

EXTRA EXTRA!

READ ALL ABOUT IT

Unknown ancient woodlands discovered

This is an edited version of a story from
© BBC News (2/10/2024)

A two-year project run by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire has uncovered a large area of previously unknown ancient woodland.

These are woods that have been present since 1600, packed with a range of forest-loving plant life, fungi, insects and microorganisms, making up some 2.5% of UK land.

Habitat survey officer Katharine Flach said what most surprised her was to discover "ancient woodland can be all around us, across all the three counties".

"There are lots of small pockets nearer to urbanisation that weren't known about or weren't part of the inventory and often are publicly accessible," she said.

Ms Flach began her research by looking at records collected in the 1980s and 1990s. She then delved into centuries-old maps held by Cambridge University and the Cambridgeshire Archives and deployed modern technology to map the range of woodland.

The new ancient woodlands were then visited in person.

Ms Flach said: "There are a variety of things to look for, some of the large



trees are old, but it's not only that, it's more important to look at the ground flora... the great diversity of species that exists only in ancient woodland.

"They've had hundreds of years of growth and decay, that has allowed those species to build up and also they've been here for so long.

"While planting new woodland can attract these species, they are very slow to spread... it's hard for them to get from isolated ancient woodlands to newer and even fairly old woodland."

Indicator plants include bluebell, woodruff and ransoms.

Once a piece of woodland is classed as ancient it receives protection from development.

Ms Flach said she was optimistic about the future of the rare habitats.

"I think people realise now the importance of trees of nature and are beginning to look to ways to improve," she said.

"Knowing where those really valuable biodiverse areas are means you can try and join up these landscapes and draw up buffers around these really important sites."

TRUE OR FALSE?

Not all news is based on truth. Do you think this story is based on true or false news?

One in five plant species in the UK is now classed as threatened.



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CHECK YOUR FACTS

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WHAT
percentage of
British land
counts as ancient
woodland?

ANSWER:
2.5%

WHO
is optimistic
about the future
of Britain's
woodland?

ANSWER:
Katharine
Flach

WHERE
were the ancient
woodlands
found?

ANSWER:
Cambridgeshire

WHEN
were the ancient
woodlands
born?

ANSWER:
Before 1600

WHY
do ancient
woodlands have
more biodiversity
than forests?

ANSWER:
Longer time for
it to develop

HOW
did Katharine
identify the
ancient
woodlands?

ANSWER:
Using old
maps



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