



WOODLAND  
TRUST



# New woods for people

The Woodland Trust's experience of woodland creation

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*New woods for people* summarises the work of the Woodland Trust in creating new native woods. We have been planting woods since our foundation in 1972 and this work has gathered pace in recent years. In the last 10 years we have planted over 5 million trees, mostly on former agricultural land that we own and maintain. In total we have created nearly 700 new native woods extending to over 7,000 hectares (17,500 acres). Our new woods range from small community projects a few hectares in size to landscape-scale habitat restoration projects, such as the Hucking Estate in Kent and Glen Finglas in Scotland. These woods contribute towards our aims of improving our natural environment and providing enjoyment for people. Many of the woods have been planted with the active involvement of local people and virtually all are open for people to enjoy. Despite this record of practical action, we have not so far widely disseminated the lessons learned. So in 1999 we carried out a formal review of our woodland-creation activity with the aim of documenting our experience. In particular we sought to identify areas for

improvement and agree best practice.<sup>1</sup> *New woods for people* arises from the findings of the review. It covers our experience, the theory behind the task and the practical lessons drawn from managing new woods and working closely with people. It should be of interest to practitioners and policymakers alike.

The key conclusion is that, just as planting a wood involves much more than placing trees in the ground, planting a wood with the involvement of people involves a still greater commitment of time and resources. At a time when woodland creation forms part of many local and central Government strategies<sup>2</sup> to improve our landscape, we hope that this will give people a flavour of the task.

Woodland creation contains elements of art as well as science, so this should be treated as a collection of opinions and practical experience, rather than a definitive guide. It should be noted that the bulk of the experience from which these conclusions are drawn comes from lowland Britain. Habitat restoration in the Highlands faces a number of different issues, not least those of scale and climate. These lie outside the scope of this document. The body of experience that we are establishing through our large-scale projects in Scotland, through our work at Glen Finglas and as part of the Scottish Forest Alliance, will be summarised in more detail elsewhere.



Photographs from left:  
Reach Wood Woodland Trust Picture Library  
Speckled wood butterfly on bramble  
by K & W Wheatley/Woodland Trust Picture Library  
Sculpture in Crinan Wood  
by D Frankland/Woodland Trust Picture Library  
Below left and inset:  
Sessile oak  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

*'The shepherd who didn't smoke went and fetched a little bag and emptied a pile of acorns on to the table. Then he began to inspect them closely, separating the good from the bad.'*  
Jean Giono, *The Man Who Planted Trees*.





## The context

The Woodland Trust's plan for action, *Keeping Woodland Alive*<sup>3</sup>, identifies four priorities for our native woodland

- No further loss of ancient woodland
- Improving woodland biodiversity
- Increasing new native woodland
- Increasing enjoyment of woodland

Woodland creation bears directly on the last two of these priorities, but also has a role to play in improving woodland biodiversity and as part of strategies to conserve ancient woodland. We believe that woodland creation will be an important element of landscape-scale approaches to conservation in the future.

The philosophy that underpins this view is set out in detail in *Seeing the woods for the trees*<sup>4</sup>, which explains our approach to conservation. It makes clear that creating woodland is not just about changing the landscape, but also about

inspiring and involving people.

At a cultural level, woods answer our need for wild, unregulated places. In this country, woods are often as close as one can get to wilderness: a wilderness that many feel 'gives meaning and definition to the human enterprise'.<sup>5</sup>

In ecological terms our efforts to create new woodland take place against a grim backdrop. The changes in agriculture and pressure from development mean that there has been a decline in many common wildlife species, a fact made painfully clear by the collapse in the populations of farmland birds in recent years.

Woodland creation remains important because less and less of our land is natural habitat, a trend that we need to reverse if we are to avoid an irreversible loss of our much-loved wildlife. Involving people in planting trees is one way in which we can address both the symptoms and the cause.

1 *A Review of Woodland Creation (unpublished internal Woodland Trust report), 1999*

2 *England Forestry Strategy, A New Focus for England's Woodlands, 1998*

3 *Keeping Woodland Alive, Woodland Trust, 1998*

4 *Seeing the woods for the trees, Woodland Trust, 1999*

5 *Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, 1949*



# Our experience

## Early woodland planting

We have been planting new woodland since our foundation in 1972. Initially, new planting often took place on gifts of land from members and supporters. One of our earliest new woods, at Dishcombe in Devon, is now in its 27th year.

In addition to planting woods on our own land, we also operated a scheme to encourage other landowners to plant woods. The Licence Planting Scheme (LPS) was introduced in 1980 to 'encourage tree planting on land not in Trust ownership'. Under this scheme, landowners leased areas of land to the Woodland Trust for a period of up to 25 years and we took

responsibility for establishing a woodland.

Between 1980 and 1995 around 280 sites were planted through this scheme, totalling around 300 hectares (750 acres).

The LPS was successful at establishing woods and provided an alternative strategy for creating woodland that did not involve land acquisition.

However, the criteria for the scheme resulted in many small pockets of woodland, often in inaccessible locations and this led to difficulties with maintenance and weed control.

Furthermore, by taking on a long-term leasehold, we removed 'ownership' of the new woodland from the landowner, sometimes leading to a lack of long-term commitment.



Photograph:  
Willesley Wood by David Bradbury

*'The great painter, Autumn, has touched with the tip of his brush a branch of the beech tree, here and there leaving an orange spot, and the green acorns are tinged with a faint yellow.'*

*Richard Jefferies, The Hills and the Vale.*

## Large-scale woodland creation

Woodland creation on a large scale started in 1989 with the acquisition of 90 hectares (223 acres) of mostly arable land at Pound Farm, near Saxmundham in Suffolk. This was followed by the gift of Home Farm in Hampshire and the creation of Barber Wood near Cheltenham in Gloucestershire. Barber Wood was established as a demonstration multi-purpose woodland with the support of the Countryside Commission.

This early experience enabled us to contribute early on to the development of the Community Forests and National Forest project. In 1991 we were invited to buy the first site in the National Forest at Willesley Wood, planted on a restored open-cast mine and extending to 40 hectares (99.4 acres). Since then we have been a major partner in the project, and we now own 19 sites within the National Forest boundaries.

We were also actively involved in the establishment of the Community Forests. Hedley Hall, a 55.8-hectare (138-acre) site acquired in 1991 in the Great North Forest, was the first of these. We have planted woods in each of the twelve Forest areas and continue to play a key role.

The acquisition of Glen Finglas in 1996 marked a further step-up in scale and a move into the Highlands. The 4,038-hectare (9,977-acre) estate is largely treeless, but contains remnants of wood pasture and a number of ancient trees.

The plan is to restore the existing wooded areas and to secure natural regeneration, with replanting taking place where seed sources are absent. Within a few decades we aim to have started the growth of one of Scotland's largest native broadleaved woods.

Hucking Estate in Kent, acquired in 1997, is our largest site in



England (232.7 hectares, 575 acres) and a model for future woodland-creation projects. About a third of the estate was woodland, but this was fragmented and surrounded by intensively managed arable land. Our new planting builds on the existing woodland, with the remainder of the arable land being converted to native grassland. A similar approach is being taken at Watkins Wood in Devon, an 80-hectare (197-acre) site planted in memory of our founder, Kenneth Watkins, which builds on the existing ancient woodland of Avon Woods.

Glen Quey is the Woodland Trust's first acquisition as part of the Scottish Forest Alliance, which aims to play a major role in re-establishing native woodland in Scotland. The site lies in the Ochills near Auchterarder and is mainly comprised of former grazing land. It was acquired in

2001 and extends to 384.6 hectares (950 acres).



## Formonthills Community Woodland, Glenrothes

Formonthills Community Woodland is an 84-hectare (207-acre) woodland planted on a former hill farm on the edge of the new town of Glenrothes. The land was a gift to the Woodland Trust in 1994 from the Glenrothes Development Corporation. The wood was designed after a series of consultations with local people and planted in three phases between 1994 and 1996. Local school children were involved in planting the trees and in other educational activities on the site. A network of paths and rides link the wood to the footpath network and to the nearby housing. There is also a surfaced circular path suitable for less able visitors and people with pushchairs. At Formonthills a trial is being carried out on the introduction of woodland ground flora into woodland creation sites. There are no nearby sources of woodland plants so 24 experimental plots have been established with the aim of creating a viable seed source for the colonisation of the rest of the new woodland.



# Our experience

| Large-scale woodland creation sites | Wood                          | Location          | Region          | Hectares | Acres   | Acquired |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------|---------|----------|
|                                     | Pound Farm                    | Great Glemham     | Suffolk         | 90.3     | 223.0   | 1989     |
|                                     | Statfold Wood                 | Holsworthy        | Devon           | 23.0     | 56.9    | 1990     |
|                                     | Home Farm                     | Bentworth         | Hampshire       | 136.8    | 338.0   | 1990     |
|                                     | Barber Wood                   | Cheltenham        | Gloucestershire | 39.0     | 96.3    | 1990     |
|                                     | Willesley Wood                | Ashby de la Zouch | Leicestershire  | 40.2     | 99.4    | 1991     |
|                                     | Hedley Hall                   | Sunniside         | Durham          | 55.8     | 138.0   | 1991     |
|                                     | Londonthorpe Wood             | Grantham          | Lincolnshire    | 62.4     | 154.2   | 1991     |
|                                     | Pipe Hall Farm                | Burntwood         | Staffordshire   | 44.2     | 109.3   | 1992     |
|                                     | The Old Park                  | Brentwood         | Essex           | 54.6     | 134.9   | 1992     |
|                                     | Reynold Wood                  | Brogborough       | Bedfordshire    | 97.8     | 241.6   | 1992     |
|                                     | Warneage Wood                 | Swindon           | Wiltshire       | 18.9     | 46.6    | 1993     |
|                                     | Royal Tigers & Centenary Wood | Bagworth          | Leicestershire  | 34.4     | 85.0    | 1993     |
|                                     | Blaeberry Community Wood      | East Whitburn     | West Lothian    | 35.1     | 86.8    | 1993     |
|                                     | Mackintosh Davidson Wood      | West Knoyle       | Wiltshire       | 57.5     | 142.1   | 1993     |
|                                     | Lottie's Wood                 | Sunniside         | Gateshead       | 18.2     | 45.0    | 1994     |
|                                     | Warren Farm                   | East Ewell        | Surrey          | 21.5     | 53.2    | 1994     |
|                                     | Lady Mabel Wood               | Haigh             | Wigan           | 25.1     | 62.0    | 1994     |
|                                     | Coton Wood                    | Coton in the Elms | Derbyshire      | 33.1     | 81.8    | 1994     |
|                                     | Stratton                      | Swindon           | Wiltshire       | 54.6     | 135.0   | 1994     |
|                                     | Formonthills                  | Glenrothes        | Fife            | 108.5    | 268.2   | 1994     |
|                                     | Crawford's Wood               | Aspull            | Gtr Manchester  | 20.0     | 49.4    | 1995     |
|                                     | Foxley Wood                   | Linton            | Derbyshire      | 28.7     | 70.9    | 1995     |
|                                     | Birdwell Wood                 | Birdwell          | Yorkshire       | 28.9     | 71.5    | 1995     |
|                                     | New Moss Wood                 | Cadishead         | Salford         | 30.8     | 76.1    | 1995     |
|                                     | Wheatley Wood                 | Rayleigh          | Essex           | 34.0     | 84.0    | 1995     |
|                                     | Burroughs Wood                | Ratby             | Leicestershire  | 36.8     | 90.9    | 1995     |
|                                     | Merry Hill                    | Bushey            | Hertfordshire   | 64.6     | 159.7   | 1996     |
|                                     | Top Wood                      | Linton            | Derbyshire      | 80.8     | 199.8   | 1996     |
|                                     | Glen Finglas                  | Brig o'Turk       | Stirling        | 4,037.7  | 9,977.0 | 1996     |
|                                     | Spud Wood                     | Lymm              | Warrington      | 17.3     | 42.7    | 1997     |
|                                     | Pear Tree Wood                | Ratby             | Leicestershire  | 18.4     | 45.5    | 1997     |
|                                     | Stratfield Brake              | Kidlington        | Oxfordshire     | 18.6     | 46.1    | 1997     |
|                                     | Hucking Estate                | Maidstone         | Kent            | 232.7    | 575.0   | 1997     |
|                                     | Thorn Wood                    | Weaverham         | Cheshire        | 16.8     | 41.5    | 1998     |
|                                     | St Bedes/Bright Lea           | Ouston            | Durham          | 23.7     | 58.5    | 1998     |
|                                     | Belhus Chase                  | Aveley            | Essex           | 54.2     | 133.9   | 1998     |
|                                     | Watkins Wood                  | Loddiswell        | Devon           | 79.9     | 197.4   | 1999     |
|                                     | Glen Quey                     | Auchterarder      | Perthshire      | 384.6    | 950.0   | 2001     |



## The Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund

The Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund was the result of a partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council and began with a private gift to the Woodland Trust. The aim was to take an inclusive approach to creating new woodland, with local people and communities assuming responsibility for identifying sites and raising funds as well as playing a major part in the design and planting of each wood.

The project had a dedicated member of staff who provided a point of contact for local people and who could draw on specialist skills from across the Woodland Trust. Ten new woods were planted with the help of local communities between 1992 and 1996, going some way towards reducing Cambridgeshire's record as our least wooded county.

The most striking aspect of this project was the enthusiasm shown by local people about making a difference to their immediate environment. The success of the Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund was the inspiration for the Woods on your Doorstep initiative, within which it was incorporated in 1997.



Photographs from left:

Planting at White Ponds Wood, a  
Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund site  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

White Ponds Wood is now established  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

Planting at Nine Acre Wood, near Ely  
Woodland Trust Picture Library



# Our experience

## Woods on your Doorstep

Woods on your Doorstep began in 1995 with an award of £6.5 million from the Millennium Commission. The target was to create 200 millennium woods near to villages and towns across England and Wales. The project was completed on target in March 2001. Each of the woods was designed and planted in partnership with local people and in total 930 hectares (2,297 acres) of new woodland across England and Wales were created.

Woods on your Doorstep was achieved through a wide range of local and national partnerships. Each site required the support of the local community and financial backing to match the Millennium Commission grant. The sites range from 0.4 hectares to 13.8 hectares, with an average size of 4.6 hectares (just over 11 acres).

Over a quarter of a million people were directly involved in the project. Community planting events were a central part of the process and these proved hugely popular. Volunteers planted more than 20,000 trees on a single weekend in November 2000. The project was highlighted in the England Forestry Strategy and achieved more widespread repute through the planting of the Aldridge Millennium Wood on BBC Radio 4's *The Archers*.



## Daeda's Wood

This 4-hectare (10-acre) wood can be found just outside the Oxfordshire village of Deddington. It stands on the banks of the River Swere and was the first Woods on your Doorstep site to be planted. The planting day took place in a blinding blizzard, which did not deter enthusiastic volunteers from the village, especially children from the primary school.

Already many of the 3,700 trees and shrubs that were planted, a mix of oak, ash, willow and alder, are taller than the numerous people who regularly walk amongst them. There is a surfaced path to help everyone reach a bench overlooking the river, which lies in a glade where wild flowers have been planted. The circular paths round Daeda's Wood are well trodden and the local group, the Friends of Daeda's Wood, contribute to a regular newsletter to update villagers on how the wood is developing. The group has hosted visits from other Woods on your Doorstep communities and also maintains an active website.



**Woods on your Doorstep in Northern Ireland** began in 1997, backed by an award of £4 million from the Millennium Commission and with the aim of creating 50 new woods in the Province. The woods range from Carrow Wood, a 0.4-hectare (1-acre) site on the Ards peninsula, to Drumlamph, a 13-hectare (33-acre) extension to an existing ancient woodland.



Photographs from left:

Tug-of-war at Daeda's Wood

by George Spenceley/Woodland Trust Picture Library

The Daeda's Wood website

([www.deddington.org.uk/community/daedaswood.html](http://www.deddington.org.uk/community/daedaswood.html))

View from 'Woodland View', Newtownards, Co. Down

By Maia Taylor

Right at the start - Kilcooley Wood

Woodland Trust Picture Library

Kilcooley Wood fun day

Woodland Trust Picture Library

## Kilcooley Wood, Bangor

Kilcooley Wood really is on people's doorsteps, in Bangor, Northern Ireland. It was created on land remaining after the building of public housing. Having been mown 15 times a year for the last 25 years, it now provides an area for local people to walk and enjoy the outdoors. Orchids grow in the grassland while orange tip butterflies flutter between the trees. The Kilcooley estate's residents designed the site and every child in Kilcooley Primary School planted a tree there. We worked closely with Kilcooley Community Forum to consult local people and to organise a celebratory event with nature walks, a teddy bears' picnic, horse rides in the wood, birds of prey and a barbecue. Three years after planting, the developing wood is well used by residents. A local teenager replants any trees that are pulled out and Kilcooley Art Club is creating additional arts features. In future the local youth group hopes to create an orienteering trail through the new wood.



# Woodland creation and biodiversity

## Biodiversity measures for woodland

- Density of ancient woodland cover
- Percentage of ancient woodland which is semi-natural
- Cumulative core area of semi-natural habitats
- Area of old growth



*'In wildness is the salvation of the world.'*  
Henry David Thoreau

We are now beginning to understand more about the contribution that habitat creation can make towards conserving and increasing biodiversity. This allows us to make some general judgements about the benefits provided by different potential sites and will mean that, where biodiversity is the key objective, we can use our limited resources to achieve the maximum benefit.

*Woodland biodiversity: expanding our horizons<sup>6</sup>*, gives a new framework within which we can target our efforts. It sets out four clear measures by which we assess the potential impact of woodland creation on biodiversity (see left).

These biodiversity measures for woodland are derived from seven key features that are identified as having greatest influence over the contribution of a site towards biodiversity. These are:

- Ancient woodland
- Size
- Old growth
- Core area
- Woodland edge adjacent to other semi-natural habitats
- Density of semi-natural habitats
- Linkage of open-ground habitats

Woodland creation bears directly on the last four of these features, leading us to conclude that habitat creation (including the planting of new woodland) is potentially a major element of strategies to maintain biodiversity.

As *'Woodland biodiversity: expanding our horizons'* makes clear, the implications of this conclusion are significant for the development of future strategies for planting new woodland. Where ecological benefit is the primary aim, the development of biodiversity measures for woodland will allow us to assess and rank the biodiversity benefit of woodland-planting options and target our activities accordingly.



Photographs from left:

Badger

Woodland Trust Picture Library

Fungi

Woodland Trust Picture Library

Barn Owl from Christmas Cards

NHPA

Blackberry

by Image Quest 3-D/NHPA

Dormouse

by Owen Newman/Oxford Scientific Films

## Site selection

A key conclusion to be drawn, both from the literature and from practical experience, is that the selection of the site is the principal variable influencing the future value of a woodland planting site for wildlife. Within this the major variables are:

- Existing and historic land use
- Whether the site borders ancient woodland or other semi-natural habitats
- Size
- Core area (largely determined by shape – long, thin sites have a smaller core area than circular or square sites)



At a site level, these factors influence the development of a new woodland and the rate at which it acquires new species. A site bordering ancient woodland will, in time, acquire many of the more mobile woodland species found in the neighbouring mature woodland. The extent to which it does so will depend, in part, on the previous use of the land. If the site was formerly arable, the

high residual fertility will favour strongly competitive plants, such as nettle, bramble and dock, making it difficult for woodland plants to establish. However, if the planting site is improved grassland, once the effects of nitrogenous fertilisers have diminished a semblance of woodland flora may begin to develop.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that considerable patience is required. Some plants, such as wood anemone, migrate only a few feet per century and some species may remain more or less permanently restricted to the ancient woodland. Fortunately, other much-loved woodland plants, such as primrose or campion, may well seed more rapidly into the new woodland once conditions are right.

A site which does not share a boundary with an established woodland will tend to remain much more species-poor. In addition, a small isolated site will always have an upper limit on species abundance as a result of its size, as well as its isolation.<sup>8</sup>

The implication of this is that, once a site has been chosen, there is limited scope for influencing its long-term contribution to biodiversity. This is important in the context of site design, because it is tempting to cram as many different types of tree and different types of habitat into a new site as possible.

Our view is that each site must be treated in the context of the surrounding landscape, rather than as a wildlife island.

## Minimum criteria for a public-access woodland planting site

The site should be:

- accessible to the public
- free from significant archaeological remains (although archaeological interest on part of the site can be incorporated as a feature)
- suitable for planting in ecological terms. Sites which have existing value as grassland, wetland or heath are not appropriate for tree planting
- without too many wayleaves or constraints (power cables, pipes, overhead wires)
- preferably adjacent to existing ancient woodland or other semi-natural habitats

<sup>6</sup> Woodland biodiversity: expanding our horizons, Woodland Trust, 2000

<sup>7</sup> Francis J.L., Peterken G.F. and Hill D.A., Aspects of Applied Biology, 44, 1-8, 1996

<sup>8</sup> Peterken G.F. and Game M., Historical factors affecting the number and distribution of vascular plant species in the woodlands of central Lincolnshire. Journal of Ecology, 72, 155-182, 1984

# Woodland creation and biodiversity

Photograph:

Hedley Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.  
New planting with open space next to  
Ridley Gill, an ancient wood, which is  
being encouraged to naturally regenerate  
parts of the new woodland  
by Tessa Bunney/Woodland Trust Picture Library

## Open space in new woods

The importance of open space within woods is widely recognised. Indeed, a number of rare woodland species are dependent on temporary and permanent semi-natural open ground within woods.<sup>9</sup>

The periodic creation of open ground through management activities such as coppicing in ancient woodland can also be important in the life cycles of butterflies, such as the pearl bordered fritillary.

However, in most new (secondary) woods, open-ground habitats will not possess 'semi-natural' characteristics and are more likely to be dominated by opportunistic plants that prefer fertile ground. In addition, small woodland creation sites have a large proportion of 'edge habitat' and very little core. As a result they are vulnerable to external influences such as intensive agriculture

and are less able to sustain woodland species. We therefore need to consider sites in the context of the wider landscape before defining areas of open ground – some sites for new woodland are surrounded by open space.

Retention of open space is important if there is an opportunity to link existing semi-natural open-ground habitats. Woods can act as barriers to the dispersal of open-ground species,<sup>10</sup> so in this context the inclusion of rides to connect habitats would be desirable. Where this is not the case, there may be little wildlife benefit from the inclusion of areas of open ground within new woods (particularly on former arable land). In these cases an alternative strategy is to allow open areas to develop where tree failures occur, rather than defining them within the design at the outset.

## Long-term development of new woods

Much of the literature about woodland creation implies that the long-term aim should always be to create a copy of traditionally managed ancient woodland. Our view is that such an assumption should not be automatic. Instead long-term management decisions should be influenced by the landscape context of each site and the other potential uses of resources. Non-intervention, continuous cover or management on a semi-commercial basis may all be considered as future management pathways for new woods. The decision in each case will depend upon the setting. It is widely accepted that the absence of a range of woodland habitat and the absence of old growth can be important factors limiting the range of species that occur in small woods.<sup>11</sup> There is no simple solution to the absence of old growth, although importing dead wood has been suggested as an option. The inclusion of species with

a short lifespan, such as silver birch, is a medium-term strategy for providing dead-wood habitat, particularly where sites adjoin existing areas of old growth.

## Biodiversity and public enjoyment

One of the key motivations for creating a new woodland is a desire to improve the value of an area for wildlife. In every case, the planting of a woodland on intensively used agricultural land will lead to some wildlife benefit. Birds, in particular, benefit from the creation of small woods as they provide shelter, feeding areas and new nesting sites. Living near to a wood means that you are more likely to see deer, woodpeckers and badgers, which although not rare are rarely seen.

There is often local enthusiasm for erecting nest boxes, introducing woodland flowers, digging ponds, and so on. The main beneficiaries of these activities are people and

their success should be judged more by the enjoyment that they bring than in terms of wildlife gain.

At a strategic level, there is potential for conflict between an ideal site for biodiversity improvement and an ideal site for public access. However, there may be opportunities to meet both of these objectives and our biodiversity measures will help us to identify these.

But it is worth remembering in any discussion of biodiversity that the love of woods extends well beyond the specialist. Woods should be valued accordingly. A local wood can bring great joy to visitors, provides a place to play and escape and comprises a key element of the local landscape. This same wood might well be considered by an ecologist to be relatively uninteresting and species-poor. There are multiple public benefits from the planting of woodland, even where biodiversity gains are likely to be small.

<sup>9</sup> Peterken G.F., *Natural Woodland*, Cambridge University Press, 1996

<sup>10</sup> Mungira M.L and Thomas J.A., *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 29, 316-29, 1992

<sup>11</sup> Francis, Peterken and Hill, *op cit*

# Working with people

Most of our new woodland has been planted with the active involvement and support of local people. In the case of Woods on your Doorstep sites, local people have often been the driving force behind a project.

Aside from the principle that it is good to work in partnership with communities, there are practical advantages to working with local people from the outset of a woodland planting project:

- It provides an opportunity to agree shared objectives at the start
- Potential conflicts can often be identified and tackled early. The local 'grapevine' is a highly effective medium for picking up local concerns
- Local knowledge can help to avoid mistakes and misunderstandings, by consulting the right

people early on and by advising on how to communicate in the right way

- Networks of local people can be highly effective at galvanising support and raising funds for projects to proceed. From a fundraising perspective, members of a community provide links to organisations, companies and local authorities that otherwise would not be identified
- Local people and contacts help to get the job done: from booking halls and organising meetings, to providing storage for trees and refreshments for planting events
- Working in partnership with local people gives a clear sense of responsibility for and ownership of the new wood. This provides a basis for sustained involvement.

*'Today we planted the trees,  
Underneath the wheeling wings,  
With the breeze in our faces,  
And in our minds  
The thought of the shading leaves  
Over the generations to come.'*

*By Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington, also known as  
Patrick of the Hills.*

*Engraved on a boulder at the centre of Netherwood,  
Stoke Lacy, Herefordshire*

## Working together

A key lesson is the need for setting shared aims with local people at the outset of the project. The design phase of a new woodland should ideally start before the site is secured. At this stage, it is important to agree on a vision for the new wood. All specialists need to remember that their idea of a woodland is not necessarily shared by everyone. An ecologist's idea of a living natural woodland with lots of dead wood, regenerating trees, shrubs and thickets seems to many people like an abandoned, untidy place. Their vision of a woodland may more closely resemble an arboretum, or a tree-lined park. These are fundamental differences and, if the aim is not defined clearly at the outset, there will be conflicts later on.



Where we are taking on a long-term responsibility for management of the site we can also make clear our objectives and management style and provide information about how new woods develop. Planting a wood is an exciting event, but it is important to remind people that woodland creation is a slow process and they need to temper their expectations.

Talking to local people and interest groups about their new woodland is therefore an important step. As a rule we work closely with local people throughout a planting project. In addition to this we have used a range of formal and informal methods for communicating with the rest of the community, including public meetings, questionnaires, guided walks and open discussion.





Photographs from left:

Engraving at Netherwood  
by Mark de la Torre

Design consultation  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

The design for The Retreat

The Retreat during planting  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

Coed y Mwldan  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

At some sites, particularly in urban areas, techniques such as 'planning for real' have been used.

Each community is different, so it is important not to have a formula: what works in some places will not work in others. Public meetings can be very effective ways of building consensus, but these are invariably better attended in smaller communities than in large ones. In urban areas it can be more effective to invite existing groups and community representatives to a site meeting, rather than attempting to hold an open forum.

Communicating with people tends to operate in two phases. The first phase is before the acquisition of the site. At this point, it is more productive to discuss a specific proposition – 'Would you like to help establish a woodland in this location?' – rather than a general aspiration. In taking this approach, it is crucial that flexibility is retained to withdraw, adapt the proposals or choose an alternative site. Whilst it is possible to anticipate most potential issues, there is always scope for the unexpected. A classic example from Woods on

your Doorstep was when we discovered that the site proposed for a new woodland was a favourite sledging run in the winter. Local people supported the scheme, but this fact had a major bearing on the design of the site, with sledging runs being included!

Consultation after a site is secured is also an important part of designing a woodland. Once a site has been identified, it is good practice to consult those people who are immediately affected (ie, the neighbours) on a one-to-one basis. This should be the first step of the design process. Many people are delighted to have a new woodland that will be literally on their doorstep, but they will wish to know who to contact in case of emergency, how the wood will be maintained and what planting is proposed.

It is not always possible to secure agreement on every aspect, but opening a dialogue with local people at an early stage can help to avoid misconceptions and defuse conflicts. Concerns about new woodland often relate to issues such as parking or public access rather than the wood itself and these are issues that can often be

## Coed y Mwldan, Cardigan, Ceredigion

Menter Aberteifi, a local development group, proposed the 0.6-hectare (1.3-acre) site in January 1998 as a gift from Ceredigion County Council. At the time, its main use was to provide access to flood defences; there was no public access.

With the support of Menter Aberteifi, local participation was highly active. Private donations totalled £5,000 and local businesses contributed £1,750. Sixty people were present at meetings to launch the project and design the wood. Youngsters working with the Prince's Trust, Cymru constructed access points and two sculptured wooden benches. The planting event in November 1999 became a two-day woodland crafts fair.

Users of town businesses visit the site during the day, the main street being 200 metres away. There is little litter or vandalism; even the sculptures remain untouched two years after installation. Participation in site management by a Local Agenda 21 group is being explored.



# Working with people

## Working in partnership - the Green Light Trust

There is great scope to add value to the process of planting a wood. Working with other partners is an effective way of achieving this. The Green Light Trust, an environmental charity specialising in drama and story telling, worked with 21 schools near Woods on your Doorstep sites between 1998 and 2001. At each wood they held a workshop for the children followed by a planting event. The school children learnt a special planting song and dance, which they performed at the wood after planting the trees. As well as being hugely enjoyable, these events helped to enhance the feeling of local 'ownership' of each woodland.



*'It actually felt quite good as I was putting my seedling into the ground because I was thinking in about 80 years' time this tree will be a lot bigger and I'll have loads of grandchildren and I'll be able to take them down to Westfield Wood and say: 'This is the tree that I planted'.'*

Aron Robinson, age 11  
Wigginton Primary School, North Yorkshire

resolved by discussion and careful design.

We also seek input on the design of each woodland. At this stage it is important to inform as well as ask for people's views. In particular, it is useful to clarify the constraints, make clear the practicalities of woodland establishment and explain our objectives. The impact of different options in terms of biodiversity and future maintenance can be explained. People should be encouraged to look at the site in a wider context and not to think only 'within the boundary fence'.

Lastly, while working with people is a central element of all woodland-creation projects, it is necessary to make a sensible judgement about how much formal consultation is required. Provided that those people immediately affected by the woodland have expressed support, most communities prefer action to consultation. 'The optimism of the action is better than the pessimism of the thought.'<sup>12</sup>

## Involving everyone

One of the best ways to involve people in creating a new woodland is to have a tree-planting day. Even very small children are capable

of planting trees well, given clear instructions and a bit of supervision. Involving children is also an important way of encouraging them to value the new wood and to take care of it.

In recent years we have had a nationwide programme of tree-planting events throughout the winter. In the winter of 2000-2001 over 5,000 people

attended 63 Woods on your Doorstep planting events and planted 55,000 trees. Some of these events were



attended by more than 200 people of different ages, illustrating the support for direct local action to improve the environment.

At many of these events local people brought along trees grown from local seed to plant in the new wood. At Hartest in Suffolk, primary school children planted their new woodland with oaks grown from seed that they had collected two years previously.

Names for new woodland might be based on historical evidence, local customs or characters, or specific features of the site. The variety of names for Woods on your Doorstep sites illustrates the way in which new names can reflect local distinctiveness. Each of these names was chosen by local people and contains a local story or fragment of local history, showing how planting a new wood can be part of building a 'sense of place'.



Photographs from left:

Planting event at Dunton Green  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

Millennium seat at Littlewood, East Sussex  
by Alison Crowe

Boyden Wood, Dorset in 1979, 1985 & 1999  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

Inset: *The Lorax* at Hainault Forest  
by Alex von Koettlitz/Woodland Trust Picture Library

Organising events and placing pieces of art in woods can provide a way of drawing in visitors who might not otherwise experience a woodland. Sculpture works well in woodland, particularly on the urban fringe.

Encouraging local people to monitor how the wood develops over time is also a good way of sustaining interest. A thorough survey of the site before planting can be followed by periodic observations of birds, butterflies and plants. Fixed-point photography is also an excellent method for monitoring long-term change in woodland. Our work to support the UK Phenology Network to monitor seasonal events illustrates the way that simple local monitoring of this kind can contribute valuable scientific data.

## A selection of names of Woods on your Doorstep sites

|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Meridian Wood       | The Brynna          |
| The Drum            | Abbots Wood         |
| Top Ardles Wood     | Monks Rest Wood     |
| Killaloo Wood       | The Nymph Hay       |
| Windmill Piece      | Half Moon Wood      |
| Harnser Wood        | Charleycombe Wood   |
| Cow Hollow Wood     | Little Giant Wood   |
| Crown Meadow Wood   | Vecklands           |
| The Sibsey Wood     | Crossland           |
| Silver Eel Wood     | Dutchie's Orchard   |
| Corrog Wood         | Coed Creuddyn       |
| Croft Glebe         | The Jockies         |
| Pot Kiln Fields     | Eoves Wood          |
| Bonney Doles        | Wantley Dragon Wood |
| Blaby Oaks          | Whelkie Whin        |
| Hoggs Kiss Wood     | How Tun Wood        |
| Coed y Mwldan       | Sledge Wood         |
| Pen-y-Turnpike Wood | Old Laund Wood      |
| Pattles Fen         | Fox and Parrot Wood |
| Church Covert       | Wainstones Wood     |
| Stratfield Brake    | Middledyke          |
| Daeda's Wood        | Spud Wood           |
| Drumlamph Wood      | Koes Trannack       |
| St Martin's Wood    |                     |

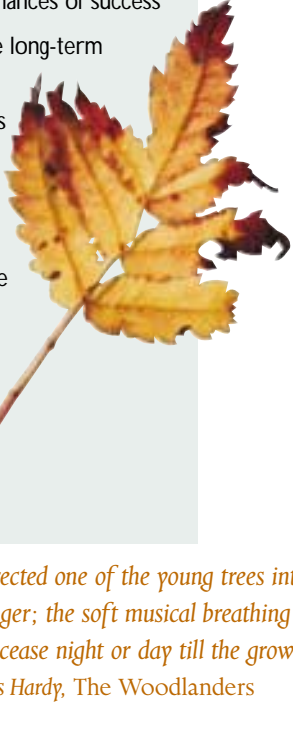


12 King M., *Community involvement and community development – a review of lessons for the future, in Community Forestry: a change for the better, Proceedings of a conference 7-8 December 1999*

# Lessons from practical experience

## Some principles for designing a native wood


- **Think outside the boundaries of the site.** Take account of how the site functions dynamically within the landscape and within the local ecological context
- **Accept that things will change.** Designing a new wood is merely the first step in creating a natural self-regulating system and it may not develop in the way that you expect or desire
- **Work with the grain.** Make as clear an assessment as you can of what the site will become if left to develop naturally. The closer your design can come to this, the greater the chances of success
- **Think long term.** At the design stage you make long-term management commitments. Satisfy yourself that these are sustainable. Designing a wood involves defining a management plan at the same time
- **Keep it simple.** Our experience shows that simple designs have been proved to be most successful. Remember that there is always scope for adding features later on
- **Remain humble.** Remember that most of the finest examples of secondary woodland have occurred naturally without any human intervention at all



*'She erected one of the young trees into its hole, and held up her finger; the soft musical breathing instantly set in which was not to cease night or day till the grown tree should be felled.'*  
Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders*

## Designing woods for the long term

The most important step in the design of a new woodland is deciding on the objectives. In our case the aim is to create a native woodland that, in the long term, will function as part of a sustainable natural system. In addition, we wish to create a wood that is welcoming and suitable for visitors. We wish to see a wood containing locally native species, that is developing through natural processes of regeneration and decay, with a balanced age structure and a good proportion of old trees. This long-term vision frames our decisions at the design stage and means that we may reach different conclusions from a landowner planting



a wood for reasons of sport, commercial forestry, or landscape.

Existing guides to woodland design place great emphasis on issues of landscape, often providing detailed prescriptions of woodland-edge structure and patterns of woodland and open ground.<sup>13</sup> Our view is that at least as much emphasis should be placed on ecology and the practicalities of future management. Complex designs, which might be appropriate for an amenity planting, often prove impractical to manage at the woodland scale. Similarly, complex designs can also generate unsustainable long-term management commitments – they do not 'work with the grain'.



Designing a sustainable woodland also means considering future long-term costs and income. We can anticipate potential future costs and liabilities and, in some cases, minimise these through our planting design. Good design can also help to avoid future conflicts and concerns. Where a new wood borders an existing property, neighbours may be worried about shading, subsidence or security. Planting a belt of shrubs against the boundary can ameliorate these concerns. Thorny native shrubs such as blackthorn, hawthorn and gorse make an effective barrier, although this solution does take time.

Similarly, at some sites, future harvesting of

timber may prove to be a viable and desirable exercise. In these cases, we have designed the site to keep this open as an option (typically by planting trees at closer spacing and designing access routes accordingly).

Lastly, we aim to avoid ending up with a formula, where all new woods have a wide variety of tree species, a pond, a meadow, a glade and a group of conifers. Pure stands of trees look boring on paper, but majestic in reality, as anyone who has stood in a Chiltern beechwood will know. In both biodiversity and landscape terms, a virtually pure stand of a single species of tree may be both most appropriate and beneficial.

# Lessons from practical experience

## Planting patterns

The choice of tree species and their arrangement within the new woodland is determined by the long-term objectives at each site. Over the years we have used a range of different techniques, from natural regeneration to planting broadleaved trees amongst a conifer nurse crop. We have not used direct sowing of seed<sup>14</sup> or a successional approach<sup>15</sup> as advocated by some. Our current practice is based on a pragmatic judgement of 'what works best' in each location and in the context of our objectives.

Our early planting frequently used random planting of trees in intimate mixtures at wide spacing (3 metres apart or more). Our experience is that this approach led to a long 'establishment phase' leading to problems with noxious weeds and slower tree growth. Our aim now is to achieve canopy closure as soon as possible. For similar reasons, we do not employ complex planting patterns, or clumping of trees as advocated by the Forestry Commission.<sup>16</sup> Such complex patterns tend to create obstacles to management and it is not at all clear what ecological benefit this approach achieves.

Young woods tend to include uniform stands of even-aged trees and lack 'structural diversity' (ie, the presence of a range of sizes and ages of tree). We see little benefit in phasing the planting of woodland over a period of years, as this will make little discernible impact on the age structure in the long term. Instead, depending on

the objectives for the woodland, it is much more practical to improve structural diversity by management intervention as the trees grow. Coppicing or selective thinning of areas of the new woodland as it develops (in years 15 to 30) are preferred options to achieve a varied structure.

We now tend to plant sites at around 2-metre spacing along sinuous lines. This creates a random effect while still providing a discernible structure for ease of maintenance (a major problem with true random planting). Individual tree species are planted in stands of several dozen, interspersed with smaller trees and shrubs. This has a number of advantages:

- It provides a similar effect to that found in natural woods, where trees tend to occur in stands rather than as individuals
- It allows the rapid development of shade, which helps in the creation of a woodland 'feel' and the suppression of arable weeds
- It keeps open the option of future timber harvesting.



<sup>14</sup> Forestry Commission Handbook 11, *Creating and managing woodlands around towns*

<sup>15</sup> Baines C. and Smart J., *A guide to habitat creation*, GLC Ecology Handbook No.2, 1984

<sup>16</sup> Rodwell J.S. and Patterson G., *Forestry Commission Bulletin*, 112, 1994

<sup>17</sup> Rodwell J.S., *British Plant Communities*, Vol 1, Cambridge University Press, 1991

<sup>18</sup> *Seed Provenance*, Woodland Trust position statement No. 3





Photograph:  
A digital map of the planned planting areas at the Hucking Estate in Kent

## Species choice

Our choice of trees is based on what is appropriate to the site and the soil. This evaluation ensures that we plant species mixtures that reflect the local landscape and, equally importantly, that the trees have the best possible chance of survival. The National Vegetation Classification<sup>17</sup> and the Forestry Commission's Bulletin 112 give good guidance on the suitability of trees for different locations. But the National Vegetation Classification should not be regarded as a rigid guide to species composition. In many cases planting takes place on soils that have been radically altered by agriculture and it is a matter of informed guesswork what the final composition of the woodland will be.

At sites which are community-led, in urban locations or isolated from other habitats, we take the view that we should not necessarily be

too purist about excluding much-loved introduced trees such as walnut, sweet chestnut, horse chestnut, or even wellingtonia. These trees are not dangerously invasive and are now a familiar element of many British landscapes. New woods have a cultural importance as well as an ecological one.

We are committed to the use of native broad-leaved trees grown from seed of local provenance. The importance of local provenance is not yet fully understood, but the precautionary approach suggests that we should try to retain the current range of local genetic variation within our native trees. Ideally the aim should be to use seed gathered from nearby ancient woods. For example, at Long Close Wood, part of a 80-hectare (200-acre) site within the National Forest, we have planted over 100,000 oak trees which have been grown from seed collected from ancient woodland in Leicestershire.

## Why are provenance and origin important?

- **Improved growth** – for native British species such as birch and Scots pine, trees of British provenance show better growth rates than those where the seed has been imported from Europe. An exception to this is oak, where no clear evidence has been found to show that trees of British provenance grow better than those from the rest of Europe.
- **Better chances of survival** – it has been shown that trees of British provenance are better able to adapt to British climatic conditions. The Continent has very warm summers and very cold winters whereas the British climate is more temperate due to the effect of the Gulf Stream. Continental conditions affect the date of bursting of buds in spring and the phases of growth throughout the summer and this can severely affect the chances of a newly planted tree surviving.
- **Protection of the local environment** – there is a well-balanced relationship between native trees and the wildlife they support. The trees of central and eastern Europe have been separated from British trees for tens of thousands of years and hence the wildlife which they support has evolved separately. It is feared that large-scale introduction of European trees into Britain could lead to forests which cannot support some of Britain's native wildlife and some species could be threatened. The effect could be passed on up the food chain, as many birds feed on insects and caterpillars, which rely on trees for their habitats.
- **'Genetic pollution'** – the adaptations made by native trees over thousands of years have given them many characteristics which could be lost if they are allowed to cross-pollinate with trees of foreign origin. Amongst other things, this could lead to dramatic changes in the rural landscape, in which large native trees such as oaks often provide prominent features.<sup>18</sup>

# Lessons from practical experience

## Advantages of natural regeneration

- It can produce a woodland largely composed of trees of local provenance
- It produces a natural woodland structure
- It can be inexpensive

## Disadvantages of natural regeneration

- Lack of control over species composition. An area may regenerate through a successional scrub community, rather than directly to woodland. Alternatively, invasive introduced trees or plants may regenerate more effectively than the desired native trees
- The stocking density (ie, number of trees per hectare) of successful natural regeneration may well be below that required to gain support under the Woodland Grants Scheme. This will either mean forgoing the grant or planting in the gaps
- Areas left to regenerate can become infested with noxious weeds such as ragwort or thistle. This can lead to substantial costs if weed control is required
- Time. Natural regeneration requires patience and good site preparation. For example, a strong grass sward can delay regeneration for some years

## Using natural regeneration

Many of the finest examples of secondary woodland have arisen naturally without any human intervention. This has often occurred through the abandonment of farmland or former industrial land. Where a site for woodland creation borders an existing ancient woodland the use of natural regeneration could be the most desirable mechanism for establishing woodland. Regeneration makes use of the most local seed source possible and will also lead to a natural woodland structure. We are using this approach to expand Swan Wood in Essex.

Regeneration is unpredictable and can be slower than alternative methods such as planting. It can also be difficult to explain or justify to sponsors and grant-giving bodies. A regenerating woodland looks to the untrained eye like a neglected field that has been left to 'scrub over'. If regeneration is employed as an option then steps have to be taken

to explain the process both to supporters and neighbours.

Despite these caveats, natural regeneration is an immensely powerful force for creating woodland on a large scale. The challenge for us is to find ways of working with this process whenever we can.

Photograph:

St. Berteline's Wood, Runcorn  
by Jon Sparks ARPS



## **Designing open space in new woods**

Many woodland creation sites contain significant proportions of open space, a category that includes rides, glades, wayleaves and meadows. The relationship between open ground and biodiversity has been discussed earlier, but there is a range of other motivations for designing areas of open space in a new wood. It may be because of the presence of archaeological interest, or the preservation of views, or a desire to integrate the planting within the landscape. At some sites, open space is a product of the process of public consultation. Landscape change of any type can be unpopular, so the retention of open ground is often a compromise.

Whatever the reason for including open ground, we have learned that it is critical at the design stage to set clear objectives for open space within woodland and to define a future management regime. We also need to be realistic about what we can create and how we should use our resources.

It may be possible to sustain a hay meadow plant community on highly fertile ground, but it is likely to be a time-consuming and costly exercise. Management of open ground in areas with a high level of public access can also be problematic. Grazing open areas requires fencing and as a result an increased number of gates. This can add considerable expense and alter the character of the site. In addition, it is increasingly difficult to find graziers, particularly if there are high visitor numbers. The sale of hay-cutting rights may also not be an option if the grass is trampled or contaminated by dogs.

However, open areas in woodland do not have to be treated as traditional hay meadows. Meadows near woods are important as nectaring and foraging grounds, but these can equally be created through cutting every three to five years to favour coarse grasses and robust herbs. In many cases this is an appropriate and more sustainable management option. A similar conclusion applies to rides and glades in secondary woods.

# Lessons from practical experience



## Managing new woods

Successful woodland creation depends on the investment of considerable time and expenditure in the years following planting. In particular, there is a need for close attention during the first few growing seasons. This is the critical period for tree establishment, but also the period during which other management problems may become apparent (such as vandalism or the presence of deer and rabbits).

The most frequently voiced concern by managers of woodland creation sites is the issue of noxious weeds. Aside from the statutory responsibility to control them, their presence can create an impression of neglect in the eyes of visitors and jeopardise relationships with neighbours.

The key factor in the control of noxious weeds is good ground preparation before planting. Ideally it will involve taking a year to establish a good grass sward. This means resisting the temptation to gain income by letting the site for a season. The savings in long-term weed control invariably compensate for the loss of income.

At former arable sites, where weed problems tend to be most acute, it is our practice to sow a non-vigorous grass mix, typically dominated by fescues. Whereas coarser grasses might prove more effective in suppressing weeds, these tend to grow very tall and flop over onto the trees. This makes it difficult to establish and sustain a weed-free circle around each young tree. Furthermore, fescues are not very shade tolerant, so will tend to die out as the trees mature and allow woodland and hedgerow plants to establish early in the development of the new woodland.

Once the grass is sown it is vital that it is cut several times over the course of the growing season. This vastly reduces the establishment of annual weeds and encourages the grass to 'tiller'. Where grazing is possible, this may be an equally good, and more cost-effective, option.

Where weed problems are anticipated, mowing between the rows of trees in the summer can help to favour the grass species over the annual weeds. Timing of inter-row cutting can be problematic as the optimum time often corresponds with the nesting season. However, such issues are rarely insoluble and preventive action can help to minimise the need for less desirable and often more expensive weed-control options, such as hand pulling or spot spraying.



Photographs from left:

Coppicing at Hammond's Copse, Surrey  
by Brian Aldrich

Home Farm, Hampshire  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

New woods provide habitats for wild  
birds, including kestrels  
NHPA

Oak sapling  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

## Establishing and maintaining trees

Maintaining an area free of vegetation around the base of newly planted trees is one of the most important factors affecting their growth and survival.<sup>19</sup> On large-scale woodland creation sites, the use of herbicides remains the most effective way of achieving this, although we are exploring alternative options. At smaller sites we have used mulch mats and woodchip mulches.

At former arable sites, we have found that the presence of a 'plough pan', a hard layer below the soil surface, can also delay or prevent successful tree establishment. Where this is a concern,

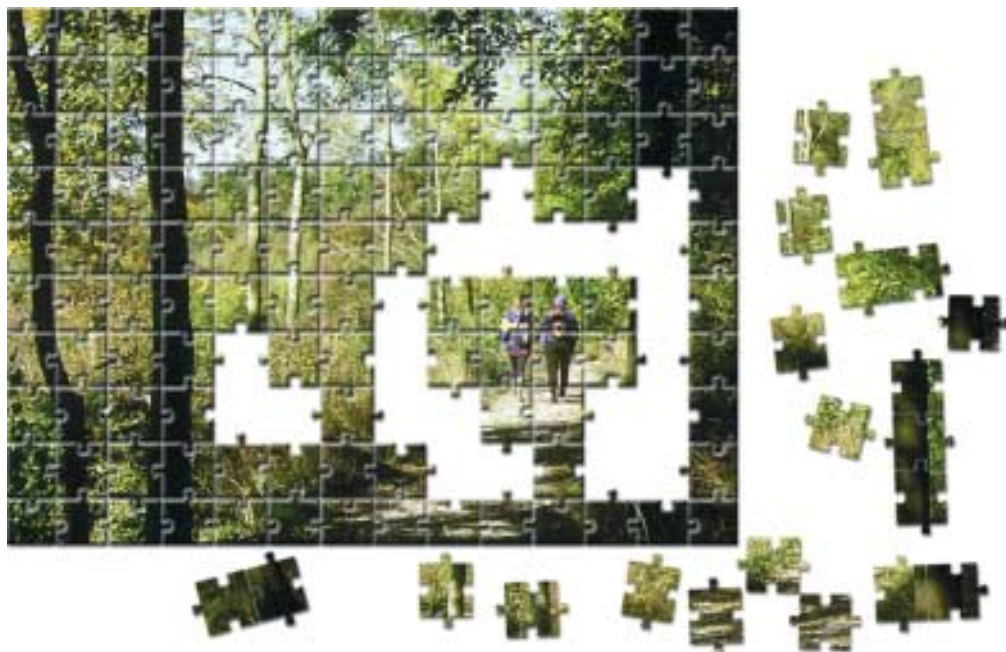
ripping of the soil before planting is now recommended. We are also investigating soil inversion, where the soil is deep ploughed, breaking the plough pan and burying weed seeds. This is a technique widely used in the Netherlands.

Predation by animals is the other major cause of tree failure. Voles cause damage by gnawing at the base of trees. Their populations fluctuate dramatically, but if planting coincides with a peak year they can have a very severe impact on young woodland. The presence of rabbits, hares and deer means that the protection of young trees through the use of tree shelters or rabbit fencing is essential.

<sup>19</sup> Kerr G. and Williams H.V., *Woodland creation: experience from the National Forest*, Forestry Commission Technical Paper 27, 1999



## Next steps



The need for new woodland is more urgent now than it has ever been. There is growing awareness of the long-term implications of habitat fragmentation and changes in land management on our ancient woods. Action to preserve the fragments of ancient woodland that remain is not enough on its own to conserve their beauty and diversity. It is also necessary to act on a national scale to buffer our ancient woods from the external pressures of agricultural intensification and to build landscapes that are ecologically sustainable in the long term in the face of climate change. Creating new woodland is an essential element of this.

Woodland is a part of our cultural heritage. The love of trees extends to most of the population and for many of us our woods are the closest link we have to the natural world.

Planting woods with people and communities is both a gesture of hope and an immensely powerful way of connecting individuals with their local landscape and natural environment: something that we recognise as a key challenge for conservation. Woods provide a means to build those links, not only through the planting of trees, but through active and sustained involvement as living and working places, providing timber, benefiting health, reducing pollution<sup>20</sup> and building a sense of place.<sup>21</sup>

In the last three decades we have worked to create hundreds of new woods for people to enjoy, from tiny copses to those covering hundreds of acres. We are now part of a wider movement seeking to create new wild spaces for individuals and communities.<sup>22</sup> New woods for people will be even more important in this century than they were in the last.

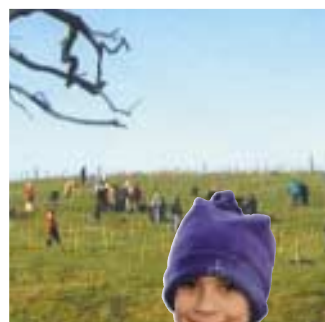
*‘Gather up the fragments that remain,  
that nothing be lost’  
St John, chapter.6,verse 12*

Photographs from left:

Planting at Tynings Wood, Bristol  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

The hills are alive with the sound of  
planting: Bonney Doles, Nottinghamshire  
Woodland Trust Picture Library

Creating new woodland  
Woodland Trust Picture Library



## We have a clear agenda for new woodland in the future:

- We wish to use new woodland planting as one means of reversing the fragmentation of natural habitats. This will involve targeting some of our efforts at the most threatened and important areas
- We will continue to support the momentum of the community woodland movement, in particular by working with groups of people and local communities to help them create and take ownership of new local woods. Our involvement as a landowner and implementer will be complemented by improving our skills at supporting others, providing information and practical help
- We believe that everyone should have the right to an accessible woodland within reasonable distance of their home. Woodland creation is one way in which we can fill the current gaps in access
- We will use our newly planted woods to help people understand and appreciate their relationship with the natural world
- We will contribute to the debate about the creation of new woodland by presenting a well-argued case for targets for expansion based on woodland's social and environmental benefits

20 Broadmeadow M.S.J and Freer-Smith P.H.,  
*Urban woodland and the benefits for local  
air quality, Department of the Environment  
Research for Amenity Trees, No. 5, 1996*

21 *Trees Matter: the benefits of trees and  
woods in towns, National Urban Forestry  
Unit, 1998*

22 *Community Forestry: a change for the  
better, Proceedings of a conference 7-8  
December 1999 (see page 17)*



## New woods for people

The Woodland Trust was founded in 1972 and is the UK's leading conservation organisation dedicated solely to the protection of native woodland. The Trust achieves its aims through a combination of acquiring woodland and sites for planting and through advocacy of the importance of protecting ancient woodland, enhancing its biodiversity, expanding native woodland cover and increasing public enjoyment of woodland.

The Trust relies on the generosity of the public, industry, commerce and agencies to carry out its work. To find out how you can help, and about membership details, please contact one of the addresses opposite.

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