

BRIEF HISTORY AND SETTING OF TOLL WOOD

The extent of Toll Wood (also noted historically as Mously/Mously Toll) has remained almost completely unchanged from the footprint found in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Historic auction records refer to Toll Wood as a “sporting woodland” (deer and pheasant being regularly hunted over local estates into the 20th century). The woodland size and topography would support that interpretation.

OS maps since 1801 confirm Toll Wood in its present place and dimensions. The later OS map surveyed in 1854/5 and subsequent surveys (see Appendix 2) detail the place of hard-fruit orchards and parkland mixed with grazing pastures along the length of the Lyn Valley without any changes to Toll Wood itself. The great depth of brickearth clay covering the lower profile Lyn Valley was recently confirmed following the excavation of a V2 rocket impact and ejector zone roughly 55 metres directly west of the north-west point of Toll Wood.

Continuity of Ownership. Mously Toll (sic) appears in the Linstead (sic) Tithe award schedule – signed 25th March 1840ⁱ – confirms ownership within the Linstead Lodge Estate owned at that time by Charles Henry Tyler (Lord Teynham) in his own occupation. “Cultivation” of Mously Toll was defined as “Wood” – not the alternatives of coppice, plantation or orchard. There has been continuous ownership of Toll Wood with the descendants of the Roper/Lord Teynham familial line until the break-up of the estate in the early 20th Century.

The 1st Lord Teynham was John Roper, b.1534, d.1618. The woodland almost certainly predates his ennoblement. The Roper family earlier lived in the ancient manor house of Bedmangore into antiquity. Bedmangore and its associated village is estimated to have existed near to the entrance to present-day Lynsted Lodge, off Tickham Lane. Bedmangore manor was demolished to make way for the Roper seat at Lynsted Lodge (Logge) built in 1599. Estate Papers are held but not yet researched in Maidstone History Centre for both Bedmangore and Lynsted Lodge Estates.

The direct line to the title of Lord Teynham, first bestowed in 1616, became extinct in 1724 with the suicide of Edward Roper, aged 20, at Almanza in Spain. The title and estate continued through familial succession of that title and ownership of Lynsted Lodge continuously into the 20th Century. The Roper family vault is attached to the nearby Lynsted Church of Saints Peter and Paulⁱⁱ.

Changes of ownership. Toll Wood emerged in the 19th century as part of the Aymers estate, associated with the Vallance Family in the 19th century. Aymers (the house) was built in the 1860s and set back from The Street. It replaced “Millers”, a mediaeval home adjacent to The Street, which was associated with relations of Lords Teynham. A series of changes in ownership of Aymers also led to the separation of Toll Wood from Aymers through to today’s ownership of Toll Wood.

Defining the extent of Ancient Woodland

Approaching Toll Wood today, it appears to extend from a public footpath on its northern edge, stretching southwards towards Lynsted Park. However, behind a screen of mature trees alongside the public footpath sits a parcel of more open land (early OS maps confirm this), probably used for grazing (certainly within recent memory). The enveloped chalkland meadow has been left fallow for decades and could benefit from management to stimulate chalk meadowland plants and insects.

Further ideas on meadow management requires distinct treatment to that of the ancient woodland proper – see Appendix 5. The screen of mature trees at the boundary do appear to form part of the ancient woodland footprint (see above). Two isolated trees of interest sit at the east end of the meadow - a Black walnut in good health (non-native tree) and an elm clearly displaying Dutch Elm beetle galleries. There is another Black walnut near the north-east corner of the meadow.

The Ancient Woodland Inventory suggests a woodland area of *3.46 Hectares (8.55 acres)*. For management purposes, we agree the defined woodland, grassland and hedgerow extents held by the Rural Payments Agency – **3.74 Ha (9.24 acres) Woodland and 0.68 Ha Permanent Grassland.**

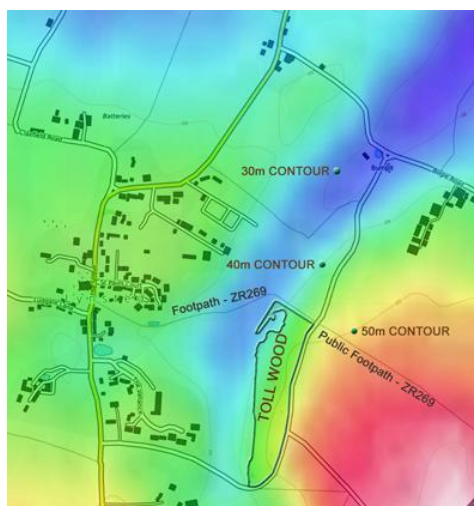
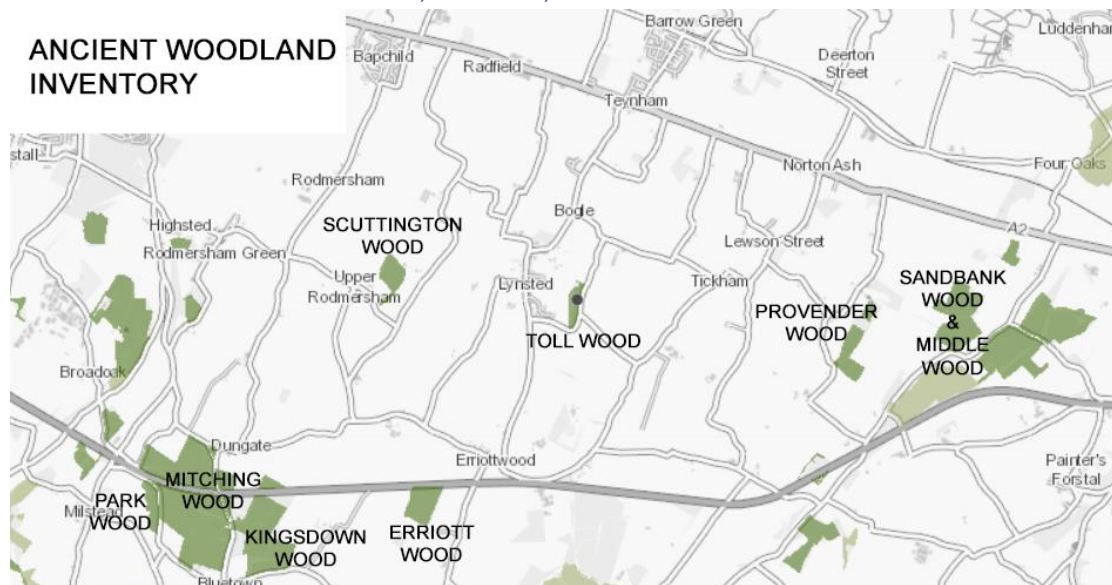
There is a thin lenticular fenced and hedged plot along part of the west margin of Toll Wood that has an ambiguous relevance to Toll Wood. Today, it sits under power lines. There is an established thicket of spindle at the meadow edge where this ‘way-leave’ merges with the proper woodland edge confirming the connection with ancient Toll Wood. The utilities company has adopted a brutal clearance policy beneath the power-lines that leaves the ground with a scrub mix.

The Toll Wood boundary and internal banks/scarps support the most mature native trees. However, the most significant ancient maidens sit in the parkland below (see table below). The antiquity of these trees confirms the long history of the Lyn Valley in an unbroken line through more than six centuries of parkland, incorporating the only local wood (“sporting woodland”) associated with the Roper family estate holdings in Lynsted Parish (now Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish).

REMARKABLE PARKLAND TREES ADJACENT TO TOLL WOOD

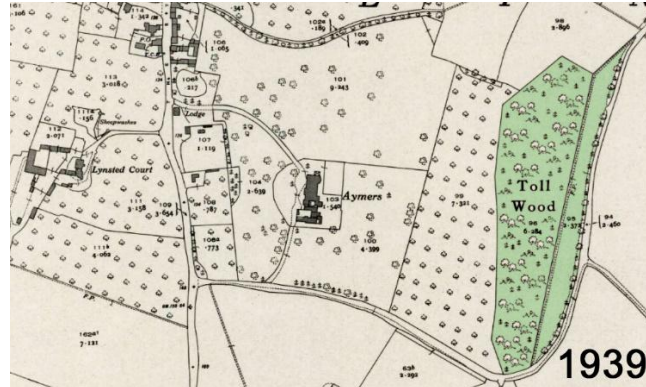
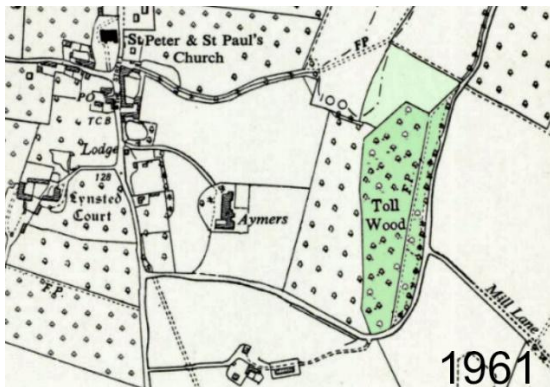
	Circumference (Girth)	Diameter	Estimated age (years)	Mitchell (1974) – “Veteran” Trees (Diameters)	“Heritage” Class = <u>girth</u> greater than:
Sweet Chestnut (Castanea sativa)	690cm	220cm	320-470 years	199cm dia = Truly ancient (max 318cm)	510cm diameter ✓
Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur)	515cm	164cm	274 – 300 years	150 = <u>valuable</u> {199cm = Truly ancient} (max 318)	454cm diameter ✓
Copper Beech (Fagus sylvatica f. purpurea)	520cm	166cm	210 - 260 years	123cm dia = Truly ancient (max 197cm)	321cm diameter ✓
Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur)	670cm	213cm	500 - 600 years	199cm dia = Truly ancient (max 318cm)	454cm diameter ✓

MAPS INDICATING LOCATION, EXTENT, HISTORY AND FEATURES OF TOLL WOOD



LYN VALLEY GRADIENTS

PERIMETER OF TOLL WOOD,
INCLUDING MEADOW



ⁱ <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/tithes/lynsted-linstead#02.htm>

ⁱⁱ http://www.lynsted-society.co.uk/resources_documents_articles_members_roper_mausoleum.html