

Bassingthorpe Spring

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What to look for in the wood

The wood is basically oak with an understorey of holly. Sessile oaks dominate, many of which are double stemmed and cork-screwed. The woodland edge is more varied and includes ash, cherry, hazel and field maple. Crab apple and guelder rose can also be seen. Planted trees are less common, there are some sycamore, a few beech, one hornbeam and unusually, one horse chestnut,



Multi-stemmed oak
probably a survivor
from the gardens of
Bassingthorpe Cottages.



Bluebells are widely distributed but only flower abundantly on the north eastern margins of the wood. Other ancient woodland indicators are yellow archangel, dog's mercury, yellow pimpernel and wood anemone.

Bird life in the wood is varied and includes the resident treecreeper, great spotted woodpecker and tawny owl and the summer visitors blackcap and chiffchaff.



Sessile
oak

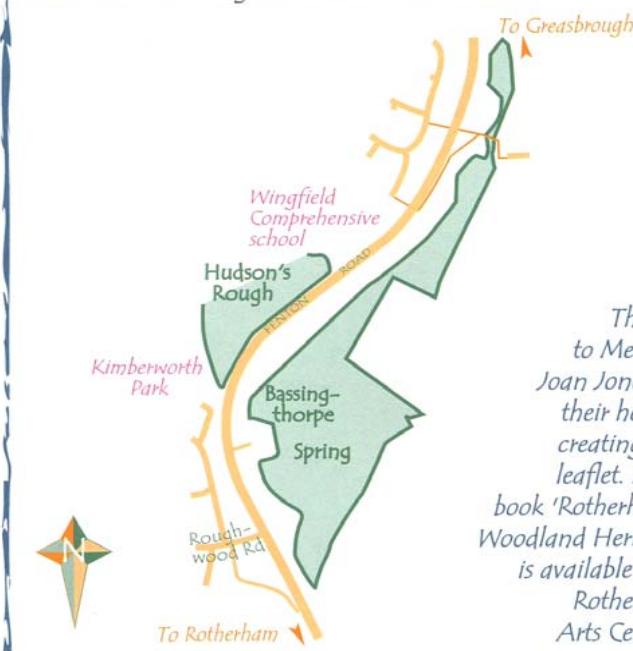
Field
maple

Management of the wood

The woodland is mainly used for informal recreation, dog walking and for through access. Being well used it is under heavy pressure and is in need of sympathetic management. A management plan has been written, initially covering the period from 2004 to 2009. Its emphasis is on the selective thinning of trees to encourage new growth and to create a better habitat for wildlife. Improvements will be made to public rights of way and access.

General information

To find out more about the woodland's management and maintenance contact: the Woodlands Officer on 01709 822177; or look on www.rotherham.gov.uk or www.heritagewoodsonline.co.uk.



Thanks
to Mel and
Joan Jones for
their help in
creating this
leaflet. Mel's
book 'Rotherham's
Woodland Heritage'
is available from
Rotherham
Arts Centre.

Early history of the wood

Bassingthorpe Spring was originally three woods – Munsbrough Wood, Cliffredding Wood and Stripman Birkes. Munsbrough Wood took its name from a farm to the east of the wood, Cliffredding means the wood at the steep clearing and Birkes in Stripman Birkes means birch trees. Stripman Birkes in the south had disappeared completely by 1900. Munsbrough Wood, which is the large part of the wood, and Cliffredding Wood, which is the northern long, narrow area of the wood, were both reduced in size as a result of the building of the Kimberworth Park estate including Fenton Road and its wide mown verges.



Ownership history

The wood was owned by the Earls of Shrewsbury and their successors the Dukes of Norfolk until 1678. It became the property of the Marquises of Rockingham and the Earls Fitzwilliam of Wentworth Woodhouse from 1726 until 1950 when it was bought by Rotherham MBC.

The meaning of 'Spring'

The first record of Bassingthorpe Spring was in a document written between 1590–1616 for the 7th Earl of Shrewsbury. This was a list of 'springe woods' belonging to his lordship's forges. 'Spring' was the old name for a coppice wood and the reference to the Earl's forges suggests that most of the coppice poles would have been turned into charcoal for smelting iron.

Past management of the wood

From the earliest record of the wood, until the late nineteenth century, it was managed as a coppice-with-standards, where most of the trees would regularly have been cut down to ground level and allowed to grow back as multi-stemmed trees (coppice). Among the coppice would be single-stemmed timber trees (standards).



Archaeological features

The most interesting feature of the wood is the route of an old lane, Munsbrough Lane, which is marked by a hollow-way bounded by banks. Other ditches, mounds and hollows are connected with past mining activity. Bassingthorpe Cottages, once hidden deep within the wood, are now reduced to a few ruins on the western edge.