



Tom Wood

**Management Plan
2018-2023**

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Tom Wood
Location:	Charlesworth
Grid reference:	SJ998929, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 109
Area:	11.43 hectares (28.24 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Ancient Woodland Site, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A great destination for those seeking a trip to a wood from nearby Manchester. A beautiful landscape with ash, oak, birch and sycamore and varied wild flowers. Steep slopes can become muddy so sturdy footwear recommended all year round.

2.2 Extended Description

Tom Wood lies on a steep gullied valley running down into the River Etherow near the village of Charlesworth. The surrounding land is the rolling country between the hills of the Peak District National Park (one mile to the east) and the outskirts of Manchester (two miles to the west).

The underlying ground is clayey surface water gley soils derived from carboniferous mudstones and shales, these are waterlogged for most of the year and make access over the steep terrain difficult. The wood itself is composed of chiefly sycamore with ash, oak birch and alder. It is a good example of ancient semi natural woodland on the west Pennine fringe and forms part of a ribbon of such woodland fragments extending down between the Peak District National Park and the urban sprawl to the west. It holds a mosaic of various woodland types (although these have never been surveyed), ranging from alder- ash woodland (NVC W7) in the valley floor through herb rich ash-elm-sycamore woodland (NVC W8) to dry grassy oak-birch woodland (NVC W10) on the upper fringes with the pasture land above. The ground flora is dominated by spring flowering species - bluebell, wood sorrel, ransoms, cuckoo pint and dogs mercury: with carpets of opposite leaved golden saxifrage in the wet gullies and ferns throughout. Rhododendron was once extensive throughout the wood and has been subject to a programme of eradication between 2003 and 2013, resulting in the complete clearance of the site, although regeneration is ongoing from rhododendron on adjacent land. Himalayan Balsam is present along the banks of the River Etherow and control desirable but currently widespread and constantly invasive and to date control has not proved effective or sustainable so for the present it has been halted.

A recent historical survey showed how little is known of the history of the area. In the middle ages the surrounding land was part of a royal hunting forest and under control of the cistercian abbey of Basinwerke in Flintshire for the production of cattle from 1157. Unfortunately the abbey records, and those of the grange established close by, were destroyed by a fire in the eighteenth century. From the Elizabethan period the land passed into the hands of the Howard family where it remained until the twentieth century, however no estate maps have been uncovered that show the wood. A survey of the parish of Charlesworth in 1849 shows that it was 45% under trees which is very significantly higher than it is in the present day. This indicates that the surrounding area must have been relatively underdeveloped agriculturally.

The wood is served by one permissive path and two public footpaths, that link in well with the network of paths in the area. Unfortunately, local parking on Woodseats Lane is difficult which will deter many potential visitors to the woods but parking is available in nearby Broadbottom. Considering the access difficulties the wood is fairly well used and there is a high level of local interest in the wood and its footpaths.

Public footpath no.64 and no.62 cross very steep and often wet terrain. The route was significantly improved with the provision of a permissive path developed by the Trust in 1998 on a north south loop, including requisite bridges and long stepped sections to give more public access into the wood. The boundaries are ill defined in many places on the north side of the wood. To the east and south the wood boundaries are clearer although effective fencing is not always present.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Tom Wood lies close to the villages of Charlesworth and Broadbottom. Access can only be gained via the local public footpath network.

Paths lead to Woodseats Lane over fields to the south west (2-300m) or to Broadbottom along the river Etherow to the north (a good half mile). There is no public parking available on Woodseats Lane. At Broadbottom a layby exists across from the Roman Catholic Church on the Broadbottom to Charlesworth road. From there you pick up the public footpath that runs down the side of the churchyard and along the river till you reach the wood. Access into the woods is by stile and it is served by two public footpaths and a permissive route. All these routes bisect the wood. Due to the complex valley system that the wood lies in all routes are steep in most places with long stepped sections where the gradients are worst. Ground conditions get very wet and slippery after only moderate rainfall, navigation is difficult and further access into the wood is for the more adventurous explorer. The river crossings on the through routes have now all been safely bridged.

Both Broadbottom and Charlesworth are served by bus and Broadbottom has a rail station a good mile from the wood. Travel details can be found on Traveline on www.traveline.org.uk or alternatively on 0871 200 2233. No public facilities are known within the vicinity.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The aims of management are to realise Tom Wood's full potential as an ancient semi natural woodland. Through

1. Management as a native high forest and maintaining continuous cover of the forest canopy . All regeneration of small canopy gaps is to be by the natural regeneration of the trees on site.
2. Maintaining the absence of rhododendron which previously has had a detrimental effect on the wood's ground flora
3. The active control of other invasive species where practicable and sustainable ie. Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed wherever they arise. These tend to be disseminated along water courses so constant vigilance will be needed along the banks of the River Etherow and in the lower parts of the wood.
4. Maintaining and accessible path network through the wood to allow continued public enjoyment of the site.

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 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Tom Wood consists of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland of various NVC types. These have not been surveyed to date but include a mosaic of W7 alder -ash- willow woodland in the gully bottoms and on the riverside, various W8 herb rich ash-elm-sycamore types for instance dominated by ramsons and possible W9 ash woodland areas also. On the drier tops of the slopes there is an intergrade with W10 grassy oak-birch types. The wood is heavily dominated by sycamore in many areas although this is a naturalised, if not natural, component of these woodland types (NVC W8/9). wych elm forms a scattered understorey shrub in the east of the wood. Ground vegetation and NVC types have undoubtedly also been modified by the long periods of time smothered under the dense rhododendron sub canopy

Significance

Tom Wood is important because it is a relatively large fragment of ASNW which has probably been relatively undermanaged or undisturbed given the difficult terrain. It is an important wildlife refuge close to the urban fringe of Manchester and forms part of a closely scattered network of ancient semi natural woods running north south down between the urban areas and the Pennine hills. Compartments 3 and 4 can also be classified as a RAWS (restored ancient woodland site) due to the complete control of rhododendron throughout the site.

Opportunities & Constraints

There is an opportunity to now maintain a good sized and fairly undisturbed ancient woodland to a reasonably semi natural state through the future control of invasive species - notably rhododendron. This affect the ground vegetation only and the tree canopy itself is relatively robust with good recruitment from natural regeneration. There is an opportunity to produce much more of a dead wood resource on site, both fallen and also standing due to the difficult access to a lot of the site.

The main constraints are the invasive alien species - rhododendron and himalayan balsam , together with the wet and steep terrain which makes any management activity difficult.

Factors Causing Change

rhododendron control, gully erosion, tree development in the planted coupes, ash dieback

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Tom Wood will be managed as minimum intervention high forest, and should continue to form an intrinsic part of the local landscape with a canopy cover likely dominated by sycamore. The woodland will be structurally diverse in terms of age and size classification with a mix of older trees, natural regeneration, well developed shrub layer and diverse ground flora. There will be the occasional more unusual specimen tree (e.g. black poplar, Bay willow) Invasive species will be controlled and eradicated from the wood where practicable and sustainable, ideally as part of a landscape scale approach.

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

There will be no intervention in the woodland structure other than ensuring no future rhododendron becomes established in the woodland through the spraying/ pulling of regrowth and seedlings on at least one occasion per plan period. An assessment of woodland condition will be carried out in each 5 year plan period.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Two public footpaths no.s 62 & 64 run north south through the wood. 6 bridge crossings were installed to facilitate the crossing of streams and gullies, however the remaining path surfacing will remain in a fairly natural state on their current route. For easier access there is another permissive path with bridges and steps, improved by the Trust in 1998 at the west end of the wood which links PROW no.62 with a desire line path along the banks of the River Etherow.

It is hoped that with footpath improvements in place that visitor numbers to the wood will increase, although these will still be limited by the poor car parking opportunities available and the continued wet and often steep terrain within the woodland..

Significance

The wood provides an opportunity for experiencing ancient semi natural woodland in a situation close to major built up areas and the routes through the wood link well with a good network of public footpaths within the area.

Opportunities & Constraints

The opportunities exist to promote more visitor access to the wood by way of the PROW footpath improvements. Although free access is allowed throughout, the wet and unforgiving terrain proves hazardous to progress through the wood and basic navigation.

It is acknowledged that even with the PROW improvements in place and the existing permissive footpath, that visitors willing to stray off the beaten track will be few and far between, which is a pity given the range of things to see within the wood.

Another major constraint is the lack of parking facilities on Woodseats Lane which intersects both footpaths although parking is available in Broadbottom a short walk along the River Etherow from the north..

Factors Causing Change

footpath improvements carried out, reopening of the PROWs on the north side of the wood, increase in the level of use, reduction in the parking opportunities on Woodseats Lane

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To have a fully functional path network linking the wood to the surrounding settlements to allow the public to enjoy the property. Although the routes are in need of improvement to make them passable it is the aim to ensure that they remain as natural as possible without excessive development.

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

Ensure that the level of visitor facilities remains commensurate with the level of useage over the plan period, and maintain the access points, signs on at least one occasion per year, and the steps and bridges on at least one occasion per plan period.

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	0.28	Oak (pedunculate)	2000	High forest	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground, No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Ancient Woodland Site, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Tree Preservation Order
<p>A small area of predominantly sycamore, clearfelled in 1999 and replanted in spring 2000 with oak and ash. The originally intended planting density was 2250/ha but this proved not possible due to the amount of brash etc on site and it was agreed with the Forestry Commission to subsequently plant as much of the site as possible and also accept sycamore regeneration from cut stumps and treat as a naturalised component of the wood. The end result is ash and oak (50:50) at a density of approx. 1500/ha with recruited sycamore coppice bringing stocking density up to around 2000 stems per hectare. Since felling took place brambles have dominated the ground layer.</p>							
2a	0.25	Oak (pedunculate)	2000	High forest	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground, No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Ancient Woodland Site, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Tree Preservation Order

A small area of predominantly sycamore, clearfelled in 1999 and replanted in spring 2000 with oak and ash. The originally intended planting density was 2250/ha but this proved not possible due to the amount of brash etc on site and it was agreed with the Forestry Commission to subsequently plant as much of the site as possible and also accept sycamore regeneration from cut stumps and treat as a naturalised component of the wood. The end result is ash and oak (50:50) at a density of approx. 1500/ha with recruited sycamore coppice bringing stocking density up to around 2000 stems per hectare. Since felling took place brambles have dominated the ground layer.

3a	5.41	Sycamore	1940	High forest	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order
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Ancient semi natural woodland of varying types but overwhelmingly dominated by sycamore at 90% with minor species components silver birch, ash, alder, poplar and the occasional oak on the drier upper fringes of the wood. Sycamore is to be treated as a naturalised/native stand component from cut stumps and regeneration. Wych elm and elder form the understorey species and would have been common prior to the outbreak of Dutch Elm Disease. Rhododendron regeneration is present seeding from adjacent land. There are several large poplars (possibly native black poplar) within the compartment towards the west end. Ground flora is varied, dominated by bluebells and ransoms and ferns.

4a	5.54	Sycamore	1940	High forest	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, People issues (+tve & -tve), Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order
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The western part of the wood is more varied in character than the eastern cpt3. Again ancient semi natural woodland, the dominance of sycamore is less pronounced (40%) with far more oak(30%) and ash (15%) present. Sycamore is to be treated as a naturalised/native stand component. Birch and alder form measurable percentages of between 5% and 10% and similarly to cpt 3 there are several large poplar which may be native black poplar scattered through the wood. There is abundant regeneration of ash throughout, but very little sycamore. The understorey is varied with hazel, hawthorn, holly. Rhododendron regeneration is present seeding from adjacent land. Ground flora is varied, dominated by bluebells and ransoms and ferns.

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.