

How this wood passed from Francis Smith to William Chaplin by 1841 is unclear, but they were related by marriage and a sale or transfer may have taken place. William had an elder brother, James, born in 1790, and he married Francis' daughter, Sarah. Francis died in 1820 and left his farm in Sudbourne and other properties, which may have included the wood, to James. When James and William Chaplin's father, Richard, made his will in 1824, he left Cowton Farm, Sudbourne to James and his other unspecified properties to William. However Richard did not die for another eight years. William was aged 21 in 1824 and perhaps the 'geometrical wood' was passed between the brothers.

The 1841 Tithe Map shows how this wood was divided into rectangular blocks, each between one and two acres in extent, except for 4 acres of arable land and another 4 of wood. The woodland is described as 'planting' rather than 'plantation' implying that it was in the process of being planted. The arable lands were at the four corners of the holding and there were two circular areas of trees. Today the whole of the western half of the original holding is the large open field seen from the entrance gate to the reserve. Lines of nettles show where it was originally hedged and the circular areas can also be detected by this means.



Section of the Tithe Map. The areas coloured green are those described as 'plantings' in the apportionment. (Reproduced by permission of the Suffolk Record Office (Ipswich)). See the Appendix for the apportionment.



Photograph of the eastern half of the 'geometrical wood' with some newly planted trees and the outline of one of the circles clearly shown by the tall nettles (photo Jane Allen)