

PARES WOODLAND GARDEN

We have also made a simple path around the wood which will be officially opened in June 2013. It is very much “work in progress”; it will take at least 2 years for the new saplings to grow and flower and fruit. This gives us a wonderful opportunity to monitor the changes within the wood as the vegetation diversifies and matures.



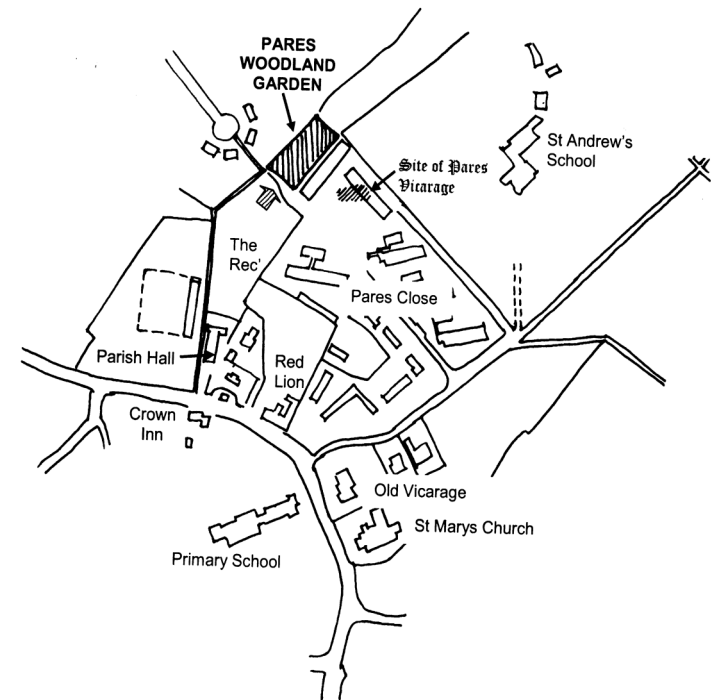
The woodland is open for everyone. We would be especially happy to welcome small school groups and envisage many activities, ranging from games which also teach about pollination and plant growth, to sensory blindfold trails, and studies of the environment and mini beasts.

There is the possibility for pupils to plant young saplings and seeds and monitor their development over a period of time.

This woodland is within easy walking distance of schools, clubs and playgroups in the village.

Most importantly, children and adults can reconnect with their natural environment .

All the work has been done by volunteers from Horsell Village, but we gratefully acknowledge assistance from Woking Borough Council, SERCO, and Squires Garden Centre.



The Site

In recent years the site has been a neglected and unwanted piece of land to the west of the Pares Close development. However in 1851 it is clearly shown on a valuation survey of Horsell as part of a much larger, 21 acres field, owned by Henry Roake, and later in subsequent maps; but it may be significant that no tree cover is shown until 1895.

The land slopes steeply to the west, and there is no indication it has ever been used for agriculture. By 1880 the land had been bought by Rev John Back, the new vicar of Horsell, who built Church Hill House for his retirement, in 1883 now St Andrews School. It is assumed that the oaks were planted by him at that time for a windbreak or privacy. This estimate ties in with the advice of the tree specialist who visited the site, making our oaks over 120 years old.

Shortly after this a second house was built nearby, which in 1901, became the vicarage when Canon Norman Pares, John Back's nephew, became vicar of Horsell. The site then formed part of the vicarage garden. Precisely when this house was built and by whom remains a mystery, but hopefully the truth will become clear in time.

After his death in 1936 the vicarage was used for war-time purposes; for refugees, as a land girls hostel, until it was sold to the Council and demolished in the 1950's. In his will Canon Pares left the field used by the vicarage to the village of Horsell as a place of recreation, hence The Rec. It is fitting that this the residue of his garden should now also be open to the public for their enjoyment.

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Trees and flowers

On the site are fifteen 100 year old oak trees, As you enter from the Rec there are two younger oaks covered in ivy. These have been retained on purpose as they are the ideal sunny, edge of wood habitat for many moths and butterflies.

Over many years the holly had grown in abundance; much has been cleared to permit light to reach the woodland floor, where over 20 species of wild plants have been planted, including bluebells, primroses and foxgloves.

In addition wild flower seed will be sown in the sunny parts of the site, and by the brambles to attract insects. There are some interesting fungi present, this one is called, Chicken of the Woods; it fruits in the Autumn.

