

woodland

Description of Habitat

At the end of the last Ice Age, Wrexham initially developed a mixture of broad-leaved and coniferous woodlands of birch, pine and willow and through the course of natural processes these species were succeeded by oak, ash and lime. Our early ancestors began to clear the woodlands to create farmland and as a result the woodland component steadily declined so that by the medieval period, woodland cover was little higher than now. Today, only 2.6 % of the original ancient woodland area supporting our native broad-leaved tree species remain in Wrexham.



seeding pioneer species such as birch and goat willow, which are relatively short-lived and are soon overtaken by other light demanding climax species such as oak, ash and elm. Below the canopy, shade bearing species such as hazel, holly and hawthorn await their niche when a mature neighbouring tree dies. The balance of this perpetual woodland cycle of succession is disturbed when woodlands are clear-cut or intensively grazed.

The main woodland types of biodiversity significance in Wrexham are upland oak, mixed upland ash, wet and scrub woodlands as well as veteran trees and wood-pasture.

Current Status

Most of the woodlands in Wrexham contain one or more of the following species: oak, ash, elm, sycamore, birch, cherry, hazel, alder, rowan, hawthorn and holly. Their ability to grow alone or in mixtures, usually in small areas on steep sided valleys or neglected agricultural land, constitutes the woodlands we associate with the Wrexham countryside. Left to nature, tree less areas are first populated by light

The ecological significance of ancient woodland in Wrexham is reflected in the abundance and diversity of species of both flora and fauna. The most notable botanical component of ancient woodlands are the diversity of flowers, ferns, mosses and liverworts which in turn support a rich diversity of birds, animals and insects.



Pontfadog Oak



Species Associated With Woodlands

Many National Biodiversity Priority species such as spotted flycatcher, song thrush, lesser horseshoe bat and bullfinch require woodlands to survive. Some of the woodland habitats in Wrexham County Borough support rare species of invertebrates.



Oak

Distribution

International Distribution

Predominantly the woodland types found in Wrexham are restricted to the oceanic fringe of western Europe, occurring in Britain and Ireland, and limited areas of Norway, France, Spain and Portugal. Britain and Ireland have the more extensive and best-developed examples, and therefore have a significant international responsibility towards the habitats.

Distribution in Britain

Within Britain, the woodlands found in Wrexham occur mainly in Southwest England, Wales, northern England and Scotland.

The total area is uncertain due to incomplete inventories and complication over limits of the definition. However, it is estimated to be in the order of 500,000 hectares.

Distribution in Wales

Wales has an estimated 65,000 hectares of broadleaved woodland, some 13 % of the UK resource and this is within the centre of the UK range with examples of upland and lowland woodland communities.

Distribution in Wrexham

In Wrexham there is 1760 hectares of broadleaved woodland covering 3 % of the County Borough, however only a small proportion is classified as ancient. Both broadleaved and coniferous woods are more abundant in the western half of Wrexham County Borough especially in the Glyn Ceiriog Valley.

Table 1: Species associated with woodlands

SPECIES	HABITAT	STATUS
Mammals		
Otter	Wet woods	Nationally important
Bats	All woods	Nationally important
Badger	All woods	Locally important
Birds		
Spotted flycatcher	All woods	Nationally important
Song thrush	All woods	Nationally important
Bullfinch	All woods	Nationally important
Nightjar	Scrub	Nationally important
Lesser spotted woodpecker	All woods	Locally important
Invertebrates		
Argent and sable moth	Wet woods	Nationally important
A crane fly (<i>Lipsothrix nervosa</i>)	Wet woods	Nationally important
Small Pearl bordered fritillary	All woods	Locally important
Plants		
Herb paris	Ancient woods	Locally important
Bryophytes	All woods	Locally important
Fungi	All woods	Locally important
Lichens	All woods	Locally important



Badger

and all existing woodland communities be appropriately managed.

A series of " woodland initiatives" (e.g. Sylvanus in Southwest England, Coed Cymru in Wales, Cumbria Broadleaves, Highland Birchwoods) have been prominent in successfully managing these woodlands at a local level, with support from, and using grant aid from the Forestry Commission, local authorities and other agencies.

Survey, Research and Monitoring.

The Clwyd Indicative Forestry Strategy (Clwyd Landscape Assessment 1995) seeks to guide woodland creation taking into account the benefit to employment, landscape enhancement, amenity use and wildlife.

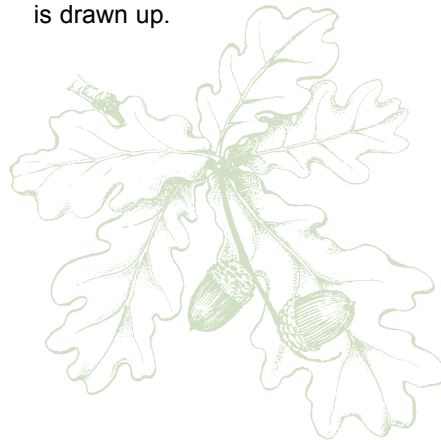
The Clwyd Inventory of Ancient Woodlands (NCC 1989) identifies

all ancient woodland sites in Wrexham over 2ha.

Wrexham wildlife site survey identified woodlands of high wildlife value (1997-1998).

The biodiversity aspect of Wrexham LANDMAP study (due for completion 2002) has identified all UK biodiversity priority habitat types in the County Borough.

New initiatives within the Tir Gofal scheme state that woodlands greater than 1 hectare entering this scheme require an ecological survey before a management plan is drawn up.



Links to Other Action Plans

-  **SAP for Song Thrush in Wrexham County Borough**
-  **HAP for Veteran Trees and Wood-pasture in Wrexham County Borough**
-  **HAP for Upland Oakwoods in Wrexham County Borough***
-  **HAP for Mixed Ashwoods in Wrexham County Borough***
-  **HAP for Wet Woods in Wrexham County Borough***
-  **HAP for Scrub Woodlands in Wrexham County Borough***
-  **HAP for Hedgerows in Wrexham County Borough***

*N.B * Action Plans to be published by 2003*

Objectives and Targets

- 1** *Raise awareness of local, national and international importance of woodlands and associated flora and fauna.*
- 2** *Maintain the existing area of woodlands in Wrexham County Borough.*
- 3** *Improve the condition of 10% of existing ancient woodlands in Wrexham County Borough by 2010.*
- 4** *Increase the area of woodlands in Wrexham County Borough by 50% before 2050.*
- 5** *Identify all priority woodland sites in Wrexham County Borough.*
- 6** *Assess the condition of priority woodland types within Wrexham County Borough through survey.*

Sources of Information

-  UK Forestry Standard 1997
-  UK Biodiversity Steering Group 1995
-  Clwyd Landscape Assessment 1995
-  Clwyd Inventory of Ancient Woodlands Nature Conservancy Council 1989.
-  Forestry Commission Practice Guides 1-9
-  Woodlands for Wales (2001) National Assembly for Wales. Published by the Forestry Commission.

Proposed Action with Lead Agencies

Action	Objectives	Partners	Target
Policy Protect woodlands through local plans and development control policies and the use of Tree Preservation Orders and European legislation.	2	WCBC	Ongoing
Ensure all Priority Habitat Woodlands are designated as SSSI or wildlife sites.	5, 6	WCBC, CCW	2005
Approve and encourage appropriate management plans for woodlands.	2, 3, 4	WCBC, FC, EA, CCW, Coed Cymru	Ongoing
Work within the spirit of the "Woodland for Wales" (NAW Strategy 2001).	2, 3, 4	WCBC, CCW, Coed Cymru, Woodland Managers & Owners	Over 50 years
Provide the local forest and timber industry with effective business support.	1, 2	NAW, WDA, WCBC, FC, Coed Cymru	Ongoing
Promote the concept of new Community Woodlands across Wrexham.	4	WCBC, FC, WDA	Ongoing
Practical Management Implement the UK Forestry Standards 1997.	3	FC	Ongoing
Promote the uptake of management agreements through Woodland Grant Schemes and Tir Gofal.	1, 3, 4	Woodland Owners & Managers, FC, CCW, Coed Cymru	Ongoing
Encourage the conversion of conifer plantations on ancient woodland sites.	1, 2, 3	Woodland Owners & Managers, FC, CCW, Coed Cymru	Ongoing
Promote the sustainable management of woodlands to maintain and enhance their structural diversity and recreational and wildlife values.	1, 2, 3	WCBC, FC, CCW, Coed Cymru	Ongoing
Ensure that prescriptions within agri-environmental schemes take full account of the management requirements of woodlands.	1, 2, 3	FC, CCW, NAWAD	Ongoing
Investigate and support the development of local and national markets for sustainable woodland products.	2, 3	WCBC, FC, WDA, Coed Cymru	Ongoing
Identify potential areas for creating new woodlands and target grant aid at these areas. (20% increase in woodland cover.)	1, 4	WCBC, FC, CCW, Coed Cymru, Land Owners	2020
Create new woodlands through planting trees with the appropriate local provenance or utilising natural regeneration. (20% increase in current area of up oakwood cover.)	1, 4	FC, WCBC, CCW, NT, WT, RSPB, Coed Cymru, Land Owners	2020
Reduce woodland fragmentation though encouraging land owners to co-operate.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	WCBC, FC, CCW, Coed Cymru, Land Owners	Ongoing
Advisory Compile new Indicative Woodland Strategy for Wrexham.	1,5	WCBC	2005
The creation of new woodlands should avoid other habitats of nature conservation interest and aim to link fragments of woodlands.	5, 6	FC, CCW, EA, WCBC	Ongoing



<i>Proposed Action with Lead Agencies</i>			
Action	Objectives	Partners	Target
Monitoring and Research			
Identify all Priority Habitat Woodland sites through a programme inventory of available data (wildlife site surveys, LANDMAP and phase II surveys) and survey work.	5, 6	WCBC, CCW	Before end of 2003
Monitor managed Priority Habitat Woodlands.	3, 5, 6	WCBC, CCW, FC	2010
Communications and Publicity			
Utilise current publicised material.	1	WCBC, CCW, FC, Coed Cymru	Ongoing
Highlight economic, environmental and social benefits of sound long term management.	1, 2	WCBC, CCW, FC, Coed Cymru	Ongoing
Raise public awareness of Priority Habitat Woodlands and their conservation and recreational importance through open days, walks, interpretation and events.		NWWT, WCBC, CCW, FC, Coed Cymru	Ongoing
Promote the use of Community Woodlands in the Country Parks as multi-use recreational facilities.		WCBC	Ongoing

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Further information

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A large print version of this Plan is available.
 Please call 01978 292019.



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