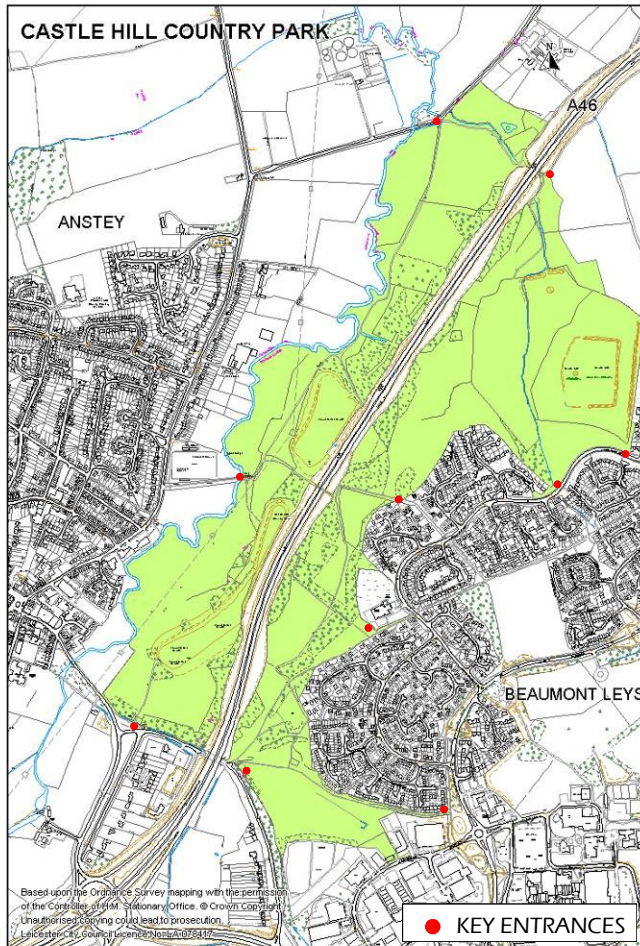


FRIENDS OF CASTLE HILL COUNTRY PARK & CASTLE HILL COUNTRY PARK USER GROUP

A Friends of Group for Castle Hill Country Park was established in 2008, and are actively involved in park improvements and events. A Park User Group meets locally on a quarterly basis to discuss park management matters. If you are interested in joining the Friends of, or attending the User Group meetings, please contact either Park Services or the Friends.



Nothill Woodland Walk



Park Services Tel: Leicester 0116 454 1003
email: parks@leicester.gov.uk

Friends of Castle Hill Country Park
email: fochcp@aol.com



THE TREES OF CASTLE HILL COUNTRY PARK



Black Poplar, Anstey Quarter

Tel: 0116 454 1003

CHCP Natural History Series: Leaflet No.3: Trees

THE TREES OF CASTLE HILL COUNTRY PARK

Beaumont Leys association with parks, woodland pasture and hunting reserves dates back to the early medieval period. From the late 12th century onwards the woodland resource has steadily declined, giving way to agriculture and, more recently, urbanisation. Small stands of mature woodland occur locally, some in modern parks, as do remnants of old wood banks and hedgerows. Elsewhere, modern woodland and amenity plantings prevail.



Medieval Park Pale Gorse Hill

A walk through Castle Hill Country Park, with its mix of trees, hedges, woodlands, set in grasslands, provides a good introduction to Beaumont Ley's woodland, past and present.

Old Trees & Woodlands – The Park contains a fine selection of native trees, including mature Ash, Oak, Field Maple and Willows. These trees are associated variously with old hedgerows, the boundaries of former medieval parklands and the banks of the Rothley Brook. Of particular interest are Bluebell Wood, the Gorse Hill Wood Bank, and the ancient banks and ditches bordering the Castle Hill Earthworks.



Bluebell Wood

Some of these trees have girths in excess of 3m. The 'Great Oak', at Sharpley Drive, (right) is reminiscent of former woodlands and parklands. The tree has been recently estimated to be almost 300 years old, and is designated a *Local Wildlife Area*.



The 'Great Oak'

Hawthorn and Blackthorn dominate the old hedgerows, with evidence for traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing and hedge laying. A couple of fine Black Poplar trees may be found in the hedgerow near King William's Bridge, while old Hawthorns grow on the old Dam Embankment, below 'Castle Hill'. Old Ash, Oak and a multi-stemmed Field Maple are found nearby. At 'Anstey Leys' the hedgerow supports an old coppiced Small-leaved Lime.



Coppiced Field Maple

Ground flora linked to old woods and hedges include Anemones, Bluebells, Dogs Mercury and Cuckoo Pint. The mature trees are also home to a variety of wildlife including insects, birds and bats.



Plantation Woodlands – The modern woodlands are associated with the Park's establishment in the 1980, and the subsequent construction of Leicester Western Bypass. Often densely packed, these woodlands tend to be dominated by Ash and Field Maple, but also include the likes of Cherry, Hawthorn, Hazel, Oak, Common Lime, White Poplar and Willow. (White, Crack



Modern Woodland

and Goat varieties). These modern woodlands sometimes conceal old historic hedge lines, ditches and wood banks.

New Trees, Woodland & Community Orchards - Since 2005, four Orchards have been established on the Park. These include: the 'Little Hill Meadow' & 'Nut' (or 'Roman' Orchard) established 2005 & 2008, respectively; the 'Anstey Leys' Orchard (2012) and the 'Leicestershire Heritage Apple Orchard' at Thurcaston Gate (2013). The Orchards contain a variety of fruit trees including traditional Leicestershire apples such as *Barnack Orange*, *Annie Elizabeth* & *St Ailred*, as well as more unusual fruit trees such as Medlar, Quince and Black Mulberry.



Little Hill Meadow Orchard

It is known that there were orchards hereabouts in 1338, linked to the Knights Hospitaller's grange (or Preceptory) at 'Castle Hill'.

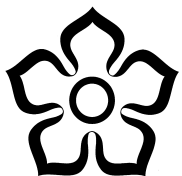
Sixty English Oak trees were planted for Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A new wood is being established- The 'New Anstey Wood'. New 'wetland' trees have been planted as part of the *Rothley Brook Wetland Habitat Creation Project*.



Speckled Wood Butterfly

CASTLE HILL COUNTRY PARK

Park Services Tel: Leicester 0116 454 1003
email: parks@leicester.gov.uk



Leicester
City Council