

# Croft Wood

Design and production: www.thinkgraphic.co.uk

## Key

-  Landmanaged by Forestry Commission
-  Public Footpaths
-  Forest Road



## Going back for the Future!

Croft Wood has seen many changes and many uses over the centuries. Within these trees evidence of charcoal burning, ploughing, hedges, ancient pathways and timber processing can be found. Perhaps this wasn't the quiet place we think of today...

Some sections of this wood have been covered in trees for hundreds of years. The Forestry Commission is working to a fifty-year plan to return these areas back to the broadleaf woodland that it would have once been.

The most defining features of Croft Wood are the ancient pollard trees which have stood on this site for centuries. The Forestry Commission is taking advice from ecologists for the best way to manage these magnificent trees for the future.

## Pollard?

The term comes from the verb poll – to cut hair; so a pollard is something that has had a haircut (like a drunkard is someone who is drunk).

Pollards are trees that have repeatedly had their branches cut off at head height or higher. The cutting over centuries creates the distinctive shape of a large but short trunk with an abundance of thin branches growing out the top.

## Double Decker Land Use!

Pollarding trees meant the land could be used for two things at once. The frequent cutting of pollarded trees gave a regular supply of wood at whatever size it was needed. As wood is slow growing it was cut high so livestock could be grazed below the trees without being able to reach the tasty re-growth of the branches. The landscape this created is called a wood pasture.

## All that Wood!

In the past, wood was as important to our economy as oil is now. It made our houses, kept us warm and had hundreds of uses in tools and transport, we couldn't live without it!

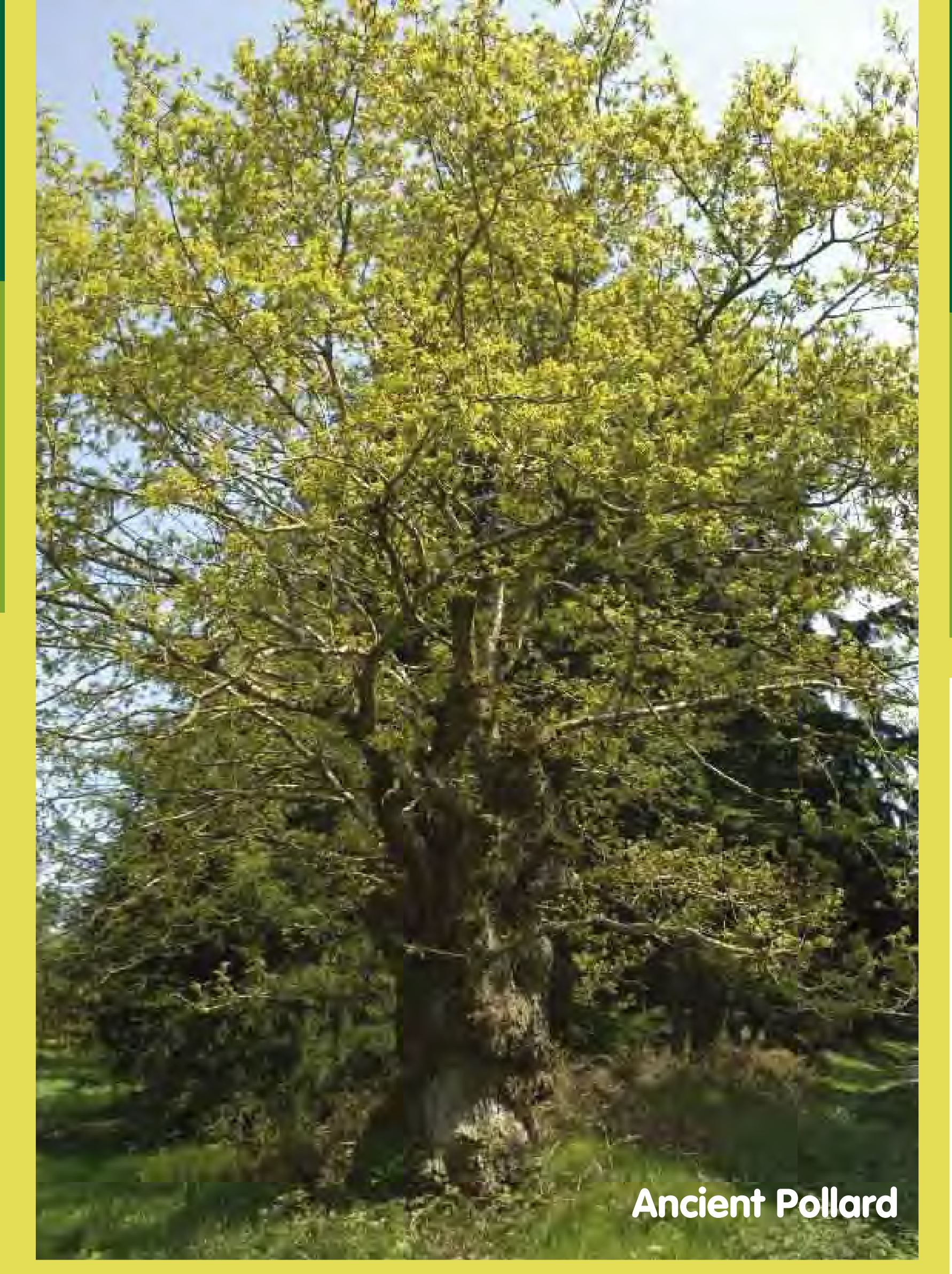
The wood was often cut in the winter but branches were sometimes cut in the summer months to provide extra food for livestock or to make "tree hay" when leaves were dried and stored for animal feed in the winter months.

## Important today?

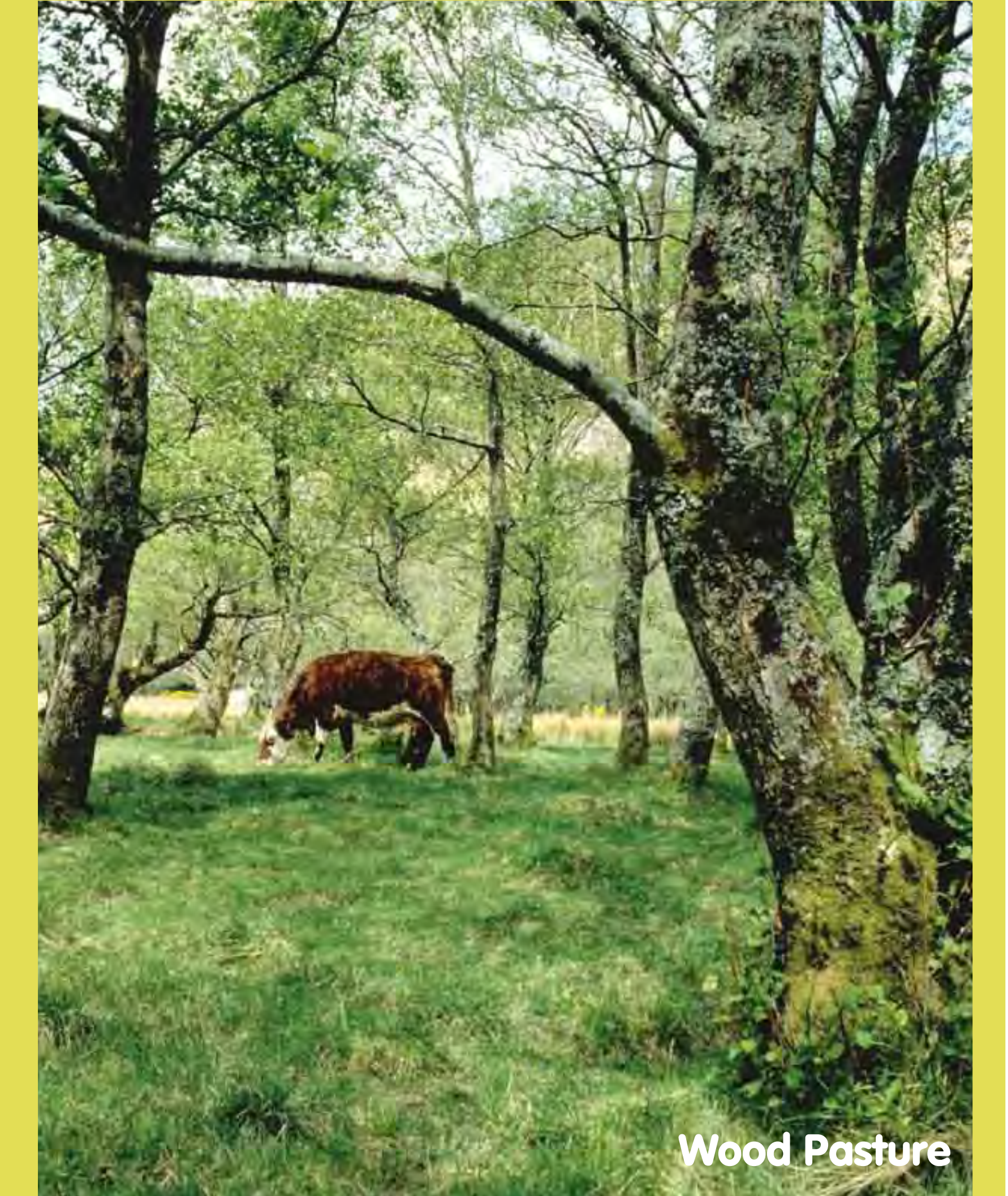
The old trunks topped with young growth of a pollarded tree provide a unique habitat for many invertebrates especially rare beetles. The ancient trunks are perfect for fungi and lichens and the size of the trees make fantastic places for wildlife to nest and roost and shelter.



Cardinal Beetle



Ancient Pollard



Wood Pasture



Stag Beetle