





What is Ancient Woodland?

- *Ancient Woodland is divided into:*
- *Ancient semi-natural woodland*
- *Plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)*
- *Both types of stand are classed as ancient woods.*



Ancient Semi-natural Woodland





Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)



Why is it important?

- Ancient semi-natural woods are irreplaceable, and are perhaps the most important wildlife resource in England.
- Ancient woods contain a very high proportion of the rare and vulnerable wildlife species. Many of these species require the stability afforded by the continuity of suitable woodland



How do I know if a wood is ancient?

Ancient woods are identified based on various types of evidence:

- presence on maps, particularly those from the early nineteenth century or before, and on all later maps;
- historical documents such as estate records, tithe and enclosure surveys;
- wood names reflecting nearby settlements, or old words relating to woods (hagg, frith, spring);
- their location towards the parish boundaries, on steep slopes or valley sides, or generally unsuitable agricultural ground;
- irregular woodland boundaries; or
- woodland boundaries that do not fit with seventeenth century (or later) enclosure patterns in the surrounding field boundaries.

Field surveys may show:

- Old/large coppice stools, or veteran trees;
- Well-developed boundary banks and ditches
- The presence of 'ancient woodland indicator' species, particularly in the ground flora



How much ancient woodland is there?

In 1981 Provisional Ancient Woodland inventory was initiated

21, 918 Sites on the inventory

	Area (ha)
Total	340, 666
ASNW	198, 492
PAWS	142, 174

2.5% of land surface of England



Replanting on Ancient Woodland Sites

- Many ancient semi-natural woods (c38%) were converted to coniferous plantations prior to 1985. Restoration of their native tree and shrub communities should be encouraged as the first step in the rehabilitation of their rich woodland ecosystems.
- 1985 Broadleaves policy
 - No significant replanting with conifers post 1985
- Appears to be so
 - Difficult to verify



Restoration of PAWS





Ancient Woodland -Total Loss



Ancient Woodland – Partial Loss



New Woodland

- 25,000 ha is the national BAP target for new woodland
- Buffering and linking existing ancient woodland is priority, particularly smaller sites

