

# Pollards Hill history

Pollards Hill occupies the highest point in Norbury and on a clear day can give views of Central Croydon, Epsom Downs, Mitcham Common, Windsor Castle and the Crystal Palace TV masts.

A survey was made of the ancient Manor of Benchesham or Bensham towards the end of the 13th century and recorded that tracts of land known as Pollards Hill and Grandon were attached to the Manor. The document which was unfortunately damaged at some time, shows that John de Mortimer was the tenant-in-chief, and that he owed attendance at the Archbishop's Court at Croydon every three weeks. In the Manor there was a messuage with garden, curtilage and mound and ditch lying to it, containing seven acres. The arable land of the Manor, which included 51 acres in South Pollards Hill, 60 acres in North Pollards Hill, and about 90 acres in Grandon.

The Hill was formally part of the North Wood and the name "Pollard" derives from this connection. The height of the hill over the surrounding land would have given clear views to early man and therefore it may have been used as an early observation post.

The road layout of Pollards Hill is clearly shown on the 1868 map of the area and is marked by two avenues of trees.

Pollards Hill was given to the Council in 1913 by Sir Frederick Edridge, five times Mayor of Croydon, who was also a benefactor to Croydon in many other ways. The land had been left as an open space as the surrounding estate quickly developed.

A pedestal was erected on the top of the hill to indicate the direction of various land marks. A shelter was given to commemorate the late Dr WA MacWilliam a local doctor who was well respected by his patients.

The adjacent open space was opened in the 1980's, having previously been allotments. Thickets of native trees and shrubs were planted around the space and footpaths are cut through the surrounding meadow that is developing.