

Wider application

This innovative project takes a wide-ranging, holistic approach to the revitalisation of historic but neglected woodlands. Practical woodland management, improved public access, well researched interpretation, educational outreach work and environmental art have all been combined with well co-ordinated community involvement and delivered through an effective broad-based partnership. With so many similarly neglected small historic woodlands in need of restoration, the *Fuelling a Revolution* model deserves to be widely adopted.

Further information

National Urban Forestry Unit

This leaflet is one of a series produced by the National Urban Forestry Unit. NUFU is a charitable trust which provides a national focus for the exchange of information and good practice in urban forestry. If you would like further information on other case studies, or if you have examples of good practice to share, please contact:

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The South Yorkshire Forest Partnership

The South Yorkshire Forest is one of the 12 Community Forests in England. It seeks to create high-quality environments for millions of people by diversifying land use, revitalising derelict land, enhancing biodiversity and providing new opportunities for leisure, recreation, cultural activity, education and healthy living in a comprehensive package of social and economic regeneration.

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Further reading

Jones M & Warburton R (1993) *Sheffield's Woodland Heritage*. Green Tree Publications
Jones M & Warburton R (1995) *Rotherham's Woodland Heritage*. Rotherwood Press
Jones M & Warburton R (2000) *The Making of the South Yorkshire Landscape*. Wharnccliffe Books
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Urban Forestry in Practice

Revitalising neglected historic woodlands



CASE STUDY 47

Revitalising neglected historic woodlands

Introduction

In many urban areas, small woodlands still survive as remnants of extensive historic forests. For centuries they were intensively managed and highly productive but almost all of them have become neglected. This is because other materials have replaced woodland products in agriculture, construction and industry. As a consequence these woodlands have deteriorated, lost much of their value for wildlife and for local people, and now many of them suffer from vandalism and fly-tipping.

Many of these historic woodland fragments have strong links with their productive past. They offer great scope for nature conservation, educational use and general recreational enjoyment by the public. However, many tend to be in local authority ownership, and few councils are able to commit the resources needed to restore them. Furthermore, in their neglected and abused state they are regarded as unattractive and unsafe by those local people who might otherwise appreciate them.

Specific example

Project name and location

FUELLING A REVOLUTION - the woods that founded the steel country, **SOUTH YORKSHIRE**, UK.

Project partners

- South Yorkshire Forest Partnership
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sheffield City Council
- Wickersley Parish Council
- Barnsley Education-Business Partnership
- Countryside Agency

Project objectives

The forests of South Yorkshire were used historically to provide charcoal and wood fuel throughout the early decades of the Industrial Revolution. The *Fuelling a Revolution* programme is making use of that strong sense of productive history to inspire the restoration of 545 ha of woodland to their former glory on 35 historic sites. In particular, the programme aims to:

- Increase awareness and appreciation of the landscape heritage importance of the woods through improved interpretation, protection of their historical interest and improvement of their value for nature conservation
- Increase enjoyment of the woodlands for the local community and for other visitors, by making them safer through much better public use
- Provide an educational resource for local schools



South Yorkshire's woods were an important energy source as long ago as the Middle Ages but the woods lie over deep coal reserves. When coke replaced charcoal as an industrial fuel at the end of the 18th century, the woods began to be neglected

Project description

Fuelling a Revolution is a £2 million, five year programme running until April 2005. 75% of the cost is being met through a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

All 35 heritage woods lie within the South Yorkshire Community Forest (52 ha in Barnsley, 235 ha in Rotherham and 258 ha in Sheffield). The smallest is 2 ha in area and the largest covers 83 ha. 34 of the woodlands were already in local authority ownership, but Canklow Wood, close to the centre of Rotherham, was purchased as part of the project.

The project is restoring the 35 woodlands to a condition that will allow them to be managed in a sustainable way by their local authority owners and this involves increased community involvement, professional interpretation and much improved public access. Packs of educational materials have been produced for each of the woods which include curriculum materials for *Key Stages 1, 2 and 3*. These have been distributed free to schools in the locality of each wood.

After the five year programme ends, the local authority owners are committed to fund continuing management through their own revenue budgets, supplemented by government grants and a modest income from timber sales.



Rockley blast furnace was built around 1700 and was fuelled by charcoal throughout the first half of the 18th century

Results

The achievements of the first two years of the project include:

- Archaeological and ecological surveys of all the woodlands
- Plans prepared for management and interpretation
- Local employment through the use of contractors to carry out habitat management and public access work in all 35 woodlands
- Boundary protection, rubbish removal and the control of invasive plant species
- Interpretative leaflets for every woodland, interpretative signs in most and 295 additional interpretation events
- A promotional website - www.heritagewoodsonline.co.uk
- Education materials for all the woodlands and 390 schools events
- A heritage woodland theatre production and six pieces of environmental art