



# Wassell Wood

# Management Plan 2017-2022

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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.

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## 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](http://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

<b>Site name:</b>	Wassell Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Trimpley
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SO795774, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 138
<b>Area:</b>	22.37 hectares (55.28 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Tree Preservation Order

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

A semi-natural ancient woodland site cloaking a steep hill overlooking Kidderminster, Bewdley and the Severn valley. The site has a network of paths and bridleways, well used by walkers and riders. Hilltop views and a scheduled ancient monument.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Wassell Wood is an area of Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland in a prominent hilltop location near Trimley to the north of Bewdley, Worcestershire. The Wood continues further south into third party ownership. The entire site is an isolated unit but in the vicinity is heathland and one of the most wooded parts of Worcestershire and as such, the site should not be considered in isolation but as part of a larger ecological unit. Wassell Wood lies within a timbered farmland landscape characterised by regular shaped woods of ancient character. The site slopes steeply throughout with a moderate south-easterly aspect and includes a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Hillfort) reference SAM19141 at its summit. The underlying geology consists of sandstone of the Bridgnorth and Hodnet associates giving rise to sandy free draining soils on the lower slopes with heavier clay soils on the upper slopes.

The lower eastern slopes of the site were subject to heavy thinning prior to Trust ownership and are now dominated by birch and sycamore regeneration with coppice regrowth of oak and sweet chestnut and planting of native mixed broadleaves completed by the Trust in 1984/85. Elsewhere on site, the woodland is composed of planting early in the 20th century and a mature mixture typical of oak-ash woodland but with a high percentage of sycamore in the higher and lower canopy zones. There is limited regeneration of canopy species in the under storey with exception of sycamore.

The site is very well used with two entrance points off Hoarstone Lane, giving access to a network of approximately 2.2km of formal and informal paths. Included within the path framework are 650 metres of permissive bridleway allowing horse riders safe passage away from a particularly narrow road section along Hoarstone Lane and busy, fast moving traffic. Both entrance points are set back from the road and take the form of pull-ins providing car parking for 1-2 vehicles at each entrance point. The paths and access offer circular walks and including a route to the scheduled ancient monument from which there are stunning views of the surrounding countryside.

The key features for this site are:-

Informal Public Access  
Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland  
Historic Features.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

Wassell Wood is located approximately on sloping ground 1.5 miles north of Bewdley along Hoarstone Lane which gradually steeps as it reaches the two main entrances to the wood. Both the first and second access point are via a squeeze post or wicket gate (wicket gate shared with horse access along permissive bridleway. The bride-way has a rough surface to accommodate horse access but is also quite steep and therefore not well suited to wheel chair or push chair access. None of the other paths are surfaced and although very attractive to follow, do involve negotiating some rather steep sections. There are also isolated pockets of boggy paths, but overall the site does not suffer to badly with waterlogged and muddy routes.

There are no car parks at the site, although a car can be parked in the entrance way at each of the two access points providing the squeeze post and wicket entrance points aren't obstructed.

Public transport - nearest bus stop is located about 5 mins north of the site in Trimpley by the turning for the Golf Club. The nearest train station is in Kidderminster 3 miles from the wood.

Public Toilets - nearest is at Dog Lane car park in Bewdley. It is a super Loo (like a little stand alone tardis) in the car park and has disabled facilities.

\*\* Further information about public transport is available from Traveline - [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) or phone 0870 608 2 608

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The Woodland Trusts objectives and long term intentions for Wassell Wood are determined after balanced consideration of a our Woodland Management Approach (WMA) and seek to conserve key features in relation to our outcomes. Where there is conflict, the interests of biodiversity take precedence over people. We do not intervene at our sites unless there is evidence that it will improve woodland biodiversity and/or public understanding and enjoyment.

In 50 years time, Wassell Wood will be a well structured, species diverse predominately native broadleaved high forest woodland. Natural regeneration will be frequent and large amounts of standing and fallen deadwood will be present with a significant number of mature and veteran trees. Sycamore will remain a component of but not dominate the canopy. The shrub layer will include regenerating native tree and shrub species. Ancient woodland flowers and plants will be well represented within the ground flora along with an array of bramble, ferns, mosses, honeysuckle and Ivy. Invasive species e.g. rhododendron and laurel, will be rare or absent. There will be a graded edge to many of the pathways providing a valuable transitional zone habitat benefitting a range of wildlife.

The integrity of the Scheduled Ancient Monument will be maintained through management and annual strimming to encourage a stable grass sward with removal of any new tree/shrub regeneration as required.

In accordance with the Trust WMA, free public access will be provided for quiet, informal recreation and the woodland managed to ensure it remains accessible. Paths will be maintained to provide a range of woodland walks and the site valued as an important local amenity. Ride edge coppicing will be undertaken where appropriate to enhance visitor and conservation interest. Regular tree inspections will be undertaken by competent people with any remedial work required implemented in accordance with current best practice.



## 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 Informal Public Access

#### Description

In accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims, the site is open to the public for quiet informal pedestrian activities. The wood is well used with two entrance points leading off Hoarstone Lane, giving access to a network of approximately 2.2km of formal and informal paths, 650m of which includes permissive bridleway allowing horse riders to avoid a narrow closed-in section of Hoarstone Lane. Both entrance points are set back from the road and take the form of pull-ins which can also be used for car parking (maximum 2 vehicles). The network of paths here offer visitors a choice of circular walks with easy access to the Scheduled Ancient Monument and other surrounding viewpoints.

#### Significance

In accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims the site is open to the public for quiet informal pedestrian activities. Wassell wood offers the four-fold benefits of easy access to an ancient woodland site; a scheduled ancient monument; exceptional views over Kidderminster and the Severn Valley; the woods prominent location means it is also of high value in terms of visual amenity in the local landscape. The bridleway allows horse riders to avoid a narrow closed in section of Hoarstone Lane and to add variety to their routes. Local concerns due to large scale felling and planning proposals in the late 1970's early 1980's were instrumental in securing the site for the Trust, indicating the importance of the wood to the local community and the trust they place in the Woodland Trust.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The sites historical and conservation value along with its close proximity to a large population provide excellent opportunities for use by local, field study, and interest groups. In the past, the site has enjoyed considerable local input in terms of interest and volunteer wardens and work parties and the opportunity exists to rekindle and maintain a strong sense of local ownership. This could be achieved through ongoing consultation and dissemination of information regarding management issues and proposals. The steep nature of the site and restrictive car parking limit its recreational use, however, the network of grassy rides developed by the Volunteer Wardens is well used by the local community and the section of permissive bridleway is a popular riding route. The site has excellent views of the Severn Valley which can be maintained and improved through careful management.

Seasonally wet ground conditions and people riding off the designated bridleway may result in periods of restricted access or even closure to horse riders

### **Factors Causing Change**

Vandalism/misuse of the site. Change in visitor profile at the wood.

### **Long term Objective (50 years+)**

The long-term intention is to maintain the present levels of access. The Trusts duty of care to neighbours and site users will continue to be addressed through ongoing tree safety and site risk assessment regimes that will stimulate remedial works as required. The Trust will continue to consult and inform the local community on major management issues.

The SAM is one of the most popular places for visitors to spend time when they visit this site and as such, this area will continue to be kept open and mown as part of the annual mowing regime applied to the rides and paths here.

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

The existing footpaths and bridleway will be maintained. The paths will be cut to a minimum of 2m width twice a year.

The Scheduled Ancient Monument Area is one of the most popular areas for visitors at the site and will continue to be maintained as an area open space through mowing and strimming as part of the other annual path and ride maintenance. Vegetation encroaching onto paths will be cut back and annual maintenance of all woodland fixtures, including, signs, seats, gates and fences will be maintained as part of the estate maintenance contract.

Signs or plaques welcoming the general public will be maintained at all the main entrance points.

The woodland will be promoted through the Woodland Trusts own publications and web site.

The site will be kept clear of litter and fly tipping. Local schools and approved interest groups will continue to have access to the site for study and survey activities.

## 5.2 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

### Description

Wassell Wood including the section adjoining outside of Woodland Trust ownership has been identified as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland (SNAW) in the provisional Worcestershire inventory of ancient woodlands (Nature Conservancy Council 1986). The area in Woodland Trust ownership has a history of management in the 20th century resulting in two distinct areas of woodland. Heavy felling in the eastern third of the site during the early 1980s is now regenerating into mixed broadleaf woodland from a mixture of natural regeneration, coppice regrowth, and replanting. The remainder of the area has a mature mixed broadleaf canopy of between 60 to 100 years in age, a mixture of planting and natural regeneration dating back to the early 1900s. Oak and Ash are strong components in the canopy with a number of birch and holly stands and sycamore occupying approximately 28% of the mature and regenerating canopy. Wassell Wood supports W10a *Quercus robur*-*Pteridium aquilinum*-*Rubus fruticosus* woodland (typical subcommunity) with localised occurrence of W8b *Fraxinus excelsior*-*Acer campestre*-*Mercurialis perennis* woodland along the western boundary and patches of W8f *Fraxinus excelsior*-*Acer campestre*.

Compartments 1a,b,c and 2b are dominated by W10a *Quercus robur*-*Pteridium aquilinum*-*Rubus fruticosus* woodland. Bramble dominates much of the ground flora in these compartments but many other species can also be found including ancient woodland indicators. W8f is associated with wetter soils. The ground flora in these areas is dominated by a dense covering of Ramsons. Ground flora in compartments 2c and d conforms to W10a *Quercus robur*-*Pteridium aquilinum*-*Rubus fruticosus* woodland under a 10-15metre canopy dominated by Birch with Sycamore, Oak, Ash, Hazel, Yew, Holly, Cherry and Sweet chestnut. The ground flora in compartment 2c has frequent Bramble and Bracken with occasional, dense pockets of bluebell and honeysuckle. Compartment 2d is denser and bramble less dominant and strong pockets of bluebells.

The site also contains two small ponds in compartment 1C. Pond 1 is thought to be an old marl pit with a steeply sloping bank to the north. Pond 2 is more open than pond 1, does not have the steep banks and an area of shallow water with a range of aquatic species. Species recorded include creeping buttercup, Bur reed, Opposite leaved golden saxifrage, Soft rush, Brookline and Duck weed. The immediate surrounding area is wet and supports Lesser celandine, Bugle, Curled dock, Chick weed, Marsh bedstraw, Dog's mercury, Red current and nettle.

### Significance

"No further loss of ancient woodland" is one of the Woodland Trusts core objectives. The importance of Wassell Wood as a SNAW is made greater by the close proximity (within 400m) of two further areas of SNAW to the north and south, and by the general areas richness in terms of semi-natural and planted ancient woodland sites including the Wyre Forest across the Severn Valley to the west.

### Opportunities & Constraints

The prime opportunity is to ensure for posterity the continuation of woodland cover of SNAW at this site and to increase the diversity of native species regeneration through appropriate intervention.

Habitat value and variety can be further enhanced by the retention of larger volumes of standing and fallen deadwood.

Steeply sloping and poorly drained terrain have the potential to make planning and execution of silvicultural work challenging with a high risk of surface damage unless intervention work is timed carefully. Silvicultural work undertaken along the extensive woodland boundary against the public highway will also require careful planning and execution due to the risk posed to passing traffic.

The opportunity to engage the local community in woodland management at the site.

### **Factors Causing Change**

Invasive Sycamore, Squirrel Damage, restricted regeneration both in terms of coverage and species diversity.

### **Long term Objective (50 years+)**

A well structured, species diverse predominately native broadleaved high forest woodland. Natural regeneration will be frequent and large amounts of standing and fallen deadwood will be present with a significant number of mature and veteran trees. Sycamore will remain a component of but not dominate the canopy. The shrub layer will include regenerating native tree and shrub species. Ancient woodland flowers and plants will be well represented within the ground flora along with an array of bramble, ferns, mosses, honeysuckle and Ivy. Invasive species e.g. rhododendron and laurel, will be rare or absent. There will be a graded edge to many of the pathways providing a valuable transitional zone habitats benefitting a range of wildlife.

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

During this plan period, light thinning across the site will be undertaken to aid development of a broader range of native species within the wood. Currently, tree and shrub regeneration is patchy across Wassell Wood and frequently dominated by sycamore. The mature mixed broadleaved canopy is species diverse e.g. Oak, Lime, Cherry, Ash and Birch. However, the current structure is very dense with diversity lacking in the sub-canopy making the wood vulnerable and less resilient in the face of future threats including climate change, pollution, pests and diseases and increasing intensification of land use.

A light thin (approximately 20%) favouring the retention and development of a range of native species would provide the opportunity to increase both structural and species diversity at the site long-term. The gentle increase in light levels through thinning around a variety of selected native trees would encourage native natural regeneration of species other than sycamore to establish. The work would also provide more space for the retained mixed broadleaves to grow-on and develop into maturity.

More recently planted stands in the eastern portion of the site (2c and 2d) have established well alongside other natural regeneration. However, growth and development of some trees is now limiting overall diversity with birch and sycamore becoming increasingly dominant to the detriment of other natives species present e.g. Oak, Cherry, Rowan, Field Maple, Goat Willow. Light thinning and respacing work to these areas favouring a broader mixture of native species is now required.

- 1) 2020/21 - Light thin 1a, b, c and 2b to favour a broad range of native broadleaves
- 2) 2017/18/19/20/21 - respacing of pole stage stands in subcompt 2c and 2d to favour a more diverse mix of native broadleaves to grow onto maturity.

Rhododendron control will be undertaken across the site to prevent it's spread and dominance in the field and shrub layer to the detriment of native species and ground flora.

## 5.3 Historic Features

### Description

The Schedule Ancient Monument (SAM) consists of a rectangular platform with ditch and banks (Sub-comp. 2A). The structure was thought to be medieval fortification and was possibly one of the posts used by Henry IV against Owen Glyndwr after the burning of Worcester in 1405. Scheduling history :- included: 11/06/76 - County and number: Hereford and Worcester, national monument 19141 (county No was 210) - Name: Wassell Wood hill fort.

However, more recent investigative work including LIDAR and ground assessments, suggest the origin of both the earthworks and other heritage assets on site to date back much further. Their features are consistent with a form of settlement associated with an extended family group focused on subsistence farming and animal husbandry dating from the later pre-historic or Romano-British period (approximately 800BC - 400AD). There is also some evidence to suggest there was an outer enclosure, extending towards the south-west that may have been an area of occupation or an enclosed field associated with the core area of settlement. It is possible the site was occupied during even later periods in history, however, this remains unproven.

The enclosure is an example of four other similar sites in the Wyre Landscape that are either located on the promontories of land (like Wassell Wood) or on low-lying terraces adjacent to the River Severn

### Significance

The moated site and other heritage assets in Wassell Wood survive in good condition. The SAMs hilltop position and method of construction is unusual for this class of monument (Moated sites). The platform, ditch, and ditch fills will contain archaeological material and evidence that could increase our understanding of the settlement pattern, economy, and social structure of the region during the medieval period.

### Opportunities & Constraints

#### Opportunities:

Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 several management restrictions apply to this site. The opportunity exists for the Trust to manage the site in such a manner that the woodland does not adversely affect the archaeological value of the SAM. Further opportunities arise from the possibility of formalised archaeological survey work undertaken with licence from the statutory bodies. The fort provides an extra area of interest for site visitors, a factor that might be of value in attaining future grant aid or community involvement.

To open up the dense tree cover where appropriate through planned silvicultural work to reveal archaeological features

The features and buried archaeological heritage of the scheduled ancient monument in sub-compartment 2A may be subject to degradation by the activities of tree roots and root failure of mature trees, an opportunity exists to conserve the monuments archaeological value through the gradual reduction of tree cover through managing as woodland pasture (see key feature F3 SAM for more detail).

### Factors Causing Change

Regenerating trees and shrubs on the earthworks and other heritage asset areas.  
Wind blow - affecting mature trees present thereby jeopardising the integrity of the earth works and other heritage asset areas.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

To protect the SAM and other heritage assets. Maintain the visibility and integrity of the SAM through management to develop a low grass/herbaceous cover. Mature trees will be left to senesce naturally whilst regeneration will be discouraged and not permitted to extend to greater than 10% of the surface area of the SAM. The area will be maintained as one of open space mown annually as part of the ride and path mowing regime. Where the opportunity exists, to carefully open-up the dense tree canopy in heritage asset areas e.g. charcoal hearths, to reveal these features without increasing light levels to a point where rapid and

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

Assess the condition of the hillfort through Key feature monitoring observations for any regenerating Sycamore, Ash and coppice elder shrubs which should be programmed for removal to ensure the integrity of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) is maintained.

Continue to mow the main areas of the SAM as part of the annual path and ride mowing regime to maintain the open ground and easy access to this part of the site. This is the most visited area of the wood with its fantastic views of the surrounding towns and countryside.

2017/18/19/20/21 Where potential exists, open-up the current dense tree cover as part of any planned silvicultural work to help reveal archaeological features present on site e.g. charcoal hearths. Care to be taken to ensure the high forest canopy is maintained to a suitable level suppressing excessive shrub and scrub cover which could obscure and otherwise erode archaeological features sensitive to such conditions.

Support opportunities to act as a host site for local groups to develop deeper, more focused archaeological research including site investigations and non-invasive survey assessments as well as public archaeological events and activities.

2021 - Refresh on site historical interpretation material to include more recent archaeological and survey data findings.

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## 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	5.40	other oak spp	1920	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order
<p>This sub-compartment has a southwestern aspect with a moderate slope. It stretches from the southern access off Hoarstone Lane to the northern boundary. A post and wire fence alongside Hoarstone lane defines the west boundary. The northern boundary abuts pasture and is defined by a post and wire fence. The eastern boundary runs south westwards from the woods north boundary along the stock fence on the west side of the hill fort then follows the footpath from the forts SW corner to the permissive bridle path, from there it continues back to the southern access point off Hoarstone Lane.</p> <p>Past thinning operations have opened canopy gaps resulting in two distinct canopy layers: The areas of high canopy are dominated by oak (mostly <i>Q. petraea</i> approx. 25 m) with occasional sweet chestnut, ash, birch, sycamore (<i>P.20</i>), horse chestnut, and lime. Areas of lower canopy comprise of mixed and pure stands of young sycamore cherry and birch, with mature hazel, and occasional yew and holly trees. There is a mixed understory of elder bramble willow herb, thorn, field maple, hazel and rowan but very little presence of regeneration of the larger woodland tree species but sparse examples of Ash, Hawthorn, Holly and Hazel seedlings. The ground flora is limited across most of the compartment by a dense canopy, with ferns and ivy the most abundant flora. There has been some recent under-planting in the last 15 years with Ash, Lime, Birch, Oak and rowan which appears appears to have been random and has not been highly successful. The semi mature birch and cherry in the extreme northern section has recently been respaced. Cherry Laurel is rare.</p>							
1b	4.10	Sycamore	1920	null	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, People issues (+tve & -tve), Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Scheduled Ancient Monument, Tree Preservation Order

Roughly triangular, and on a moderate to steep incline, with a southwest to southern aspect. Sub-comp 1B shares a boundary with sub-comp 1A to the west, this runs from the south west corner of the hill fort/earthwork along the footpath and permissive bridle path to the junction with the southern access track. The southern boundary abuts sub-comp. 1C and follows the southern track from the bridle path to its union with the central north south footpath. The eastern boundary abuts compartment 2 and is defined by the central north south footpath. A bench and small clearing at mid point on the eastern boundary provide excellent views southwards down the Severn valley.

With exception of the north east corner this compartment has a similar species and structural composition to 1A although the canopy tends to be denser resulting in sparser sub canopy layers. Some older Sycamore coppice is also present. The area has an almost full canopy approximately 60% of which is mature dominated by: sycamore, oak (*Q. petraea* & *robur*) and ash, with sweet chestnut, wild cherry and birch. After very heavy thinning in the north east corner in 1980, prior to Woodland Trust ownership this remaining 40% of the area has a full but lower canopy of young and semi-mature regeneration with occasional mature maidens, it comprises of birch (mostly *B. pendula*), sycamore, hazel, field maple, elder, oak and ash. The understory and shrub layer is relatively sparse below the dense mature canopy and includes elder, holly yew, and an area of cherry laurel in the lower southern-western slopes. The shrub layer under the younger canopy is dense in places and comprises of brambles, bracken, elder, and honey suckle. In neither area is there a high incidence of young regeneration from the canopy species.

1c	2.70	Sycamore	1980	null	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features 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, Tree Preservation Order
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A long thin compartment forming two thirds of the woods southern boundary with a predominantly steep southeast to south aspect. The west boundary is defined by post and wire fencing along Hoarstone Lane. The northern boundary is defined by the southern management access track from the south management gate off Hoarstone Lane to the track junction in the southeast most corner of the wood. The southern boundary abuts neighboring pasture and woodland and is defined by post and wire fencing. The compartment has two small ponds located in its central section above Wassell Wood House.

Sub-compartment 1C is similar to 1A and 1B with an increased dominance of Birch, Sycamore and Sweet Chestnut. The canopy is very dense with approximately 95% canopy cover with 5% open space which has resulted in a less developed shrub layer with local dominance of Laurel although elsewhere the sub canopy layers are similar to 1B. The mature eastern canopy is dominated by sycamore, oak, and ash with the remnants of a small-leaf lime avenue along the southwest boundary defining the route of a disused track to Wassell Wood House. The canopy in the central section of the compartment is dominated by sycamore with oak, ash, and crack willow. The thin extreme eastern section of the compartment is predominantly birch with sycamore. The understory is varied depending on the canopy density: the western half of the compartment has a wider spacing between mature trees and with a varied structure including areas of low canopy and understorey formed by hazel, elder and holly, yew and goat willow with brambles and bracken. Where the southern boundary abuts neighboring woodland there is considerable incidence of cherry laurel and rhododendron spreading into the understory from the south.

2a	1.00	Open ground		null	Archaeological features, Legal issues	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Tree Preservation Order
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Small, oval, mostly flat compartment at the highest point in the wood, and formed by the bounds of the scheduled ancient monument (earthwork). The area is predominantly wood pasture compartment has approximately 40% open space with 60% tree and managed for the SAM. The ditches/revetments have more dense canopy closure. There are some isolated mature Oak, Ash, Horse Chestnut and Sweet Chestnut and the occasional Yew or Holly. The northeastern facing boundary abuts pastureland; the remainder is surrounded by woodland. The boundaries are all defined by post and wire stock fencing. Access is gained via two stiles located on the southwest boundary.

2b	2.35	Sycamore		null	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order
<p>Mostly steeply sloping compartment with the northern part supporting a mature stand dominated by Sessile Oak and Sycamore (P.20) with some Birch and Ash. Coppiced Hazel is present but less well define than in other areas of high forest on the site. The shrub layer is scrubby with Elder, Willow and dense areas of Holly and Yew. The south of the compartment has a history and composition similar to 2C. I.e. cleared in 1980 with resulting structure re-growth from seed and coppice stools. The canopy of approx. 15m and dominated by Birch with frequent Sycamore and occasional Yew, Holly, Sweet Chestnut, Hazel, Cherry and Filled Maple. Trees in the main canopy are young and there is little difference between this and the shrub layer although there are areas where Hazel and Sycamore Coppice are prominent. The occasional mature Oak and Ash remain from before the clearance. Recent under planting of Field Maple, Oak, Small Leaved Lime, Hazel and Ash has been carried out.</p> <p>The northern boundary is defined by post and wire stock fencing following the southern edge of the ancient monument (sub-comp 1A) then paralleling the stream in the valley bottom to comp 3D. The southern boundary is defined in the west by the central footpath until this drops down the hill, the boundary is then less obvious and is represented by the gradual change in stand structure between post thinning regeneration (sub-comp. 2C) and more mature woodland on the high more level ground, the boundary then descends eastwards along southern rim of the hidden valley.</p>							
2c	3.35	Birch (downy/silver)	1980	null	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order

This sub-compartment occupies the steep south and southeast facing slopes on the eastern side of the wood. The central north to south footpath defines the eastern boundary until it joins the lower management track forming the southern boundary. The eastern boundary is defined by the track running generally northwards across the site. The northern boundary is less obvious and is represented by the gradual change in stand structure between post thinning regeneration (sub-comp. 2C) and more mature woodland on the high more level ground of (sub-comp. 2B).

This whole area was very heavily thinned (almost clear cut) prior to Woodland Trust ownership the resultant structure is a mixture of natural regeneration from seed and coppice stools, and under-planting carried out by the Woodland Trust, interspersed with the occasional mature maiden tree (the majority of which are sycamore). The canopy is at approx. 15m and is dominated by Birch with frequent Sycamore and occasional Yew, Holly, Sweet Chestnut, Hazel, Cherry and Field Maple. Trees in the main canopy are young and there is little difference between this and the shrub layer although there are areas where Hazel and Sycamore coppice are prominent. A dense layer of bramble and bracken forms the shrub layer across most of the compartment. The occasional mature Oak and Ash remain from before the clearance. Recent under planting of Field Maple, Oak, Small Leaved, Hazel and Ash have been carried out.

Squirrel damage is particularly bad in this compartment; the majority of damage is to sycamore but does extend to young birch and oak. Lime, holy, yew, field maple and hazel appear to be less prone to the bark stripping activities of the squirrels.

2d	3.10	Birch (downy/silver)	1980	null	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order
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The eastern extreme of Wassell Wood has a very slight eastern slope with the north and southern sections draining towards a central eastwards falling gradient. The western boundary is defined by a management track, and the northeast and southeastern boundaries by post and wire fencing. A circular track follows the east boundary then cuts through the northern end of the area in a wide arc back to the southwest corner of the compartment.

As with sub-compartment 2C this area was subject to very heavy thinning/almost clear-cut prior to woodland Trust ownership, resulting in a structure formed by a mixture of natural regeneration from seed and coppice stools interspersed with the occasional mature tree. The current species mix is dominated by birch, with oak, and sweet chestnut and the occasional wild cherry, ash, sycamore, holy, yew and rowan. The northern part has re-grown as Hazel Coppice with Oak Standards providing almost CWS structure. The shrub and ground flora is dominated by a mixture of bracken fern, bramble, and honey suckle with some under planting and natural regeneration of oak, and rowan occurring.

## Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2018	2c	Thin	0.50	30	15
2018	2d	Thin	0.50	30	15
2020	1a	Thin	5.78	26	150
2020	1b	Ride edge Coppice	0.02	0	0
2020	1b	Thin	4.35	34	150
2020	2c	Thin	0.50	30	15
2020	2c	Thin	0.50	30	15
2020	2c	Thin	0.50	30	15
2020	2d	Thin	0.50	30	15
2020	2d	Thin	0.50	30	15
2020	2d	Thin	0.50	30	15
2020	2d	Thin	0.50	30	15
2021	2c	Thin	0.50	30	15
2022	2c	Ride edge Coppice	0.05	0	0
2023	1b	Ride edge Coppice	0.04	0	0
2023	1c	Ride edge Coppice	0.04	0	0
2023	2c	Ride edge Coppice	0.02	0	0

## 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.