

Wormley Wood, Hertfordshire

Acquisition of Wormley Wood, a large, mature woodland consisting mostly of Sessile oak with a hornbeam understorey. It is the largest woodland in the Broxbourne National Nature Reserve (NNR) complex, which in turn is the only NNR in Hertfordshire. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC) providing Europe-wide recognition. Most of Wormley Wood is ancient semi natural woodland (ASNW), suggesting that the wood has developed from natural means rather than by planting by man and forms the most northerly limit for naturally occurring Sessile oak/hornbeam woodland in Europe. Whilst most of the woodland is ancient in origin, large areas were felled of trees and brought either into agricultural production during the 1800's or more recently replanted with conifers. At the time of the agricultural recession, (the late 1800's), the areas formerly cleared of trees were allowed to revert back to woodland and these less mature areas provide a useful contrast to the dense, high forest of the interior. The varied geology and former land-uses have produced a mosaic of vegetation. Along with Sessile oak and hornbeam, there are ash, pedunculate oak, birch, Sallow and the occasional Wild Service tree. A network of earthworks (mainly bank and ditch) lies throughout the entire wood. These are thought to be late Bronze Age field systems and possibly Saxon Kingdom boundaries. A coal post erected in the mid 1800's marks the spot where duty was payable on provisions such as coal and wine as it entered the London Area. This tax helped to repay the large debt incurred in rebuilding London after the Great Fire in 1666. This is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

Nation/region

East of England

Grant awarded

£10,000

Award date

15/10/1981