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WOODLAND
TRUST

Silia Wood

Management Plan
2013-2018

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
- 10 Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Silia Wood
Location:	Presteigne
Grid reference:	SO305640, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 148
Area:	3.40 hectares (8.40 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Ancient Woodland Site, Conservation Area, Great Landscape Value, NULL, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Registered Garden, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Part of Silia Wood was once ornamental woodland and as a result contains some of the oldest and largest conifers in Wales. A network of paths runs through the wood and there are benches with views of the surrounding countryside. Access is off Slough Road

2.2 Extended Description

Silia Wood is a small woodland on a moderately steep sloping, south facing hillside about half a mile from the centre of Presteigne. It was ancient semi-natural woodland but converted to ornamental woodland circa 1860 and then incorporated into the grounds of Silia House. Many specimen conifers were planted in the period 1860 - 1896 and some survive, now being amongst the oldest and largest examples in Wales. There are a number of Douglas fir more than 100ft tall, together with particularly notable specimens of Grand fir, Noble fir, Wellingtonia, Coast redwood and Western hemlock. Naturalised non-native shrubs and garden plants are also abundant including flowering currants, box, butchers broom, Portuguese laurel, hollies and mahonia. Much cherry laurel was removed shortly after acquisition by the Trust. Plants of garden origin include daffodils, snowdrops and primroses. Towards Presteigne the woodland continues as an arboretum as part of the more formal grounds of a private garden. The wood is surrounded on all other sides by improved permanent pasture.

Characteristics of ancient woodland survive in the wood. Much of the canopy in the higher part of the wood is oak, ash is also present and regenerating freely in places. Ancient woodland indicators that survive include bluebell, dogs mercury, yellow archangel and wood sedge.

The wood is within walking distance of Presteigne and is well-used. It forms an important skyline feature visible from the town. The only entrance is along a short section of hedged track, owned by the Trust, which connects the wood with Slough Road. A network of paths provides access to all parts of the wood.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

General Location:

Silia wood is located outside Presteigne. Arriving in Presteigne from the south on the B4356, turn left into Slough Road. Approximately half a mile along there is a primary school on the right and the entrance to the wood is in 500metres on the right via a short section of hedged track, owned by the Woodland Trust.

Overview of paths and entrances:

There is a board on site for notices, and a network of paths throughout the wood. There are also two benches in the wood with views of the surrounding countryside. The wood is set on the side of a steep hill and there are many sets of steep steps throughout the wood. One fairly level path follows the contours from the entrance.

Parking:

There is little room for parking along the Slough road. There is a car park (requiring payment) for about 15 cars at the bus stop and coach pull in on the B4356 (Joe Deakins Road) which is just before the turn off into Slough Road. This is called ByPass Car Park.

Public transport:

At the above coach stop and car park, the following buses stop:

Leominster - Presteigne Route 49 (Lugg Valley Primrose Motors)

Ludlow - Presteigne Route 83A (Lugg Valley Travel)

Kington - Presteigne- Knighton Route G5 (Sargeant Brothers).

Details are available from Powys County Council Public Transport (0845 607 6060)

The wood is about 0.6 miles from the bus stop.

Public Toilets:

Presteigne Public Toilets & Car park, on Hereford Street (grid reference 331522/264302) approximately 0.6 miles away are the nearest public toilets with disabled facilities (require RADAR key).

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term objective is to maintain the woodland as an arboretum within a naturalistic setting provided by native woodland. The wood is an ancient woodland site and arboretum with informal public access as a key feature. Surviving specimen trees will be retained until they fall, or become clearly and immediately dangerous. Opportunities for restocking will be taken as large trees fall, creating gaps. Restocking will be with non-native species already represented in the arboretum, but appropriate new species may be added following consultation with the local community and CADW. The ancient woodland characteristics will be maintained but the intention with the site is to preserve the arboretum feature rather than restore the site to semi-natural woodland. Natural regeneration of native species and selected exotics will be recruited into the canopy where space allows. Naturalised shrubs and plants of garden origin will also be retained, but invasive spread will be prevented, particularly of cherry laurel.

The canopy on the western side of the wood will be managed to retain mostly native broadleaves with a scattering of non-natives, but arboretum specimens will dominate on the eastern site. Public pedestrian access will be maintained with an extensive path network giving access to all parts of the site. Some path sections may need to be blocked if large trees become dangerous.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 Planted Ancient Woodland Site

Description

A matrix of W10 oak and ash woodland survives around arboretum plantings, with some ancient woodland indicator plants, including butcher's broom, bluebell, dogs mercury, yellow archangel, and wood sedge.

Significance

Preserves characteristics of the former semi-natural woodland and provides a naturalistic setting for the arboretum.

Opportunities & Constraints

Much of the tree canopy is made up of specimen arboretum trees, and non-native shrubs and naturalised plants are significant components of the understory and ground flora. These non-native species are of interest and will be retained. The wood is prominent in the landscape and clearly visible from Prestiegne.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The ancient woodland features will be maintained by ensuring the continued presence of a range of woodland specialist species and that native tree species are present in the canopy and in natural regeneration, and deadwood is present and that dense mat forming species are not aggressively dominating. This will not involve full restoration as the arboretum feature will also be maintained.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

To maintain ancient woodland features are secure by ensuring:

- 1) sufficient natural regeneration of native broadleaves including oak and ash to ensure 50% native canopy throughout western half of wood.
- 2) levels of indicator ground flora are not decreasing through excessive shade or overuse by visitors.
- 3) competition from exotic conifer regeneration not required as recruits to the arboretum will be felled to waste. This to include some of the larger sub-dominants.

5.2 Arboretum

Description

Arboretum of considerable historical interest, containing specimen trees, many dating from plantings in 1860 - 1896. Contains some of the largest individual trees in Wales, including Grand fir (151 ft), Noble fir (119 ft), Douglas fir (20 trees more than 100ft) Western hemlock (115 ft), Wellingtonia (105 ft). Also numerous naturalised shrubs including a range of varieties of holly, and naturalised garden plants.

Significance

Important collection of arboretum trees including some of the earliest plantings of some species in Wales. On the register of Parks and Garden of Special Historic Interest in Wales, Grade II. "A noted late victorian and unusual arboretum still containing fine specimen trees, particularly conifers. Connections with the Banks family of nearby Hergest Croft". This special interest and the opportunities for promoting public enjoyment justify the Trust in over-ruling in this case its usual presumption in favour of restoring planted ancient woodland sites to predominantly semi-natural conditions.

Opportunities & Constraints

Trees are approaching maturity and may become unstable or prone to windthrow. The wood is an important feature in the landscape visible from Presteigne School nearby.

Factors Causing Change

Natural regeneration of ash, degeneration of mature trees.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain as an arboretum, retaining existing specimen trees until they fall or become clearly and immediately dangerous, and restocking with similar species.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

To ensure sufficient regeneration of species present in the arboretum canopy by opportunistic restocking as canopy gaps appear.
Select exotics to be retained both as mature trees and recruits and remove the rest. Control invasive shrubs E.G. Rhododendron, cherry laurel as both growing in adjacent woodland.

5.3 Informal Public Access

Description

A network of paths runs through the wood which in the past was maintained and developed by a network of volunteers. Most of these paths were created when the garden and arboretum were developed in the 19th century.

Significance

Local amenity for Presteigne, within walking distance of the town.

Opportunities & Constraints

There are no public rights of way but a network of permissive paths provides several circular walks. There is a Forest School in the wood with Presteigne Primary School nearby (started 2012).

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain low key informal public pedestrian access, including paths and seats.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

To maintain existing path network, viewpoints and seats appropriate to the level of use of the site.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	0.80	Beech	1965	PAWS restoration	Landscape factors, No/poor vehicular access to the site	Arboretum, Informal Public Access, Planted Ancient Woodland Site	Ancient Woodland Site, Conservation Area, Other, Tree Preservation Order
<p>This compartment lies in the south-western quarter of the wood, incorporating the entrance area at the head of the entrance track. Gently to moderately sloping south-facing hillside with a canopy of beech dating from planting circa 1965 (no mature specimen trees). The Scot's pine has poor thin crowns. It was thinned out in 2001 (extraction by horse) to promote regeneration of native species. There is regeneration of holly, ash, elder and occasional oak amongst the bramble which is heavy in places. Bluebells are growing in significant numbers. (Previously Compartments 1b and 1c in 1994 plan and 1996 WGS).</p>							
1b	1.00	Oak (pedunculate)	1850	PAWS restoration	Landscape factors, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Arboretum, Informal Public Access, Planted Ancient Woodland Site	Ancient Woodland Site, Conservation Area, Other, Tree Preservation Order
<p>This compartment lies in the upper part of the wood, above a footpath which traverses the slope. It is south facing, and moderately steeply sloping, but with a flatter area at the top. The canopy is mostly mature oak surviving from the semi natural ancient woodland pre-dating the arboretum planting. Mature specimen trees are scattered throughout. Beech planted in the 1960s occurs in the lower part of the sub compartment. The understory is mostly non native shrubs and varieties of holly: a great deal of cherry laurel was removed shortly after acquisition by the Trust. The ground vegetation is dominated by bramble.</p>							
1c	1.40	Mixed conifers	1880	High forest	Landscape factors, No/poor vehicular access to the site	Arboretum, Informal Public Access, Planted Ancient Woodland Site	Ancient Woodland Site, Conservation Area, Other, Tree Preservation Order

Located in the south-eastern quarter of the wood to the right of the entrance, this compartment is gently to moderately sloping and south-facing. The canopy is dominated by large mature conifers, this part of the wood containing the majority of the arboretum; this area will be maintained as an arboretum, rather than restoration to native broadleaves. The understory is mostly naturalised non-native shrubs, with dense bramble growth where the canopy is thin.

1d	0.10	Hawthorn species		Non-wood habitat		Arboretum, Informal Public Access, Planted Ancient Woodland Site	
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A thin sliver of land connecting Silia Wood to Slough Road. A wooden field gate prevents access up an unsurfaced track to the boundary of the woodland. A tall, species rich, hedge is present on both sides comprising hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, ash, hazel and other species. The ground flora is semi-improved grassland with ruderals and brush-cut once annually in May. The hedge is maintained by the adjacent landowner.

GLOSSARY

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

Ancient Woodland Site

Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

Beating Up

Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

Broadleaf

A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

Canopy

The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

Conifer

A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

Continuous Cover forestry

A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

Coppice

Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

Exotic (non-native) Species

Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

Field Layer

Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

Group Fell

The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

Long Term Retention

Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

Minimum Intervention

Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

Origin & Provenance

The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

Re-Stocking

Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

Sub-Compartment

Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

Thinning

The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

Weeding

The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established. Either by hand cutting or with carefully selected weed killers such as glyphosate.

Windblow/Windthrow

Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.