

This area of farmland at Pulloxhill extending to 13.6 hectares (33.5 acres) was part of the County Council's Smallholdings Estate. In September 1988 responsibility for the land was transferred to the Planning Department in order that it could be planted with trees. The woodland, to be known as Centenary Wood, will be planted to celebrate the centenary of the County Council.

A good deal of thought has gone into the planning of the wood. It is intended that it will stand as a demonstration of how trees can be grown as a crop whilst providing for the needs of nature conservation and recreation and creating an enduring and attractive new landscape.

The land has an interesting history. From at least early medieval times until 1826 it was almost entirely part of a common field known as North Field. Three arable furlongs can be identified. These are High Elms, Middle Shot and Upper Shot. These disappeared in 1826 during the Parliamentary Enclosure. New boundaries were created and some still survive. On the south eastern boundary there is a hedgerow of earlier origin which in 1826 marked the limits of the closes in the parish.

The woodland stands at a high point and will be visible from some distance. Because of its size it will form an important feature locally. The choice of trees will present a mixture of colours and textures and be attractive to look at and pleasant to walk through.

The woodland will provide a wide range of conditions for plants and animals. Existing established hedges will be retained and adjoining, unplanted strips will allow them to spread out and form long thickets. Ponds will be dug to provide damp and wet habitats for insects, plants and amphibians. Open areas will allow grassland with wildflowers to develop sheltered by trees. Some areas will be sown or planted with wildflowers and an area of central parkland will be grazed. This will provide an ideal habitat particularly for butterflies and other insects. The range of tree and shrub species will provide a 'patchwork' attractive to many birds.

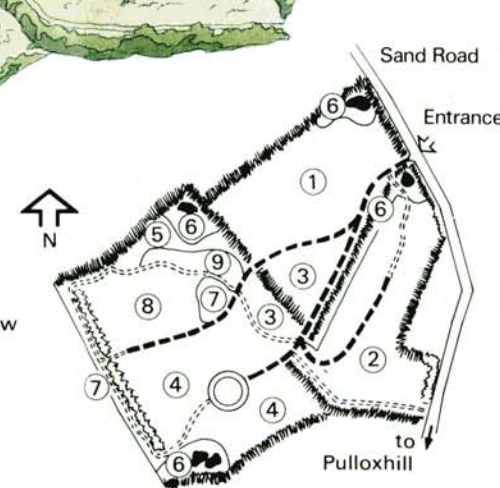
The wide rides, paths and tracks will allow access as well as providing many sheltered edges for wildlife. A variety of circular and through walks will be provided. The changes in trees and shrubs, with their associated shapes and colours, the clearings and other features, will make for interest at all times of the year.

Centenary Wood

The full colour illustration on the left shows how the woodland is expected to appear fifty years on, based upon the site plan shown below.

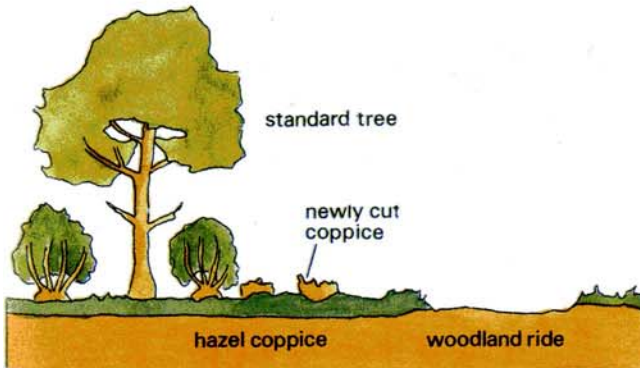
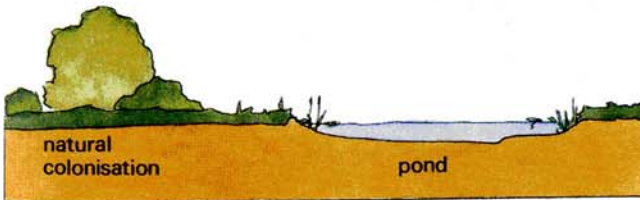
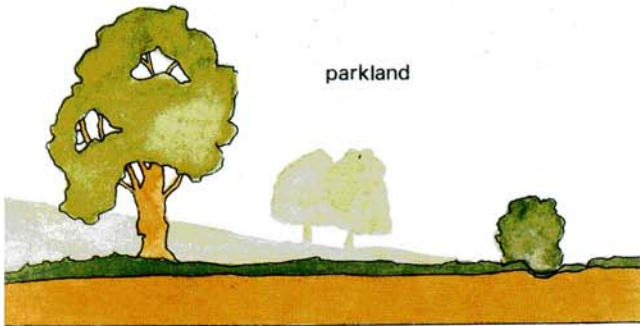


- existing hedgerow
- new hedgerow
- footpath
- woodland ride
- pond



- commemorative tree planting
- 1** broadleaved woodland and conifer groups
- 2** high forest of non-native trees
- 3** parkland
- 4** broadleaved high forest
- 5** ash coppice
- 6** natural colonisation
- 7** clearing with wildflowers
- 8** coppice with standards
- 9** hazel coppice

There will be plenty of opportunity for direct involvement by local people and organisations. Part of the wood will be planted by schools and other groups and later maintenance and coppicing of the trees could be done by volunteers. The wood will provide excellent opportunities for learning about the countryside and become a useful outdoor study area. Ideas for the further use and development of the woodland will be welcomed.



The ceremonial planting in March 1989 will be in the form of a "roundel" of Oak trees planted by County, District, and Parish Councillors along with representatives of other Bedfordshire organisations and agencies. The oak roundel will become the formal part of the woodland.

The *Centenary Wood* demonstrates the comprehensive and positive approach to conservation in the countryside that the County Council has followed over the years.

Centenary Wood

- will** be a prominent feature in the landscape
- will** provide a timber crop
- will** include areas for conservation and to encourage wildlife
- will** be planted with more than 20,000 trees and shrubs of a wide range of species, mostly deciduous
- will** include within it the 750,000th tree planted by the County Council since local government reorganisation in 1974
- will** be designed to encourage public access
- will** provide opportunities for school groups and young people to enjoy and learn about the countryside.

Much of the planting we now enjoy was carried out by far-sighted landowners in the last century. Many of our finest landscapes date from the 18th century and these trees are now past their best.

Trees take many years to mature and we must ensure that, through our combined efforts, we leave a countryside which future generations can enjoy.



Centenary Wood

