

OTHER URBAN WOODLANDS AT BEAUMONT LEYS

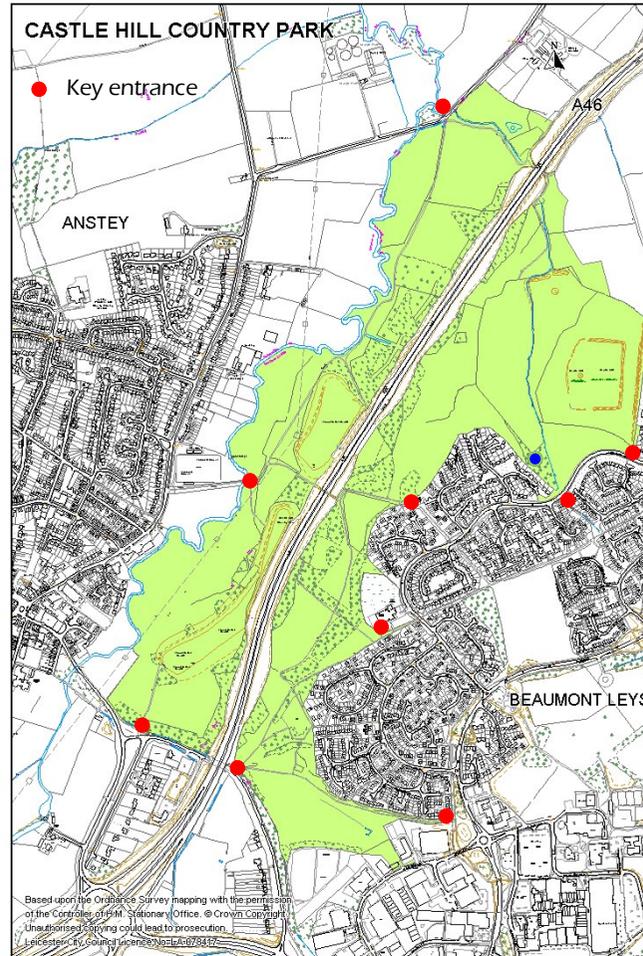
Bluebell Wood comprises one of four sizable pockets of mature woodland located within Beaumont Leys. These include the Astill Lodge Spinney (Astill Lodge Park), Beaumont Wood (Beaumont Park) and 'Babbington Lawne Wood' (Beaumont Walk).



Above—The Astill Lodge Spinney

The Parks Service, in partnership with other interests, intends to restore and improve access to these woodlands, thereby ensuring the continuation of the historic Beaumont Leys woodlands.

Other pockets of old woodland at Beaumont Leys occur at Bennion Road / Redruth Road and alongside Church-bell Way, Thurcaston Glebelands.



Bluebell Wood, Astill Lodge Road

CASTLE HILL COUNTRY PARK

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BLUEBELL WOOD



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BLUEBELL WOOD

Though relatively small (just 0.5ha) and by no means ancient, the Bluebell Wood is of ecological significance in that this is the only stand of old broad-leaved plantation located within Castle Hill Country Park.



Bluebell Wood & New Orchard

The Bluebell Wood supports trees and plants commonly associated with heavy clay soils. The canopy is dominated by ash, with some oak. Smaller trees and shrubs found in the Wood's understorey include; field maple, elder, hawthorn and blackthorn.

Some of the more common plants dominating the woodland floor include; bluebells, pink campion, and cow parsley.

Other plants and herbs include; dog's mercury, wood false-brome, herb bennet, hemp-nettle, cuckoo pint and hedge woundwort.



Bird species that have been observed in spinney and neighbouring hedges include: Blackbird, Black Cap, Blue Tit, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Great Tit, Robin, Whitethroat and Wren.

The Wood in its Historic Context

Beaumont Leys is historically associated with woodland and deer parks. This association dates back to the Norman Conquest, if not earlier. There is documentary evidence from 1361 for a Park at Beaumont Leys, and it is also known that Edward IV established a deer park here in the late 15th century, when he acquired the lands from the Knights Hospitaller. During the reign of Henry VIII these lands passed into private ownership and were converted largely to sheep pastures.

Further agricultural enclosures occurred in mid 17th century, when historic Beaumont Leys Estate was divided into a series of farms. At this time the site of Bluebell wood formed part of the *Little hill meadow*. An old ditch survives from this period, and forms a boundary between the Bluebell wood and more recent woodland planting.

Remnants of an old *wood bank*, subsequently used as a boundary between Beaumont Lodge Farm and (the former) Astill



Lodge Farm also survives close by.

The Bluebell wood was most likely established in the 18th or 19th Century.

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