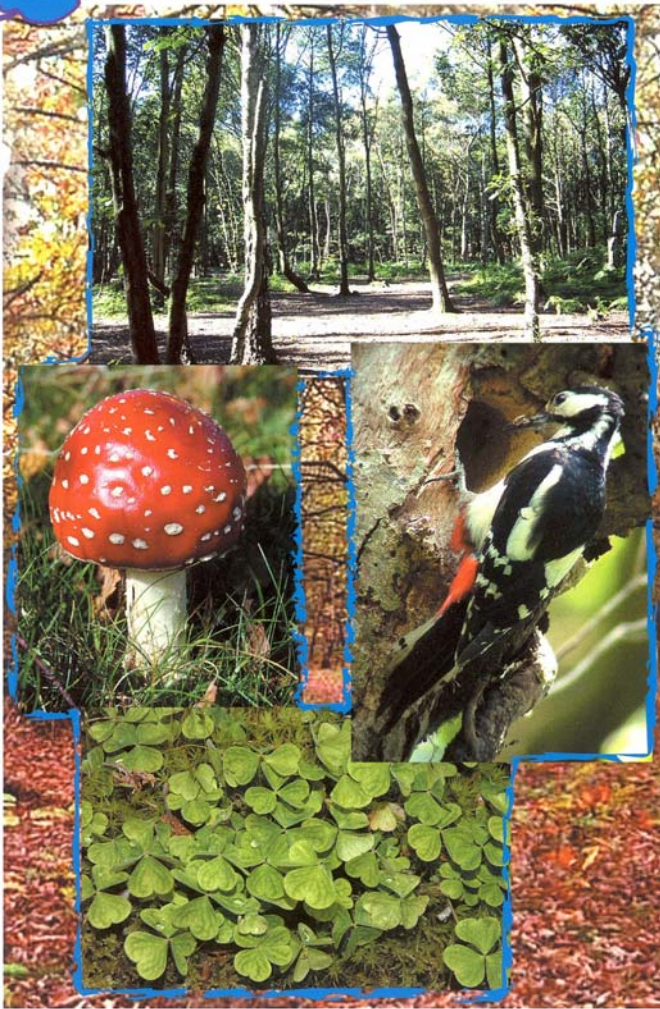


Wickersley Wood

15



FUELLING A REVOLUTION

*the woods that founded
the steel country*

What to look for in the wood

Much of this ancient and semi-natural woodland consists of young oak and birch which grew after the area was clear felled. A large glade of heather and acid grassland can be found close to the wood's centre and provides important heathland habitats. The western third of the site consists of mature, even-aged oak and beech.

A host of wildlife occurs in the wood including rare mammals, for instance the pygmy shrew. Birds like treecreeper, sparrowhawk, green woodpecker and gold-crest have also been seen. There are over fifty species of butterflies and moths and many notable beetle species in the wood.

Pheasant



Glade

Boundary earthworks exist and may relate to past coppice management. There is also a disused quarry on the southern edge.



Toad

Management of the woods

The first management plan ran from 1997-2001. Two open areas were created to encourage natural regeneration. A large area of birch and oak was thinned and trees were removed from the edge of the heath and acid grassland. The second plan (2003-08) continues this work.

Wickersley Wood is one of 35 'Heritage Woodlands' in the South Yorkshire Forest Partnership area which has undergone restoration as part of the 'Fuelling a Revolution' initiative, mainly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Forestry Commission.

General information

To find out more about the woodland's management and maintenance contact: the Parish Clerk on 01709 703270; or look on www.heritagewoodsonline.co.uk



Thanks to Mel and Joan Jones for their help in creating this leaflet. Mel's book 'Rotherham's Woodland Heritage' is available from Rotherham Arts Centre.

Lings Common



SOUTH YORKSHIRE
forest
A National Community Forest Partner

Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Past management of the wood

By the time of the Domesday Book (1086) a large part of the Manor of Wickersley was wood pasture, an open type of woodland where animals grazed. It was also described as 'waste' probably meaning the area was uninhabited.

As people settled, pressure on the land grew and management by coppicing the trees replaced wood pasture. Several tall, slender 'poles' grew from each coppice stool (tree stump) and were periodically cut at ground level to make different timber products and charcoal. Coppice was often grown in conjunction with larger timber trees called standards. Wickersley Wood was first recorded as a 'spring' or coppice, whilst in the ownership of the 7th Earl of Shrewsbury (1590–1616).



Speckled wood

By the latter part of the eighteenth century coppicing was declining, this was due to coal replacing charcoal as the fuel used in iron and steel making and for domestic use. Wickersley Wood became a plantation of sweet chestnut, beech and larch. It is unclear when the Warde-Aldam family gained ownership of the wood but it was certainly in their hands at this time.

During World War II much of the wood was clear-felled and regrowth after the felling helped to restore some of its semi-natural character. Since 1978 Wickersley Parish Council has leased the wood from the Warde-Aldam family.



Grey squirrel

What's in a name?

The possible origin of Wickers is thought to be from Vikar, an Old Scandinavian personal name. The suffix ley is common in English place names and means woodland clearing or meadow in Anglo-Saxon. So Wickersley probably means 'Vikar's forest clearing'.

Awards

As a result of the improvements to the wood Wickersley Parish Council were the first Parish Council in the country to be awarded the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) certificate in March 2003. The wood was also Reserve Winner in the Yorkshire and Northumbria Woodlands Competition 2003 and most recently won the John Boddy Rosebowl for Best Woodland in Yorkshire 2005, awarded by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society.

