

The Cotswolds Commons and Beechwoods NNR extends across 7.5 km of the Gloucestershire Cotswolds. Situated between Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud, there is ready access from the M5 motorway and the A417.

## Management

Management of the reserve is carried out jointly by the owner and Natural England with the dual aims of conserving the diverse, uneven-aged beechwood with its rich wildlife and of producing timber.

During this century the wood has been managed by a system of block felling and more recently by selection forestry in which individual trees are selectively removed at maturity. Under both forms of management natural regeneration replaces the trees removed.

These methods have ensured an uneven-aged wood with a proportion of mature trees being left to become veterans.

Permanent glades and rides are managed by removing trees and occasional mowing to encourage a varied structure suitable for light demanding plants and butterflies.

## Scientific use

Natural England facilitates the use of the reserve for a wide range of research projects, ranging from long-term non-intervention woodland studies to exploring how wildlife and farm stock impact on each other.

## Partnerships

The National Nature Reserve is managed in partnership with National Trust, private landowners and the local communities of Sheepscombe, Cranham, Edge and Painswick as well as bodies including Butterfly Conservation, The Cotswolds Conservation Board and The Cotswold Way.

- Unauthorised vehicles and motor cycles are not permitted.
- Please help us by keeping your dogs under control; taking your litter home; not disturbing wildlife and not picking or uprooting plants.



# Buckholt Wood

## Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods National Nature Reserve

**Front cover photograph:** Buckholt Wood in autumn  
© Rob Wolstenholme



**Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.**

ISBN 978-1-84754-231-1 Catalogue Code: NE335

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National Nature Reserves (NNRs) represent many of the finest wildlife and geological sites in the country. Our first NNRs emerged in the postwar years alongside the early National Parks, and have continued to grow since then.

Buckholt Wood is part of the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods National Nature Reserve. This internationally important area includes some of Britain's best beechwoods and limestone grasslands.

Established in 1981, the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods NNR is set in the classic English Cotswold countryside of steep limestone scarps, wide valleys, pastures, and beautiful villages.

Buckholt Wood lies to the north of Cranham Village. It covers an area of 100 hectares (247 acres) and became part of the reserve in 1980 under a Nature Reserve Agreement with the owner.



© Steve Mackay

Song thrush

## A working landscape

This ancient woodland is believed to have existed since the original wildwood developed after the retreat of the ice sheets. The name derives from the Saxon for beechwood.

The woodlands were used to supply timber and firewood from as early as the 12th century and parts of the wood were managed by coppicing.

The family of the present owner acquired the wood in 1871 and have managed it for timber production since that time. In 1917 and again in the 1940's large scale felling took place to help the war effort.

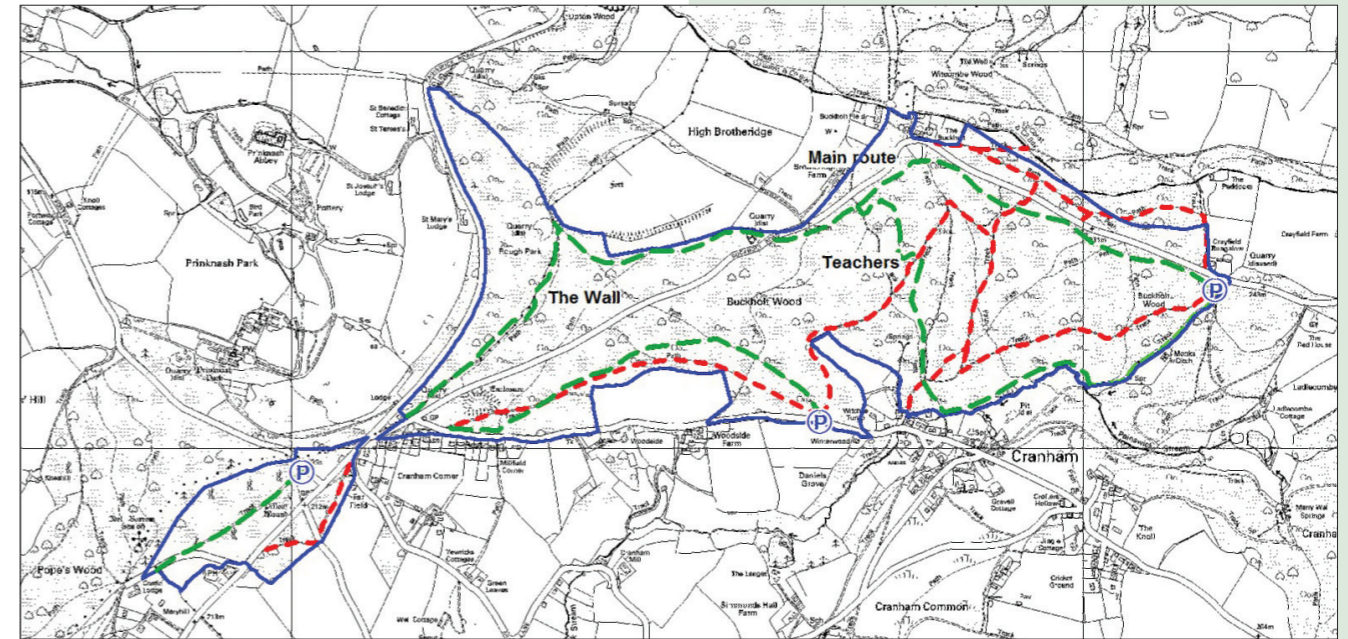
Today a range of woodland habitats from rides and glades, worked coppice through high forest timber management and firewood production to non-intervention woodland are maintained.

## Habitats

Recent management has led to the development of high forest with selective felling creating glades which are soon colonised by natural regeneration. This has helped to maintain a varied structure and rich fauna and flora.

The beechwoods are amongst the most varied and species rich of their type. Dominated by beech, there are also ash, oak, whitebeam, wych elm and alder trees. Woodland shrubs are well represented, particularly holly and yew. Buckholt Wood is an outstanding site for wild fungi with over 780 species recorded.

The ground flora in beech woods is typically sparse, however here it is richer including dog-violet, wood anemone, primrose, lords and ladies, and woodruff.



On the drier slopes beneath the beech canopy, wild strawberry thrives and less common plants such as stinking hellebore, bird's nest orchid and narrow-lipped helleborine may be found.

## Animal life

Buckholt Wood is frequented by deer, fox and badger and smaller predators such as weasel and stoat are occasionally glimpsed. Woodland butterflies including speckled wood, silver-washed fritillary, grizzled skipper and white letter hairstreak can be seen in spring and summer. The glades are important for those species which have specific food plant requirements in the larval stage.

The birdlife is typical of broadleaved woodland and in autumn mixed flocks of tits with goldcrests and treecreepers frequent the reserve, whilst chaffinch and brambling forage for beechmast during the winter months.

## Access Map

Buckholt Wood is a registered common and is designated Access Land; access on foot is unrestricted. The owner and Natural England ask for your help in sharing the woodland with its many visitors and with wildlife. Horse riders and cyclists are each asked to keep to a system of clearly marked requested bridledways, and a similar system of permissive cycleways.

**Red** = horseway (horse riders requested to keep to these where possible)

**Green** = cycleway (cyclists permitted to use these only)



© Jim Asher

Silver washed fritillary