

**From:** [SM-NE-Consultations \(NE\)](#)  
**To:** [Vikki Van Sylvan](#); [Thomas Jackson](#)  
**Subject:** Ancient Woodland Query Land east of Cut Lane Rishton, Hyndburn, Lancashire - Your ref 468071  
**Date:** 22 August 2025 08:37:03  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Dear Ms. Van Sylvan

Thank you for your email regarding Cut Wood, Rishton.

Cut Wood, Rishton, Hyndburn was identified as ancient woodland as part of the Ancient Woodland Inventory Update Project for England. The revised dataset for Lancashire was delivered under contract to Natural England (NE) in 2024 and published in January 2025. As a result of queries raised by Hyndburn Borough Council in June 2025 Natural England has now reviewed the evidence for this site.

Evidence in support of the site as ancient woodland consists of presence on maps and aerial images dating back to 1840 (OS Drawing) as well as 40 ancient woodland vascular plants (AWVPs) recorded in the 1 km grid square. However, the site is not recorded as woodland on the 1786 county map by William Yates which is evidence against the site being ancient woodland. It should also be noted that the site is named as a plantation on the Ordnance Survey First Series (Epoch 1) map. Whilst this suggests the woodland is not ancient it can be the case that woods named as plantations and showing both broadleaved and conifer symbology in this period are ancient woodlands into which conifers have been planted.

Yates' 1786 map represents a significant milestone in the cartographic history of Lancashire, being recognised as the most accurate survey of Lancashire available in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with Yates receiving a gold medal from the Society of Arts for his efforts. The map shows an area of unenclosed land as well as an area with no symbology north of Blackburn Road in the vicinity of the present day Cut Wood and Rishton Reservoir. The symbology of the uncultivated area is identified as moorland in analysis of the Yates map by Harley (1962). Although an accurate and detailed map of its time, 1 inch to 1 mile county maps of this period must be interpreted carefully. Apparent absence of woods (that are visible on later and larger scale surveys) on this type of map can rarely be safely interpreted as evidence of absence of the wood and should not be relied on (Sansum 2018). In Wealden, Kent, a landscape with many small woods, (Macnair and Williamson 2011) found that a relatively low proportion of woods smaller than two hectares in size are shown on the 2 inch scale map of Andrews, Dury and Herbert produced in 1769. Omission of woods can be demonstrated using contemporary estate maps. In this case the wood at that time, if in existence would have exceeded 4 hectares, both its size and location next to the main road suggest it would have been recognised and that it is likely to have been included if present.

1786 Yates County Map of Lancashire with approximate location of Cut Wood highlighted in yellow.



The presence of 40 AWVPs is unusually high and if accurate would indicate that the site is ancient woodland. NE have examined the survey evidence and concluded that the number of AWVPs that can be reasonably attributed to the site, rather than its 1 km square is much lower. Of the 796 botanical records (including some duplicate records) that relate to the 1 km square, only 50 are confirmed as being from the Cut Wood area. These being 46 records from Cut Lane which is the eastern boundary of the site and a further 4 records derived from a 100m x 100m square in the south-east corner of the site. AWVPs are identified in The Wild Flower Key by F. Rose (2006). The Rose lists of AWVPs are widely recognised as being an important tool for identifying ancient woodland. Of the 50 botanical records for the site, six are included in the Rose lists as AWVPs. Two of the species (Holly and Hazel) are so common that they are not reliable indicators of ancient woodland and a third species is only considered to indicate ancient woodland in Somerset. This leaves a total of 3 AWVPs. Three is not a significant number of AWVPs and as such does not support a classification of ancient woodland.

In conclusion, the evidence currently available to Natural England does not support the site as ancient woodland and Natural England will now remove the site from the Ancient Woodland Inventory at the next opportunity.

#### References.

Harley, J.B. 1962. William Yates and Peter Burdett: Their Role in the Mapping of Lancashire and Cheshire During the Late Eighteenth Century. The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire  
Macnair, A. & Williamson, T. 2011. William Faden and Norfolk's eighteenth-century Landscape: a digital reassessment of his historic map. Oxford, Oxbow.  
Rose, F. 2006. The Wild Flower Key (Revised Edition) - How to Identify Wild Plants, Trees and Shrubs in Britain and Ireland, Warne  
Sansum, P. (2018) Ancient Woodland Inventory Handbook, Natural England Commissioned Report 248, Natural England  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4876500800634880>

Yours sincerely  
Natural England

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[www.gov.uk/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/natural-england)



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For further information on the Discretionary Advice Service see [here](#)  
For further information on the Pre-submission Screening Service see [here](#)

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**From:** Vikki Van Sylvan  
**Sent:** 01 July 2025 11:06  
**To:** 'Nicholas.Armstrong@naturalengland.org.uk' <[Nicholas.Armstrong@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Nicholas.Armstrong@naturalengland.org.uk)>  
**Cc:** 'consultations@naturalengland.org.uk' <[consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)>; Thomas Jackson <[Thomas.Jackson@hyndburnbc.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.Jackson@hyndburnbc.gov.uk)>; Adam Birkett <[Adam.Birkett@hyndburnbc.gov.uk](mailto:Adam.Birkett@hyndburnbc.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Land east of Cut Land Rishton, Hyndburn, Lancashire - Your ref 468071

Hello,

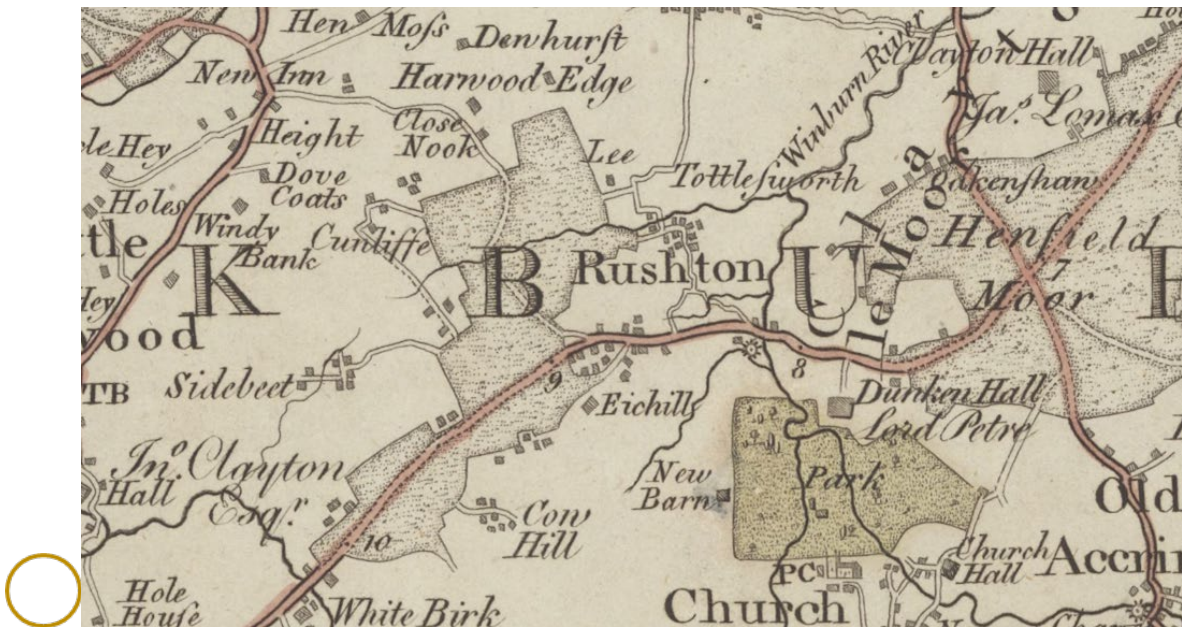
Further to this email, LCC Archaeology signposted me to an [old map](#) (see below), which they regularly use, dated from 1786. This shows the area (circled roughly in yellow) comprising of marsh land, rather than woodland. This is consistent with the area being used to form a reservoir for the canal as mentioned in my last email.

Our Inspector is currently preparing her Main Inspectors Questions, we have raised the issue with her as this allocation is one of the larger sites in the Hyndburn Local Plan and it would be very useful to expediently find out why this site was designated as ancient woodland and your thoughts on it appearing to be a plantation on marshland created in the 19<sup>th</sup> C.

I apologise if I have not contacted the right department but if you could forward it on to the right person I would be very grateful.

Best wishes,

Vikki van Sylvan MTCP MRTPI (She/her)  
Planning Policy Consultant  
Hyndburn Borough Council  
Scaitcliffe House  
Ormerod Street  
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**Mapmaker:** Yates, William, 1738-1802 ; Billinge, Thomas  
**Title:** Centre south east sheet - The county Palatine of Lancaster  
**Date:** 1786.

[View map: Yates, William, 1738-1802 ; Billinge, Thomas, Centre south east sheet - The county Palatine of Lancaster - Counties of Scotland, 1580-1928](#)

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**From:** Vikki Van Sylvan

**Sent:** 30 June 2025 10:56

**To:** 'Nicholas.Armstrong@naturalengland.org.uk' <[Nicholas.Armstrong@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Nicholas.Armstrong@naturalengland.org.uk)>

**Cc:** 'consultations@naturalengland.org.uk' <[consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)>; Thomas Jackson <[Thomas.Jackson@hyndburnbc.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.Jackson@hyndburnbc.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Land east of Cut Land Rishton, Hyndburn, Lancashire - Your ref 468071

Good morning,

Hyndburn has submitted its [Local Plan for examination](#) and is expecting hearings to take place in September. Natural England have previously been consulted through various iterations of the Local Plan but have not made any site specific objections (468071 attached).

Through the publication of the [draft Lancashire LNRS](#) it has come to light that land which bounds the access road for one of our larger sites (H20 land to the northeast of Cut Lane) has been identified as Ancient Woodland, the site is a park known as Cutwood Park, Rishton. We can see this on the Natural England County layer but it does not appear on the 'England' layer. The fact that there are two contradictory maps is unhelpful but we understand now that the County map takes precedence.

This designation has the potential to sterilise the site as some trees would need to be removed from the park land to create a new access. We were wondering if you could let us know why this land has been designated as ancient woodland and when the designation was made? I assume that it has recently been designated but can't find an older layer to confirm this.

We have looked back at old maps and the oldest one (1844) shows the woodland as a broadleaf "reservoir plantation", potentially to accompany the reservoir which was built as part of the Leeds Liverpool canal in 1828, if this were to be the case then we are unsure if it would meet the 1600's date to be counted as ancient woodland. The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory shows 3 'notable' trees but no ancient ones.

Any information that you could provide regarding this designation would be greatly received. The Inspector is currently preparing her Main Inspector's Questions (MIQs) and has today been made aware of this issue so your expedient response would be much appreciated.



Kind regards,

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