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Wood Pasture and Parkland Habitat Action Plan: progress report 2003

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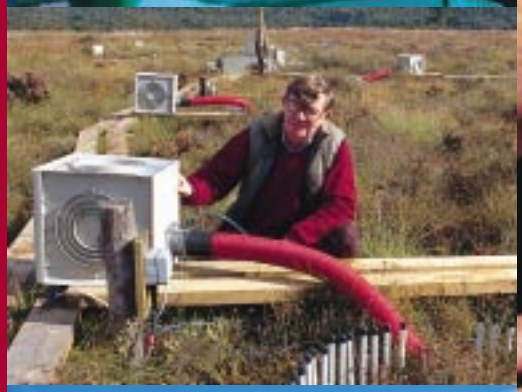

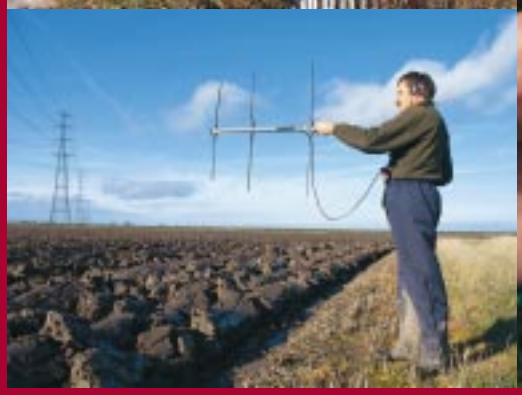

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Number 582

Wood pasture and parkland habitat action plan: progress report 2003

Edited by
Rebecca Isted

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Preface

This report contains notes from the wood-pasture and parkland habitat action plan advisory group meeting that was held at Glenbruach Country House, Loch Achray, Trossachs FK17 8HX, in July 2003. We have added to it various notes updating sections where appropriate. Our thanks to those who contributed material. Any errors or changes in meaning introduced as a consequence are our responsibility.

Reports from previous years are available as *English Nature Research Reports,* Nos. 396, 459 and 539.

Keith Kirby
Rebecca Isted

Contents

1. BARS update - BAP reporting key messages

Rebecca Isted, JNCC

Defra have now published the analysis from last year's reporting in December 2002. The full details are available for all habitats and species on the UKBAP website, www.ukbap.org.uk. The following are the key messages.

National Highlights:

- More than a third of BAP species and 2 thirds of habitats are showing positive trends.
- 72% of the national action plans are progressing on at least 1 target.
- A lack of knowledge is the single biggest constraint on progress.
- Habitat loss and degradation are still the main causes of declines.

Data collection was all web-based through the biodiversity action reporting system (BARS). All 45 HAPs and 93% of SAPs and 73% of LBAPs made a return so there was a significant amount of data on which to base conclusions.

In terms of trends and status of wood-pasture and parkland we reported that it is declining as a habitat but that the decline has slowed since the HAP was published in 1998. Over 60% of other habitat groups reported the same. Only 13% of HAP groups reported making overall gains.

This was really a best guess made by specialists in the group. The group is trying to remedy this and various surveys have been undertaken producing county inventories of sites including Staffordshire, the Chilterns area, and the east midlands. These projects will all feed into the national inventory project the wood-pasture and parkland information system, (WAPIS), details of the inventory project can be viewed on its website: www.wapis.org.uk A separate web-site to record ancient trees has been set up by the Ancient Tree Forum at www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-hunt/inded.htm

When the plan was published 10 threats to the habitat were identified. We were asked to re-evaluate the threats and to rank them. The top three selected for wood-pasture and parkland were:

- loss of trees;
- inappropriate grazing;
- lack of recruitment.

We also added pollution as an issue. The full list of threats and their relative ranking can be viewed online.

We reported on the four key targets in the plan.

T1 to maintain the current extent and distribution of the total resource of wood-pasture and parkland. We have estimated that there is c35100 ha of qualifying habitat, some 5000 ha of which is in Scotland. Some progress has been made in being able to assess the extent of the resource through the inventory work mentioned earlier.

T2 maintain the current extent that is in favourable condition. This area is largely unknown because we haven't identified the full resource yet, but within the country agencies we have been working on a definition of favourable condition for wood pasture and parkland SSSIs and we should be able to come up with a suitable translation of this for sites outside the SSSI system. The provisional guidance for SSSI sites is given in section 10 of this report.

T3 to initiate in areas where derelict wood-pasture occurs, a programme to restore 2,500ha to favourable condition by 2010. We know restoration work is going on but we do not have a complete listing of area achieved or that planned so cannot quantify it. See also section 6 of this report.

T4: by 2002 initiate the expansion of 500ha of wood-pasture and parkland in appropriate areas to reverse fragmentation and reduce the generation gap between veteran trees. We know that there are some expansion projects and recently £500,000 of HLF money was awarded to the national forest company to fund both expansion and restoration within the national forest area.

Constraints on progress were identified as a lack of inventory and also a lack of funding. The nature of wood-pastures means that they do not fit well with the existing grant structures (mixtures of agricultural and forestry rules are relevant). More flexibility in interpreting schemes to favour extensive grazing and the necessary capital input to restoration of wood-pastures is needed. A particular concern is whether sufficient uncultivated space will be left around veteran trees in fields under the new Entry Level Scheme in England; we are hoping to enhance this under the complementary Higher Level Scheme. More positively support for wood pasture management has been included in the Rural Stewardship Scheme in Scotland.

Also work is needed to bring together the experiences of the various restoration projects underway at present. This is happening in part through the Grazing Animals Project and with dissemination of advice on veteran tree management. English Nature has also just started a project to explore the implications of Frans Vera's ideas on the role of grazing animals, both in the original wildwood, but also in modern large-scale naturalistic landscapes (see section 9 of this report). Updates to the *Veteran Tree Management Handbook* via a series of leaflets are also being developed.

We do need a better picture of what is going on on the ground. Some of the work to progress targets is being done by large national organisations but there are also many LBAP groups working locally and we need to improve the links to their achievements and aims. The BARS system (see account from last year's meeting) will help us do this better as we can identify which counties are taking part and see what their targets and reported actions are. They will also be able to link to the national group through the same system.

Nevertheless it is worth noting some real achievements by partners within this HAP. Forest Enterprise have started a huge programme of restoration work including Deer Park in North Yorkshire, over 120 ancient trees have been found in the plantation and Forest Enterprise are halo thinning around them to give them a chance to survive.

The habitat had previously been thought to be largely found in the lowlands and to be absent from Scotland. Recent survey work by Scottish Natural Heritage has shown that wood-pasture systems were also widespread in the uplands and many such areas with veteran trees have now been in identified in Scotland, for example at Glen Finglas.

Grazing has been restored at a number of sites including at Felbrigg Hall (National Trust), Epping Forest (Corporation of London), Penn Wood (Woodland Trust). This has helped our understanding of the social, economic as well as ecological issues involved in this process.

Other examples are included in the table in Section 6.

If you would like to read more of the 2002 BAP Report for wood-pasture and parkland or the full analysis log on to www.ukbap.org.uk and follow the link.

2. Update from Scotland

Kate Holl, Scottish Natural Heritage

SNH hosted a visit from Carl-Adam Haeggstrom, from Scandinavia. He visited various sites that were thought to be wood pasture sites he gave an opinion on the history of site, based on tree form and surrounding vegetation. He was particularly intrigued by single-stemmed hazel trees. Within the meeting there was much debate on the origin of single-stemmed hazel but no conclusion was reached.

Dalkeith Oakwoods – further saproxylic surveys have been done and a management plan written.

Rural Stewardship Scheme - In April additions to the scheme were made for wood-pasture management. Only agricultural holdings can apply and it is specific to historic/ancient wood-pastures. These areas will continue to count as forage area for farmers so careful management will be required to ensure there is no overgrazing.

3. Update from Wales

Jim Latham, Countryside Council for Wales

Some preliminary inventory work for wood-pasture has been done through analysis of the phase 1 survey data. Hilary Miller has produced a paper for FC on non-woodland trees in Wales and their protection. There is also a review of woodland grants in Wales.

4. Wood pasture restoration projects

Mike Smith - Borders Forest Trust

The project is in 2 parts – Leader+ funded and HLF funded. A selection of sites going into restoration, including calcareous sites. The project will also be putting some trees back into fields and some will be individually protected. The pasture will remain as forage area for the land owner. The project will also include some more densely wooded wood-pasture.

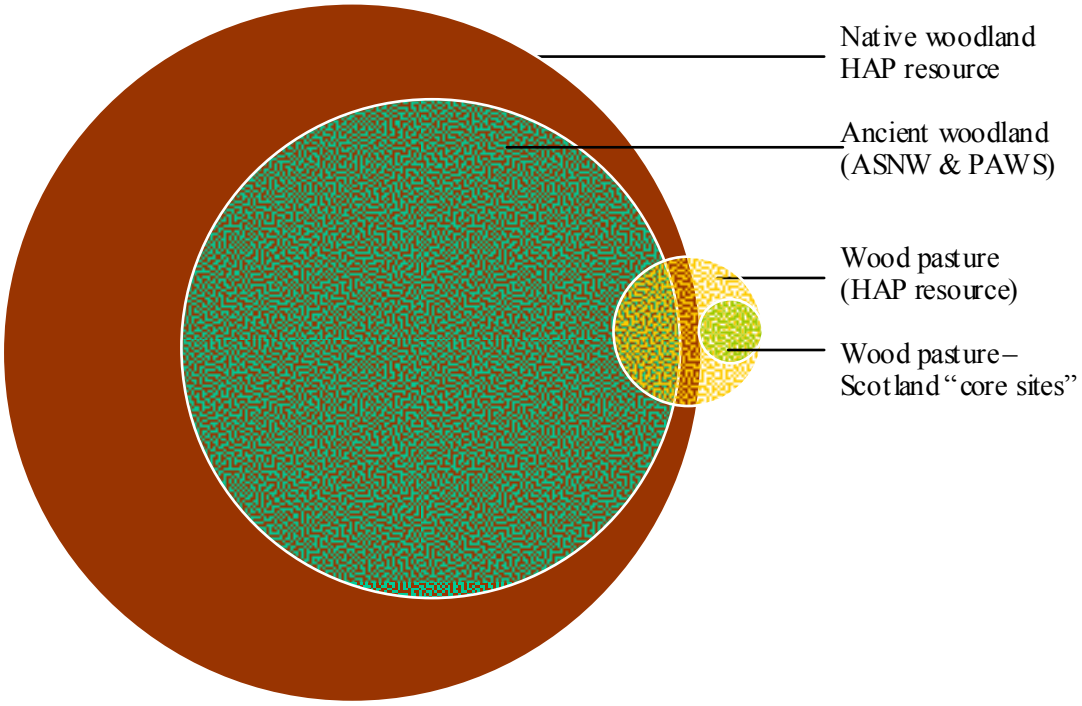
The advantage of HLF funding is that the management of the sites is not tied to any particular scheme rules. The experience gained through this project could be used to modify scheme rules in the future. The project sites will be monitored to help address practical management issues. For more information about the project contact Mike who is now at Scottish Natural Heritage in Edinburgh.

5. The wood-pasture & parkland habitat action plan: defining the way ahead?

Richard Smithers, Woodland Trust

The UK habitat definition is 'areas that have been managed by a long-established tradition of grazing characteristically with at least some veteran trees. The tree component can occur as scattered individuals, small groups, or as more or less complete canopy cover.'

Some wood-pastures have very clearly defined boundaries; in others it may be difficult to set limits. While it may be pragmatic to distinguish the tree component from the broader grazing unit, this should not lead to the treed area being regarded as uniquely separate.



Relationships between definitions

- Knowledge of extent is increasing.

Should ancient wood pasture be included in Ancient woodland Inventories (AWIs)?

Ancient woodland outside statutory designation has some protection through planning policies, those in Scotland and Wales are quite strong:

- Planning Policy Wales - Ancient and semi-natural woodlands are irreplaceable habitats… which should be protected from development that would result in significant damage.

- Scotland's NPPG14 - Planning authorities should… protect trees, groups of trees and areas of woodland where… natural heritage value or contribute to…character or amenity ... Ancient and semi-natural woodlands have the greatest value for nature conservation.
- Current review of PPG9 in England – call for protection of all ancient woodland.
- If parkland were included on the inventory it would be afforded the same protection.

Existing targets in the HAP are:

- Protect and maintain current extent (10-20,000ha) and distribution in favourable condition.
- Initiate restoration of 2,500ha to favourable condition by 2010.
- Initiate expansion of 500ha to help reverse fragmentation & reduce generation gap between veteran trees.

For comparison those in the other woodland plans are:

- Maintain the area of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW).
- Initiate favourable condition. in 100% of SSSIs & 80% of resource by 2004, achieve favourable condition over 70% of SSSIs & 50% of resource by 2010.
- Initiate restoration of 10% of Plantation on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) & complete restoration to site-natives over half area by 2010 and all by 2015.
- Initiate colonisation/planting of additional 10%, complete establishment of half by 2010 and all by 2015.

However what is meant by the different terms of maintenance, restoration and expansion? For other HAPs the following are used:

- Maintain - Meets BAP habitat criteria but action to maintain extent/quality.
- Enhance – Meets BAP habitat criteria but action to improve quality.
- Restore – Return an area containing relicts of BAP habitat to a condition/species ref BAP definition of the habitat.
- Create – where not currently present, where no significant remnants of other habitats.

In terms of the other woodland types in England this is taken to mean:

- Existing HAP resource – all ASNW/PAWS and all native woodland >80% broadleaved.
- Maintain – no further loss of AW, maintain existing area of native woodland.
- Favourable condition – site/landscape-scale.
- Restore – to over 80% native species.
- Expand – at least 80% native species.

Tranlating this to wood-pasture and parkland might give the following:

- Existing HAP resource - all existing ancient wood-pasture and parkland and all other Wood-Pasture and parkland > 80% broadleaved using UK definition.
- Maintain - no further loss of ancient wood-pasture and parkland , maintain existing area of wood-pasture and parkland.
- Favourable condition – site/landscape-scale.
- Restore – to over 80% native species (eg, non-native conifer removal or arable to semi-natural vegetation) and reintroduction of grazing.
- Expand – at least 80% native species, grazed.

  (See also section 6 of this report which takes tries to relate the standard definitions to some actual examples of work on the ground.)

Clarity of definitions is helpful in relation to implementation of legislation (CRoW Act (England & Wales); Nature Conservation Bill for Scotland) but also in development of policy, incentives, practice.

More meaningful targets could perhaps be developed as part of the BAP review (2005/6), taking account of ideas on the ecosystem approach, and related to delivering on biodiversity and quality of life at a landscape-scale.

There is the potential for wood-pasture to contribute to developing ecologically functional landscapes in a matrix of ancient woodland or semi-natural habitats. It may be used to promote synergy across delivery of all HAPs. It might also help to avoid the tendency to put habitats into self-contained boxes.

6. Definitions of restoration and expansion for wood-pasture and parkland

Keith Kirby, English Nature

Concern was expressed at the Advisory Group meeting on 31/10/02 that problems would arise because of differences in interpretation of the definitions of the habitat, of restoration and expansion, and of habitat condition.

The definitions cannot be watertight – what is needed is something that works easily and quickly 70—80% of the time rather than something that is 95% correct but depends on a two day specialist survey. In addition there is inevitably going to be a gradation between what counts as restoration and what is just enhancement of an existing area of wood-pasture, depending on the extent and degree of work required.

Restoration

The target is 'Initiate in areas where examples of derelict wood-pasture and parkland occur a programme to restore 2,500ha to favourable ecological condition by 2010'.
Under actions the plan says:

> "5.2.5 Promote re-establishment of grazing where appropriate in derelict wood-pasture and encourage the development of subsequent generations of veteran trees in all sites.
>
> 5.2.6 Promote the restoration of wood-pasture and parkland where old trees remain in former sites that are now arable fields or forestry plantations."

Restoration could be seen as applying to two of these components – direct management of the vegetation (putting arable back to grass etc, removing conifers) and getting a grazing regime in place. Work to encourage development of an appropriate age range might be better seen as part of improving condition.

If the above is accepted then work towards either putting back grazing or on vegetation management could count as initiating restoration but both would be needed for full restoration on most sites (conceivably there might be circumstances where one or other was not appropriate).

Expansion

The target in the plan is:

> "4.1.3 By 2002 initiate the expansion of 500ha of wood-pasture or parkland, in appropriate areas, to help reverse fragmentation and reduce the generation gap between veteran trees."

The action is:

> "5.2.7 By 2002 initiate programmes to expand parklands and wood-pasture sites in targeted areas."

This implies that expansion is outside existing or former wood-pasture sites, but is close to/contiguous with existing sites. As with restoration it could include both reference to the grazing regime and to direct vegetation management. So putting new trees into an already grazed field or putting grazing into an area with scattered trees (but not a former wood-pasture) would also count as a start towards this.

The Biodiversity Unit in English Nature has looked across what different HAP groups included under Restoration and Creation in the 2002 reporting round. From this they produced some generic definitions. I have tried to match up these definitions with the above approach using actual projects. If others would like to add to these, preferably with areas attached we can see what has been achieved so far.

Habitat Target Type Definitions	Biodiversity group draft definitions	Wood-pasture site examples (not exhaustive, please add)
1. Creation	Establish BAP habitat where it is not currently present and where no significant remnants of that BAP habitat exist. This leads to an expansion of the extent of the BAP habitat.	*Moccas Park, Hereford*: Stewardship agreement on area adjacent to NNR, reversion of arable to grassland with tree planting (long-term grazing aim). *Southwick Wood, Northants.* FC, former medieval site, but only 12 hulks left in c80 ha; so creation rather than restoration. Opening up of plantations and introduction of grazing. *Ebernoe Common, Sussex*: Wildlife Trust creation of wood-pasture on farmland adjacent to existing reserve (work in reserve counts as enhancement).
2. Restoration	Return an area containing relicts of a BAP habitat (but which currently does not meet the criteria for qualifying as that habitat type) to a condition and species composition where it meets the definition of that BAP habitat. This leads to an expansion of the extent of the BAP habitat.	*Savernake Forest, Wilts*: FC re-introduction of grazing to c30 ha, some opening up around old trees. Significant old tree interest left across site, so restoration rather than creation. *Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire*: FC removal of conifers and haloing of veteran trees with longer term aim of grazing introduction. *Eridge Park, Sussex*: stewardship scheme involving rhododendron removal and opening up with grazing re-introduction (need to check this went ahead). *Windsor Great Park, Bear Rails area Berkshire*: Conifer removal and re-introduction of grazing. *Deer Park (Castle Hill), N.Yorks*: removal of conifers from around veterans. *Penn Wood, Bucks*: Woodland Trust removal of conifers and re-introduction of grazing. *Felbrigg Park, Norfolk*: NT extensive clearance of young growth and re-introduction of grazing in former parkland. *Powerstock Common, Dorset*: Wildlife Trust removal of plantations and re-introduction of grazing. *Eastnor Park, Hereford*: Private estate, stewardship reversion of arable and tree planting. *Old Moors Wood, Shropshire*: private estate major opening up of veterans by conifer removal.

Habitat Target Type Definitions	Biodiversity group draft definitions	Wood-pasture site examples (not exhaustive, please add)
3. Enhancement	The habitat meets the BAP criteria for qualifying as the habitat type, but action is underway to improve the quality of the habitat so that it better meets its management objectives. This leads to maintenance of the extent of the BAP habitat and an improvement in its quality.	**Langley Wood, Wilts**: Trials of pig and cattle usage of NNR. **Hatch Park, Kent**: Repollarding of neglected pollards, but within site where regular pollarding has occurred recently, so enhancement not restoration. **Epping Forest, Essex**: re-introduction of grazing but only a few years gap, structure of wood-pasture still there, so enhancement rather than restoration. **Hainault Forest, Essex**: re-starting of pollarding programme. **Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire**: introduction of grazing to Buck Gates area. Structure and composition largely OK, so enhancement not restoration. **Windsor Great Park, Cranborne Wood area**: re-introduction of grazing after short break. **New Forest, Hampshire**: opening up of Inclosures to allow grazing. **Ebernoe Common, Sussex**: reintroduction of grazing to reserve itself. **Croft Castle, Hereford**. NT removal of conifers from around veterans. **Burnham Beeches, Bucks**. Restoration of pollarding and grazing.
4. Maintenance (NB this may need to be split into two – "Maintenance of extent" and "Maintenance of quality"	Habitat meets the BAP definition criteria and is also meeting its management objectives. Action underway leads to maintenance of both extent and quality of the BAP habitat.	Business as usual on sites

7. Report from English Heritage

Jenifer White

7.1 Extent and distribution of sites

There are now 1563 sites on English Heritage's register of parks and gardens. 81 sites have been added over the last year, including 6 national nature reserves, SSSIs, SNCI, County wildlife sites, and ASNW, for full details see Annex 1 to this section.

The London Parks and Gardens Trust launched their London Inventory of Historic Green Spaces in April. The inventory lists more than 2000 historic green spaces – parks, gardens, churchyards, cemeteries, commons and greens in the greater London boroughs. The description for each site includes nature conservation designations and other designations such as TPOs. English Heritage sponsored the publication of the inventory.

The Association of Gardens Trusts, the Garden History society and the University of York were awarded a HLF grant to develop a UK inventory of Historic Parks and Gardens. The National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG) and their partners Demeter project to establish a UK plant heritage database.

7.2 Policy and Legislation

Agri-environment schemes framework document Dec 2002. English Heritages commented on this document which looked at the future of agri-environment schemes included advice on historic parklands. Subsequently there has been a joint working group lead by Defra looking at how veteran trees, parkland and grazed woodland can be incorporated in the Entry Level Scheme and Higher Level Schemes being developed following the recent CAP reforms.

UK Forestry response to the convention on Biological Diversity February 2003. English Heritage contributed to this UK response co-ordinated by the forestry commission.

CRoW Act. Mapping access land for the CRoW Act has raised some issues about defining parks and gardens. English Heritage is to meet Defra to discuss access in relation to historic parks on downland and heathland eg Leonardslee, West Sussex; and growing concerns that landowners may be reticent to undertake arable reversion, eg under countryside stewardship agreements, if this leads to the land being subject to CRoW act access.

Designation Review The DCMS designation review consultation paper was published in July. The review made the case for introducing a unified statutory system for recognising the significance and value of assets in the historic environment. This system should embrace all types of heritage assets currently signified by listing, scheduling, registration and designation, but also create a level playing field by abolishing the current distinction between statutory and non-statutory designation. The proposed 'area assets' designation would incorporate the existing are definition of conservation areas, registered parks, gardens and battle fields and world heritage sites, but extend to embrace wider landscapes, areas, and composite sites. The revision of PPG15 was put on hold whilst the Designations Review was ongoing.

7.3 Site Safeguard and management

CABE space. English Heritage welcomed the setting up of CABE Space in May 2002 as the new champion for urban parks and green spaces. They are part of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. The aims of CABE Space are to:

- Become a national champion for urban parks and green spaces.
- Enable parks and green spaces to contribute to improving quality of life.
- Contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities and urban renaissance.
- Gather support and commitment from organisations involved with green space issues.
- Improve co-ordination between relevant departments, agencies, local authorities, voluntary organisations and funding providers.
- Influence funding decisions at national, regional and local level.
- Strengthen and promote partnerships for improving green spaces.
- Promote and develop skills training needs.
- Carry out research and develop information, quality standards and good practise.
- Raise public awareness of, expectations of and commitment to urban public space.

Green Heritage sites. As part of the Green Flag Award scheme, English Heritage has sponsored a new green heritage site accreditation. Each site is judged on its conservation and restoration standards, its maintenance of historic features ad the use and enjoyment of the site.

Country Parks. The joint agencies review of country parks is complete. The countryside agency will soon be publishing towards a renaissance of Country Parks.

English Heritage Cedar of Lebanon Project. English Heritage's project looks to propagate its historic cedars and understand their genotype in order to replace individual specimen and to help protect the gene pool for these trees that would have been originally brought over from the Lebanon as 200 years on this habitat is becoming increasingly scarce.

7.4 Advisory

English Heritage's website. A new page looking after historic parks and gardens has been added to the web site. The page will be developed further to include links to other organisations including the habitat action plan.

New leaflets on management of ancient trees. Along with the National Trust and English Nature, English Heritage is supporting the Woodland Trust and Ancient Tree Forum to prepare a new series of four leaflets on the importance of ancient trees and best management practise. The leaflets will be ready in 2004.

Peeling back the layers conference. The Association of Gardens Trusts, the Ancient Tree Forum and Woodland Trust (with sponsorship from English Heritage and English Nature) held a national conference Peeling back the layers: the legacy of ancient trees in the historic environment on 6 November 2003 in London. The conference focussed on the

interrelationship of the historic and wildlife interests of these trees and their parks. (The joint interests of English Heritage and English Nature in this subject formed the basis of a presentation at the conference and the outline of this is given in section 8.)

Climate change. Gardening in the Global Green House was published in November (see www.ukcip.org.uk) and included sections on heritage gardens.

Annex 1 Parks and Gardens Register – breakdown by type of site:

Region	Type	No of sites	Added 02/03
South East	Cemetery	10	5
South East	Urban Public Park	18	4
South East	Country Park	3	0
South East	Other Public open Space	4	0
South East	Town Square	2	0
South East	Hospital	8	1
South East	National Trust properties	31	0
South East	EH guardianship sites	7	0
South East	Privately-owned park or garden	271	2
South East	South East Region total	354	12
South West	Cemetery	10	1
South West	Urban Public Park	23	7
South West	Country Park	3	0
South West	Other Public open Space	6	0
South West	Town Square	0	0
South West	Hospital	1	0
South West	National Trust properties	38	0
South West	EH guardianship sites	2	0
South West	Privately-owned park or garden	204	5
South West	South West Region total	287	13
West Midlands	Cemetery	7	2
West Midlands	Urban Public Park	17	1
West Midlands	Country Park	1	0
West Midlands	Other Public open Space	4	0
West Midlands	Town Square	0	0
West Midlands	Hospital	0	0
West Midlands	National Trust properties	14	0
West Midlands	EH guardianship sites	5	0
West Midlands	Privately-owned park or garden	97	2
West Midlands	West Midlands Region total	145	5
East Midlands	Cemetery	8	4
East Midlands	Urban Public Park	14	1
East Midlands	Country Park	5	0
East Midlands	Other Public open Space	3	0
East Midlands	Town Square	0	0
East Midlands	Hospital	1	0
East Midlands	National Trust properties	12	0
East Midlands	EH guardianship sites	4	0
East Midlands	Privately-owned park or garden	86	2
East Midlands	East Midlands Region total	133	7
East of England	Cemetery	5	1
East of England	Urban Public Park	14	5
East of England	Country Park	4	0
East of England	Other Public open Space	4	1
East of England	Town Square	0	0
East of England	Hospital	2	0
East of England	National Trust properties	11	0
East of England	EH guardianship sites	5	0

Region	Type	No of sites	Added 02/03
East of England	Privately-owned park or garden	166	1
East of England	East of England Region total	211	8
North West	Cemetery	19	14
North West	Urban Public Park	47	4
North West	Country Park	5	0
North West	Other Public open Space	7	0
North West	Town Square	0	0
North West	Hospital	1	0
North West	National Trust properties	5	0
North West	EH guardianship sites	0	0
North West	Privately-owned park or garden	45	0
North West	North West Region total	129	18
Yorkshire	Cemetery	12	8
Yorkshire	Urban Public Park	32	2
Yorkshire	Country Park	5	0
Yorkshire	Other Public open Space	1	0
Yorkshire	Town Square	0	0
Yorkshire	Hospital	1	0
Yorkshire	National Trust properties	5	0
Yorkshire	EH guardianship sites	6	0
Yorkshire	Privately-owned park or garden	49	1
Yorkshire	Yorkshire Region total	111	11
North East	Cemetery	3	2
North East	Urban Public Park	21	2
North East	Country Park	2	0
North East	Other Public open Space	0	0
North East	Town Square	0	0
North East	Hospital	1	0
North East	National Trust properties	4	0
North East	EH guardianship sites	1	0
North East	Privately-owned park or garden	27	0
North East	North East Region total	50	4
London	Cemetery	15	1
London	Urban Public Park	39	0
London	Country Park	0	0
London	Other Public open Space	26	0
London	Town Square	23	0
London	Royal Park	10	0
London	Hospital	1	1
London	National Trust properties	4	0
London	EH guardianship sites	5	0
London	Privately-owned park or garden	20	1
London	London Region total	143	3
Grand Total		**1563**	**81**

8. Championing the historic environment together

The following notes formed the basis for a joint presentation by English Heritage and English Nature at the Association of Gardens' Trusts' conference in November 2003.

8.1 Introduction

England is predominantly a 'cultural' rather than a natural landscape so that it is appropriate, indeed necessary, that English Heritage and English Nature should work together to ensure the conservation of the key elements of the past.

English Heritage is the government agency primarily concerned with historic monuments in England: but over the last decade it has become increasingly apparent that such monuments may have allowed the survival of areas of high nature conservation value, for example chalk grassland on the ramparts of Iron Age forts, the wall-flora of castles.

In the same way, while English Nature's remit is the biological heritage, it has come to recognise that hidden within ancient woods or meadows may survive Bronze Age cairns or the foundations of a Tudor hunting lodge.

The common thread is that both historical and biological conservation values are highest in areas that have escaped the intensification of land use practices in farming and forestry in the second half of the 20th Century.

8.2 Complementary interests and ways of working

Each interest benefits from the context provided by the other in a variety of ways: historical analysis helps to explain the variations within different parts of ancient woods. Recent French studies suggest that the impact of Roman settlement may sometimes still be visible in the woodland ground flora today, even though the site was recolonised by trees over 500 years ago. Comparative analysis of the beetle faunas from archaeological sites with modern reserves can suggest the type of landscape that surrounded a particular monument. At Flag Fen Bronze Age site efforts are being made to recreate the sort of woodland that provided the material from which the artificial island was made; in Yarner Wood historical woodland practices such as charcoal burning are resurrected as a demonstration for visitors to the National Nature Reserve.

Most visitors to our sites are not interested only in its historical or only in its biological content: they appreciate both and we can increase our overall support by providing integrated interpretation wherever appropriate.

English Nature and English Heritage have similar mixes of responsibilities in terms of having to balance work on the statutorily protected sites, against the mass of (generally) less important elements that are scattered through the wider countryside.

We have also both had to come to terms with trying to conserve whole landscape patterns. We need to go beyond the individual wood or monument to consider the way it relates to all its surroundings. This has been helped by the development of integrated Heritage Lottery Funded projects that involve both historical and biological elements of our heritage.

8.3 Parks, wood-pastures and ancient trees

The topic of the conference – the role of ancient trees in the historic environment – has particular relevance to this question of how English Nature and English Heritage work together.

Ancient trees are of historical interest, either locally or nationally, for associations with particular people or events and collections of ancient trees, often in parkland, provide the setting for some of our finest historical buildings. The landscape designers of the eighteenth century often deliberately incorporated existing old trees into their plans.

In a similar way even an individual tree can be of high value for nature conservation because of its associated species, particularly lichens, fungi and invertebrates that live on or in them, and sites with populations of old trees are among those designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

In less formal settings old trees with the associated mosaic of scrub and grassland on commons or in some former Royal Forests such as Epping or the New Forest represent, both outstanding nature conservation areas and a chance to appreciate what the landscape might have been like, and how it would have been managed, over much of the country in the past.

8.4 Taking forward the past

English Nature and English Heritage started working together with respect to old trees in the mid-nineties through the Veteran Tree Initiative. Along with the enthusiasm of the Ancient Tree Forum this initiative generated a massive increase in awareness of the importance of old trees and the places where they occur. A huge amount of knowledge was brought together on how these veterans should be managed, including the issues revolving round questions of risk and public liability. However the Veteran Tree Initiative was always seen as having a limited lifespan; its objectives were to raise the profile of veteran trees and the sites they occurred in; thereafter their conservation had to become part of 'normal business' as it were for both organisations.

However largely because of their veteran tree interest parkland and wood-pastures were recognised as one of the priority habitats for conservation under the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan and so as the VTI was winding down, so the Habitat Action Plan provided a vehicle for continuing to promote veteran trees.

The BAP in general is about the biological aspects of biodiversity, but in drafting the parkland and wood-pasture plan we recognised the need to ensure that the cultural and historical elements were integrated into any management plans being developed for sites.

A key action in the HAP to facilitate integration of management is the development of a database [WAPIS} that will allow the cross-referencing of the existing lists of parks/wood-pastures of historical, biological and cultural interests.

Across the country a wide variety of sites and landscapes with ancient trees are benefiting from work that English Heritage and English Nature staff, separately and together are doing; preliminary work has been done to improve our understanding of the European significance

of the UK resource of ancient; and we are jointly contributing the production of advice leaflets in conjunction with the Woodland Trust, ATF and National Trust.

There are potential conflicts and differences of emphasis that may arise over particular sites and these should be acknowledged: stage-headed old trees, patches of scrub may not on some sites be the sort of landscape vista that is appropriate for that particular house; dead and dying branches can present a liability in areas that are very actively used by the public; regeneration of trees to provide a new generation of trees may be unwelcome if they are developing on earthworks. As long however as both organisations recognise early on that these issues could arise the conflicts can be resolved: trees can be made safe in key areas, but any dead wood removed is kept on site for example.

Finally both organisations need to consider what to do about ensuring that there are replacements available when the current veterans eventually collapse.

8.5 Conclusions

Oliver Rackham has referred to the English countryside as a palimpsest; with each generation adding something and in the process overwriting other bits. Our ancient trees and the sites in which they occur have developed and survived through, in some cases centuries, of such re-writing. The job of English Heritage and English Nature is to ensure that as many as possible continue through to delight the next generation.

9. Fresh woods and pastures new

English Nature is starting an exciting project to see how free-ranging cattle and other large herbivores could be used to create and maintain wildlife-rich mixed landscapes of woodland, scrub and open grassland or heath (see discussion forum at http://forums.ceh.ac.uk:8080/~naturalised-grazing).

9.1 Background

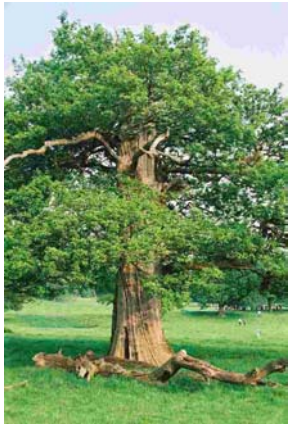
Wood-pastures and parkland such as the New Forest or Windsor Great Park, have long been recognised as important for nature conservation because of their veteran trees, rich fungal and insect communities. Their distinctive mixture of habitats is a consequence of centuries of management - the trees were generally pollarded and the ground between them was grazed by mixtures of stock, such as cattle or ponies, or by various species of deer.

White park cattle at Savernake. Patrick Cashman / English Nature

As part of the wood-pasture and parkland Habitat Action Plan English Nature is encouraging the restoration of grazing in sites where it formerly occurred - for example at Epping Forest (Essex), Savernake Forest (Wiltshire) and Sherwood Forest (Nottinghamshire). However is this just maintaining an artificial system, albeit for sound nature conservation and historical reasons?

Recently Frans Vera, a Dutch ecologist, has challenged our ideas of what the natural forest was like: he proposes that the wildwood that once covered much of western Europe may actually have been rather open, not unlike wood-pastures in fact. There is little doubt that the role of large animals such the (now extinct) wild ox in shaping forests has been under-estimated, but whether much of Britain would really have been open parkland is debateable.

Irrespective, however, of what the former landscape was like the work of Vera and his colleagues has shown that rich mixed landscapes can be created and maintained now on a big scale by using free-ranging cattle and other large herbivores. The 5000 ha reserve at Oostvaardersplassen in the Netherlands is an example of this. Could such an approach be adopted under British conditions?



Veteran Tree Chatsworth

9.2 Project Aims

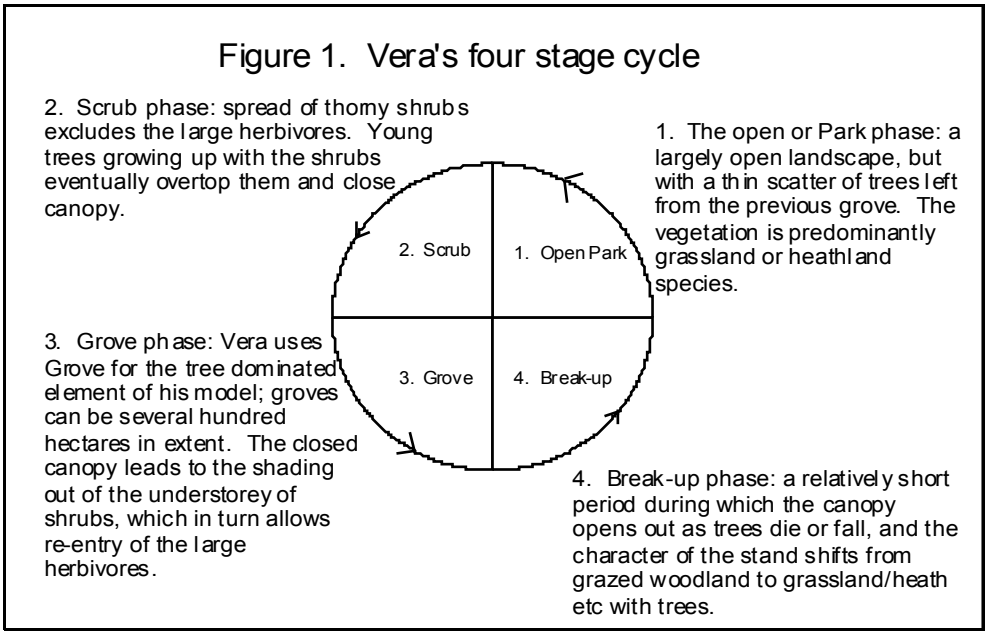
The project we have established has two aims. The first is to look back into the past: to explore the evidence for and against much of Britain having a relatively open forest cover some 7,000 - 10,000 yrs ago. This will be done primarily through an analysis, by Professor Paul Buckland of Bournemouth University and ECUS Ltd, of the remains of fossil insects. By comparing for example the proportions of dung beetle remains to those of species that need dead wood we may be able judge what the surrounding landscape was like.

Deer at Parham Park. Keith

The second part of the project is more concerned with the future use of large grazing animals as part of conservation management of existing wood-pastures but also of new mixed landscapes. This will be led by Dr James Bullock from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. They will be looking at questions such as what types of animals are best, at what densities and such like, building on the work of the Grazing Animals Project. They will also consider what are the animal welfare and public safety issues.

An important difference between this and many other conservation grazing studies is that we are not just looking at how to keep open grass or heath open: we expect under the sorts of grazing regimes considered (and this is a key part of Frans Vera's hypothesis) that open areas will go to scrub and trees, but sufficient tree-ed areas will open up to keep a dynamic mosaic present (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Vera's four stage cycle



But is it practical?

The conservation agencies have been exploring the idea of less intensive forms of forestry - 'new wildwoods' - as part of the response to changing social and economic conditions (CAP

reform, depressed timber markets, increased interest in environmental benefits of woodland). New thinking on conservation objectives and approaches may also become necessary because of climate change. There are landowners, both private and state, who are seriously interested in looking at free-ranging grazing systems as an option in the management of large sites, and there are potential sources of funds. Hence English Nature wants to ensure that the scientific and practical issues are properly explored.

Moccas Park. Keith Kirby / English Nature

9.3 We want your views

Our contractors are just starting their work. In the summer of 2004 we will organise a seminar at which their ideas will be presented. In the meantime, we would be interested in hearing people's views on the project, on the scientific basis of Vera's hypothesis, from people with practical experience of free-ranging grazing of the sort envisaged, of places where this approach is being considered or may be appropriate. We have a web based discussion forum for the project at: http://forums.ceh.ac.uk:8080/~naturalised-grazing and look forward to hearing from you.

9.4 Background reading

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For more information about the project in the first instance please contact:

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10. Wood-pasture and parkland – provisional guidance on setting creating condition assessment tables

The standard woodland guidance already contains some examples of how wood-pasture sites should be tackled, particularly those with a relatively high tree cover. For the more open sites in particular some modifications may be needed. The table below provides examples of the sorts of targets that might be set.

There is not a hard and fast division into wood-pasture and non-wood-pasture woodland. There will be sites with a wood-pasture history where this is not the preferred future state (just as not all former coppice woods should be returned to that state). The key structural elements may be maintainable in other ways. Hence we have not put in a target for the presence of grazing animals (although if dung beetles are important a target for dung might be appropriate!).

Key elements of the table below are as follows.

Area - It is the extent of the mosaic of which the tree cover is but a part that is important. However it may also be helpful to separate out the extent of land that is under trees, or, given that the interest is often in the veteran trees, the number of such trees.

Structure and natural processes - it is often important that the veteran trees are not being over-shadowed by younger growth, hence the suggestion that they should have free crowns.

Continuity of age-classes of trees is critical for the survival of many of the key species; we suggest that a cohort at least every hundred years is likely to be needed. The size of the desirable cohort can be calculated as roughly twice (the number of trees in the most extensive veteran or near-veteran class) divided by (the number of centuries for that class). This means that most parkland, with just a thin scatter of veterans over grass, will be unfavourable.

The extent of open space will usually be higher than in 'normal' woodland, but also more evenly spread over the site (rather than being concentrated in rides etc).

The presence of some scrub in the open (to provide nectar sources) is also a desirable structural feature.

Dead wood on the ground but particularly in the trees themselves is generally more important on these sites than in normal woodland.

Regeneration - a cohort of trees in the 0 - 100 year category may be sufficient regeneration for many wood pasture sites.

Tree and shrub composition - it may be that there are particular species associated with 'exotic' species on the site, for example rich lichen communities on old sycamores or saproxylic invertebrates on beech outside its current native range.

Quality indicators - the ground vegetation should normally be semi-natural, but may be of a grassland or heathland type rather than woodland communities (or some combination).

Exceptionally in some parklands we may accept that there would be little to be gained by reverting improved grassland to a more desirable state; if so then the site may (other things being OK) be classed as favourable despite this. However I do not think we are likely to treat sites with arable land in between the trees as favourable.

Signs of fertilizer or spray drift in sites important for lichens (fungi) would be a negative indicator.

Characteristics of the trees themselves, eg notable rot-holes, sap-runs etc have not been separately noted. It is assumed that they will usually be present if the veteran tree population is maintained. If there is a particular assemblage or species for which the site has been notified that depends on such a micro-feature then it would have to be included.

The species associated with the veteran trees will not normally be checked directly on a condition assessment visit. Instead we rely on the general habitat assessment plus a less frequent, resurvey by a specialist.

Generic targets: these must be tailored to the specific interest of the site, but keeping the standard five attributes. Not all will be applicable to all sites.

Attribute	Target	Comment
Area	Extent of mosaic of which the wood-pasture is a part. Extent of tree-ed area. Number of veteran (near-veteran) trees.	Not all of these need be used on every site.
Structure and natural processes	Veteran/near-veteran trees with free crowns. Succession of age classes present - a cohort every 100 years. > 20% open space spread through the site. 10-20% open grown scrub. Frequent dead wood on the ground and in the canopies/trunk of trees.	In most cases we are trying to avoid overshading of the veterans. This is a first stab and needs to be tested. An open site is important for some invertebrates and to allow for dappled shade to tree trunks.
Regeneration potential	At least one cohort of trees established in the last 50 years.	See notes for what sort of numbers should be considered a cohort; the aim is to get one every 100 years, so if not one in the last fifty then action is likely to be needed in the next 50 years.

Attribute	Target	Comment
Tree and shrub composition	> 95% native trees and shrubs (based on the area actually occupied by trees and shrubs). [option of specifying minimum numbers or proportions of appropriate native species]	A lower % natives may be acceptable in designed landscape parks where exotics are non-invasive and part of the history of the site. If exotics are important for their species interest and should therefore be maintained this must be specified.
Quality indicators	> 80% of ground vegetation referable to relevant semi-natural vegetation types (may be grassland or heathland rather than woodland). Micro-habitats for key specialist species present (as appropriate) [Key species shown to be still present by periodic specialist survey]	Although not strictly features for which sites are notified the presence of archaeological or historical artefacts may be worth noting. Direct survey for key species is not normally part of the basic condition assessment.

11. The Wood-pasture and Parkland Information System (WAPIS) add-in for Recorder

Wood-pasture and parkland is a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) - it is an extremely important habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. Parklands and wood-pastures are also exceptionally important for their landscape and historical heritage values.

English Nature is the lead partner for the habitat action plan for wood-pasture and parkland. There is an abundance of information on each of the areas of interest but it is largely fragmentary, widely dispersed and uncatalogued. Better integration of this information is needed to inform planning and site management, to determine resource needs and to target effort.

To that end, we have prepared a Web-based Information System to enable 'single point of entry' access to as much of that data as possible, either in summary or sometimes in its original form see www.wapis.org.uk.

The end result, once more data has been collated, will be an information system where it will be possible to find out which organisations have interest in any particular site, who holds what data on its wildlife and heritage features, how it has been evaluated and what statutory designations may apply. Additionally it will enable us to identify gaps in our knowledge and help circumvent possible conflicts with the aim of gaining a fully integrated approach to the management of parks and wood-pastures throughout the UK. This database will complement the work being undertaken by the Ancient Tree Forum mapping ancient trees. www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-hunt/index.htm

You can also download a free copy of the software used to collate the data to help you manage your own sites and information**: the WAPIS Add-In.**

The WAPIS Add-in for Recorder enables the collection of information that supports the Wood-pasture and parks habitat action plan. It also provides facilities for collection and viewing information about locations and their features that are not available in the standard Recorder.

WAPIS Information

The WAPIS add-in adds screens to the default data entry screens in Recorder 2002 to enable you to collect more information about features attached to a location. This is vital for recording information about veteran trees and other features. In fact the add-in provides facilities that most Recorder 2002 users will find useful!

Installation

You can download the add-in for free from the WAPIS website: www.wapis.org.uk/wapis_addin.asp . Download the zip file containing the add-in (OCX) and the required bitmaps. Save and extract these to a directory on your computer. In Recorder 2002 view the help on installing add-ins. Using the add-in manager choose install and browse to the directory containing the WAPIS add-in and select install.

Information that can be added to **locations**: Location facts

Information that can be added to **features** is grouped as follows:

Spatial data – add specific details to locate a feature within a location
Events – create events for a feature and link them to management aims
Measurements- provide measurements for a feature (eg number of secondary stems)
Threats – add a temporal component to threats to indicate if they are past, immediate or more long term

You can view sample screens on the website.

Free training course

Would you like to learn more about the WAPIS Add-in and what you can do with it? Attend a free 1 day training session at English Nature. We will be organising more training as demand requires so register your interest today, email your details to rebecca.isted@english-nature.org.uk NB Knowledge of the Recorder software is assumed, training will not be provided in its use.

Training course contents:

Overview of WAPIS
The purpose and recognition of components of WAPIS
Entering and Accessing information and Meta Data
Contributing data to the web-based system

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Top left: Using a home-made moth trap.
Peter Wakely/English Nature 17,396
Middle left: Co_2 experiment at Roudsea Wood and Mosses NNR, Lancashire.
Peter Wakely/English Nature 21,792
Bottom left: Radio tracking a hare on Pawlett Hams, Somerset.
Paul Glendell/English Nature 23,020
Main: Identifying moths caught in a moth trap at Ham Wall NNR, Somerset.
Paul Glendell/English Nature 24,888