

CREDENHILL PARK WOOD: RESTORATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURE WITHIN ANCIENT WOODLAND



Introduction & Location

An ancient woodland site of 91Ha (225 acres) containing a Scheduled Ancient Monument in the form of a prehistoric Hill Fort

Location: Credenhill, Hereford

Grid reference: SO 450 445

Objectives:

The long term aim for the Scheduled Archaeology key feature is to conserve its archaeological value by –

- furthering our archaeological knowledge of the feature and
- manipulating the tree canopy to secure monument survival and enhance woodland biodiversity

Actions:

- A programme of further archaeological research to increase public understanding and enjoyment, whilst also helping conservation of the feature itself
- Management of tree cover – tree canopy reduction, ground vegetation management and prevention of tree regeneration on the key feature
- Restoration of ancient woodland covered by conifer plantation (PAWS)
- Establishment of local community volunteer group to aid in understanding and enjoyment of the site, whilst also contributing practical maintenance

Achievements:

- Improved knowledge about and enjoyment of a major biodiversity and cultural feature in Herefordshire
- Creation of a management regime designed to preserve both historical and ecological assets
- Improved management and public access to alleviate recreational and other pressures on the monument
- An increase in woodland biodiversity via PAWS restoration, wider provision of deadwood habitat and promotion of mature and ancient trees

Background:

- Credenhill Park Wood, an ancient woodland located within the Hereford Hills major ancient woodland concentration, was acquired in 2002. It occupies steep slopes and a prominent place in the landscape. The scheduled ancient monument crowns the top of the site with oval shaped ramparts forming an Iron Age Hill Fort enclosure of around 20 Ha (49 acres) in size. It is a well visited site, serviced by a car park entrance, with horse access permitted on a circular route by license only.
- During the initial period of site management, delivery of a project funded by HLF brought about a series of community based events and initiatives, out of which emerged a large amount of historical evidence to inform a Conservation Management Plan drawn up by Herefordshire Archaeology. This, together with information on fungi, butterflies, wet woodland species and an ecological history, combined together to form the basis of the Trust's Woodland Management Plan.
- As with all ancient woodland sites, the historic environment of Credenhill Park Wood is rich and diverse, containing living archaeology, such as veteran yew trees, and historic archaeology in the form of fort banks, hedge banks, saw pits and old tracks etc.
- This management regime resonates well with historical and ecological evidence that the hill fort interior and some of the surrounding woodland is likely to have been historically characterised by a sparse tree canopy and woodland pasturage management.

Quotes:

- *"In the early days creating and consulting on a future vision for Credenhill Park Wood was a challenge, but it's a shared journey of discovery: the local community with support and funding, the contractors and partners with ideas and enthusiasm, my colleagues and all of our many supporters."*
Jeremy Evans, Woodland Trust
- *"I'd not visited Park Wood before it was bought by the WT, despite living in the village for nearly 20 years. When health permits, I visit the site daily, making observations and joining working parties. When health doesn't permit, it's the thought of returning to the woods that speeds recovery."*
Warden & community group member

Partners:

Heritage Lottery Fund
Herefordshire Archaeology

Funding:

Woodland Trust
HLF funding
Funding from other grants, trusts and

WMRFF Objectives: Main Theme & Others

Enhancing Biodiversity: Enhancing woodland biodiversity by restoring ancient woodland planted with non-native conifers

Fostering Social Inclusion: Successful engagement of the local community in woodland management

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