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Why have I seen trees being cut down?



We sometimes get questions asking why a tree or trees have been cut down at Queenswood. There are several reasons as to why trees may be felled in a public, managed woodland so we've addressed each below.

Health & safety

One is that we are compelled to ensure the woodland is safe for the public. * Any trees close to public areas, or along paths or close to the road that are of concern – i.e. show signs of decay and may drop branches or fall – must be felled to ensure the site is safe. This was the case with a large tree recently felled behind the tannery building, close to the picnic area. This would not apply to areas of the woodland which are not close to paths – indeed, standing deadwood and rotten branches can be very valuable for wildlife.

Coppice management

Areas of the woodland at Queenswood are also managed on a coppice rotation. This is a traditional form of woodland management, practiced for centuries, to which woodland wildlife has adapted and now thrives in. This involves cutting an area of trees to the ground and then allowing them to regrow from the base. This creates some more open areas of woodland which allows woodland flowers and butterflies to flourish. As the area turns to scrub, this favours other species including many woodland birds. Each area is managed on a cycle so across the whole woodland there is always a diversity of habitats for wildlife as well as interest for visitors with a wider variety of species; especially woodland wildflowers. Coppicing has been carried out at Queenswood as part of its management plan for decades.

The harvested coppiced wood can be used for traditional craft products such as hurdles or pea sticks or for firewood making this form of management intrinsically sustainable.

Rides, Glades and Thinning



Another reason may be ride and glade management. Wide rides (woodland paths) and glades, like coppicing an area, also create a diversity of habitats within the woodland and are hugely important for wildlife. Thinning is the removal of selected trees within the woodland, which allows the trees around them to grow and mature naturally without competition. Thinning along with rides and glades allow more light into the woodland which, as explained above, is beneficial for floristic diversity and has knock-on benefits for the wider ecology of the site.

Woodland flowers which rely on light reaching the woodland floor through an open canopy, open glades, rides or coppiced spaces include: bluebells, primroses, celandine, ramsons, dog's mercury, wood anemone and many more. Woodland butterflies which feed on these flowers include: brimstone, comma, gatekeeper, orange tip, peacock and ringlet.

The above techniques all help to create more of a mixed age structure in the woodland, something which is hugely beneficial to wildlife, but has been lacking at Queenswood which is largely an even aged woodland due to the wholesale felling of trees during the first world war.

None of the above have any impact of the total acreage of woodland on the site; they merely create a more open, managed woodland, of a traditional type which has been how woodlands have been sustainably managed across the UK for centuries and which is the perfect habitat to allow our woodland wildlife to flourish.

** The Health and safety at Work etc act 1974 requires us to ensure the site is safe for the public.*

Trees requiring pruning or felling at Queenswood this winter were identified through a tree inspection by a arboricultural and ecological consultant who is a member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, a Member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, a Chartered Environmentalist and a Professional Member of the Arboricultural Association. The trees were identified as having a range of faults that meant there was a risk that they might fail and posed a significant hazard to people. Not all the trees have been felled, some have had pruning works carried out to reduce the stresses they were under which has meant they can be retained.

More detailed information about this management of woodlands can be found in this article: [https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ewgs-on011-ride-mangt.pdf/\\$file/ewgs-on011-ride-mangt.pdf](https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ewgs-on011-ride-mangt.pdf/$file/ewgs-on011-ride-mangt.pdf)

If you have any further questions about woodland management at Queenswood, please get in touch at info@queenswoodandbodenhamlake.org

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