



Ancient Woodland Inventory for the Chilterns

Appendix - Wycombe District



Chiltern
District Council



1. Introduction

This appendix summarises results from the Chilterns Ancient Woodland Survey for the whole of Wycombe District in the County of Buckinghamshire (see map 1 for details). For more information on the project and its methodology, please refer to the main report,¹ which can be downloaded from www.chilternsaonb.org

The Chilterns Ancient Woodland Survey area includes parts of Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire. The extent of the project area included, but was not confined to, the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The work follows on from previous revisions in the South East.² The Chilterns survey was hosted by the Chilterns Conservation Board with support from the Chiltern Woodlands Project, Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre (SBIC). The work was funded by Buckinghamshire County Council, Chilterns Conservation Board, Chiltern District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Forestry Commission, Hertfordshire County Council, Natural England and Wycombe District Council.

Project aims

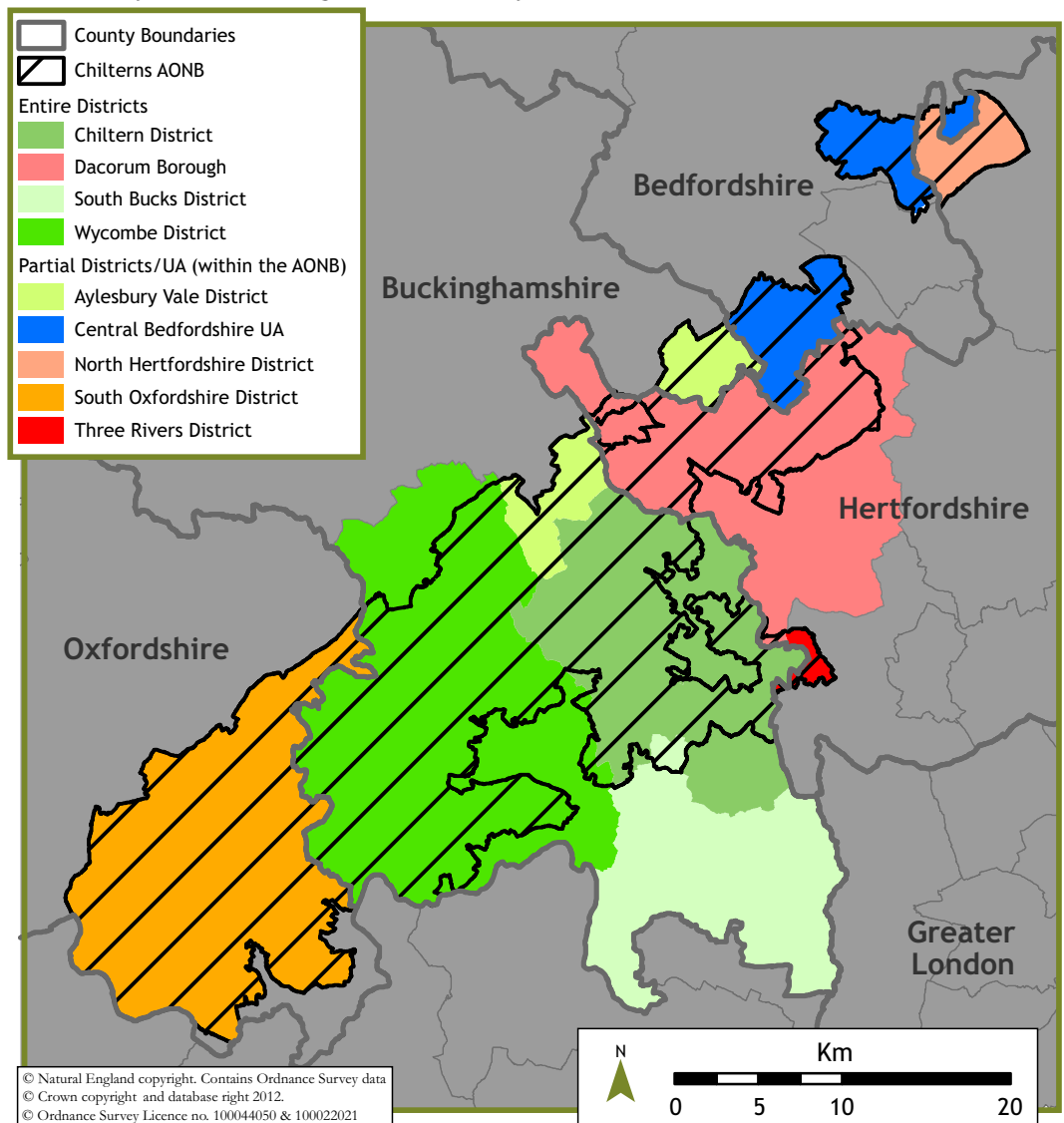
The primary aim of the survey was to revise and update the Ancient Woodland Inventory and to include ancient woodlands less than two hectares in size.

Background

Comparisons have been made to the 2003 digitized version of the Ancient Woodland Inventory created by the Forestry Commission (from which more detailed statistics at the district and borough level can be derived than from the paper reports). Hereafter, referred to as the 'FC digitized AWI'.

Map 1:

The Survey Area, showing Local Authority areas covered and the Chilterns AONB



¹ Benstead-Hume et al (2012)

² Westaway, et al (2007a); Westaway et al (2007b); Sansum et al (2009); Hume et al (2010); Davies et al (2011)

2. Ancient woodland definitions

Woodlands in Britain are routinely classified as 'ancient woodland' or 'recent woodland' according to their history. The concept of 'ancient woodland' is embedded in national forestry and nature conservation policy.

Recent woodland

Secondary or recent woodland (less than 400 years old) is either planted or has been allowed to grow naturally through regeneration. These woods are therefore excluded from the inventory.

Ancient woodland

English Nature³ (now part of Natural England) defines ancient woodland as:

'An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. Ancient woodland is divided into ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites. Both types of stand are classed as ancient woods.'

The date, 1600 AD, was chosen by Peterken,⁴ because it reflected the point at which detailed maps started to become more common. Other dates could be argued for but 1600 has been adopted for policy and practical purposes in England. A wood may have been cut, felled or coppiced since 1600, but as long as the area has re-grown or been replanted shortly afterwards then it remains ancient. Ancient woodland therefore does not necessarily contain old trees. Ancient woodland is divided into ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites.

Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)

Ancient semi-natural stands are those that are composed predominantly of trees and shrubs native to the site that do not obviously originate from planting. They include stands that may have been managed by coppicing or pollarding.

Ancient replanted woodland (PAWS)

Ancient replanted woodland sites (also called Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites, or PAWS) are areas of ancient woodland where the original native tree cover has been felled and replaced by planted stock most commonly of a species not native to the site, for example conifers such as Norway spruce (*Picea abies*). The division between ASNW and PAWS may not always be easy to define.

Ancient wood pasture

Wood pastures were managed for both trees and livestock. They frequently occur in a mosaic with other habitats and the boundaries are often poorly defined. The original inventories were often inconsistent - some of these woodlands were classified whilst others were omitted. Re-examination of the evidence does not always support these decisions and can reveal a complex management history with a mixed pattern of woodland, grazing and shifting agricultural use. Pasture woodlands that showed a wooded nature throughout recent history were included in the revised inventory. These sites can be readily extracted from the dataset.

³ Kirby & Goldberg (2006)

⁴ Peterken (1977)

3. Methodology and Sources

Software

The woodland mapping and much of the historical research was done using a Geographic Information System (GIS). The GIS software used was ESRI ArcMap® 9.3.1.⁵ The resulting GIS database can be linked to external databases which hold more detailed site survey and archive data.

Data accrued from field surveys was held in a Recorder 6 database by the Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre, from which a report for each site outlining the main survey findings could be generated.⁶

Inventory revision

The procedure for revising the Ancient Woodland Inventory has three main elements:

Desk-based mapping

The capture of potential ancient woodland sites employed three key mapping elements:

- The current Ordnance Survey MasterMap® Topographic Layer
- High-resolution aerial photographs
- Ordnance Survey First Edition County Series 25 inch to 1 mile map (or Epoch 1 maps) (1865-85).⁷

This indicative dataset was then compared with the FC digitized AWI.

Historical Research

The indicative dataset was refined by comparison to two further map resources:

- The tithe maps (1837-51)
- Ordnance Survey Drawings, 2 inches to 1 mile (1804-1815)⁸

Features such as place names and woodland shape and situation in the landscape were also considered.

Field survey work

Field survey work was carried out to support the desk-based mapping. This work captured:

- Vascular plant species.
- Notable trees, e.g. veteran trees, pollards, coppice stools.
- Archaeological evidence such as saw pits, charcoal hearths, drainage systems, banks, mineral diggings, ridge and furrow markings and lynchets.
- Historical boundary features, e.g. wood banks, stubbed trees or outgrown hedges.
- Current management
- Uses or factors causing disturbance or damage to the wood.
- Structural and habitat diversity e.g. presence of dead wood, streams, ponds and depressions.

Semi-natural or replanted ancient woodland status

The Forestry Commission's National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (NIWT)⁹ was used as the core dataset to redefine the boundaries of PAWS and ASNW with reference to aerial photographs and the FC digitized AWI. Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland was used as the default classification where it was not possible to determine the woodland type.

Minimum size of a wood to be included in the inventory revision

0.25 ha was generally the lowest size of woodland polygon considered for inclusion in the revised inventory. However, each wood is considered separately and factors such as the location and historical extent of the woodland mean that some woods under 0.25 ha were included.

⁵ ESRI Inc (2009)

⁶ JNCC (2007)

⁷ Dates from the British Library: <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/maps/index.html>

⁸ Dates sourced from the British Library website: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/>

⁹ Smith (2000)

4. Results for Wycombe District

Table 1: Summary of the woodland area (hectares) and number of separate woodland parcels from the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (2002), the FC digitized AWI (2003) and the revised AWI (2012).

	Area	% of the total area	Number of woodland parcels	Average area of woodland parcel
Wycombe	32,457			
All woodlands (NIWT) >2 ha	6,091	18.77	908	6.71
FC digitized AWI (woods >2 ha)	3,674	11.32	436	8.43
Revised AWI (including woods <2 ha)	4,037	12.44	445	9.07
Overall ancient woodland gain - compared to FC digitized AWI (2003)	363			

Table 2: Ancient woodland type.

Ancient woodland type	Area (hectares)	% of ancient woodland area
Revised AWI - ASNW	2,746	68
Revised AWI - PAWS	1,291	32

Table 3: Selected findings from the field survey work

Damage Type	% of sites
Rubbish	37
Garden Waste	29
Invasive Species	22
Gardenization	16
Garden Planting	7
Human Disturbance	7
Rubble	7
Localised Damage	1
Other	1

Table 4: List of sites surveyed

Site Name	Grid reference	Area (hectares)	File code
Abbey Barn Lane Wood	SU 885 916	0.28	BU_293
Badgers Way Copse (Part Of Munces Wood)	SU 845 892	0.57	BU_35
Barrowcroft Wood A	SU 886 914	1.00	BU_291
Barrowcroft Wood B	SU 884 914	0.23	BU_292
Beechlands	SU 882 949	0.17	BU_93
Cockshoot Wood	SU 879 956	2.32	BU_90
Coney Copse	SU 878 865	3.03	BU_88
Craig's Wood	SU 898 954	2.12	BU_117
Deangarden Wood	SU 876 916	1.81	BU_290
Edge Of Hatches Wood	SU 842 894	0.90	BU_32
Five Acre Wood	SU 841 925	1.46	BU_28

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¹⁰ This is a unique code that can be used to cross reference data held within GIS and Recorder 6 databases.

Table 4: List of sites surveyed

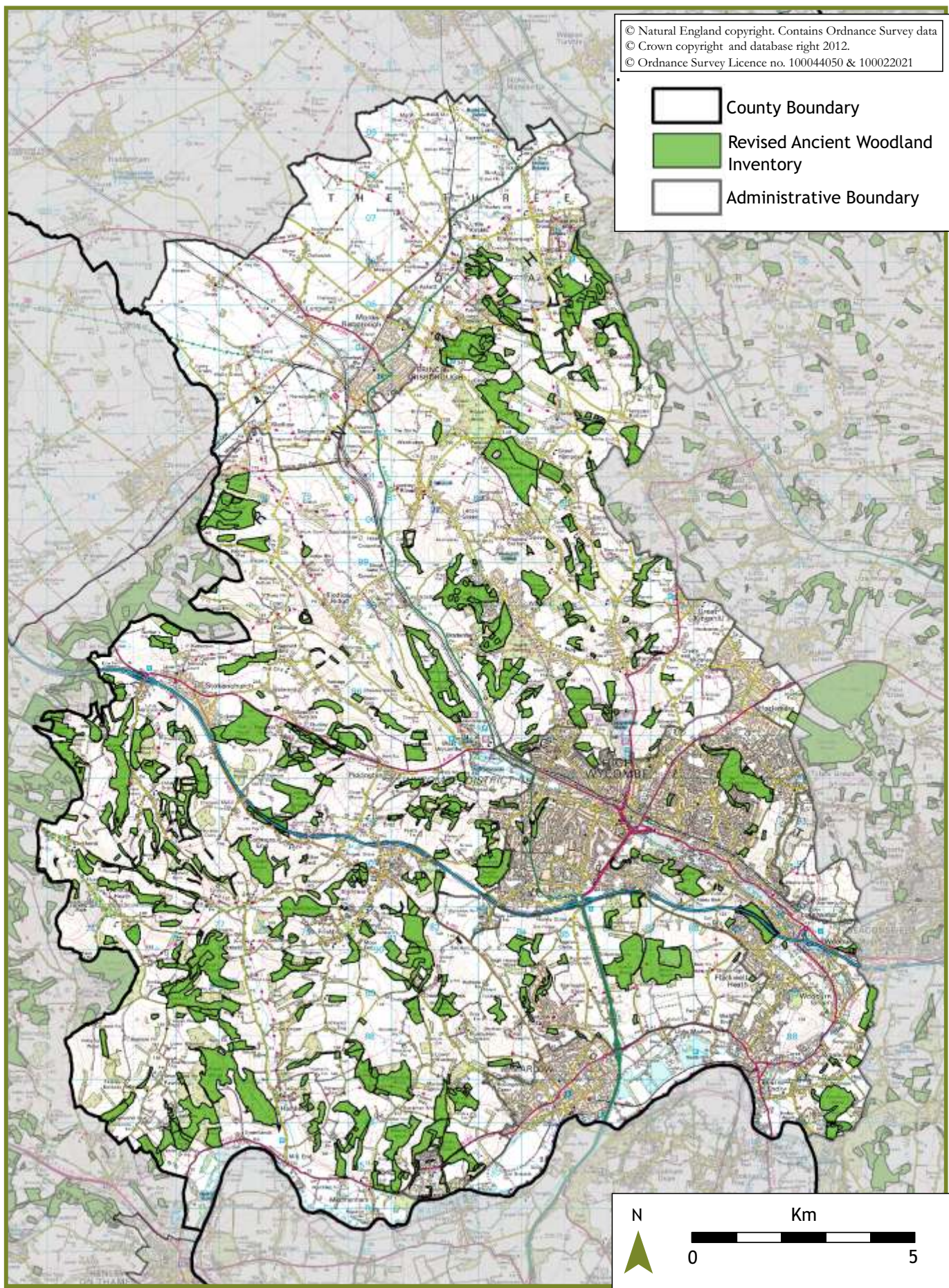
Site Name	Grid reference	Area (hectares)	File code
Flackwell Heath	SU 893 893	1.53	BU_112
Flackwell Heath Golf Club	SU 901 901	1.29	BU_125
Gomm's Wood	SU 892 927	0.84	BU_298
Grims Ditch	SU 828 990	1.38	HS_16
Hammersley Lane Shaw	SU 903 935	0.22	BU_140
Hammersley Shaw	SU 903 934	0.20	BU_138
Hanging Wood	SU 860 954	11.39	BU_47
Hatches Wood	SU 867 980	1.19	HS_242
Hazlemere Common	SU 889 957	0.57	BU_104
Hazlemere Common	SU 890 958	3.33	BU_105
Hedsor Lodge A	SU 907 859	4.75	BU_164
Hedsor Lodge B	SU 908 861	1.17	BU_172
Hollow Way	SP 819 015	0.77	HS_12
Horsenden House A	SP 794 028	0.12	HS_5
Horsenden House B	SP 794 029	0.14	HS_3
Hughenden Manor Garden	SU 861 953	0.27	BU_46
Hughenden Park	SU 863 951	0.62	BU_51
Hughenden Park	SU 863 946	20.03	BU_53
Hunt's Wood	SU 847 881	2.80	BU_2
Keep Hill	SU 874 918	9.87	BU_87
Little Gomm's Wood	SU 896 926	1.51	BU_114
Little Pigott's	SU 850 994	2.07	HS_26
Little Stocking Wood	SU 856 974	0.70	HS_255
Long Acre	SU 850 881	0.36	BU_3
Lucas Wood	SU 874 935	2.54	BU_80
Magpie (West)	SU 897 920	0.43	BU_116
Magpie B	SU 900 918	6.97	BU_124
Magpie Lodge Wood	SU 899 913	0.76	BU_119
Marlow Bottom	SU 853 880	1.89	BU_4
Marlow Bottom (Lea Close)	SU 846 885	1.66	BU_1
Marlow Road Shaw	SU 819 907	0.74	BU_7
Marlow Shaw	SU 861 877	0.49	BU_6
Moor Wood	SU 814 910	3.15	BU_264
Munces Wood (Northern Edge)	SU 844 891	0.73	BU_274
Munces Wood (Western Edge)	SU 846 893	0.32	BU_273
North Of Track In Rookery Wood	SU 864 920	1.17	BU_54
Nuttings Wood Landfill Site	SU 833 901	0.44	BU_203
Nuttings Wood Landfill Site (Eastern Area)	SU 835 902	0.57	BU_20
Oak Wood	SU 888 906	3.09	BU_100
Patches	SU 875 865	3.06	BU_81
Pigott's Common	SU 853 985	1.25	HS_27
Pigotts Wood	SU 853 994	1.27	HS_254
Pink Woods	SP 820 012	0.38	HS_13
Pond Wood	SU 907 926	1.69	BU_165
Pump Farm Wood	SU 866 883	1.94	BU_63
Pyrtle Spring	SP 810 024	0.44	HS_6
Rays Lane Shaw	SU 905 941	0.17	BU_148
Rays Lane Shaw	SU 905 940	0.04	BU_151
Reading Shaw	SU 834 904	0.98	BU_18

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Table 4: List of sites surveyed

Site Name	Grid reference	Area (hectares)	File code
Roundabout Wood	SU 866 922	3.74	BU_59
Seerhill	SU 848 981	6.39	HS_23
Sheepridge Shaw	SU 889 898	1.30	BU_107
Speen Farm	SU 837 990	3.68	HS_21
Springfield	SU 857 995	1.56	HS_30
St John's House Quarry	SU 883 949	0.53	BU_98
Terriers	SU 880 949	0.29	BU_91
Terriers Brick Words	SU 883 950	1.03	BU_96
The Rye	SU 873 922	2.64	BU_83
The Scrubs	SU 858 879	1.91	BU_5
The Swilley	SU 910 872	1.21	BU_174
Town Farm	SU 907 923	0.80	BU_162
Town Farm Grounds	SU 907 924	2.08	BU_166
Triangle North Of Track In			
Rookery Wood	SU 865 921	0.05	BU_56
Warren Wood Western Side	SU 870 921	5.20	BU_296
Wash Hill	SU 912 874	2.40	BU_179
West Side Of Spring Coppice	SU 830 923	4.47	BU_15
Westhorpe House	SU 866 870	1.58	BU_64
Westhorpe House East	SU 866 873	0.17	BU_61
Westhorpe Piece	SU 870 874	0.80	BU_73
Widdenton Park Wood	SU 818 915	34.83	BU_263
Winchester Wood	SP 820 020	8.54	HS_14
Wood By Cedar Park School	SU 889 963	0.65	BU_103
Woolman's Wood	SU 908 866	3.25	BU_158
Wycombe Abbey School	SU 862 920	2.84	BU_49
Wycombe Air Park (North)	SU 832 908	1.60	BU_16
Wycombe Air Park (South)	SU 832 907	0.29	BU_14

Map 2: The Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory for Wycombe District



5. Outputs

The Map shows the revised Ancient Woodland Inventory on an Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale base map. Due to the map scale and the volume of small woods added to the inventory this map should be treated as indicative only. These maps represent a snapshot in time and will not show any subsequent revisions.

Natural England will incorporate the final dataset for the Chilterns into the national Ancient Woodland Inventory. These digital boundaries will be available to download online either directly through Natural England's website but also through www.magic.gov.uk. Any changes to the inventory made on a case-by-case in the future by Natural England will be incorporated into the national dataset over time.

The data recorded during the field surveys is held by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre and will be passed on to the relevant Biological Record Centres for incorporation into their county databases. All data and information relating to the project will also be held by the Chilterns Conservation Board.

6. Discussion

The accurate mapping of the ancient woodland resource provides important opportunities for understanding and improving connectivity of semi-natural habitats and biodiversity at the landscape scale and can be used to inform and enhance initiatives such as the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Conservation Target Areas. The standards of mapping used in the Chilterns Ancient Woodland Survey mean that the revised Ancient Woodland Inventory dataset will be readily synthesised with a range of other compatible spatial datasets and inventories.

The importance of ancient woodland is widely acknowledged¹¹. This resource is increasingly threatened by development pressures and lack of appropriate management. It is hoped that the work outlined here will make a useful contribution towards the long-term protection and appropriate management of this irreplaceable resource.

7. Acknowledgements

The Ordnance Survey maps are provided by the Chilterns Conservation Board under licence from the Ordnance Survey. Contact Ordnance Survey Copyright for advice on licensing Ordnance Survey map data for further use.

¹¹ English Nature (2002), Defra and the Forestry Commission (2005), Ellis (2004)

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