

Projects / Hatfield Forest Coppice Survey – National Trust



HATFIELD FOREST COPPICE SURVEY – NATIONAL TRUST

The Hatfield Forest Coppice Survey has not been a typical ancient tree survey. The viability of each compartment of woodland to be coppiced was re-

evaluated – the period of time from the last rotational cut varies across the Forest and some compartments have been considered unviable in the past as they had become too old.



However, experience in successfully re-coppicing some older areas, together with new research into the global importance of Hatfield Forest as the most important Medieval Hunting Forest, (in part due to the extensive continuation of the traditional management), meant that the coppice viability was re-visited as there is ambition to bring more of the woodland into traditional management.

At the same time as surveying the coppice woodland, individual trees were also surveyed – as well as finding, plotting, and surveying all the ancient, coppiced trees throughout the woodland, using the Specialist Survey Method, we were also surveying notable ‘standard’ trees and any exotic plantings from the 18th and 19th century.

The complex relationship between the density of ancient trees, and the age and density of the coppice understorey all factored into the viability assessment, and the future aspiration for coppice compartment was a major consideration for the recommendations for the individual trees.

A fascinating, complex project, in the most amazing Forest, surveying some of the most extraordinary trees – some in excess of 1,200 years old!

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