



Hare Warren Woods is the long strip of woodland to the left of the image

Hare Warren, Wilton

Hare Warren is a 300 acre wood in southern Wiltshire and grows along the north side of the chalk escarpment that separates the Nadder and Ebble rivers before they converge with the Avon around Salisbury. During the 16th century Hare Warren was fenced off from the rest of Wilton House parkland in order to preserve it for the hunting of the hare.

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) wrote of Wilton Park (1720's in his letters on London to Land's End:

"The gardens are on the south of the house, and extend themselves beyond the river, a branch of which runs through one part of them, and still south of the gardens in the great park, which, extending beyond the vale, mounts the hill opening at the last to the great down, which is properly called, by way of distinction, Salisbury Plain, and leads from the city of Salisbury to Shaftesbury. Here also his Lordship has a hare-warren, as it is called, though improperly. It has, indeed, been a sanctuary for the hares for many years; but the gentlemen complain that it mars their game, for that as soon as they put up a hare for their sport, if it be anywhere within two or three miles, away she runs for the warren, and there is an end of their pursuit; on the other hand, it makes all the country men turn poachers, and destroy the hares by what means they can. But this is a smaller matter, and of no great import one way or another."

Excerpt from "Wiltshire Yews", by Peter Norton – June 2010.