

## An unfolding story

In May 1998 the Royal Forestry Society acquired 48 hectares of arable farmland adjacent to the village of Battram. The site, which sits in the heart of the National Forest, received significant support from the National Forest Company and Leicestershire Council among others, which with assistance from local residents helped create the woodland you see today. The aim was to establish a multipurpose woodland from scratch, demonstrating how to create and run commercially viable and productive woodlands in crowded lowland Britain. Wildlife conservation, landscaping and recreation are integral components too, while combatting climate change is also promoted.



The early stages of reforestation at Battram

A national competition was run in 1998 to find an imaginative yet appropriate plan for the site using the 3 Rs of forestry – the Right Trees in the Right Places for the Right Reasons. By 2001 80,000 saplings had been planted in three phases; a mixture of native and introduced, coniferous and deciduous trees. Form pruning and stooling has been undertaken to develop straight stems for future timber quality. Thinning aims to remove 20% of the weaker trees, allowing the stronger specimens to grow on and thrive.

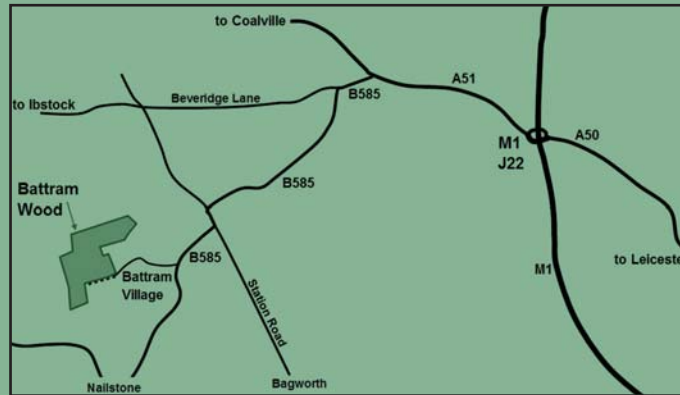
The work isn't just related to forestry - the pond was cleaned and remodeled in 2008. This provides a wetland habitat, with a wildflower meadow sown adjacent. Conservation is inherent within all the work as the woods are a flagship site for multi-purpose forestry.



The evolution of Battram Woods will carry on long into the future, with continued wise management and the support of locals sure to result in the success of this long-term project, proving that creating woodlands can be economically and ecologically rewarding.

## How to find us:

Once in Battram Village continue straight on, go through the gate and the car park is on your right after 150m.



## The Royal Forestry Society

*Having enjoyed visiting the woods you may wish to become a member of the Royal Forestry Society.*

The RFS is one of the largest woodland educational charities in the UK, founded in 1882 and now with over 3,500 members sharing an interest in trees. We aim to *promote the wise management of trees and woodlands so they can be better protected, improved and expanded.*

Regular field meetings will give you the chance to visit woods around Britain and meet with other enthusiasts. The Quarterly Journal of Forestry will help you learn about trees and their management, while there are also award schemes for students and woodland managers.

Membership is open to everyone, so if you love Britain's trees and woods and would like to learn more about them then please contact us via the details below, or for more information visit us at [www.rfs.org.uk](http://www.rfs.org.uk)



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*"A Growing Success"*



# An emerging flora and fauna

As the site moves from intense arable cultivation to woodland, new ground flora has begun to colonise, encouraging a wider range of birds and insects. With increased crop harvesting and thinning in the future this is expected to continue, with the aim of making Battram an excellent demonstration of how a wood can be a haven for wildlife and wildflowers as well as producing good quality timber and being economically viable.

## Things to see >>>

Many species of trees can be found in Battram Wood, including English oak, ash, Corsican pine, larch, Douglas fir, wild cherry, western red cedar, sweet chestnut and the rare native black poplar (right). These are often planted in a range of silvicultural mixes so look out for our information boards to help with tree identification! Cricket bat willows line the stream, and ride edges and open areas are dominated by more attractive trees and shrubs.



The focal point of the woods is the Millennium Circle, formed of 350 oak and yew trees, while the group of rare native black poplars was planted as part of a conservation action plan. Landscaping is also key, with broadleaved trees on the woodland perimeter providing a long-term retention fringe and reducing the impact of felling, while also benefitting wildlife and improving the visual appearance. A joint project with The Woodland Trust and Marie Curie Cancer Fund in 2005 resulted in 600 saplings being planted to create a new commemorative wood, with 10,000 wild daffodils also planted along the Miners Way footpath by RFS members and locals.



Many butterflies are seen along the ride edges, while it is hoped that the pond will attract dragonflies and amphibians. Bats are very common at the site and can be seen flying between the trees at dusk.

# Battram Wood

Explore the wood using the range of footpaths and cycle routes available, and use the information boards to guide you and learn about the past, present and future of these young woods.

## Managing Battram Wood >>>

Woodlands need management if they, and the wildlife that depends on them, are to flourish. Forestry experts, Lockhart Garratt Ltd, manage Battram Wood on the behalf of the RFS, using their knowledge to maximize timber value whilst encouraging the establishment of the wildlife associated with woodland.

Forestry requires a long-term plan, with the first softwoods (pines, larch and firs) expected to return a commercial harvest in 2018, 20 years after the site was acquired. Likewise some of the hardwoods may not be fully mature for another 100 years!

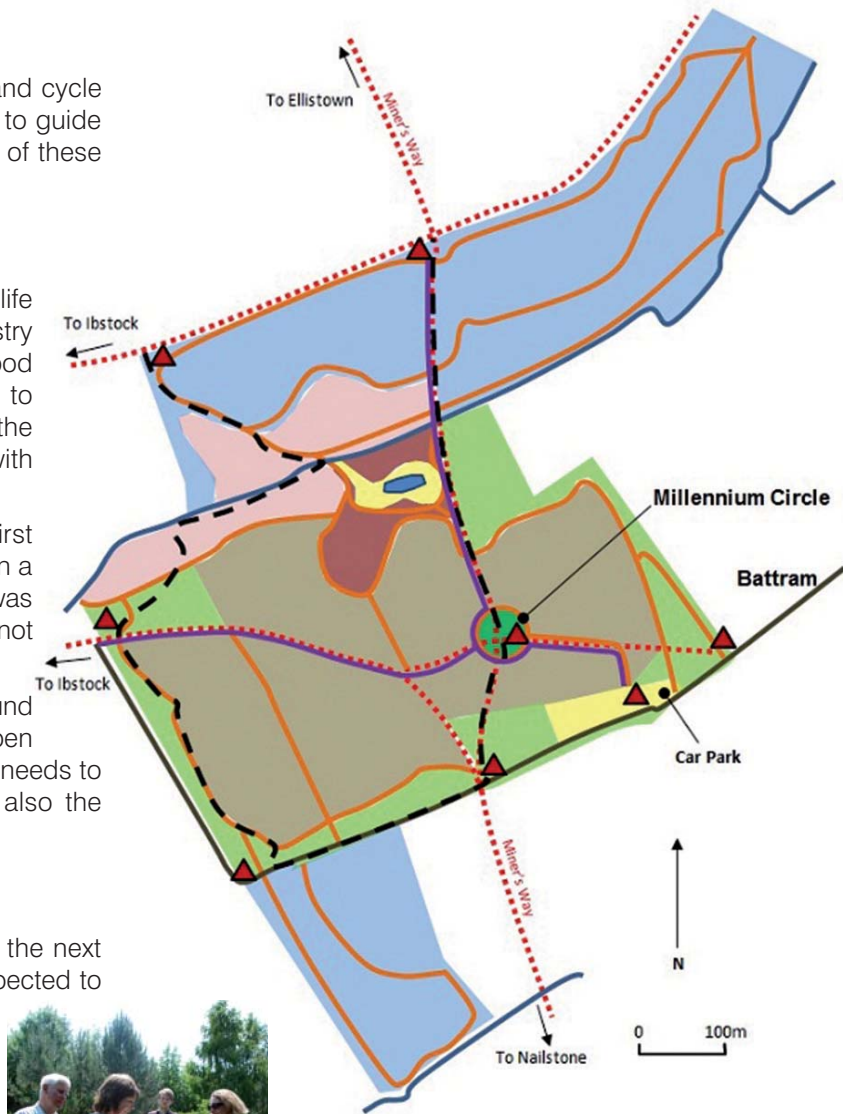
The site incorporates a pond, a stream, and around 12% of the area is designed as rides, paths and open spaces for users to enjoy. Management therefore needs to incorporate not only the trees themselves, but also the associated wildlife and recreation the wood offers.

## An exciting future >>>

With significant timber production starting within the next decade the dynamic of the woodland may be expected to change, however new trees will be planted to replace those harvested to ensure a constant cycle of production combined with rich biodiversity. The woodlands will be managed sustainably, with the pond and brook managed as wetland habitats, while thinning will remove weak or diseased trees to ensure the wood remains as healthy and productive as possible.

Battram Wood will provide multiple benefits:

- raw material for wood-based products we use;
- new and diverse habitats;
- landscape enhancement;
- environmental benefits such as filtering pollutants and removing greenhouse gases;
- a place for this and future generations of people to enjoy.



**Legend**

- Information Board
- National Forest Birthday Walk
- Public Footpaths
- Woodland paths
- Sustrans Cycle Route
- Surfaced routes
- Water Courses
- Open ground/meadow
- Pond

**Main woodland**

- Broadleaves
- Conifers
- Mixed plantation
- New native woodland
- Poplar
- Oak and yew circle