

ANCIENT IFIELD



POND BAY



SPILLWAY

Hyde Hill woods, on the old parish border with Beeding (Bewbush) is, at first glance, a small nondescript wood, but a closer look reveals a wealth of well preserved features of antiquity.

The first feature that you will come across when approaching on the path that runs alongside along Hyde Hill Brook from the east, is a large pond bay (dam). The bay is 34 metres long, up to 9 metres wide at the base, 1.6 metres wide at the top and 1.7 metres high. This is one of four connected features, the others being a spillway, a possible working area and the pond itself which was, of course, created by the construction of the bay.

The bay has been breached by the brook close to it's northern end and the dry remains of the spillway loop around the northern end of the bay and join the brook some 20 metres downstream. The pond bed is to the west of the bay and is around 85 metres long, 20 metres wide and of varying depth. The features are very well preserved, so it is quite surprising that the site was unknown until 1986, when an Ordnance Survey cartographer mapping out the newly built Ifield West estate discovered it. The level of preservation would normally suggest a recent site, but the depth of the erosion through the pond bed points to a much earlier date. It has been speculatively dated by archaeologists as Early Medieval (c6 to c10) or Medieval (c10 to c15). The pond appears on no maps of any detail and, of course, by 1841 we had maps of incredible detail. The Tithe map shows the field to the immediate north of the pond as being called 'Pond Field' and this is the only piece of documentary evidence for Hyde Hill Pond.



POND BED