

PICCADILLY HILL



Place names are normally given by the local community, and are descriptive of the place. Before the mid 1800's village people did not travel, so the locals would not have been familiar with Piccadilly, in London. It was left to the Welsh cattle drovers to name the hill as a meeting place on their trade route into London, having been regular visitors to Piccadilly since the Middle Ages. Piccadilly in 1585 was Llamus common land, over which the parishioners had grazing rights from August until Spring. Doubtless the Welsh gathered there, claiming some ancient right before moving to Smithfield market. In 1612 the developer Robert Baker enclosed the land and erected Piccadilly Hall which received lodgers, and in 1624 "Pikadilly Hall" is given in the overseers' accounts as the name of "divers houses and messuages". By 1651 there were three inns in the area, being on the route of the A4, the main artery into the City from the west. There is a Piccadilly Hill at Wootton near Basingstoke (SU593550), and there was one at Wilcot near Pewsey (SU148609), both hill top gathering places for the Welsh. Chequer's Knap, a wind swept hilltop meeting place for the drovers near Great Kimble (SP829053) in Buckinghamshire, was called Piccadilly Hill in the 1800's, the name being subsequently changed in 1922 when the nearby country residence of the Prime Minister was given to the nation. Nowadays the hill at Ashridge attracts visitors for other reasons, and in 2014 it was cut to enable the downland flora to flourish; a maintenance which is carried out every five years. This important habitat is a class SSSI site as classified by Natural England, supporting rare Chiltern species of



flowers and butterflies. [Butterfly Conservation](#) and [seasonalwildflowers](#)