



**BACK
FROM THE
BRINK**

Ancients of the Future

Best practice approach to cross-taxa management

Facilitated by:

Ian Leatherbarrow, Buglife

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Dave Lamacraft, Plantlife

Paul Rutter, Plantlife

Sonia Reveley, Bat Conservation Trust

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Talks available on Back from the Brink website and Youtube

- Back from the Brink and Ancients of the Future *Hayley Herridge, Buglife*
- The aging process of trees *Paul Rutter, Plantlife*
- The benefits of fungi *Paul Rutter, Plantlife*
- Lichens of ancient trees *Dave Lamacraft, Plantlife*
- Saproxylic invertebrates: ecology and management of wood-decay habitats
Liam Olds, Buglife
- Bats: ecology and habitat requirements *Sonia Reveley, Bat Conservation Trust*
- Case study: Moccas Park, Herefordshire
- Case study: Savernake Forest, Wiltshire
- Case study: Knepp Castle Estate, West Sussex (without narration)
- Case study: Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire (without narration)



What is Back from the Brink?

One of the most ambitious conservation projects ever undertaken

Its aim – to save 20 species from extinction and benefit over 200 more through 19 projects that span England

National project - 4 year, £7.7m project, 4.6m from National Lottery Heritage Fund

Supported by 8 additional funders



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What is Back from the Brink?



7 conservation partners and many more organisations pooling expertise and developing new ways of working



In partnership with & funded by



Back from the Brink in a nutshell

Aims and objectives

Conserve the highest priority threatened species where they are found

Work together to provide integrated action and advice for all of the species

Inspire a movement of people to discover, value and take action for England's threatened species



Ancients of the Future

Securing the future of our
ancient tree landscapes and
species that depend upon
them



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Project partners



British Lichen Society



VOLUNTEERS



Ancients in wood pasture and parkland

Wood pasture is an open mosaic habitat, characterised by big old trees growing in open pasture land.

Often relicts of royal forests, wooded commons and medieval deer parks they provide a direct link to a bygone era.



© Paul Rutter

Ancient Beech, Oak, Field maple, Hawthorn and Ash- contain late-stage fungal induced decaying wood found nowhere else and provide **ecological continuity** spanning past centuries.



Habitats rich in biodiversity

Around 25% of wildlife found in these habitats is associated with decaying wood microhabitats

They support around 2000 (saproxylic) invertebrates alone - about 40% are rare or scarce

Particularly flies and beetles.
Countless fungi, lichens, and mosses.



© Lech Borowiec



Providing important resources

Microhabitats support a huge array of threatened species



© Neil Aldridge



© Paul Rutter



Key Challenges

Habitat loss and fragmentation

On-going pressures

New problems: tree diseases,
climate change

Attitudes & values to
management of ancient trees
and deadwood.



Ecological continuity – age gap between existing ancient trees, rich in biological and cultural history, and the 'Ancients of the Future'.



Target species

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© Paul Brock

Royal splinter crane fly; Oak click beetle; Violet click beetle & Noble chafer



Target species

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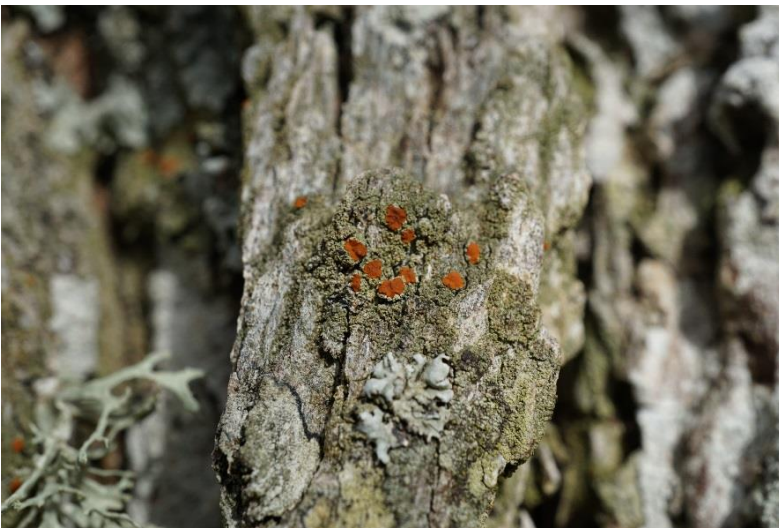
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Eagles claw; Sap grove; Geranium firedot; Orange fruited Elm lichen



Target species

© Vavrin CC



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Oak polypore; Coral tooth; The Pretender & Knot hole moss



Target species

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Noctule bat & Lesser spotted wood pecker



Objectives

Future proof ancient tree habitats and species at a site level.

Increase resilience and connectivity at a site and landscape level.

Increase conservation understanding of target species and secure recovery.



Moccas beetle survey © Paul Rutter



Objectives

Identify and breakdown barriers to protecting and retaining ancient trees.

Inspire new ways of working and cultivate a public sense of the value of ancient trees.



Learning about species at Petworth Primary School © Laura Thomas



19 project sites

- Windsor Great Park and Forest, Berkshire
- Moccas Park, Herefordshire
- Moccas Hill Wood, Herefordshire
- Bredon Hill, Worcestershire
- Savernake Forest, Wiltshire
- Burnham Beeches, Buckinghamshire
- Petworth Park, Sussex
- Norbury Park, Surrey
- Fowey Valley, Cornwall - Ethy & Lanhydrock
- New Forest, Wiltshire & Hampshire
- Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire
- Mells Park, Somerset
- Knepp Castle Estate, West Sussex
- Fountains Abbey/ Studley Royal Water Gardens
- Little Doward, Highbury Wood Herefordshire
- Dixon Wood, Gloucestershire
- Epping Forest, Essex
- Rydal Hall Estate, Cumbria
- Hatch Park/ Brockhanger Woods, Kent



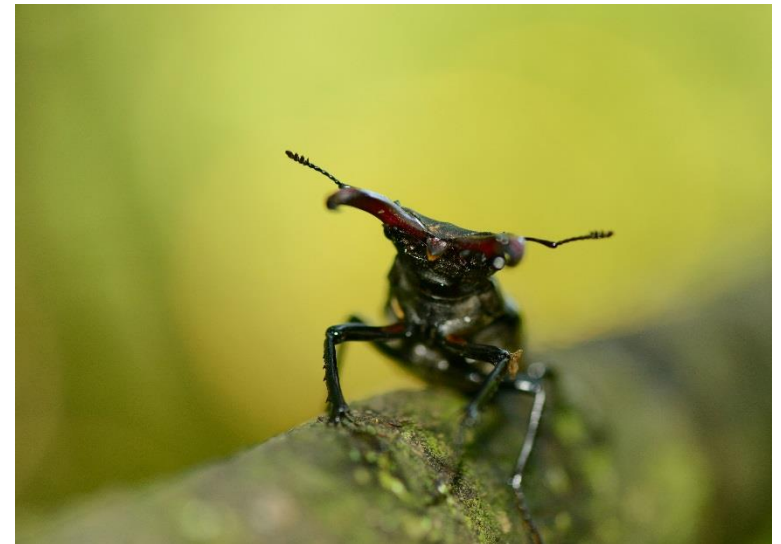
Expert and volunteer recording



- Expert surveys capture data on rare species to address knowledge gaps and inform management
- Targeted species survey
- Research of historical data
- Recruit train and up skill volunteers to undertake survey and monitoring
- Citizen science – People's Trust for Endangered Species 'Great Stag Hunt'



© Hugh Clark



© Ben Andrews



Habitat management and restoration



Conserving veteran trees

Next generation veterans identified

Wood pasture restoration –
clearance and grazing, deadwood retained

Tree planting – selected species to
support associated species and
provide habitat continuity

Nectar enclosures with flowering
scrub species to provide important
food sources

Landscape connectivity & partnership
working

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Pollarding, haloing, tree cribs and new trees and new
nectar enclosures
@Paul Rutter



Addressing the age gap - veteranisation



Mimicking horse damage at Sherwood Forest © Owen Jones



Woodpecker hole at Sherwood Forest © Owen Green



Addressing the age gap - deadwood trails

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Standing deadwood mimicry © Reg Harris



Renewed deadwood trail at Great Windsor Park © Jamie Simposn



Addressing the age gap – innovative trials



Veteranisation by fungi inoculation

© Matt Wainhouse



Violet click beetle habitat boxes

© Steph Skipp



Innovation - species translocations



A pox lichen (*Pyrenula nitida*)
© Dave Lamacraft



A pox lichen (*Pyrenula nitida*) translocation
© Dave Lamacraft



Inspiring and raising public awareness

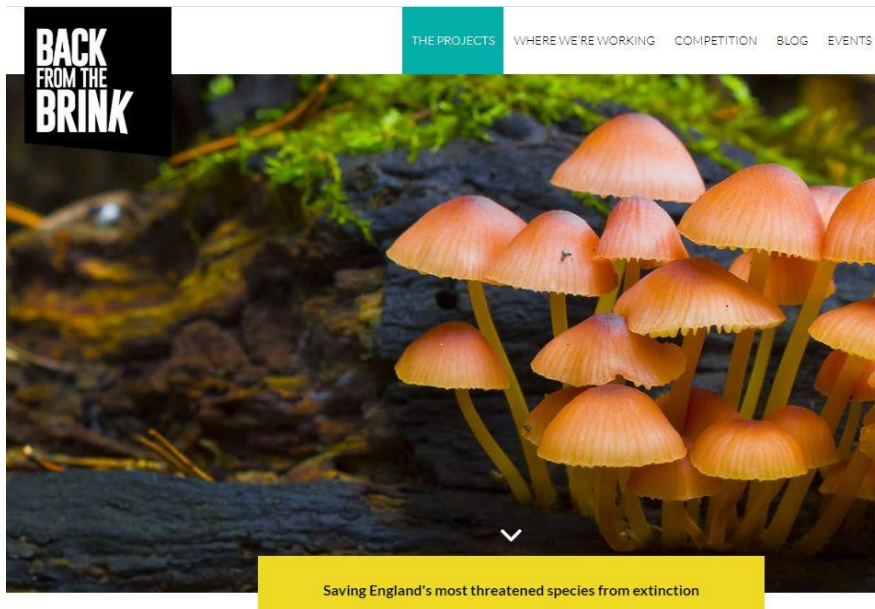
- Recruit train and up skill volunteers to undertake species survey and monitoring
- Specialist training workshops
- Cross-taxa management workshops and guidance
- Public engagement: deadwood roadshow, walks, talks, schools & social media



Bats and Arboriculture course © Sonia Reveley



Ancient tree hub



Back from the Brink website



Buglife – Ancient tree Hub



Ancient tree hub

Including technical species and land management advice and community learning

- Workshop presentations
- Cross taxa guidance
- 28 species accounts for threatened species
- Video 'How-to' guides
- Best practice and case studies
- Survey reports
- Community learning materials
- Links to other on-lines resources



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Useful links

The woodland wildlife toolkit:-

<https://woodlandwildlifetoolkit.sylva.org.uk/>

The wood pasture & parkland network:-

<https://ptes.org/wppn/>

Ancient tree forum:-

<https://www.ancienttreeforum.co.uk>

Tree Council Ash dieback toolkit for local authorities: <https://treecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Tree-Council-Ash-Dieback-Toolkit-2.0-2.pdf>

Tree Safety Group <http://ntsgroup.org.uk/>



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feedback!**



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