

Jason Hawkes

Horsham District Council

HORSHAM

Planning Received

07 OCT 2025

Name:

Ref:

DC/25/1312

Dear Jason Hawkes

Please find enclosed my contribution in opposing Homes  
England's speculative planning application West of Ifield  
[DC/25/1312]

Yours sincerely

Crawley Community Awards Winner 2016 [Environment]

13 Ferhurst Close

Ifield

Crawley RH11 0AW



# Nature Notes for the Ancient Parish of Ifield

Written for the Ifield Parish Map Project.

Author: David Moon

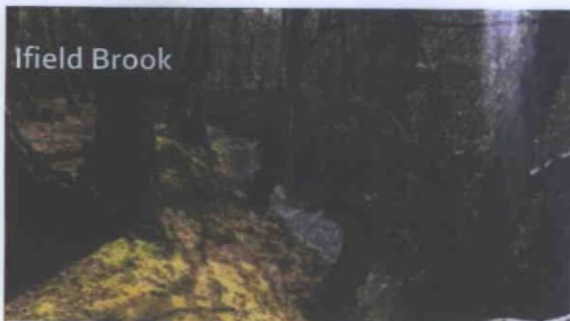
Community Award Winner 2016.



A rare combination of rock and soil types, climate, elevation, aspect and varied human activity throughout the ages have shaped a scenic landscape rich in history and biodiversity.

About one-half of the ancient parish is taken up by parts of the new town of Crawley, but its parks and gardens also contribute to its wealth of wildlife, some of which is rare nationally and extremely localised.

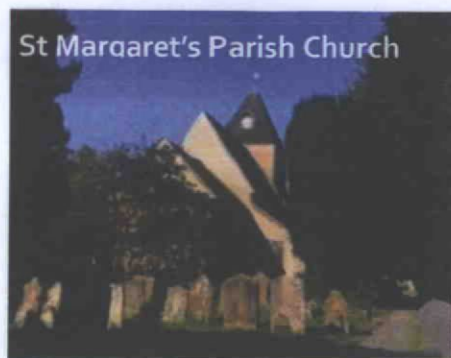
Ifield Brook



The rural areas – mostly farmland with old hedgerows – pasture oaks and pockets of ancient woodland – are bisected by the infant River Mole, into which feeds Ifield Brook whose own source is a series of hammer ponds and smaller streams. These water courses attract their own distinctive and very diverse aquatic inhabitants, including the rare River Mussel, the even larger Swan Mussel and the Beautiful Demoiselle Damselfly. Millers in the past maintained a mussel bed for extra food.

The focal point – and geographical centre – of the ancient parish is the 13th century St. Margaret's of Antioch Church, the fields and woods beyond it offering a wide variety of wildflowers – vital nectar sources for a whole range of insects.

St Margaret's Parish Church



Burlands Copse

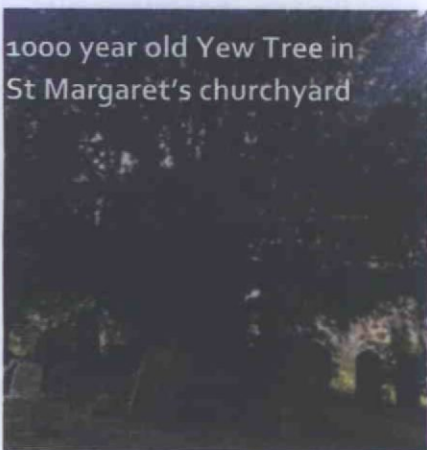


The flora counts some rare orchids and waterside plants among its numbers. One of the finest Sussex Bluebell woods, Burlands Copse, with its wonderful distant views, is located on the higher ground within the parish.

There are magnificent ancient and veteran Oak trees dotted here and there, the two at Oak Tree Farm [now a private residence] dating back to pre-Tudor times [early 1400's].

Even older – going back to Saxon times are some of the ancient Yew trees in the parish. The field means 'Yew Field' with notable examples in St Margaret's churchyard cemetery and at Brook Cottage.

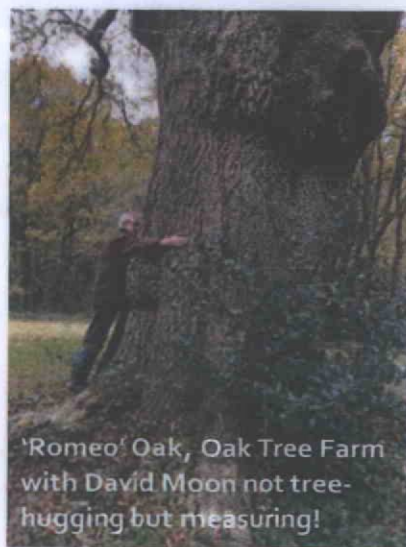
1000 year old Yew Tree in St Margaret's churchyard



Older hedgerows indicate their venerable status by the presence of Spindle bushes with their attractive autumn show of bright orange berries.

Perhaps nowhere else in Britain can boast of the number of Longhorn Beetle species to be found in such a small area – certainly more than a third of the country's total. They include some national rarities, such as the Golden-burnished Longhorn found here on oaks, the only Sussex records of this beetle. Also on Oaks and Small-leaved Lime, the Uncommon Greater Thorn-tipped Longhorn Beetle, and on Ash the more localised Sussex species, the Varied Longhorn Beetles (below 'Stenocorus Meridianus').

'Romeo' Oak, Oak Tree Farm with David Moon not tree-hugging but measuring!



The butterflies and moths of Ifield are equally diverse. These include the uncommon Brown Hairstreak Butterfly, whose larvae feed on the buds and leaves of Blackthorn, a shrub abundant in the hedgerows and field margins. The attractive Marbled White Butterfly, with its grass-feeding caterpillars, flies in its season across the older meadows. Almost a half of Britain's resident and migratory butterflies have been recorded in the parish.





The rare Yellow Meadow Ant appears in older, less cultivated fields, such as Rectory Field, where its prominent nesting mounds provide a food source for the brightly-coloured 'Yaffle' – the Green Woodpecker, which uses its long sharp beak and tongue to extract the ant grubs.

There are old records of Bullheads, Stone Loach, even Brown Trout among the fish species living in Ifield Brook and the Mole. Certainly large Carp, Perch and Pike persist in the hammer ponds which feed their water into the parish.

Populations of the Great Crested Newt, a handsome, nationally-protected amphibian are found in some ponds and small lakes in Ifield.

Reptiles include the Slowworm, a legless lizard, and the non-venomous Grass Snake, which can be seen occasionally swimming in search of frogs and small fish for its meals; it can also seek the warmth of garden compost heaps to lay its eggs.

Slow Worm – 'the legless lizard'



Kingfisher – Dale Baldwin Photography

Ifield is a marvellous 'patch' for the birdwatcher! The varied dry and watery habitats attract many different resident and migratory species. Among the more colourful are the three species of woodpecker, the Great Spotted seen frequently at garden peanut-feeders, the Lesser Spotted now much less common. Most people have heard of the Kingfisher, of which there are at least two breeding pairs of this exotic-looking bird along the water courses.

At least five species of warbler add their distinctive songs to the spring and early summer choruses. The splendid notes of the Nightingale, as elsewhere in Britain, are now heard less frequently – as are the 'ascending' notes of the Skylark.

The Little Egret, once an extremely rare vagrant to this country, can now be seen from time to time feeding in the local meadows. Other, artificially-introduced, now feral bird species are a welcome and very attractive addition to the parish wildlife, such as the resplendent Mandarin Duck and the Egyptian Goose. Also, more recently, the rather noisy Parakeet!

There is the usual array of wild mammals in the parish – voles, mice, rats, rabbits, the fox, hedgehog, grey squirrel and, largest of all, the Roe Deer. The Hazel Dormouse, an attractive small rodent, persists in some bushy locations. The rare Water Shrew was once recorded in the Brook. A less welcome, alien visitor to the Mole, the Mink, has been spotted occasionally.



Photo provided by Derek Stass

Perhaps the rarest of all, Bechstein's Bat, provides a poignant reminder that the wild riches of areas such as these are desperately in need of TOTAL conservation. The bat occurs in scattered colonies across Ifield Parish, hidden among the leafy

canopies of larger oaks where suitable hollows and crannies exist.

'The Weald is the home of British natural history'. As a Wealden parish, Ifield exemplifies this statement in full.

This lovely parish offers a wealth of wildlife experiences year-long, and it certainly needs no further destructive development.

Its insect fauna alone makes it a national treasure!

