

Stanmore Common LNR, Harrow: Statement of Significance

Bluebell Heath Management Committee July 2012

Stanmore Common is the open space in Harrow with the greatest sense of wildness. Visitors feel that they could get lost in the network of winding paths. This sense of remoteness is valued by many visitors but discourages others. In contrast to the other open spaces in Harrow's Green Belt, which look out over urban Harrow and central London towards the North Downs, views in Stanmore Common are northeast over open land albeit cut by the M1 motorway. The soil grades from London Clay in the lowest, northeast sections through Claygate Beds to the quickly draining Stanmore Gravels on the north, west and south. Stanmore Common contains good examples of three habitat types and their associated fauna:

- ***Mature woodland*** on the south and west sides suffered significant felling around the 2nd World War but is otherwise likely to have been continuously wooded since 1660. It contains a rich flora including many ancient woodland indicators together with a rich invertebrate fauna, many of which depend on the considerable amounts of standing dead timber.
- ***Acid grassland and heath*** is a rare habitat in southeast England. The loss of large areas of open heath on Stanmore Common was recorded by the local naturalist Eliza Brightwen, who described in 1904 how the "golden sheen of the furze blossoms spreading over more than two hundred acres" she remembered from 1880 had been replaced by birch woodland. By 1990 only a few small glades retained the lovely, special flora including heather, white heath bedstraw and yellow-flowered tormentil. Considerable work by volunteers rescued heather bushes from under the deep shade of willow scrub and restored the open glades of Cerrislande and Oakmead to complex and lovely mosaics of grasses, both tall and short, mixed with young tree saplings, heather, bracken, and gorse. These are lovely places to come upon when the low winter sun illuminates frosty grasses, or to rest among flowers on a warm summer's day.

A project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund will in 2012-2015 perform a similar but larger scale restoration of Bluebell Heath. Bands of scrub will be cleared, while a small section of young birch woodland will be cleared and reseeded with heather. When complete Bluebell Heath will form a broad sweep of grassland and heath giving the visitor a great sense of openness. It will provide considerable space for colonization by the flora and fauna of the smaller residual acid grassland habitats, helping to ensure the survival of these plant and invertebrate communities.

- **Wetlands** develop in springs and flushes on the interface between the Stanmore Gravel/Claygate Beds and the London Clay and are home to a specialized community of plants and invertebrates including rarities such as Sphagnum moss. At the lowest part of the Common a boardwalk crosses the marshy Pynding Mersc, giving a sense of adventure and providing opportunities for pond dipping.

There is a long history of human settlement and activity in Stanmore and clues of this are present all over the Common. The open heaths themselves are the result of clearance in the 17th century, while a series of earthworks probably all belonged to a 16th century or later rabbit warren documented in 1667 as the coney warren. The rounded hill-like mound called Fox-Earth is the most obvious, but this may possibly be an older mound re-used. South of Warren Lane lie Brewer's Ponds, created in the late 19th century as a reservoir to serve Clutterbuck's Brewery.

IN DEPTH

Results of research done during generation of Statement of Significance

1. Current Status
2. Geology
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4. History
5. Current usage of the Common
6. Wildlife and habitat management strategy
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8. The species of Stanmore Common

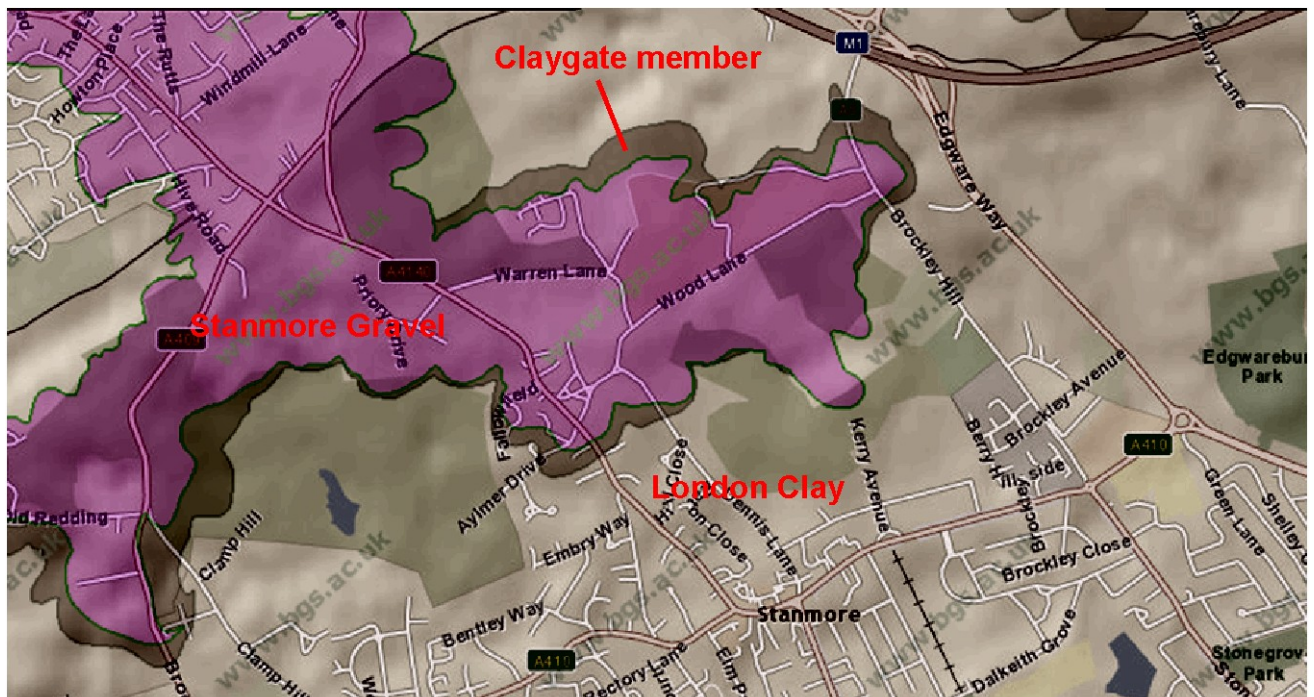
1. CURRENT STATUS

Stanmore Common is situated on Harrow's north boundary with Hertsmere and is entirely owned by the London Borough of Harrow. It has an area of 49ha (= 121 acres) and its centroid (geometrical centre) lies at TQ16044 93815.

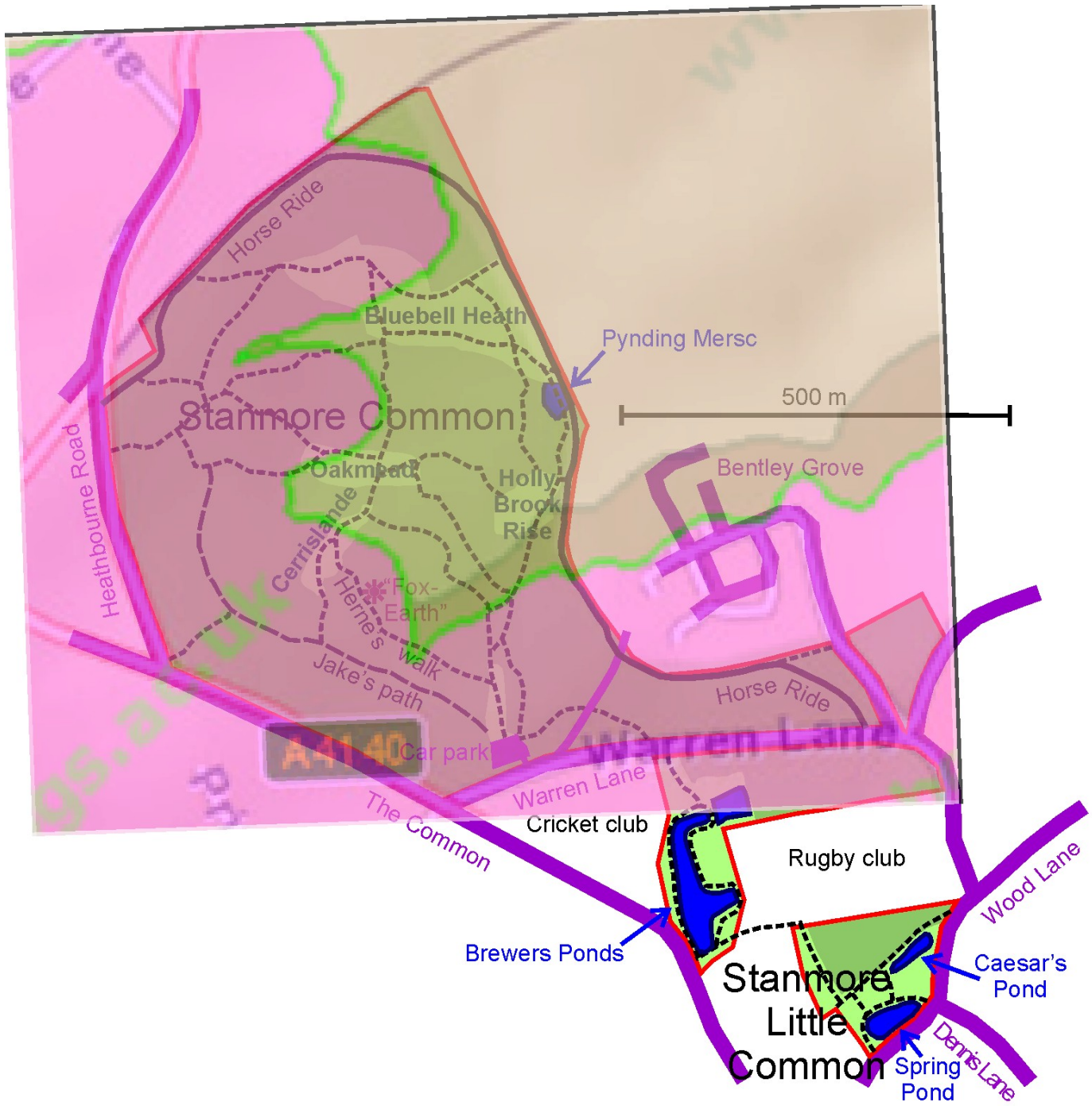
Stanmore Common is a statutory Local Nature Reserve (LNR). It is on Green Belt Land and is a designated Local Wildlife Site (until recently known as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation). The site formerly enjoyed Site of Special Scientific Interest status (SSSI), primarily on the basis of its nationally scarce invertebrates, particularly those species breeding in decaying timber.

Stanmore Common is wardened and managed by volunteers in partnership with the Local Authority. Liaison takes place through Harrow Nature Conservation Forum (HNCF), a branch of Harrow Heritage Trust which provides oversight on the management of some of Harrow's key wildlife areas. Other key partners include Harrow Natural History Society (HNHS) along with conservation volunteers from a range of other organisations.

2. GEOLOGY



The lowest areas of Stanmore Common lie on London Clay. Above this lie the quicker draining Claygate Member while the Stanmore Gravels form the highest areas and generate a quick draining, acid soil. The map below shows the geology map superimposed on the plan of Stanmore Common, and reveals that New Heath, and the area of Flushing Wood that will be scraped and planted with heather, are on the Stanmore Gravel, while the more easterly parts of Bluebell Heath lie on the London Clay.



The characteristics of these three strata are detailed below.

London Clay Formation - Clay, Silt and Sand. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 34 to 55 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period. Local environment previously dominated by deep seas. Setting: deep seas. These rocks

were formed in deep seas from infrequent slurries of shallow water sediments which were then re-deposited as graded beds.

The London Clay typically comprises bioturbated or poorly laminated, slightly calcareous, silty to very silty clay. It commonly contains thin courses of carbonate concretions – “cementstone nodules” – and disseminated pyrite. At depth, where fresh, it is grey, blue-grey or grey-brown in colour. Near the surface the uppermost metre or few metres typically weathers to clay with a distinctive brown colour produced by the oxidation of pyrite. The London Clay may contain thin beds of shells and fine sand partings or pockets of sand, which commonly increase towards the base and towards the top of the formation. Glauconite can be present in the sands and in some clay beds. White mica grains may be present. At the base and at some other levels, there may be a thin bed of black well rounded flint pebbles.

5 sedimentary cycles have been recognised in the London Clay, each recording an initial sea-level rise and marine transgression followed by gradual shallowing of the sea. The base of each cycle of deposition is typically marked by a sparse pebble bed. This is covered by thick clays, which become progressively more silty and sandy upwards.

The Claygate Member: Clay, Silt And Sand. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 34 to 55 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period. Local environment previously dominated by shallow seas. Setting: shallow seas. These rocks were formed in shallow seas with mainly siliciclastic sediments, comprising fragments or clasts of silicate minerals, deposited as mud, silt, sand and gravel

The Claygate Member is the uppermost part of the London Clay Formation and corresponds to the upper part of the last of the 5 sedimentary cycles in that formation. It typically comprises interbedded fine-grained sands, silty clays and silts. The proportion of sand tends to increase upwards. The clays are generally blue-grey where fresh and brown where weathered.

The Claygate Member deposits are of tidal marine origin and represent a transition to the overlying Bagshot Formation (absent at Stanmore and Harrow Weald but capping Harrow Hill and Hampstead Heath). They occur only as scattered outliers throughout the Thames Group outcrop.

Stanmore Gravel Formation - Sand And Gravel. Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local environment previously dominated by rivers. Gravel and sand, clayey near base. Gravel mostly composed of flints, up to 150mm in diameter, with a little quartz, quartzite and Lower Greensand chert in the fine fractions. Matrix of orange-brown, pale grey, red mottled clay and sandy clay, with pockets of coarse sand. Locally with layers of silt, clay or peat. Interpreted as offshore or beach gravels (Ellison et al 2004), or possibly fluvial (Bridgland 1994).

Setting: rivers. These rocks were formed from rivers depositing mainly sand and gravel detrital material in channels to form river terrace deposits, with fine silt and clay from overbank floods forming floodplain alluvium, and some bogs depositing peat; includes estuarine and coastal plain deposits mapped as alluvium.

Hilltop occurrences of gravel at between 130 and 150m OD in the extreme north-west of the London district have been named the Stanmore Gravel. This typically contains well rounded pebbles of flint, with lesser proportions of quartz pebbles, subangular to nodular flint, quartzitic sandstone and some other types. These are set in a clayey, sandy matrix with some pockets of coarse sand. The deposit is up to about 5m in thickness.

The Stanmore Gravel is of uncertain age and origin. It has been proposed as river deposits from south bank tributaries of the proto-Thames (ie when the Thames flowed north of London to the sea at Colchester prior to the Anglian glaciation), rather like the older of the Thames terraces. However, its distribution suggests it is a westwards correlative of the Red Crag of East Anglia and that it therefore comprises marine deposits of latest Pliocene to earliest Pleistocene age.

As such, it could yield significant information about the early Quaternary palaeogeography and climate and about the long-term rates and patterns of vertical movement in the London region.

There are very few natural exposures (and none at Stanmore Common?) though it is exposed at Harrow Weald geological SSSI.

HYDROLOGY

The wetland habitats and their flora and fauna at the site are dependent on water entering the site *via* flushes, old drainage channels and run-off from the site's perimeter. Maintaining the site's hydrology is a high priority for us, and for many years we have been carrying out small-scale works (e.g. by extending existing seasonal marshes) in order to extend the retention-time of water on the Common.

HISTORY

Two earthworks on the Common

The entries for Stanmore Common in the Greater London Historic Environment Record (Appendix 1) are based largely upon notes on visible earthworks made by G F Cole in the late 1940s (Cole 1951). His most prominent site is marked on the current OS 1:10,000 map as a long narrow earthwork labelled *Pillow Mound* in the archaic lettering used for an antiquity. He identified it as a representing a rabbit warren, a rectangular mound with 'quite well defined sides, ends and corners...surrounded by a clearly visible ditch'.

About 60m to the SW is another mound, then 'known locally as the "Fox-Earth"'. Cole describes this as 'tumulus-like', sub-circular, and suggests that it could possibly be the remains of a tumulus; by this he means an artificial burial mound, which are usually late Neolithic to early Bronze Age in date (although some can be Roman).

In 1985 these two mounds were the subject of a measured survey, as part of the Harrow Archaeological Survey Project (Watkins 1985). The rectangular earthwork, in woodland and dense undergrowth, was plainly a pillow mound (that is, an earthwork constructed for the management of rabbits; see below). It lies on low flat ground, is 42.8m long and 8.6m wide, and has sharp corners and a continuous ditch around it. One end is very slightly rounded. The other earthwork, 60m to the SW, is in a very different location, being a prominent subcircular mound on high ground, which slopes away to the east. This one was found to be 18.2m across, not including the surrounding ditch, and 1.5m high with steeply rising sides and an almost flat top.

Both form and position suggest that this could have been a burial mound (apart from the flat top, which could be a later modification), but there are other possible uses.

The disturbance in the top might be due to digging into the mound in the past; it could have resulted from the installation and later removal of the timber cross trees of a post mill for turning grain into flour. As Watkins observed, this is, however, a long way from the common fields of the manor, and although a good spot to catch the wind an early mill is perhaps unlikely here (although it is not far to the east of the post-medieval windmill at Bushey Heath). Other uses might be for a beacon, or a gibbet, but there is no record of either in Stanmore. Watkins did not realise that pillow mounds can be circular, and concluded that this was most likely a burial mound unrelated to the rectangular earthwork. Rabbit warrens do, however, often include

round earthworks (Williamson 2006, 40), so although this could be an older mound adapted for the purpose (and burial mounds have often been re-used for other purposes, from windmills to World War II anti-aircraft guns) there is at present no real evidence that it is. It has not been excavated.

Other earthworks

About 200m from Belswood Cottage (at the junction of Heathbourne Road and Magpie Hall Road) Cole noted a 'triple warren', also rectangular and surrounded by a ditch 'formed by the removal of soil for the construction of the mound'. About 100m NE of this earthwork 'are what may be the remains of a single warren, indicated by a rectangle of ditches'; and 'in the extreme NE corner of the Common are remains of an earthwork...which have a somewhat similar appearance...i.e parallel ditching'. So Cole briefly recorded at least four, possibly five, pillow mounds upon the Common. His identification of these mounds as all belonging to a warren is likely to be right, both from the rudimentary descriptions and because a warren rarely if ever consisted of a single earthwork. He assumed them to be medieval (hence the date given them by the GLHER), but Williamson (2006, 32) concludes from archaeological, documentary and map evidence that 'most surviving pillow mounds were built between c.1550 and 1850'. It is worth summarising Williamson's relevant conclusions here:

'The archaeology of rabbit warrens':

- 'Coneys' (the word used until the 18th century) were reintroduced to Britain in the medieval period, for their meat and fur, but only became adapted to the climate after many generations and needed careful management.
- A manorial lord could introduce rabbits onto his waste without infringing the common rights of his tenants. Into the 17th century warrens, like fishponds and dovecotes, were important symbols of status, 'to be proudly displayed beside the main approaches to the mansion, or carefully positioned on the skyline'. It was only from the 18th century that they gradually lost their symbolic and financial value.
- Around two-thirds of known pillow mounds are found on common land. Their primary purpose was to provide the rabbits with a raised area of loose dry soil with good drainage, in which they could burrow. Most mounds lie roughly at right-angles to the slope of the ground.

- They are usually rectangular, with an external ditch and neat corners, but come in many forms, sizes and arrangements. They are usually in groups (one warren could contain a great many individual mounds) and can often re-use existing earthworks.
 - Many warrens were enclosed within boundary ditches, to keep the rabbits from escaping and damaging crops, or within banks of earth and turf on heathland.
 - Fodder for the rabbits was often provided, and piled on top of the mounds to help keep them dry in the rain. Cuttings of hazel, elder and ash were favoured for this.
- The above is applicable to the earthworks on Stanmore Common, which appear to represent a standard post-medieval warren. It is quite possible that all the earthworks belong together as a single monument, scattered across much of the present Common. The bank seen by the Ordnance Survey (below) may or may not be one of the features of the warren.

Many warrens had a lodge for a keeper, to guard the rabbits from vermin and poachers and as a place to keep the nets and equipment for the catch, but 'where small warrens were established on open commons or lay close to a mansion, they were usually absent'. Warren House in Wood Lane may get its name from its proximity to the warren, not because it had any functional link with it.

Who was responsible for this warren is hard to say, although one obvious candidate would be the Duke of Chandos in the early 18th century. But the 'coney warren' on Stanmore Common is documented in 1667 (VCH 1976, 102), and could be earlier in origin. There were other wealthy estates on and below the ridge from the Tudor period onwards, as by this date Stanmore, reachable on horseback, was already favoured by City businessmen for their country properties. This is just the period when pillow mounds and their related earthworks become most common, from c.1550 onwards. The nearest estate, of course, was The Grove just to the east, where the streams issuing from the Common fed two artificial lakes in the grounds. The Grove, however, is largely an 18th century and later estate. The Limes (see the postscript below) is another candidate.

Bluebell Heath is not the site of any of the recorded earthworks, but clearance may reveal something which could relate to the warren (or traces of past gravel digging, like those seen by the Ordnance Survey). In addition, it is quite possible that objects may be revealed when the topsoil is stripped from part of the Heath. These could include a scatter of prehistoric worked flints, Roman potsherds or even coins, and metalwork of any date relating to past uses of the common. It will be necessary to

monitor the clearance, and record any earthwork or artefacts. Advice can be sought from the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (kim.stabler@english-heritage.org.uk for north-west London).

Gravel extraction

The history of manual gravel extraction at the Common, including its historical duration and cessation date, are unknown to the author. That history is written widely over the Common's landscape, in the form of hundreds of small and mainly shallow pits. The small size of these pits is however thought to suggest an early date.

Postscript

'Boudicca's Mound': this is said in the Stanmore Common Nature Reserve leaflet to be one of the obvious archaeological remains on the Common (presumably the highly visible round earthwork, which Cole says was known locally as the Fox-Earth), but this is not the case. The name applies to a mound in the grounds of The Limes, which was excavated in 1954. As 17th-century pottery was found beneath it this was evidently a post-medieval prospect mound, a small artificial hill created within the pleasure grounds of a private estate to provide a view, and deliberately given a fanciful name.

References

Cole, Gilbert F (1951): Coney warrens at Stanmore; *London & Middlesex Archaeological Society Transactions* n.s.10, 60-62

VCH (1976): Victoria County History of Middlesex, vol. 5.

Watkins, C J (1985): *A survey of two earthen mounds on Stanmore Common*. Harrow Archaeological Survey Project, 2nd interim report. Unpublished typescript in Harrow Local History Collection, Civic Centre Library.

Williamson, Tom (2006): *The archaeology of rabbit warrens*. Princes Risborough: Shire Publications.

The quotation from Eliza Brightwen in the Statement of Significance is from *Quiet Hours with Nature* pub. T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1904.

Appendix 1

Relevant entries on the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER), with their sources:

052049 STANMORE COMMON An area of old gravel digging in the form of lengths of banks and ditches (Ordnance Survey Record Card). TQ 159 135.

052056 BELSWOOD COTTAGE (200 YDS FROM) Rabbit warren (medieval).

Earthwork consisting of three banks and surrounding ditches, all rectangular. Similar earthworks in area (Cole 1951). No longer visible in 1975 (Ordnance Survey Record Card). TQ 156 940.

052039 STANMORE COMMON Barrow of unknown date. A large ditched mound, unusual plan and profile, near circular, with ditch 0.9m in depth and berm 0.5m above ground level, average width 1.5m. Known locally as the 'Fox Earth'. Doubtfully a barrow, probably a local variant of coney warren of which a conventional example exists 90m to the NE (Cole 1951). TQ 158 937.

052036 STANMORE COMMON Rabbit warren (medieval). Earthworks consisting of parallel ditching, similar to rabbit warrens elsewhere on Stanmore Common (Cole 1951). TQ 158 943.

052038 STANMORE COMMON Pillow mound (medieval). Coney warren, oblong in plan, surrounded by ditch 0.2m in depth, on all sides except to north where nearly filled in (Cole 1951). TQ 158 938.

052048 STANMORE COMMON Earthwork (unknown date, or post-medieval). A large bank with flanking ditches, probably a boundary (OS Record Card). TQ 159 940.

There are also records for nearby finds of worked prehistoric flints from Grove Field (052007), an early Bronze Age copper alloy axe from 'near' the Common (052021), and an iron 'woodman's axe' from the corner of the cricket field (052085), of a standard form which could date from any period from Roman onwards.

Appendix 2

Stanmore Common in the Old Bailey records, 1674-1913 (www.oldbaileyonline.org)

1719: 'The Prisoner pleaded that there were a great many playing at Nine-Pins on the Common...'

1777: 'As I was going from London to Watford in the Watford diligence, I was stopt on Stanmore Common...' by two men who robbed the coach.

1789: 'About twelve at noon, going over Stanmore Common, I was met by two highwaymen, one went to my coachman, and held up a pistol to him, before the horses, the other came to the side of the coach...'

1879 '..pleaded guilty to setting fire to certain heath grass and furze on Stanmore Common...'

(see end of document for the Old Bailey transcripts)

CURRENT USAGE OF THE COMMON

The site's users include walkers and ramblers, dog-walkers, horse-riders and geocachers etc., as well as of course by many naturalists and country-lovers through the decades.

Mapping the Site

In the past the management of the site has been made difficult by the lack of reliable maps. Much of the site is wooded, and features such as management parcel boundaries, woodland paths and habitat features could not be properly charted from aerial photographs. In 2010 however, high sensitivity recording GPS/GIS and cartography was employed to accurately map all footpaths, watercourses, management compartment boundaries as well as the locations of numerous ecological features, allowing the production of accurate printable maps for the use of wardens, visitors and recorders.

WILDLIFE & HABITAT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

We regard records of the Common's species and habitats as the keystone of our management strategy, which is to develop our management in the light of our growing knowledge and understanding of the site's wildlife and its requirements. In other words, instead of imposing formulaic management on the Common's wildlife, we first ask it what it needs!

THE HABITATS OF STANMORE COMMON

In broad terms habitats at Stanmore Common can be divided into; woodland and scrub, grassland and wetland features. Certain habitats are prioritised under Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).

UK BAP Priority Habitats include: Lowland dry acid grassland, Lowland mixed deciduous woodland and Wet woodland.

London BAP Priority Habitats include: Acid grassland, Woodlands, Standing water, Heathland, Ancient woodland, and Rivers and streams.

Harrow BAP Priority Habitats include: Grassland, Woodlands, Standing and running water, Heathland, Bare ground and Decaying timber.

Other key habitats of the Common include a range of wetland features such as flushes, marshes and ditches, and ancient woodland as revealed by the 34 Ancient Woodland Indicator plant species recorded here.

THE SPECIES OF STANMORE COMMON

Species Recording

We actively encourage species recording at the site, and many people have studied and recorded the wildlife of Stanmore Common over the years. This process is ongoing and as a result we have significant datasets of a variety of major groups which we can use to encourage understanding of the site and to guide and prioritise appropriate site management.

In the early 2000's HNCf published a series of reviews of the *Reviews of the Wildlife & Habitats of Stanmore Common LNR*: **No we didn't! Does Simon mean HNHS?**

- Part I Flowering Plants, Ferns & Horsetails of Stanmore Common: [*Superseded by a detailed botanical survey which we commissioned in 2010*]
- Part II Mosses & Liverworts (Bryophytes) of Stanmore Common
- Part III An Annotated Checklist of the Fungi of Stanmore Common
- Part IVa Hoverflies, Soldier Flies & Dance Flies of Stanmore Common
- Part VIIa Sphagnum Habitats at Stanmore Common: A Preliminary Audit and Action Plan

In 2010 HNCf commissioned a detailed botanical and habitat survey of the 30 management parcels (see below in the section on Flora).

Invertebrates

Stanmore Common is known for its invertebrate fauna, and the sites original designation as an SSSI was based largely on insect records from the site.

Butterflies (Lepidoptera): Both the White Admiral and Ringlet butterflies are resurgent at the site having been apparently absent for many years. The first recent records of the White Admiral were in 2003, and by 2010 they were fairly common at the site. It is a London BAP- and National BAP Priority Species. On the other hand the Small Copper is a declining butterfly in London and elsewhere and it is gratifying to see that its population at the Common survives. Although the Small Heath butterfly (a National and London BAP Priority Species) was recorded here as recently as 2003, it is in regional decline and unfortunately its current status at the site is uncertain.

Moths (Lepidoptera): Light trapping and rope baiting carried out over recent years have given us a substantial list of the moths of Stanmore Common. Highlighted and scarce species include: Flounced Chestnut (one of the National- and London BAP Priority Species found at the Common, and a very scarce species), Light Orange Underwing, Hedge Rustic, Alder Moth, Birch Mocha, Gold Swift, Northern Winter Moth, Peacock Moth, Small Elephant Hawk Moth, Suspected, Lead Coloured Drab, and Scarce Prominent.

Beetles (Coleoptera): Beetles breeding in decaying timber include *Melandrya caraboides*, *Bitoma crenata*, *Abdera quadrifasciata*, *Megatoma undata*, *Orchesia undulata* and *Sphindus dubius*. The Welsh Chafer (*Hoplia philanthus*) is a large beetle which may be seen on the right day flying around oak trees in clearings. *Zeugophora subspinoso* and *Gonioctena decemnotata* are both found on aspen leaves, whilst the Eyed Ladybird *Anatis ocellata* is a member of the Common's pine-associated fauna.

Flies (Diptera): Flies breeding in decaying timber include *Ctenophora pectinicornis* a wasp-like 'gloss-finish' crane fly, the crimson and black hoverfly *Brachypalpoidea lentus* as well as the hoverflies *Mallota cimbiciformis* and *Myolepta dubia* which both breed in rot-holes in large trees. The hoverfly *Dasysyrphus pinastri* is an aphid-feeder, normally on conifers, and the scarce fungal feeding hoverfly *Cheilosia longula* has also been recorded here. Other scarce but distinctive hoverflies include *Xanthandrus comtus* which feeds on gregarious web-making caterpillars and *Sericomyia silentis* which breeds in acidic flushes in grassland. The first UK record of an adult of the Nationally Scarce flat-footed fly *Agathomyia wankowiczii* was at the Common in June 2000; its larvae are gall-formers in Artists' Fungus (*Ganoderma applanatum*).

Bees, Wasps and Ants (Hymenoptera): The site's solitary bees include the Sleepy Carpenter Bee *Chelostoma florissomne* which is known for curling-up and falling asleep in flower heads, and the very scarce metallic blue-green *Lasioglossum leucopus*. Solitary wasps include *Cerceris rybyensis* which preys on solitary bees, *Crossocerus styrius*, a rarity of damp woodlands where it nests in the dead broken stems of birch, and *Crossocerus walkeri*, a Notable species of unpolluted ponds and

streams, where it preys on small mayflies. Among the social wasps the Hornet (*Vespa crabro*) has increased its range in urban areas in recent years and can now be seen at the Common. The ant *Lasius platythorax* is very similar to- and country-cousin to the common black ant (*Lasius niger*). However it normally nests in dead wood and is a shade-tolerant species.

True Bugs (Hemiptera): The lace bug *Cixius similis* is an uncommon species of scrubland on acidic substrates. The tree hopper *Centrotus cornutus* is a Local woodland species recognisable by its distinctive 'horns'. On the surface of woodland pools and becalmed sections of stream the red-and-black Water Cricket *Velia caprai* can sometimes be seen swimming in small flotillas.

Grasshoppers and Crickets (Orthoptera): The attractive Long-winged Conehead *Cnephasia longana* is a non-native colonist to the UK and was first recorded at the Common by the warden in 2010. If you are very lucky you might see the Slender Ground-hopper (*Tetrix subulata*) swimming underwater in pools and large woodland puddles at the Common. Otherwise it may be found on bare mud or other damp places, or in rushy habitats in the open.

Spiders: The Common has been visited on more than one occasion by the LNHS Spider Recorder, and any scarcer species found will be considered in the future management of the site.

FLORA

In 2010 HNCF commissioned a detailed Flora and Habitat Survey of all of the 30 management compartments at the Common. As a result we have an up-to-date audit of our wildflowers, trees, shrubs and ferns.

A number of **London BAP Priority Species** occur the Common including: Hard-fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Marsh willowherb (*Epilobium palustre*), Devil's-bit scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Lily-of-the-Valley (*Convallaria majalis*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Green ribbed sedge (*Carex binervis*), Heath wood-rush (*Luzula multiflora*), and Heath spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*) which is also a Harrow BAP Priority Species.

Around 50 species at the Common are classified as **Notable in London**: These include: Green-ribbed sedge (*Carex binervis*), Brown bent (*Agrostis vinealis*), Velvet bent (*Agrostis canina*), Heath spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*), Marsh willowherb (*Epilobium palustre*), and Pill sedge (*Carex pilulifera*). The common is home to the only colony of Heath spotted-orchid in London.

The 34 species of **Ancient Woodland Indicators** for South East England recorded at the Common include: Wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*) Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Lily-of-the-Valley (*Convallaria majalis*), Wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Three-nerved sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Wood millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood meadow-grass (*Poa nemoralis*) Creeping soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*) and Broad-leaved helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*).

The Common's characteristic **flora of acid grassland** habitats includes: Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Heath Rush (*Juncus squarrosus*), Pill-sedge (*Carex pilulifera*) and Heath Wood-rush (*Luzula multiflora*).

Scarce and local **Ferns and Horsetails** include: Hard fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Lady-fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), Soft Shield-fern (*Polystichum setiferum*) Intermediate Polypody (*Polypodium interjectum*) and Great Horsetail (*Equisetum telmateia*).

Characteristic trees at the site include: Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, Downy birch *Betula pubescens*, Silver birch *Betula pendula*, Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*, Aspen *Populus tremula*, and Beech *Fagus sylvatica*. **Rarer trees** of the Common include: Sessile oak *Quercus petraea* Wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis* and a massive ancient Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, (trunk girth 219cm as measured in 2010).

Fungi : As a result of annual fungal forays over many years by Harrow NHS, and of surveys by Prof. Bruce Ing, an internationally renowned mycologist we have records of close to 500 species of fungi making Stanmore Common among the best recorded fungi sites in London.

Mosses and Liverworts: Wet areas on acidic soil support several uncommon species of moss which depend on these habitats.

BIRDS:

Red Data Book species present at Stanmore Common are Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus minor*), Song Thrush (*Turdus philomenos*) and Starling (*Sternus vulgaris*), UK BAP species include Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) and , Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*)as a winter visitor. There is a large population of Treecreepers (*Certhia familiaris*) and Nuthatches (*Sitta europaea*) . Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*) breed in the wet woodland habitat and Woodcock (*Scopolax rusticola*) is another uncommon species also associated with wet or damp woodland. Twany Owl (*Strix aluco*) almost certainly breeds on the reserve. Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) despite huge national declines still holds summer territory on the common. Notable new arrivals are the ubiquitous Ring Necked Parakeet(*Psittacula krameri*) Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) and Raven (*Corvus corax*). For a number of years Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) has bred on the reserve.

MAMMALS:

Bats are a harrow bap species and they are also priority species at a London and national level. Stanmore Common has recorded Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentoni*), Brown Long Eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*). The latter species was last recorded about 10 years ago. Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*), UK BAP species are present. Deer are represented by Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) and rare sightings of Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*). Rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) are rare and Moles (*Talpa europaea*) are common. Weasels (*Mustella nivalis*) are very occasionally seen. Badgers (*Meles meles*) have been reported but no set has been found. Mammal trapping has been done, the species found have been Woodmouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*), Bank Vole (*Myodes glareolus*) Common Shrew (*Sorex araneus*) and Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*).

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS: Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) a UK BAP species occurs in Great Brewer's Pond and has also been recorded at Pynding Mersc. Common Frog (*Rana temporalis*) has also been found at the pond sites and elsewhere. There have been no recent newt records from the site but it is hard to believe that newts are not still present. Grove Ponds which are beyond the site boundary offer the best hope. Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) is quite common and may be found basking within south facing woodland edges on warm spring days. However, there have not been recent sightings of Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*). Red-Eared Terrapin (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) is present in Great Brewer's Pond. There are historic records for Common Lizard, but its present status at the Common is uncertain.

FISH

A fairly recent survey of the Grove Ponds found the following species : Carp (Cyprinus sp.) Pike (Esox Lucius), 3 Spined Stickleback (Gasterosteus aculeatus), Perch (Perca fluviatilis), Common Roach (Rutilus rutilus),and Tench(Tinca tinca)

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Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 09 May 2012), February 1777, trial of JOSEPH WILSON WILLIAM WILSON (t17770219-14). JOSEPH WILSON, WILLIAM WILSON, Violent Theft > highway robbery, Violent Theft > highway robbery, 19th February 1777.

178. JOSEPH WILSON was indicted for that he in the king's highway in and upon Sir William Fleming did make an assault, putting him in corporal fear and danger of his life, and stealing from his person a guinea, the property of the said Sir William , January 21st .

Sir WILLIAM FLEMING sworn.

I was going to Belfont in a hackney post-chaise upon the 21st of January; when I was about two miles on this side Belfont , I perceived a man riding on the off-side of the chaise, it was then about four o'clock in the afternoon, it was quite light; I thought first that he was drunk; I looked out of the chaise fearing he would get some mischief; upon which the prisoner presented a pistol and demanded my money; I gave him a guinea; he demanded more, I said I had none; I had some letters and a news-paper in my hand perusing at that time, he demanded the letters also; I said they could be of no consequence to him; he said he would have them; I observed he was pulling a handkerchief he had under his hat down over his face; I laid hold of his pistol and took him by the collar, but by some means he got loose from me; he reeled upon his horse; then the postilion got off his horse, ran up to him and seized him, and called out to me, If you are an officer and a man of courage, come out and assist me to take him; I got out of the chaise, and found him struggling with the postilion; I wrenched this pistol out of his hand (producing it); it is a little rusty, it-fell in the dirt; Thomas Stanton , a harness-maker of Hounslow, came up to us; the prisoner returned the guinea as soon as he was taken; he was tied at first, but complaining of the tightness of the ligaments with which he was bound, we released him; he was very tractable, and made no resistance.

JOHN MILFORD sworn.

I drove the chaise; the prisoner bid me stop; he then went to Sir William Fleming , Sir William gave him something; Sir William gave him a check, and then ordered me to drive on; I got off the horse and came up to the prisoner and took him by the collar; then I called out, D - n you, come out and fight like a gentleman; Sir William came out, and took the prisoner, we tied him directly; the prisoner gave the money back.

THOMAS STANTON sworn.

I came up immediately; they had got hold of the prisoner before I came up; Sir William was then out of the chaise, the prisoner was rather taken before I got up; Sir William had wrenched the pistol out of his hand.

PRISONER's DEFENCE.

I lived coachman with lady Parry several years; I left her two years ago, and kept a public-house; I was cheated of some money, and was arrested and put in prison; I have been out of employment some months: I married the daughter of Mr. Shemelt, a copper-merchant in

Thames-street.

FOR THE PRISONER.

ELIZABETH WAXAM sworn.

I am a lapidary's wife; I have known the prisoner from a child, he has behaved very well while I knew him; Mr. Cox the brewer put him in gaol for debt: I hope he will be a good sort of a young fellow if he gets over this.

DANIEL ROSS sworn.

I knew the prisoner when he was a coachman , and when he kept a public-house; he was coachman to lady Parry four or five years, he miscarried in the public-house about two years ago; I don't know how he has got his livelihood since that: he was eleven months in gaol at the suit of Mr. Cox the brewer.

GUILTY . Death .

Tried by the Second Middlesex Jury before Mr. RECORDER.

He was a second time indicted, together with WILLIAM WILSON , for that they in the king's highway in and upon Thomas Deacon did make an assault, putting him in corporal fear and danger of his life, and stealing from his person a metal watch, value 20 s. a cornelian seal set in gold, value 10 s. an amethyst seal set in gold, value 10 s. a steel watch-chain, value 1 s. and 14 s. in monies numbered, the property of the said Thomas , December 3d .

THOMAS DEACON sworn.

On the 3d of December last, as I was going from London to Watford in the Watford diligence, I was stopt on Stanmore Common ; as the chaise was going on, I heard a voice say, Have you any body within? the driver answered in the negative; I apprehended the person that enquired wanted somebody in the diligence; I put down the fore-glass, upon which two men came up to the chaise, one on the one side and the other on the other; the man on my right hand said, Be quick; understanding what the intention of the expression was, I gave him half a guinea and a sixpence; he said, that is not all; then I gave him two or three shillings; the man on the opposite side was employed in searching the front-pocket of the chaise; as there had been some other robbers on the road, I had concealed my watch under some parcels in the front pocket; after removing the parcels, that man found the watch and took it; he said, Are these your tricks? and went off with it; it was near five in the evening, and so dark, I could not distinguish faces; I cannot say whether either of the prisoners are the persons that robbed me.

JOSEPH HARRISON sworn.

I am a journeyman to a Mr. Gray a pawnbroker in Denmark-street; this watch was pledged at Mr. Gray's by Margaret Lenox upon the 23d of December last; I lent half a guinea upon it; Lenox had pledged things before; her husband is a carpenter and undertaker, and is in a very good way; Lenox was taken up afterwards in pledging something at another pawnbroker's, a

duplicate of this watch being then found upon her, led to a discovery; I produced the watch next day at Sir John Fielding 's, and it was owned by the prosecutor.

MARGARET LENOX sworn.

I have known Joseph Wilson about two years; my first acquaintance commenced by my husband being in Newgate for debt at the same time that he was there; I was for four months together with my husband, by that means I became acquainted with the prisoner; after they got out of Newgate, Wilson visited my husband, by which means the acquaintance was continued: I received the watch from the prisoner about Christmas, he desired me to pawn it; I got half a guinea upon it at George Gray 's, and gave it to Wilson; I had frequently pawned things at this pawnbroker's for my husband in his distress: Wilson told me it was his own watch.

Why did you pawn it for him, why did he not pawn it himself? - He was then confined, I went to see him in his confinement; he there gave it me, and I brought him the money.

PERCIVAL PHILIPS sworn.

I was at the Brown Bear in Bow-street, near Sir John Fielding 's; William Wilson came there under suspicious circumstances; I pulled him off his horse, and found a pair of loaded pistols upon him.

JOSEPH WILSON 's DEFENCE.

If I was guilty of this fact, I would at this time own it; two gentlemen that were robbed near the time Mr. Deacon was, were ordered to look at me; and they said that we were not the men.

' William Wilson was not put upon his defence.'

JOSEPH WILSON GUILTY ; Death .

WILLIAM WILSON NOT GUILTY .

Tried by the Second Middlesex Jury before Mr. Baron PERRY.

Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 09 May 2012), December 1789, trial of JOHN WILLIAMS otherwise MILLER WILLIAM WILLIAMS (t17891209-2).

JOHN WILLIAMS, WILLIAM WILLIAMS, Violent Theft > highway robbery, 9th December 1789.

2. JOHN WILLIAMS otherwise MILLER and WILLIAM WILLIAMS were indicted for feloniously assaulting Richard Capper , Esq . on the 19th of November , on the king's highway, and putting him in fear and danger of his life, and feloniously taking from his person and against his will, a watch, with the outside case made of base metal, and the inside case base metal and fish skin, value 20 s. a stone seal set in gold, value 10 s. a brass key,

value 12 d. a ribbon, value 12 d. a hook, value 6 d. and two guineas, and a half guinea, and thirty shillings, and ten six-pences, his property .

(The case opened by Mr. Garrow.)

RICHARD CAPPER , Esq. sworn.

On the 19th of November, about twelve at noon, going over Stanmore Common , I was met by two highwaymen, one went to my coachman, and held up a pistol to him, before the horses, the other came to the side of the coach, and presented a pistol to me; nobody was in the carriage with me; he then demanded my watch and money; I told him I had no fire arms, and begged him to take away his pistol, which he immediately did; I then gave him two guineas and a half in gold; he said that was not all I had; I said, it was all I had; he said, he would see; I told him it was all I had; but he said, I will see; and he put himself into the coach; I said, I have some silver, but that is not worth offering you; he said, I will have it; and I gave him thirty-five shillings in silver; he then asked me for my pocket book; I took it up and opened it, and shewed it to him, and I unfolded all the letters that were in it, to let him see if there were any notes in it; he looked over me, I put it on the side of the carriage; there were fifteen or twenty letters which he opened; he then demanded my watch; and I told him it was a metal one, it would distress me, and do him no good; he then said, I will have it; I held it up, and I thought he put his hand down as though to the pistol, and I then told him, I told you I had no fire arms, and if you will have it you must; it is a metal watch, the inside case is metal, the outside case made of black fish skin; the maker was Thomas Mudge , No. 436; there was a purple ribbon chain, not a common ribbon, there was one seal set in gold, a watch key, and a hook: nothing more passed; and they rode away; I should think this must take up about ten minutes; the person who came to the carriage had no disguise; it was a very fine day; this prisoner, who is indicted by the name of William Williams otherwise Crew, he is the man I had the conversation with, and who robbed me, and took these things from me.

Had you opportunity enough to swear to the other? - No, I had not; I saw very little of him.

Do you believe the prisoner, William Williams otherwise Crew, to be the man, or do you entertain any doubt at all? - I have no doubt at all; I never saw them from that time till now; I had a letter that two men were taken for other robberies, in Hertfordshire, and I went to the justices, who committed them, and the next morning I saw my property in the custody of one Michaels; I saw the horse at Elstree; I had made so much observation of the horse, that the prisoner rode, that I was satisfied it was the same horse.

Have you any doubt of it? - I would not swear to it.

WILLIAM KING sworn.

I am coachman to Mr. Capper; I drove his carriage on the 19th of November; as my master was going to town in his coach, about twelve, he was stopped by two highwaymen, upon Stanmore Common, near Stanmore; one stood before me with a pistol, and the other with another pistol at the coach door, and demanded my master's money and watch; I saw the man sometime with my master, about five minutes, it might be longer.

Did you observe the persons of either of the men that stopped your master's carriage? - The

prisoners are the two men; I have seen them; I am certain sure they are both the two men; I never saw them since, before to day; their horses were very wet and dirty; one horse had a star in his face, and his ears put back; I have seen the horses that the prisoners rode, but I cannot swear to them; I saw the prisoner Crew put my master's watch into his pocket.

ROBERT BYGRAVE sworn.

I am a smith and farrier; I live at Elstree; through information of a robbery being committed in Hertfordshire, I pursued these highwaymen, on the 19th of November, between the hours of eleven and twelve, I believe it was when I set out after them: I pursued them from Elstree, from my own door; I took the road about two miles from the St. Alban's-road; I found the prisoners at Pinner; they returned back again, and crossed the Common; it is between three and four miles from Stanmore Common; I found them at a publick-house, in a room together.

What were they doing when you went in? - They were standing with their backs to the fire when I went in; nobody was with them; I found the horses in the stable before I found the prisoners.

Was you present when either of the prisoners was searched? - Yes, close by; that was at a publick house before a magistrate.

Who was that magistrate? - Colonel Miles.

State what was found on either of the prisoners? - I cannot particularly state it, but the property was found on both of them; they are here (produced); there were three watches found concealed in the hat of Crew; and these two purses were found, but I do not know which on either; there is another purse that was found in the room; this handkerchief was found on one of the prisoners; that purse was found in a closet in the room, with pistol bullets at one end, and powder at the other; these keys were found upon them; there was another watch found upon them, which I have not got; and a brace of pistols were found on each of them; I do not recollect any thing was found.

Was East with you at the time? - Yes.

JAMES EAST sworn.

I am servant to Mr. Phillimore; my master was robbed in Hertfordshire; I joined with Mr. Bygrave in the pursuit of the highwaymen; I went with him to the public-house at Pinner, where they were found; I went into the room with him, and saw the prisoners; and I found a purse upon each, and a loaded pistol upon each; the pistols are here; they were loaded with powder and ball.

WILLIAM PHILLIMORE sworn.

I saw the two prisoners searched; they were both dead drunk; one of them took off his hat, and was laying it down on the table; I took hold of it; and in the lining of it, puckered up in the new fashioned way, were three watches; the one I took out, which I knew to be my mother's and these are the other two, which were delivered to Mr. Bygrave.

(The watch deposed to by Mr. Capper.)

I have no doubt of it.

Court. Prisoners, what have you to say.

Prisoner. Our distressed situation prevents us from speaking; I have wrote a few lines, if you will permit the clerk to read it.

Court. Is it your hand writing? - Yes.

(Read.)

"It was not from any desire in us to evade justice, that we, at our arraignment, pleaded not guilty; but from a wish that every circumstance attending the commission of the offence with which we stand charged, might be made known to the Court and the Jury; and that we might have an opportunity of informing your lordships of our conduct and character in life, previous to that day, when we unhappily first thought of resorting to so unjustifiable a means of procuring money.

Our situations in life, since we left home, have been that of servants to different gentlemen, in which character we faithfully endeavoured to discharge every duty, of which, we hope, those whom we served, will now bear testimony. We are not old offenders. We are not, I assure your lordships, hardened in iniquity; and the grief under which we at present labour, is not because we are detected thus early in the commission of our crimes, but because we have so widely strayed from that golden rule, which from our infancy we weretaught, of doing to others, as we would they should do to us. We fear it is now too late to hope for such an extension of the royal mercy, as to afford us an opportunity of convincing this part of the world, of our contrition of mind, and the reality of our repentance. But we do humbly presume to hope, that the gate of mercy will not be wholly shut against us. We have made no bad connections; we are not experienced in the practices of vice; we are very young men. The distress we have occasioned our parents and friends, is a source of the most painful reflection to us. Every possible lenity and indulgence we have experienced from those who are under the necessity of prosecuting us; and we hope to meet their forgiveness for the injuries we have done them. Should mercy be extended to us, our future conduct shall, as far as it is possible, atone for those offences which have reduced us to the disgraceful situation in which we now stand."

The prisoners alledged, that their trial coming on sooner than they expected, their witnesses were not present.

JOHN WILLIAMS , alias MILLER, aged 19, WILLIAM WILLIAMS , alias CREW, aged 20,

GUILTY, Death .

Prosecutor. I beg leave to recommend the prisoners to mercy; one of them I know has respectable connections; they used no particular violence .

Court. Had they the appearance of being drunk, when they robbed you? - They behaved with no particular violence.

You have reason to believe that they have been reputably brought up? - Yes, my lord.

Jury. We wish to join in the recommendation, on the same ground.

Mr. Wells. My lord, I saw several gentlemen yesterday, who said they would come to speak for them.

Tried by the first Middlesex Jury before Mr. Justice ASHURST.