

Forest for Cornwall

Landowner Site Visit Report for T. Adams

Coombeshead Farm



1. Site Summary Information

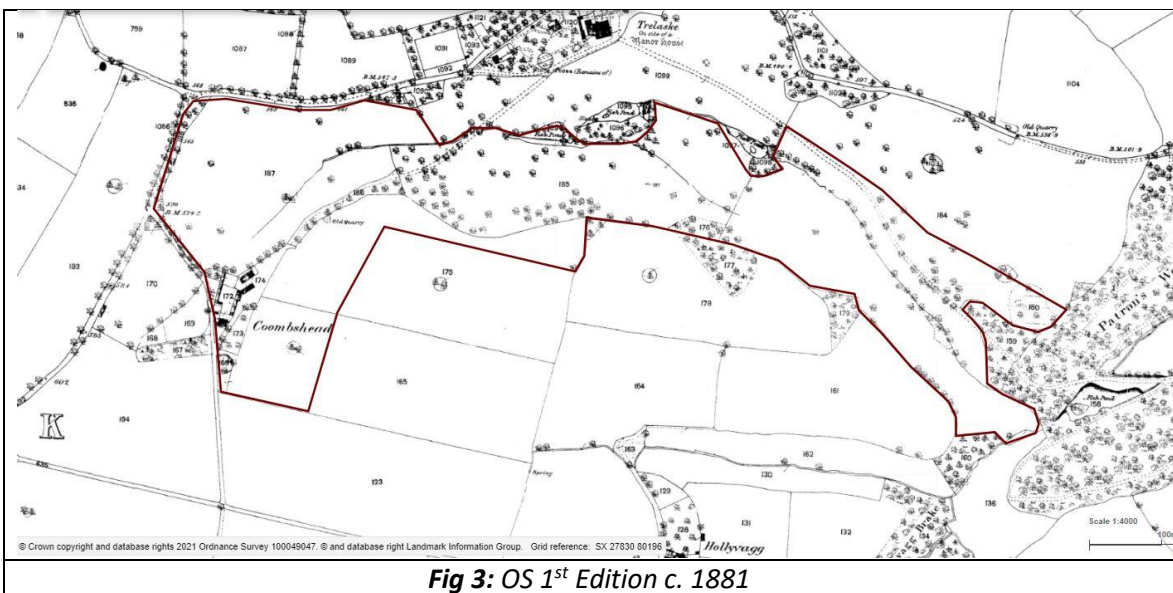
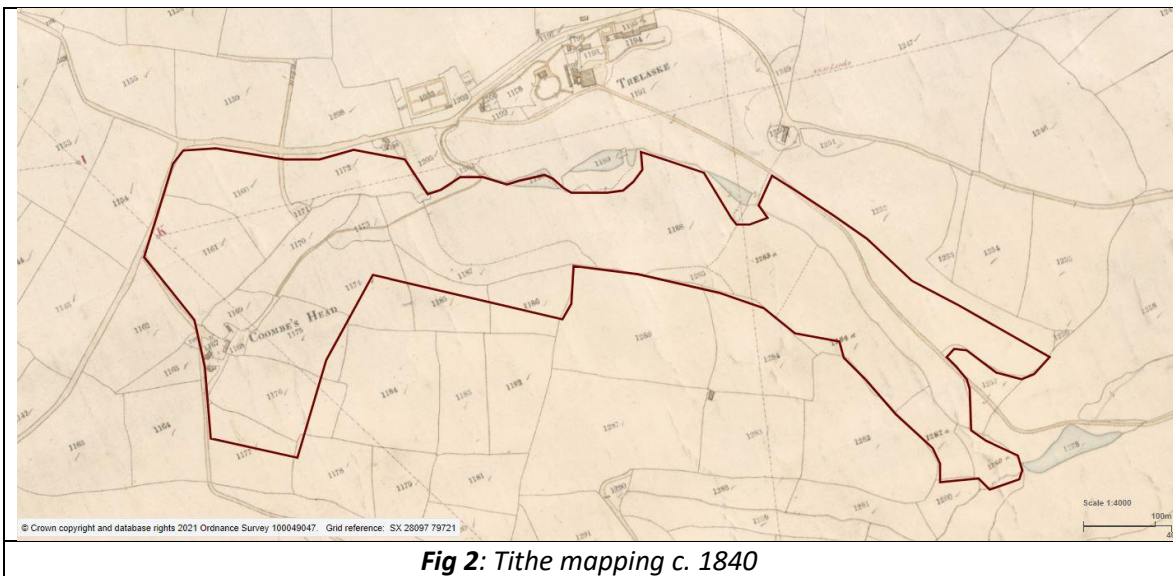
Landowner Name	Tom Adams
F4C Client Reference No.	600
Site Address	Coombeshead Farm, Lewannick, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 7QQ
Contact Details	
Landowner Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting for wildlife, cultural and climate objectives. • To provide shelter and produce for farm and hospitality business
Site Background	The valley now owned by Coombeshead farm formed part of the historic parkland of the manor of Trelaske.
Date Site Visited	7 th December 2021
Attendees	B. Norwood (F4C), F Ashford & T. Adams (Owner)
OS Coordinates/Grid Ref.	SX2812280031
Land area (ha)	c.26ha

Environmental Impact Assessment screening required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planting schemes <0.5ha in size are considered no risk, an application to the FC for 'an opinion' can be made if consent is desired but is not strictly necessary in this situation. Planting schemes between 0.5ha -<2ha in size. >70% of the property falls within a 'Low-Risk zone' for afforestation requiring only an application for an opinion for planting within these areas for proposals. Areas of the property that fall outside of the 'Low-Risk zone' are predominantly wood pasture /parkland habitats and should not be afforested.
Claiming BPS / other agricultural payment schemes	Yes – currently in Countryside Stewardship scheme
Site Designations – E.g. SSSI, County Wildlife Site, Scheduled Monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of Great Landscape Value: Inny Valley & Lawhitton County Wildlife Site: Trelaske Wood 350m north of property boundary National Character Area: Cornish Killas (#152)
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soilscape 6: Freely draining slightly acid loamy soils Soilscape 13: Freely draining acid loamy soils over rock
BAP Habitat	None
ERCCIS 2005 Landcover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixture of broadleaf woodlands, arable and possible areas of unimproved grassland (which encompasses a portion of woodland). Patrons Wood a Plantation on Ancient Woodland site (PAWS) borders the eastern boundary of property
PROW / CROW	None
Existing Hedges	The hedgerows landscape has been simplified since 1840. The majority of the farm is covered by Wood pasture/ parkland.
Agricultural Land Classification	Grade 3
FC ESC Site description and variables	The site has a warm, moderately exposed and moist climate. Soils have a slightly dry moisture status and poor nutrient status.
Streams and waterways / wetlands	A tributary to the Lower River Inney runs along the length of the property with the springhead at the farmhouse.
Catchment	Lower River Tamar
Ancient Veteran Trees	Cornwall Ancient Tree Forum surveyed over 35 AVTs on site in March 2019. Predominantly Pedunculate oak and Beech, mainly found clustered within the historic parkland of Trelaske Manor

2. Site Detail

Background

The land was once part of the historic manor house of Trelaske, with the wood pasture/ parkland forming part of the principal landscape views of the former mansion. The valley has a good population of ancient and veteran trees and is in an area of Cornwall that has some of the oldest and most valuable ancient and veteran trees in the Duchy. Other notable locations nearby for ancient and veteran trees are Trebartha and Darleyford. When combined the locations form an extensive landscape scale network of ecologically and cultural valuable habitats.



The tithe mapping (fig. 2), 1st edition OS map (fig. 3) and 1946 RAF aerial survey (fig. 4) provide useful context on how the treescape at Coombeshead has changed over the last 180 years. During this time there has been a rationalisation of fields, simplifying their layout in the wider landscape resulting in fewer larger fields than the medieval field patterns that went before.



Since 1881 there has been a loss of over 35 trees (marked on the map in fig. 3 as tree icons). The OS 1st edition recorded significantly sized trees on the map and are accurately surveyed when overlaid on modern aerial photography. This can provide a useful reference document in which to consider restoration of wood pasture and parkland landscapes.

3. Recommendations

The historic setting and existing ancient and veteran tree population should play an important part in deciding where to plant trees to avoid negatively impacting on one of the defining features of the landscape. Positive gains for climate, nature and contributions to the farm businesses can be gained from enhancing the existing wood

pasture/ parkland habitat (one of the most significant habitats in the UK), planting hedgerows, orchards and smaller wooded areas such as copses or spinneys rather than establishing new plantations.

The structural diversity already present across the farm has high ecological value which can be improved further with modest interventions phased over time. Interventions that focus on enhancing the trees outside of woodland landscape will have great contributions to addressing the ecological emergency that we are currently experiencing.



Fig 5: Overview of planting approaches focusing on silvo-arable areas in the west, wood pasture/ parkland restoration and hedgerow establishment along the property boundaries.

Tree planting: hedges (marked in yellow)

Hedgerows are a great way to link up habitats cross the landscape and can become large carbon stores over time. They play an important role in intercepting water run-off from fields helping to reduce sedimentation and nutrient in-flows into watercourses.

The suggested planting areas amount to around 800m of new hedgerows. These can help create bio secure field boundaries for livestock and link up existing habitat features without impacting on existing ancient and veteran trees or the historic setting.

Within the hedgerows, ensuring standard trees are established every 15 – 20m will contribute to treescape surrounding Coombeshead.

Suitable hedgerow species include: Pedunculate or Sessile oak, Common Beech, Grey or Goat Willow, Crab Apple, Rowan, Holly, Hawthorn, Hazel, Blackthorn, Elder and Spindle.



Fig 6. New hedgerow and small copse would buffer millennium wood and create habitat corridors across the wider landscape



Fig.7: Hedgerow planting in eastern end of wood pasture/parkland. These would create important wildlife corridors whilst also providing suitable bio-secure boundaries for any grazing livestock.

Tree planting: Spinneys / copses (marked in green) and orchards (marked in pink)

The arable field to the west of the property has the greatest potential for bigger tree planting areas in the form of spinneys/copses, wide hedges or a possible location for a new orchard that is near the main farmstead.

Orchards can be traditionally planted in one area or in a 'linear orchard' style that is becoming popular in modern silvo-arable and silvo-pastoral systems.

The orchards can be made up of traditional fruit and nut trees such as damson, apple, plums, mulberries, pears, sweet chestnuts, hazelnuts and walnuts.

For copse/spinney plantings, mixed native species would be suitable choices for the environment around Coombeshead farm, including: Pedunculate or Sessile, Oak, Common Beech, Common Alder, Grey or Goat Willow, Holly, Rowan, Blackthorn, Downy Birch, Alder Buckthorn, Hawthorn, Elder, Spindle Crab apple and Hazel would be suitable species choices for planting within the wood pasture / parkland area

The Peoples Trust for Endangered species has some great resources on [traditional orchards](#).



Fig. 8: More open arable field system with hedgerow, small woods and orchards around the field edge. (the grey banded area demarcates the electrical wayleave and required clearance). Options for replacing historic in-field trees which have been lost since 1946 are marked by the triangles

Fig. 9: Showing alternative approach to establishing orchards as linear features within an arable system. Approach shown leaves approximately 40m between rows. More information on 'silvo-arable' systems can be found at the [Agroforestry Research Trust](#) or in the [Soil Association Agroforestry handbook](#)

Tree planting: In-field (marked as green triangles)

Across the farm there are more than 40 options for planting in-field trees (fig. 10) that have been lost. Establishing younger generations of trees will help to ensure the continuity of the wood pasture / parkland habitat well into the future. New plantings should be at least 5m beyond the dripline of any established tree, ideally 10-15m. This will ensure new developing trees do not adversely impact older trees through competition for light, water and nutrients.

There are many approaches to protecting in-field tree plantings. Traditional parkland guards (either wooden or steel construction) as well as wire mesh guards such as the 'Cactus guard'.

Pedunculate, Sessile, Oak, Common Beech, Copper Beech, Sweet Chestnut, Sycamore, Small-leaved or Common lime, Scots Pine, Holly, Hawthorn and Hazel would be suitable species choices for planting within the wood pasture / parkland area.



Fig. 10: Locations for possible in-field plantings informed from the OS 1st edition map of c.1881. Online mapping tools such as the [National Library of Scotland](#), the [Ancient Tree Inventory](#) or [Cornwall Council historic environment interactive mapping](#) show digital overlays of historic mapping free of charge.

Other recommendations

Open areas in the eastern end of the property should be maintained if possible as this will add to the structural diversity of the wooded valley. The open fields act as de-facto glades providing habitats for many bird species and invertebrates.

No fertilisers or other inputs should be applied to the wood pasture/parkland areas.

Improving the wildflower meadows within the areas of wood/pasture/parkland will have significant gains for wildlife and soil health. Grass sward enhancements through plug planting or scarifying and sowing of wildflower seed can help improve the species diversity. The use of yellow rattle, red or yellow bartsia and other native wildflowers can help reduce grass vigour thereby allowing other native wildflower's to develop. More information on enhancing grasslands can be found on the [Gov.UK website](#).

Encourage a proportion of scrub habitat to develop within the wood pasture/ parkland areas. This can enrich the value of the wider habitat and help nurture natural regeneration and protect developing trees.

Large diameter deadwood both standing and fallen should be retained in situ where possible. Material <20cm in diameter is of limited value ecologically when compared with large trunks, main branches and stumps.

More information on the value of deadwood, scrub and further advice on managing Ancient and Veteran trees can be found on the [Ancient Tree Forum](#) website or the [Wood Pasture & Parkland Network](#). I believe you already have a physical copy of the following guidance by [David Lonsdale "Ancient & other veteran trees: further guidance on management"](#).

Practical considerations

Deer numbers are increasing in Cornwall with Roe and Red being particularly present in this area of the Duchy. Most plantings will need to be protected using suitable fencing or tree shelters to ensure successful establishment.

Most plantings will need management of grass around trees in order to reduce competition for nutrients and water in the first few years. This can be achieved through the application of chemical herbicides, mechanical cutting or the use of weed suppressant fabrics or mulches.

The [Agroforestry pages on Cornwall Council's 'Lets Talk'](#) website has resources and presentations from recent agroforestry events hosted by the Forest for Cornwall.

4. Funding opportunities

MORE Woods: is available where more than 500+ trees are planted as woodland covering an area of at least 0.5ha. This can be made up of smaller blocks. They will supply trees and protection and can cover up to 75% of the costs if you choose to plant the trees yourself. Further information on the scheme and how to apply can be found here: [Woodland Trust - MOREwoods](#)

MORE Hedges: is available if you want to plant 100m or more of new hedging and allow a large tree to grow approximately every 6m. They can subsidise up to 75% of the cost if you choose to plant the hedge yourself. Further information on the scheme and how to apply can be found here: [Woodland Trust - Morehedges](#)

Countryside Stewardship may be a feasible option for any wood pasture/parkland restoration works and hedgerow creation capital support. If your current Mid-tier scheme is drawing to a close soon it may be worth contacting [FWAG SW](#) or your local Natural England advisor to discuss options about [entering a higher-tier scheme](#).

Forest for Cornwall will be working with DEFRA in 2022/23 as part of the Shared Outcome Fund & Woodland Creation Partnership. Through these schemes we are aiming to support agroforestry, orchards and small woodland creation of less than 1ha. If interested, please let me know and I shall keep you informed of funding developments.

The [English Woodland Creation Offer](#) can fund tree planting for schemes of 1ha or more, made up of smaller components of 0.1ha. more information can be found here.

6. Next steps

Develop planting ideas to support future farm business and how you wish to use the land

Identify which funding streams may best support these ambitions.

Consider contacting Natural England or FWAG to discuss Higher Tier- Countryside Stewardship schemes for a 2023/24 start.

For tree planting in the winter of 2022/23 and beyond we would advise to talk to tree nurseries early on (Spring or even earlier) to book tree stock and understand availability.

If required, EIA notifications or opinions can take up to 42 days for responses from the Forestry Commission. Please ensure enough time is factored in when planning planting

The [SW Woodland Directory](#) has local forestry information with contact details of suitable advisors who can support specific designs if required.

Please keep us informed of how you get on as we would be keen to add your planting to the Forest for Cornwall tracker, where we monitor how tree cover is increasing across Cornwall on our way to increasing the tree canopy cover by 2% (c.8,000 ha by 2030).

If you haven't already, please sign up to our [Forest for Cornwall newsletter where](#) we share news, events and advice on tree planting and their care.

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