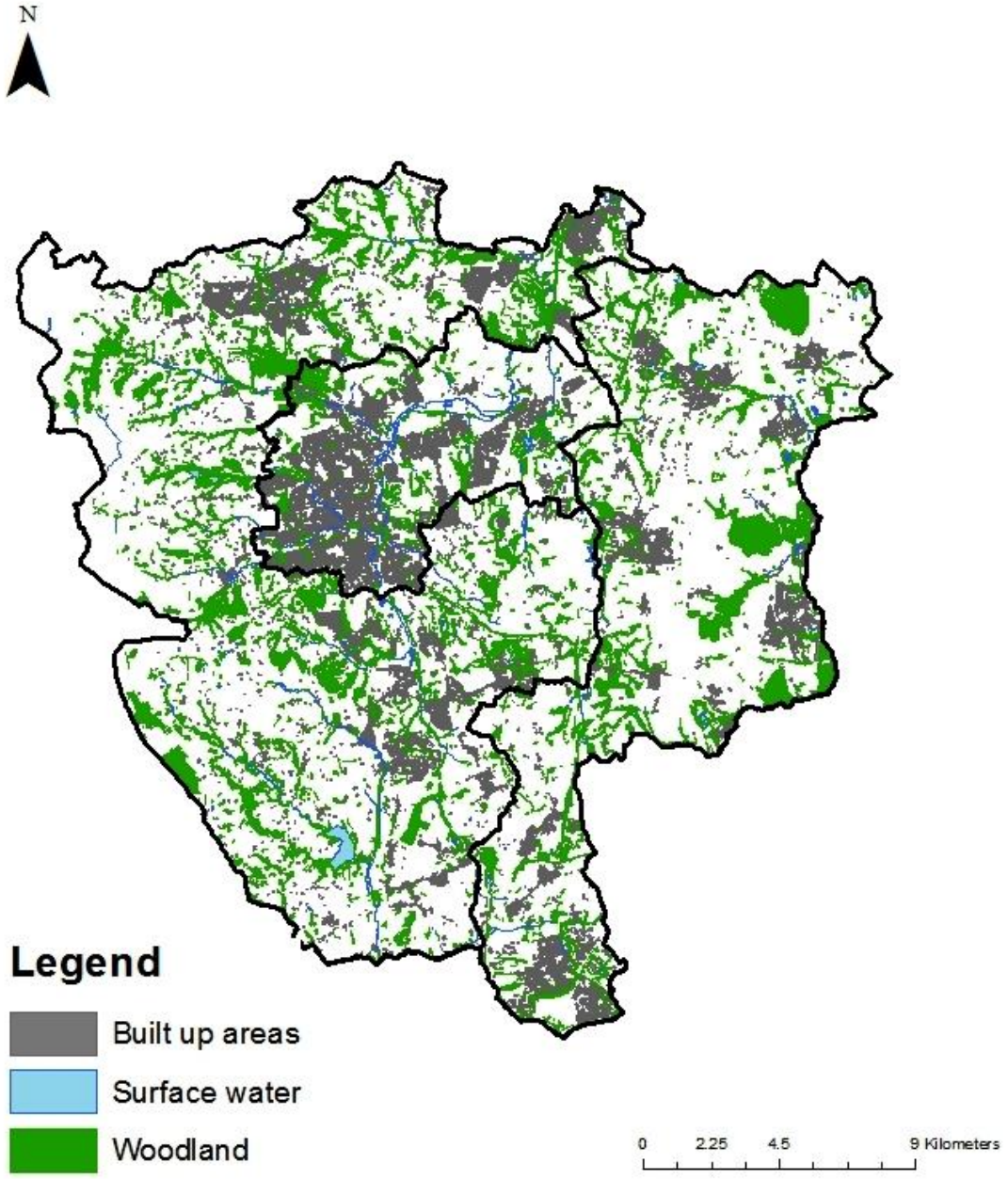


Figure 4.1: Map of North East Derbyshire showing areas of woodland, surface water and urbanisation.

4.2.1 Woodland Size and Shape

Table 4.1 shows the size distribution of the 58 woods in the study.

Table 4.1: A breakdown of the sampled woodlands by size. Examples show the largest and smallest of each size category. Areas of trees smaller than 1hectare (ha) were not included in the sample.

Size category	Number of woods	Example and size (ha)
>100 ha	2	Huntswood Park (171.1); Bilberry Plantation (105)
50 – 99 ha	2	Brook Forest (90); Langley Country Park (88)
20 – 49 ha	5	Long Woods (48.8); Potter's Plantation (20.6)
10 – 20 ha	4	Fenny Banks (19.3); Moorfield woods (12.7)
2 – 10 ha	29	Tanner's Plantation (9.6); Highfield wood (2)
1-2 ha	16	Cross Hills Plantation (1.8); Shireberry Golf club (1)

The largest wood in the Study is Huntswood Park, a mixed woodland dominated by conifer species, beech and oak. Huntswood Park is listed on the ancient woodland inventory as re-planted and is known for its prehistoric archaeological finds (Beresford 2012). It is owned by a large estate and sits in a rural post-industrial area, close to the site of a former colliery. The other woodland above 100 hectares is Bilberry Plantation. Bilberry Plantation forms part of a large area of even-aged conifer plantation and is owned by the FC. It was originally planted before 1884 (First Edition, County Series, 1:01560, 1884) and remained wooded until 1955 (National Grid, 1955, 1:10560) when the area was clear felled. Bilberry Plantation was fully forested again by 1967 (National Grid 1:25,000, 1967). However, these very large woods were uncommon in the study. The Woodland Trust's woodland access standard aims that everyone should live within four kilometres of a 20 hectare wood (Collinson, 2005). Only nine out of the 58 woods in this study reach this size. The majority of woods are less than ten hectares in size. Figure 4.2 shows the size distribution of the sampled woods. Here, it becomes clear that most woods (36) are, in fact, smaller than five hectares, with woods over 60 Hectares being rare (just four).

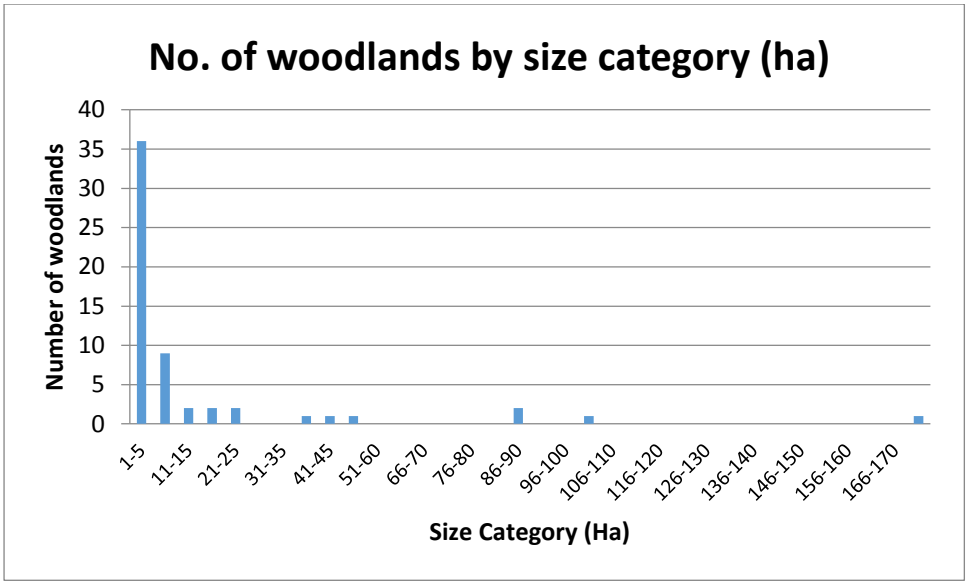


Figure 4.2: Woodland size distribution of the sample.

Another important characteristic was the shape of the woods. 37 out of the 58 woods in the study were less than 150 metres wide. An example is the Leigh wood, an ancient wood, Leigh tracks the edge of farmland, see figure 4.3. Coles and Bussey (2000) found that members of the public disliked narrow strips of woodland and preferred larger woods where a circular walk could be created.

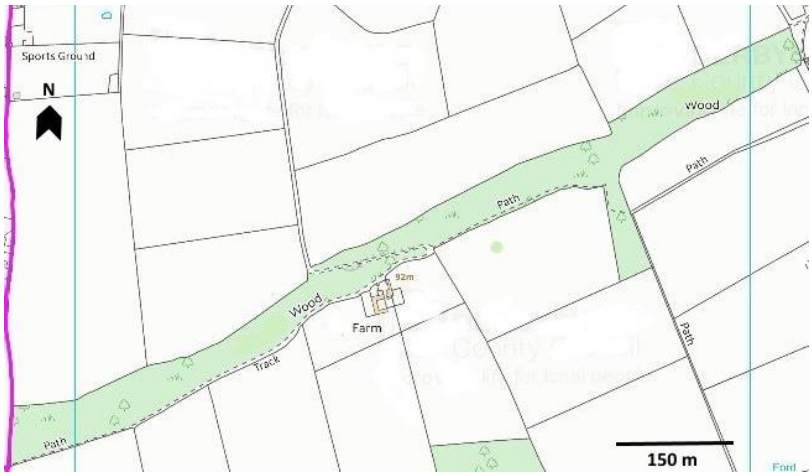


Figure 4.3: Map showing an example of a narrow strip of woodland. Leigh wood measures just 78m at its widest point. Map is OS Explorer 1:25,000 accessed via Edina, place names have been edited out.

4.2.2 Woodland Antiquity

Historic map evidence, combined with use of the Ancient Woodland Inventory, allowed woods to be categorised in terms of their antiquity. Table 4.2 gives a summary of the woods with their age categories. There is an ongoing debate about the accuracy of the ancient woodland inventory, especially where ancient woodland indicator species have been relied upon to make the assessment (Rose, 1999) and this limitation is acknowledged. However, longstanding woods can be reliably checked against OS map data. The majority of the woodland in the study was relatively old being categorised as either long standing or ancient (74.1% overall). Relatively few woods were established between the 1880s and the 1970s in this sample. This is consistent with Rackham's (1990) findings where he described a period of rapid deforestation up to 1975 in a section entitled *'the years that the locust hath eaten'* (p.104). Rackham also describes a period of coniferisation where many existing woods were felled and replaced with conifers. This sample contains just one conifer plantation, a FC site, which is of longstanding antiquity and where maps show conifers right back to 1879 (County series 1:25000, 1879 (Edina, 2018)). No new conifer plantations were established in the sample since the 1880s, though 11, including some of the ancient woodlands have been coniferised to a degree, for example Brook Forest and Blackcrag woods (see figure 4.4). The remaining 46 woods were entirely broadleaf. Nine of the woods have been planted since 1975. This date was chosen as a suitable time boundary as it represents a time when the number of colliery closures accelerated.

Table 4.2: A summary of woodland antiquity categories used in this study. *Woods listed on the ancient woodland inventory were included in this category. **Woodland in these newer categories may have been clear-felled and re-planted, especially around the time of World War II.

Antiquity category	**Description**	**No (%) woods**	**No (%) large woods**	**No (%) small woods**
Ancient	A woodland that has existed continually since 1600 or before (Peterken, 1981)*	10 (17.2)	6 (28.6)	4 (10.8)
Longstanding	Wood extant since the 1880s**	33 (56.9)	11 (52.4)	22 (59.5)
Post 1st Edition	Woodland established since the 1880s but before 1975.	6 (10.3)	0	6 (16.2)
Recently established	Woodlands created or regenerated since 1975	9 (15.6)	4 (19.0)	5 (13.5)



Figure 4.4: A view of part of the Ancient wood, Blackcrag, it has been partially coniferised. (*Lisewski-Hobson, March 2017)*

Recently established woods were often planted on reclaimed industrial land such as Langley Country Park and the Thorpe Plantation (figure 4.5) which are both on the sites of former collieries. Table 4.3 summarises the recently planted woodlands and their origins. It can be seen from the table that redeveloped collieries feature heavily as new woodland, especially on the larger sites. Some of the smaller sites are established on other land, such as farmland and in one case a playing field. All of the sites are planted with the exception of Canal Wood which shows a species mix more typically associated with natural colonisation such as birch and sycamore

(Hodge, S. J., & Harmer, R. 1996). Thorpe Plantation is also dominated by birch but in addition it contains a wide mixture of planted species such as oak, field maple and scots pine. However, birch has been shown to out-compete other species on contaminated sites (Dickinson et al, 2005) and this perhaps explains its species composition.



Figure 4.5. The Thorpe Plantation is on the site of a former colliery which closed in 1984. This young birch wood also contains a mixed planting of other species. The site is open access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. (*Lisewski-Hobson, July 2016.)*

Name of wood	Ownership category	Year planted	Former land use
Brickworks plantation	Local Authority	1982 – 2000	South section was a brickworks closed in 1982, in 2000 the adjacent clay pit to the North also closed.
Highfield wood	Local Authority	2000	Recreation ground
North West Reservoir	Private Corporate	1976	Farmland, planted as landscaping after construction of reservoir
Cavendish Nature Reserve	Local Authority	1993	Farmland, planted as part of nature reserve
Langley Country Park	Local Authority	1993	Colliery and then diesel works
Grassmill Wood	Private-Unknown	1982	Farmland
Shireberry Golf Course	Private corporate	1982	Colliery
Canal Wood	Local Authority	1976 (regenerated)	Colliery
Thorpe Plantation	Local Authority	1985	Colliery

Table 4.3: A summary of recently established woodlands showing ownership and former land use.

4.2.3 Floristic composition

21 of the largest sites were selected for closer examination of both canopy and ground flora. Table 4.4 contains summary information of the flora of these woods. Deciduous stand composition typically contained ash and sycamore as dominants, with beech also common. Oldfield wood, however, was dominated by an even aged crop of oak trees, while the Thorpe Plantation, a former colliery site, consisted mainly of birch.

Name	Landscape category ***	Size (Ha)	Antiquity category	Dominant Tree species	AWI spp.
Coombs wood	RPF	21.6	Ancient*	beech; elm; oak; sycamore	4
Brook Forest	PU	90	Ancient*	ash; beech; birch; oak; sycamore; conifers	5
Blackcrag woods	RPF	41.2	Ancient*	beech; birch; holly; rhododendron; sycamore; conifers	6
Huntswood Park	RPI	171.1	Ancient*	beech; oak; conifers	9
Dog woods	RPI	14	Ancient*	beech; oak	2
The Thicket	RPI	5.7	Ancient*	conifer/ broadleaf mix, species not known	Not known**
Potter's plantation	UF	20.6	Longstanding	ash; oak; sycamore	3
Scout Plantation	RPI	6	Longstanding	beech; sycamore	8
Bilberry Plantation	RPF	105	Longstanding	conifers	0
Duchess	RPI	36	Longstanding	ash; beech; crack willow	4
Tanner's Plantation	UF	9.6	Longstanding	ash; hawthorn; oak	1
Fenny Banks	PU	19.3	Longstanding	ash; birch; oak; rowan; sycamore	5
Fringe wood	RPI	7.6	Longstanding	ash; sycamore	0
Oldfield wood	PU	5.1	Longstanding	oak	1
Long woods	RPI	48.8	Longstanding	beech; sycamore; conifers	10
Moorfield	RPF	12.7	Longstanding	beech; birch	0
Norse Plantation	PU	4.2	Longstanding	lime; larch; rhododendron; sycamore	3
Brickworks plantation	RPI	6	Recently Established	ash; birch; oak	2
Langley Country Park	RPI	88	Recently Established	ash; sycamore; birch	2
Canal Wood	PU	6.6	Recently Established	birch; sycamore	1
Thorpe Plantation	PU	17.9	Recently Established	birch	1

Table 4.4. A summary of some of the characteristics of the 21 larger woodlands. *Ancient woodlands are listed on the inventory as a mix of semi-natural and replanted trees. **The Thicket had no public access and the landowner did not grant permission to enter the site. *** Landscape category refers to the wider landscape setting and not the site of the wood itself. It consists of Urban Fringe (UF); Peri-Urban (PU); Rural Post-Industrial (RPI); Rural Peak Fringe (RPF).

Two woods, the ancient woodland, Blackcrag, and the lime/sycamore wood, Norse Plantation, contained notable populations of the invasive shrub, *Rhododendron ponticum* (see figure 4.6). Another notable invasive plant, Himalayan balsam, was found in large quantities at Fringe wood, which was otherwise dominated by ash and sycamore.



Figure 4.6: Rhododendron has begun to dominate the understory in parts of the wood at Blackcrag. *(Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016)*

A number of these larger sites contained ancient woodland indicators (AWI) along with other ground flora that might attract visitors. Many of the ancient woodland indicators were found at sites not on the Ancient Woodland Inventory, such as Fenny Banks which contained large swathes of wood anemones and bluebells as well as patches of wood sorrel, dog violets and yellow archangel (see figure 4.7). According to Rose (1999), Ancient Woodland Indicators are sometimes found in woods lacking considerable antiquity and bluebells have been associated with sites with an industrial past especially turf stripping for charcoal hearths (Rotherham et al., 2008). In this study, only three out of the 15 woods not categorised as ancient didn't have indicators, though there were examples such as Dog wood, an ancient, replanted Beech and Oak wood which only had 2 different ancient woodland indicators. This situation reflects recognised complications with using ancient woodland indicators to determine antiquity as populations can be affected by the

factors such as the size of the site and nearby refuges (Peterken, 1974). Human interference is another factor as in the case at Duchess Wood which is actively gardened in order to attract paying visitors (see figure 4.8).



Figure 4.7 Bluebells (top) and wood anemone (bottom) both ancient woodland indicators with large populations at Fenny Banks, a longstanding wood. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017 (top) and March 2017 (bottom))*



Figure 4.8: Duchess wood bluebell display with Camelia in the foreground (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017*)

It is not the purpose of this thesis to analyse ecological processes in great detail. However, attractive ground flora is a potential draw for recreational visitors and is therefore relevant to this study. Langley Country Park and Bilberry Plantation had populations of orchids including bee orchids and common spotted orchids (figure 4.9). These are not ancient woodland indicators but nevertheless are cherished by members of the public, as thematic analysis of interviewed members of the public at Langley demonstrates (see chapter 7).



Figure 4.9: A common spotted orchid at Bilberry Plantation. (*Lisewski-Hobson June 2017).*

4.2.4 Historic Features

A number of the large sites contained interesting historic features, these are summarised in table 4.5.

Historic feature	Examples	Illustrations
Veteran trees	Black poplar at Duchess; oak coppice at Tanner's; oaks at Brook Forest; beeches at Blackcrag	Figure 4.10
Old hedgerows	Old hawthorn hedges at Tanner's plantation and Long woods	Figure 4.11
Earth works	Embankment at Scout Plantation; Old railway embankment at Tanner's; Medieval earthworks at Huntswood Park; Clay pits at the Potter's plantation.	Figures 4.12 and 4.13
Disused quarries and mines	Quarry at Bilberry Plantation; Quarry at Fenny Banks; Lead mine at Blackcrag;	Figure 4.14
Boundary stones	Gritstone slabs at Blackcrag	Figure 4.15
Industrial buildings and remains	Engine house at Brook Forest; World War II air raid decoy sub-station at Brook Forest; Engine house chimney at Blackcrag. Evidence of coal industry at Brook Forest, Langley Country Park and Thorpe Plantation. Tip refuse remains at Tanner's Plantation	Figure 4.16, 4.17 and 5.24
Remains of dwellings	Farm houses at Bilberry Plantation and Blackcrag	Figure 4.18
Carvings	Tree carvings at most sites, especially on beech. Stone carvings at Blackcrag.	Figure 4.19

Table 4.5: Historic features of woodland

Many of the older woodlands contained veterans that were older than the most of the other trees on the site (figures 4.10 and 14.11).



Figure 4.10: Veteran trees. Top: The base of a black poplar at Duchess wood, a site with paid access. Middle: One of many old coppiced oak trees at Tanner's plantation. Bottom: Part of a row of wayside Oaks retained in this Beech plantation forming part of Brook Forests (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2016 (middle) and July 2016 (top and bottom)).*



Figure 4.11: Old boundary Hawthorns at Long Woods. These trees have been coppiced many years ago and left since. (*Lisewski-Hobson, August 2016).*

Other sites contained historical manmade features of interest. The Park Pale at Huntswood park (figure 4.12) reflects the construction of a medieval deer park, possibly dating back to the 1300s (Beresford, 2012). Beresford also reports Neolithic finds in the park. He asserts that the lack of public access in the park has preserved its archaeological importance. Also see figure 4.29 for photographs of the Park Pale.

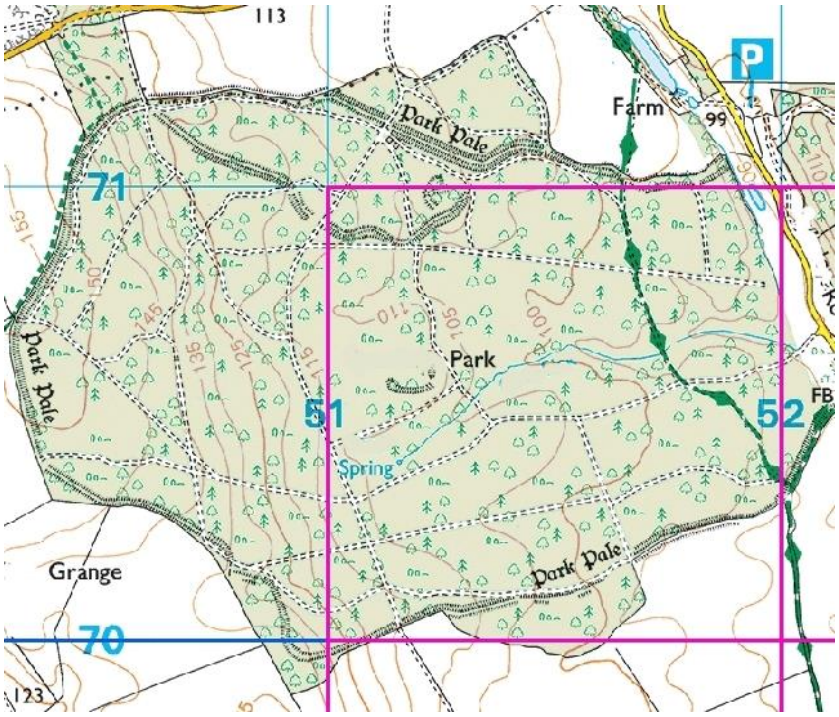


Figure 4.12: Modern OS map (Edina) showing the medieval earthworks, the Park Pale, at Huntswood Park. The pink grid squares show the sample selection for this study. The green dashed line is a long distance bridleway.

At the Potter's Plantation there are a number of large depressions in the ground (figure 4.13). A local council report (Chesterfield Borough Council, 2009) suggests these are related to mining works that existed prior to 1900. However, some local people believe these are clay pits associated with the local potteries of which there were four close by at their height in the 19th century. Eroded soil elsewhere on the sites shows regular fragments of salt-glazed earthenware consistent with the look of the local pottery (Walters 1999), therefore it is possible that the site was also used as a tip for the potteries. Other beliefs held by locals to explain these depressions included bomb holes (Barbara) and people digging for surface coal (Pat).



Figure 4.13: One of many bramble-covered depressions in the Potter's Plantation. *(Lisewski-Hobson, January 2017)*

Blackcrag wood was home to the Alison lead mine (figure 4.14). It operated between 1758 and 1803 yielding an average of 511 tonnes of lead per annum (Derbyshire Heritage, 2018). Vegetation on the site has remained supressed with few trees colonising and stress tolerant lichen species common. Along the edge of the old mine a row of unusual stone slabs can be seen (figure 4.15)



Figure 4.14: The site of the Alison lead mine in Blackcrag wood. *(Lisewski-Hobson, April 2016)*



Figure 4.15. Stone slabs near the Alison mine at Blackcrag (*Lisewski-Hobson, April 2016).*

There are also remains of engine houses in some of the woods. At Brook Forest the Brook Forest Engine House (figure 4.16, left) was used for winding and pumping at the Old Plumley Colliery which closed in 1914. It is a scheduled ancient monument (Historic England, 2018). At Blackcrag an 18th century chimney remains (figure 4.16, right). It was part of the engine house that powered a lead mine.



Figure 4.16. Left: The Brook Forest Engine House. Right: The engine house chimney associated with the Alison lead mine at Blackcrag *(Lisewski-Hobson, April 2017 (left); April 2016 (right)).*

The coal mining heritage of some of the sites is also evident. Figure 4.17 shows a spoil heap situated near the engine house in Brook Forest. Locally known as the 'Blue tips' they are now used by mountain bikers for recreation. There were other clues of coal mining at further sites, figure 4.17 also shows a fragment of solidified tar found on the outskirts of Langley Country Park. These could also be seen at other ex-colliery sites such as Canal Wood and Thorpe Plantation.



Figure 4.17: Evidence of coal mining at woodland sites. Top: A spoil heap at Brook Forests. Bottom: A fragment of solidified tar on the outskirts of Langley Country Park (*Lisewski-Hobson, August 2017 (top) and August 2016 (bottom)).*

Other evidence of former industrial use could be seen at Tanner's plantation (figure 5.24) where fragments of plastic and general refuse break through the eroded soil, giving away its past as a landfill site (National Grid 1:25,000, 1962), see chapter 5 for more detail. Elsewhere there are probe points where the site is regularly monitored for methane and a methane gas regulation station on the Northern Boundary of the wood.

Figure 4.18 shows the remains of an old farm building at Bilberry Plantation. The Farm pre-existed the plantation and is clearly visible on early maps (County series 1:25000, 1879). It disappears from the maps as a working farm by 1955 (National Grid 1:10560, 1955). Blackcrag wood was particularly rich in carvings made by people both on the trees and the rocks, details of these are set out in Chapter 7.



Figure 4.18: The remains of a farm house at Bilberry Plantation *(Lisewski-Hobson, February 2018.*

4.3 Ownership Patterns

According to Forest Research (2017), 83.6% of woodland cover in England is privately owned. However, this figure uses a crude definition of 'private' and includes all non-FC organisations in one category, including charity owned and even local authority woodland. Woodland ownership details were established for the woods in this study and overall 70.9% of woodland by area was found to be privately owned, 16.6% local authority owned and 12.5% Forestry Commission. The two small woods owned by charities accounted for less than 1% of the total woodland cover. However, figures on the *number* of woods owned privately and not their area are perhaps more relevant for the public, for example the 12.5% Forestry Commission figure is derived from just one single plantation situated away from major population centres, in reality most of the woods people live near and access are smaller. With this in mind further analysis on ownership will consider the number of woods owned and not woodland cover. 78.5% of woodlands in this study were privately owned.

Table 4.6 details categories developed to summarise type of ownership, giving an indication of the range of ownership within each category. The number of owners and the number of woods owned are listed. Country estates own the largest proportion of the woods (38.7%) with 33.1% of the woods owned by just two aristocratic estates. Local authorities owned the second largest percentage of woods (18.1%) with the ownership being split between the county council and one borough council. The district councils had no woods in their ownership. Private corporations owned 12.1% of the woods while the FC and the charitable sector only held one wood each in this sample. However, when considering the number of owners rather than the number of woods, private individuals were the biggest group accounting for 29.7% of all owners. This reflects the fact that some woods in the sample have been recently sold off in lots resulting in multiple ownership, mainly split between private individuals. Examples are Brook Forests and Oldfield wood which have both been divided into lots and sold by country estates in the last 20 years.

Ownership Type	No. of owners (%)	No. of woods owned (%)*	Description
Private: Country Estate	5 (13.2)	22.45 (38.7)	Woodland forming part of an estate owned by a large country house or manor.
Private: Corporate	6 (15.8)	7 (12.1)	Woodland owned by a company. This can include large corporations such as utility companies down to small businesses.
Private: Individual	11 (28.9)	4.55 (7.8)	Woodland owned by individuals or groups of individuals
Private: Farm	6 (15.8)	5.5 (9.5)	Woods associated with farms, owned or tenanted
Charity	1 (2.6)	1 (1.7)	Any charitable organisation.
Local Authority	2 (5.3)	10.5 (18.1)	County, district or borough councils.
Forestry Commission	1 (2.6)	1 (1.7)	Woodland owned or leased by the Forestry Commission.
Private: Unknown	6** (15.8)	6 (10.3)	Ownership of these woods could not be established from either local sources or the land registry. Not part of local authority, FC or charitable portfolios. Does not belong to one of the large country estates.
Total	38	58	

Table 4.6: A list of ownership type categories developed for the sample with a brief description of each. *Some woods are only part owned. **This is an estimate and assumes these small woods are not owned by multiple parties.

4.4 Official access

Official access is defined, for the purposes of this thesis, as land accessible in theory by public rights of ways, multi-use trails or by sign-posted permissive access. Before access in the sample is discussed in detail it is worth noting how the region is affected by wider access schemes. Firstly provision under the CRoW act affecting North East Derbyshire will be examined and then access via greenways, some of which operate across county and even regional boundaries.

Woodland CRoW provision in North East Derbyshire

In theory, any woodland owner can voluntarily dedicate their land as open access under the provisions of CRoW. However, no examples have been found in this study where a private sector landowner has dedicated but both the Forestry

Commission and the Woodland Trust did so. North East Derbyshire does not have an enormous concentration of land belonging to either organisation but there is some. Figure 4.19 shows the few woods accessible under CRoW in North East Derbyshire.

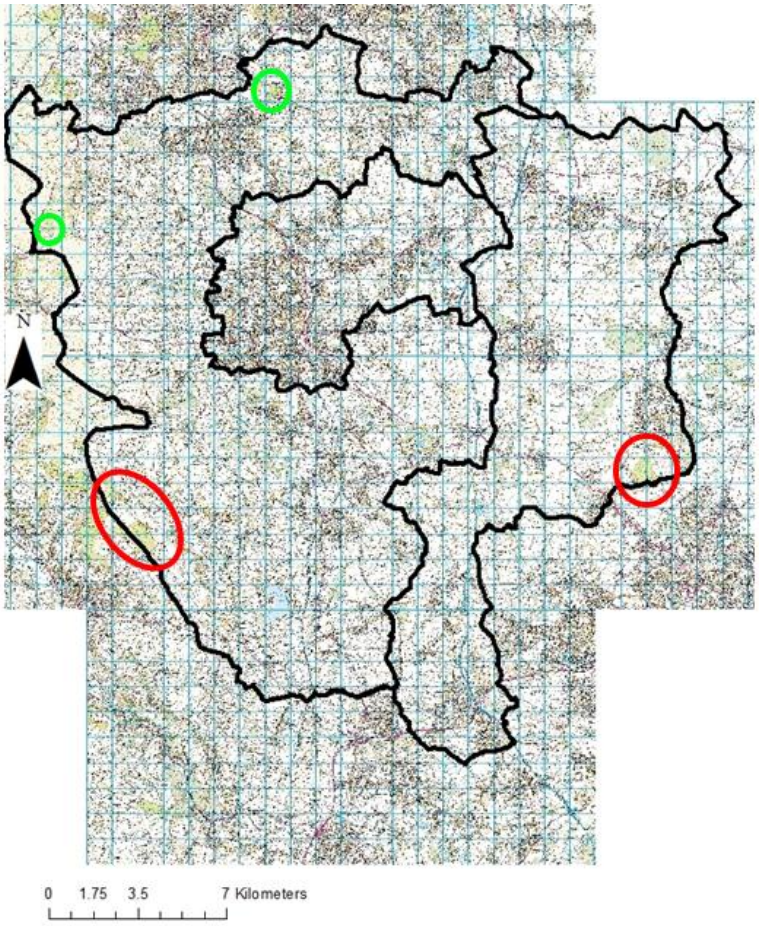


Figure 4.19: FC and Woodland Trust woods with open access. FC woods are circled in red and Woodland Trust in green. The Woodland Trust have four additional woods but these are too small to see at this scale, all under a hectare in size and most under half a hectare.

Greenway infrastructure in North East Derbyshire

Figure 4.20 is an excerpt from the Cycle Derbyshire route map (2014)[25] and shows the greenways in the region. In North East Derbyshire greenways are overwhelmingly dominated by converted railway lines, especially old colliery routes. The main Greenways in the region all accommodate horses and are:

[25] Derbyshire County Council (2014), Cycle Derbyshire Route Map, Matlock: Derbyshire County Council

- The Archaeological way[26] - Currently a five mile stretch from Langley Country Park to Creswell Crags, just East of Bolsover. The council plan to extend the route down to Shirebrook.
- The Stockley Trail[27] - A 3.5 mile route linking local nature reserves, just South of Bolsover.
- The Five Pits Trail[28] – A six mile route in NE Derbyshire District running South from Grassmoor Country Park (Just SE of Chesterfield) down to Tibshelf.
- The Trans-Pennine Trail[29] – A huge route running hundreds of miles from Chesterfield in the South to Leeds in the North, it also has a latitudinal branch running from Southport in the West to Hornsea in the East.

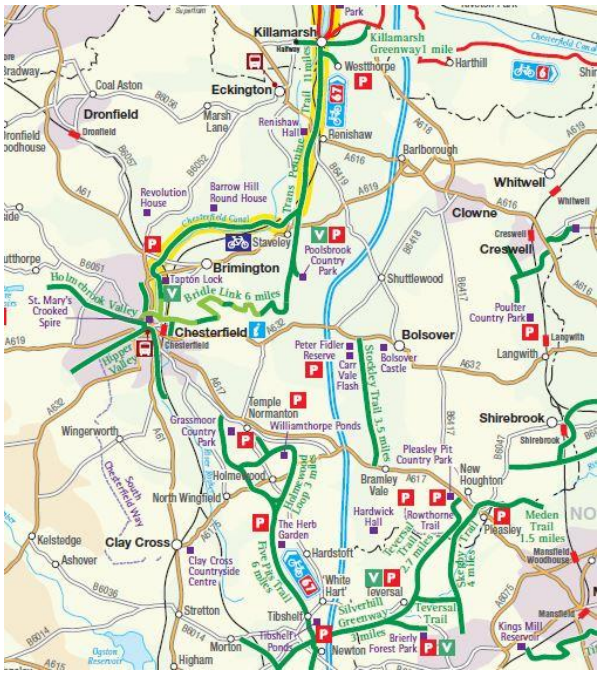


Figure 4.20: An excerpt from the Cycle Derbyshire route map showing the locations of the area's greenways. Note that the trails in the South East corner of the map are over the border into Nottinghamshire.

Only some of the greenways in the region have been designated as PRoWs. A council representative explains their position on the matter:

[26] https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/greenways/archaeological-way/the-archaeological-way.aspx
[27] https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/walking/walks-and-trails/stockley-trail.aspx
[28] https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/walking/walks-and-trails/five-pits-trail.aspx
[29] https://www.transpennine trail.org.uk/

> *Our aim is to legally create them as public bridleways or as cycle tracks where horse riders cannot be safely accommodated. We try to complete this process as the route is being developed but as you have spotted there are a number of routes with no formal status. Many are on DCC land or in some other public ownership – at the moment we are prioritising those which are in private ownership*[30].

Access may seem secure on public land but without formal designation some of the routes, such as the Stockley trail, are not appearing on ordnance survey maps. This makes it difficult for anyone attempting to plan a route utilising footpaths, bridleways and greenways together.

Official access in the sampled woodlands

Categories have been developed to describe the official accessibility of the 58 woods in the sample (see table 4.7). Accessibility is assessed based on availability for an able-bodied person to access the site. Access for wheelchair users is considered in the next section on practical access.

[30] Millward, G. By email on 16th August 2018

Category	Definition	Example.
1. Open	The site has open access and visitors are permitted to wander on foot. May be land volunteered under the CRoW act, such as Forestry Commission/ Woodland Trust land or may be local authority owned where open access is openly permitted or encouraged.	Bilberry Plantation, a 105 Ha Forestry Commission Plantation.
2. Good	Not open access but provides a network of footpaths allowing a high proportion of the woodland to be experienced.	Dog wood, which has an extensive network of public rights of way (figure 4.21)
3. fair	Accessibility is limited to a single path or covering a limited area (but over 10%, of the wood). Can still allow the experience of being immersed in a wood. Or paid access aimed at the general public.	Tanner's plantation, which has a single right of way running through the centre of the site. Also Duchess wood, which can be accessed under restricted hours after paying an admission fee of £6.50.
4. Poor	Paths allowing access to less than 10% of the wood or alongside rather than inside the wood. Or paid access for a niche activity aimed at the public.	Brickworks plantation can be accessed alongside only from a multi-user trail. (see figure 4.22)
5. None	No access permitted or access for private use only.	The Thicket. Nearest permitted access is approximately 200m away.

Table 4.7: Accessibility categories assigned to woodlands

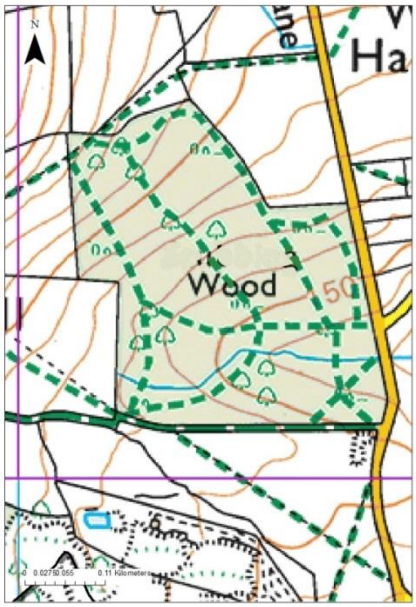


Figure 4.21: Modern OS map (Edina) showing public rights of way through Dog wood. Short dashed lines are public footpaths and long dashed lines are bridleways. The map has been anonymised.

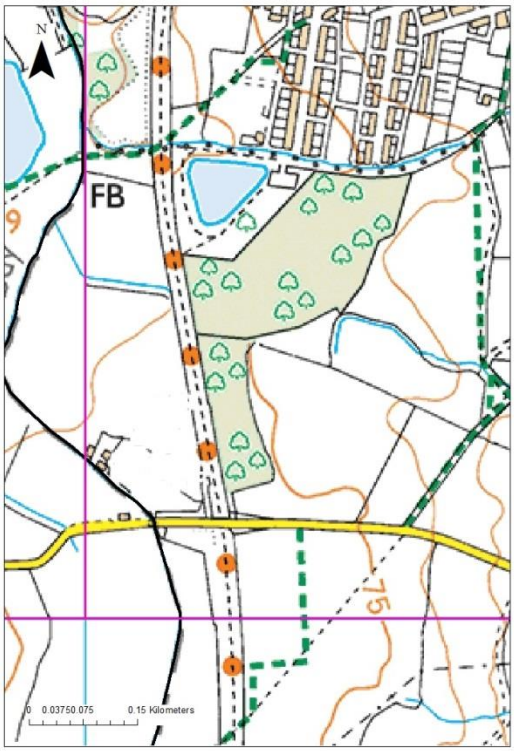


Figure 4.22: Modern OS map (Edina) showing Brickworks plantation which has a multi-use trail passing along its Western flank. The public footpath to the east only gets within 200 metres of the wood.

Table 4.8 shows the number of sites falling into each category. Overall a large proportion (58.6%) of the woods in this study have no or poor official access, whereas only 24.1% have open or good access. Larger woods (those greater than 150m at widest point) were more accessible, a greater proportion of the larger woods had open or good access (33.3%) with a slightly lower 52.3% offering poor or no access.

Access category	Total no. of woods (%)	No. of large woods (%)	No. of small woods (%)
1. Open	6 (10.3)	3 (14.3)	3 (8.1)
2. Good	8 (13.8)	4 (19.0)	4 (10.8)
3. Fair	10 (17.2)	3 (14.3)	7 (18.9)
4. Poor	8 (13.8)	4 (19.0)	4 (10.8)
5. None	26 (44.8)	7 (33.3)	19 (51.4)

Table 4.8. Woodlands and their categorised official access.

Of the woods that are accessible, for most this is restricted to pedestrian access only. Routes with higher rights are fewer in number with bridleways making up only a small percentage. There are no BOATs or restricted byways running through or along any of the woodland in this study. Table 4.9 gives a break-down of woods by type of access. It shows that just 15.7 % of woods are accessible by cycle or horseback, though this figure is considerably better in the larger woods with a third of woods accessible to some degree. Nationally, 22% of PRoW have higher rights (Palmer, 2015).

Type of access	**Total no. of woods (%)**	**No. of large woods (%)**	**No. of small woods (%)**
Open access with higher rights	4 (6.9)	3 (14.3)	1 (2.7)
Open access on foot only	3 (5.2)	0	3 (8.1)
Access via footpaths and routes with higher rights	5 (8.6)	4 (19.0)	1 (2.7)
Access via footpaths only	18 (31.0)	6 (28.6)	12 (32.4)
Paid access only (on foot)	2 (3.4)	1 (4.8)	1 (2.7)
No access	26 (44.8)	7 (33.3)	19 (51.4)
Total	58	21	37

Table 4.9: A breakdown of PRoWs by access type.

In terms of absolute figures, the sample woodlands in this study contained 54 public footpaths, including one permissive footpath and 8 bridleways (including 1 permissive bridleway). There were also four multi-use trails passing beside the woods.

Overall, most woods did not have good or open access, especially not for cyclists or equestrian users. However, it is worth examining how ownership affects the likelihood of woods being accessible. Table 4.10 shows that many more of the woodlands in public or charitable ownership had open or good access (58.3%) than those in private ownership (14.9%). Table 4.10 also shows that most woods in public ownership have been planted more recently and, as was established in table 4.3, many have been created on ex-industrial sites.

Attribute	Ownership Type (no. of woods)*	
	Private (47)	Public/ Charity (12)
Access		
Open/Good	14.9%	58.3%
Poor/None	61.7%	41.7%
Antiquity		
Ancient	21.3%	0%
Longstanding	63.8%	33.3%
Post 1st Edition/ Recently Established	14.9%	66.6%
Mean AWI plant species (large woods only)	3.9	1.2

Table 4:10: Ownership, access and antiquity *Tanner's plantation is owned partly privately and partly publicly, it has therefore been split into its component parts for the purpose of this analysis.

It is therefore fair to summarise that good or open access to woodland is unlikely in private woods, which are more likely to be old woods with an attractive ground flora. Newer woods, typically planted and owned by local authorities offer the best official access.

4.4.1 The Suitability of Official Routes

Official routes were examined using site visits and were analysed in two ways:

- **Rights of Way Condition Assessments.** An assessment of the official rights of way on the ground. All of these routes were assessed using local authority guidelines, noting any blockages, issues with conditions or signposting.
- **Access for Wheelchair Users.** An analysis of which routes are appropriate for use by wheelchair users

Rights of way condition assessments

Local authorities assess rights of way biannually in May and November. Nationally agreed targets state that 95% of rights of way must be easy to find, follow and use (The Countryside Agency, 2001). In Derbyshire this guidance has been converted into rights of way assessment criteria as follows: (Derbyshire County Council, 2017)

- Routes must be signposted from any tarmacked roads
- Way marks should be present, when appropriate, allowing navigation with a 1:25,000 OS explorer map

- The surface must be in a condition that is safe, stable and not excessively muddy.
- Stiles and gates must be usable and safe
- The route must be without obstructions that restrict the access along it

66 rights of way were assessed during this study using these local authority criteria. These were 4 multi-use trails; 2 concessionary routes; 53 footpaths and 7 bridleways. The four multi-user trails were all in excellent condition and easily passed this assessment (see figure 4.23), though some might argue that these wide, flat paths are un-interesting. The two permissive routes in this study were in extremely poor condition. The permissive bridleway was so heavily poached by horses that it was assessed as unusable by cyclists and very difficult for pedestrians. The permissive footpath had eroded into a stream at one point and a muddy, slippery bank in another area might risk a pedestrian sliding into a barbed wire fence (see figure 4.24).



Figure 4.23: Two of the four long distance multi-user trails found in the sample. All were in excellent condition and easily passed the rights of way condition assessment. Left is the Trans-Pennine trail running along the Western flank of Brickworks plantation. Right is the Cuckoo way which runs between Canal Wood and Birley Wood *(Lisewski-Hobson, May 2016 (Left) and August 2016 (Right)).*



Figure 4.24: Footpath condition on the permissive path in Coombs wood. The stream is eroding away the footpath (left) and in places the route is excessively muddy, the slope in the right hand picture has a barbed wire fence at the bottom making it dangerous. (*Lisewski-Hobson, December 2016 (left) and June 2016 (right)).*

Overall 39 of the 53 public footpaths (73.6%) passed the assessment, way below the target of 95%. None of the routes had been deliberately obstructed by landowners or other users. Failure was categorised under the following:

- Impassable due to overgrowth of vegetation (9)
- Poor way-marking or un-navigable paths (4)
- Excessive mud (4)
- Unusable stiles (1)

These assessments took place in the summer months when overgrowth is at its most likely and excessive mud at its least likely. However, the large woods were monitored year round. Most of the overgrowth was of ground flora rather than surrounding trees making these sites accessible in the winter months. Figures 4.25

illustrates examples where footpaths were unusable due to overgrowth of vegetation.



Figure 4.25: Examples of overgrowth on footpaths. Top left: Shireberry Golf Course; Top right: Binkley wood; Bottom: Grassmill Wood. All three of these paths were completely unpassable. *(Lisewski-Hobson: June 2016 (top left) and August 2016 (top right and bottom))*

Evidence from landowner and user group interviews also highlighted issues with the council not keeping footpaths clear of overgrown vegetation during the summer months. Zoe, a farmer and woodland owner, commented that:

> *It's that time of year when everything's got a bit overgrown and the council haven't got round to clipping everything…..We usually pasture top it at some point, when it becomes completely unruly….the council don't so…*

Elizabeth, a horse rider, suggests that the issue has got worse just recently:

> *Countryside services have had a staffing cut and they haven't cleared the bridleways. It's normally done and I have been on to them.*

Figure 4.26 shows other issues that caused some routes to be unusable. Top left shows an un-navigable path with a way mark sign pointing into long vegetation at Shireberry Golf Course. The picture at the bottom left, also at Shireberry Golf Course, shows a derelict stile which has become rotten and overgrown. The picture to the right is an excessively muddy footpath caused by equestrian use and poorly draining soils at Dog wood.



Figure 4.26: Footpaths unusable due to being un-navigable (top left), having unusable stiles (bottom left) and being excessively muddy (right) (*Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016 (top and bottom left) and October 2016 (right)).*

There were seven bridleways in the sample, three of these failed the assessment. Two were excessively muddy and one was blocked by overgrown ground flora. Just before the assessment took place the two bridleways in Huntswood park were so muddy that they we extremely difficult for walkers to use and completely unusable for cyclists (see figure 5.27). Indeed one dog walker commented:

> *I'm not going up there he'll [the dog will] get filthy and I'll have to get the car cleaned.*



Figure 4.27: An Illustration of the poor surface conditions at Huntswood Park before resurfacing work took place *(Lisewski-Hobson, May 2016).*

The poor surface conditions were caused by heavy equestrian use by a local pony trekking centre. The bridleway was re-surfaced by the local authority in July 2016 (see figure 4.28). Though the resurfacing now allowed the route to pass the local authority rights of way inspection it can be argued that the new surface was

unsympathetic to the surroundings and detrimental to both the ancient woodlands ground flora and its medieval earthworks (Beresford, 2012).



Figure 4.28: Resurfacing of bridleway at Huntswood park. Note absence of ground flora in the latter after excavated soil was dumped all over it. *(Lisewski-Hobson, April 2016 (left) and July 2016 (right)).*

Dumping of excavated material onto the Park Pale which was previously home to an array of ancient woodland indicators has damaged the ground flora (figure 4.29). This is undoubtedly a case where catering for public access has come into direct conflict with nature and heritage conservation.



Figure 4.29: The medieval earthworks at Huntswood Park. Left: Spring ground flora at Huntswood Park is abundant on the medieval earthworks and in April 2016 it includes bluebells, wood anemone, wild garlic and yellow pimpernel. Right: By April 2017 ground flora has been supressed in places by dumped earth from the resurfacing project which took place the previous summer. (*Lisewski-Hobson, 2016 and 2017).*

Overall, 47 out of the 66 rights of way were in good usable condition. This is a pass rate of 71.2%, well below the 95% local authorities are asked to aim at. For the user, this means that they're likely to encounter problems on more than a quarter of the official routes in this study.

Access for wheelchair users

The 21 large woods were assessed for suitability for wheelchairs. Just six of these were suitable for wheelchair use. Duchess wood had excellent wheelchair access, providing ramps and well serviced routes; however this is in exchange for a £6.50 entrance fee. Duchess wood is also a highly managed site and is described by its owner as a 'woodland garden'. This will suit some though not those people who

are seeking to experience woodlands with a more natural feel. Of the other 5 routes, consistent with the general findings, the best access was on newer ex-industrial sites owned by local authorities. However, Canal Wood and Brickworks plantation merely offered the opportunity to *pass by* young woodland planted on old industrial land. Langley Country Park and Thorpe Plantation both allow a better exploration of woodland on openly planted colliery redevelopments. Only the re-surfaced bridleways in Huntswood Park offered access to woodland older than 50 years for free. However, this route receives very frequent equestrian usage and may become heavily poached again in the future making it unsuitable for other users.

Of the 15 large woods unsuitable for wheelchair or pushchair use the main reason was mud, with other common issues being narrow paths and uneven ground. Clearly it is not feasible, and probably not desirable, to make all paths suitable for wheelchair use but there may be opportunities to provide a more diverse portfolio of accessible sites, though the replanted industrial sites are a good investment for the future.

4.5 Practical access

Practical access is the actual access enjoyed by the public in the ground. This includes both official paths and those used by the public without an official right of way (informal paths). Informal routes are those present on the ground but not officially sanctioned by landowners either as an official right of way, a permissive route or as part of an open access agreement. Informal routes can be interpreted as trespass unless the user has had specific permission from the land owner. These additional routes were documented in two ways. Firstly by use of the website *Open Street Map* (2018) and secondly by exploring each wood on foot and charting any additional paths in person (see chapter 3 for further details).

Of the 21 large woods three are open access, these are Bilberry Plantation, Langley Country Park and Thorpe Plantation. This means that any path through these sites

is legally sanctioned. Therefore they have been discounted from any figures comparing official and informal routes.

Open Street Map evidence

Of the remaining 18 woods eight had additional paths marked on Open Street Map. For Brickworks plantation, Brook Forest and Tanner's Plantation these additional documented paths were numerous (see figures 4.30, 5.26 and 6.11). In addition four of the smaller woods also had unofficial paths charted on Open Street Map, three were extensive.



Figure 4.30: An excerpt from openstreetmap.co.uk (2018) showing paths added by members of the public through Brickworks plantation. There are no official rights of way available in this wood though a multi-use trail runs down its Western flank.

Evidence of informal paths on the ground

Walking the paths on the ground revealed that the paths shown on open street map represented just a small proportion of the additional paths apparent on the ground. Hundreds of informal paths emerged, many on sites with no official access. Table 4.11 compares official and practical access and shows that the sampled woodlands are more accessible than official sources would suggest. Large woodlands in particular show a big disparity between official and practical access. Instead of a third of the woods being completely inaccessible less than a tenth cannot be accessed in practical terms. For the smaller woods the improvement is

only marginal with 43.2% of the woods being totally inaccessible. This is likely to be for one of two reasons, these woodlands are all very narrow, less than 150m wide, and are therefore less desirable as a place to walk for many people (Coles & Bussy, 2000), they are also a more manageable area to fence off for landowners.

Type of access	**Total no. of woods (%)**	**No. of large woods (%)**	**No. of small woods (%)**
OFFICIAL ACCESS			
Open	6 (10.3)	3 (14.3)	3 (8.1)
Good	8 (13.8)	4 (19.0)	4 (10.8)
Fair	10 (17.2)	3 (14.3)	7 (18.9)
Poor	8 (13.8)	4 (19.0)	4 (10.8)
None	26 (44.8)	7 (33.3)	19 (51.4)
Total	58	21	37
PRACTICAL ACCESS (Official and unofficial)			
Open	17 (29.3)	9 (42.9)	8 (21.6)
Good	8 (13.8)	3 (14.3)	5 (13.5)
Fair	6 (10.3)	4 (19.0)	2 (5.4)
Poor	9 (15.5)	3 (14.3)	6 (16.2)
None	18 (31.0)	2 (9.5)	16 (43.2)
	58	21	37

Table 4.11: Numbers and (percentages) of accessible woodlands .

Figure 4.31 shows the difference between official and practical access after routes were examined on the ground. It shows almost a third of all woods were open access on an informal basis, while just under a third had no access, rather than the 44.8% official sources would suggest. The difference between official and practical access was widest in the large woods with 42.9% having unofficial open access, compared to just 14.3% officially.

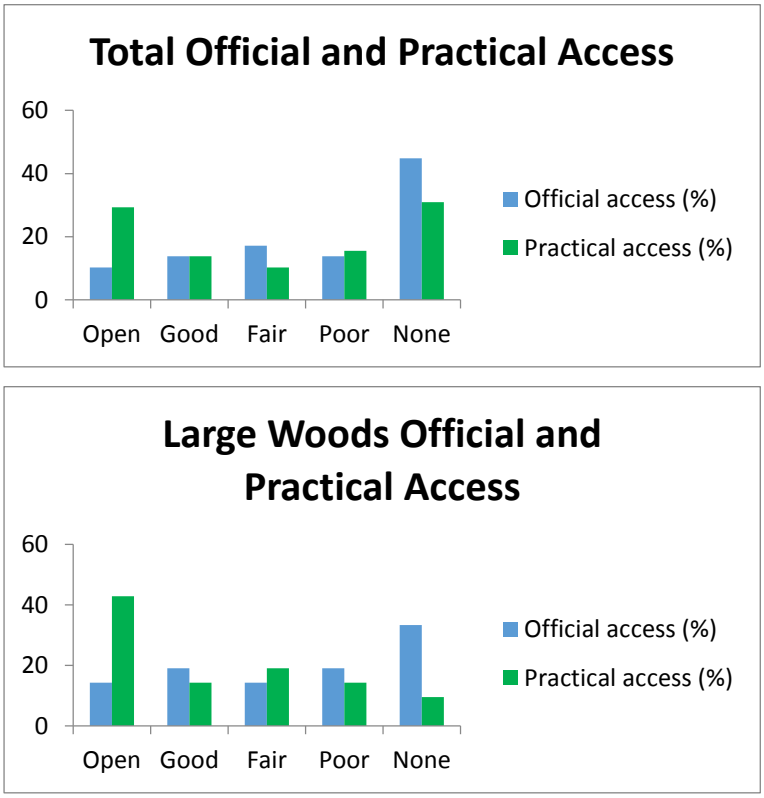


Figure 4.31: Graphs showing the difference between official and un-official access after routes were examined on the ground. Top: Showing access to all woods. Bottom: Showing access to the larger woods.

All woods had the same or better access than is suggested by map sources when examined on the ground. There were no cases where the official access was not available as shown on the maps. Access changes for the large woods are set out in table 4.12, where 12 out of the 21 woods have additional informal access. This access is not necessarily permitted by the landowner as chapters 5-9 set out, though some landowners are fully aware of the situation and do not object.

Nature of any additional access	**Large wood names**
Already open access (3)	Bilberry Plantation; Langley Country Park; Thorpe Plantation.
Additional access (12)	Potter's Plantation; Scout Plantation; Brickworks plantation; Brook Forests; Tanner's Plantation; Fenny Banks; Fringe wood; Oldfield wood; Blackcrag wood; Smith Brook; Dog wood; Norse Plantation;
No additional access (6)	Duchess wood; Coombs wood; Long wood; Moorfield wood; Huntswood Park; The Thicket;

Table 4.12: Woodlands categorised by the practical access they offer

Of the seven large woods with no official access, five did have some sort of access on the ground. Three of these were treated as open access by members of the public. These were Potter's Plantation, Fenny Banks and Norse Plantation (see chapter 5 and 6 for details). The remaining two are Fringe Wood and Oldfield wood. Fringe wood (see figure 4.32) is situated in the Post-industrial North-East of the region and is owned by a private individual who lives in a nearby town. The wood is accessible from a minor road to the North where a single path penetrates a short distance into the wood. The path eventually terminates at a barbed wire fence which forms a border with adjacent farmland, there is no signage discouraging public use of the wood.



Figure 4.32: The beginning (top) and the end (bottom) of the informal path in Fringe wood. (*Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016 (top) and July 2016 (bottom).*

Oldfield wood was originally owned by a small country estate but three sections of it were sold off in the 1990s to people in adjacent housing. Early OS maps (County series 1:10560, 1883) show the wood to be surrounded by farmland but this was built on between 1967 and 1999 and the site is now surrounded by housing on three sides (see figure 4.33). The country estate owner has failed in her attempts

to keep her part of the wood private and considers use of the informal paths as trespass, she complained:

> *People just don't respect private land… The public have made paths to get to the houses at the back…and they have knocked down a wall to get over*

The wood is used as a cut through from housing to the East of the wood onto the main road. There is also evidence of fires and some litter. The South section of the wood displays evidence of landowners wishing to keep the public out but even these have failed (see figure 4.34).

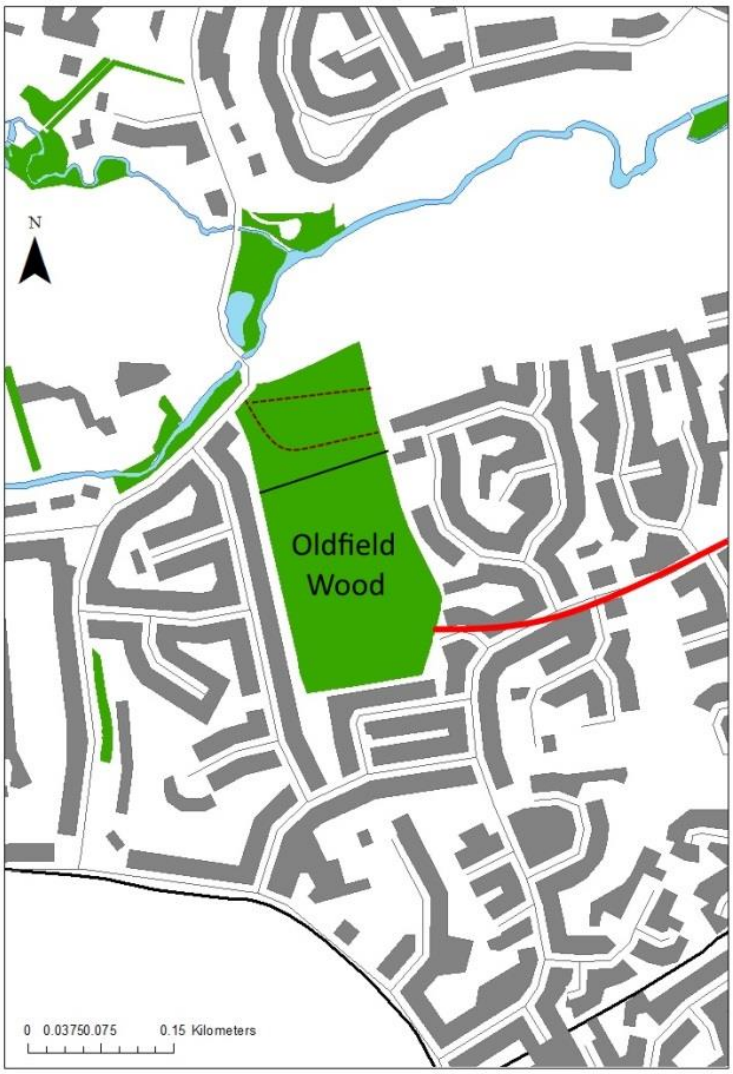


Figure 4.33: Map of Oldfield wood showing informal paths (dotted lines). The North part of the wood (above the black solid line) is owned by the country estate and the South part has been sold to local residents. The red line represents a divide between older and newer housing developments. The housing to the immediate North of line was built between 1988 and 1999 (Nation grid 1:10000, 1988 and Google earth, 1999) and the rest is earlier, 1967-1978 (National Grid 1:10560, 1967 and National Grid 1:10000, 1978).



Figure 4.34: Signs (top) and barbed wire (bottom) have failed to prevent trespass at Oldfield wood. By December 2017 the sign had been removed. (*Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016)*.

There were six woods which had no access in addition to official rights of way (as shown in table 4.12). The owners of these woods often protected their sites with barbed wire fencing and prohibitive signs. An example of this is Coombs wood, owned by a small country estate who in a written statement said that they opposed to access because it '*is not compatible with our objectives for the wood*'. Coombs is

a large ancient wood (21.6 ha) with an irregular shape so such fencing must have been arranged at considerable expense (figure 4.35).



Figure 4.35: One of many barbed wire fences that surround Coombs wood. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2016)*

However, some owners managed to prevent informal access without the need for fencing such as at Huntswood Park where conspicious signs and the regular presence of gamekeepers was used instead (figure 4.36).



Figure 4.36: Conspicuous signage at Huntswood park. (*Lisewski-Hobson, July 2016.)*

Some sites appear to have also had additional informal access reduced over recent years. There is evidence to suggest that The Old Thicket, Brook Forest and Tanner's Plantation have lost some of the informal access previously used by members of the public. All three have paths shown on Open Street Map that no longer exist on the ground. Figure 4.37 shows paths into The Old Thicket from a field to the North. The field is now home to a solar farm and access is blocked off with a security fence (figure 4.38).

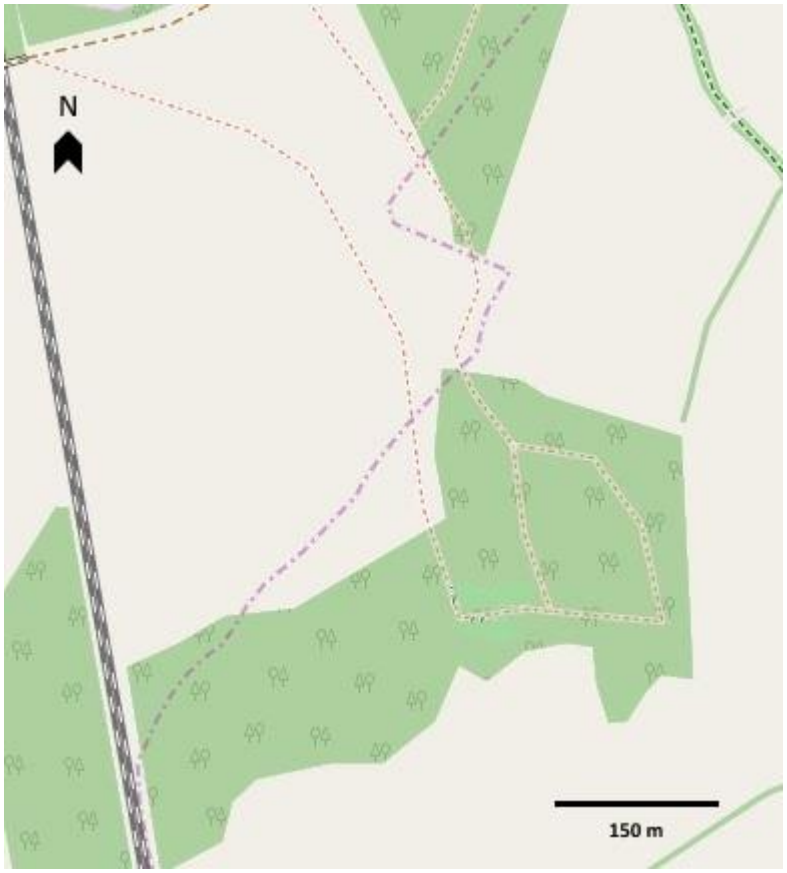


Figure 4.37: A map of The Old Thicket from www.openstreetmap.org. The now extinguished footways (faint pink dotted lines) are shown from a track to the North (Brown dotted lines). The purple dashed line is an administrative boundary.



Figure 4.38: A solar farm occupying a site which used to provide informal access to The Thicket (visible in the background). (*Lisewski-Hobson, July 2016*)

For Brook Forest OpenStreetMap shows a very good reflection of the informal paths visible on the ground (see figure 6.10). These include desire lines offering access directly from nearby villages, rather than taking longer routes around the wood. The wood is also listed as accessible[31] on the woodland trust website, meaning that at some stage the previous owner must have declared the site fully accessible. However, both the Woodland Trust (2018) and Open Street Map (2018) reflect the situation before the woods were sold off to separate individual woodland owners. The situation is now very different with some informal routes now prohibited and cyclists banned in many parts of the wood (see section 6.2 for a more detailed explanation). A further case of an unofficial path being lost was at Tanner's Plantation where an official claim was made and rejected following the installation of a travellers' site along the side of the path (See section 5.3).

A combination of OpenStreetMap and the Woodland Trust's '*Find a Wood*' database (Woodland Trust, 2018) revealed these losses of informal footpaths. However, both of these sources only offer partial coverage of the sample sites making it entirely possible that further paths have existed and subsequently been

[31] The Woodland Trusts definition of 'accessible' is a wood where the landowner has been contacted directly and confirmed that members of the public are allowed to wander. (Personal correspondence with Karen Hornigold).

lost. This is the main issue with informal and even permissive paths, they have no protection in law.

In addition, landowners are able to protect their woods against rights of way claims made on informal paths by completing a section 31 declaration (see section 2.2). Two of the woodland owners in this study have done so. These are the country estate owners of Oldfield wood and one of the new owners of Brook Forests.

The addition of un-official access to the formal access offers a very different story to that determined from official sources alone. Most woods have extra paths made by members of the public and some, including a number of private woods that, on paper, appear inaccessible are treated informally as open access. This is particularly apparent in the 21 larger woodland sites where the data was transformed from most woods being inaccessible to most woods being accessible. Additional evidence was gathered by using observation which showed that of the 1095 woodland users observed 40% were using informal paths. This was strongly the case in both public sector (47.6%) and private sector (38.6%). The interviewees recognised the reality of the situation too. Carol, a member of the equestrian focus group, commented that:

My local wood is like a super-highway of trespass

However, informal access is unprotected and therefore vulnerable to loss as has been the case in Brook Forest, The Thicket and Tanner's Plantation. Rates of informal access do not differ significantly between public and private land. Some private landowners have fenced off their woods entirely but others have felt unable to stop trespass or simply don't mind. A few may be unaware. The topic of landowners and their experiences of informal routes is explored further in chapter 9.

4.6 Facilities in woodland

Facilities in woodland were logged by walking all available routes. On the whole few woods had any facilities. The smaller woods tended to have nothing at all, with the exception of the Beech Plantation, owned by a well-known environmental charity, which contained just a single sign identifying its name and ownership. Duchess wood, where paid access is available 5 days per week, offered by far the most facilities. These included toilets, seating, educational nature trails, shops and a cafe. There were also specially provided toilets and ramps allowing access for people with disabilities. (see figure 4.39).



Figure 4.39: Facilities at Duchess Wood. Left: A view of the wood from the formal garden showing a ramp to allow access for people with disabilities. Top right: Signage forming part of the estate's 'tree trail'. Bottom right: Seating arranged around formal monuments in the 'wooded garden' (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017 (left) and July 2016 (all others)).*

Most of the other sites had no toilets or other facilities but a few included: Car Parking; Signage and/or information boards/ Nature or heritage trails; Seating; Picnic tables and/or Dog waste bins.

Car Parking

Several of the smaller woods in the Peak Fringe area, including Foxley Wood and Beech Plantation are close to a large car park containing a toilet block, which was closed by the local authority due to anti-social behaviour of a sexual nature. The car park itself and one other close to the South Wood in the Peak Fringe have had car park opening hours severely restricted for the same reason. The former has opening confined to daylight hours by iron gates and CCTV and the latter restricted to bank holiday weekends only (see figure 4.40). All of these closures were prompted by complaints from local residents. Tom, a local woodland owner, commented:

> *The stories I've heard from residents on an evening were unbelievable, like ten or 20 cars there in the middle of the night. And there are houses quite close to there, not many but it's not something that we wanted our sites known for.*

At the second site matters became quite serious as Paul, the local authority landowner, explained:

> *Everything kicked off…about 6 or 7 years ago… it cumulated in meetings with NHS, parish council, police, local residents and ourselves and county council members as well… The NHS used to visit it quite often handing out condoms and sexual advice… Local residents open and unlock the car park there so it's open at weekends in the summer but we've had a lot of pressure and we'd need some quite serious justification for opening it [full time] again. It is a shame, if you could design the site again and put something onto the site to add value and bring in people that would force that activity out.*

He commented on the toilets:

> *There's the public toilets…that was renowned… And there's a few other sites in that area and other public toilets have been closed.*



Figure 4.40: Car parking and toilet closed or restricted due to anti-social activity. Top: Two car parks both with now restricted opening hours. Bottom: This toilet block has been closed entirely due to inappropriate use(*Lisewski-Hobson, March 2018).*

Tony, representing a large public sector landowner, also reported issues with woodland car parks and dogging at Bilberry Plantation and some of his other sites.

> *Basically it was dogging…they used to come in here because it wasn't very well visited but we clear-felled that a couple of years ago, so it just moved the problem and now they're at [another wood]… We're on a website too, I looked it up.*

Paul went on to comment that the issue seemed to be confined to the Peak Fringe area:

> *It just seems to be this locality as well [he points on the map to an area of the Peak Fringe SE of Chesterfield, some in North East Derbyshire District and some into the Derbyshire Dales]'*

Of the large woods only Langley Country Park provided hard standing, dedicated car parking, this was also sufficiently close to serve Huntswood Park. Langley is also immediately beside a train station running services between Nottingham and Worksop.

Canal Wood was situated close to a free car park provided for the adjacent Trans-Pennine trail. In addition, eight of the other woods were close to laybys where limited parking was available, but some of these were muddy in winter and therefore not useable by most vehicles. Brickworks plantation, Oldfield wood and the other remaining large woods could be accessed by parking in nearby streets. 4 woods were not easily accessible by car including The Thicket and Moorfield. However these woods offered no public access in any case. Blackcrag was particularly difficult to access with the nearest car parking around 20 minutes' walk away. Fenny banks, however, though parking was difficult, was on the route of a regular bus service.

Signage

With the exception of the two re-developed colliery sites (see section on other facilities), signage was dominated by prohibitive rather than informative messages. Prohibitive signs ranged from those aimed at the general public, see figure 4.34 but were sometimes aimed at specific groups especially motorcyclists (see figure 6.17).

Other facilities

Most other facilities were restricted to the two large ex-colliery sites Langley Country Park and Thorpe Plantation. However these are presented very differently on the ground. Langley Country Park is in receipt of considerable investment via European Union Grant funding. The funding has allowed it to develop nature and sculpture trails, heritage sign posting, seating and a dedicated car park. It also actively encourages health activities such as jogging (see figure 4.41). Thorpe Plantation on the other hand is classified as a low priority by the local authority and so has not benefited from any further investment since its original conversion from the old colliery in 1985. Though it contains informative signage, a picnic bench and

a dog waste bin, it appears neglected with furniture looking old and tired and the dog waste bin left overflowing. The local authority admitted that ongoing maintenance was limited:

> *For Thorpe Plantation colliery we have a priority rating of low so…. somebody visits that site once per month… it's just a matter of going and checking that nothing's afoot*



Figure 4.41: Facilities at Langley Country Park and Thorpe Plantation. Top left: A sign (edited to remove place names) detailing information on the sculpture trail, one of three trails available around Langley Country Park. Top right: Signposts for Jog Derbyshire available at Langley Country Park. Bottom: A neglected looking picnic table at Thorpe Plantation. (*Lisewski-Hobson, July 2016).*

Privately owned woodland, unless access was paid for, did not contain any facilities. The only exception was at Coombs where a sign and a single bench were funded as

part of the countryside stewardship scheme (see section 4.41). This is likely to simply reflect the objectives of the owner where public access and convenience is unlikely to be a priority.

4.7 Summary

The Woods of North East Derbyshire

The sample found 58 woods, but only 21 of these were over 150m in width. Most of the woods (74.1%) had been around at least since the first edition of the OS County series maps (1:10560, issued in 1883) with 10 woods being ancient. Few were planted in the early 20th century though, latterly, local authorities have created a number of woodlands and wooded parks on old industrial land, especially collieries. Only one wood was completely coniferised though some of the others contained sections of conifers. Many of the woods contained components of Ash, which are at risk from *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus,* a fungal disease threatening Ash populations on a massive scale (FC, 2018). Sycamore was also common though many woods had sizable plantations of Beech or Oak within their boundaries, sometimes of considerable vintage. The woods offered a range of historical features including old buildings, earth works and veteran trees.

The vast majority (78.5%) of the woods were privately owned with this figure only increasing by 1% in urban settings. This may appear higher than the national average because of the geography of North East Derbyshire, being relatively low lying and heavily industrialised in the recent past, it contains only a limited amount of FC land, with just one of the woods in the sample owned by the organisation. Privately owned woods were more likely to be ancient or longstanding with no ancient woods owned by the public or charitable sector.

These older, privately owned, woods also had less official access with fewer facilities. Open access was available on the Forestry Commission conifer plantation, Bilberry Plantation, and the small Woodland Trust wood, Beech plantation, while the two ex-colliery developments (Langley Country Park and Thorpe Plantation)

offered the best combination of open access and facilities. However, these woods being either conifer plantations, small in size or newly planted are not of the type said to be favoured by the public (Coles & Bussy, 2000, Lee, 1990). Facilities on the whole were scant in this sample of woods, with only the paid for Duchess wood offering toilets and refreshments. However, there is not necessarily a demand for such facilities (see chapter 5).

Public rights of way were peripheral or none existent in 85% of privately owned woods. Further to that, path condition surveys showed that problems with excessive mud and overgrowth of vegetation limited the availability of around a quarter of official routes for at least some of the year. Notably though, none of the 66 routes were found to be deliberately blocked by landowners or others.

Informal access was widespread in both public and private woodlands with 40% of all woodland users observed using informal paths. Some informal paths have even been charted on OpenStreetMap, which was helpful for suggesting any paths that might have disappeared shortly before the commencement of the study. The scale of access on this informal level appears undocumented in academic literature and needs to be considered in light of trends in law and land ownership.

Chapter 5 – Urban Fringe woods: Case Studies

5.1 Introduction

This chapter, along with chapters 6 and 7, explores the nature of practical access and its associated issues in more detail at six of the large woodland sites. The sites have been categorised by their geography and include two urban fringe woods (this chapter), two peri-urban woods (chapter 6) and two rural woods (chapter 7). The woods are briefly summarised in table 5.1 and plotted on a regional map in figure 5.1. The aim of these chapters is to:

Examine the nature of access at each of six contrasting woodland sites using interview material, physical evidence, on-line and print sources to analyse:

- Ownership perspectives and access issues
- Positive aspects of using or living near woods
- Woodland activities and issues arising

Name of wood	**Woodland setting**	**Woodland Nature**	**Official and practical access**	**Ownership (bold indicates participating owners)**
Potter's and Norse Plantations	Urban fringe	Long standing. Deciduous (Potter's) and mixed (Norse)	Potter's: Permissive open access but with misleading signs. Norse: informal access only	Potter's: small country estate leased to forestry company **Norse: Corporate**
Tanner's Plantation	Urban fringe	Part former landfill planted with deciduous tree mix. Part longstanding oak coppice	Public footpath and numerous informal paths	3 owners. 1 corporate, **2 local authority**
Brook Forest	Peri-Urban	Ancient: Re-planted. Mixed	In flux; public footpaths, some permissive access, many informal paths	**6 owners. 5 private individuals and 1 country estate**
Fenny Banks	Peri-Urban	Long standing. Deciduous	Informal access only	2 owners. One private individual; one corporate.
Langley Country Park and Huntswood Park	Rural – Post Industrial	Redeveloped colliery planted with deciduous trees. Huntswood Park is ancient woodland: re-planted. Mixed	Langley Country Park is open access. Huntswood Park has 2 bridleways but no informal paths	**Local authority (Langley) and country estate (Huntswood Park)**
Blackcrag wood	Rural – Peak Fringe	Ancient woodland: re-planted. Mixed	Public footpaths, bridleways and informal paths	3 owners: **2 farmers,** 1 corporate.

Table 5.1. A summary of the six case study sites

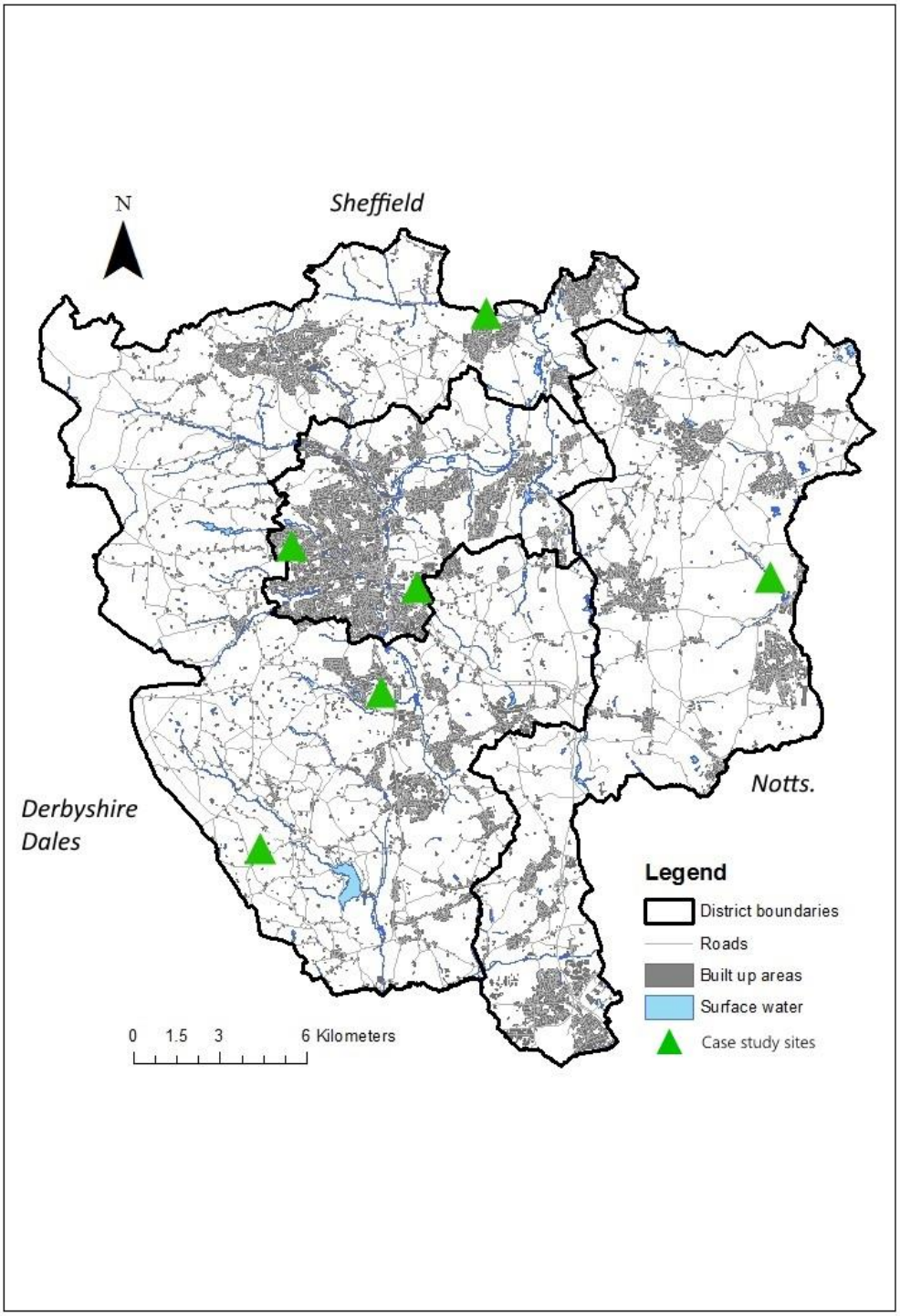


Figure 5.1. Map showing the geographical location of the six case study sites. The two urban fringe woods lie in Chesterfield but towards the outskirts while the peri-urban sites occupy areas closer to smaller settlements. The rural sites are situated in contrasting zones, one in the Western peak fringe and the other in the post-industrial East.

The two Urban fringe case studies, Potter's and Norse and the Tanners plantation, are both situated on the outskirts of Chesterfield but on opposite sides of town. Potter's and Norse are considered together as they are separated only by a relatively quiet and narrow road.

5.2 Urban Fringe woods: Potter's and Norse plantation

5.2.1 Background and Description

Potter's and Norse Plantations together occupy approximately 25 ha and lie immediately opposite each other in an urban fringe location. Figure 5.2 is a map showing the layout of the woods and surrounding housing. Both plantations border a busy A-road to the East, while the road separating them is relatively minor. In Potter's plantation the soundscape is dominated by the road, the paths are uneven and sometimes become overgrown. The tracks traversing the wood have been used by forestry machinery and are tremendously muddy, to the point where they are difficult to use even in sturdy boots (figure 5.3). Though forestry operations were ongoing at the time of the observations the wood feels unkempt almost to the point of abandonment. There are many fallen trees across the paths and the outskirts are lined with a scattering of litter and the occasional fly tipped object.

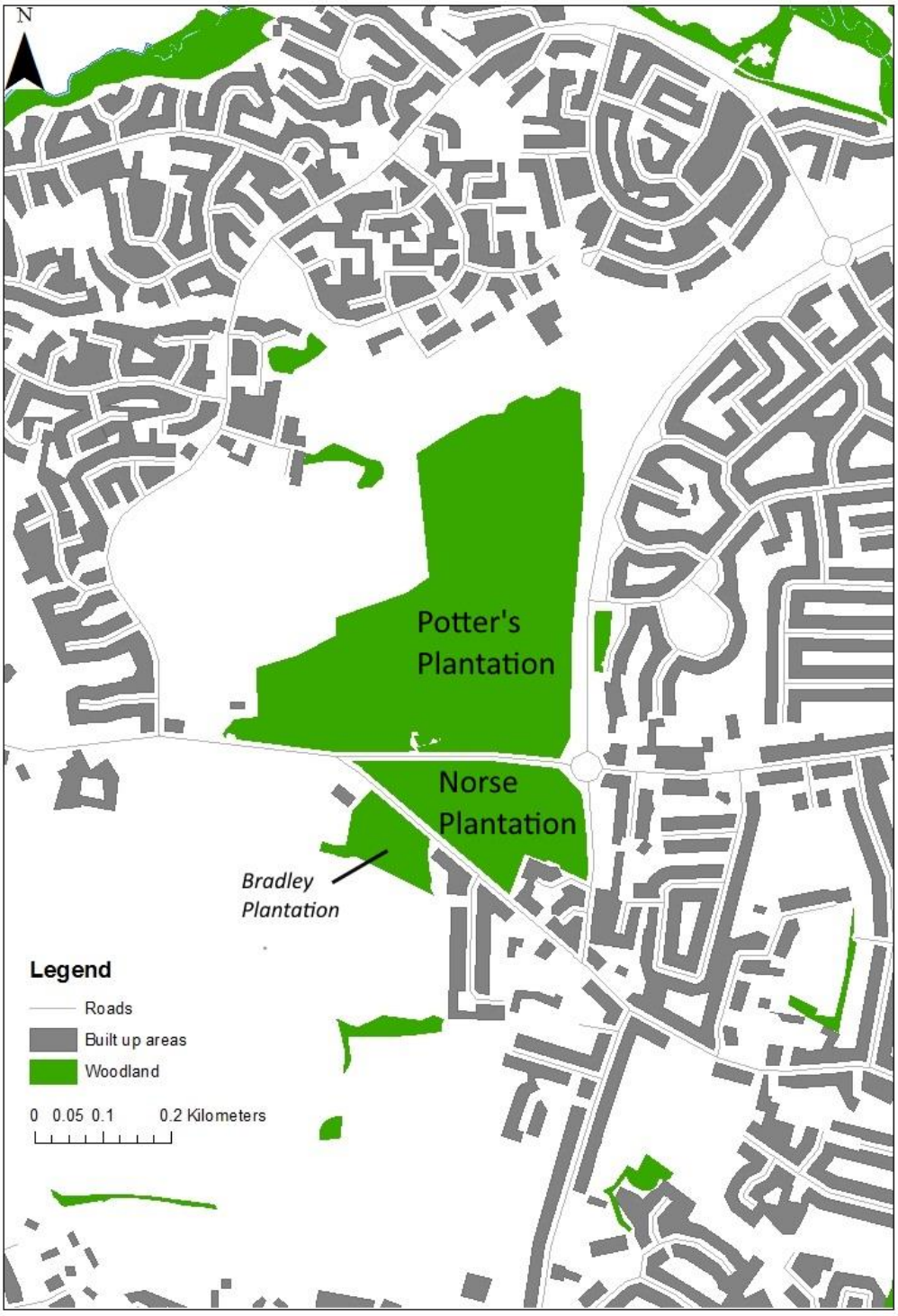


Figure 5.2. Map showing setting of Potter's and Norse Plantations. The Bradley plantation is not part of the case study but is included in the wider study.



Figure 5.3: Some of the tracks that traverse the Potter's Plantation are almost unusable for pedestrians.

The land to the immediate North and West of the Potter's Plantation has been earmarked for housing development (Chesterfield Borough Council, 2016) with the North Section now sold (figure 5.4) and the rest currently for sale. Potter's itself is not at any immediate risk of development. This is in part due to its status as a local nature site but also because of its former use as a saw pit and coal pit, which according to the council were in operation in the nineteenth century (Chesterfield Borough Council, 2012). Both woods were recorded on the OS map of 1883 (County Series, 1:10560), though trees are absent in Potter's on the 1955, National Grid map (1:10560), later re-appearing on the next edition of the map in 1968. Documentation from the local authority confirms that the site was clear felled shortly after the Second World War (Perry, 2012). The wood consists of broadleaf trees, the most numerous being ash, oak and sycamore. While the understory is dominated by brambles and ivy (see figure 5.5), it does have a localised bluebell population towards its Northern extent.



Figure 5.4. The Potter's Plantation from the outside showing recently sold adjacent land and the fast A-road running along its Eastern flank (*Lisewski-Hobson, August 2016).*



Figure 5.5. The Potter's Plantation on the inside. It consists mainly of even aged ash, sycamore and oak trees with an understory dominated by bramble and ivy. (*Lisewski-Hobson, September 2016).*

The trees in Norse Plantation (figures 5.6 and 5.7) are currently subject to a tree preservation order and occupy two distinct zones, one mainly of larch and the other of lime with rhododendron and colonising sycamore. The understory under the larch is sparse but consists mainly of sycamore and holly seedlings with some

bramble. Norse feels a lot more open, it is drier and the paths are in much better condition, there are frequent calls from goldcrests and groups of long tailed-tits can be seen moving through the branches. However, the feel of the place is negatively affected by the debris left in the centre of the wood (see figure 5.8).

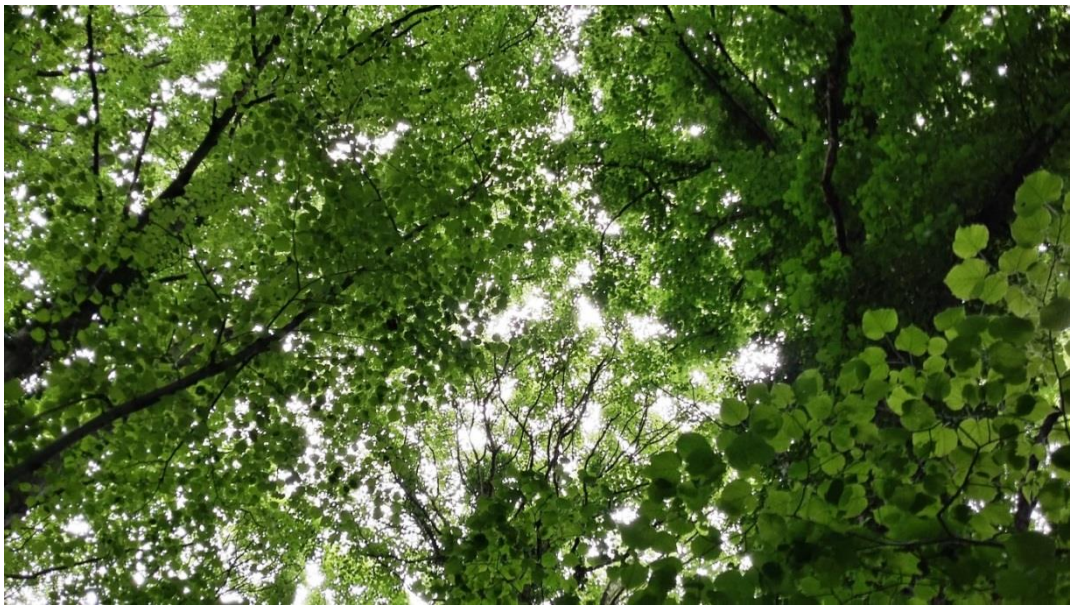


Figure 5.6. Lime trees in the Norse plantation *(Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016).*



Figure 5.7: The Norse plantation, shown from the quieter road separating it from Potter's plantation *(Lisewski-Hobson, September 2016*).



Figure 5.8: The centre of the Norse plantation contains a lot of litter and debris including pieces of tarpaulin, damaged trees and some large metal barriers (*Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016*).

5.2.2 Ownership perspectives and access issues

In this section access will be discussed from the perspectives of both the owners and members of the public. 13 woodland users and 15 local residents were interviewed. Just a third of the local residents visited Potter's or Norse. The Potter's planation has no officially designated routes but many informal paths and entry points (see figure 5.9).

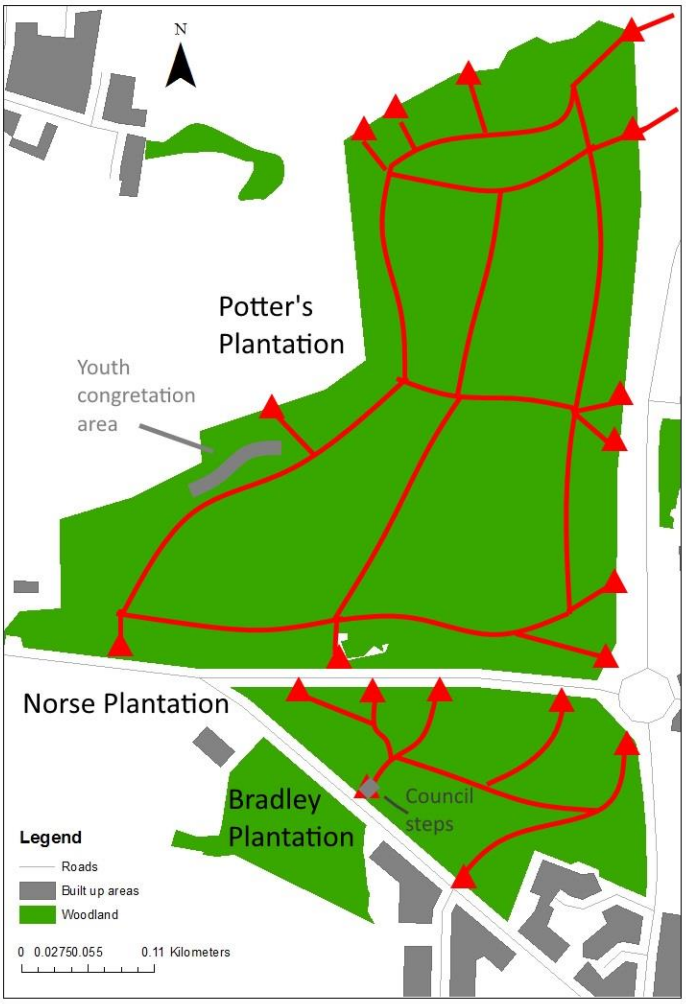


Figure 5.9. Potter's and Norse plantations showing entry points (red triangles) and informal paths (red lines). Paths in the North East corner cross land now sold for development. Also mapped is an area where young people typically congregate and some concrete steps installed by the local authority. The Bradley plantation contains no informal paths despite being un-fenced.

The site is owned by a small local estate but was leased in 2011 to a tree management company who applied for money under the English Woodland Grant Scheme, administered by the FC. Their objective was to thin the woodland and sell the timber for firewood (Perry, 2012). The proposal included provision for nature, leaving permanent wood stacks in the wood. They also argued that the thinning would improve '*access and amenity'* (p.3) for the public. Providing permissive public access is a requirement of FC grants of this type, owners are expected to use '*woodlands welcome'* signage (see figure 6.12) and advertise, where possible, that the woods are open to the public (Hunt, S, 2018). However, no such signage was

erected at Potter's and old signage, discouraging access, was left in place (see figure 5.10). This leaves a situation where the public are potentially misled into believing that they are trespassing when entering the wood. In reality they have permissive access made available under the terms of FC grant.



Figure 5.10. One of several prohibitive signs left up at Potter's Plantation even though the site was subject to a live access agreement (*Lisewski-Hobson, March 2018*).

Both the owners and the occupiers declined an invitation to take part in the study and, therefore, their perspectives on this issue cannot be represented. However, a tree surgeon (Jason) employed by the owners was happy to comment while he cleared a fallen tree in March 2017. He wasn't aware of the official access situation:

> *People have been coming in here for years and years, I don't know whether there are any official paths*

He was worried about liability for accidents and commented that:

> *It's a bit stressful, because of public liability. We might get sued if a tree comes down on someone, we've put the signs on the log stacks [see figure 5.11] and they're safe enough really, but you never know. I'm a bit worried about the dead standing wood. That's what everyone does now, suing seems to be routine.*



Figure 5.11. One of the signs erected at Potter's Plantation intended to prevent accidents and limit liability in the event of an accident *(Lisewski-Hobson, June, 2016)*.

Like Potter's, the Norse plantation has no official access. However, unlike Potter's, Norse has no permissive access, it only has informal paths. The site is owned by a multi-national company with headquarters in the region. The CEO of the company, Robert, was interviewed in September 2017 and commented on public access at the site:

> *People walk in wherever they want. Now they seem to have established, but unofficial, footpaths across the wood*

One of these informal paths has concrete steps to aid access (figure 5.12), potentially misleading the public into believing they are on an official path. Robert was asked about the steps and responded as follows:

> *The council, when they did the pavement, they actually put the steps up into the wood, I don't know why…I did ask the question and the council said, 'well it's an established path'*



Figure 5.12. Concrete steps installed into the Norse plantation aiding access to an informal path through the wood (*Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016).*

There is also on-line evidence that might mislead the public into believing the owner has granted access. Figure 5.13 shows a screen shot taken from the woodland trusts' online database *'find a wood'* (woodland Trust, 2018), which aims to allow the public to search for fully accessible woods in their area. This entry was submitted by the local authority who owns the small neighbouring wood, the Bradley plantation. The map shows the area as including Norse in error (figure 5.13). However, only one member of the public mentioned the database in relation to access at Norse. Robert was unaware of the existence of such a database.

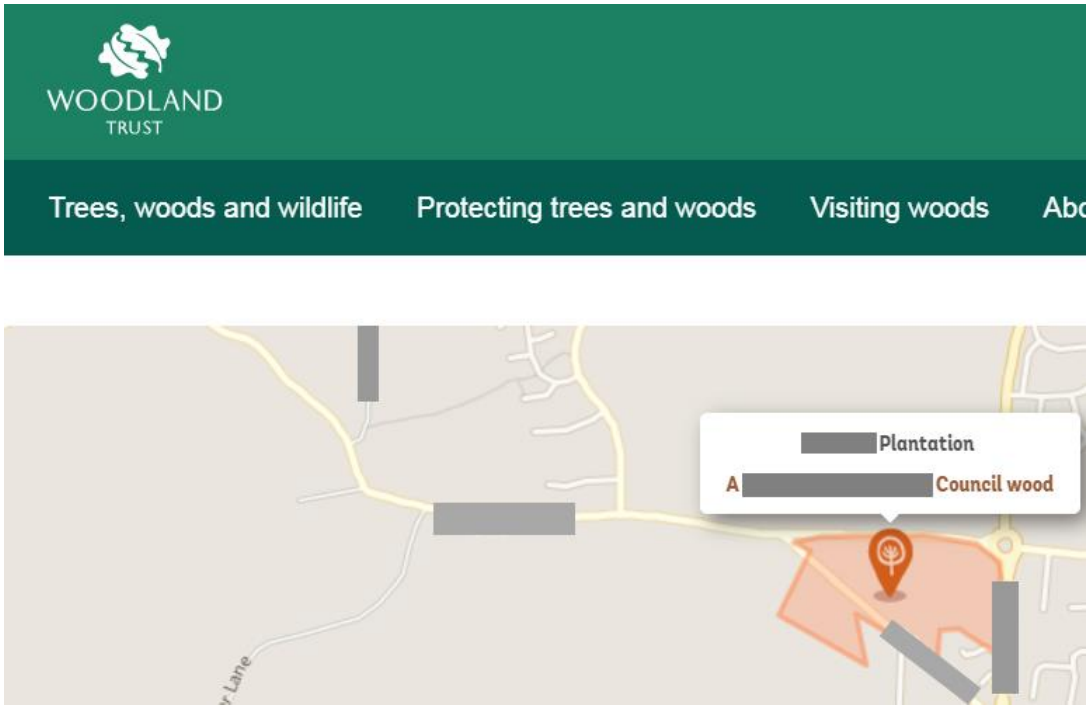


Figure 5.13 Map from the Woodland Trust's 'find a wood' database (Woodland Trust, 2018) with erroneous information showing Norse plantation (the large area of wood) to be part of a smaller, local authority wood, SW of the road (see figure 5.9 for context) where open access has been granted by the owner. Grey boxes are protecting the anonymity of the location.

When Robert took over as CEO, a decade ago, the plantation was already in company ownership. He knew little about the site and spent only a small fraction of his time visiting or thinking about the wood. He commented that:

> *The business has other priorities, owning a couple of acres or whatever it is, of trees, is not really a big thing*

Robert's main management priority was '*risk prevention*'. He complained about the costs of maintaining it on the boundaries with the highway and was also concerned about how to manage the wood once the trees become old:

> *I do worry that the trees will get so mature at some point that the woodland will need to be knocked down and re-planted.*

Robert had little or no sentimental attachment to the wood and viewed it purely in business terms. He saw it more as a liability than an asset commenting that:

> *Trees are not terribly cash productive….as a crop they cost nearly as much to chop down as you get for the wood*

He retained the wood because he believed there may be a future opportunity to develop housing on part of the site. In the meantime, like Jason, Robert worried about the public having accidents while using the informal paths. He said:

> *I am concerned from a public liability point of view that somebody's going to come along and put a claim in for something that's totally unreasonable, which seems to happen in all walks of life these days.*

However, he wasn't of the opinion that trying to keep people out was the best solution, he took a much more pragmatic approach and commented that:

> *We accept that we're not going to push water uphill or deprive people of what has been a nice public route and so if we were ever to seek to develop this section then we'd look to formalise a route and then you can maintain them safely and properly, which is in everybody's interest.*

His attitude was partly informed by his belief that the public have grounds to claim some of the informal routes, this was not in his interests if he wanted to develop the site. He explained that:

> *If you try and restrict people from going there you're going to be fighting an uphill battle because people will claim rights….and if you ever want to develop once you've put a public footpath in and you've agreed…they've walked that route for 20 years then that's going to preclude you from moving it, whereas if it's all informal you'll have a better opportunity to reach agreement with the local people*

However, like most of the woodlands in this study, few people actually knew who owns the wood. None of the participants interviewed in the woods knew the owner and only three out of 15 residents did. This was the way Robert preferred it, he commented:

> *If you put your name up you're likely to get more people giving you more problems.*

For the Potter's plantation no members of the public knew the owner, not even those in neighbouring houses. For some people this was a real issue. Barbara, a retired resident bordering Potter's, was concerned about the tree felling:

> *All I want to know is who it belongs to. They owe people an explanation for the stuff that's been going on.*

None of the 28 members of the public interviewed at this site had a full understanding about the status of access in these woods. Confusion about access was a major theme among the walkers with almost half of those interviewed

expressing unprompted uncertainty as to whether they were allowed in the Potter's Plantation. Mary, a woman walking in the Norse plantation, commented on Potter's:

> *I probably wouldn't have gone in Potter's as there are signs, the signs look pretty old now though and people told me I could go in so I do.*

In fact most of the people that raised the issue of the signs, even if they felt a level of uncertainty were not ultimately put off, Melissa said:

> *It's private, we're not really allowed in here. But nobody really enforces it.*

Others felt it was their right to be there, such as Jess who had some level of awareness of access law:

> *You're allowed to walk here because people have always walked here. If we've been walking here for more than 20 years then it's ours.*

But some were apathetic, such as Josh who asked:

> *Am I allowed in here? People don't care anyway.*

By their very being there, people in the Potter's Plantation have either not seen the old signs or have ignored them. Some of the local residents felt differently. Of the two thirds of participants interviewed that didn't visit the woods, the most common reason given was a perception that access wasn't allowed. Jim said:

> *You shouldn't be in there anyway, there are signs up.*

The absence of any signage at Norse seemed to make access less of an issue, people there tended not to bring up the subject. This suggests that in the absence of signs or any other obvious attempts to keep them out, access is taken for granted. James worked from home and went into the wood on his breaks. He used the wood as a gym and practiced his golf under the larch. James certainly felt that the wood was somewhere he was allowed to roam. He commented:

> *I want to keep this a free place, I don't want to regulate it.*

To summarise, Potter's and Norse plantation do have a good level of access, though none of it is official. The owners of Potter's have discouraged access by leaving up

old signs stating access is trespass and not adding '*woodlands welcome'* signs. The Norse owner preferred to leave people to their own devices until he is ready to develop the land. He was aiming to avoid any footpath claims before this time. Both owners worried about public liability though not to the point that they prevent access.

Access at both sites is potentially under threat. It is likely to be restricted at Norse because of potential house building and at Potter's because their obligation to allow access will end after a fixed period. The time period of permissive access obligations forming part of a forestry grant varies from 10 to 30 years depending on the value of the grant (Hunt, 2018).

5.2.3 Positive aspects of using and living near woodland

This section explores the positive aspects of woodland as reported by members of the public using the woods and those occupying local housing. Interviews were coded thematically and are summarised in tables 5.2 and 5.3. Themes are designated as major when at least a third of respondents deemed them important.

Overarching theme	Etic themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Health and wellbeing	**Peace/quiet/solitude (13)** Relaxation (3) Fitness (2)	socialising
Nature appreciation	**Birds (7)** inc. Buzzards (2) Seasonality: Summer (3) Trees (2) Bluebells (2)	Mammals: Badgers; Foxes; Squirrels Other: Fungi Seasonality: Winter; Spring
Practical	**Proximity (4)** Dog likes it (3)	Avoiding road
Heritage	Historical interest	Stories: People digging out clay for the Brampton potteries
Emotional responses		Nostalgia;

Table 5.2: Positive themes from interviews with 13 visitors to the Potter's and Norse Plantations.

Overarching theme	Etic themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Quality of life	**Visual aesthetics (5)** Rural feel (2) Fewer neighbours (2)	Privacy; Shelter; Somewhere for children to play
Nature appreciation	Birds (4) inc. Owls (2) Foxes (2)	Seasonality: Spring; Changing seasons; Bluebells
Heritage	Historical interest (3)	Stories: People digging for coal; German's dumping bombs during the war Post war development
Health and Wellbeing		Peace; Calm; Relaxation; Protection from pollution

Table 5.3: Positive themes from interviews with 15 residents whose homes border the Potter's or Norse Plantation.

The users of these urban woods appreciated the health and wellbeing benefits of visiting woodland. They were overwhelmingly seeking peace, quiet or solitude. Nancy, who was walking in Norse Plantation commented:

> *I love the solitude, even though you're near the road. It gives you some thinking time.*

Sandra, who was walking in Potter's, agreed:

> *I love it because it's peaceful and you don't see many other people.*

The walkers were also great nature appreciators and were particularly keen to mention the birds. Sandra was keen on the wildlife:

> *I…feed the birds in the bottom corner. There's usually a Robin waiting for me, though I've not seen him the last couple of days. Now there's other birds I feed too, blue tits and sparrows. I used to feed the foxes in here, there was one time when I'd put the food out I saw a fox and a badger eating side by side.*

The local residents were also nature appreciators as Bob, who lived close to Potter's Plantation explained:

> *We like the wildlife and they go through our garden. We like the foxes and pheasants.*

In common with Tartaglia-Kershaw 's (1982) study of Sheffield, residents most appreciated the visual aspect of living close to a wood. Barbara added an auditory dimension to her description of living near to Potter's:

> *I love the position of the house with greenery all around... I like the wood the most when it's rained and it's windy and it's all moving and you can hear it whooshing.*

5.2.4 Activities and Issues

This section uses physical evidence, observations and interviews to outline the main recreational activities taking place and any issues relating to these and other human activities occurring in the woods. Table 5.4 shows a summary of the people observations in the two woods. Less time was spent in Norse due to its smaller size.

	Potter's	**Norse**
Hours of observation	21:08	6:35
No of people observed	27	19
Male/Female split	12/15	9/10
Mean people/ hour	1.3	2.9
Average group size	1.4	1.6
Distance travelled <1/1-5/>5 (miles)*	9/1/0	3/0/0
Local/Visitor split*	9/1	3/0
Transport split foot/car/bus*	9/1/0	3/0/0
Walkers with dogs	21	10
Walkers without dogs	0	6
Cyclists	2	0
Equestrians	0	0
Runners	0	2
Young people socialising	2	0
Other	2	1

Table 5.4: Basis statistics about woodland visitors observed. *These data were gathered from interviewees only

Both woods were dominated by walkers with dogs. However, the interviewees, who were all walking with dogs were fairly evenly split between walkers who happen to have a dog, those who walked for themselves and the dog equally and those who were briefly walking to the nearest greenspace just for their dogs. All but one of the woodland users had walked to the wood straight from home making them clearly a local utility rather than destination woodlands.

Two categories, the cyclists and the young people socialising are backed up by other evidence. Both Norse and Potter's contain mountain bike ramps constructed by members of the public. At Potter's these are fairly extensive and coincide with

an area where young people were also observed sitting smoking cannabis. This area of the wood can be seen in figure 5.14.



Figure 5.14: Mountain bike jumps and associated litter in Potter's Plantation. The image on the right also shows tree vandalism. *(Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016)*

There is also physical evidence of a space which appears to have been the centre of some level of anti-social behaviour at Norse, figure 5.15 shows evidence of fires and drinking with a damaged tree in the background. Both sites suffer from fly tipping (figure 5.16).



Figure 5.15: The site of anti-social behaviour at Norse plantation *(Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016).*



Figure 5.16: Fly tipping. Left shows fly-tipped fabrics and other domestic waste in Potter's close to the border with the main road. Right shows an old toilet dumped under a rhododendron bush in Norse. (*Lisewski-Hobson, September 2016 (left) and December 2016 (right)).*

Litter and fly tipping was concentrated in areas where people socialise and around the borders with the main road. In Norse there is also a large quantity of identical dog waste bags dumped in a small area (see figure 5.17). This was pointed out by an interviewee, James:

Someone has been dumping poo bags…over there there's a massive pile of them, all the same pink ones



Figure 5.17: Hundreds of dumped dog waste bags in Norse plantation. *(Lisewski-Hobson, January 2017)*

Themes from the interviews are shown in tables 5.5 and 5.6.

Overarching theme	Etic themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Crime and Anti-social behaviour	**Litter (10)** Shooting (3) Discarded dog waste bags (2) Drug taking (2)	Litter: Broken Glass; Firewood theft; Fires
Practical	**Mud (10)** Uneven ground (2)	Poor paths
Development anxiety	**Losing the wood to development (10)**	Fracking
Fear	**Young people socialising (8)** Personal security (3)	Aggressive dogs; Roads
Access	**Uncertainty over whether access is allowed (6)** Fear of losing access because of nearby development (2) Ownership uncertainty (2)	2026 historic claims deadline; 20 year rule; Landowners liability
Management	Tree thinning (3) Unsafe felling (2)	Lack of management; Need to clear fallen branches
Controversial usage	Mountain bikers (3)	People living in woods

Table 5.5. Issue related themes from interviews with 13 walkers in the Potter's and Norse Plantations

Overarching Theme	Etic themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Development Anxiety	**Losing the wood to development (6)**	
Controversial usage	**People living in woods (5)**	Fires;
Practical	Traffic (3) Poor paths (3) Excessive shade (2) Mud (2)	Overgrown entrances; Uneven ground; Leaf litter; Sycamore seedlings
Management	Tree Preservation Orders too rigid (3) Lack of Management (3) Don't like tree thinning (2)	
Fear	Young people socialising (3) Mine shafts (2) Falling trees (2)	Burglary; Getting Lost
Crime and anti-social behaviour	Motorbikes (3) Litter (2)	Vandalism; Loud Music; Firewood theft; Dog Poo;
Other	Nuisance wildlife (2)	
Lack of facilities		Car Park; Toilets

Table 5.6: Issue related themes from interviews with 15 local residents at the Potter's and Norse Plantations

For the woodland users there were many issues concerning them. Unsurprisingly, given the physical evidence shown in figures 5.14-4.17, litter was the number one concern, though mountain bikers didn't feature prominently. The litter seemed to be closely linked to young people using the wood as Sarah, a walker in Potter's explained:

> *There's a big mess down at the bottom where the kids have been, they've left a lot of litter and broken bottles, so I worry about the dogs' paws.*

This issue comes out in fewer residents interviews but those who do experience it feel very strongly. Jenny lives close to the part of Potter's where the young people congregate and was very angry about the issue:

> *I want to go over there and tell them to fuck off. But what you going to do?... I suppose there's no way of stopping them. I can hear it from the house. It upsets me as a person, I don't know how people can just sit and relax when they're breaking things, I heard a massive crack and they've had a big branch down….. There's piles rubbish up there, I can only see from the evidence that they're youths, there's a lot of pop bottles.*

Amanda lives close to Norse and had similar concerns:

> *There's young people in there, making noise and drinking and people making dens. They play music until god knows what hour. That puts us off, I don't like the kids to go in, even though they're getting to that age when they want to go off exploring.*

Residents were also worried about people living in the woods, Robert (the landowner) confirmed that there was somebody living in Norse for a while:

> *We did have a vagrant who used to live in the woods….he used to live up there with his dog and defecate all over the place, it wasn't very pleasant.*

He refered to complaints from residents, but felt unsupported by the police:

> *If a local person phones up and says something's wrong, like 'there's a vagrant in the wood and he's got a nasty dog that bites my ankle'…then we go and do something about that but…policing priorities, hmm, they go up and have a look and they say we'll have a word and see if the chap's willing to move on. So, do we bother with the police now? No we don't. If someone leaves something on our land that shouldn't be there we take it away and we throw it in a skip… I used to send our building maintenance department to move him on.*

However, despite these issues, the participants, both resident and woodland users, were keen to keep the woods. Development anxiety came out as a major theme. People were deeply anxious about the woods being lost to development. This is not an unfounded worry as has been previously discussed.

Sandra, who was interviewed in Potter's Plantations said:

> *They're trying to sell all the fields round the wood for housing. I'm worried about the wood, I went to a planning meeting and the councillor said it was alright because it's a nature reserve. I'd be really upset if it went.*

Barbara, a local resident, also feared the loss of the remaining greenspace:

> *Everything is going for housing, it's happening now, it's happening all the time.*

Some residents also worried about paths through the fields that they used to access the wood (see figure 5.18). This included Melissa, who takes her dog into the Potter's Plantation:

> *They're building on the fields we cut through to get here, so I suppose that path will go when it's built on.*

Residents who expressed this concern were later asked about whether they might claim the paths using the 20 years of use rule. However, none knew that this mechanism existed.



Figure 5.18: Land adjacent to Potter's now sold for house building. An informal path crosses the field allowing access to the wood *(Lisewski-Hobson, December 2016).*

The final major theme for the woodland users was mud, this was most problematic in Potter's (see figure 5.3), where forestry machinery had churned up many of the tracks. James preferred to stick to Norse:

> I*t's too muddy over there and if I want to take the dog with me I'll need to bath her when we get home.*

Of the residents that did not access the wood, poor, muddy paths was often given as a reason. Otherwise the residents' issues were quite wide ranging with a number of themes appearing under overarching subjects such as management, practical, fear and crime and anti-social behaviour.

However, only one resident reported feeling that living near a wood was a negative experience overall. This was Bob, who's house was adjacent to Potter's. He complained about the trees:

> *From now [May] we'll not get any sun until October. The sycamores are an absolute pain, we're always picking them out of the garden. If I had my time again I probably wouldn't choose this house.*

Crime and anti-social behaviour were a worry to him too:

> *We had to put a big fence up to keep people out. We had burglars that came through the wood and broke into the garage. We found our big petrol lawnmower in the woods that they couldn't carry. There are kids in there and people on motorbikes.*

5.2.5 Summary of Potter's and Norse plantations

Overall Potter's and Norse were very much appreciated by users and local residents who benefited from well-being effects associated with peace and solitude, enjoyed the greenery and appreciated the nature on their doorstep. Though the wood has its issues, especially related to young people and litter, this was outweighed by the positive elements. Usage rates of the wood were fairly low with fewer than 2 people per hour observed at Potter's plantation, however, this was part of the attraction for many, who wanted to escape from other people. This is a local wood used overwhelmingly by those who live in close proximity, however it was important to them, as is reflected in the levels of anxiety expressed by participants about future development plans affecting the wood. Continued access to these woods is not guaranteed and members of the local communities were not well informed on ways they could retain their current levels of access. For the landowners public liability was a major issue, however, they were making little or no attempt to restrict public access. This may change in the future.

5.3 Urban Fringe woods – Tanner's Plantation

5.3.1 Background and Description

Tanner's plantation is ten hectares in size and also occupies an urban fringe location. The wood feels small, due to its narrow shape but there is a playing field to the North and most of the houses to the South are beyond a railway embankment and out of sight making it is possible to feel separated from the

human world. However, the wood sits on high ground above the ring road in the bottom of the valley and it is traffic that dominates the soundscape.

The wood is several miles away and on the opposite side of town to Potter's and Norse plantations. Figure 5.19 shows its context around local housing. Tanner's is surrounded on three sides by housing estates. To the East and West is private housing and to the South is social housing, built in the 1940s. The green space to the North is currently a recreation ground with a newer block of trees planted in the year 2000. Land between the new trees and the road to the East was advertised for sale as a residential development opportunity in 2016 (see figure 5.20). Prior to this, in 2013, local residents had applied for village green status to protect the greenspace. This included the recreational ground, the new trees and Tanner's Plantation. The application was turned down in May 2016 after objections from all three owners of the wood as well as the Derbyshire Gypsy liaison group (McElvany, 2016). The liaison group were representing travellers who bought a small plot of land on the greenspace in 2010, constructing a permanent dwelling in 2011 (see figure 5.19 for location). David, a local authority owner felt that the application was a reaction to the arrival of the travellers:

> *I think there was a concern from the local community that something larger would appear and they sought to obtain village green status for the playing field and some of the surrounding woodland.*

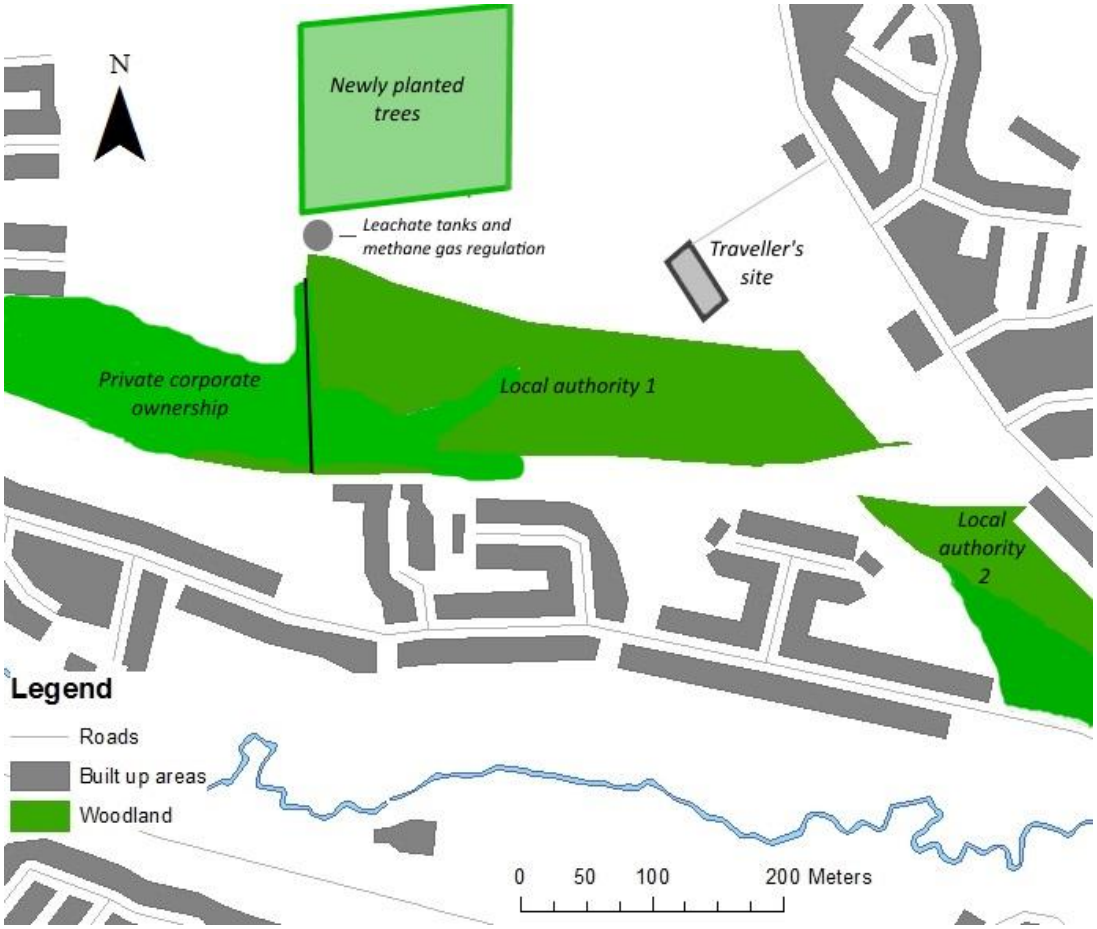


Figure 5.19: Tanner's plantation in its urban fringe context. The black vertical line represents the boundary between private and local authority ownership. Brighter green areas of woodland were omitted from OS woodland vector data (2015) and have been added referencing the latest paper OS map (Explorer 2015, 1:25,000), google earth and field notes.



Figure 5.20: Land to the North East of Tanner's Plantation was advertised as a residential development opportunity in 2016. (*Lisewski-Hobson, August, 2016)*

Historic OS maps show the wood was already in existence at the time of the County Series first edition (1:10560) in 1883, with the housing to the West appearing by the first revision in 1899. The wood remained in this form until the 1955 National Grid map (1:10560) when, as with the Potter's Plantation, it disappeared. By 1968 the West (shown as coppice) and South east portions of the wood were present again, however, the centre portion had been converted to landfill (see figure 5.21) only being returned to woodland in the 1980s (OS National Grid 1:10,000, 1983).

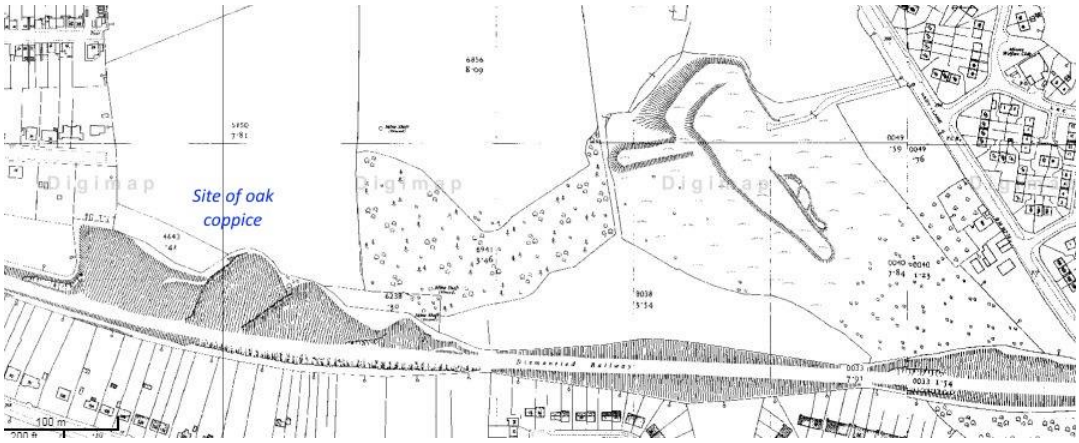


Figure 5.21: OS national Grid 1:10560 (1968) showing the landfill site at Tanner's. The far Western extent of the oak coppice is missing but field evidence suggests that some of the trees pre-date this map and at least a wood pasture was present. (*Map reproduced under license via Edina, 2018)*

There are potential questions about the Westerly extent of the woodland on some of the OS map evidence. The full present western extent of Tanner's did not appear on any OS maps until the latest OS explorer, 1:25,000, issued in 2015. It is also omitted from OS vector data on woodland areas, as figure 5.19 shows (OS Vector Map: District, 2015). According to Watkins (1990), coppiced trees were not always shown on OS maps. Field data shows coppiced oak trees of considerable age visible in this missing area of woodland suggesting at least an open coppice was historically extant (see figure 5.22).



Figure 5.22: One of many coppiced oaks found in the area of Tanner's Plantation not included in historic editions of OS maps. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2015)*

Floristically, Tanner's plantation has three distinct zones which correspond to the ownership zones set out in figure 5.19 (see figure 5.23 for photographs). To the West is the area of old Oak coppice which may have had an association with the local tanneries, established in the Georgian period (Preece, 2002). The South East of the wood consists mainly of hazel, birch and lime, while the centre of the wood is deciduous plantation, mainly of oak with sycamore and some isolated pockets of beech and white poplar. The trees in the centre are clearly much younger and are in need of some thinning work. Evidence of this section's recent history as a landfill site persists in the wood today where the soil has eroded away to reveal fragments of refuse (figure 5.24). A methane gas regulation station with leachate tanks is visible between this section and the area of newly planted trees to the North (figure 5.25).



Figure 5.23: Zones in Tanner's Plantation. Oak coppice in the West Zone (left), recently planted trees (centre) and the South East Zone (right). (*Lisewski-Hobson, December 2016 (left), March 2017 (middle) and November 2018 (right)).*



Figure 5.24: As topsoil has eroded at Tanner's, refuse from the old tip can be seen. *(Lisewski-Hobson, January 2017)*





Figure 5.25: The gas regulation station to the North of Tanner's plantation. (*Lisewski-Hobson, January 2017)*

5.3.2 Ownership perspectives and access issues

Two out of the three woodland owners were interviewed as well as 19 woodland users and 23 local residents. A reasonable proportion of the residents interviewed (61%) visited the wood regularly.

Tanner's plantation has a public footpath running through it. In addition a network of informal paths exists on both the public and privately owned sections. There are no signs on the site, indicating ownership or any restrictions on behaviour, just one public footpath sign where the main path meets the road. The base map used in figure 5.26 is taken from Openstreetmap.

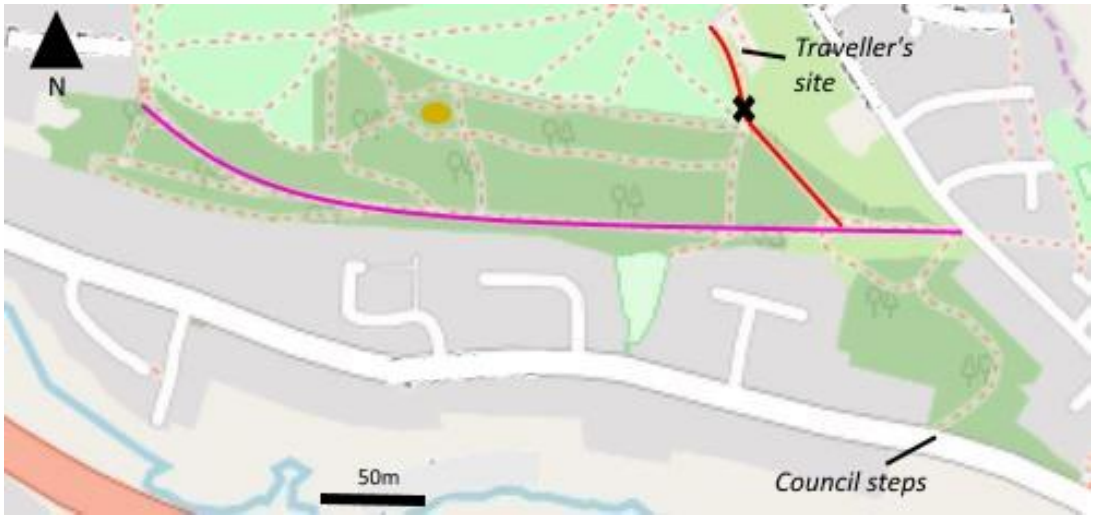


Figure 5.26: Map showing footpaths added in Tanner's Plantation by members of the public on Openstreetmap.org (pink dashed lines). The dark pink line has been added to show the official public right of way and the red line to show the path now closed (from the x, Northwards) after a failed public footpath application. The orange circle is a congregation area popular with young people known as '*the circle'*.

In the case of Tanner's Plantation, OpenStreetMap shows an accurate depiction of the paths used in the wood. One exception is the path marked in red. This path, which passes immediately by the travellers site, was subject to a failed footpath claim[32] by local people and is now blocked. Tony, a local resident, explained what happened:

> *We tried to claim the footpath but it failed. I just don't understand it, we've been walking here for years and the farmers used to let us through.*

The local authority state on their website that the claim was rejected on the grounds of insufficient evidence. This clearly wasn't communicated to the local residents who had no idea why it had been turned down. It appears the residents simply did not put a strong enough case together or have been rejected on a technicality. Only a quarter of the footpath claims for this parish have been successful and most take years to process and eventually fail on the grounds of insufficient evidence. This seems to be common across the county as figure 5.27, showing applications for the parish of Chesterfield demonstrates. The process of applying for official designation is somewhat opaque and it is possible that

[32] https://apps.derbyshire.gov.uk/applications/right-of-way/

applicants do not know the system well enough to make sure their evidence is sufficient.

03747	15/04/2011	Claim to add a Footpath between Chesterfield Public Footpath No 71 and Newbold Back Lane. Across Sports Ground	Rejected by Committee - Insufficient evidence
03748	15/04/2011	Claim to add a Footpath from Chesterfield Public Footpath No. 71 and around sports ground Newbold Back Lane	Rejected by Committee - Insufficient evidence
03762	07/11/2007	Claim to add a Footpath in Chesterfield. Between Springfield Avenue and Linden Park Grove	Application Concluded
03934		Claimed Footpath in Chesterfield between Footpath 118 and Footpath 139	Rejected by Committee - Insufficient evidence
04057	19/10/2015	Claim to add a Bridleway and upgrade Footpath Number 38 (Chesterfield) and 73 (Barlow) to a Bridleway in the Parishes of Chesterfield and Barlow	Consultation in progress

Figure 5.27: An excerpt from the register of live rights of way claims in Chesterfield showing a number of applications rejected on insufficient evidence (DCC, 2018[33])

Some of the residents blamed the travellers for the footpath closure, such as Richard:

> *We've walked it since the tip was there, and before it was a tip, as far as the school along where the travellers site is and I think that's why the council turned it down….The travellers bought it and fenced it off.*

Unfortunately, the travellers were unwilling to take any part in the study so their perspectives cannot be represented. Two of the three landowners at Tanner's Plantation did take part, both local authorities. They knew of the case but didn't have any grasp of the detail.

The private landowner, who owns the old coppice zone to the West (figure 5.19), is locally-based and buys and sells land as his business. He declined an invitation to take part. The other two land owners are different local authorities. On the ground there is no suggestion that the site is owned by multiple parties. Of the members

[33] From Derbyshire County Council's live register of RoW claims, accessed 29th August 2018. Available at: https://apps.derbyshire.gov.uk/applications/right-of-way/results.asp?Select_a_Parish=Chesterfield&subParish=Search+by+parish

of the public that felt they knew who the owners were they all answered *'the council'* though nobody could specify which council. Some of the residents who were involved in the village green application knew about the private owner but these were in the minority.

David was interviewed from the first local authority in September 2017. His organisation owns the South East portion of the wood. David was driven by objectives, he was clear that the local authority manages its sites as amenities and therefore public access is important and *informal* open access is allowed. As with Norse, the council have built steps to help with access to an informal path (figure 5.26) and they have listed their land with the Woodland Trust. However, overall the existence of this informal open access was not well advertised. David commented:

> *Signage is something that we're pretty weak on…some of our woods have signs on saying who the owner is and, you know, what you can do in there. Others don't, particularly the smaller woodlands.*

When the words '*right to roam'* were mentioned David was quick to point out that all freedom on council land was granted *'as a concession'*. This is consistent with his positionality as a self-proclaimed *'custodian'* of the land. His sympathies generally were with land owners with whom he works as a private consultant. He felt that public access often clashed with their objectives:

> *The council's woodlands are there as a recreational resource. Privately owned woodland, the owners have different objectives whether that be timber operations where commercial forestry can be hazardous…it's difficult to safely plan in a timber harvest if you're worried about someone who might just pop out of a rhododendron bush… Privately owned woodlands are used for game shooting and things like that which brings its own complications.*

However, on council land he admitted that public access on foot hasn't caused any significant problems, motorbikes were the real issue:

> *Pedestrian access isn't really a problem. The problem we do have with access is vehicular trespass, so motorbikes in woodlands is a major problem across the borough.*

David believed that Tanner's was used exclusively by locals, rather than being, what he would consider, a high priority destination woodland. He felt the site was suffering from a lack of management but has struggled to find the budget to improve matters:

> *We've got a relatively small woodland budget….so we have to target that on the larger woodlands where we get more visitors…and we have more ecologically valuable woodlands…it tends to get neglected… so in terms of things like thinning and coppicing… in Tanner's, unfortunately there are not many mature trees and the value of the crop…the first thinnings would be cancelled out or exceeded by the cost of the labour.*

In terms of management for the wood, the situation with the other local authority was worse still. The individual responsible for woodland management, Paul, was also interviewed in September 2017. As a former land fill site, management of the central and largest part of Tanner's Plantation was assigned solely to the waste management team, and not to Paul, therefore it was managed as a toxic waste site rather than as a woodland. Like David, Paul's authority administers a policy of unadvertised and informal open access. Like Robert from Norse, Paul believed that trying to stop informal access is unrealistic:

> *People have always made desire lines all over the place, so…we've formalised some of them and on some we don't need to do anything. From our perspective, yeah, it's fair game to go wherever. We know from experience that if we restrict people from going into those places fences just get torn down anyway, you know, and you're fighting a losing battle... If people want to go there, they'll go there.*

Paul was very pro-recreationalist and felt that there are opportunities for local authorities to generate revenue from such sites. However, he complained of hefty funding cuts and described his relationship with his sites as *'frustrated and detached'.* He spoke generally of issues of anti-social behaviour across his sites and had particular issues with motorbikes, unauthorised camping, fires and litter. However, he felt that these problems could be reduced if sites were properly managed:

> *The sites look run down so it's, kind of, a vicious circle really so as soon as they start looking tatty it almost encourages a similar type of behaviour…the quicker you can right it, it won't attract more.*

From the public interviews, the overarching theme of access was fairly major in the analysis of public data from Tanner's. However, comments were more diverse than

at Potter's and Norse and confusion over access wasn't a big issue. Just over half of those interviewed in Tanner'ss seemed oblivious to the status of the paths they walked on. However, many knowingly used informal paths. Steve said:

> *I like that you can do a circular walk in here, even though I know some of the paths aren't official.*

The informal paths were very popular with the public, 43% of groups noted in the observation were using them. Michelle said:

> *I like the paths that people have made*

Only Christine felt that people should not use the informal paths:

> *Legally we're not allowed to leave the official pathway and there's only one in these woods… People think that because it's council they can do what they like but you wouldn't walk around a council building taking stuff or start sitting at the desks.*

Later on Christine and her friend were found using one of the informal paths. She commented with a laugh:

> *There's us, trespassing!*

Christine's was an interesting case. In the private part of the wood, the ownership of which she and most others were not aware of, it would seem people using the informal paths are technically trespassing. However, in the local authority areas there is some level of permissive access, though only one council have declared it in any way (via the Woodland Trust). It appears there is a spectrum of unofficial permissive access. From access that is ignored by the landowner to some level of undeclared permissive status. From a legal perspective it isn't clear where on this spectrum trespass is taking place. Is it trespass when the landowner does not use a formal declaration to grant official or permissive access but doesn't mind or doesn't care?

To summarise, the woodland at Tanner's was not actively managed by any of the three owners involved. The local authorities had budget constraints and the private landowner is likely to have real estate interests rather than forestry ones. Members of the public were left to their own devices to use the site freely and the

owners haven't reported any major site specific problems related to public use. The public largely took access for granted at the site and used the informal paths even when they knew they weren't official. Few people were aware that some of the site is privately owned.

5.3.3 Positive aspects of using and living near woodland

This section explores the positive aspects of woodland as reported by members of the public using the woods and those occupying local housing. Interviews were coded thematically and are summarised in tables 5.7 and 5.8. Themes are designated as major when at least a third of respondents deemed them important.

Overarching theme	Sub- themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Health and Wellbeing	**Peace/Quiet/Solitude (8)** Socialising (4) Fitness (2) Sense of community (2)	Watching dog play; Grounding
Practical	**Proximity (8)**	Foraging; Avoiding traffic; Pub walk; Circular walks; Lots of paths; Dog likes it; People are responsible
Heritage	Historical interest (5)	
Nature appreciation	Bluebells (4)	Bird song; Crunching through leaves; Listening to trees; Sun shining through trees; Watching trees in the wind; Foxes; Rabbits; Seasonality: Autumn; Spring

Table 5.7: Positive themes from interviews with 19 visitors to Tanner's Plantation

Overarching theme	Themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Nature appreciation	**Birds (11)** Bluebells (5) Trees (3) Foxes (2) Seasonality: Spring (2)	Wood anemones; wind rustling through trees; Squirrels; Hedgehogs; Badgers; Rabbits; Nature connectedness
Health and Wellbeing	**Peace/Quiet/Solitude (8)** Air quality (2)	
Quality of life	Fewer houses (4) Visual aesthetics (4) Privacy (4)	Educational; Rural feel; Fewer roads; socialising; increased house prices
Emotional responses	Nostalgia (3)	
Heritage	Historical interest (2)	

Table 5.8: Positive themes from 21 local residents near Tanner's Plantation

Like Potter's and Norse plantations, quiet, peace and solitude was a strong theme among woodland users, though in Tanner's this also appeared prominently among the residents too. Kim, who was walking with her dog in Tanner's Plantation explained the role of peace in her whole woodland experience:

> *It's my favourite place to be, I love being in the woods ever since I can remember, I just find it peaceful, grounding, I enjoy the bird song, the smells and crunching through the leaves, watching the dog playing.*

Kim highlighted the bird song, which is themed under nature appreciation. The local residents at Tanner's seemed to find an incredible amount of enjoyment from the local birdlife as the major theme suggests. Eric, a retired resident talked with great enthusiasm about nature in the woods:

> *The bluebells have been gorgeous this year on the old bit with the banking, actually there are a few wood anemone in there… Jays, tawny owls, I'm waiting for the buzzards nesting. There's woodpeckers in there, there are loads.*

There is a definite sense that the local population value Tanner's Plantation very highly as Judy, walking with her dog, explained:

> *The other day there was a man in here getting angry about people picking the bluebells, especially the white ones because he says they're rare. People get very passionate about the wood.*

The bluebells in the oak coppice are pictured in figure 5.28.



Figure 5.28: Bluebells among the coppiced oak in Tanner's Plantation. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017)*

However, despite this passion many used the wood out of convenience, John, another woodland user has a succinct explanation:

> *It's local, you don't have to get in the car.*

5.3.4 Activities and Issues

Table 5.9 shows a summary of the people observations in Tanner's plantation.

Hours of Observation	22:19
No of people observed	73
Adult Male/Female split	36/31
Mean people/hour	3.3
Average group size	1.3
Distance travelled <1/1-5/>5 (miles)*	19/0/0
Local/Visitor split*	19/0
Transport split foot/car/bus*	19/0/0
Walkers with dogs	59
Walkers without dogs	8
Cyclists	1
Equestrians	0
Runners	1
Young people socialising	3
Other	0

Table 5.9: Observation summary for Tanner's Plantation

These data show a very similar pattern to Potter's and Norse with woodland users dominated by walkers with dogs in small group sizes, typically one person. Around two thirds of the dog walkers at Tanner's said they were in there just for the dog, while the remaining third said they go for themselves and the dogs. None claimed to be walking mainly for themselves. This corresponds with the major theme of proximity discussed in the last section and the suggestion by the local authority manager, David, that this is a wood used mainly by locals. The interview data backs this up, all the interviewees had walked straight from home, typically less than half a mile away. Even those without dogs were not necessarily out walking just for pleasure as Michelle commented:

> *You don't get many proper walkers in here… I see an old man who walks into town, and quite a few other people who are just cutting through.*

Tanner's is busier than both Norse and especially Potter's. Unlike Potter's and Norse, Tanner's doesn't have physical evidence of mountain biking and doesn't suffer from littering to the same degree (figure 5.28). This might, in part, be due to the fact that it has fewer borders with roads where people might find it convenient to dump waste.

Themes from the interviews can be found in table 5.10 and 5.11.

Overarching Theme	Etic themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Practical	**Mud (7)**	Wood too small
Crime and Anti-social behaviour	**Litter (6)** Timber theft (4) Fly tipping (3) Raves (2)	Quad bikes; Drug taking; Broken glass; Police don't deal with problems
Fear	Personal security (3) Aggressive dogs (3) Youths (2)	
Controversial use	Travellers (3) Camping (2)	People living in the woods; letting dogs run free
Access	Lack of access from areas of housing (2) Confusion over which paths are official (2)	No proper walks; Historic rights; Woodland trust 'find a wood' database; Claiming footpaths; Uncertainty as to whether it's OK to camp or take dead wood; Land Law; People don't care on council land;
Lack of facilities		Litter bins; Dog waste bins; Seating; Children's play areas
Management		Lack of management; Lack of education on public's responsibilities
Development anxiety		Losing wood to development; Building too close to wood

Table 5.10: Issue related themes from 19 woodland users at Tanner's

Overarching Theme	Etic themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Development anxiety	Fear of losing wood to development (5)	
Controversial use	Travellers (5)	
Crime and Anti-social behaviour	Motorbikes (3) Burglary (3) Litter (2)	Vandalism; Fly tipping
Practical	Big trees too close to house (3) Leaf litter (2)	Not enough paths; Wood too small; Excessive shade; Sycamore seedlings
Management	Overgrown (3) inc. Nettles (2)	Lack of habitat connectivity; Lack of management
Fear	Youths (2) Aggressive dogs (2)	Personal security
Lack of facilities	Bird boxes (2)	Wheelchair access; Seating
Access	Loss of important footpath (2)	

Table 5.11: Issue related themes from 21 residents living near Tanner's Plantation

Issues reported by members of the public at Tanner's were diverse and there are not as many clear main themes as was the case at Potter's and Norse where there were big issues relating to litter and young people congregating. Though these themes did arise for both the woodland users and the residents they were not nearly as prominent. There could be a number of reasons for this. Firstly Tanner's seemed to have less litter. As previously discussed, this may be, in part, because of road boundaries but also members of the public regularly picked up litter. Leonie explained:

> *There's litter but there's an old chap that goes around collecting cans and another bloke who does it too, with a dog.*

As with Potter's and Norse young people used the wood as a social space but this didn't seem to provoke the same fearful response in Tanner's. Both woodland users and residents were much more relaxed about it and some saw it in a positive light. Susan, a local resident, was one such person:

> *There was a place called the circle where my kids used to love it, they made fires there with their friends.*

The circle (see figure 5.26 for map and figure 5.29 for photograph), is in a depression towards the North of the wood. It was something of a party venue and,

like Potter's and Norse, could generate noise. But though some locals saw it as a nuisance they were much more understanding. Angie talked of her experience:

> *There's the odd party, down in that little hollow. There was a massive one at new year and it was still going on new years' day when we brought the dog out. I don't really have a problem with it, though I imagine the people in the houses down the bottom heard it. People aren't really hurting anything.*



Figure 5.29: 'The Circle' a depression in the woods used as a meeting place and occasional party venue by local youths. Note the lack of litter, just one white carrier bag (containing kindling wood) is visible. (*Lisewski-Hobson, January 2017)*

There was a clear difference between the way activities of local young people were perceived in Tanner's compared to Potter's and Norse. There were no major socio-economic differences between the two areas, both have a mix of modest private housing estates and social housing. There are several possible contributing factors. The four main factors are likely to be as follows: There was a stronger sense of community in Tanner's; It was busier; It was, to most people's knowledge, publicly owned and, finally, the presence of travellers at Tanner's may have changed the focus of people's fears.

At Tanner's there was a sense of joint responsibility for the wood with some people doing practical things to look after the wood such as picking up litter. Richard said:

> *We had a group that formed, a ground force group that went out and cleaned everything up.*

Here Richard hints at the social aspect of the community getting together and some other residents also saw their visits as a social experience, Laura was one:

> *There are some people I know with dogs that come in here and my dogs like to play with theirs. Sometimes we actually all set off together from the estate, a mass dog walk.*

The wood also contains dens constructed from fallen wood, Pete said:

> *Kids, they like to go up there, use fallen branches to make stuff.*

There are also items which may have been made by adults such as ladders to aid tree climbing (see figure 5.30). The fact that there were more people around may also have helped others feel safer (Davies et al., 2017) and worry less about the presence of young people.



Figure 5.30: Ladder attached to a beech tree in Tanner's Plantation. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017)*

Another contrast between the two woods is that Potter's and Norse are privately owned and display prohibitive signs mentioning trespass. Although Tanner's isn't entirely publically owned most people believed that to be the case and may have felt a sense of ownership themselves. Ryan described one of the local characters that used the wood frequently:

> *He was in here feeding the birds just now. Some people have asked if he owns the wood, I say 'he doesn't, he just thinks he does'.*

There was one participant who would argue to the contrary though, that people don't respect land that belongs to the council, Lisa commented:

> *This is Council so I don't think anyone's bothered.*

The final factor that may be contributing is a potential shift in the perception of young people from an out-group to an in-group (Brewer, 2007). In Tanner's, some users and residents have expressed concern about the travellers and their nearby dwelling. There is no evidence from the woods that the travellers have committed any controversial actions outside of the occasional report of loose dogs. However, some locals saw them as an out-group and express concern. When Anthony, a local resident was asked who uses the wood he said:

> *Burglar bill apparently. Apparently gypsies on the rob.*

Laura was a little more balanced and summarised the situation:

> *There are travellers, I don't know much about them, they seem alright but a lot of people don't like them being here, there was a petition about it.*

The issue may serve to distract some members of the public from issues of young people using the wood, who in comparison are a known quantity and therefore perceived as less of a threat.

Though the travellers were not categorised as a major theme (tables 5.10 and 5.11), any mention of them was un-prompted. This is a controversial topic and so this theme might be under-represented in the results with some people potentially avoiding the subject for fear of appearing racist (Bhopal & Myers, 2008).

Despite the more lenient attitudes towards the young people using the wood, the general category of crime and anti-social behaviour did appear as a major theme. A whole range of issues were described including litter but also, motorbikes, fly tipping and timber theft. Many people didn't see an issue with collecting wood for domestic fires but clearly some at Tanner's take it more seriously, as John described:

> *Once the wind blew a tree down, up there [he points to the North section of the wood] and so me and another guy started chopping it up for the fire but someone called the police on us.*

Though Tanner's was probably among the least muddy of the case study sites mud still came out as the most prominent theme for the woodland users. For residents, development anxiety was mentioned by many people, some of whom had been involved in the village green and the footpath application. Like Potter's and Norse the greenspace around the wood, if not the wood itself, is under threat from further development.

5.3.5 Summary of Tanner's Plantation

Tanner's is a secondary, urban fringe, woodland owned partly privately and partly by two local authorities. It is not actively managed. There was a strong sense of community in the wood and any anti-social behaviour remains at nuisance level and was not a serious issue for the public or the participating landowners.

Attitudes to young people using the wood were relaxed compared to Potter's and Norse with more concern being directed towards the travellers living on a small plot of land near-by. Other than the occasional report of unruly dogs there was no evidence that the travellers were responsible for any anti-social behaviour associated with the woods. Users of Tanner's Plantation complained about mud and similarly to Potter's and Norse had concerns about losing greenspace to housing developments. Access to the majority of Tanner's is not currently under threat, though the private part of the wood would be vulnerable if sold to a more attentive land owner.

Chapter 6 – Peri-urban woods: Case Studies

6.1 Introduction

The two Peri-Urban case studies both occupy mixed settings alongside small commuter towns on opposite sides of Chesterfield. Both areas have seen a substantial growth in housing since the second world war transitioning them from rural to Peri-Urban areas.

6.2 Peri-Urban woods – Brook Forest

6.2.1 Background and Description

Brook Forest occupies a mixed setting. To the South is a very large housing estate forming part of a town with a population of almost 12,000 (at 2011 census) (figure 6.1 and 6.2). To the immediate North and West the landscape is largely composed of arable fields (figure 6.3). It is a large wood of 90 hectares, and it feels big on the inside as though nothing outside the wood exists. The soundscape is mainly of birds though noises from people talking, children shouting or dogs barking are never far away. At the Southern extent of Brook Forest it starts to feel more suburban with the sound of lawnmowers and other domestic appliances drifting in from the nearby housing estate.

Though the wood is large, most of it has been split into lots and sold by the country estate that has owned it since the beginning of the 20th century. Figure 6.1 indicates the separate lots in their setting which have been given wood names of their own to ease description.

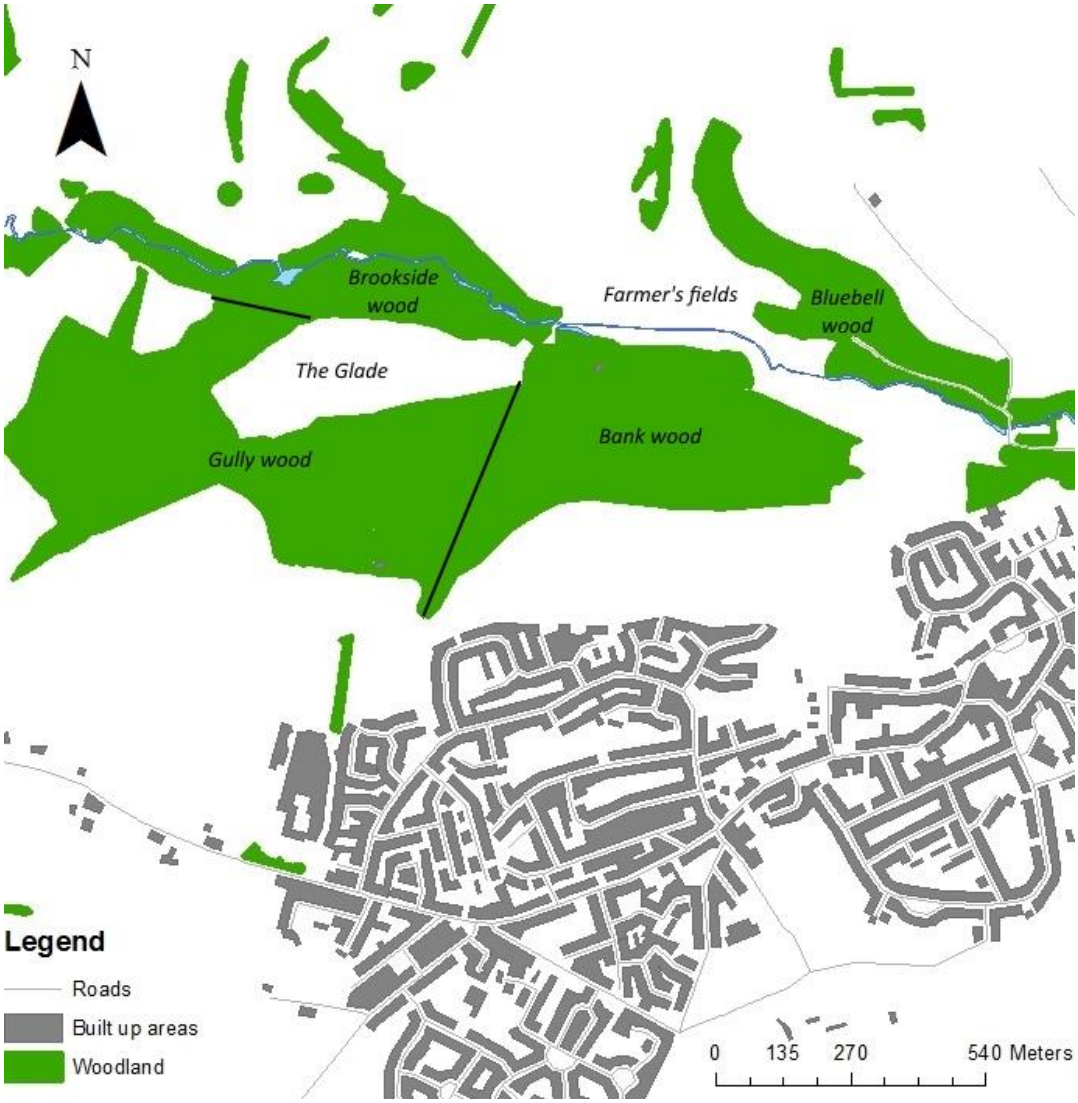


Figure 6.1: Brook Forest in its landscape context. The map shows the 5 different woodland lots, including the central glade, all owned by different parties. The farmer's fields are tenanted.



Figure 6.2: View from Gully Wood South towards the edge of the housing estate. The informal path crosses an arable field. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017)*



Figure 6.3: View from Gully Wood North over the Western edge of The Glade and Brookside Wood towards the rural landscape to the North. *(Lisewski-Hobson, August 2017*.)

Unlike the previous sites there is no known housing development planned for the area though there is an application under appeal for an exploratory fracking site just over a kilometre to the South West.

The woods are listed as ancient and semi-natural by Natural England (2015)[34] though it is clear on the ground that most of the wood is planted. Brookside wood is also listed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (Derbyshire County Council, 2018). Some of the woodland owners believe that the glade was an old deer park, originally crown property but sold to a local country estate in the 1930s. Historic maps show the woodland boundaries almost unchanged since the OS County Series first edition (1:10560) was released in 1883, though some of the trees appear to have been coppiced during the earlier part of this period. The main difference is the existence of a colliery, which opened in 1870 and was closed due to bankruptcy by 1901 (AditNow, 2018). Figure 6.4 shows the position of the colliery at the time of the OS first revision in 1899 (1:10560). Figure 6.5 shows the old engine house still present in Bank wood today, it is leased to the County Council for the sum of £1 per year. The wood attracts a lot of local interest, especially from a heritage and

[34] Information gathered via map files in Edina

natural history society based in the town. The society has a Facebook page where people share photographs taken out during their walks. There are also promoted walking trails through the wood including a heritage trail with QR codes dotted along the route (figure 6.6). Members of the public can read these codes using their mobile phone. The codes link them to web pages giving details of the history of that particular location. There is also a guided video of the route available on YouTube.

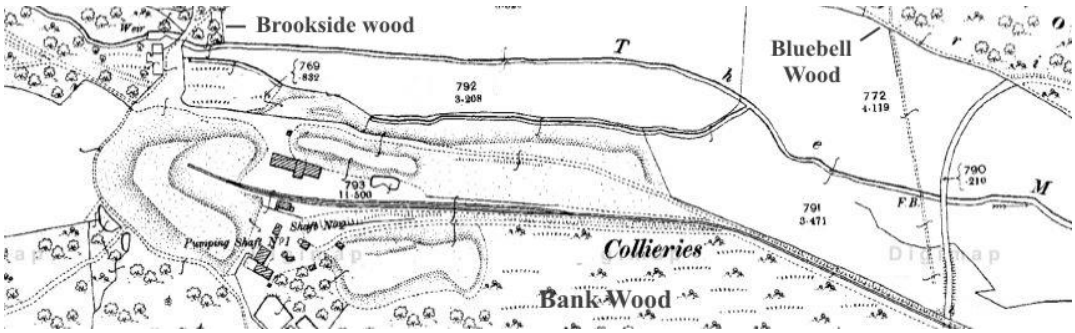


Figure 6.4: The old colliery in the centre of Brook Forests taken from the OS first revision (1:10560, 1899). Wood pseudonyms have been edited in.



Figure 6.5: The old engine house in Bank wood. It was left abandoned in 1901. *Lisewski-Hobson, April 2017.*



Figure 6.6: QR code along a heritage trail through Brook Forest. The photograph has been edited to remove place names. (*Lisewski-Hobson, October 2016)*

Tree composition at the site is mixed with small stands of planted trees appearing almost at random. Many are beech and some coniferous but there is also the occasional unusual species such as European white elm which can be found at the edge of The Glade. Gareth, the land agent, who until recently managed the whole wood for a country estate, explained the history behind the tree mix:

> *'It wasn't planted for forestry…. He [owner c.1900] dotted them around, I'm told that he used to have his desk taken out...and work out in the woods so that's why there's so many different compartments of species… It was his passion, woodland, and for whatever reason that was why it was planted in that way.'*

There are also a number of veteran oak trees lining the track to the South of Bluebell wood (see figure 4.10). Figures 6.7-6.10 show an assortment of views from the woods. Bluebell wood, as the name suggests, has an impressive population of bluebells under a beech stand (figure 6.7). There are also conifers planted at the North west end of Bluebell wood but especially in Bank and Gully wood. These can be seen photographed in the foreground of the view over an area cleared in 2011. This patch of the wood is already recolonising naturally with birch (figure 6.8). The Glade is beginning to be developed for organic permaculture (figure 6.9) and

Brookside wood, which also contains a lot of beech, has alder along the water's edge (figure 6.10).



Figure 6.7: Bluebells amongst the beeches in Bluebell wood. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017)*

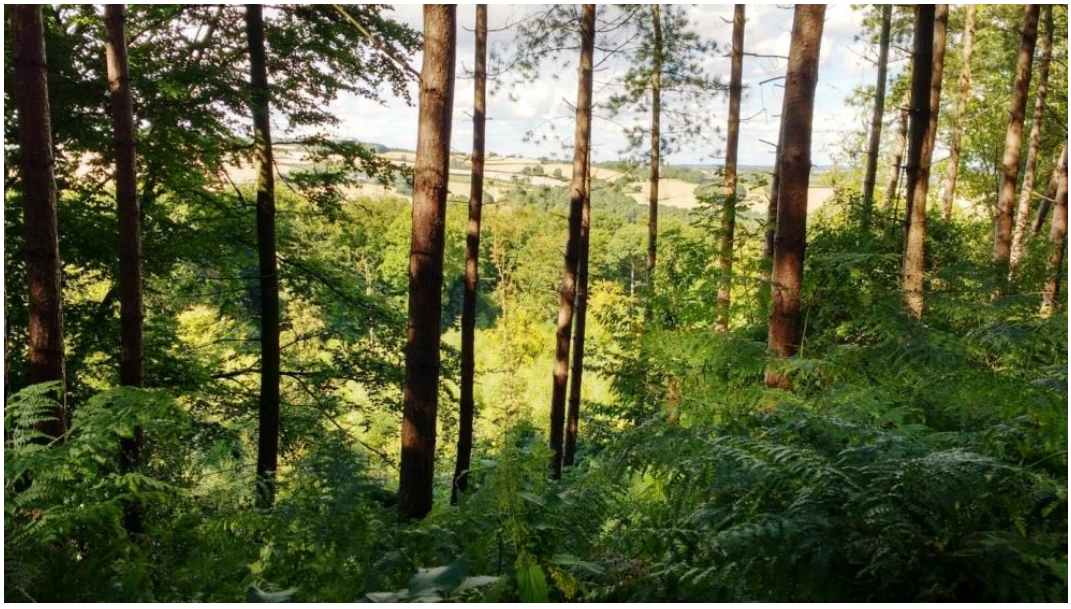


Figure 6.8: Conifers in Gully wood next to an area cleared in 2011. This patch of the wood is re-colonising naturally with birch. (*Lisewski-Hobson, August 2017)*



Figure 6.9: The Glade looking towards the West from Bank Wood. The site now has compost toilets a hay bale building and a poly-tunnel. (*Lisewski-Hobson, April 2017)*

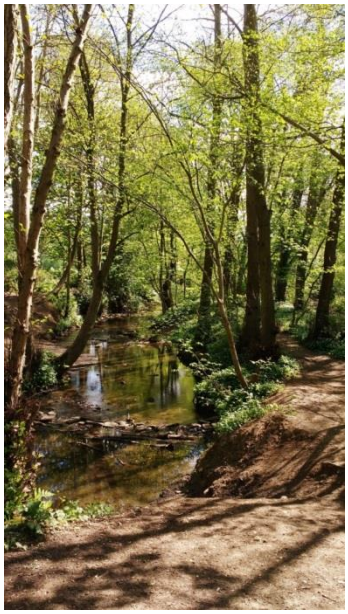


Figure 6.10: Alder along the brook in Brookside wood. The path to the right of the brook is informal. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017)*

6.2.2 Ownership perspectives and access issues

Brook Forest was put up for sale in 2012 (see figure 6.1 for lots). All of the lots, except for Brookside woods, sold. This wood was still on the market at the time of writing. The forest has a total of 5 owners, all of whom took part in this research between September and October 2017. At the time of the study *The Glade* was changing ownership again. Both the incoming and outgoing owners were interviewed giving a total of 6 participating landowners for Brook Forest. Details of the landowners involved in the study are set out in table 6.1. In addition the tenant

working the *Farmers fields* was interviewed in July 2017. 20 woodland users were interviewed as well as 13 local residents. Of the local residents just 4 actually visited the woods (36%). In common with Ravenscroft & Curry's (2004) study in the South of England, the most common reason people gave was that they were too busy.

Participant Pseudonym	Description	Forest segment owned	Size (Ha)	Purchase year	Motivation for owning segment	Objective(s)
Gareth	Land agent for country estate	Previous owner of entire forest. Current owner of Brookside Wood and Farmer's fields	18	1900s	n/a	Risk minimisation
Tim	Private Individual	Bluebell Wood	11	2015	Hobby; domestic fuel supply	Thin trees
Matt (with parents Pat and Victor)	Private individual bought with assistance from parents	Bank Wood	20	2013	Forestry experience	Sustainable forestry; Habitat; Public access (on foot)
Roger	Private individual	Gully Wood	32	2013	Domestic fuel supply; Profit; Escape.	Make a commercially profitable woodland
William	Private individual	Outgoing owner of The Glade	9	2015	Organic permaculture; Off-grid dwelling	Self-sustaining off grid dwelling
Sandra and Harry	Private couple (retired)	Incoming owners of The Glade	9	2017	Retirement retreat	Recover costs through diversification
Brian	Occupier	Farmer's fields	13	In the family since 1900	n/a	Arable farming

Table 6.1: Basic information on landowners of forest sections.

Brook Forest was, until recently, used as open access by members of the public on foot, horseback and mountain bike and continues to be featured on the Woodland Trust's database of accessible woodlands. A large number of informal routes and mountain bike trails have been established. These have been charted by members of the public on open street map (see figure 6.11). However, more additional paths were charted using GPS during field work. 38% of the people observed were using informal paths.

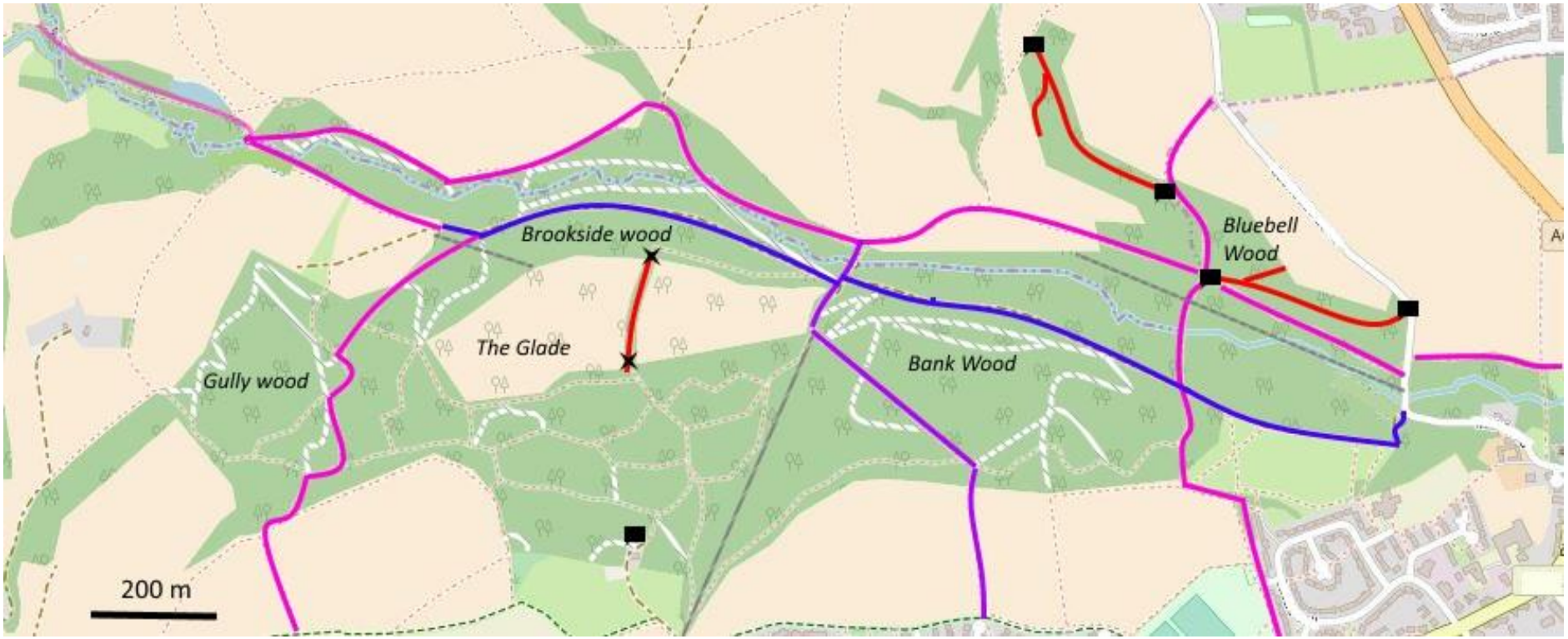


Figure 6.11: Access map in Brook Forests as of January 2018. Many of the informal paths, especially in Gully wood have been made by mountain bikers though some were created mainly by pedestrians. This map uses OpenStreetMap as a base but further informal routes have been added using field GPS notes and readings. Note that the OpenStreetMap base map does not show the farmers fields and has merged Bank Wood and Bluebell Wood together.

Since the sale of the land the situation has changed and some informal paths have been fenced off or furnished with prohibitive signs. Some landowners were resisting certain types of access, though there was a level of confusion as to what they can and cannot do to prevent this access. At least three sections of the wood (Bank, Gully and Brookside woods) have been under an access agreement as part of a FC Grant. This would have given open access on foot for a fixed period. Evidence of this can be seen by the presence of *'woodlands welcome'* signs in Brookfield woods, still owned by the country estate, (see figure 6.12) and the inclusion of the woods on the Woodland Trust's find a wood website.



Figure 6.12: A sign at the Western entrance of Brookside woods demonstrates the legacy of the Forestry Commission grant utilised by the estate owners prior to sale of most of the woods. (*Lisewski-Hobson, August 2017)*

However, the land owners had contradictory views on how long the access obligation had to run. Roger, the owner of Gully wood, believed he had an ongoing access commitment but he wasn't sure how long it lasted for. Matt owns neighbouring Bank wood and explained an uncomfortable moment during his first encounter with Roger:

> *I think his obligation is 15 years and when I first met him the first question he'd asked was 'when can I kick the public out, when can I cease public access?' And it was, sort of, it was a question that I really didn't want to answer!*

However, Gareth, the land agent representing the country estate, believed the access obligation has expired:

> *It's just the public footpaths because it's all finished. It was all part of a higher level stewardship scheme, the only people that should be walking is people walking across the public footpaths.*

Gareth had not removed all of the woodlands welcome signs from Brookside Wood. The public entering the woods could be forgiven for believing they have open access, though many suspected they should stick to certain paths. However, the huge number of informal paths present without any way-marking made it very difficult to know the status of the path in use. Mark, a woodland user, explains:

> *It could do with better signposting, I'm not sure what sort of path we're on most of the time, whether it's a public footpath or not…. I'm not sure what's public access and what isn't.*

Alan is a visitor to the wood and commented:

> *There are so many paths and we've not really felt that confident we're going the right way.*

However, when it was put to Gareth that the wood was poorly waymarked and so people didn't know the legal routes, he was sceptical:

> *They [the waymarks] probably were there at one point but they've been ripped down or whatever but I honestly don't believe that if you've got somebody that's walking round here they're going to say, 'oh no I'm not on a public footpath I'm going to walk back and all the way around here.' They'll carry on what they're doing. Because that's where they walk every day and they think that's their right.*

Gareth's point about wilful trespass is probably correct in some cases. William agreed with him:

> *People who want to come through will, it's like fences and signs will only, kind of, deter some people.*

Hazel was walking through the wood with her family and explained that, for her, the likelihood of trespass depends on the context:

> *I like to think that I use the maps and just stick to the public footpaths, but thinking about it, I only do that in places I'm not familiar with. When I'm close to home I go on any paths and I don't really think about whether they're proper official ones or not. If I see a private sign though, that will put me off. Though having said that, if it was a route I'd used for a long time that suddenly had a sign I'd probably still try to sneak through.*

Even Pat, who part owns *Bank Wood* admited to taking a similar approach with a wood near where she lives:

> *The new owner started to make us just use the official route and we all did it for a short time and then we just went back to using the same old routes.*

However, land ownership was not something most visitors to Brook Forests thought about. Most were not aware of who the original owners were, let alone that the wood had been sold to multiple parties. Though Hazel admitted to probably trespassing, this wasn't necessarily a conscious decision. She gave a fairly typical response to the question of who owns the woods:

> *I've never really thought about it.*

Jeff thought that he knew why people didn't consider ownership and land law important:

> *When people don't know about things like this [land law] it's not always through ignorance but more that they don't care, they will do what they've always done anyway. It's like that song, this land is your land song. I used to poach in here when I was young, I feel a strong right to walk through this place… I will walk where I want.*

The song he referred to is an American piece by Woody Guthrie with lyrics outlining an opposition to the concept of trespass, land ownership and asserting rights to the land for ordinary people (Klein, 2006).

However, whether the public will take heed of the official routes or not there is another potential source of confusion. There is a permissive bridleway granted by the estate through the woods (see figure 6.13), for which old signs are still present. Sandra, the new owner of The Glade, and Tim, owner of Bluebell wood thought that it was an official bridleway when technically it may now only a be footpath. Gareth insisted that the permissive bridleway status no longer exists:

The majority of the woodlands were sold so for example [name of track] is no longer owned by the estate and I thought the signs had been removed…..it's all done and finished now.



Figure 6.13: Post along the permissive or formally permissive bridleway in Brookside wood. In this case the 'woodlands welcome' sign has been partially removed. (*Lisewski-Hobson April 2017)*

The path was still regularly used by horses without any opposition; indeed representatives of the British Horse Society took the route for granted and were seeking an upgrade to a nearby public footpath in order to link the permissive route to an official bridleway just South of the wood (See figure 6.11). However, they were in a precarious situation because if the permissive path is formally withdrawn at any point they will find it much more difficult to claim under the 20 year rule as the commencement of permissive agreement brings to an end any period under

which a claim can be made (see Chapter 2.2). In the case of Brook Forest the route in question was made permissive over a decade ago. Therefore the equestrians would need to find people that have been using it as a bridleway for a period of 20 years before it became permissive. This will, of course, become more and more difficult as time passes. The only other means they have to make a claim is on historic grounds. The mechanism for claiming on historic grounds will be extinguished in 2026 and Matt was not on their side:

> *I see no great reason to make moves to "formalise" additional horse access, knowing the conflicts it can cause. As I understand it, "upgrading" footpaths to bridle paths attracts no greater level of assistance from a local authority.*

Some of the land owners complained about poor behaviour by some members of the public, often blaming it on the previous estate owners. Brian, the tenant farmer of the Farmer's fields, proclaimed that:

> *They are never here to see what goes off, they've not managed it properly, people do all sorts.*

William the outgoing owner of The Glade agreed:

> *The [previous landowners] haven't looked after the place, you know, it's just turned into a bit of a wild west at times.*

However, Gareth explained their situation:

> *Realistically you cannot fence an area of woodland that size, it's just not feasible and… people just believe that it's their woodland to walk and roam for free…..we put up signs but they got ripped down so we gave up spending money on signs all the time.*

Attitudes to access in general differ depending on the land owner. Gareth, Roger and Brian were generally anti-access. For Gareth, who is from a farming background, and Brian, a lifelong farmer, this seemed to boil down to a general mistrust that the public can behave responsibly. Talking about the experience of his tenants in Brook Forest, Gareth explained:

> *It's the right thing as a country to be able to have access across privately owned land but I believe it should be specific routes as designated by public footpaths... I don't believe that people should just be allowed to walk wherever…the kids throw stones at the tractors and if they're bailing they set fire to the bales… And if they're out walking about they're getting shot at with air rifles…That gives you an idea of*

> *the type of activity that's going on so when they get into the woodland where there's less restriction they're doing anything they want.*

Roger has a large property portfolio but Gully wood was his first venture into land ownership. He considered his wood to be no different to any other kind of property and reacted to certain intrusions in his 32 hectare woodland as a breach of his personal karma:

> *I go there, I get a really nice calm feeling, if somebody threatens that…and therefore it's not providing that [the calm] then I'm not interested.*

In a reaction to a question on how he might feel if there was blanket open access in woods he responded as follows:

> *I'd be spitting mad. You know, you'll be sitting in your house one day and I'll just come to your house and have a picnic because someone has said that your house is under CRoW too and there's nothing you can do about it*

Roger has listed his land under section 31 of the highways act with the intention of preventing footpath claims under the 20 year rule. He was thoroughly opposed to this mechanism in law and even denied on his notice (figure 6.14 and 6.15), and at interview, that there were public rights of way on his land. Figure 5.30 shows there clearly is a public footpath. Roger's response when questioned on this was as follows:

> *Yes alright, there is one…people don't usually read my signs, just rip them down.*

Roger's approach to dealing with public access has been controversial and he appears to have a poor relationship with local members of the public. His grey squirrel control has not gone down well with a woodland user, Max, who responded electronically:

> *He is partial to shooting woodland creatures with his air rifle..... for no apparent reason.* 😢

As Roger said, the signs he erected have been removed on several occasions. Sam, a young mountain biker in Bluebell wood, talked about his signs:

> *The owner has put signs up, white plastic ones telling horse riders and mountain bikers to keep out [figure 5.43]. Some of the other riders have ripped them all up…That man down there [points towards Gully wood], well, someone broke their*

collarbone on a mountain bike and he wouldn't open the gate to let the ambulance through.



Figure 6.14: One of the signs Roger has erected on his land setting out tight restrictions on the type of activity he will permit on his land. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017)*



Figure 6.15: Roger's terms and conditions and the only remaining no cycling sign positioned high up a tree in Gully Wood. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017)*

Roger felt the criticism aimed at him was unjustified, though in this quote he revealed his inflexible attitude towards enforcing rules and regulations on his land:

> *There was a bit of a twitter storm…some people who've got allotments just next door and apparently I've been dictating how many cars they're allowed to park. Well that's a load of rubbish because I know where my boundaries are I don't dictate what happens on the other side of the boundaries.*

Some of the other land owners have found his attitude unhelpful too, especially Matt and William who both share borders with his land. Matt expressed his difficulty with Roger's signs:

> *That's tempted me to put signs up as well saying 'I am not this man, I'm a nice woodland owner'.*

William went much further with his criticism:

> *He likes spouting off rules and regulations… There's some wording he's put on all of his notices which have been ripped down… The thing is, he pisses off people and it's not doing him any favours… if he could have fenced it off he would have but he couldn't and I think he was expecting everybody else as landowners to be, kind of, supporting him and I thought 'why would I do that?' People have been walking around here for generations. They've all grown up here.*

Tim has signs too (see figure 6.16), and these haven't gone down very well with the public either. Denise was walking in Bluebell wood with her son and her dog, it was the first thing she spoke about when her interview began:

> *I'm really upset about these signs….. I don't like the tone, suddenly telling us what to do.*



Figure 6.16: Signs erected by Tim in Bluebell wood at the junctions of the informal paths he wished to extinguish. For locations, see figure x. (*Lisewski-Hobson, April 2017)*

Tim put the signs up to prevent damage to his woodland after receiving advice from the Small Woodlands Association, though he wasn't against access in general:

> *I think the idea is to make people firstly aware, because I don't think it's ever been notified as a private woodland before….it doesn't really worry me too much, you know, I think it's great that people use the woods, walk through them and enjoy them it's when it becomes detrimental… It has become a lot more used than when we first purchased the wood and a lot of it is the less savoury use.*

Tim has made attempts to improve his relationship with the public and believed that having good ties with the community is beneficial:

> *We talk to local people who use the wood a lot, they tend to be quite a good source of information and actually are normally quite protective of the woodlands as well.*

Sandra and William had similar attitudes. William was generally pro access but as he was living in The Glade he found the invasions on his privacy too much, eventually blocking an informal path and fencing the whole area off:

> *When I first came we, kind of, enjoyed people walking through saying hello, what you doing? Then after a while we…realised our privacy and our time had a lot of value and also there was a few people walking through that were just, you know, really grunty and unpleasant so…people were just being either plain ignorant or abusive and it's just no fun so we started fencing it off.*

William's path closures have been noted by the public with few of them understanding what was actually going on in The Glade. William used volunteers under an agri-tourism scheme called 'work away'. These volunteers stayed on site in caravans. However, members of the public had interesting perceptions of the people living in the glade with some referring to them as hippies. Liam believed the whole of the wood belonged to the '*hippies*' and therefore apportioned the blame for all of the new signage on the residents of The Glade:

> *There's some resistance to people walking through some parts of the woods, I think it's the people in that commune.*

Matt, who has a forestry background was very pro access and saw use by the public as an 'ecosystem service' and built it into his planning:

> *Most of the management plans I've written have had public access as one of the objectives. Not number one, really rarely is it ever number one but always there.*

In common with some of the landowners described by Rackham (2012), Matt felt that encouraging the right kind of access is a good thing:

Lets thin it, let's make it a more attractive place for people to walk in, then good people will walk in it and that will put off the bad people.

His father, Victor, added:

The people that are walking the woods are the eyes of the owner.

Matt's mother, Pat, found the concept of owning a wood problematic:

It's weird. I still walk round and think 'how can this belong to us'? Woodland belongs to everybody and this is ours but why?

Landowners' issues and comparisons with local public opinion

Though Gareth admitted he did not even like the woods, the majority of the owners found them a place of peace. William commented:

I have 360 degrees of just charm and beauty, the nearest visual disturbance is if I look up at a plane, …there are places where I've been where…there's always some kind of visual, …distraction and here it's just trees and trees and trees.

However, issues dominated interview conversations with Crime and Anti-Social behaviour being the prevailing theme. Table 6.2 shows a presentation of the issues landowners and the tenant farmer expressed.

Overarching Theme	Etic themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	**Motorbikes and quad bikes (7)** **Mountain bikes (4)** **Litter (4)** **Dog mess (3)** Breaking fences (2) Fly tipping (2)	Noise; Raves; Fires; Burned out vehicles; Crop damage; Shooting.
Access	Trespass (2) Liability for accidents (2)	Arrogant ramblers; People obsessed with their rights
Fear		Paedophiles; Quad bikers; Young people
Management		Lack of resources; SSSI bureaucratic

Table 6.2: Issue related themes from the seven owners and occupiers at Brook Forests

Every owner interviewed took exception to the motorbikes and quad bikes. Some of their issues were related to physical damage which was important for Tim:

They just tear it up, ironically it tends to be when the bluebells are out.

But for William it means meant more than this. He felt they violate other people's ability to enjoy the woods and in some cases act in a threatening manor:

I think it's just the disrespect of anybody else's safety or values…and the noise is incredible and they just tear around with no regard to anybody else's safety or welfare or privacy… So there's a lot of intimidation but people that I've managed to speak to on motorbikes who have stopped and listened have said, 'OK, fair cop and have disappeared'. But it's the ones that tell you to F off and aim their bikes at you.

Roger brought up the subject of quad bikes and motorbikes repeatedly in his interview, he described feeling physically threatened by quad bikers wearing hoods:

You know, hand on the shoulder, somebody comes up and [Roger enacts physical intimidation], you know, that to me, is not particularly friendly and it's not something I'm going to stand for because it will never be a sanctuary unless something like that is stopped.

Members of the public have also brought up the subject of aggressive motorcyclists. Mark said:

Those knob ends on trail bikes. We had a bit of an encounter with them, there was a group of them just in the middle of the path revving their engines at us. It was clear they were deliberately trying to frighten us.

Denise spoke with a lot of emotion while complaining about them:

These people have absolutely no concern for others at all, you can hear them in the woods all around you and you don't know where they are, they could come flying around the corner and might hit the dog.

Rhonda, who used the wood for mindfulness meditation, described how the motor vehicles spoiled her experience:

It's the noise I don't like, you're trying to find peace and it just shatters it

Rhonda's summary of the situation highlighted the issue of contradictory value sets. As the urban fringe case studies have shown and the next section on positive feelings at Brook Forest also sets out (tables 6.3 and 6.4), the theme of peace/quiet/solitude strongly dominates for members of the public both using and living near the wood. The majority of people seek out and value quiet enjoyment as the most important part of their woodland experience. Achieving this is strongly

linked with positive mental health and well-being outcomes (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010). Loud noise from motor vehicles and the uncertainty as to where the vehicles might appear from is simply not compatible with the desire for peace, quiet or solitude.

The problem with motor vehicles has become a police matter (see figure 6.17). Though the frequent presence of marked vehicles is believed to deter them, this doesn't last. A local police officer has been campaigning for access to unmarked two wheeled police vehicles so they can catch the culprits:

> *It's a full time job deterring these guys, but if we can actually pounce on them to take the bikes off them, we no longer have to deter.*



Figure 6.17: Police notice warning users of motorised vehicle to stay out of the wood or have their vehicle seized. As of December 2017 police had still not ceased any vehicles. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017).*

Compared to the quad and motorbike users, the mountain bikes seed like much less of an issue. According to Gareth:

> *Where there's no engines involved they're less dangerous, they're less intrusive and make less of a mess.*

However, the mountain bike issue has caused a great deal of controversy on Gareth's land, but also for Roger and Tim. Mountain bike use has been widespread and almost 50 videos had been posted on YouTube[35] by a range of mountain bikers from Pro-cyclists to groups of middle aged men on an adventure, some of the cycling took place at night see figure 6.18.

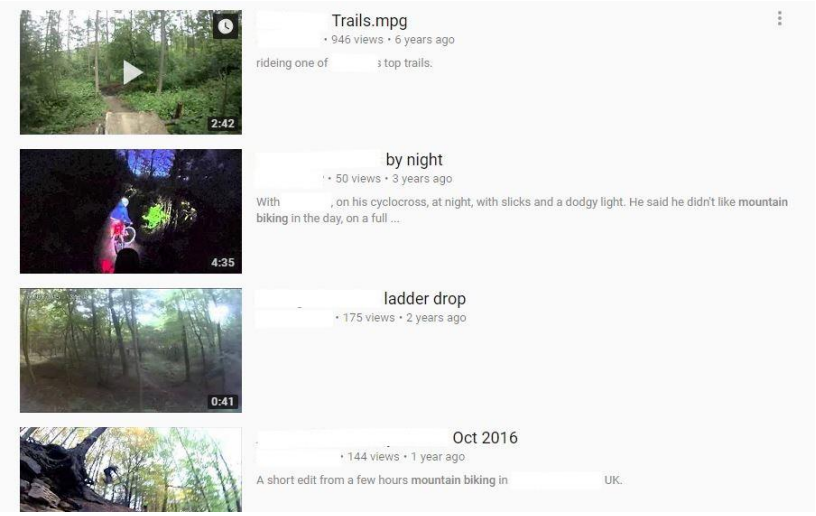


Figure 6.18: An extract from YouTube search conducted in May 2018. The results reveal some of the videos available for the wood. The text has been anonymised.

For some of the landowners this has been a serious problem. Gareth explained how issues with the mountain bikers at Gully Wood and other behaviour he deems anti-social were a big part of the estate's decision to sell the woods:

> *They [the woods] are severely trespassed by motorbikes, vehicles being burned out, dog walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers. The mountain bikers had started going in this area here [he points to Gully Wood] and making jumps over the footpaths, and the view was from the trustees was that it was just an accident waiting to happen and it didn't produce any income…and we'd release ourselves from the liability. There was a worry that if somebody gets hit by a bike on the head and it falls back on the owner.*

Though there was a point when the estate had an agreement with the mountain bikers:

[35] At the time of writing, May 2018

> *We did a license with the mountain bike group that was set up to try and regularise what was going on in there and they had appropriate insurance so we did grant them an annual license once but then the decision was made to sell it [the forest].*

The crux of the dispute with the mountain bikers was around public safety and liability for accidents. Figure 6.19 shows some of the trails and jumps in Gully Wood. However, William has some sympathy with them:

> *They've had historical permission to do that and obviously with…[sale of the land] it just didn't happen so, you know, bad timing for them. I like the mountain bikers because they don't make a noise.*



Figure 6.19: Mountain bike trails in Gully Wood. Top left: Trail with a 'berm' - a steeply banked corner designed to be taken at speed (FC, 2018).[36] Top right: Downhill track with poor visibility which crosses an informal pedestrian path onto a 'Bump'. Bottom: Wooden Jetty, crossing an informal path and then down a slope. (*Lisewski-Hobson, August 2017*)

[36] https://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/activities/mountain-biking/glossary

A representative of the mountain bikers group, responsible for the construction of the trails, Max, was interviewed via Facebook in early 2017. He had been involved in talks with the new owner, Roger, to reach a similar agreement. However, these did not go well:

> *We were in talks with him for...riding on his land. But he wanted too much money in rent and he wanted us to form a club and everyone who rides the trail must pay to be a member of. And a solicitor to write a legal contract binding us to policing who rides on his land and us to pay for it. And we were only allowed 21 ride days a year on a Saturday. And how are we to stop people riding during the week? We all have jobs and families. He's an arrogant, unreasonable man, he was asking for the impossible. When we told him we didn't agree, he wanted us to sign to say we would not ride on his land and if he caught ANYONE in there WE would be held responsible. Obviously we disagreed to that too. A lot of riders still ride down there, and there are no signs saying, no cycling.*

Roger's strategy was to stage mountain bike events, which were fully insured and paid for by a national cycling organisation. All other cyclists remained banned as far as he was concerned. Gareth doesn't think his strategy will work:

> *Good luck to him, I think he'll fail miserably.*

Bluebell wood has had its own issues with mountain bikers, though the trail building there has been much less extensive and less ambitious. However, this has caused a concern for Tim, though he was less worried about health and safety and more about the damage they were causing to the wood:

> *You find every so often there'll be a group of young men who come in with wheel barrows, spades and start digging up huge amounts of earth and moving it around, and cutting trees down! So it's quite an efficient operation, they're quite skilled at it in fairness to them. But that's not something that we want really.*

Tim has put signs up to try to deter the mountain bikers (figure 5.45) but this hasn't really worked for him:

> *There's a team of night riders, mountain bikers that use it on a Wednesday but the first thing that they do is take all the signs down…..they come through the woods with their lights on. They always take the ones down at the top so I've put them quite high so they must stand on their bikes and physically take them down, which is just bizarre. I tend to come in on a Thursday and put the signs back.*

None of the *'night riders'* could be interviewed but two young men, who were digging trails in Tim's wood, wanted their point of view heard. Sam did almost all of the talking and started out with the positive aspects of trail building:

> *It's really easy to get to, we can just cycle here from home and build whatever ramps we want ourselves…. I like making my own trails, it's like my own little project.*

Sam was talking in January 2017, before Tim had started putting signs up. He had met Tim once and was told to leave, but he'd not taken that too seriously. However, he had heard from other mountain bikers about Roger's signs in Bank wood and was worried that his current activities would be stopped too:

> *It's not right, we just want to spend some time outside doing healthy things, it's better than staying in and playing on our x-boxes. But there's nowhere to go if we can't go here. My Dad says he's [the landowner] just worried about someone having an accident because then it's their fault.*

Sam's father has certainly grasped one of the landowner motivations for wanting to keep the mountain bikers out, especially for Gareth and Roger. Though for Roger, having control over his land seemed very important and Tim just didn't want his land being dug up and his trees chopped down. Sam made a good point about access. Teenagers without cars to transport their bikes don't really have any facilities locally. According to Paul, a local authority manager interviewed in September 2017, a mountain bike course is to be set up in Bolsover. This is a good start, but will be the only official mountain bike course in the whole of North East Derbyshire. There are few FC woods in the area and so it is difficult to know, given the unwillingness of landowners to allow this kind of cycling, how this deficiency might be addressed. Some of the jumps Sam built can be seen in figure 6.20.



Figure 6.20: Sam and his friend's bicycles posing next to the jump they constructed in Bluebell wood.

Members of the public were generally supportive of young people's use of the woods. Jeff said:

> *I would hate it if it was made all neat and tidy. It has connections to the pit estates and the working class populations. Wild kids find something in it, something for them. I was working with some kids that had been excluded from school, some of them have come here and then it continues to be an important place for the rest of their life.*

Though the public were emphatically in agreement with the land owners about the motorbikes and quad bikes they were very supportive of the mountain bikers, Carl said:

> *We want them to be outside enjoying themselves, a lot of them are just kids.*

Andrea liked the fact that they've made their own trails:

> *The woods are full of mountain bike tracks, the construction is incredible and some of the brilliant corners they've put in.*

Pam also appreciated that they've made their own routes:

> *Sometimes there were boys on mountain bikes…they weren't really a bother because they didn't go on the paths I use*.

Many local people had been through the woods on cycles themselves and took exception to what they saw as new rules:

> *Now it's no cycling. People have been cycling in here for years, I used to come up here all the time, we're decent citizens we've always respected the place. It was quite a big thing at one time. Some of the bits past the engine house…they're full of bike trails.*

Litter and dog mess were also themes for the landowners though not as widely and thoroughly discussed as the motorbikes, quad bikes and mountain bikes. Observations showed that levels of litter in the wood did not seem particularly high compared to Potter's or Tanner's. The dog mess problem according to Tim was down to professional dog walkers and that is why he'd included restrictions on dogs on his signage. Brian felt that other dog walkers were to blame too:

> *I've seen people who've driven here and then they come back to their car and still throw the poo bags instead of taking it home. I don't want them getting in my silage*

To summarise, issues around access, landowner's attitudes and beliefs were incredibly complicated in Brook Forest. Their approaches and belief systems were at points contradictory and often confused. Even they did not fully understand what is and isn't supposed to be allowed in the woods. It is a well-used wood and controlling access in a way that the landowners consider to be appropriate is a very difficult task. The footpaths were not waymarked and the status of some of the routes as a footpath or bridleway was disagreed upon. With so many informal paths, even with the use of a good map, sticking to the official routes is difficult for members of the public, though it is clear that some would still use the same old routes whether they are official or not.

Illegal use of motorised vehicles was the single biggest issue in the woods with landowners and the public unanimous in their opposition to it. However, the mountain bike issue divided the stakeholder groups. Most of the landowners oppose it because of liability fears and the physical damage it causes, while the public felt it was an important utility, especially for the younger members of the population.

6.2.3 Positive aspects of using and living near woodland

This section explores the positive aspects of woodland as reported by members of the public using the woods and those occupying local housing. Interviews were coded thematically and are summarised in tables 6.3 and 6.4.

Overarching theme	Sub-themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Health and Wellbeing	**Peace/quiet/solitude (10)** Calm (3) Escape (3) Fitness (2)	Privacy
Nature appreciation	**Bluebells (8)** Visual aesthetics (4) Birds (4) Brook (3) Beech Trees (2) Fungi (2)	Foxes; Badgers; Wild Garlic; Steep banks; Muddy Paths. Seasonality: Changing seasons; Spring
Practical	**Proximity (8)** Large size (3) Lots of paths (2) Pub walk (2)	Shade for dog; Away from roads
Emotional responses	Nostalgia (5) Ancestral connections (2)	Emotional attachment; sense of place; familiarity; Sense of ownership; Nostalgia; Exploration
Heritage	Historical interest (3) Coal industry (2)	Flour milling, Deer park;
Managment	Not over managed (3)	Well managed

Table 6.3: Positive themes from 20 woodland users at Brook Forest.

Overarching theme	Sub-themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Health and Wellbeing	**Quiet/peace/solitude (12)**	Escape; Relaxation
Quality of life	**Visual aesthetics (4)** **Rural feel (4)**	Increases house prices
Practical	Proximity (3)	Children like it
Nature appreciation	Birds (2)	Bluebells; Butterflies Seasonality: Changing seasons; Spring
Other		Historical interest (Old gas works and Old Mill); Nostalgia

Table 6.4: Positive themes from 13 local residents.

In common with the urban fringe woods, the theme quiet/peace/solitude comes out as a clear dominant. For the local residents, this was the only major theme with

almost everyone mentioning it as an important factor. Hazel, a visitor to the wood, explained how important a quiet woodland experience was for her:

> *A quiet wood without any reminders of people is quite hard to find, but that's what makes me happy… I, sort of, need the woods. I need nature anyway. I start feeling like I've gone half mad if I don't get a bit of quiet time out in nature… I need time on my own, just listening to the birds and looking at the plants, looking at the signs of spring and willing the leaves onto the trees.*

For the woodland users, bluebells and other nature appreciation themes came out strongly too. Most of the interviews took place in the spring and therefore this may have been a factor as to why bluebells were discussed so frequently. Vince and his family travelled to the wood specifically for the bluebells:

> *We come to see the bluebells and smell the bluebells, we try to come every year.*

As at Tanner's plantation, proximity was also a major theme. Though at Brook Forest there were visitors from further afield such as Hazel above. One difference from the urban fringe woods was the appearance of emotional responses as a major over-arching theme for woodland users. The biggest sub-theme for this was nostalgia. However, for all of the participants with a sense of emotional attachment, the woods seemed to be part of who they were, part of *their* history and part of *their* ancestry. Jeff, walking with his wife and son, painted a particularly vivid picture of his relationship with the woods:

> *It's a really emotionally significant place for us. We've been coming here since about 1959 and we used to bring the kids here a lot… We did a bit of our courting here in the woods too. I feel really attached to this piece of land, there are lots of memories of playing with our dogs when we were children and our sons used to play in one of the bunkers down there. I used to come here when I was playing truant from school, it gives me lots of positive feelings, a sense of escape… This is an old valley with a connection to mining…my father used to work underneath here.*

The physical evidence shows signs of a well-loved wood. In bluebell wood a conifer had been decorated at Christmas time and elsewhere there were rope swings and positive symbolism painted on the trees (figure 6.21).



Figure 6.21: A scene in Brookside wood showing a tree with names and a painted heart. There is a rope swing on the right hand side of the picture which was observed in use as part of the study. (*Lisewski-Hobson, April 2017)*

6.2.4 Activities and Issues

Table 6.5 shows a summary of the people observations in Brook Forests.

Hours of Observation	23:31
No of people observed	197
Adult Male/Female split	76/82
Mean people/hour	8.4
Average group size	2.2
Distance travelled <1/1-5/>5 (miles)*	13/5/2
Local/Visitor split*	13/7
Transport split foot/car/bus*	10/10/0
Walkers with dogs	95
Walkers without dogs	71
Cyclists	15
Equestrians	9
Runners	4
Young people socialising	3
Other	0

Table 6.5: Basic statistics for Brook Forests

Brook Forest was around four times busier than either of the urban fringe woods in this study. With a mean of more than eight people an hour observed. The male/female split was consistent with the others with slightly more female visitors. Group sizes are larger. There were more family groups and couples out walking compared to the urban fringe woods, where most were individual people exercising their dogs. Consistent with the promotional material on heritage walks in the area,

as previously discussed, Brook Forest had more of the hallmarks of a destination woodland than either of the urban fringe case studies.

Small numbers of cyclists and equestrians were observed despite the confusion as to whether they were officially allowed to be there. Nine of the cyclists were using the historically permissive bridleway, one was on a public footpath and the other five were using informal routes. Of the equestrians, eight were using the "bridleway" while the other was using an informal route. As a proportion of the overall number of visitors, the number of young people socialising in the wood was comparatively low. Themes on issues arising from the interviews can be found in table 6.6 and 6.7.

Overarching Theme	Sub-Themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Crime and Anti-social Behaviour	**Motorbikes/quad bikes (17)** Fly tipping (2) Shooting (2) Litter (2) Dog waste (2)	Raves; Badger baiting; Burned out cars; Drug taking
Development anxiety	Losing wood to development (5) Fracking (3)	
Access	Recent loss of access to informal paths (5) New rules in wood (2)	New signs; Disjointed bridleway network; Confusion about right to roam; Concern about BOATs; Anxiety about change in ownership; Poor public/owner relations; Can't find out who owns wood; Respect for private ownership
Fear	Personal security (5)	Accidents; Dogs
Practical	Mud (4) Poor paths (2)	
Inappropriate use	Horses (3)	Mountain bikes
Lack of facilities	Wheelchair access (2) Signposting (2) Off-road cycling routes (2)	Litter bins; Parking;
Other	Too busy (3)	Road noise

Table 6.6: Themes from 20 interviews with woodland visitors

Overarching Theme	Themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Crime and Anti-Social behaviour	**Motorbikes (7)** Dog waste (2)	Timber theft; Dog waste bags; Quad bikes; Crop damage; Raves; Damage to fencing; Criminals hiding
Access	New landowners limiting access (3)	Trespass through fields to access woods
Development anxiety	Losing wood for development (2) Fracking (2)	
Practical	Poor paths (2)	Mud; Parking problems
Fear	Paedophiles (2)	Personal security
Lack of facilities	Dog waste bins (2)	

Table 6.7: Themes from 13 interviews with woodland residents

As discussed earlier in this section, it is no surprise to see motorbikes and quad bikes as the leading theme with almost all of the woodland users mentioning it as a problem. For the local residents this was the only major theme.

Access was also a major over-arching theme, particularly relating to the recent changes made by the new land owners. Another familiar theme, development anxiety, also appeared as an overarching theme, some of this was related to the fracking application nearby which has stirred up a lot of local opposition (figure 6.22). Lynn spoke of her concerns concisely:

There's fracking, they might start fracking in here.



Figure 6.22: A protest sign against a nearby fracking application photographed at a wood close to Brook Forest. Place names have been edited out. *(Lisewski-Hobson, March 2017)*

In common with the urban fringe woods, Jeff's concerns were much more about development for housing:

> *I want to be reassured that it will stay as it is. It would be a terrible loss if it got suburbanised, it would feel like a tipping point for me if this went and we'd have to leave and find somewhere else to live. I'd actually go out and protest to save this wood.*

There was some level of fear with around a quarter of people worrying about personal security. The majority of the personal security worries were for solitary women. Howard said:

> *My wife won't come through by herself and I don't think I'd feel comfortable if she did. It's a shame really, what it's like these days.*

However, for Teresa the fact that there were always people around helped dismiss any fears:

> *I like that it's quite popular, people are around enjoying it, you feel safe.*

Lack of facilities appeared as a major over-arching theme. This didn't occur in the urban fringe woods. A probable reason for this is that Brook Forest is a destination woodland and therefore expectations may be higher.

It is worth noting some of the potential issues that do not appear as major themes. As previously discussed, mountain bikers are generally supported by the public with only one participant arguing to the contrary. Mud wasn't particularly prominent either, though Brook Forest is considerably less muddy than Potter's it is fairly similar to Tanner's. This could again be down to perception. Because of its semi-rural setting mud may be an accepted part of a *country* walk. The final notable absence is fear of young people specifically. This may simply be down to the fact that young people congregating form such a small proportion of users of the woods (just 3/197 in the observations). Also there was no physical evidence of a particular meeting place. The public did not mention fires or associated litter and there was no evidence of this anywhere in the wood. The way woods look can easily affect the way the public feel (Garrod, 2008) and not seeing this physical evidence may have affected people's perceptions of the wood. One of the landowners was

observed picking litter on his visit so the lack of litter is probably a combination of less being dropped in the first place and more being cleaned up by a collection of individual landowners who all take an active interest in their woods.

6.2.5 Summary of Brook Forest

Brook Forest is a large ancient woodland and is composed of a set of individually owned woodland lots, though few members of the public realise this. The owners are predominantly private individuals and have differing perspectives on access, with some landowners finding the confrontational approach of others unhelpful. However, they did all share a strong dislike of motorcyclists and quad bikers who use the wood illegally. The public also felt very strongly about this issue and the police were making an effort to curtail the problem. Some of the landowners and the vast majority of the public were highly motivated by a quest for peace, calm or solitude. This is a desire that is simply not compatible with the presence of motorised vehicles in the wood.

The wood has a legacy of frequent pedestrian, cyclists and equestrian use on a myriad of informal paths and home-made mountain bike trails. The status of some of the paths and tracks has not been fully established and even the owners were confused about what exact rights the public have to walk or ride. Signage was contradictory or missing and so the public had little perception of where they stand in terms of the law. Though many were oblivious to the status of the paths they use, some were confused. Others were determined to continue to use routes they've always used. Landowners efforts to control access have been somewhat resisted with signs being regularly removed by members of the public.

Some of the landowners have clamped down on mountain bikers using the wood and in some cases continuing to build their own trails. This has caused tremendous ill feeling between local cyclists and a few of the owners. The public, some of whom have cycled in the woods themselves, overwhelmingly support the mountain bikers.

The access situation in Brook Forest is still very much in flux, though it had some anti-social behaviour issues that clearly need to be addressed it appears that a good number of ordinary, well-behaved members of the public have lost out on some of their freedoms to explore this ancient woodland.

6.3 Peri-Urban Woods - Fenny Banks

6.3.1 Background and description

Fenny banks is a 19 hectare wood in a setting consisting of a mix of pastoral fields and housing estates (see figure 6.23). Housing to the North West (figure 6.24) dates from around the early 1970s (OS National Grid 1967, 1:10560 and 1978, 1:10000) while the estate to the East dates from the late 1950s (OS 1955 and 1967, 1:10560). Though none of these estates are particularly recent there are a number of newer developments nearby. There are no firm plans for building further housing developments on or around the wood. However, the area does have ambitious housing targets and there are plans to develop on green fields in the area (Derbyshire Times, 2017).

Figure 6.23 is a map showing the wood in its setting, the road running down the Eastern edge of the road is fast and busy (figure 6.25). The road dominates the soundscape for about 150 meters into the wood but further in it is remarkably peaceful, especially South of the brook (figure 6.26) where many different species of bird can be heard singing and kingfishers can be glimpsed darting along the water. The wood feels isolated, as the trees hide nearby housing developments, and views reach across the glade towards further areas of woodland in the distance (figure 6.27).



Figure 6.23: Fenny Banks in its landscape setting, a mixture of pastoral fields and scattered housing estates. The area of pale green shading shows how the wood connected to an adjacent smaller plot of woodland prior to 1921. The goit is a diverted mill stream



Figure 6.24: Housing to the immediate North West of Fenny Banks. There is no access from this side of the wood. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2016)*

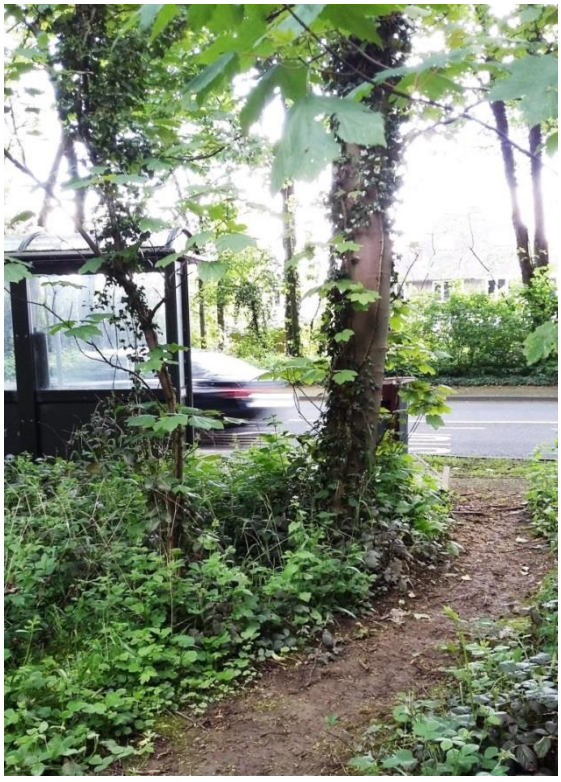


Figure 6.25: The road running along the Eastern flank of the wood is fast and busy. It dominates the soundscape on the edge of the wood. The path in the photograph is informal. (*Lisewski- Hobson, May 2016)*

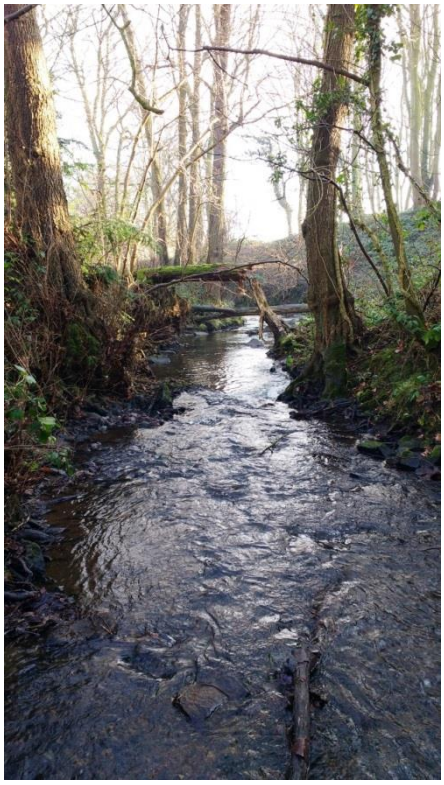


Figure 6.26: The brook running through Fenny Banks. In many places the paths cross the brook which is usually shallow enough to paddle through. (*Lisewski-Hobson, January 2017)*



Figure 6.27: The view across the glade looking towards distant woodland. This part of the wood feels rural and has no visual signs of nearby housing. (*Lisewski-Hobson, July, 2016)*

Fenny Banks is entirely deciduous with two distinct zones. North of the Brook the wood is dominated by sycamore but to the South a mix of oak, birch and rowan can be found (figure 6.28). The trees immediately alongside the brook are mainly alder (figure 6.29). The glade in the centre of the wood is not currently in use. It is a

damp habitat and is rapidly regenerating with alder, spread from the brook. The wood has a rich ground flora containing large populations of ancient woodland indicators such as bluebells and wood anemones but also other attractive species such as greater stichwort and marsh marigolds. Spectacular floral displays can be observed in the spring and early summer (figure 6.30).



Figure 6.28: Woodland trees at Fenny Banks. Left: The area North of the brook is dominated by sycamore. Right: To the South of the Brook the wood is composed mainly of oak, birch and rowan. (*Lisewski-Hobson, September 2016.)*



Figure 6.29: Around the brook and the glade at Fenny Banks. Left: Mature alders along the brook. Right: Alder saplings have colonised the damp glade in the centre of the wood. (*Lisewski-Hobson, May 2016).*



Figure 6.30: Floral displays at Fenny Banks. Left: Bluebells to the North end of the wood photographed in May. Right: Wood anemones towards the south and centre, photographed in March. (*Lisewski-Hobson, 2017)*

Despite the presence of these ancient woodland indicators, the wood is not recorded on the ancient woodland inventory. The maps show it dating back in, more or less, its current form to the OS County Series first edition in 1883 (1:10560). Sometime shortly after the second revision was released in 1921 (County series 1:10560), the woodland lost around 10% of its extent from the South West corner where it was clear-felled and replaced by housing. Figure 6.23 shows the previous extent of the wood. Land the other side of these houses has regenerated back into woodland.

The differing woodland compositions offer a clue to the floristic history, the sycamore to the North of the brook has the characteristics of a naturally regenerated secondary woodland (Rackham, 2001) while the oak south of the brook may have been planted and subsequently infilled with birch and rowan perhaps also indicating a difference in habitat conditions between the flatter, wetter South and the woods on the bank to the North.

Historically this locality was less industrialised than other communities close by (Edwards, 2002). However, maps and observations still show plenty of evidence of previous development. For example, the housing estate to the North West of the wood was built on the site of a short lived open cast mine (OS 1955 and 1967, 1:10560). Inside the wood, historic maps show a mill goit (figure 6.31, see figure 6.23 for location), a goit is local name for a mill stream or leat. This stream would have diverted water to a mill. This one is believed to have powered a red lead mill in the eighteenth century ([*] parish council, 2014). Red lead mills in this area manufactured a red pigmented oxide of lead (Glover and Noble, 1831), traditionally used in paints as an anti-corrosive for exterior surfaces, such as iron railings. It was not banned in 1992 along with other forms of lead in paint but has now generally been replaced safer alternatives[37]. Evidence on the ground found the goit a vivid

[37] "The Environmental Protection (Controls on Injurious Substances) Regulations 1992", *UK Government Statutory Instruments 1992 No. 31*, 9 January 1992

orange colour in places (figure 6.32), though this is likely to be a result of Iron deposits rather than lead pigments (Clean Rivers Trust, 2018).



Figure 6.31: An old map of the mill goit (OS County series second revision 1:2500, 1917)

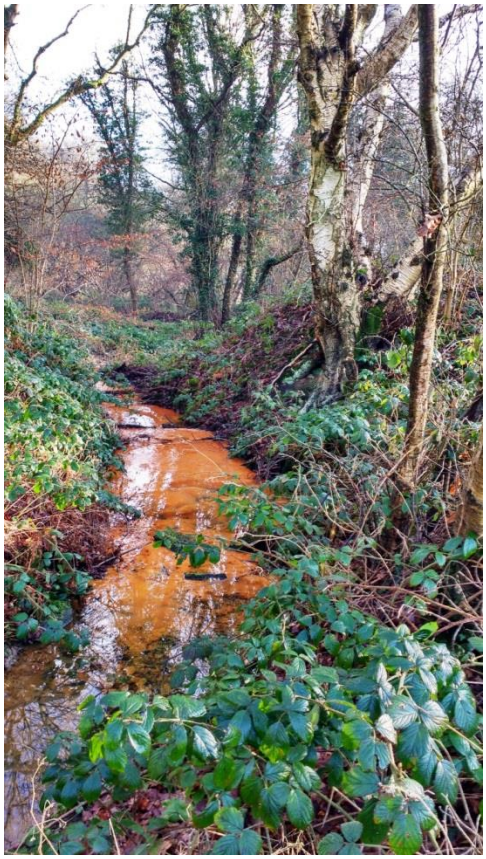


Figure 6.32: Part of the red lead mill goit as of January 2017. It shows a strange redish-orange pigment in the water. *(Lisewski-Hobson, January 2017)*

There are more recent artificial features on the site. Firstly a short mountain bike course exists in the south of the wood and secondly there is a camp fire site situated in a small quarry to the South West of the wood (figure 6.33). Locations of these features can be seen in figure 6.35.



Figure 6.33: Top: Home-made mountain bike jumps situated away from the main paths in the South of the wood. Bottom: A fire site in a small disused quarry in the South West edge of the wood. *(V Lisewski-Hobson, July 2016)*

Outside of the fire site the wood generally lacked litter, however there was one very localised problem. This was a huge pile of old bread bags containing dog

faeces. Similar to Norse, the bags were all similar suggesting just one regular person was responsible (figure 6.34).



Figure 6.34: A large pile of similar dog waste bags (old bread bags and some carrier bags) in the North East section of the wood. *(V Lisewski-Hobson, January 2017)*

However, these features do not dominate the landscape and it remains an overwhelmingly peaceful setting with a flourishing habitat for nature.

6.3.2 Ownership perspectives and access issues

Ten woodland users and 13 local residents took part in the research for Fenny Banks. Of the local residents, nine said they visited the woods regularly (69%), like Tanner's plantation this is a comparatively high proportion compared to Potter's and Brook Forest where only about a third of the local residents were visiting. Of those that did not visit the leading reason was that the wood was private and there is no public access.

The wood has two owners, unfortunately neither responded to requests to take part in the research. Most of the wood is owned by an absentee private owner, while the North West corner is part of the grounds of a large domestic property just outside the boundary of the wood. This, smaller, part of the wood is protected by a

barbed wire fence surrounding its entire perimeter. It is not accessible from any of the adjacent housing (figure 6.24). Only one participant, Cynthia, knew who owned this piece of wood. She wasn't keen on using the wood, even though her garden backed on to it:

> *I'll not go in properly because I've heard the man that owns it isn't very nice… he thinks he's above us you see and he's only a builder or a plumber or something that's made a lot of money.*

The bulk of the wood is used informally as if it were open access. The paths, created by members of the public, cover most of the accessible wood also crossing the brook on several places (figure 6.35). However, on this site none of the routes have been charted on OpenStreetMap. The informal paths meet up neatly with two public footpaths on either side of the wood making it possible to walk through the wood as part of a longer route. Despite this, there are no ongoing footpath claims attempting to join the two ends of the official network together.

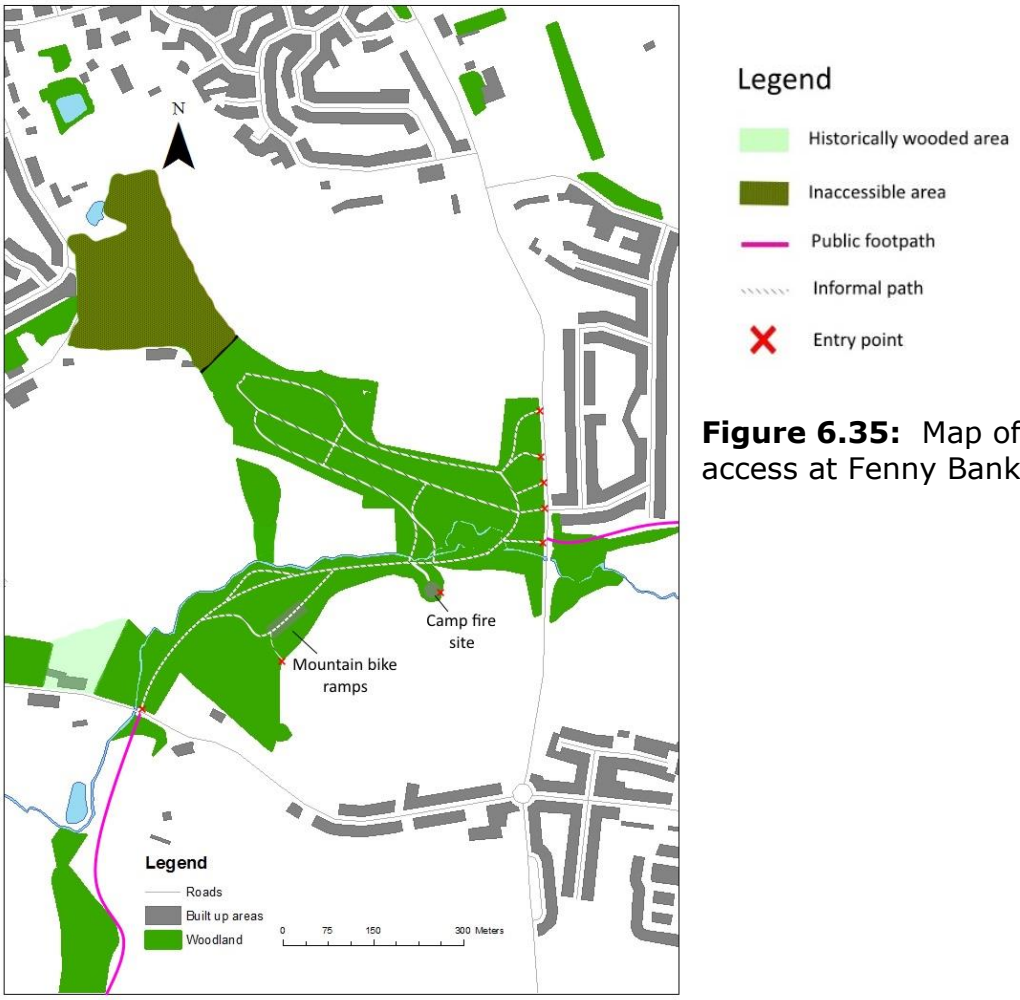


Figure 6.35: Map of access at Fenny Banks.

There are no signs, no fences and no indication of who owns the wood. Uncertainty over whether access to the woods was allowed was a major theme for the woodland users. Nobody who took part in the study had any idea who owned it. Maria was a typical example:

> *I don't know who owns it. I think people treat it as common property really, and look after it.*

Aaron, a young man, who had grown up using the woods, was asked about who owns the wood. He felt that it belonged to the people:

> *In my own mind, I do. These are our woods [He pauses]…What does someone own this?*

Some people felt a little more anxious about using the wood, Nicola said:

> *I sometimes question if I'm actually allowed in here. I've tried to look up who owns it but couldn't find out.*

However, the lack of signs or fences made most people feel comfortable enough to continue using the wood. Julie said:

> *I only walk and I keep to the paths that are there. I'm not sure whether this is a public footpath or not but there are no signs saying you can't come in.*

Craig and Kelly would use the wood regardless of the status of the path, Kelly said:

> *I'm not sure if we're even allowed to be in here. There are no signs, but even if there were signs we'd still do it. Most people use any paths.*

To summarise, this is one of the less detailed case studies due to the lack of landowner participation, therefore their points of view cannot be relayed. Lack of knowledge about the owners or their attitude to access was certainly putting off some people from using this wood. Among those that do enter, uncertainty about whether access is allowed was a major theme with some feeling the woods were part of the community while others were cautious about whether they were breaking the rules. This is a quiet wood with low visitor numbers and group sizes on a par with the urban fringe Potter's plantation. Unlike Potter's this wood does receive some visitors from further afield with the informal paths in the wood matching up well with public rights of way either side. Nevertheless, nobody has tried to claim the path. Unless access is threatened it appears people generally do not try to claim paths.

6.3.3 Positive aspects of using and living near woodland

This section explores the positive aspects of woodland as reported by members of the public using the woods and those occupying local housing. Interviews were coded thematically and are summarised in tables 6.8 and 6.9.

Overarching theme	Themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Health and Wellbeing	**Peace/Quiet/solitude (10)** Fitness (2)	Escape
Nature appreciation	**Bluebells (5)** **Birds (4)** **Brook (4)** Badgers (2)	Seasonality: Summer; Glade; Mud; Deer; Squirrels; Broadleaved trees
Practical	Proximity (2)	Likes lack of facilities; Away from road; Not many dogs; circular route; Mountain bike ramps
Emotional responses	Nostalgia (2)	Familiarity; Sense of ownership
Management		Not over managed
Heritage		Historical interest

Table 6.8: Positive themes from 10 woodland users at Fenny Banks

Overarching theme	Themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Health and Wellbeing	**Peace/quiet/solitude (8)**	Escape
Nature appreciation	**Birds (6)** inc. song (2) Changing seasons (5) **Trees (4)** Bluebells (3) Brook (3) Squirrels (2) Woodland antiquity (2)	Ferns; Wood anenomies; Glade; Views; Foxes; Badgers; leaf litter;
Quality of life	Rural feel (2) Privacy (2) Visual aesthetics (2)	Lack of houses; Barrier from road noise;
Access		Treated as a common
Emotional responses		Nostalgia; Mystery

Table 6.9: Positive themes from 13 local residents.

Yet again the theme peace/quiet/solitude is the dominant positive topic discussed in interviews with both woodland users and local residents. Deborah, a local resident, summed it up:

> *It's not a massive wood but when you get in the middle you can feel like you're away from everything and you can just hear the birds.*

The birds were very popular with both groups with the woodland users also favouring the bluebells and the brook. Local residents enjoyed the seasons, Maria sees a bit of magic in the summer time:

> *The glade in the summer, it's like a fairy glade, it's beautiful when it catches the sun.*

Cynthia enjoyed the woodland wildlife visiting her garden:

> *We feed the badgers and the foxes, they come on the lawn every night.*

Unlike the previous case studies, proximity wasn't a particularly important theme, it was mentioned by just two participants.

6.3.4 Activities and Issues

Table 6.10 shows a summary of the people observations in Fenny banks. It has very similar statistics to the Potter's Plantation on both the number of visitors and group size, it is a quiet wood most often used by individuals or couples.

Hours of Observation	24:24
No of people observed	34
Adult Male/Female split	19/8
Mean people/hour	1.4
Average group size	1.4
Distance travelled <1/1-5/>5 (miles)*	7/3/0
Local/Visitor split*	13/7
Transport split foot/car/bus*	9/1/0
Walkers with dogs	18
Walkers without dogs	9
Cyclists	5
Equestrians	0
Runners	0
Young people socialising	0
Other	1

Table 6.10: Basic statistics for Fenny Banks. *These data are for interviewees only, all interviewees were on foot.

However, unlike Potter's there were people travelling from further afield to visit the wood, many on foot as part of a longer walk and a good proportion, around a third, were without dogs. Though half of those interviewed with dogs said they were

visiting the wood just for the dog. 15% of the visitors were cyclists, which is a higher proportion than the other woods in the case studies. There was also more of a gender imbalance than usual, with many more men than women in the wood. One visitor, Sean, was looking for a rope swing he used to play on as a child, he had a surprise when he found it:

> *Wow! That's steeper than I remember it, we used to swing right into the middle, no sense of danger when you're young.*

There were no young people socialising observed for this wood, though figure 6.36 shows clear evidence that they do visit. There is a fire site in an old quarry to the South East of the site. A young person had burned all of their school books, perhaps with some ceremony after their last day. Another scene shows a ripped up and discarded young person's train ticket to Sheffield along with a football ticket and an empty cider can. Further research showed that Chesterfield suffered a heavy loss during this game so the circumstances under which the tickets reached their current state can be easily imagined.



Figure 6.36: Evidence of young people using Fenny Banks. Top: Burnt school books left on the fire. Bottom: The results of a disappointing football match. Ripped up under 16 train tickets and football ticket along with an empty can of cider. *(V Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017)*

Craig said:

> *My daughter comes here and makes fires… I know she shouldn't but we can't stop em, and I wouldn't want to anyway, we all did it when we were kids.*

Julie wasn't quite so keen on the activity but accepted it:

> *There are people taking drugs there sometimes, and sometimes people camp. I know when they're there because we only live across the field and we can see the smoke coming from their camp fires. There was one time I was walking the dog and there was a man having a wash in the river, that scared me at first but it was OK.*

Despite the fact that there is, in common with most woods in this study, a youth presence it wasn't a major theme for the participants. Themes on issues in woods are summarised in tables 6.11 and 6.12.

Overarching Theme	Sub-Themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Access	**Uncertainty about whether access is allowed (4)** **Cannot access whole wood (3)**	Depends on owner; New owners may reduce access;
Crime and Anti-Social behaviour	**Motorbikes (3)** Litter (2)	Drug taking; Illegal tree felling; Badger baiting; Fly tipping; Shooting
Practical	**Mud (3)**	Too small;
Fear	Personal security (2)	Accidents; Woodlands at night (animals)
Controversial usage	Camping (2)	Travellers Hunts
Development anxiety	Fear of losing wood to development (2)	
Management	Lack of management (2)	
Lack of facilities		Bridges
Other		Becoming too popular

Table 6.11: Issue related themes for ten woodland visitors

Overarching Theme	Sub-Themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Crime and anti-social behaviour	**Motorbikes (7)** Shooting (3) Suicide (2)	Burglary; Vandalism; Badger baiting; Litter; Fires
Development anxiety	**Losing wood to development (6)**	Fracking
Practical	Difficult to physically get in (3) Busy road (3)	Leaf litter; poor paths
Fear	Personal security (3)	Drunken youths; Mineshafts
Controversial use	Cyclists (2)	Hunting; Horses;
Access	Private, not allowed in (2)	
Management		Needs thinning; too much sycamore; overgrown

Table 6.12: Issue related themes for 13 local residents.

The only major theme for the woodland users was access related. These issues mainly relate to uncertainty about permission to use the wood but there were also some complaints about not being able to access the whole wood. This was not such a priority for the local residents, only two of whom mentioned the subject. For the residents it was motorbikes they were most concerned about though there was little evidence on the ground of motorbike activity, it appeared that it was largely an issue from the recent past. Patrick said:

> *There used to be motorbikes tearing the wood to bits, coming in here from the other end [points towards North-West end of the woods]. But now there's all barbed wire in that bit of the wood. I've not seen them in here lately.*

Julie said it was so bad it put her off using the wood for a while:

> *There were people doing motor cross in here, and they churned up the paths. It was really bad for a period a year or two back so I stopped coming.*

The other big issue for local residents is a familiar one: development anxiety. Many people worried about losing the wood to development such as Rebecca, who commented:

> *There's been so much building around here and I don't want to lose it.*

A local parish councillor also contributed to the study, she shared the development concerns of the residents:

> *We're under immense housing pressure in this parish, there's people out there who will buy up land, clear it first, so there's no nature to conserve, and then apply for planning permission to build houses.*

Other activities associated with the observational evidence weren't particularly prominent, such as mountain biking, despite the high proportion of cyclists in the wood and the mountain bike ramps. The local residents had noticed the cyclists, they just did not have much of an issue with it. Julie said:

> *Some kids have built some bike ramps…[points to where the bike jumps are], I don't mind them because they're out of the way really and they're always polite. It's really quite impressive, what they've built.*

Few people mentioned dog waste in bags, despite the enormous pile of them accumulating in the North East corner of the wood. Craig blamed it on travellers:

> *They're nappy bags that the gypsies dumped there*

However, they did not contain nappies.

6.3.5 Summary of Fenny banks

Fenny banks is a quiet wood with relatively low visitor numbers. Though it was the site of a former lead mill, it is a peaceful place where nature is thriving and impressive floral displays can be seen in the spring. The peace, quiet and tranquillity is appreciated by residents and visitors alike with both enjoying features of the natural habitat, especially the flowers and wildlife. Fenny banks does receive some visitors from outside the immediate locality using informal paths through the wood which meet conveniently with public footpaths either side.

Little is known about the owners by users or local residents and as a consequence some are put off from entering the wood. Others have been put off visiting by the presence of motorbikes, which was apparently a big problem in the recent past. Added to this concern, local residents were anxious about housing developments on or around the wood.

Chapter 7 – Rural Woods: Case Studies

7.1 Introduction

The two rural woods in the study are taken from sites with contrasting histories. Langley and Huntswood Park are examined together as they are separated by just a single lane road. These sites occupy a post-industrial setting in the North East of the region. While the second case study wood, Blackcrag, sits on the fringes of the Peak District National Park in a much more prosperous area.

7.2 - Rural woods - Langley Country Park and Huntswood Park

7.2.1 Background and description

Langley Country Park and Huntswood Park lie immediately opposite each other, separated only by a minor road. They are in a rural area consisting of mainly arable fields with scattered woodland. Figure 7.1 shows a map of the two woods and their immediate vicinity.



Figure 7.1: Langley Country Park and Huntswood Park in their landscape setting.

In both sites the soundscape is very quiet with perhaps the most dominant noise that of skylarks hovering over nearby farmland. Huntswood feels enclosed with multi-stemmed- trees over-hanging the bridleway giving it the sense of a mediaeval holloway (figure 7.2).



Figure 7.2: The bridleways in Huntswood are, in places, closely bordered by thick multi-stemmed trees. *(Lisewski-Hobson, September 2016)*

In Langley the landscape is more open with tracks surrounded by wide grass verges (figure 7.4, bottom). However, these all look very similar making it easy to feel lost. Josy, a member of the public walking in Langley, felt the same way:

> *I've lost my bearings in here a couple of times. Perhaps signs directing you back to the car park, or at least telling you where you are, would help.*

The woods are both a very large size, Langley has 88 hectares of woodland while Huntswood spans an impressive 171 hectares.

The two sites have contrasting histories and are managed very differently today. Langley was designed as a mixed landscape with wide rides and large woodland blocks. The park was partly developed on the site of a former colliery, though much of the site was formally arable land (figure 7.3). The colliery was established in the 1890s and closed in the 1980s. According to the project manager for the site, Tom, it employed 1300 people at its height.

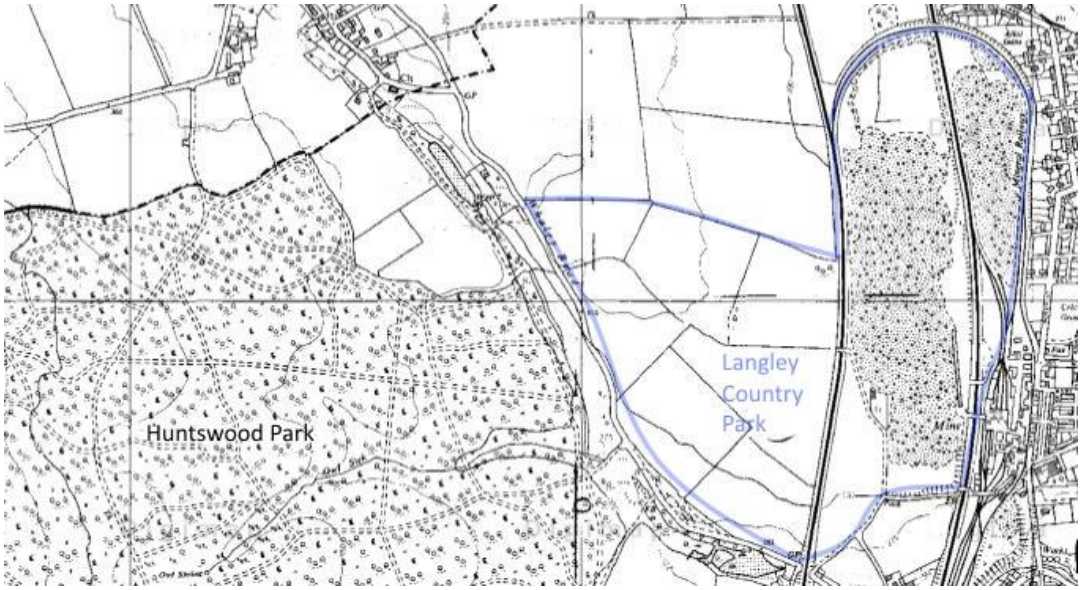


Figure 7.3: OS National Grid Map from 1967 (1:10560) showing the colliery site at Langley. Note that the modern boundary of the Langley (marked by transparent blue lines) also incorporates nearby farmland. The map has been edited to remove real place names.

Langley is local authority owned and managed for wildlife and recreation. A section of the Northern extent of Langley has been left to regenerate naturally (figure 7.4), while the rest is a planted with a mix of native and non-native species. Tom explained the reasoning behind the inclusion of non-native species at Langley:

> *Some of the non-native species, such as Italian alder, were brought in for their nitrogen fixing properties to help improve the poor soils. These are gradually being removed at first thinnings,*

Between the woodland blocks are swathes of grassland planted with wild-flower seeds as part of a higher level stewardship agreement. The flowers have grown on the site very successfully (figure 7.4).



Figure 7.4: Contrasting sections of Langley Country Park Top: The far North section of Langley has naturally regenerated, mainly with birch. Bottom: A view over one of the rides towards a planted woodland block. The ride is covered with cowslips. (*V Lisewski-Hobson, July (top) and April (bottom) 2016).*

Langley has a number of artificial features, most notably a sculpture trail, designed to attract visitors. Local communities and specifically schools were involved in the launch of the sculpture trail, in November 2015 ([*] dispatch, 2015). Sadly the sculptures have attracted vandalism and one of the main sculptures was destroyed in July 2016 (The [*], 2017). Figure 7.5 shows another damaged sculpture in

September 2017. It appears to have been the victim of metal theft. Maps for a nature and sculpture trail are available online via the county council website.



Figure 7.5: A vandalised sculpture in Langley Country Park. (*V Lisewski-Hobson, September 2017)*

Unlike the other case studies, Langley has a lot of benches dotted around the park. Though these are appreciated, some of the older users complained that they lacked back supports. Seating areas seemed to be an important meeting point for some of the users. Jerry reported that there used to be some seats at the centre of the park. These have now been replaced by a sculpture:

> *There used to be a really nice seating area, which has now got that silly ornament. Lots of us old uns [sic.] used to sit up there, I'd see the same blokes with their dogs and we'd get talking. But now there's nowhere decent for us to sit. We need something to rest our back on at our age.*

Huntswood Park is re-planted ancient woodland, with significant archaeological importance (Beresford 2012) including a medieval park pale (see chapter 4). Currently it is used for forestry and game shooting. Floristically this very large wood is mainly planted up with coniferous species. The deciduous trees present are mixed and include sycamore, ash, hazel, elm and beech. The ground flora in

Huntswood park is rich in ancient woodland indicators such as bluebells, yellow archangel, ramsons, yellow pimpernel and wood anemone (figure 7.6). However some of the best wild flower displays along the historic park pale were damaged during bridleway resurfacing works (see chapter 4).



Figure 7.6: Wood anemones at Huntswood Park. (*V Lisewski-Hobson, April 2017)*

Demographically the area is one of contrasts, being both rural and in the past home to a large colliery which inevitably brought in workers from outside the area. Though some of the small farming villages near to the two woods have become prosperous (figure 7.7, top) the large village immediately to the East of Langley was built to accommodate colliery workers and is among the most deprived localities in the county (figure 7.7, bottom). The parish has high rates of unemployment, low rates of car ownership and overall poor health at nearly twice the average rate for the county (2011 census). Perhaps because of the poor employment opportunities, there are no further housing development plans for the area. Paul, the manager responsible for the day to day running of Langley, explained that rural post-industrial localities, such as Langley have a unique culture:

> *A lot of these ex-coalfield areas they, kind of, have this urban environment that was, all associated with the coal industry but bordered onto all of this ruralness… And you get all of these salt of the earth type folk who have worked down the pit*

> *forever but, you know, hand in glove with all these rural traditions….and you wouldn't naturally consider them countryside people.*

The local authority have been approached by the fracking company INEOS to conduct exploratory tests on Langley but, despite the possible employment opportunities for the local community, they felt this was not a feasible option. Paul said:

> *Everyone's frightened of the political fallout of letting in INEOS to talk about fracking and for our sites we just said it's just not possible. Somewhere as wet as Langley they wanted to come on with two of these great big ten-wheeled vehicles weighing about 8 tonnes each or something, it would have obliterated the place so we said no.*



Figure 7.7: Contrasting settlements near Langley and Scarliffe. Top: One of the prosperous villages close to Huntswood Park. Bottom: Langley and Huntswood's landscape setting. A view over arable fields towards housing originally built to serve the colliery and then towards Langley and Huntswood beyond. *(Lisewski-Hobson, August (top) and July (bottom) 2016)*

7.2.2 Ownership perspectives and access issues

Two managers involved in Langley Country Park were interviewed as part of the research. Paul is responsible for the day to day upkeep of a number of local-authority owned sites and was interviewed in September 2017. Tom was interviewed in October 2017 and is a strategic manger working specifically on Langley Country Park and the long distance trail that connects it to other ex-coalfield sites in the locality. Peter is a land agent working for the country estate that owns Huntswood Park, he was interviewed in August 2017. The estate owns a number of woods in the sample including Long wood, Dog wood and the Scout Plantation.

20 woodland users were interviewed, though all but 2 of these were in Langley Country Park. Huntswood Park had very low visitor numbers. Only 7 local residents agreed to interview, with many showing little interest in the subject of the study. This is consistent with idea that areas with disadvantaged socio-economic populations can be difficult to engage in research and participate in woodland recreation at lower than average rates (Morris & O'Brien, 2012).

Langley and Huntswood were dealt with together in the study because of their close proximity and the availability of routes that connect the two sites. Figure 7.8 shows the rights of way situation across the two woodlands. Langley is open access to all non-motorised traffic. A downloadable map is available from the council's website which suggests routes around the park (Derbyshire County Council, 2018). However, the path network is much more extensive than just these suggested routes. This contrasts with Huntswood Park where access is limited to two bridleways which cover just a fraction of its area. Observation work detected no informal routes in this wood and any tracks crossing the bridleway were consistently signposted (see figure 7.9). Peter's priority for the wood was forestry but a private lease for game shooting provides a supplementary income. Peter didn't talk about access in relation to these specific activities directly but explained why he felt access can be problematic in more general terms:

There is health and safety. The unknown and I don't necessarily just mean a tree that goes whoosh…bang as you're walking under it. But it can happen, it has happened, it does happen… You always have the slight concern that people are going to be in the wood doing things they shouldn't and that doing things they shouldn't can involve cutting trees down.



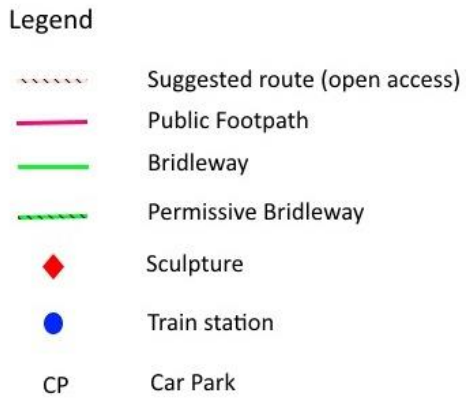


Figure 7.8: Map showing access provision in Langley and Huntswood. Langley is open access with a number of suggested routes while Huntswood is accessible by just two bridleways covering only a fraction of its size.



Figure 7.9: One of the many forestry tracks in Huntswood Park. A signpost aims to keep the public out. (*V Lisewski-Hobson, July 2016)*

Bradley used to work as a gamekeeper in Huntswood Park, he talked about people with maps often ending up in the wrong place. He explained:

> *All they've got to do is stick to the footpaths. If they start going into the woods someone will be telling them off.*

None of the members of the public interviewed complained about the lack of access at Huntswood, they were more concerned about the poor surface of the bridleway. The lack of conflict over access in Huntswood, especially compared to places like Brook Forest may be influenced by a number of factors but there are two main arguments. Firstly, the wood has belonged to the same estate since before the Second World War and has been managed in the same way for all this time, therefore people are used to this level of access. Secondly, there is a large wooded park with open access directly opposite, so some of the needs for access can be addressed there. However, Ian, who was interviewed in Langley, did not think new sites are a good substitute for older woods:

> *I don't really think of this as a wood, it's a park. I prefer older woods, Robin Hood type woods.*

Not all of the woods on Peter's estate are so closely controlled, he explained that only the commercially profitable woods are closed to the public. Peter talks about public access in Dog wood, a small peri-urban wood:

> *The estate were quite relaxed about it because we had had our timber out of it and what timber is there now is not particularly commercial.*

Peter himself was still not keen on seeing too many members of the public in there though:

> *It suffers, if I can say the word suffers, from public access….I like the wood, but it is…shall we say…… rather too public for me to say that I enjoy it … my role at the estate is quite well known in that area and so I don't always meet with approval.*

For Langley, public access is one of the primary objectives. However, neither Paul or Tom felt that it is currently meeting that objective. Paul said:

> *It's under used for the size of it*

Paul admitted that there is at least money for some maintenance at this site, thanks to its higher level stewardship status. Both he and Tom thought it had potential to attract visitors if they could acquire the investment. Tom said:

> *If there'd been a visitor's centre built as part of the reclamation and some other attractions I can see that it could be a country park that people would travel potentially 25 miles to go and visit but…there's nothing to grab people so the families market, you need…a changing area, you need facilities… So there's nothing like that and then for older kids there's no adventure play area and then for the teenage market there's nothing like mountain biking or those, kind of, higher energy things that would bring people in.*

Langley has become part of a scheme to encourage jogging (figure 7.10), though no runners were seen as part of the observation. Dominick, who was interviewed while walking his dog thought it was a great idea, though he hadn't tried it himself:

> *I like those jog targets on the posts. It's some kind of phone app, they have to jog from one post to another or if it's a shorter one they have to sprint. It's good to help people get motivated.*



Figure 7.10: Signs erected as part of a scheme to encourage fitness among visitors to Langley Country Park. *(Lisewski-Hobson, July 2016)*

Langley and Huntswood are both very well used by horses, particularly those from the local pony trekking centre. Chapter 4 explains the story of the Huntswood Bridleway, which had become unusable to walkers and cyclists due to heavy poaching by horses. Peter, who was sympathetic towards horse riders, explained why it became controversial:

> *A local riding club was set up... And of course they use that [the bridleway], as they have every right to do, as part of their trek. But it is being used rather more heavily than it had ever been envisaged. Lovely trek and I would hate to see it not being a trek but of course in all weathers the surface of the path deteriorated very badly.*

Jacob was interviewed while overseeing the project to re-surface the path. He was livid with the trekking centre:

> *Ah, this is a mammoth job. This route was in a right state before and it's cost bloody thousands.*

Once the bridleway was re-surfaced some walkers began to return, such as Maud who felt torn about the situation:

> *It's because of the horses coming through, it get so muddy. But then it is a bridleway so there we are.*

She and other dog walkers had been totally put off from using it before this point. Members of the public in Langley were strongly opposed to the trekking centre using the park. Ian is an ex-miner:

> *They're churning up all the bridleway and it's not as if there's just the odd one it's a business.*

Isaac, who had a dog, also felt strongly about the open access the equestrians were enjoying:

> *Everyone's just sick of the horses, we should do a petition. They're only supposed to walk, not galloping… It would be good if they had paths of their own and they weren't just going everywhere.*

Jonathan tried to be balanced, though he highlighted some poor relations between the equestrians and the dog walkers, and he worried about the wild flowers:

> *I'd not stop them, just make them more considerate. There was a woman who swore at someone, she said 'get your effing dog on a lead'. I do like to see horses, if they could just have some sort of circuit and stick to it. Not just galloping everywhere, there's orchids in here.*

From Paul and Tom's perspectives, use by equestrians is a good thing, so long as the issues with other members of the public can be resolved. They have even hired the whole park out for equestrian events (figure 7.11). Tom admitted there was a problem but thinks the public are getting the issue out of proportion:

> *We've been receiving a lot of complaints…they [the horses] are doing quite a bit of damage and that's where it comes into conflict. Now that's something to try and address in the future, in a way I'm quite torn because it would be a great part of the visitor economy if you've got pony trekking that supports things to do in the rural environment.*

Paul felt that the problem was the surfaces in the park, which he argued needed better maintenance. He felt that charging for commercial equestrian use might be a useful approach:

> *We've had several complaints over the last 18 months but I don't feel the damage is massive in the park if you go back to the fact that the trails were aggregate stone and they've all, kind of, vegetated over…the trails aren't usable anymore, you know, nobody would be moaning about the horses churning up the park if the trails were still stone. The issue I need to speak to them about is because the service has firmed up its policy towards charging for different events or for use of trails.*

Unfortunately, no representatives of the riding school themselves were willing to take part in the study.



Figure 7.11: Notice (anonymised) detailing an equestrian event being held at Langley Country Park. (*Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016).*

Overall access in Huntswood and Langley is highly contrasting. In Huntswood users are expected to stick to the two bridleways occupying a small proportion of the wood, though this was not a controversial subject for the public. Langley is open access, with all forms of non-motorised recreation encouraged. Land owners only had one major site-specific issue and that was how to manage the conflict between members of the public on foot and members of the local trekking centre, who use both the bridleways in Huntswood and the open access in Langley as part of a commercial business.

7.2.3 Positive aspects of using and living near a woodland

This section explores the positive aspects of woodland as reported by members of the public using the woods and those occupying local housing. Interviews were coded thematically and are summarised in tables 7.1 and 7.2.

Overarching theme	Sub-themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Nature appreciation	**Wild flowers (19) inc. Orchids (6);** Cowslips (3); Ox-eyed daisies (2); Bluebells (2) Birds (12) Seasonality: Autumn (2)	Invertebrates; Fish Seasonality: Changing seasons; Summer; Winter; Grass snakes and Adders; Foxes; Badgers; Deer
Health and Well-being	**Peace/Quiet/Solitude (8)** **Socialising (6)** **Fitness (6)** Fresh air (3)	Jog posts
Practical	**Proximity (6)** Free car park (3) Dog likes it (2) Large size (2) Open landscape (2) Views (2)	Lots of paths; Dog swims in pond; flatish
Management	Not too many facilities (3) Sculptures (3) Pub walk (3)	Grassy paths; Well maintained; Horses
Emotional attachment	Nostalgia (2)	Cultural connection (ex-colliery); Community connection; Family tradition
Heritage	Historical interest (2)	

Table 7.1: Positive themes form 20 woodland users in Langley (18) and Huntswood (2)

Overarching theme	Sub-themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Nature appreciation	**Birds (2)**	Cowslips; Squirrels; Foxes; Badgers; Deer
Practical	**Proximity (2)**	Free parking; Wheelchair access
Quality of life		Safe for children; Freedom for children; Privacy; Community enhancement
Health and wellbeing		Socialising; Quiet
Emotional attachment		Nostalgia
Heritage		Historical interest

Table 7.2: Positive themes from 7 local residents bordering Langley Country Park

The vast majority of public participants were using or living near Langley Country Park, there were just 2 participants in Huntswood park. Bradley's favourite thing about Huntswood was the peacefulness. He described visiting as a family tradition and enjoyed seeing deer and foxes on his early morning walks with his dog. Maud

is retired and walks into Huntswood park with her dog. She was there picking wild garlic for a salad but explained that the wild flowers are the main attraction for her:

> *It's pretty, I like all the wildflowers, the wild anemones and the bluebells when they're out.*

For the users of Langley, nature appreciation was a top theme. People liked the natural appearance of the park compared to other re-developed collieries. Issac said:

> *It's the nicest tip because it's more natura, not full of made up paths.*

The top sub-themes under nature appreciation were wildflowers and birds. Similarly to Tanner's, people were adding their own bird feeders to the woods (figure 7.12).



Figure 7.12: Well stocked bird feeders added by members of the public near the main car park at Langley. (*V Lisewski-Hobson, April 2017)*

Ian, a retired miner, helps at the local heritage centre. The heritage centre runs walks into the park where wildflowers are a popular attraction:

> *We do a cowslip walk, they've been really good this year, they seem to be spreading, it's just a carpet of yellow, so beautiful. Over the years the trees have grown up and now there's all leaves making some proper soil*.

Noreen has lived near Langley since before the colliery closed, she commented on how it has changed:

> *All the animals have come back, it did take a few years but they came back. We get deer, badgers and foxes. The foxes walk past along the street. There are birds nesting and squirrels, which are nice to see.*

Though nature appreciation was the strongest theme among the residents there were no consistently dominant positive comments. Recruitment was uniquely challenging for this case study where around ten percent of the properties stood empty and many people did not answer the door. A far greater proportion of people were not interested in taking part here than at any of the other sites. It can be speculated that there are indeed no dominant positive themes for these people. Many of them shared a lack of interest in Langley or felt it wasn't relevant to them. People who were less keen said anything from:

> *I don't have a dog so I'm not really interested.*

Or

> *We are always at work so we don't really go outside.*

These views contrasted strongly with those of the Langley *users* who were clearly keen to talk about their experiences as all of those asked to participate did so enthusiastically.

An interesting feature of the Langley interviews was the comparatively low importance of peace/calm/tranquillity theme compared with some of the other case studies. Though it was still a major topic of conversation it appears alongside the theme 'socialising'. As was the case at Tanner's, it seems that some of the participants are seeking to connect with others rather than to find peace. Many of the users were retired such as Terry, who was walking with a group of his friends:

> *As you can see, coming over here is a social event for us [everyone laughs]. We know everyone that comes here.*

Dominic had noticed the retired people too:

> *It's a brilliant social space for them, the old ones, people get to know each other.*

From what Ian said the social tradition might stem from the mining days:

> *There used to be lots of ex-miners walking in here, a lot of them are dead now. They used to meet down the bottom, at a place they used to call 'the moaning post', all standing there moaning about this and that.*

This is all very reminiscent of social trips to the countryside enjoyed by thriving mining communities in the early to mid parts of the 20th century (Williams, 2000). These communities enjoyed the countryside as a shared social space which contrasted to the ideal of 'quiet enjoyment' held dear by many other countryside users (Harrison, 1991). However, Socialising wasn't the only reason for many of the older people, for Terry and his friends health was also a major factor:

> *A lot of us have health issues, I've had a stent in, and he, he's had a double bypass. So we all need to get out and be healthy.*

Peter, who worked in the colliery for 35 years, had recently suffered a heart attack and had been advised to walk more by his doctor. Peter walked alone and appreciated being alone. He explained:

> *I like getting out in the fresh air. The solitude, sometimes I see no-one.*

7.2.4 Activities and Issues

Table 7.3 shows a summary of the people observations in Langley Country Park and Huntswood Park.

Woodland Name	**Langley Country Park**	**Huntswood Park**
Hours of observation	18:18	7:12
No of people observed	232	31
Adult Male/Female split	105/98	9/22
Mean people/hour	12.7	3.8
Average group size	2.1	2.8
Distance travelled <1/1-5/>5*	5/11/2	2/0/0
Local/Visitor split*	5/13	2/0
Transport split foot/car/bus*	6/12/0	2/0
Walkers with dogs	116	0
Walkers without dogs	34	8
Cyclists	18	1
Equestrians	37	22
Runners	1	0
Young People Socialising	2	0
Other	24	0

Table 7.3: Basic statistics for Langley Country Park and Huntswood Park. *These data are for interviewees only, all interviewees were on foot.

Despite Paul's disappointment in the visitor numbers for Langley, it is by far the busiest of the case study sites so far with almost 13 visitors per hour. The next busiest was Brook Forest with 8.4 people per hour. Unlike Brook Forest, Langley is dominated by dog walkers with only 34 out of 150 walkers being without dogs. Other sites where dog walker rates are very high include Tanner's and Potter's but these sites attract locals walking very short distances to exercise their dogs. At Langley two thirds of the visitors interviewed travelled by car and most lived more than a mile away, typically in one of two nearby towns. Many of the visitors had tried out a number of wooded parks on ex-colliery sites such as Dawn who commented:

We go to all the pit tips, this is the best pit tip going.

24 of the people recorded at Langley were engaged in activities that do not form part of the normal categories. Of these nine were picnickers. Unlike the other case studies Langley does have benches and also plenty of dry grassland suitable for picnic blankets. Brook Forest and Fenny banks also had clearings but at Brook Forest it had been fenced off and the clear space at Fenny banks is too wet. Further activities included volunteer conservation work (5), fishing (3), Nature spotting (3), Photography (2) and Geocaching (2).

There were very few young people observed socialising in either of the two sites and there was little evidence of this on the ground. Huntswood was dominated by equestrians (22/31) and before the re-surfacing works no-body but the equestrians were recorded. The state of the bridleway was clearly putting off other users. The large proportion of equestrians was reflected in the larger than average group size and the gender imbalance in favour of females. All but one of the equestrians were female.

Themes on the issues raised by woodland users and local residents are summarised in tables 7.4 and 7.5.

Overarching Theme	Sub-Theme (major in bold)	Other factors
Controversial usage	**Horses (11) inc. Destroying pathways (6);** Galloping (2); Not sticking to paths (2)	Horse dung
Practical	**Mud (6)**	Bad weather; uneven surfaces
Lack of facilities	Dog waste bins (4) Picnic benches (3) Inadequate seating: benches have no backs (3) Café (3) Toilets (2) Litter bins (2)	Bike park; Children's play area; signage
Management	Resurface rest of bridleway in Huntswood Park (2)	Trees spoil views; Ponds need cleaning; Don't like sculptures; Non-native trees; Drainage problems; Coniferisation (Huntswood Park); Prefer older woods
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	Fly tipping (2)	Shooting; Metal theft; Motorbikes; Quad bikes
Fear		Aggressive dogs
Development anxiety		Site becomes holiday park

Table 7.4: Issue related themes from 20 woodland users

Overarching theme	Sub-Themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	**Motorbikes (2)** **Vandalism (2)**	Fires; Dog poo; Witchcraft; Theft of firewood; Quad bikes; Drug taking; Polish people eating swans (Xenophobia)
Practical		Excessive shade; Parking problems
Management		Lack of tree management
Lack of facilities		Benches with backs
Controversial use		Horses

Table 7.5: Issue related themes from 7 local residents

Unsurprisingly, the major issue for the woodland uses was the horses with just over half of those interviewed complaining about equestrians. Complaints about mud were generally linked to the horses rather than being an issue in their own right.

There were also higher unfulfilled expectations at Langley in terms of facilities offered. Many people requested further facilities such as dog waste bins, better seating and toilets. This may link to the lower incidence of people seeking peace/quiet/solitude which is potentially at odds with sites containing cafes and other facilities that might make it more popular. Members of the public at other sites where the importance of the peaceful theme is stronger have tended not to request additional facilities.

There were no major sub-themes for the local residents and only one mention of the horses. Some of them could hear motorbikes or were concerned about vandalism. Ian believed there were people engaged in modern day witchcraft in Langley:

> *There are witches in there, people practicing witchcraft, you get them all over in the woods. They're usually on something, well not all of them.*

As previously discussed, many of the local residents near Langley didn't use it. This included three of the seven interviewed. Noreen didn't even like living there, she complained about motorbikes, people parking by her house or stealing firewood, dog waste and excessive shade in her garden. It appears that Noreen had difficulty coping with the change she'd seen in her long residence on the edge of the park:

> *It's not the same since the pit shut, I preferred it then. There used to be an old railway line that passed by the house.*

She had a particularly negative view of some of the newer communities of people living in the area too:

> *All the swans have disappeared since the Polish people came. They're having them, I've never seen them but I think they're having them.*

The only two Polish people involved in the interview process commented that they were too busy with work to go to the park.

The Langley project manager, Tom, commented on a reluctance among younger people to use the park:

> *[local town] heritage trust did some research about Langley and they found that the teenagers….. were frightened to go up there because of the threat of, that fear factor, that stranger danger kind of thing.*

This, and the evidence from local residents, who hadn't really engaged with it as a recreational facility, points to a certain level of mystique around the site. Demographically, these residents are classic examples of 'hard to reach' groups (Curry & Brown, 2010).

7.2.5 Summary of Langley and Huntswood Park

Huntswood and Langley exist side by side but are very different. The former is an ancient wood largely closed to the public and the latter an open access redeveloped colliery. However, one issue dominated most conversations about both woods and that was the heavy use of both the public bridleways and the open access park by a single local pony trekking centre. Steps are being made to request that the business contribute towards the maintenance of both.

Huntswood receives few non equestrian visitors, though some have trickled back since the bridleway was re-surfaced. Langley is well used by people, especially by people with dogs. Participants originated mainly from the wider local area and typically drive between one and five miles to get there. The immediate local population consists of a few small wealthy villages but the majority live on an estate of run-down houses built for the colliery on the East side of Langley. The people living here were generally disinterested in Langley and there were rumours circulating about unsavoury activities including swan poaching and witchcraft. This is consistent with the finding that a smaller proportion of the visitors were local, especially compared to the urban woods.

7.3 Rural woods – Blackcrag

7.3.1 Background and description

Blackcrag is a 41 hectare wood following the contours of a rocky tor side in the peak fringe. The local area consists of scattered hamlets and villages dotted between pastoral farmland (figure 7.13). There are no plans for housing developments that affect the wood. Figure 7.14 is a map of the woodland in its landscape context.



Figure 7.13: Blackcrag wood in its landscape setting. Top: A view from Blackcrag wood over pastoral fields and scattered villages. Bottom: A view up to Blackcrag wood over farmland to the North East. *V Lisewski-Hobson, April 2016 (top) and December 2016 (Bottom)*

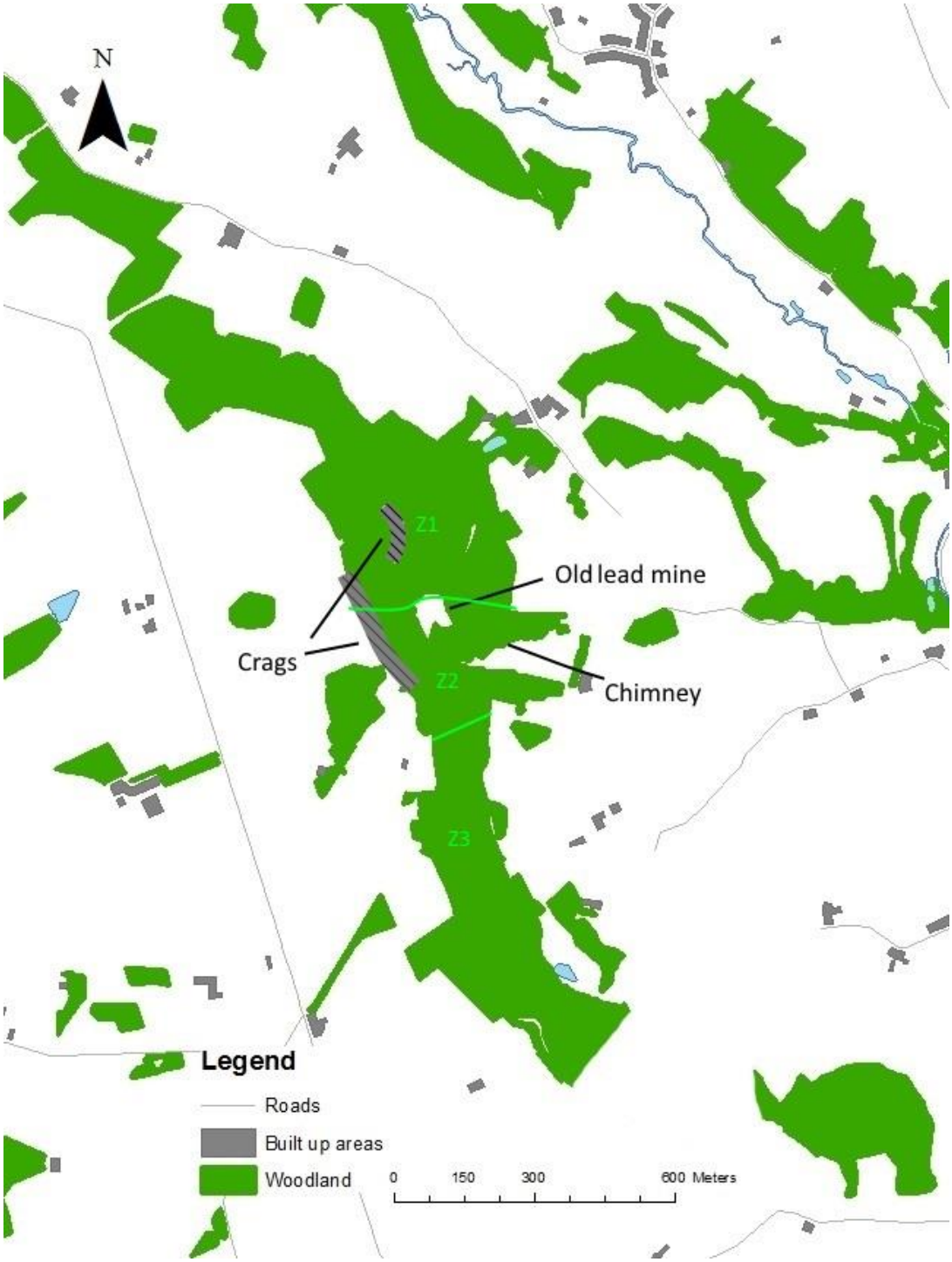


Figure 7.14: Map of Blackcrag wood in its landscape setting. The Z numbers represent different woodland zones within the site. Z1 is coniferous plantation; Z2 is mixture of birch, oak and rowan transitioning to ash and sycamore towards Z3 which is a beech plantation.

The soundscape at Blackcrag depends on the weather. On a calm day it consists of mainly woodland birds with some aircraft noise in the background. However, it is a very exposed site and the wind can be heard roaring through the trees even on moderately calm days. One participant, Herbert, said that his family always called

the wood '*Siberia*'. However, on several weekend visits gunfire from nearby land was the dominant sound. Despite this, the wood has an air of peacefulness about it and spectacular views can be enjoyed from the crags, which interrupt the woodland canopy on the Western edge of the wood (figure 7.15).

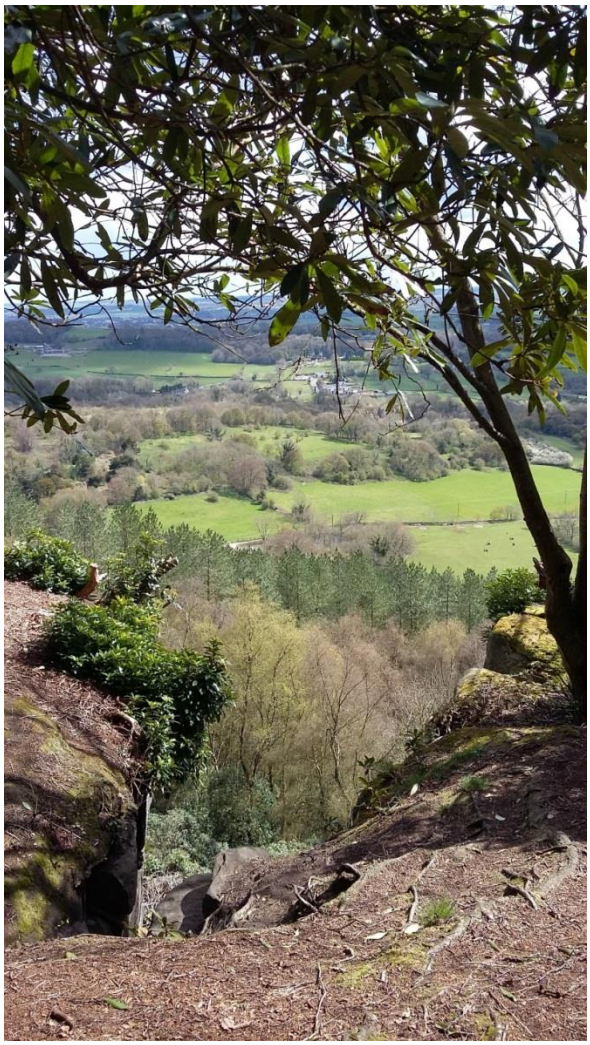


Figure 7.15: A view from the crags at Blackcrag, over the woods and beyond. (*Lisewski-Hobson, April 2016).*

The wood has a number of historic features such as an old lead mine, a ruined farm house, an unusual line of stone slabs and an engine chimney. There are also both rock and tree carvings dating back to the 19th century. The rock carvings (figure 7.16) occupy a large gritstone tor which towers above the wood providing far reaching views over the surrounding countryside. Every available space on the tor is carved showing dates commencing from the late nineteenth century through to

the present day. Many of the carvings are romantic in nature and include a marriage proposal. In addition there is a stand of old beech trees within the wood (figure 7.17), these are carved mainly with names dating to the post war period. Readable dates span 1948 to 1970. Earlier dates are present too but they have become distorted by the trees' growth.



Figure 7.16: The tor at Blackcrag woods (left) with examples of carvings (middle and right)



Figure 7.17: Beech carvings at Blackcrag wood. Top: one of the old beeches with legible carvings going back to the 1940s. Many of the carvings can no longer be read and are probably earlier. Middle: A close up of one of the carvings bearing the name of its creator. Bottom: The carvings in their beech copse setting. *(Lisewski-Hobson, October 2016)*

Most of the wood is listed as ancient though it hasn't always been as densely wooded as it appears today. For example on the 1917 OS second revision county series (1:2500), many areas around the old lead mine are only sparsely wooded (figure 7.18).

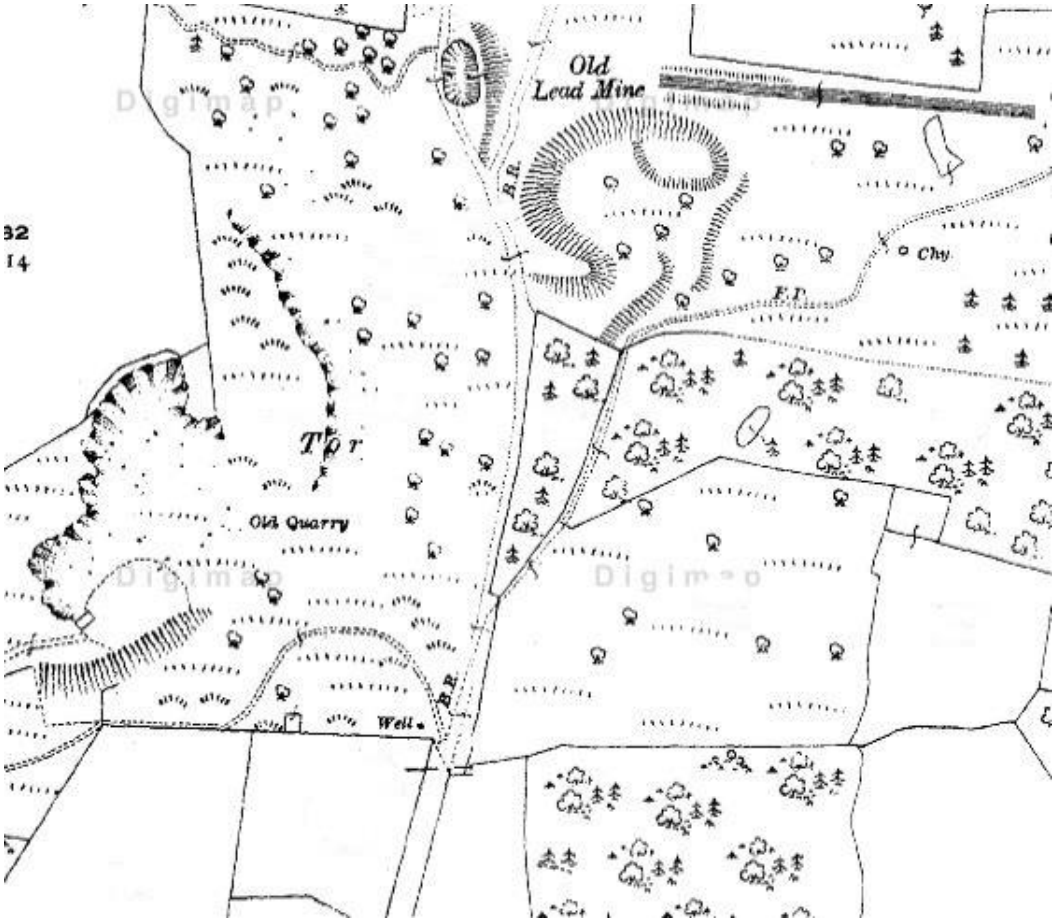


Figure 7.18: OS second edition county series from 1917 showing the centre of Blackcrag wood around the tors and the old lead mine. Some areas show only sparse tree cover. (*Reproduced under license from Edina Digimap*.)

Blackcrag has multiple zones of tree species composition (see figure 7.14 for locations and figure 7.19 for photographs). The North of the wood (Zone 1) is coniferous plantation with an understory dominated by rhododendron. The area around the old mine and the crags (Zone 2) has regenerated to birch, oak and rowan. These transition into sycamore and ash to the South and East, where the ground has received less historical disturbance. The old mine itself is now occupied by acid heath vegetation, particularly heather. Zone 3 is a beech plantation. This

has the most healthy populations of ancient woodland indicators such as bluebells, ramsons, yellow pimpernel, wood sorrel and yellow archangel.



Figure 7.19: Woodland zones in Blackcrag. Top left (Zone 1) is coniferous plantation with an understory of rhododendron. Bottom left (Zone2) shows the area to the East of the quarry where the old engine chimney is situated. It has been colonised mainly by birch with oak and rowan as sub-dominants. The old mine itself is acid heath, visible in the bottom left of the photograph. Right (Zone 3) is a beech plantation rich in ancient woodland indicators such as bluebells. (*V Lisewski-Hobson, April 2016 (left top and right), August 2016 (bottom left))*

Zone 1 contains an informal camp site at the top of the crags (figure 7.20). This is generally kept neat and tidy with little litter. The nature of the litter is different to other sites where fires have been lit. Litter is mainly wine bottles perhaps more associated with adults than the strong ciders and energy drinks favoured by the younger users of Tanner's and Potter's plantation.



Figure 7.20: An informal campsite at Blackcrag. Fire places are neat and litter is kept to a minimum. The Marks and Spencer's carrier bag in right hand picture contains an empty bottle of rioja, suggesting a more mature social group use this site compared to some of the more urban woods. Note in both images the lack of dead wood on the forest floor and evidence of branch and tree cutting in both images. (*V Lisewski-Hobson, April 2016 (left) and October 2016 bottom (right).*

Blackcrag is advertised beyond the local area and though the site is omitted from most mainstream publications on walks in Derbyshire or the Peak District it has been featured in the press such as Derbyshire life magazine (2014) and the Independent newspaper (2012). A walk taking in the wood is also listed on the website '*Discover Derbyshire and the Peak District' (2018).* For climbers the crags in the wood feature in the British Mountaineering Council's (BMC) latest guidebook which was published in 2010.

7.3.2 Ownership perspectives and access issues

20 woodland users and seven local residents took part in the research for Blackcrag. The resident participant number is low, simply because there are few dwellings in the immediate area. All but one of the local residents visited the wood, the remaining participant explained simply:

> *I don't have a dog*.

The wood has two owners. Zone one was owned by an overseas investment company until the spring of 2018. The company did not reply to approaches to take

part in the research. The new owner, a local farmer, preferred to speak informally as did the owner of zones two and three who is also a farmer but well into retirement.

Blackcrag wood has a network of public footpaths and bridleways (figure 7.21) but 18% of people observed were using informal paths. This is a smaller proportion than in some of the other woods but is still almost 1 in 5 people. Some of these informal paths link to places of local social significance. Examples of these places are the emphatically engraved tor which sits at the South end of the crags (figure 7.16) and the copse of heavily carved beech trees (figure 7.17), which also, until mid-2017, were host to a rope swing. Isabel, an adult in her early 20s, said that the rope swing, along with the view from the crags, was her favourite thing about the wood. When she found the swing was gone she said she *'might cry'*. She went on to explain:

> *I used to come up here all the time when I was a kid, my parents brought me. We used to go up to the tor too.*

A young couple, walking hand in hand, asked for directions to the tor. Danny said:

> *I used to come here, when I was younger, I wanted to show her [girlfriend].*

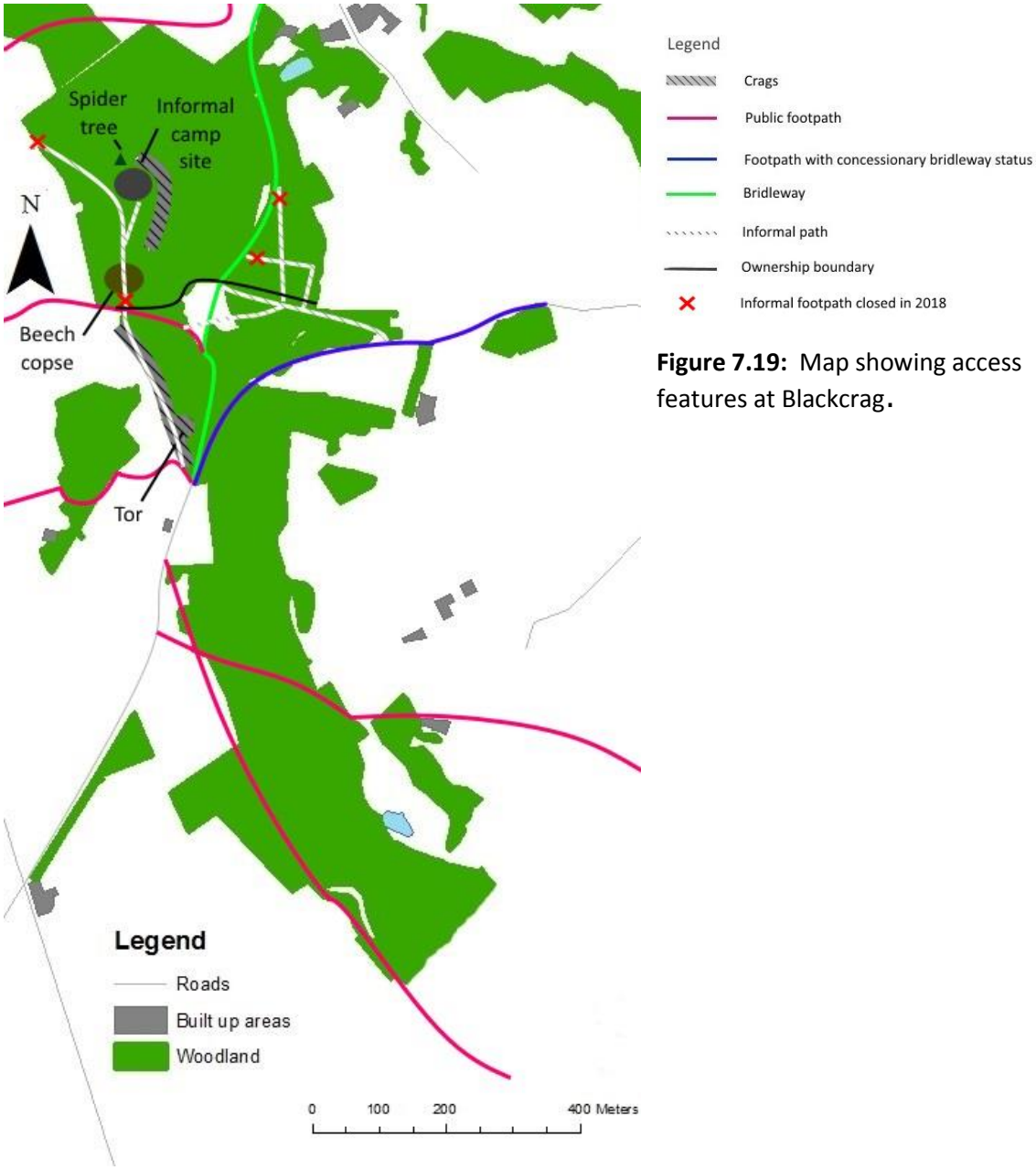


Figure 7.19: Map showing access features at Blackcrag.

Other features accessible via informal paths only are an unusual fallen tree known as the '*spider tree'* and the camp site featured in the last section. The spider tree was popular with families who enjoyed climbing it (figure 7.21). Stephanie and her family found great enjoyment in that part of the wood:

> *There's a great climbing tree up there, the kids love it. We call it the magical wood, it's all a bit druidy up there. The kids find it spooky, but that's just probably me telling them stories.*



Figure 7.21: Children climbing the spider tree in Blackcrag. *Taken with full consent of parents (Lisewski-Hobson, May 2017)*

The camp site features in a number of YouTube videos demonstrating bush craft and wild camping skills. One bush craft enthusiast has a vlog which gives detailed video instructions on how to get to the site referring to it as '*the bush craft forest'*.[38] A screenshot of the video can be seen in figure 7.22.



Figure 7.22: A screenshot from a bush craft vlog featuring the informal camping area in Blackcrag.

[38] https://ar-new.com/online/autumn-wildcamp-at-the-bushcraft-forest-[*]w.html

Craig, who was interviewed in Fenny banks, has used Blackcrag for bush craft and wild camping but didn't approve of all the publicity:

> *I used to camp up there but…there's these websites…they all advertise on YouTube and tell everyone exactly how to get there. There are groups of families camping there with massive tents… I don't know why they have to do this, 'oh look at me I'm on YouTube'. It's a right mess now…you should leave no trace. There's no deadwood anywhere so they've started hacking some of the trees down.*

Though this site is tidy compared to informal campsites in woods such as Norse and Potter's it is apparent that dead wood and some standing trees have been removed from the site (figure 7.20). There has also been some removal of rhododendron from the edge of the crag by the campsite. This is likely to be the work of climbers, who are removing an obstruction from this well advertised crag. Gordon was visiting from the west midlands and commented that the rhododendron needed removing from the crags. He'd come to the wood specifically to find the crag:

> *I'm doing a reccy for perhaps climbing here in the summer….it's in all the climbing mags.*

This is also the part of the crag listed by the BMC in their guidebook (Westlake, 2010). The guidebook says that the site is FC land and is therefore open access. This information is two decades out of date as the land formed part of a FC sell-off in the 1990s . At that point in time there were no access obligations, outside of the normal rights of way, passed onto buyers and so some access will have been lost, though clearly this wasn't necessarily noticed at the time, as the new buyer was an absentee investment company.

A small proportion of the participants also believed the site was still Forestry Commission, though the vast majority didn't know who the wood belonged to. At the time of study there were no signs relating to ownership but that all changed in early 2018 after the interviews took place. This is when a new owner, Jamie, took over the North section of the wood. Jamie is a nearby farmer, who said he was '*sick of all the noise'* from the campsite. He complained that people were taking drugs in there and said they dropped litter. He swiftly put up new signs prohibiting access to any of the informal paths in this half of the wood thus opposing access to the

camp site, climbing crag, spider tree and the beech copse (see figure 7.23). The beech copse has carvings dating back to the 1940s meaning that there are grounds to claim, at least some of the route, as a public footpath.



Figure 7.23: A new sign opposing access to the beech copse, the informal camp site, the climbing crag and the spider tree. (*V Lisewski-Hobson, May 2018)*

Ownership changed hands after the public interviews took place so any reaction from the public wasn't captured. However, Jamie admitted he's had some opposition but he retained an uncompromising mind-set:

> *I met someone up there who said, 'but I've been walking here for years' but I said, 'makes no difference to me, It's private, you shouldn't be here.*

Jamie also mentioned that mountain bikers were making new paths through the East side of the plantation (figure 7.24). He remarked:

> *It has been an absolute nightmare since we took the wood on, we don't want to change the wood, we'll just leave it as it is. We just want everyone to stick to the rules and stay on the paths they're supposed to be on. The mountain bikers and the campsite, it's just got too popular.*



Figure 7.24: An informal mountain bike trail through the east side of Jamie's wood.

Jamie repeatedly cited public liability as a reason to keep people out:

> *Someone might fall off a cliff or have an accident on a bike in here and then it'll be us that get sued, it would bankrupt us.*

Evidence from many other landowners in this study suggests that Jamie is likely to encounter plenty more resistance to his new restrictions. Stephanie, who uses the informal path on adventures with her children, was interviewed in the spring of 2017, before Jamie took over the wood:

> *I would disobey the rules anyway, I'm all for the Scottish way of thinking, this is my country and I'm going to walk on it. As long as you're being respectful and not leaving litter.*

Herbert talked about another wood he uses that has recently changed hands:

> *They're always trying to keep us out but we go there…everybody goes in.*

One of the other main places of social interest, the tor, is owned by a retired farmer, Violet. The path that provides access to the tor is informal but is nevertheless included in many of the on-line walking routes mentioned in the last section. However, the future of access to this spot is extremely precarious. Violet is in her 90s, she is now house bound and hasn't visited the wood for many years. She seemed unaware of how popular the wood has become:

> *Hardly anyone ever uses it, just the ramblers association sometimes.*

However, Malcolm, a nearby farmer, had noticed:

> *We're feeling increasingly encroached upon because it's increasing in popularity, especially at weekends.*

Violet gave the impression that she would not be at all happy if she knew:

> *I'm a member of the Country Land Owner's Association. That tells you everything you need to know…. It's peaceful and tranquil around here and that's the way I want it to stay. I just want to live in my own little bubble, I don't want to see any other people*.

Some woodland users shared some of her sentiment. Ruth, a local walker, was starting to find the wood a little too busy:

> *We used to feel like this is our wood but it's becoming much more popular, it must be published somewhere but we don't know where.*

Violet has no heirs, so her wood will inevitably change hands in the near future. Access to the tor, all of its carvings and its views hang in the balance. The informal route is undoubtedly claimable but whether enough people will get together to make that happen is another matter.

At the time of the public interviews, people were generally not too worried about access. 12 out of the 20 woodland users seemed oblivious to the status of the paths, taking their use for granted. Around a quarter of the people said they think it is OK to use any paths. Vernon was one, he said:

> *As long as I'm not damaging anything I don't see a problem.*

A minority of people were a little worried about the paths. Eddie, who uses the wood for fell running, was one:

> *I'd much rather it was in public ownership. If the landowner changes they might try to restrict access.*

Eddie has very concisely highlighted what looks like one of the most major issues for access affecting access to English woodlands today.

7.3.3 Positive aspects of using and living near woodland

This section explores the positive aspects of woodland as reported by members of the public using the woods and those occupying nearby housing. Interviews were coded thematically and are summarised in tables 7.6 and 7.7.

Overarching theme	Sub-themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Health and Well-being	**Peace/Quiet/Solitude (10)** Fitness (3)	Therapeutic; Fresh air; socialising
Nature appreciation	**Trees (9)** inc. Larch (4) Views (6) Bluebells (2) Birds (2)	Broadleaf trees; Rocks; Badgers; Woodland antiquity. Seasonality: Spring; Autumn
Heritage	**Historical interest (7)**	Romanticisation of past
Practical	Pub walks (2)	Rope swing; clear paths; lots of paths; circular walks; Freedom for dog; Away from livestock
Other	Exploration (3)	
Emotional responses	Nostalgia (2)	Sense of place; Excitement; Mystery; Emotional significance.

Table 7.6: Positive themes from 20 woodland users at Blackcrag

Overarching theme	Sub-themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Health and Well-being	**Peace/Quiet/Solitude (7)**	Clear my head; Fresh air; Serenity
Practical	**Nice walks (3)**	Large size; Expanding; provides shelter;
Nature appreciation	**Views (2)** **Seasonality: Autumn (2)** **Seasonality: Spring (2)**	Bluebells; trees; foxes; badgers; Changing seasons
Quality of life	**Visual aesthetics (2)**	Privacy
Heritage	**Historical interest (2)**	
Emotional responses		Magical

Table 7.7: Positive themes from seven local residents at Blackcrag

Like all of the case study sites, with the exception of Langley, the theme Peace/Quiet/Solitude comes out top with both the woodland users and the local residents. Malcolm explained why he likes living near the woods, he talked of tranquillity but it also offer privacy:

> *It feels protective to have a wood around you. Nothing encroaches on woodlands, nothing takes place, it's a tranquil oasis. It's part of our cocoon, if it was open farmland, we'd see more people and it would intrude on our life. It has got busier over the last few years but we can't see them.*

For Harry it was just about getting away from the crowds:

> *I don't like walking where there's hordes of people.*

As with all of the previous sites, nature appreciation featured heavily among positive comments. The trees and particularly the larch, which occupy the Northern border of the old lead mine (figure 7.25). Maureen says:

> *I like the larch, they always look nice in the spring and in the autumn.*



Figure 7.25: The larch bordering the old mine was popular with woodland users. (*Lisewski-Hobson, June 2016.)*

Though the subject of historical interest has come up as a minor theme in all of the other sites, at Blackcrag it was much more commonly talked about. There is a lot of history to the site and for many people that really added to the wood's attraction. Eddie demonstrated a strong emotional response to the historic features at the site:

> *You just get a real sense of history when you're here. It's obvious that's it's been a real place of significance for generations. I find all the graffiti interesting on the tor even though in a lot of other places I would see it as vandalism. There it fits with the place... The old mining ruins too... I like looking around them and trying to guess what they might have been used for and picturing the people and their lives.*

Other comments related to the nice walks available through the wood and some people enjoyed the fact that a walk could be created with a pub either end of it.

7.3.4 Activities and Issues

Table 7.8 shows a summary of the people observations in Blackcrag wood.

Hours of Observation	32:41
No of people observed	155
Adult Male/Female split	91/51
Mean people/hour	4.8
Average group size	2.5
Distance travelled <1/1-5/>5 (miles)*	1/7/12
Local/Visitor split*	1/19
Transport split foot/car/bus*	9/9/1
Walkers with dogs	37
Walkers without dogs	92
Cyclists	15
Equestrians	0
Runners	14
Young people socialising	0
Other	12

Table 7.8: Basic statistics for Blackcrag. *These data are for interviewees only, all interviewees were on foot.

Despite the complaints from both landowners and the public that Blackcrag was getting too busy, observations found it to be relatively quiet with a mean of 4.8 visitors per hour compared to Brook Forest (8.4) and Langley (12.7). Another difference is the number of visitors compared to locals, people travelled further to access this wood, some from a considerable distance away such as Birmingham, Leicester and Sheffield. Evidence suggests that Blackcrag is a clear example of a destination woodland. Wilfred was walking with two of his friends. They had caught the bus to a nearby village from Sheffield:

> *We often come to this area, we've been many times and we've invented a walk that includes this bit. It's very practical and it meets up with lots of other footpaths.*

Many of those who lived more than a mile away walked, rather than drove. Vernon was on a long walk straight from his door. At Blackcrag he was about nine miles from home. He'd remembered the wood from when he was younger:

> *I've not been for years, used to go a lot when I was young, with my Dad.*

People who did drive often walked part of the way after leaving their car in a nearby town. There was no parking close to the wood, as even access to the nearby hamlet was private and excluded motor vehicles (see figure 7.26).



Figure 7.26: A sign detailing access restriction on the road approaching Blackcrag wood. (*Lisewski-Hobson, April, 2016*)

The comparatively low proportion of walkers with dogs is probably partially related to the motivation of the woodland users, for most of them walking is their primary reason for visiting, not simply exercising a dog. This is different to most of the other woods where many people are there just for their dogs. An underlying factor relating to this is the fact that few people live close to the wood and it is difficult to access by car. There is also a gender imbalance at Blackcrag, where almost two thirds of those observed were male. It may be that long distance walking is more popular amongst males, though further research would be needed to confirm this.

For this site 12 people observed were categorised as 'other'. Two were camping, five were picnicking on the crags or the edge of the old lead mine. Five were using

motorcycles illegally on the bridleway. Some were witnessed speeding up to jump over the pony hops installed to prevent their presence (see figure 7.27).



Figure 7.27: The North entrance to the bridleway that passes through the woods. Here a pony hop has been installed to prevent motorcycle use, however the motorcyclists were witnessed speeding up to jump over it. They left slight damage to the wood which can be seen in the picture. (*Lisewski-Hobson, February 2017)*

Tables 7.9 and 7.10 show the results of a thematic analysis of issues raised by members of the public participating in the study.

Overarching theme	Sub-themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	**Motorbikes (6)**	Litter; Dog waste bags; 4x4s; Fires; People drinking; Illegal tree felling
Practical	Mud and slippery paths (5) Trees hide views (3)	Needs more paths; too steep;
Management	Rhododendrons (4)	Coniferised
Fear	Development anxiety (3)	Unfriendly locals; Personal security; Aggressive dogs
Access	Concern about private landowners refusing access (2)	Overgrown paths; getting too popular; misleading signs
Lack of facilities		Car parking; Mountain bike trails; Toilets
Other		Social unease (walking without a dog); Lack of cultural diversity
Controversial use		Mountain bikes

Table 7.9: Issue related themes for 20 woodland visitors

Overarching theme	Sub- themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	**Motorbikes (4)**	Quad bikes; Fires
Access	**Getting too popular (2)**	
Practical		Uneven ground; Mineshafts
Management		Lack of management; Clearing fallen trees
Fear		Youths

Table 7.10: Issue related themes from seven residents.

From the table it is clear that, as with Brook Forest, motorbikes were a real issue for members of the public. Andrew was walking his dog, he talked about motorbikes and mountain bikes. For him, mountain bikes are the lesser of two evils and it was the motorbikes that prevent him from experiencing the peace and calm he is seeking in the wood:

> *They put those pony gates in to stop them but…the bottom is all full of mud so you can ride over them. They erode the footpaths, well I suppose the mountain bikes do to an extent… It's the noise they make and they're so disrespectful, and I suppose some of the mountain bikers are too, but they [the motorcyclists] don't care about other people who come here for some peace and quiet, they spoil it.*

Shane, a local resident felt that their presence was hazardous:

> *It's dangerous because it's just a single track. There's hundreds of walkers with babies and dogs. They [trail bikers] come in really big groups sometimes. They come from [a nearby quarry] which is set up specifically for them, but I think some of them get a bit bored and so go off free range.*

The landowners didn't highlight it as a current problem. Violet mentioned the subject though she thought the problem had be solved. Jamie, did not bring up the subject though he is a motorbike owner himself and uses it on the bridleway to access his part of the wood.

7.3.5 Summary of Blackcrag wood

Blackcrag is a destination woodland filled with interesting historic features from the old lead mine and the engine chimney to the prolifically carved tor. These features were of great interest to many of the woodland users interviewed. The wood is also well used by bush craft and wild camping enthusiasts and the crags are attractive to climbers. These features, along with walks taking in the wood,

including the tor are widely advertised and evidence from interviews suggests that the wood has become more popular in recent years.

However, many of the features that attract people to the wood are only accessible via informal paths. The Northern half of the wood has recently been taken over by a new land owner who is attempting to prevent this access. Early evidence suggests this will be met with some resistance from the public, though whether they have the legal know-how or inclination to make a footpath claim, remains to be seen. Meanwhile the south section of the wood is also likely to be sold in the near future, putting access to the tor in jeopardy.

Like most of the other sites people were attracted to the wood to experience peace, calm or solitude though illegal motorcycle use challenges that ideal. Motorcycle use dominated conversations about issues in the wood.

Chapter 8 – Comparative analysis of the case studies and additional perspectives from Cyclists and Horse riders

8.1 Introduction

This chapter offers the opportunity to reflect on the case studies as a whole and in addition consider the perspectives of cyclists and equestrians whose viewpoints were under-represented in the case studies.

8.2 Case studies – A comparative analysis

To summarise all of the case studies from chapters 5-7 a number of aspects will be discussed:

- Basic use statistics – who is using which woods and how
- Landowners approaches and access issues
- Positive themes and their relationship with woodland use issues

Basic use statistics

Table 8.1 displays some basic statistics for the case study sites. An immediate pattern is that the more urban woods had very high proportions of local users as opposed to visitors who had travelled to the site. This links with the important theme of proximity identified for these sites. The theme of proximity came up widely in the literature including in Jones and Crowe's (1996) study of Wakefield parks. Conversely the rural sites received a much larger proportion of visitors who had travelled more than five miles.

The two woods with the fewest visitors were Potter's and Fenny Banks, despite the fact that there were a considerable number of potential visitors from ample nearby housing. However, these two sites were also the ones where confusion about access was strongest among members of the public. For these privately owned woods the public did not know who the woods belonged to and were often confused about whether they were allowed to be in there. This has affected some

people's willingness to use the woods and therefore the overall participation rates. The Potter's Plantation contained old prohibitive signs which did put off some of the participants in this study, though not all.

Site	Potters & Norse Plantations	Tanner's plantation	Brook Forest	Fenny Banks	Langley & Huntswood Parks	Blackcrag wood	Large wood mean
Visitors/ Hr	1.7	3.3	8.4	1.4	10.3	4.8	5.4
% locals	92.3	100	65	65	35	5	-
% of walkers with dogs	83.8	88.1	57.2	66.7	73.4	28.7	62.6
Largest non-walker category (%)	Young people socialising (4)	Young people socialising (4)	Cyclists (8)	Cyclists (14.7)	Equestrians (22.4)	Cyclists (9.7)	Cyclists (13.8)
% Informal access	100	43.1	38	100	0 (Langley is open access)	18	38.6

Table 8.1: Overall statistics

Related to the fact that the urban fringe and peri-urban woods received a lower proportion of travelling visitors than the rural woods is their tendency to have a higher proportion of walkers with dogs. Blackcrag wood was the only one where walkers with dogs were outnumbered by those without. Both Blackcrag and Brook Forest were on the route of advertised long-distance walks attracting more people without dogs and those with dogs who walk primarily for themselves. Many of those with dogs at sites with a high proportion of locals rather than visitors stated that they were just there to exercise the dog. At some of the sites, even rural ones such as Blackcrag, not having a dog was cited as a reason for not using the woods. In some of the interviews there were hints of a taboo relating to being in the woods without a dog. Howard was walking through Blackcrag and started his interview by justifying why he was in the wood, he went on to say:

> *I feel a bit uncomfortable walking alone without a dog in case people think I'm up to no good or some sort of weirdo*.

Pat, one of the Joint owners of Brook forest gave a woman's perspective on the issue:

> *When…you see somebody that you don't know who hasn't got a dog. What are they doing? Why are they here? And they might be doing it because they've had a heart attack…or whatever but you're always slightly more wary as a female of a man who hasn't got a dog, who's walking in woods.*

Several people mentioned borrowing dogs so they could go on walks, Dan was walking in Brook Forests:

> *We borrowed the dog to start off, he's my brother's, we just started walking him and we really got into it. It's been a real lifestyle change for us.*

After walkers, cyclists tended to be the next largest category of recreationalists, this was in line with the overall statistics for all 21 of the large woods in this study. However, in Langley and Huntswood they were overtaken by horse riders. Almost a quarter of people using these woods were on horseback here which is an atypically high proportion.

Informal access was occurring everywhere except at Huntswood and Langley. Langley is open access, so by definition all routes are formally sanctioned, but Huntswood is the only site where the land owner has managed to prevent the creation of additional paths.

Landowner approaches and access issues

Two local authorities were owners or part owners of two of the sites (Tanner's and Langley). The local authorities both operated a system of informal open access, partly because they feel the land belongs to the people and partly because they believe any attempts to keep them out will be futile.

Of the others, there are three main types of owners: Absentee investors, country estates and private individuals. Potter's, Fenny Banks, Part of Tanner's and (formally) part of Blackcrag were all owned by absentee companies who bought the land for investment purposes. With the exception of the Potter's owners, these have all tended to leave the woods almost completely to their own devices and take no interest in public use. They equally took no interest in this study so their perspectives cannot be added.

The two country estates involved have employed mixed approaches to the management of public access. The owners of Huntswood Park have split their portfolio into amenity woodlands and commercial woodlands. The commercial woodlands are used for forestry and game shooting. Access there is guarded fiercely, while at some of the smaller woods they ignore any trespass. Peter explained that:

> *It's a very large estate and we can afford to keep woodland for habitat and amenity.*

The other estate, the former owners of the whole of Brook Forest, has had a relatively recent change in land agent resulting in an alteration of policy towards the wood. Previously taking a more liberal approach to access, they converted to a much more business minded, objectives driven approach. Risk management is now the dominant motivation for them and when they realised they could not control access it became a major factor in their decision to sell off the woods.

Private individuals own most of Brook Forest and all of Blackcrag now. At Blackcrag the owners are farmers but their general approach is similar to the other private individuals, they all take an active interest in their woods and most are making attempts to restrict the public to official routes and permitted activities. Even Matt at Brook Forest, who has reasonably sympathetic views on public use of the wood, does not wish any further access on his land. William too, who has left wing views and sympathies that tend to lie with ordinary people rather than landowners has eventually fenced off his land. William has a small area that is occupied most of the time and is the only one who has successfully managed to control public behaviour. For all of the other land owners any new attempts to restrict access have met formidable opposition. Certain members of the public have taken offence to signage which have been frequently removed. It seems that any landowner who wants to challenge the local traditions of the wood will have a battle on their hands. Huntswood isn't challenged because any restrictions on access occurred a very long time ago.

The public have only claimed one footpath through official channels, at Tanner's, and this failed. Awareness of any legal mechanisms to claim paths was extremely low and it seems the public prefer to employ passive resistance by ignoring or removing signs. However, there is evidence that some people are put off by landowner attempts to keep them out.

Most of the land owners were concerned about public liability though control and privacy were also major factors. Land owners found motorbikes and quad bikes problematic and at Brook Forest mountain bikers are being resisted on safety grounds. Most land owners do not have major issues with horses or walkers, though they were keen for people to stick to official rights of way in most cases. The case of Blackcrag highlights issues surrounding bush crafts and camping where a well-established informal bush camp was clamped down on by the new landowner. The rapid growth of forest schools encourages such activities in children, however there are no known cases in either the case studies or the wider study sample where a landowner is happy for people to use their woods for such purposes once they are beyond forest school age (typically 11). Even public and charitable organisations do not allow informal camping or bush craft. Therefore there is a huge mismatch in what children are encouraged to do and what they are actually able to legally carry out once they leave primary education. This is added to the general unease often reported by adult woodland users to the presence of adolescents in the outdoor environment (Ward Thompson, 2007).

Positive themes and their relationship with woodland use issues

With the exception of Langley, the majority of woodland users and local residents were seeking peace, quiet or calm when they used the woods. This sentiment was shared with many of the landowners and was closely related to a desire to achieve solitude for some people. This links with complaints about woodlands getting too busy and especially with an almost universal dislike of motorbikes and quad bikes using the woods.

People were seeking quiet enjoyment and this is a different value set to those who pursue more adrenaline fuelled activities such as motorcycling and even mountain biking. It is also different from the more sociable uses of the wood popular at Langley and to some extent Tanner's.

What was surprising from these case studies was the lack of opposition to cyclists from members of the public. Though Cessford (2003), suggests that walkers with experience of mountain bikers tended to have more positive attitudes towards them than those without. Certainly at Brook Forest, most local users will have been co-existing with the mountain bikers for some time. Other sources would suggest that cyclists can be the focus of a great deal of vitriol (Carothers et al. 2001 and Sheriff & Schliwa, 2015). One theory is that they do not impact significantly on the achievement of peace, quiet and tranquillity, mainly because many of them use informal routes away from pedestrians but also because they do not make a noise incongruent with the expectations of other recreational users (Brambillia & Maffei, 2006), unlike the almost universally unpopular motorcyclists. Cyclists can cause damage to pathway surfaces but this is not as severe as any damaged caused by motorcycles and horses. It is probable that any negative feelings towards cyclists are merely overshadowed by stronger responses to motorcyclists in particular but also to equestrian users. The antagonism towards horse riders at Langley and Huntswood may be related to the sheer quantity (almost 1 in 4 visitors) of equestrian users and also the commercial aspect of the trekking centre which may challenge the public's sense of fairness.

The presence of young people using the woods was a big theme for the urban-fringe Potter's and Norse, but despite having similar amounts of usage by young people this was not echoed at the other urban fringe site, Tanner's. Tanner's seemed to have a sense of community ownership in addition to other distractions, namely the travellers living close by. Here woodland users seemed to recognise the importance of the wood to young people as set out by Owens (1988). The presence of young people wasn't significantly felt at the peri-urban or rural sites.

Another issue asserted most strongly in the urban fringe sites and also the peri-urban woods was development anxiety. People cared about their green spaces and the wildlife in them, with nature appreciation being another big theme. This great enthusiasm for nature and also the desire for peace and solitude link to the general lack of demand for additional facilities, though there was some demand at Langley, which was almost as much of a social space as a place to seek quiet. Charlie, at Fenny Banks, had a similar view to many others interviewed:

> *If it was improved too much, like if they put bridges in across the brook, it would get pretty busy so leaving it natural is nice.*

Similarly, Dawn approved of the lack of car parking at Fenny banks:

> *I love the peace and quiet, it's never busy… We see more people in the other wood across the road…lots of dog walkers because you can park at the entrance of it.*

However, all of this presents a challenge for policy makers. Delivering the health and well-being benefits of woodland, of which peace and solitude are vital elements to many more people requires a considerable increase in supply. 78.5% of the woods in this study are privately owned by landowners who typically wish to avoid granting further access.

8.3 Additional perspectives from cyclists and equestrian users

This section brings in opinions from cyclists and equestrian users who took part in interviews or focus groups in the winter of 2017. Only 15.5% of the woods in this sample had any official access for horses and cyclists. Graham, a walker interviewed in January 2018, had noticed this deficiency. He represents rambling interests on a local authority advisory group, and commented that:

> *We know there's not enough bridleways in Derbyshire and the only way to secure that is for the cyclists and the horse riders to get together and claim some.*

The local equestrian group who participated in this research are extremely active in claiming bridleways either using the 20 years of use rule or the, soon to be dissolved, Pre-1949 historical evidence route. There was some evidence that higher rights users were starting to co-operate at a local level with the equestrian group

regularly corresponding with a cycling representative who they hope will contribute to some of the bridleway claims. Cyclists and equestrian users, who formed part of an organised group were making a clear effort to think of each other as allies rather than adversaries. This is in-line with the tone of the recent Cycling UK report (2017) and the policy line of The British Horse Society (2018). However, individuals interviewed outside of the formalised groups occasionally let underlying hostilities slip. May had a clear animosity towards cyclists:

> *I hate cyclists, they come whizzing past and the horses just can't cope with it, I was leading [young daughter] out and they startled the horse, it's really dangerous, and there was that one the other week that killed a pedestrian.*[39]

Stephanie is a mountain biker who was interviewed in Blackcrag wood:

> *Horse riders, they come in here sometimes, which is annoying because they're scared of mountain bikes. Cyclists and horses don't mix. Whenever a horse starts getting a bit out of hand it's always…somebody else's fault when they're the ones riding around on wild animals. There was one time when I was cycling with my friend and we stopped because there were some horses, we weren't going that fast but when I broke my brakes squeaked. The horse didn't like it and so the woman gave me a mouth full…, I don't know what they expect you to do.*

The culture of the two recreationalist groups could not be more different. While the equestrian users were well networked and organised, local cycling groups and individuals connected to the specific sites in this study were reluctant to involve themselves in research of this kind. Interviews with these individuals were informal and conducted either via social media or during brief conversations in situ as they were encountered in the woods. The focus group eventually assembled contained only three participants and relied heavily on personal connections, where trust was easier to establish. Bill commented on the reluctance of some individuals to take part:

> *Some of them said to me about coming here tonight, they weren't that keen because they didn't want to make their views known or didn't want to feel as though they were being spied on.*

[39] This was a famous, but extremely exceptional, case reported in the national press. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/sep/18/cyclist-charlie-alliston-jailed-for-18-months-over-death-of-pedestrian

Frankie agreed to an informal interview but he didn't really understand what mountain bikers had to gain from the study:

> *I don't really get the point of the study, there are plenty of places to go, paths everywhere*
> *(VL) - But you only have a legal right to be on the bridleways*
> *I've never really thought about what's legal and what isn't, you can go on paths to get to trails though can't you? What can they do anyway?, I'm not damaging anything.*

It was clearly the case that in a lot of places cyclists were happily using footpaths virtually unchallenged in order to connect to bridleways. They therefore might have felt that exposing this fact would not do them any good. Bill, who claimed to be playing devil's advocate, also challenged what cyclists have got to gain from participating in the study:

> *Is there really any point in highlighting these things when what we're doing at the moment really doesn't cause much of an issue. I mean, OK there are people who don't like us doing what we do and where we do it but I think that will always be the case and will probably be the case even if we're doing it legally.*

Bill might have been surprised to know how sympathetic the general public were to the cause of off-road cyclists (see chapter 6). Carl though, recognised that the public are becoming much more accepting:

> *The negativity towards us has reduced a lot since we started in the early 90s when mountain biking was a new thing and were regarded as hooligans.*

This change in attitudes that Carl reported probably reflects the transition from Mountain Biking as a new and unknown, and therefore feared, recreational pursuit to a more established sport which members of the public have now had much more direct experience of (Cessford, 2003 and Clark et al., 1994).

For off-road cyclists it can be difficult to avoid using public footpaths, or *'cheeky trails'* as they are often referred to. Bill explains:

> *There are very few rides that we could do which are totally legal, obviously around here the opportunities to go on bridle paths are limited and they obviously always have to be joined up by tarmac and so what we've always tried to do is to stay off road as much as we can.*

However, not all cyclists were willing to use footpaths, such as Larry:

I wouldn't dream of cycling on a public footpath.

Heather explains that her attempts to stay within the law have resulted in her cycling on the roads instead:

I stick to the bridleways. I've only gone on footpaths a couple of times. One of those I just went the wrong way by accident and the other was when the bridleway was closed and so I had to use a footpath to get back onto the road… To be honest it's hard to make a decent route where I live so I've started road cycling.

Hazel feels that the few bridleways available in Derbyshire are just too busy and has also taken to road cycling:

I used to Mountain bike quite a lot when I lived in Sheffield, the trouble round here is that there's just too many pedestrians on the bridleways so you can never really relax and get into a flow, you're constantly having to stop to give way. So I've basically given up and started going out on the roads.

Aidan wanted to make use of a concessionary bridleway he'd heard about, he tried to access the local authorities definitive map, not realising that these were not included on any official maps (see section 2.2.1 for explanation):

I tried to look at that [the definitive map] because I heard there was a concessionary bridleway but I couldn't see it.

Aidan was in two minds about straying off the public rights of way:

I very much try to stick to the rights of way, there are certain paths that I've discovered whilst sticking to those rights of way and I've thought, ah, I bet I can nip down there and I've done it and I've got away with it and I've found that actually hardly anyone ever seems to use those paths so why not.

When Aidan gets into a woodland he feels excited by the possibilities of all the different paths they offer:

You find that when you're crossing open land there's one path, when you get into a woodland, boom, it's like the routes through the trees, suddenly you can go wherever you want, you can ride different lines.

It is fair to summarise that there is inadequate legal provision for mountain bikers wishing to use bridleways and multi-use trails in Derbyshire. Concessionary routes are a good addition in theory but they are difficult to plan into routes when they are not included in maps. At grass roots level, rather than challenging the system in an organised way or working together to claim routes, cyclists have simply adapted.

Those that ride illegally on footpaths or informal routes have experienced little opposition while others who are not comfortable with straying from the legal routes have found themselves with few options and so have started cycling on the roads. The county also lacks any substantial circuits dedicated to mountain bikers as Anita explained:

> *There's not really much in Derbyshire for Mountain bikers, proper graded trails, Sherwood pines is the nearest one. Walkers are always favoured, there are so many woods I would use if they were better set up for mountain bikes and we could have our own trails without people walking on there.*

As Anita says the nearest major facilities are at Sherwood Pines in Nottinghamshire. There is also Cannock Chase in Staffordshire or Lady Cannings in South Yorkshire. However, the county council have recently developed two blue grade trails in the North of Bolsover district. These are easy trails, suitable for cyclists with only basic off-road riding skills.[40]

Charlie agreed with Anita that dedicated off-road trails are important. He also explained why woods are important for mountain bikers:

> *I like the woodlands best. They're slightly unpredictable and quite fast…. There are natural hazards like roots and rocks and it keeps changing, if you did that on the moors it would just look like a skate park, I like it to look natural.*

Many mountain bikers saw themselves as extreme sports people and the style of cycling they wish to undertake can be incompatible with the safety needs of other recreational users. Steve described his experiences on multi-user routes:

> *If there are people you have to give way to them and you end up constantly stopping especially when there's dogs as they're so unpredictable. I used to even cycle in streams to avoid people… I want to go as fast as I can, it's a real adrenaline thing you know you might injure yourself but that's exciting.*

Equestrian users do not feel the need for separate provision but they are passionate about creating more off-road, particularly circular routes, they can use safely away from cars. While cyclists can usually control their bikes in hazardous situations, horses are spirited, independent, prey animals that can be easily

[40] https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/walking/walks-and-trails/stockley-trail.aspx

frightened. This puts themselves and their riders at serious risk of injury making it particularly dangerous for horse riders on roads, or on trails where other recreational users are not behaving responsibly. In Derbyshire there are several local groups, affiliated to the British Horse Society, who work together to improve the network of Bridleways. One of these organisations hosted a well-attended focus group from which most of the comments in this section derive. They spend a lot of energy using official channels to create more bridleways and join up existing routes. Part of their efforts is to persuade land owners to give official access voluntarily through EDCL (see chapter 2.2). This is a much less bureaucratic route to making a bridleway official than the normal adversarial method. The group are also involved in the maintenance and improvement of bridleways.

Just like the walkers and cyclists, horse riders admitted to trespassing on footpaths and other routes. However, they felt that their options were more limited because of the room they need, the difficulty they have passing through gates and stiles and because of their general visibility. Elizabeth explained that most routes are not suitable for horses:

> *You'd break your neck if you hit a low branch, so they need to be cleared, and if there's tracks with small saplings on they need clearing for horse access.*

Some of the others explained how they felt uncomfortable trespassing on a horse:

Deborah:	*If you're trespassing on a horse you feel a lot more guilty than trespassing when you're walking a dog.*
Abigale:	*You're more visible*
Fran:	*You are more noticeable on a horse yeah*

Their reluctance or inability to trespass may be contributing to the determination of equestrian users to claim more legitimate routes. Added to that, any successful claims for new bridleways come with a legal obligation for the local authority to keep it in a condition suitable for horses. However, recently this has been happening less often. Elizabeth pointed out problems with overgrown vegetation:

> *Countryside services have had a staffing cut and they haven't cleared those bridleways. It's normally done.*

She also argued that this obligation on councils, who are also responsible for decision making on the official designation of routes, has created a conflict of interest. Elizabeth believes this has led to a historic reduction in bridleways:

> *Unfortunately they got downgraded because it's cheaper for the council, this is where it's all gone horribly wrong. We know from historical evidence that it was a bridleway*

Carol and Elizabeth both vented their frustration on the lack of action on the part of central government:

Carol: *The government should appoint people to go and restore our bridleways.*

Elizabeth: *There's been thousands spent into looking at how they can improve rights of way and it's just been kicked into the long grass, maybe it's because they've not got the money, there's hardly any staff on DEFRA*

However, the group were very mindful of how much damage horses can cause to path surfaces:

Deborah: *It's difficult for horse riders…because you actually mess up the paths don't you when you're on horses.*
Carol: *We do tend to churn them up when they're just mud, they get into disrepair, for us to use all year round.*
Deborah: *And also you know you're messing it up for walkers.*
Abigail: *Yeah…and then we don't have a good relationship with the rest of the general public.*

The group did express a few difficulties with some cyclists who ride fast. Though Abigail had a particularly nasty encounter with a motorcyclist:

> *They ran me off the track. The horse bolted and they carried on going, I ended up in a ditch with the horse on top of me…I could see he'd have to tread on me to get up so I just curled up.*

There were differing opinions on the solution:

Fran: *Everyone needs to be educated about what to do when there are horses.*
Elizabeth: *Did anyone see the parliamentary debate, it was sent by peak horse power… they're trying to stop more of the unclassified green lanes becoming byways open to all traffic.*

Elizabeth also felt that a lot of inter-recreationalist issues were simply because the lack of provision forced everyone to interact at higher densities. She went on:

> *If we had more access, there'd be more of a spread rather just concentrated on a few places.*

However, the group recognised there was a general reluctance on the part of land owners to voluntarily dedicate bridleways. Reasons they felt were important were a risk of motorcycle use but also public liability. They, in common with the members of the cycling focus group, and the public in chapter 6 felt that a lowering of liability would be a sensible step:

> Deborah: *Landowners are all about insurance aren't they, what happens if someone has an accident?*
> Carol: *Lowering liability would work in our favour*

The group described a scheme called ' toll rides'[41] which solves the insurance problem and pays landowners to allow access for horses. However, it hasn't worked very well in their locality. Elizabeth highlighted another issue concerning fragmentation in ownership:

> *It worked when you'd got really big estates because the farmers were paid so much per mile but round here, the ownership is so fragmented, every time I've looked at a bit of land we could hardly get anything, it just didn't work out.*

Overall both cyclists and equestrians found access to be inadequate in North East Derbyshire. Some of the cyclists in less busy areas simply used footpaths but all of the other users found the higher rights provision limiting or even dangerous. Increasing provision to reduce the density of users on multi use trails sounds sensible, as does increasing mountain bike only provision for sports cyclists whose behaviour causes conflict with other users.

[41] https://www.tollrides.org.uk/

Chapter 9. Landowners' perspectives on access

9.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to further examine the positions of landowners and any implications for the future of public access. The chapter is split into three sections, firstly exploring landowners' objectives and motivations, then examining their experiences of public access and finally it will analyse the landowners attitudes towards public access.

25 Landowners were interviewed in the Autumn of 2017. Most took part in semi-structured (SS) interviews of approximately one hour, some preferred shorter informal interviews (II) while two provided a written statement (WS). Table 9.1 offers a summary of the landowners with some brief details of their woods as well as their personal backgrounds and objectives. The participant landowners include every sector of ownership found in the sample. The table can be used as a reference throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Table 9.1: Summary of land owners involved in the study. Colours separate the main categories of landowners by sector. (Plot) denotes that only part of a wood in multiple ownership is owned.

No.	**Pseudonym**	**Interview type**	**Sector**	**Wood owned** (in sample)	**Participant background**	**Personal involvement in woods**	**Primary objectives** (in order of importance)
1	**Gareth**	SS	Private country estate: Land agent	9 woods and 1 plot. Ancient and Longstanding	Farming	None	Landscape value; Risk minimisation; Shooting
2	**Mary**	WS	Private country estate: Land agent	Large. Ancient	Not known	Not known	Shooting; Forestry; Conservation
3	**Pamela**	SS	Private country estate: Joint owner	Small. Longstanding. (Plot)	Farming	Lives within 300m of wood but no longer visits	None
4	**Peter**	SS	Private country estate: Land agent	10 woods. Ancient and Longstanding	Land management	Minimal	Forestry; Shooting; Public Amenity
5	**Simon**	WS	Private country estate: Land agent	2 woods. Ancient	Not known	Not known	Forestry; Shooting; Landscape value
6	**Stefan**	II	Private country estate: Head landscape gardener	Multiple. Ancient and Longstanding	Horticulture	Works in the wood on a daily basis	Landscape value; Profit
7	**Adam**	SS	Private corporate: Public relations manager	Post OS first edition	Farming	Minimal, does not live locally	Conservation; Landscape value;
8	**Debbie**	SS	Private corporate: Small business owner	Large. Longstanding	Business: Combat games	Works in the wood on a weekly basis	Personal enjoyment: combat games
9	**Robert**	SS	Private corporate CEO	Large. Longstanding	Business: Manufacturing	Minimal, lives around 10 miles from wood	Investment; Risk management
10	**Roger**	SS	Private individual	Large. Ancient. (Plot)	Business: Property investment	Weekly though sometimes spends extended periods abroad. Shoots in the wood but has not yet extracted any timber. Lives within 10 miles.	Investment; Profit; Personal wood supply; Personal recreation
11	**Matt**	SS	Private individual	Large. Ancient. (Plot)	Academic: Forestry	Fortnightly, has extracted timber with horses. Lives more than 50 miles away.	Forestry; Conservation; Personal development; Public amenity
12	**Sandra**	SS	Private individual	Glade in ancient woodland. (Plot)	Clerical (retired)	Lives in the glade.	Personal recreation (retirement retreat)

13	**Tim**	SS	Private individual	Large. Ancient. (Plot)	Business: Manufacturing	Visits every few days, extracts timber himself. Lives 30 miles away	Personal recreation; Personal wood supply
14	**Victoria**	SS	Private individual	Small. Recently established. (Plot)	Farming; Education	Visits sporadically, extracts firewood herself. Lives around 5 miles away	Personal recreation; Forestry experience
15	**William**	SS	Private individual	Glade in ancient woodland. (Plot)	Horticulture	Lives in glade.	Off grid dwelling (peace and wellbeing); Permaculture
16	**Ethan**	II	Private Farmer	Small. Recently established. (Plot)	Farming	Lives adjacent to wood, visits regularly, has not done any significant management.	Conservation; Personal wood supply
17	**Jamie**	II	Private Farmer	Large. Ancient. (Plot)	Farming	Lives within 300m of wood. Visits frequently.	Investment; Public access limitation
18	**Violet**	II	Private Farmer (retired)	Large. Ancient. (Plot)	Farming	Lives within 200m of wood but has not visited for years. Has little awareness of what happens there.	Privacy; Peace
19	**Zoe**	SS	Private Farmer	Small. Recently established. (Plot)	Academic: Micro-biology	Lives within 200m, uses the wood for livestock shelter.	Personal recreation; Personal wood supply; Conservation
20	**Mark (pilot)**	SS	Charity: Trustee	Large. Ancient. (Plot)	Business; Farming	Lives within 500m, visits regularly and manages the wood with the help of other volunteers.	Conservation; Education
21	**Owen**	SS	Charity: Regional manager	Small. Longstanding	Forestry	Lives 100 miles away, visits twice per year.	Conservation; Public amenity; Education
22	**David**	SS	Public sector: Operations manager	2 woods and 1 plot. Post OS first edition and recently established	Forestry	Personal address not known, rarely visits the woods himself.	Conservation; Public amenity
23	**Paul**	SS	Public sector: Operations manager	6 woods and 1 plot. Recently established	Countryside ranger	Lives approx. 15 miles from woods, rarely visits the woods himself	Public amenity; Conservation
24	**Tony**	SS	Public sector: Regional manager	Large. Longstanding	Business; Forestry	Lives 30 miles away from wood, visits infrequently.	Forestry; Conservation; Public amenity
25	**Tom**	SS	Public sector: Project manager	Large. Recently established	Public recreation	Personal address not known, visits infrequently.	Public amenity; Conservation

9.2 Landowners' objectives and motivations

Before landowners objectives and motivations are discussed in full it is worth noting that half of the woods owned are single parts of larger woods in multiple ownership. The owners of these woodland 'plots' tend to be private individuals or farmers. However, both Gareth and Pamela, who are country estate owners also have a small woodland plot. In both cases these are residual pieces of land left unsold after it was parcelled up into plots. Pamela explained that her estate did own the whole of Oldfield wood, she continued:

> *I think my father started selling bits off the top… So individual people on [name of road] have had strips for their back gardens.*

Referring back to table 6.1 allows an examination of the participant landowners' main objectives. The results were very mixed but there are some patterns. In common with the research of Urquhart et al. (2010) this study found that purchasing a wood for personal recreation was most common among private individuals. Game shooting is often an objective for the country estate owners but does not appear for other types of landowners. Larger landowners sometimes keep woods for their landscape value and in some cases were planted to screen off unattractive features such as collieries in Stefan's case or car parks in Adam's case:

> *The main focus is the biodiversity and the aesthetics of the landscape so the woods were planted around the car parks…to screen them.*

Like many of the other landowners, Adam states that conservation is a main objective. Conservation was the single most commonly cited theme among landowners, almost half said it was a major objective for them. The research of Urquhart et al. (2010) found that traditional woodland owners (estates and farmers) were much less likely to prioritise conservation than new woodland owners (private individuals). This was not the case in this study. The theme appeared in every category of owner, though it was most prominent in the public and charitable sectors where all participants cited it as a priority. These types of owners also prioritised public amenity, a theme that appeared only rarely among the private owners with just one private individual and one country estate citing it as important.

Landowners' official objectives are not the only factors influencing why they chose to buy or continue to own a wood. Many have personal interests and motivations contributing to their overall outlook on their woods. Table 9.2 shows the results of a thematic analysis of objectives and motivations.

Over-arching theme	Sub-themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Environmental	**Nature conservation (11)** Habitat restoration (4) Nature appreciation (3) Disease management (3) Landscape value (3) Rhododendron control (2)	
Personal	**Peace/Quiet/Solitude (9)** **Hobby/personal recreation (6)** Personal wood supply (4) Improve forestry skills (2) Privacy (1)	Fitness; Social;
Public	**Amenity (7)** Education (2)	Public relations
Commercial	Profit, general (5) Commercial forestry (3) Shooting (3) Investment (2) Breaking even (2)	Horticulture; Livestock shelter
Negative themes	Wood is a liability (5) Risk minimisation (4)	

Table 9.2: Landowners' objectives and motivations. A threshold of 6 has been assigned for major themes.

As previously discussed, conservation was a major factor for many, especially the public and charitable owners. However, there were owners in every category with this objective in mind, including farmers. Zoe is a sheep and cattle farmer and owns part of a recently established wood. She was hoping to manage her section of the wood into a better habitat for wildlife:

> *The plan is to, kind of, accelerate it to an older…semi-natural woodland and then see what interesting, little herby things grow up underneath and then perhaps add a few. Some little bits of dogs mercury and some native bluebells when I can.*

Ethan is a dairy farmer and bought his wood when a country estate sold off land adjacent to his farm *'in little bits'*. Ethan has been gradually converting his wood

with a hazel coppice, he hoped this will encourage dormice. Private individuals bought many of the other parcels of land. Ethan wasn't particularly complimentary about these newer types of land owners:

> *People think they can just get a wood and it'll be all calm and nature but it's bloody hard work.*

However, there was a sense from Ethan that he regrets purchasing the wood himself:

> *It's never been thinned and...so I don't really know where to start with it.*

Concern over the safety of woods was among the issues cited by four landowners who prioritised risk minimisation. Five owners considered their woods to be an overall liability. Even Paul, one of the managers of woodland in public ownership, talked about some of his woods as a liability, especially the Thorpe Plantation (figure 9.1):

> *If we could dispose of Thorpe Plantation we would do, I'm sure we would. Erm, because to get it up to scratch as a decent community woodland... We don't have the resources to do that so it's always going to stay as it is… It's like a lot of those ex-coalfield sites…there's no management happens in a significant amount of time and they look pretty shoddy.*



Figure 9.1: The Thorpe Plantation in its landscape setting, a former colliery site shared with an industrial estate. *(Lisewski-Hobson, July 2016)*

Pamela simply does not know what to do with her wood and has no objectives for it or any remaining motivations to keep it, she stated that she would sell it if someone

would buy it. For her, persistent trespass has taken away her enjoyment of the natural aspects of the wood:

> *It used to be a beautiful bluebell wood but everybody walks through it…and it's ruined it.*

Linked to the idea that woodlands can be a liability rather than an asset is a perception among many woodland owners that woods are simply not profitable, just five of the owners cited profit as a major objective. Some of this is a matter of scale, with forestry not a profitable option in most small woodlands or larger woodlands split into lots. Matt felt that he could only make his plot of woodland pay because of his background in forestry:

> *It was the sort of thing that financially wouldn't work… unless there was someone like me who could manage it for free. Back when I was a forestry consultant, you'd be charging so much money to manage the timber that the landowner wouldn't see a penny they'd just see a big red figure at the bottom of a balance sheet every year.*

Some owners are looking at other options, such as paid access for specific kinds of recreation. However, when Debbie, who runs combat games in her wood, was asked whether she enjoyed how she made her living she responded as follows:

> *I don't know about earning a living, no it doesn't bring in nothing to be fair, more than enjoyment. Whatever we get from the public goes straight onto ammo and food.*

Some participants had bought their woods as an investment, assuming it would go up in value at some point in the future. This objective is likely to be under-represented in the sample of landowners interviewed as many of those who owned their wood purely as an investment had little personal stake in it and therefore were less interested in participating in the study.

In the larger woods, some owners were managing their woods for commercial forestry. Though David, who works as a consultant to many woodland owners, felt the Forestry Commission hamper their efforts to make a living:

> *From a…timber growing perspective the state is flooding the market… the state doesn't own, you know, dairy farms and flood the market with cheap milk.*

Successive governments have sold off a great deal of FC land over the years. This has resulted in some loss of access to woods (for an example see the Blackcrag case study in the previous chapter). Even though policy has since changed, meaning that any open access obligations remain if the woodland is sold, the public are extremely resistant to see public woodland sold into private hands. The results of this study show that publicly or charitably owned woods are much more likely to prioritise public access in their objectives. Tony believes that public support for open access in woods, as demonstrated by the public outcry at sell off proposals in 2011, has been responsible for keeping the FC going:

> *I think giving open access has actually saved* [the FC] *as an organisation so when governments have wanted to sell it off, cos the people can go in our forests, they see them as their forests and that's why there was that huge fuss.*

Paul has been involved in monitoring public access obligations on more recent land sold by the FC. He found that open access often contradicted private landowners' objectives:

> *A chap…bought the wood…he was involved with a shooting club so he was going to…do target shooting and…we had responsibility to see through this access agreement so… what he was proposing conflicted with our ability to…safeguard people who are using the wood.*

Despite the obvious conflicts of interests between the objectives of private landowners and public access, two of the 18 private landowners did see amenity as an objective. One was Matt, an owner of Brook Forest (see chapter 6). He was amenable to public access on foot. Part of his motivation for including this seemed to be genuine public spiritedness, he could relate to the public because he was brought up using his local woods freely. Another of his motivations was for his own benefit. As he saw it *'the good people…will put off the bad people.'* When it was put to him that not all land owners saw it that way he was aghast:

> *Really? How come?*

Peter also saw amenity as an objectives for some of his woods, the smaller woods with little income potential. Working for a large estate he felt they could afford to be generous:

> *It's…because we're a large estate, we can afford, the word philanthropic sounds slightly Victorian, err, and perhaps it sounds a little bit goody goody but none the less I think it's probably a suitable word to use… and we're not a farmer with one wood.*

There is certainly an important point in there that large estates will necessarily have a different relationship with individual woods that those with portfolios containing only a single wood (Potter-Witter, 2005). There is also another distinction, between woods that are professionally managed by someone employed to do so and those held as more of a personal asset, as is the case with some of the farmers and all of the private individuals (see table 6.1).

Personal themes were the second largest category listed in table 6.2. Many landowners kept the wood as a hobby or for their own personal recreation such as Tim:

> *Many years ago my father used to manage a wood…so…I used to spend a lot of time in the wood helping him… And so…I decided it was something I wanted to follow up and take ownership of a wood.*

In common with the motivations of the public the theme peace/quiet/solitude was very popular with landowners, most notably among the private individuals, many of whom had bought their woods with the aim of gaining some solitude. Victoria explained the peace her woodland gives her:

> *It is just a very relaxing place…we go up there stressed…and it all seems to disappear and every problem doesn't seem quite so bad.*

However, she is somewhat territorial about it and didn't feel comfortable with any public intrusion:

> *It does, sort of, make you feel like, well it's my space and someone's been there…if I was there and there was someone else there, it's that conflict, I think. It's just the thought of someone using your own space and what if I went up there and there was someone there in a tent.*

The farmers Violet and Zoe keep their woods for personal reasons rather than as straight forward farm woods. As a result they should perhaps be re-categorised as a private individuals, who happen to also be a farmers. They both prefer to spend time alone and are not keen on accommodating others on their land. Zoe said:

> *I'm not a wildly sociable person [laughs] and I probably would have a bit of difficulty with the idea that people could just come in*

Paul thinks that individuals behave differently to more traditional private owners:

> *I've found the landowners who were more problematic, err, or were anti-access were…people [who had]…just bought a countryside pad and didn't want people going on their extended garden*

Some of the difference in landowners' attitude towards public use may be attributable to their personal involvement in the woods. Private individuals and farmers were much more likely to visit their woodlands frequently and actively manage them themselves. Many of the farmers and some of the private individuals also lived near the woods. Jamie, for example, had difficulty with the noise coming from an unofficial camp site:

> *It's just getting too popular and we've had enough.*

However, Pamela, a small estate owner no longer visited her woods despite living only a few hundred metres away.

> *I've not been for years*

Categorisation of private small woodland owners by objectives and motivations

Urquhart & Courtney (2011), in their analysis of small-scale private landowners in three geographically contrasting locations in England developed a typology of small woodland owners. Some of the small private woodland owners in this study do map onto this typology but almost as many do not. It is therefore fair to conclude that the typology is not particularly useful for the sample used in this study. For example, Zoe and Ethan use their woods as private consumers but equally value conservation. William and Sandra are in many ways individualist but are not particularly anti-access. Jamie values privacy alone and does not use his wood for private amenity, he purchased the wood mainly to control what he perceived to be undesirable forms of access. Control was important to other owners too such as Roger and Tim but is under-emphasised in Urquart & Courtney's typology.

In 2012 Urquart et al. made another typology with fewer categories. This one made distinctions between those with strong beliefs in private property rights and those willing to provide amenity. It also had a category of hobby conservationist which couldn't be applied strongly to any of the small private landowners in this study though many of them do have conservation as one of their objectives. Again, this second typology is a poor fit for the landowners sampled in this study.

In broad agreement with Potter-Witter (2005) the motivations of landowners in this study are too complicated to easily categorise. The main useful dividing line for private landowners is between those who own a small amount of woodland and have a large personal stake in it and those who manage larger estates or are detached from their woodland. The former tend to want to control their woods, and therefore access, while the latter have other priorities. However, landed estates may seek to control access if that access conflicts with one of their objectives. Notwithstanding that, with the trend towards woodlands being sold in small lots to private individuals it is likely that the proportion of those who wish to closely control access is growing.

9.3 Landowners' experiences of public access

Landowners experiences of public access have been broken down into five over-arching themes in table 9.3. The numbers in brackets indicate how many of the landowners mentioned this topic independently. When a subject is not mentioned this should not be taken to mean the issue doesn't occur. Only those taking part in semi-structured interviews were asked if they experienced any issues. Informal chats and, particularly, written statements did not cover this topic in the same depth.

Themes relating to the public for landowners were mainly negative, though most acknowledged that any problems come from a minority of people. Even Tony, a public sector manager could appreciate the position of private landowners:

> *Most of them [the public] will be OK but there's always that 5% that will cause you problems*

Zoe is one landowner who has had few problems:

> *The vast majority of people are completely responsible when we've got sheep in the field and dogs on the lead, you know, we don't get a lot of litter, people do tend to shut the gates so in general people most people enjoy the opportunity to use it and do it responsibly.*

However, she plans to add a hidden stile to her woodland so that she can get in without encouraging others:

> *What you can do is just disguise one as a set of rails and just remove the top rail and stick the rail back on again… And from a distance you can't tell that it's a stile. A bit sneaky [laughs].*

Over-arching theme	Sub- themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Crime and Anti-Social behaviour	**Motorbikes (15)** **Quad bikes (6)** Fly tipping (5) Mountain bike trail building (5) Litter (5) Timber theft (3) Dog mess (3) 4x4s (2) Shooting (2) Vandalism (2)	
Negative Access issues	**Public liability (10)** **Confrontational members of the public (6)** Sign removal (5) Removal or damage to fencing (4) Persistent pedestrian trespass (4) Mountain bike trespass (3) Equestrian trespass (3) People obsessed with their rights (2) Removal or damage to walls (2) Public don't understand or ignore their responsibilities (2) Inter-recreationalist tensions (2)	
Access Coping strategies	**Signage (7)** Controlled, paid-for access (3) Community liaison (3)	Inconvenient gates; Disguised stiles
Controversial use	**Camping and shelter building (6)** Dogging (3) Camp fires (3) Young people congregating (3) Hunts (3)	
Positive Access themes	No major problems (5) Problems with non-pedestrians only (4) Public access can help to prevent anti-social behaviour (3) Most people are reasonable (2)	People are friendly

Table 9.3: A summary of themes relating to landowners experiences of the public.

Many of the owners who reported no major problems owned woods with no official public access and no informal routes, they had not made any robust attempts to keep people out but there seemed to be no demand for access or any access traditions affecting their wood. Debbie's wood is used for combat games, but only once per fortnight. She reported only one incident of trespass even though there are no signs on non-shoot days and no barriers (see figure 9.2):

> *Only one person, an old man, I think he was in his 60s, he was drunk, he thought he lived down here, but that's it… We don't even get dog walkers…but there's not one person that comes on here, sept [sic] that old man, that was probably about 4 years ago…they could get in though.*



Figure 9.2: Debbie's wood is surrounded, for the most part by low stone wall. A member of the public wanting to gain access to the wood could easily do so. *(V Lisewski-Hobson, September 2017)*

This site is close to a large Forestry Commission wood where much of the local demand may be met, it also has little housing close by though there is a caravan site in the vicinity which generates some demand for walks in the local area.

Ethan, a farmer, also has no rights of way and has had few issues with trespass. He put that down to his livestock:

> *We get the odd ones but it's surrounded by cows and people don't like going near cows.*

Mark found that pedestrian access created few issues, though he has a problem with some other groups of users, who use the footpath through his woods illegally:

> *My least favourite are mountain bikers, most least favourite are motorcyclists but the worst are the hunt!*

He went on to describe his first encounter with the local hunt in 2014. The hunt were out training their dogs, using quad bikes and 4x4s rather than horses:

> *One February afternoon…I went for a walk in the woods…and I heard a hunt horn and I thought, what the hell? this is a SSSI!… And these dogs came round the corner with their handlers… I politely asked them to leave by the closest exit and they… reluctantly said OK and then I could hear motorbikes and two fucking quad bikes… I went apeshit… they actually hadn't gone out there were probably 20 big country men with these dogs who were very aggressive*
> *(VL)- What the men or the dogs?*
> *The men… And they said ' go back to the city where you come from' and I said, 'actually we have a farm [laughs] and we live near here, we're locals where are you from?' and they wouldn't answer that. We took their number plates and stuff and then they blocked the road, wouldn't let us go. I told them that the police were coming and they went. That was quite scary, you know, 20 big thugs with 30 dogs and a bunch of quad bikes and 4x4s that's an aggressive group of people. They're my least favourite users of the wood! By a mile!*

Owen works for a charity, and though his woods are open access on foot he too hasn't had to deal with any major issues with pedestrians.

> *We get a little bit of litter but it's not a serious problem really. And we don't have any anti-social behaviour so the people that use the site, it occurs to me, use it for the right reasons.*

Though he has had a few problems with horses:

> *They have managed to damage a pedestrian bridge because the bridge isn't designed to take the weight of a horse and there's a little bit of poaching of the ground in some of the wetter areas that we'd really like to keep them away from. So we've got a little bit of management to do.*

And cyclists:

> *It's more the mountain biking issue really that's biting us...it's because it's quite dangerous really, they're using paths that pedestrians are using as well. We haven't had any instances of people getting hurt yet but that concerns me…we try to manage the problem but it's very difficult because people can just lift bikes up and get them over any gates or obstructions you put in their way.*

Mountain bike trail building was also a problem for five of the landowners. However, consistent with the results of chapters 5-7, motorbikes were the single biggest issue for landowners in the sample with 15 choosing to bring up the subject in their interviews. This seems a high number but in actuality some had not had major problems with motorbikes but perceived them as a threat, particularly in relation to improving provision for horses or cycles which some felt would invite problems with motorised vehicles. Tony explained:

> *When you've got a footpath you get cyclists sometimes and quite often horses, if you upgrade it to a bridleway you'll get motorbikes and quads wanting to use it.*

Also high up the list under the category of crime and anti-social behaviour was fly tipping (figure 9.3). It appeared five times, and so was a little more prominent overall than it appeared in the case studies. Peter explained why it was a concern:

> *I've mentioned the fly tipping, that's a big worry to all landowners because the responsibility for clearing the rubbish away rests with the owner of the land not with the local authority. So, and of course that [the costs] can be considerable.*



Figure 9.3: Fly tipped rubbish on the edge of one of Peter's woods. *(Lisewski-Hobson, April 2017)*

Peter's perspective is echoed by Jones' recent article (2018) arguing that fly tipping is on the increase. This inevitably leads to escalating costs for land owners.

The over-arching theme of negative access issues was headlined by the subject of public liability with ten landowners arguing that it was a major concern for them. For Tony's public sector organisation this was a huge issue:

> *We've had a lot of claims against us and at first we paid out a lot of money for these claims and then we started to realise that word was getting around and we were an easy target. So now we've put things in place and we've stopped paying the claims automatically and now each case is treated on its merits. This sort of thing stops people giving access where they might think about it.*

For most, no litigation has ever taken place but the fear of being sued is enough, as discussed in the case studies where this issue was raised repeatedly by land owners such as Jamie who felt that a claim could *'bankrupt us'.*

However, in the wider sample of landowners, opinions on the seriousness of the liability issue were split. Another ten landowners argued that they didn't feel it was a major issue. Some did not bring up the issue of liability in their interviews and so were asked about it towards the end of the conversation. Zoe hadn't really considered liability:

> *I don't tend to think of woods as dangerous here [laughs] and particularly not ours but it is true that you could probably drown yourself in the boggy hole in part of our woods and you might be lucky enough for a tree to fall on you or at least fall over and break your ankle because it is very humpty bumpty so no, I hadn't thought about it. But I'm now glad that it's covered in the insurance.*

Nevertheless a significant number of the landowners do find liability to be a prominent concern and this may well affect any decisions they make relating to access.

Another issue raised under the umbrella of negative access themes was confrontational members of the public. A number of examples were raised in chapter 6 such as Roger's encounters with quad bikers and William's exchanges with walkers that eventually resulted in him fencing off The Glade in Brook Forest. There are other examples. Pamela is opposed to the public using an informal cut-through in her small section of woodland. However, she has only once tried to challenge anyone. Pamela was in the company of her sister, who also part owns the wood, she explained what happened:

> *We've put up notices and they're down within the day, people pull them down. I've spoken to people and they threatened to hit us.*

Even landowners who haven't experienced threatening behaviour often felt uncomfortable with the idea of approaching trespassers. Victoria certainly felt that way:

> *If I was there and there was someone else there, it's that conflict, I think.*

She's also had people shooting into her woods from a neighbouring field:

> *There was someone shooting… but I wasn't brave enough to go and talk to a man with a gun and say, 'what are you doing on my land?'*

Victoria's attitude towards signage also revealed her fear of confrontation:

> *People feel the need to block that off and mark their own territory but I don't like it.*

Signage was a regularly discussed topic in the interviews with five landowners complaining about signs being removed, including Pamela above. Other complaints included removal and damage to fences and walls. All of these are ways that some members of the public resist landowners' wishes to keep them out of their woods.

Signage was used actively by seven of the landowners. Adam, Mark and Owen all thought that the tone of the sign was important. Owen felt that people needed good signposting to keep them on the right routes while Adam and Mark liked the interpretation board idea. The idea behind this is to help the public understand why it's not OK to walk in some areas, Adam explained:

> *You can put interpretation out so people can help build a connection with the environment rather than just roaming everywhere.*

Matt also felt that the interpretation board approach might be helpful. However, there was evidence that the occasional landowners' sign might be misleading. In an interview with Malcolm, a farmer close to Blackcrag wood, it was revealed that signs claiming adders were nesting just off a public footpath were a work of fiction (fig 9.4)

> *They were all laughing about that down at the pub. There are no adders, he just put that sign up to stop people going off the path, and it's worked!*



Figure 9.4: Signs keeping pedestrians on the path close to Blackcrag wood.

Though William felt that signs are ineffective, he and Freddie (Sandra's partner) fantasised in jest about the contact details they would put on a sign. They came up with:

> *getlost@yahoo.com*

William's feelings about not wanting to use signs did reflect the majority of landowners views. Most preferred not to use them but the reasons were varied. Examples of reasons given range from not feeling the need, wanting to remain anonymous or wanting to treat people as adults to worries that it encourages some people. Of course, many felt putting up signs was futile as they will be removed by the public anyway. The most frequently cited reason however, was a worry that signs would cause ill feeling among the local community. Zoe explained why she hasn't used signs in the past:

> *I hate those signs… I don't like the 'keep out' ones but I think it's because, you know, we do have to live here and a lot of the village people with their dogs…on a regular basis go up and down that footpath and we know quite a few of them.*

The final major issue raised by landowners was camping and shelter building. Though a fair few landowners mentioned that they did not like camping only Jamie at Blackcrag had a major issue, mainly because of the noise and his perception that people were taking drugs. Adam's summation was more typical:

It's never really that bad, people will go in and camp in the woods at night in the summer and leave bits of fires and it seems to be more teenagers and things and it tends to be in the summer holidays.

Summary

Overall, landowners have tended to emphasise negative experiences of public access in their interviews, though a few reported no major problems. However, many of the landowners who reported no problems did not have any access to their woods, either formal or informal. Issues highlighted were dominated by negative experiences with motorcyclists, concerns about public liability and problems related to trespass, be this confrontational behaviour or removal of signs, fences and walls.

9.4 Landowners' attitudes to public access

This section considers landowners' attitudes towards the public access system in its present form. In addition three further forms of existing or theoretical access are discussed:

1. Existing informal paths
2. A theoretical extension of CRoW legislation to include open access on foot in woods
3. A theoretical expansion of higher access rights for cyclists and equestrian users

Participant contributions for this section are from the 19 land owners who took part in semi-structured interviews.

9.4.1 Landowners' views on the existing rights of way system

Table 9.4 gives details of a thematic analysis of landowners' opinions on the rights of way system in its current form.

The idea that a rights of way system should exist was almost universally agreed on or accepted by landowners. The only exception to this was Debbie who knew very little about the system and so wasn't in a position to form an opinion:

I've not really thought about it, I don't know.

Roger had a very literal interpretation of rights of way and even challenged a pedestrian's right to write down the names of trees while using a public footpath. On a chance encounter with him and two neighbouring landowners in the woods he commented:

> *I hope you've not been writing anything down, the law says you can only pass and re-pass [Matt and Freddie roll their eyes.]*

However, Roger's approach was not typical and even he accepted the existence of a rights of way system. However, all of the landowners had criticisms of the way it was working. Zoe felt that the system is out of date:

> *We do understand that it's great for people to have access across the land but of course historically the rights of way have been for a lot of people to get from home to work and back again, I mean the leisure age is a relatively recent phenomenon.*

Paul also felt that the system needed updating:

> *How we manage access is still…enshrined in acts of parliament that were of a bygone time and land changes and how people travel has changed and so there needs to be some kind of empathy towards that that a rigid act of parliament often doesn't give.*

Over-arching theme	**Sub- themes (major in bold)**	**Other factors**
Positive comments	**Agree or accept a system of footpaths and bridleways should exist (18)**	Need more footpaths through woods
Landowners perspective – negative comments	Inflexible/bureaucratic (3) Needs rationalising (2) People don't use maps anymore (2) Out of date/ Not fit for purpose (2)	20 year rule unjust
Systems perspective – negative comments	Owner fragmentation hampers building of useful network of routes (2)	No grants for access; Landed lobby too powerful; Local authorities poorly resourced; Conflict of interest for poorly resourced local authorities
Other	Close paths for management without going through official channels (2)	Don't know

Table 9.4: A thematic analysis of landowners' views on the current rights of way system

Comments on how the system could be improved were diverse. Some found rights of way to be bureaucratic or inflexible, such as Robert who described his attempts to divert a footpath near his home:

> *I moved the footpath…because it was a nightmare to come down the original way, really boggy…and the footpath's guy came along and said it's not where it should be. I said 'no it's not but it now goes where people can use it without getting completely covered in mud and they're not walking through my back yard and so everybody's happy'.*

Robert had to re-instate the original footpath but he kept his alternative too. These kinds of comments relate to complaints often cited by the Country Landowners Association (Farmers' weekly, 2013) where paths originally intended for farm workers go straight through farmyards and in Robert's case a former farmyard now converted into a domestic home.

Robert clearly tried to take matters into his own hands. Roger and Peter have also admitted to closing public rights of way when they didn't want the public through. Roger does it when paid for mountain bike races are taking place in his wood:

> *Today is bikers' day, the rest of the year that's pedestrians' year, everyone has responsibilities and your responsibility that day is to go somewhere else. It's not like the moorland under CRoW, where there's a whole area. This is just a footpath.*

Peter's approach was more polite but he has a similarly blasé attitude when it was put to him that his estate had closed a footpath:

> *Oh for the clay pigeon shoot? Ah well hardly anyone uses that path anyway.*

Peter argued repeatedly in his interview that the whole system needed rationalising:

> *You know who I represent I think that the whole rights of way system is ready for rationalising. There were discussions with the local authorities at the time [of creating the definitive map] in some areas where there were several paths, perhaps more than there should be saying we all want one path here rather than two paths or whatever, that goes nowhere, it duplicates this one…we're ready for looking at it again.*

However, he felt that society wasn't in the right frame of mind to have a sensible discussion about it:

> *I think that there will be a huge outcry if you tried to take but one yard of public footpath away because I think people see it as their right… This is very arrogant I suppose…they don't always sit and think about the long term, you know, it's just a reaction... The media has a lot to answer for because they would report if two footpaths were going to be made into one, they might mention that in paragraph 6.*

There was an argument from two landowners that the public do not always engage with the system and, in particular, don't use maps. Tom commented:

> *Not everybody has that opportunity to access how to use a map and particularly in working class communities that surround Langley and where I work, the people purchasing an OS map, it just won't happen.*

Tom's view was consistent with the case study findings, that many members of the public have no idea whether they were on a public footpath or not and don't think about the status of the paths they're using.

Landowners had a diverse set of comments when considering issues with the system itself rather than how it relates to them personally. Two of the landowners picked up on the trend of selling off land in small lots leading to a fragmentation in ownership. Tony pointed out how this can cause problems when trying to create a longer route:

> *It's difficult because of fragmentary land ownership and it would be better if there was more resource and somebody to take the lead but obviously it's up to the local council to try and join things up… They're trying to do it…along the Derwent Valley…that's a good example because the route they want to use, erm it goes into a caravan park and they're just not interested so sooner or later you run up against things like that.*

Other comments included a concern from Matt about the disappearance of the access obligation in future grant funding. Any removal of this would certainly affect the policies of landowners, like Roger, who only allows access because he's obliged to under the terms of grant taken out by the previous owner (see Brook Forest in chapter 6).

William's comments became quite political. He felt that the odds were stacked against ordinary people:

> *The prime minister is tipping her hat to the landowners, you know. And there's nothing for ordinary Joes, I just think there needs to be something a bit more revolutionary… There's no rights of way officers, there's nobody there to enforce or maintain them and the rangers have been cut. It's just very sad, it's just this race to the bottom of civic responsibility that the Tories are overseeing.*

Overall, the landowners were broadly in support of the idea of a system but they felt it is in need of a lot of improvement before it is really fit for purpose.

9.4.2 Landowners' views on existing Informal paths

During the interviews the presence (or lack of) informal paths were raised with the land owners. Table 9.5 shows the themes arising from these discussions

Over-arching theme	**Sub- themes (major in bold)**	**Other factors**
Against informal paths	It is trespass (5) Detrimental to wildlife/ conflicts with terms of SSSI (2)	Need to control boundaries; Helpless to stop people;
Intermediate views	Depends on the traditions of the site (4) Depends on the landowner (3) Depends if it is compatible with other objectives (2)	Don't mind accidental trespass; Can manage people onto appropriate paths
Accepting of informal paths	Don't mind in low volumes (3) Informal paths should be allowed (2)	Allow to prevent official claims; Ok for quiet enjoyment; Use informal paths myself

Table 9.5: Themes arising from interview conversations about informal paths

Five of the land owners considered use of all informal paths to be trespass. One was Pamela:

> *It is private land but there's always problems with people walking across it and…they've made a path, there are no paths in the wood, the public have made paths… there should be no paths whatsoever…people should respect private land.*

Gareth and Peter also consider use of informal paths to be trespass and make a point of using that word specifically. One of Peter's woods has been subject to a number of footpath claims, he said:

> *It's been quite heavily trespassed, and I'll use the word because we historically we've been using that word over the years, and at some stage a number of people decided that they wanted to obtain access rights.*

Mark avoided the word trespass but was worried about wildlife in his wood, which is an SSSI:

> *There are some users that damage the woodland by creating new paths through areas, we have a lot of ground nesting birds there, like woodcock and chiffchaff.*

Many of the participants felt that it all depended on the circumstances. Paul has worked with a lot of landowners in a previous role and felt that different types of landowner had different attitudes (see section 7.2), he also felt that trying to keep people out of areas where there is a local tradition of using informal paths is problematic:

> *People adopt those places as their own and perceive them as their own if their right to do those things has been unchallenged for so many years.*

Zoe also felt it was difficult to challenge local traditions, she commented that new woodland buyers should be cautious:

> *It's kind of a buyer beware… I think it is difficult if people are already using it, if you're going in with a different plan, then you're going to have to negotiate aren't you? I probably wouldn't buy a wood like that if it was me [laughs].*

Some landowners genuinely did not mind, as long as the wood does not get too busy. Tim had signs telling people to stick to the footpaths, but he insisted he wasn't upset if the volumes were low:

> *I think the idea is to make people firstly aware… Generally if people go off the track it doesn't bother me.*

At Norse (discussed in chapter 5), Robert knowingly allowed informal paths to be formed. He felt that this was the best way of avoiding any formal footpath claims.

Victoria confessed to using informal paths herself, even though she wouldn't allow any through her own wood. She also felt that the tradition of the paths is important:

> *It's funny because there's lots of tracks around here that I know are not official rights of way, I don't feel uncomfortable using them because I know that a lot of people use them and have used them for years.*

Owen and Tom both felt that open access should be the default position and therefore informal paths should be allowed. They felt that most people can be managed onto less sensitive routes. Owen said:

> *Our sites are open access anyway…we have shut off paths where there's been an ecological threat and we have encouraged people onto better routes.*

Overall, landowners' attitudes were mixed. A significant minority of landowners felt that all informal paths are trespass, two felt that they can be justified but most landowners felt that the degree of acceptability of these paths depends on the circumstances, including the landowners' attitudes and objectives and the traditions of the locality.

9.4.3 Landowners' views on a theoretical extension of CRoW legislation to include open access on foot in woods

Landowners were asked how they would feel if CRoW legislation was extended to woodland. Table 9.6 shows a thematic analysis of their answers.

Over-arching theme	Sub- themes (major in bold)	Other factors
Disagree - Environmental	**Damage to biodiversity (8)** Conflicts with SSSI obligations (3)	Some areas should be reserved for nature
Disagree - Personal	**Loss of privacy (7)** Loss of control (4) Disturbing the peace (3) Security (2)	
Disagree - Commercial	**Public liability/ Health and safety (7)** …in relation to timber harvesting (3) …in relation to shooting (2)	Loss of land use flexibility; Management burden
Disagree - other	Attract crime and anti-social behaviour (4) It is private and I should have the right to exclude (3)	Already have open access at FC; No demand for it; England is too densely populated
Agree	Wouldn't make any difference (3) Agree in principle (2)	Apathy

Table 9.6: Thematic analysis of landowners' responses to the idea of CRoW legislation being extended to woodland.

Predictably most land owners disagreed with the idea of making all woods open access and consistent with the analysed results of the landowners' objectives, damage to habitat or biodiversity was the most popular reason given. Some were particularly concerned about the effect open access would have on bluebells. William was comfortable with the idea of informal paths but not a right to roam in woods:

> *If people could walk anywhere a lot of regeneration and the bluebells would get trashed.*

A subsection of those concerned about the effect on nature felt that open access would conflict with their obligations to Natural England for SSSIs. Mark felt that SSSIs would need to be excluded:

> *There's a red line that's the SSSI so people really mustn't go into those.*

Peter also saw the conflict with Natural England's SSSI priorities:

> *They'll say look, you've got this area that was a SSSI and it's been trashed. And you're the owners!*

Many of the owners had personal reasons for not liking the idea of open access, some were particularly concerned about loss of privacy. The issue of privacy has been touched on repeatedly throughout this study with examples such as Violet (who doesn't '*want to see any other people'*), Zoe (Who isn't '*a particularly sociable person'*), Sandra (who '*just wants to relax*') and Victoria (who '*feels a bit funny if somebody's there'*) already quoted. Peter and William can also be added to this list, primarily due to negative encounters with the public. As outlined in chapter 6, Peter found it hard to relax in his estate's busier woods..

Adam felt the need to control access to his sites, some of which have pay and display car parking. He argued that control is important for health and safety reasons:

> *We've got control of the main access points and we've got some generic health and safety signs as you come onto site so you know it's [company name] property and we know what the dangers are on the site so we've tried to control access.*

Adam later went on to discuss concerns about public liability. This was another popular reason given for disapproving of the idea of open access in woods. Ethan was concerned that his wood wouldn't meet any safety standards explaining that:

> *It was planted in the 1970s…all the trees are about 60ft tall and like this [gestures a small tree girth], so it's a bloody death trap in there, the trees are holding each other up.*

Robert also emphasised health and safety as a reason:

> *Trees have finite lives, if people had rights then you'd end up with a situation with the trees that get diseased, start falling down and start killing people and that can't be allowed to happen.*

Matt also showed concern about health and safety, especially as he plans extensive tree harvesting in the future:

> *Public safety, yeah. In terms of the landowners legal responsibility to provide safe spaces, if that extends from a little path and things 10 meters either side of it to everything you own, bloody hell, it would be impossible.*

In reality, of course, the law would not be that severe. Current CRoW land does have lower levels of liability and even under current rules the success of any law suits rests on whether the landowner has taken reasonable steps to prevent any incidents. This will take into account the landowner's resources and the popularity of the route in question. However, this is a grey area with an insufficient catalogue of case law (see section 2.2).

Just two landowners brought up the conflict between open access and shooting. David was one:

> *Privately owned woodlands are used for game shooting…which brings its own complications with open access…you can close them for periods when there's shooting but, I mean, disturbance of game birds and things like that. There's also complexities with deer management…from a public safety point of view... whether you can effectively manage a deer population in open access woodland where visibility is poor…again I know there's provision in the CRoW act to close it for certain days a year but it's year round activity.*

Tim was one of four landowners who thought open access would attract more damage and anti-social behaviour their woods:

> *When people are going in and doing things that are detrimental to the woodland that's very negative and I think if it [woodland] was included in the act then it would have made it more difficult to police that.*

However, Roger disagreed strongly with the idea in principle and even inferred he might chop his (ancient) wood down rather than allow open access:

> *That's somewhere where I can go and get peace, for me to have it taken away by statute, I'd be spitting mad. It could be open but there might be trees all around the outside, that would be unfortunate… I'd be beyond spitting. Is that clear enough? It would be woodland, what woodland?*

The idea of felling a wood to prevent access seems far-fetched but Bennet (2012) cites a real case study where he claims a land owner blew up a rock face to prevent climbers from accessing it.

Finally, there are the three landowners that felt it wouldn't make that much difference to them. Paul's woods and many of the others in this study, even in the private sector, are used as informal open access anyway:

> *I don't think that it would cause us that much problem, I mean people use them like that anyway and we don't have the ability to police it.*

Zoe was able to work through her initial reaction and conclude that her seldom accessed wood would probably not be affected much:

> *I probably would have a bit of difficulty with the idea that people could just come in…but by the same token I've been to Sweden where they have allemansrätten… It's a very densely populated country, the UK, so you'd sort of think…that you'd get these hordes of people but you probably actually wouldn't. So I think I'd probably struggle with it as a concept but in reality it probably wouldn't be a big issue really.*

Despite some reservations, Peter thought that most people would be too out of their comfort zone to roam and could be easily managed away from places he didn't want them to go. Similarly to Parker-Jervis (1972) he used fairly derogatory terms to describe the general public. He believed only serious walkers would use any extended rights, and he didn't mind that:

> *The majority of people are, we'll call them the great unwashed, they only go 100 yards anyway so they're not going in the wood. Because they're…uncomfortable in the wood, it's rather a different setting, it's enclosed. So it wouldn't cause huge amounts of problems because only the people that go in the woods as in open access are the people that genuinely want to walk there and who are responsible,*

> *the majority of others would just simply, they might take the dog for 20 yards but then back in the car.*

Debbie's response was apathetic:

> *Some laws are stupid though... At the end of the day it's not under my control.*

On balance most land owners oppose the idea of extending the CRoW act to include woodland. The reasons are many and varied and though privacy came through as a strong theme there may be some general fear of the unknown, relating to the control theme, hiding behind some of the more practical responses such as protecting habitat and public liability. Similarly, it might be expected that even Zoe and Peter would probably object to the inclusion of woods under CRoW if it were seriously proposed, even though they don't anticipate it to affect them significantly. This is simply because it is a weakening of landowners' rights without any benefit to them. Ironically, most of the landowners who have been unable to control informal open access are against the idea of formalising the access, even though they have the most to gain from the relaxation in liability levels associated with the CRoW act. However, few of them were aware that CRoW lowered liability.

9.4.4 Landowners' views on extending rights for cyclists and horse riders

In the previous chapter the perspectives and experiences of cyclists and equestrians users suggest a great need for increased bridleway or multi-use trail provision in North East Derbyshire. Traditional approaches to expanding access have been to improve provision by allowing or encouraging land owners to volunteer access improvements either through dedication of concessionary routes or access obligations embedded into the grants system. However, the grant schemes only cover access on foot and both of these schemes allow landowners to withdraw access. The fact that they can do this has allowed landowners to successfully argue that non-permanent provision should not be included on OS maps. Peter explained another attraction to granting concessionary routes:

> *Permission brings to an end the period to be included in any 20 year claim. It is therefore very much to a landowner's advantage.*

However, poorly advertised access that can be withdrawn at any time is not in the recreationalists' interest. The remainder of this chapter examines landowners' attitudes towards cyclists and horses and the likelihood of them extending any access to these groups without any top down intervention from government.

Tables 9.7 and 9.8 show landowners' views on cyclists using the wood and on how they would respond to approaches from equestrian groups asking them to dedicate a new bridleway.

Over-arching theme	**Sub- themes (major in bold)**	**Other factors**
Negative themes	Liability risk (3) Too many of them (3) Impossible to control them (2) Poor perception of cyclists (2)	Allowing cycle access might let motorbikes in; Dangerous; Privacy; Damage to habitat
Positive themes	It should be encouraged (3)	Don't mind as long as no trail building;
Coping strategies	Can take steps to discourage them (2)	Need to give them more sensible alternatives

Table 9.7: Landowners' views on cyclists.

Over-arching theme	**Sub- themes**	**Other factors**
Negative themes	Will add more bureaucracy (4) Might let motorbikes in (4) Poor perception of equestrian users (4) Devalues land (2) Horses don't mix with shooting (2) Might antagonise other recreational users (2)	Will cost money for gates; Don't want cyclists; No benefit to the landowner; Opposition from local authority
Positive themes	Would allow long distance route if neighbours did (2)	Don't see why anyone would object; Want to help keep them off dangerous roads; OK on non-sensitive sites; Yes but only permissive; Yes but slightly worried about motorbikes

Table 9.8: Landowners' views on allowing more official access for horses

The majority of land owners were not in favour of increasing access rights of either cyclists or equestrian users. There were some exceptions. William felt increasing access to off road cycle routes was important and was willing to accommodate it as long as it didn't compromise his privacy:

> *We need more cycle paths, you're never going to have an adequate cycle system and tackle obesity if you're mixing cars and bikes, you know people should walk and should cycle in safety and a landowner just saying 'WHOAR', if someone said they wanted a path here, well great, just do it in a way that allows me a bit of privacy.*

Peter was sympathetic to the equestrian cause:

> *I am always sympathetic to horses. I recognise that particularly the access at Dog wood… the bridleway which comes out at a very unsafe junction. It's a blind summit and…much of that road is a quite fast... I especially see the benefits of putting horses on a designated route through the wood to get…access without having to look right and gallop like fury.*

However he felt that his intention to dedicate a new route was meeting opposition from both local ramblers and the council. The wood Peter discussed suffers from heavy poaching on the bridleway and the footpaths (figure 9.5) and would need a lot of work before it could be sustainably used on foot, cycle and horseback simultaneously (see chapter 4 for further details). The council have erected signs banning horses even though the landowner is in favour of them using the wood. Peter explained his difficulty:

> *There is, between the ramblers and some of the horse riders, some issues… I've heard stories of people who have ridden in the wood who have been approached by some of the ramblers in not a particularly friendly tone. I feel like sometimes the estate, as the landowner, is piggy in the middle… The difficulty could also be…there's a cost involved in dedicating woodland paths to the county. The county would, quite reasonably, say, well if we're going to have this as a bridleway we need perhaps that bit of stream culverting…or something done to the surface… You can't dedicate it if they don't want it dedicated and they don't want to spend the money right now.*



Figure 9.5: Controversial horse riding in Dog Wood. Left: Poaching from horses on a footpath in Dog wood has led to opposition from local ramblers to equestrian users accessing the wood. Right: The council has erected signs prohibiting use by horses despite the landowners support for equestrian access. (*Lisewski-Hobson, October 2017 (left) and March 2017 (right))*

However, in most instances the landowners were not in favour with reasons given varying. For the equestrian users some landowners cited that additional bureaucracy or risk of use by motorcycles would put them off while others just had a poor perception horses and their riders. Mark had suffered several bad experiences with hunts going through his SSSI. He describes the damage it can cause:

> *They came across our land and knocked down a part of our wall and trampled on a load of new trees that I'd put in.*

William argued that horse access should be less of a priority:

> *To ride a horse you need to have a lot of money and we're living in a world of austerity and the rising obesity is linked...to poverty. So anything that gets people riding bikes and walking is great and, you know, that would be my first priority… I'm not really going to stick my neck out and think horse riders should have more rights, I think it's ordinary people that should get the first dibs on more access.*

Cyclists seemed to be less poorly perceived by landowners but they often considered their activities dangerous, leading to concerns about liability. Some landowners just couldn't cope with the volume of cyclists or felt unable to control cycle access. Adam felt his company were struggling to cope with the demand from mountain bikers:

We're at saturation point…we've also got to think about the other user groups.

Mark also struggled with the volumes of mountain bikers but felt that providing more facilities in non-sensitive environments was important:

> *There are in areas of conifer woodland… outside of the SSSI, they've built up loads of tracks and trails and jumps and things like that and err, I don't have a problem with that…when they're going down through very boring plantations that's absolutely fine. So we were wondering actually about maybe formalising those trails and allowing them to go there but making it very clear that there's a red line that's the SSSI so people really mustn't go into those… I think UK Cycling, it's in a place very similar to where the British Mountaineering Council were... People were bolting up all sorts of natural rock and the BMC managed to stop these climbers… So there were these people that were behaving in a way that would relate to the sport cyclists who don't have anywhere to go and they gave them places to go, which is quarries basically… I think we can do the same thing with cycling.*

To summarise, landowners are generally not in favour of extending higher rights in their woods. However, a number of them did recognise that there was a shortage in provision, with some of them struggling to cope with the numbers of cyclists in particular.

9.5 Summary discussion

The landowners interviewed had a variety of perspectives. Those in the public and charitable sector were much more likely to prioritise amenity and therefore are more positive about access. From a recreationalists point of view this will mean that publicly owned woodlands will tend to provide better access and that access is secured because the landowners are motivated to give it and therefore unaffected by any change in government incentivisation. The public and charitable sector organisations were also generally much more tolerant of the formation of informal paths though they might take steps to manage people away from sensitive areas.

Overall, almost half of all landowners managed their woods with nature conservation in mind and many considered it a place for them to find peace and solitude for themselves personally. This was particularly true of the many private individuals that own woodland lots in the study area. Objectives and motivations

involving both conservation and a sense of privacy can be at odds with anything outside of the ideal of '*quiet enjoyment*' and in many cases landowners only felt that they could find that peace if public access was severely limited. The large estates were usually managed by employees and though some of them were anti-access they had less of a personal stake in the day to day goings on inside the many woods in their portfolio. One of the large estates had, in fact, sacrificed some of its smaller sites to public amenity.

The trend towards a secondary privatisation of woodlands, in other words the conversion of the large landholdings of country estates to ownership by a multitude of private individuals, has implications for access. This is likely to lead to a continuation of scenarios as seen in Brook Forest and Blackcrag woods, where new landowners face a battle with the local population seeking to maintain their access traditions. It has further implications for those seeking higher rights of access in woodland. Where once they might have negotiated a long distance route with a hand full of land owners, the fragmentation evident in this study has the potential to expand that number exponentially. It only takes one landowner not to co-operate and a route cannot be successfully completed. Fragmentation is perhaps symptomatic of a devaluation as woodlands as a profitable source of timber and a rise in the value of woods as personal commodities (Urquart et al. 2010). This may also lead to a slowing of timber reaching the market place, with many unable to make a profit from such small plots and instead providing wood for their own domestic fuel supply while enjoying the space for private recreation. Though there are potential opportunities for landowners to make money from public recreation (other than shooting), only two have chosen to pursue this route and neither has made it profitable. This again is likely to be linked to the motivations of private individuals who buy woods, which are more geared towards conservation and personal enjoyment than profit.

The landowners reported many negative experiences with a minority of the public, with motorcycles causing the most concern. Liability was also reported as an issue by many though some were not too worried by this. However, the analysis of

landowners' attitudes towards any additional access shows that liability is just one of many reasons landowners give for wishing to avoid further access and are unlikely to agree to it, even if liability is lowered. Church and Ravenscroft (2008) argue that some landowners can be incentivised by grant schemes, depending on their motivations. However, as set out in Chapter 2 the mechanism to oblige landowners to allow access through grant schemes has been quietly removed, as Matt reported:

> *Now that public policy instrument has changed completely and it's...not contained in the woodland grants anymore which is, professionally and personally I think is criminal it not being there. As I said one of the biggest societal benefits from woodland…is access, public access…but because it's not incentivised through the grants there's a danger of that disappearing.*

Peter discussed reports that Michael Gove planned to incentivise access post Brexit. He thinks that might work:

> *If he says that and puts a pound sign in front of it then landowners will suddenly change their minds*

However, Peter represents a more traditional landowner than the many private individuals now involved in woodland access. Many writers (such as Raley et al. (1998), Bennet & Crowe (2008) and Urquart et al. (2010)) would argue that these types of owners are motivated by privacy and control and not profit and therefore would be unlikely to take up such schemes. Even farmers, a well-established landowner type have been found by a number of studies to be put off from applying for woodland grants by accompanying access obligations (Bull, 1996; Watkins et al., 1996; Blenkinsop, 2002). However, there may still be some loss of access as a result of this policy change.

Even when such access does materialise, and as Mansley (2003) suggested, advertisement needs to be significantly improved. Landowners argue that any permissive access cannot be put on OS maps, however Derbyshire have an on-line mapping service allowing the public to search for official rights of way and this could solve the issue of real time advertisement. Peter had reservations about the

idea and feels that any advertisement should be up to the landowner, but he accepts that on-line publicity might be a potential solution:

> *Given that permissive paths are what they are indicating them on a map is at the discretion of the landowner. I can see no objection to permissive paths being shown on Council maps, if the Council showed in the legend accompanying the map that the paths…are permissive only and that permission may be withdrawn at any time, that might suit. "At any time" can be exactly that…permission could be withdrawn temporarily almost without warning.*

However, the issue that some recreational groups, such as the equestrian users, have is that problem of routes being withdrawn whenever the landowner sees fit and as Peter stated earlier, any period of concessionary access cannot be used to claim the route officially under the 20 years of use rule. This restriction, combined with the fact that the mechanism for claiming routes on historic grounds will end in 2026[42], means concessionary routes could be shut off indefinitely.

[42] The CRoW act: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents

10. Discussion and Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

This chapter will give a summary of the main findings and explore some of the areas where this research has contributed to the woodland access debate. Lambert (2008) emphasised the importance of considering access against its geographical and social backdrop. This study contributes to the field of geography by situating place at the centre of an exploration of access issues physically evident on site and as experienced and interpreted by all three major stakeholder groups: landowners; woodland users and local residents. Previous studies, if place-centred, have typically concentrated on just one stakeholder group and have rarely married their perceptions with physical evidence in the woodlands themselves (see O'Brien, 2006). There are also few other studies of human interaction with woodland that examine a range of socio-geographic settings, with the majority concentrating on urban woodlands.

Chapter 4 analysed physical woodland characteristics and included an examination of ownership type and available access, both official and informal.

Chapters 5-7 examined six case studies from urban fringe, peri-urban and rural sites in the region. The research analysed the access situation at these sites from every angle using physical evidence, observation and interviews with the three stakeholder groups. However, as well as considering the case studies in their own right it was important to examine them together, chapter 8 provided an analysis of the case study chapters in order to assess any common themes among them or issues that differ depending on their geographical backdrop. In addition it added perspectives from cyclists and equestrian users, based on evidence from focus groups and interviews.

Chapter 9 concentrated on landowners specifically and was used for further exploration of the issues introduced in the case studies, addressing gaps in research

by gaining perspectives from landowners on specific aspects of current and potential access law.

10.2 Headlines from the research

The following headline findings make an important contribution to the access debate in rural environmental geography and have the potential to make a real impact in policy making and planning at local and potentially national government level:

Official public access was very poor in privately owned woods

78% of the sampled woodlands were privately owned. Only 15% of privately owned woods offered good or open access on an official level compared to 58% for publicly owned or charitable land. The implications for this is that the public had poorer access to ancient and longstanding woods as the publicly owned sites were usually more recently planted or often conifer plantations (in the case of FC land). Provision for cyclists and equestrian users was particularly poor with only 15% of all woods accessible to them.

Practical (actual) access was much better than official sources would suggest: Many woods were widely trespassed

43% of the larger woods were open access in practical terms compared to just 14% officially. New landowners attempting to clamp down on trespass typically met with stiff opposition from the local community, who ignored or removed signs. Over 40% of people observed were trespassing. Trespass took place regardless of ownership type though the definition of trespass is open to debate. Though cyclists and equestrian users committed trespass, most trespassers were local people on foot.

Awareness of the status of paths is low among woodland users

Very few users are consulting OS maps, though a few are following suggested walks posted online. Most will see a path and use it without any further consideration.

Awareness of land ownership is poor. Therefore, though some of the trespass committed may be deliberate, much is done at an unconscious level. Because of this poor knowledge of path status, members of the public take paths for granted and tend not to attempt to claim them as official, though awareness of any means to claim official paths was also low.

Peace/quiet/calm was the most dominant positive theme while motor vehicle trespass was an almost universal complaint

Woodland users in particular but also many local residents and land owners were seeking a place of quiet and calm. This is strongly allied to the aversion of all three groups to the presence of motor vehicles who remove the feeling of peace they are seeking.

Private ownership types are changing with newer owners having a larger personal stake in their land

There was evidence of a continuation of the parcelisation of woodlands enabling more private individuals to buy a woodland plot. With a larger personal stake in their small woods, these owners are more likely to try to control access.

10.3 Discussion – Contribution to knowledge and implications for future research

Woodland characteristics

The sample for this study contained 52 1km grid squares. Measured woodland cover was 10.7%. This is broadly similar to the English average of 10%. However, most of these woods were small, the vast majority under 10 hectares in size with over a quarter being under 2 hectares. Well over a third were narrow belts of trees less favoured by the public (Coles and Bussy, 2000) and only 9 out of the 58 were above the 20 hectares recommended by the Woodland Trust's woodland access standard (Collinson, 2004).

Access patterns

Access was split into two main categories: Official access included all PRoWs and permissive routes; Informal access means paths with no formal status.

Official access was categorised into Open; Good; Fair; Poor or None depending on the proportion of the woodland that could be accessed on foot. Just 24% had open or good access. In addition to this footpath inspections concluded that 26% of the PRoWs available were un-usable at the time of survey (July). The main issues were identified as overgrowth of vegetation, waterlogged surfaces and poor way-marking. There were no examples of landowners deliberately obstructing rights of way anywhere in the sample area.

Levels of official access were much lower on privately owned land, only 15% of privately owned woods offered good or open access compared to 58% of public or charitably owned woods. This has implications for the type of woods that the public have access to as private owners are in possession of all of the ancient woods in the sample and most of the longstanding ones.

Formal access when coupled with informal access is termed as '*practical access'*, meaning the actual access available to the public on site. 43% of the larger woods (> 150m in width) were open access in practical terms compared to just 14% when only official access is taken into account. This has interesting implications for arguments aiming to make all woodlands open access, when almost half of woodlands in this sample are already operating as if they were open access.

Less than 10% of the woods had no access of any sort compared to a third which lack official access. Other than Curry's (2000) acknowledgment of informal access, this is the first academic work to have identified the nature of the contribution informal paths are making to overall access. The implication of this is that the public are taking for granted (as they do not seek to protect these routes) a hugely elevated level of access that has no legal protection and is therefore vulnerable to loss. Considering the scale of the informal use, this is particularly pertinent concern

in light of recent calls from sections of the present Conservative government for trespass to be criminalised (The Daily Telegraph, 2018).

The observation data substantiated the physical evidence demonstrating that, of the 1095 people observed during the research 40.4% were recorded on informal routes. Though users were more likely to be seen on informal paths on publicly owned land (47.6%), there was still a large proportion walking informally on private land (38.6%).

In some cases the informal use was a clear infringement against the landowners' will and therefore constitutes trespass (such as in Oldfield wood). However, in other cases the line between trespass and permissive access is blurred. The law itself is contradictory. The definition of trespass is using land without the owner's permission. However to claim a route as a PRoW it must have been used without express permission or opposition from the landowner. Silence on the part of the landowner equates to assumed consent in the eyes of the law. Therefore when a person uses an un-marked path in woodland without any knowledge of the landowners' intension they are stepping into a grey area of the law. It could be argued that their act only becomes trespass when they are challenged either via signage or in person by the owner or their representative. This can be complicated further when landowners' signage is repeatedly removed by members of the public.

There are examples of uses of informal paths that probably do not constitute trespass. The two local authority owners in this study both operate a policy where open access is tolerated. However, these freedoms are unadvertised and unofficial so from a public perspective appear not to be sanctioned. In the private sector, land with open access obligations as part of a woodland grant package is frequently un-advertised and in the case of the Potter's Plantation the old signs prohibiting access remained present. Here there was evidence that the old signage was deterring some members of the public from using the wood.

As Mansley (2003) also observed in his study, poor signposting adds to the generally poor advertisement of any routes available to the public beyond the PRoW network, including acknowledged permissive routes. OS Maps show only PRoWs while sources such as OpenStreetMap show a fairly comprehensive representation of the routes available for some woods (such as Tanner's) but absolutely nothing for others (such as Fenny Banks). In addition, OpenStreetMap makes no differentiation between route designations. Paths are uploaded un-checked by members of the public whether legal or otherwise. However, there was no evidence from the interviews that such on-line mapping sites were widely used by members of the public. There was widespread use of youtube as a means of publicising certain activities in some of the destination woods, such as mountain biking at Brook forest and bush camping at Blackcrag. At Blackcrag in particular there was also evidence that some people were following prescribed walks they had found on the internet from sites including Derbyshire life Magazine (2014).

However, the non-destination woods were mainly visited by those living in very close proximity. This was particularly the case for the urban fringe sites and also the per-urban site, Fenny Banks. Very local visitors were unlikely to use OS maps or digital sources for information and simply used the paths that were there, without much regard for their status. The fact that proximity was an important factor in this study agreed with the bulk of the earlier literature where a number of authors have emphasised it's importance, with some, such as O'Brien (2006), Ward Thompson et al. (2006) and Lisewski-Hobson & Watkins (2018), emphasising the importance of nearby woodlands for children and young people. All of this supports the Woodland Trust's drive to aim towards a woodland access standard, where everyone lives within 1km of a small wood.

In lieu of this aspiration being made a reality, the Woodland Trust has made an attempt to make it easier for members of the public to know where to find a freely accessible wood with their website application '*find a wood*'. Here, landowners are invited to declare any woods that are open to the public. However, there was no evidence from this study that the service was particularly well used and when

investigated on the ground there were a number of inaccuracies, especially where woodland (such as Norse) was included in error or entries were out of date (as in the case of Brook Forest). The coverage is also fairly sparse for North East Derbyshire. The onus is on the landowner to give data rather than any active investigation on the part of the Woodland Trust. Chesterfield Borough Council, for example, has submitted its data while Derbyshire County Council has not.

Access for cycles and horses

For users who require higher rights such as cyclists and horse riders, provision in the sample area is poor. Only 11.6% of the PRoWs are bridleways and only 15.5% of the woods have any kind of official access for these users.

As Palmer (2015) also argued, interview and focus group sources for this study demonstrated that cyclists (predominantly mountain bikers) and equestrian users were united in their opinion that provision for them was inadequate. In general agreement with the Cycling UK research from 2017, they gave accounts of difficulties in planning safe off-road routes without needing to either trespass on footpaths or use roads which, for the horse riders in particular, can be extremely dangerous. Contrary to Sheail (1988) and Butler's (1998) findings of several decades ago there was evidence that these two previously opposing recreational groups were beginning to unite in their pursuit of additional provision, at least on an official level. At grassroots level though, the two stakeholder groups responded to the shortage of bridleways in different ways.

As Cycling UK found (2017) many of the cyclists, rather than challenging the system, were routinely using footpaths to link the bridleways. As they were largely doing this unopposed they saw little reason to bring the issue of poor bridleway provision to public attention. However, not all cyclists were prepared to use footpaths. A number of them, frustrated by poor connectivity or overcrowding on the few bridleways available, had given up and taken up road cycling.

Though equestrian users admitted to trespassing on footpaths or informal paths on occasions, for them this was not such an easy option. The fact that low branches, unsuitable gates or other barriers make many footpaths (and even some bridleways) unsuitable was added to a high level of conspicuousness the riders felt when trespassing. As a consequence of this and the heightened safety imperative that equestrian users face, they have become highly organised in claiming unrecorded routes and seeking new ones. As the Equestrian Access (2012) forum suggested many of the horse riders felt a sense of injustice that the historic bridleways network had been deliberately downgraded by local authorities.

Interviews with landowners showed that the vast majority were very reluctant to grant any additional access for anybody including cyclists and horse riders. Reasons given were many and varied. Cyclists were perceived to be a liability risk while many felt that horses would cause damage to pathways. Landowners also feared that the process of upgrade would be bureaucratic and that physical upgrades would encourage illegal use by motorised vehicles.

In agreement with the findings of Carothes et al. (2001) and Cessford (2003), the public groups were largely in favour of use by mountain bikers, who did not challenge their sense of peace in the same way that motorcyclists did. The reaction to equestrian users was mixed with many at Langley Country Park in total opposition because of severe poaching at that site and neighbouring Huntswood Park. The Bridleway at Huntswood, had undergone recent major resurfacing works. However, making routes suitable for horses is expensive. As a consequence there were some accusations from both equestrian users and landowners that the local authority was unwilling to bear the costs of upgrading and maintaining many routes and therefore found reasons to oppose it. In addition to this, the parcelisation of woodlands means that there are more landowners to negotiate with, even if the local authority is on board.

In agreement with the proposals by Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forum (2018) it would be beneficial to create a strategic network of circular bridleways

expanded from the current haphazard collection of routes currently available. This will allow equestrian users, as well as cyclists, to enjoy a variety of rides safely and away from roads. However, unless a significant injection of funding becomes available to allow councils to restore and maintain rights and provide an effective way of encouraging landowners to co-operate this isn't going to happen. Some level of top down intervention, perhaps from a well-funded centralised organisation would be required, as Curry (1996) and Mansley (2003) suggest. Though this would be the ideal scenario there is unfortunately neither the political will nor the finances available for this to take place in the near future.

Cycling is a much more popular and accessible form of exercise, so from a public health perspective they have to take priority. There is also an emerging cycle tourism economy in Derbyshire which could benefit from extra provision. Though Palmer (2015) would advocate an approach granting cyclist access to all footpaths this would probably prove to be problematic due to the unsuitability of many routes, particularly those with unsympathetic stiles or precarious narrowing. His idea that unsuitable paths would not be used might be true for locals who know the area but, particularly in Derbyshire, many cyclists are visitors and would undoubtedly find a system that relies on trial and error exasperating. However, it would favour cyclists if they could be uncoupled from horse traffic in the eyes of the law and allowed on some footpaths, if they are deemed suitable. There is current provision under the *Cycle Tracks Act 1984* to convert footpaths into cycle paths but this unfortunately results in the routes being removed from the definitive map. There is therefore some justification for a new classification of right of way for pedestrians and cyclists.

Stakeholder motivations and the ideal of quiet enjoyment

In agreement with Bell et al. (2003) and Ward Thompson et al. (2004), themes of peace, quiet and calm dominated stakeholder motivations. Some of the other historical and contemporary literature (such as Anderson, 2011) describes the ideal of quiet enjoyment that many countryside users share. Matless (1997) characterised it as a city versus countryside scenario with urban ways tending to be

aligned to more sociable activities, which conversely have their anti-social side such as creating incongruous noise and litter.

As Tartaglia–Kershaw (1982) and O'Brien (2006) also described, the local residents interviewed as part of this study often enjoyed the aesthetic characteristics of the wood that they could appreciate from their homes. This study (in common with Bennet et al., 1995) found that themes of peace/quiet/calm dominated the motivations of most woodland users and a good number of landowners, especially the private individuals. There were two cases studies where a number of users enjoyed the social elements of using their local woods, these were at Tanner's and particularly Langley. Both the calming elements and social aspects of woodland use have been associated with improved well-being (O'Brien & Morris, 2014). At Tanner's there was a sense of community spiritedness which led to a tolerance of activity some might deem anti-social, especially camping and gathering of young people in the wood. At Brook forest too, the public were generally tolerant of young people using mountain bikes. At Langley the social element revolved around groups of retired people, many of whom had been involved with the mining industry while it was still active in the area. However, most of the people enjoying the social element were doing so peacefully, usually walking dogs in groups, without becoming noisy or leaving litter.

Dog walking, again an activity associated with improved wellbeing (Toohey et al., 2013), dominated all of the case study woodlands, with the exception of Blackcrag. In urban fringe and peri-urban settings there appeared to be a social taboo around walking in the woods without a dog, particularly for lone males. However, in contrast to Matless' (1997) suggestions, there was no evidence of a rural/urban divide between those subscribing to the ideal of quiet enjoyment and those pursuing activities previously associated with the urban working classes. If a divide existed it appeared to be a generational one, with young people more likely to engage in noisy or messy activities as can be seen at the Potter's plantation.

However, motor vehicle users and not young people were at the centre of most people's concerns. Anger directed at motorcyclists emanated from landowners, woodland users and local residents alike. Butler (1998) (in agreement with Tartaglia- Kershaw) suggested that motor vehicles alienated all other users. In this study perceptions of danger, damage and anti-social noise were at the centre of most participants concerns. Typically users felt like they could not relax and enjoy the peace if motor vehicles were present in the wood.

Part of the peaceful experience, and the second major theme among all three stakeholder groups was the appreciation of nature. Participants enjoyed seeing and hearing nature and conservation was a top priority for almost half of the landowners interviewed. Many woodland users also expressed that they did not want their woodlands to have '*improved*' facilities as this might attract too many visitors and diminish the natural feel of a site. This suggests that needs for solitude, peace and closeness to nature are strongly allied. This apparent desire for experience in a natural place away from other people runs contrary to previous policies to create honeypot sites and justifies a need to allow access to greater areas of the woodland rather than concentrating people into a small number of accessible places. This is in agreement with Shoard (1976 & 2011), Mansley (2003) and also acknowledged by Matless et al. (1996).

In common with Urquart et al. (2010) this study found that there were some landowners who resisted access based on a practical clash in objectives. However, it seems that many private landowners are also motivated by the same pursuit for solitude, peace and closeness to nature as the woodland users. They therefore have an obvious and more fundamental motivation to exclude others. Private individuals with small woodland plots seemed to be in the increase. Individuals with the means may buy a private wood to put under their own control where they can experience peace, solitude and closeness to nature without intrusion from others. Victoria is a perfect example of a landowner who has bought a wood for this very reason, Roger is another (see chapters 6 and 9). Both also demonstrated an urge to enact privacy and control. Both felt a strong sense of absolute property

rights, as Urquhart (2010) suggests is common to this new type of owner. However, Mansley (2003) would argue that this is not out of line with the general '*get off my land mentality*' (p.287), which he says is common to most British land owners.

If managing our woodland resource to allow access to peaceful, natural woodlands for everyone is an objective then this progressive change in landowner type should cause some concern. It can be argued that the new types of landowners are motivated even more strongly than the country estates of old to exclude others from their land simply because they have a larger personal stake in the small areas of woodland under their control. A country estate, even with shooting interests, would traditionally have a much larger area of land. Some of this land might be guarded ferociously while other parts are neglected, as is the case with Peter's estate (See chapters 7 and 9). Other sites, however, now owned by absentee investors, such as Fenny Banks and part of Tanner's have experienced the opposite effect where the wood is left completely unmanaged and access unregulated. However, if any new owners take over and want to restrict access then conflict will inevitably occur (see Brook Forest and Blackcrag woods). Contrary to the arguments of Rison (2017) and Mather et al. (2006) there was little evidence that the landowners in this sample had left the post-productivist phase. Only the large estates were still selling timber while many others were holding their woods for conservation and amenity. There was only one site (Potter's Plantation) where firewood was being harvested along with just a handful of other landowners bolstering their own domestic wood supplies.

Another issue affecting landowners' motivations was liability. Around half of the land owners were concerned about potential litigation arising from public access. However, with the exception of Jamie, this wasn't usually the most dominant reason for opposing access. Conservation, privacy and control were all more important factors. This finding is in agreement with the conclusions of Raley et al. (1998) Bennett and Crowe (2008).

At the urban fringe and peri-urban sites woodland users and local residents felt high levels of anxiety about losing their local wood to potential development, especially from new housing. This issue was felt extremely strongly and out-weighed any other types of fear such as crime or personal security, which (in agreement with Ward Thompson et al., 2004) were not major issues for most people. The issue of development anxiety has not been expressed in the literature in any major way. Further research would be useful to assess the degree to which anxiety about the loss of cherished green spaces can negate the well-researched (Morris & O'Brien, 2011) positive benefits gained from them.

Ownership patterns and owner-public interactions

Private landowners were generally accepting of the need for a rights of way system but, as could be predicted from the discussion on stakeholder motivations, they were overwhelmingly against the granting of any additional rights. As Ravenscroft and Gilchirst (2011) might have predicted, none had or are likely to voluntarily dedicate their woods as open access under CRoW. The majority of woods, 78%, were in the possession of private sector owners including country estates, farmers, companies and private individuals. The proportion of urban fringe and peri-urban woods that were in private hands was only slightly higher than the overall average at 79%, this does not confirm Urquhart et al's. (2010) argument that urban woods are more likely to be private. However, as the overall rate of private ownership is high, the argument that most urban woodlands are private still holds true for North East Derbyshire. Watkins (1983) analysed the percentage of woodland in private hands using the proportion of their total area, rather than as a percentage of the total number of woods. He found that, for Nottinghamshire, 70% of woods were in private hands. When the woods for this sample were examined using this method the results were similar with 70.9% of woods being in private hands by area. This result though was skewed by the huge size (105ha) of the single Forestry Commission wood in the sample.

Generally the types of owners were difficult to categorise beyond the simplest of terms with even some farmers exhibiting characteristics common to private

individuals such as a concern for conservation and a pursuit of peace. Therefore the participants in this study did not map well on to any of Urquhart et al.'s categorisations. Country estates owned the greatest number of woodlands, with just 5 estates owning 39% of the woods. However, private individuals were the most numerous ownership type (29%). This group never owned more than one wood and usually owned just part of a wood along with one or more other owners. This parcelisation is consistent with the findings of both Watkins (1987) and Rikkenbach & Kittredge, (2007) but has not been discussed in more recent examinations of British woodland owners, such as the work of Urquhart et al. (2010,2011 & 2012).

The Brook Forest case study showed how confused the access situation can become when one wood is broken into several ownerships. Here, different owners had contrasting attitudes leading to a situation where the public are tolerated in some areas of the wood while being prohibited in others. Awareness of the ownership situation was extremely low among participating members of the public leading to confusion and in some cases anger when new prohibitive signs appeared. In all cases where new owners attempted to make changes to the traditional access regime there was public resistance. This ranged from breaking fences (The Glade), removing signs (Bluebell and Gully woods), threatening behaviour (Oldfield wood), or simply ignoring new restrictions and carrying on as normal (Blackcrag wood). Public attitudes ranged from those who were prepared to wilfully trespass to those who simply did not care, though most had never considered the status of the paths. With the exception of the case at Tanner's, members of the public never tried to claim their informal routes as rights of way. Interview evidence points to a lack of awareness of the way the rights of way system works and any mechanism for claiming paths.

Another implication of ownership patterns was the tendency for ancient and longstanding woods to be in private ownership. 74 % of the woodlands in the sample were of ancient or longstanding origin. All of the ancient woods and the vast majority of longstanding woods were in private ownership. Publicly owned

woods, especially those owned by local authorities were dominated by re-planted industrial sites with a very different feel to that of an ancient wood. The one FC site in the sample was an even-aged conifer plantation, typically less popular with the public than broadleaved or mixed sites (Coles & Bussy, 2000).

10.4 Conclusions and further research

This study shows the first fully documented use of ordinary woods. The results are striking, showing poor levels of official access in private woodland and in particular for cyclists and equestrian users. This study presents the first documentation in academic literature of the nature and wide extent of informal access occurring in woodland. This research critiques the idea of trespass and argues that definitions around trespass are unclear. The public were shown to be largely oblivious of the status of paths and ordnance survey maps were rarely used. Many participants were seeking peace and calm though many were tolerant of the recreational activities of others. The notable exception to this was the use of off-tarmac motor vehicles, which were almost universally despised. Woodland ownership was diverse but there was evidence in a growth of individual private owners controlling small plots of woodland.

This leads to the first of several potential areas of further study. Most of the small woodland owners in this study had bought their wood recently and were undergoing a period of conflict with members of the public wishing to retain their former access arrangements. It would be useful to examine specifically woodlands that have changed hands between ten and twenty years ago, analysing the effects of ownership change on access outcomes and examining what settled access regimes emerge after a longer period of time has passed.

A second area of study may centre around some of the prohibited activities in woods for example camping and camp fires or the construction of informal mountain bike courses. There is a potential interaction between the demand for fire building and camping and the rise in popularity of the forest school approach in

English primary schools. Forest school is becoming more main-stream and has been incorporated into the curriculum of a rising number of nursery and primary schools in both rural and inner city locations. The approach, amongst other activities encourages wood crafts and camp fires (Knight, 2013) and has the potential to increase the demand for such activities in later life for these children. However, unless these forest school graduates have personal connections with a woodland owner their activities are universally prohibited, even by local authority and charitable organisations. Further research might look to predict the effects of the forest school on future behaviour in woods, perhaps with reference to the scouting movement and the potential to provide new recreational opportunities in the private sector.

A third opportunity for further study might examine the mountain bike issue which seems to be one of a lack of supply, with very few facilities available locally to where most people live. Further research could examine how the demand for informal mountain biking can be met sustainably.

Fourthly it may be useful to expand geographically from the conclusions of this regionalised research of North East Derbyshire. For example examining wider trends in the fragmentation of woodland ownership and how this affects both access and conservation or examining further attitudes to casual trespass.

Fifthly it may be fruitful to examine the influence of digital media on woodland use, including alternative sources of access information such as OpenStreetMap and on-line walking guides as well as more activity-based communications such as youtube videos of camping or mountain biking. This could be considered alongside an analysis of whether the use of traditional OS maps is in decline.

Finally there is potentially more to be learned about the role of woodland in youth cultures, including woodlands as a host for social gatherings or youth activities based around bike ramp building.

Overall this work has made a significant contribution to the field of rural geography by giving insights into the multi-faceted social and affective interactions around woodland in ordinary places. New information has come to light around the way woodlands are used and the attitude of the stakeholders involved, opening multiple avenues for further contributions to this branch of rural environmental geography.

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[*]These references have been amended to preserve the anonymity of research participants.

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Appendix: Stakeholder organisations and their standpoints on access.

Blue colours represent those whose primary concern is recreation; Green boxes are organisations primarily concerned with conservation and red boxes represent the landed interest. Organisations with more than one primary interest are given intermediate colours.

Organisation Name	Viewpoint represented	Summary of standpoint on access
Outdoor Recreation Network (ORN)	Recreational pursuits	Pro access. ORN are a research and information exchange membership organisation for the outdoor recreation sector.
Open Spaces Society (OSS)	General access to the countryside	Pro access. OSS say they *'represent all categories of recreational user on all public rights of way*[43]*'* OSS concentrate on the fair implementation of existing laws rather than lobby for change. They are involved in individual cases involving PROWs at grassroots level and work through a network of local volunteers.
Peak and Northern Footpath Society (PNFS)	Walkers	Pro access on foot. Like OSS, the PNFS work at grassroots level to ensure routes are 'monitored, protected and improved'. PNFS has a narrower remit than OSS, as it represents walkers only in the North Midlands and the North West of England.
The Ramblers	Walkers	Pro access on foot. The ramblers campaign for improved access rights for walkers and are now in favour of a right to roam in woodland[44]. However, they appreciate open access is not appropriate in all woodland (Hallas, 2018[45])
Cycling UK	Cyclists (all types)	Pro access. Cycling UK campaign for better '*responsible*' off-road access for cyclists. They feel that CROW land should be accessible for cyclists and horses[46].
Open MTB	Mountain bikers	Pro access. A lobby group campaigning for more access rights for off-road cyclists
British	Climbers	Pro access. Through their access and

[43] https://www.oss.org.uk/what-we-do/rights-of-way/
[44] http://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/branch-out.aspx Accessed 20th October 2016
[45] Telephone interview with Alison Hallas 7th February 2018
[46] Cycling UK (2016) Campaigns briefing: Public footpaths

Mountaineering Council (BMC)		conservation trust they lobby for improved access to the countryside and support local access improvements. BMC negotiate access with private landowners on a site by site basis[47].
British Horse Society (BHS)	Equestrian users	Pro access. Defending and expanding the bridleway network is a major part of the BHS' agenda[48]. They respond to consultations, defend threatened rights and work to create new off-road routes. They provide advice through a network of access officers and ask for donations to an *'access fighting fund'*.
Matlock and District Bridleways Access Group (MADBAG)	Equestrian users	Pro access. Affiliated to the BHS, MADBAG are one of many grassroots level organisations who actively claim bridleways and help keep existing ones in working order.
Greenlane Association	Recreational motorists	Pro access. As well as campaigning for more unobstructed BOAT provision the green-lane association offer an on-line planner for their members detailing legal off-tarmac routes for motorised vehicles called 'trailwise'[49]
The National Trust (NT)	Heritage and landscape preservation	Pro access. The NT exists to protect places of historical significance and to conserve natural landscapes. NT have a strap line '*forever, for everyone*' and do grant open access to much of their land. NT have not been involved in recent debates on access in the wider countryside though they argue strongly for the importance of experiential contact with natural environments (Moss, 2012).
The Woodland Trust	Woodland conservation and creation; public access	Pro access on foot. Primarily a woodland conservation charity, the woodland trust encourage access as a means of securing support for woodland preservation among members of the public[50]. Though not in support of general right to roam in woods the charity promotes access through its woodland access standard and its charter

[47] https://www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/RAD/View.aspx?id=5491
[48] http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways. Accessed 3rd October 2018
[49] https://www.glass-uk.org/where-can-i-drive-home-grid-articles.html. Accessed 3rd October 2018
[50] The woodland Trust (2014), Position Statement: Access to woodland and The woodland Trust (2014), Policy Paper: A guide to management of our woods

		for trees woods and people.
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	Landscape Preservation	Pro access (quiet enjoyment). The CPRE promote the ideals of the *countryside aesthetic* and endorse sympathetic forms of quiet recreation. They opposed the proposed sell off of FC land and advocate more access to private woodland[51] They supports the woodland trusts' charter for trees, woodland and people[52]. They have supported more off-road cycle routes in order to alleviate traffic[53]
The Wildlife Trusts	Wildlife conservation	Pro access on foot. The wildlife trusts own thousands of hectares of woodland and maintain it with conservation as their primary objective (Rackham, 2000). They are generally pro-access on foot and their website states '*We want to ensure that everyone has access to nature near where they live.'* However they do run a permit system for their most sensitive sites[54] and are not amenable to cyclists and horse traffic at most sites. They do not generally involve themselves in the access debate more widely
Forestry Commission (FC)	Government	Pro access on own property. The forestry commission see themselves as a provider of recreational opportunities to all sections of society. It is part of their core strategy. However as a non-departmental public body, they are linked to government and do not involve themselves in the access debate more widely.
The Royal Forestry Society (RFS)	Forest owners and the forestry sector more generally	Somewhat pro access. The RFS is a membership organisation which encourages active management of woodland for economic, environmental and public benefits. Though it supports a landowners' right to choose whether access should be available it quietly

[51] http://www.cpresussex.org.uk/campaigns/countryside/landscapes/update/item/2247-cpre-issues-a-challenge-to-the-government-over-woodlands#2. Accessed 3rd October 2018

[52] http://www.cpre.org.uk/news/circulars-and-news-2015/item/4178-supporting-the-woodland-trust-s-charter-for-trees-woods-and-people-opportunities-for-cpre-branches. Accessed 20th October 2016

[53] Campaign to Protect Rural England (2012), Get Britain Cycling: Written evidence from the Campaign to Protect Rural England for the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group inquiry

[54] http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/reserves-wildlife/our-nature-reserves

		encourages it through supporting grant funding for access and running initiatives such as '*teaching trees*'[55].
Country Landowners Association (CLA)	Landowners' interests	Anti-access. The CLA is a lobby organisation who oppose any increase in access and would like to see the current rights of way network rationalised[56].
National Farmers Union (NFU)	Farming interests	Anti-access. Sits on Defra's National rights of way stakeholder group, and on the House of Lords rights of way review committee. Seeks more flexibility for farmers to influence routing and uses of PROWs on their land[57]. They oppose the new policy to create coastal paths in England[58].
Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT)	Recreational shooting; Landowner interests; Conservation	Anti-access. The GWCT promote game shooting as a means of providing nature conservation. Not primarily focussed on access but well aligned with the CLA and are generally anti-access for all other forms of recreation[59].

[55] https://www.rfs.org.uk/learning/teaching-trees/
[56] https://www.cla.org.uk/rural-policy-advice/legal-and-professional/countryside-access Accessed 20th October 2016
[57] https://www.nfuonline.com/cross-sector/rural-affairs/access/access-news/warning-over-fake-footpaths-leading-walkers-astray/
[58] https://www.nfuonline.com/cross-sector/rural-affairs/access/access-news/coastal-access-plans-will-waste-public-money/
[59] http://www.gwct.org.uk/