



# George Henry Wood

## Management Plan 2019-2024

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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>	George Henry Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Stretton
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SK955162, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 130
<b>Area:</b>	32.50 hectares (80.31 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Newly planted wood, that was made possible by the extremely generous legacy of George Henry Sellars who lived and worked all his life in the nearby village of Greetham.

## 2.2 Extended Description

George Henry Wood is located in the county of Rutland, close to the village of Stretton and to the east of A1 Great North Road.

The acquisition of this site was made possible by the extremely generous legacy of George Henry Sellars who lived and worked all his life in the nearby village of Greetham. The wood name was chosen in recognition of his kind legacy.

The wood is 33 hectares (82 acres) in size and was planted over 4 years from 2007. The planting covered an area of 18 hectares, and was enclosed within a deer exclusion fence.

The land is on a gentle south facing slope, which plateaus to the north. The highest point is in the NW corner (110m) and the lowest in the SE corner (80m). The soil is of the Elmton 1 Series which is described as fine loamy or clayey, variably stony soils which are permeable and rarely waterlogged. The plateau tends to have a higher proportion of calcareous clay whilst the slope contains many limestone fragments of varying size. George Henry Wood joins other small established woodlands to the west and north. Elsewhere there is grazed pasture to the north, and arable land to the south on the other side of the road.

Prior to 2007 the land was formerly in arable cultivation. Initially the whole site was ploughed and power-harrowed prior to it's seeding with selected grasses and wildflowers in the late Spring of 2007. Planting began with local community help in November 2007. Tree and shrub species planted included ash, oak, field maple, hazel, and hawthorn (species typical of the surrounding landscape). An area in the north of the site was left to natural colonisation, which has been partially successful. The chalky soil conditions at George Henry benefit the development of wildflowers and grasses, and in recognition of this a good proportion of open ground has been built into the woodland design, including a number of wide open rides.

The site is well used by local walkers and has a good network of pedestrian only paths. The higher ground affords good views over the surrounding landscape.

The key features which have been designated for this site are: Secondary woodland and Informal public access. The management of the site will therefore be focussed on managing for these main aspects.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

There is a pedestrian access point at the southwest corner of the site some 100 metres from the village of Stretton and along the Clipsham Road. A roadside footpath runs from the village to this entrance. There is an informal layby on the highway verge further along the Clipsham Road, which will accommodate several cars. There are a total of 3 entrance points into the wood off the Clipsham Road. All the paths and rides within the site are grassy and unsurfaced and some of the terrain is steeply sloping. At present most of the woodland area is surrounded by a deer fence, with metal gates providing access through it from the entrances.

There are occasional buses to Stretton village but the service is infrequent, and therefore travel to the site by public transport is not easy.

There is no public toilet within a 5 mile radius.

### 3.2 Access / Walks



## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term aim is to establish mature native broadleaved woodland which is diverse in species and structure, and which contains a good proportion of young regenerating trees. Initially management will be focussed on the successful establishment of the woodland, to an adequate stocking density. Following establishment, and into the future, silvicultural intervention may be necessary to ensure the woodland habitat is diverse and resilient to change.

A significant element of open ground will continue to be managed within the woodland, largely through wide open rides, and this will further add diversity to the woodland by providing habitat for wildflowers and woodland edge species.

A good standard of access provision will be maintained at George Henry Wood. The path network will be kept open for use and the entrances will be welcoming, accessible and clearly signed. The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors through regular tree safety inspections in high risk zones as the woodland develops.



## 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 New Native Woodland

#### Description

A plantation of native broadleaves planted on former arable land. The woodland is being established through a mixture of planting and natural regeneration. The main species are oak, ash, hazel, field maple, goat willow and hawthorn. Planting began in 2007 and was carried out over 4 years. Subsequent restocking has also taken place.

Approximately 30% of the site is open ground, and this is present as a number of significantly wide rides some of which are floristically diverse.

Old hedgerows and ditches, a function of the former farming systems, are present and have been incorporated into the woodland design.

#### Significance

George Henry Wood adds and compliments to the character of the local landscape, which has a good proportion of woodland much of which is ancient. It directly links and buffers Stretton Wood, an ancient woodland to the north which is managed by The Forestry Commission.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

**Opportunity:** An area of approximately 4ha for natural regeneration was originally built into the planting design. This has been partially successful, but is only thinly scattered with a narrow range of species. An opportunity therefore arises to supplement the natural colonisation with a greater diversity of tree species. As this planting will be more than 10 years after the original planting, it will further add diversity of woodland structure to the site.

**Opportunity/threat:** Although ash dieback threatens ash as a major component of the woodland in the future, it will also add a degree of structural diversity into the woodland giving rise to natural regeneration of other species.

#### Factors Causing Change

Deer damage and ash dieback threatening the woodland, ragwort threatening the open ground.

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

The long term aim is to establish mature, native, broadleaved woodland which is diverse in species and structure, and which contains a good proportion of young regenerating trees. Initially management will be focussed on the successful establishment of the woodland, to an adequate stocking density. Following establishment, and into the future, silvicultural intervention may be necessary to ensure the woodland habitat is diverse and resilient to change. It is expected that over time the proportion of ash within the plantation will drastically fall due to ash dieback disease, and therefore the major high forest species in the woodland will be oak, with a mixture of other native trees and shrubs such as beech, birch, field maple, hawthorn and hazel. Ash dieback will leave small gaps in the plantation, which should become colonised by natural regeneration of other species, adding structural diversity into the plantation. Any gaps created by ash dieback will not be re-planted initially, but the arrival of natural regeneration will be monitored and restocking carried out in later years if necessary. A significant element of open ground will continue to be managed within the woodland, largely through wide open rides, and this will further add diversity to the woodland by providing habitat for wildflowers and woodland edge species. In the future, and after the deer fence is removed, the threat of deer browsing on the woodland is likely to need addressing.

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

The priorities for this plan period will most importantly be to complete the satisfactory establishment of woodland over the whole site and secondly to maintain the open ground habitat through appropriate management (including control of ragwort). The following aspects of work will be undertaken:

- The removal of tree shelters from established areas of the plantation in 2019. This will cover an approximate 10 hectare area in the southern half of the site. Wire cages will also be managed as bins to contain any used shelters collected by the public, which become scattered around the site.
- The annual control of ragwort in compartments 2a and 3a. This will be via a mixture of mechanical and hand means, and ensuring that any natural regeneration and scrub development is not removed during the operation. An annual assessment before each operation will be carried out to ensure this work is targeted and specific, and ensures we are fulfilling our statutory duties to neighbouring landowners with livestock.
- The restocking of sub-compartment 2a, an area of almost 5 hectares previously left to natural regeneration. The present stocking density is approximately 700 stems/hectare so a further 1,000 trees/hectare will be planted (approx. 5000 in total). Carry out weed control around the new trees for a period of at least 3 years after the planting. Carry out this supplementary planting of sub-comp 2a in Jan-Mar 2019.
- Monitoring of the planting in compartment 1a will be carried out during the plan period, especially the northern half. This monitoring will assess the impact of ash dieback and the level of natural regeneration replacing the gaps. The objective is to ensure a stocking density of 1700 trees per Ha, if this cannot be achieved by natural regeneration then restocking may be required in the following plan period to ensure this.
- The deer fence will remain in place until at least 2020 and be maintained as necessary until this time to ensure it remains an effective barrier to deer. In 2020 an assessment of the plantation will be made to ascertain whether the fence can be removed (if the majority of trees have reached sufficient height). Visitors to the wood will be informed before the fence is removed.
- The management of a wide open ride system (compartment 3a) around the site, which will contain many of the well-used public paths and the main east-west ride through the middle of the wood, as well as much of the perimeter path. The total length of this managed ride system will be at 3.5km and the open ground will be mown to a width of between 10 and 20m varying along its length. A number of the very wide rides including the one near the eastern boundary and the central east-west ride will be half mown on alternate sides each year.

## 5.2 Informal Public Access

### Description

George Henry Wood has 3 main pedestrian entrances, all accessed from the Clipsham Road. The entrance located furthest to the west is within a short walking distance of Stretton village and linked to a pavement. The wood has over 4km of managed paths, many of which are maintained as wide grassy rides. Good landscape views can be enjoyed towards the north of the site, on the higher ground, and the extensive ride network provides a good display of wildflowers during the spring and summer. Welcome signage is provided at all of the 3 main entrances. A perimeter deer fence currently protects the establishing woodland, and there are regular metal gates positioned around the site to pass through it, including at the main entrances. There are no public footpaths (rights of way) into or out of the site. A small layby along the road next to the site provides space for several cars to park.

George Henry has become a popular wood locally and it is known that some visitors will travel several miles to enjoy the site. The Woodland Trust has given George Henry Wood a category B for access, which translates as a 'Regular usage site, with 5 - 15 people using one entrance per day'.

### Significance

An important area of informal open space close to and within walking distance of the village of Stretton in Rutland.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Benches could be installed to increase people's enjoyment of the site. Noticeboards and more public information about the wood could be provided in recognition of the wood being quite well used.

### Factors Causing Change

Removal of the deer fence in future years could cause concern with some dog-walking visitors

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Public access will be maintained in perpetuity through a network of paths and entrances. Additionally the management of a network of wide grassy rides will add to the public enjoyment of the site. Public access will be maintained to a good standard, with clear welcome signage at all entrances and well maintained paths. Infrastructure such as gates, benches and signage will be routinely inspected and maintained to a good standard. The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors to use, through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (eg. the roadside).

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

The priorities during this plan period (next 5 years) will be to continue to provide safe and enjoyable public access and to install a number of extra facilities to increase public enjoyment of the wood. Specifically this will include the following:

- Regular annual maintenance of the footpaths and entrances during the spring and summer months to ensure they are easy to use. A network of over 4km of footpaths will be maintained. Additional management of wide open rides will be carried out on top of this and towards the end of each summer (see objectives for New Native Woodland key feature).
- Regular tree safety inspections along high risk zones of the wood, which will include an annual inspection of mature roadside trees.
- Installation of extra facilities in 2019 including benches and noticeboards; in addition in 2021 new public information boards and new welcome signage (if required) will be installed

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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	22.52	Mixed native broadleaves	2008	Wood establishment		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>This sub-compartment covers the whole area which was originally planted with native broadleaves between 2007 and 2010 and lies within the protective deer fence. It accounts for approximately two thirds of the area of the site, and also includes several wide internal rides. The planting is quite mixed in species and includes ash, oak, field maple, willow, hazel and hawthorn.</p>							
2a	4.89	Mixed native broadleaves	2009	Wood establishment		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>The sub-compartment covers the area to the north of the site where woodland creation using natural regeneration has been carried out. The trees, mostly goat willow and a smaller number of oaks, have only achieved a current stocking density of 700 stems per hectare consequently enhancement planting of approximately 1000 trees per ha will be attempted during this plan period.</p>							
3a	5.08	White willow	2018	Non-wood habitat		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>This sub-compartment comprises of the area outside the deer fence. It is mostly open ground but contains some natural regeneration. It includes an old horse pond in the centre of the site.</p>							

## 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.