

Folly woodland management.

4 acres

The Scots Pine (*Fagus Sylvatica*) were first planted by Henry James Pye in the 1780s. They form the outer ring. Some of the original Scots Pine still exist, so are more than 200 years old. It is said they are some of the best Scots Pine in the south of the British Isles.

The Pines in the North west quarter are thought to have been planted in the 1930s and those in the South West quarter in the 1960s. From 2010 planting of Scots pine continues to fill gaps in the outer ring where old trees have been lost.

The central woodland trees are deciduous. These are mostly Beech, Sweet Chestnut and Sycamore as well as oak, ash, rowan, cherry. In 2010 the only middle layer shrubs were self seeded sycamore and elder.

Our aim for the woodland is to improve biodiversity- to this end we have planted many native shrubs and trees as well as spring bulbs and wild flowers. One aim is to create a middle layer that will provide food and shelter for birds and insects.

The growing conditions on Folly Hill are not ideal. The soil is sandy so moisture drains quickly, it is often dry and exposed to strong wind.

Our strategy is to give precedence to middle layer planting and young trees, and the wild flowers and bulbs. We have planted hawthorn, hazel, field maple, privet, yew, beech, holly, snowdrops, English bluebells, aconite, scilla, clover, campion. The shrubs are taking years to grow to a substantial size that will provide food and shelter for birds and other creatures.

To give the new planting precedence we have cleared invasive species ie brambles, ragwort, stinging nettles, sycamore, elder, rosebay - where we have planted. There are areas where brambles etc are left pretty much alone- specifically for the wildlife (East, and NW).

This clearance has helped other plants to emerge- foxgloves, violets, forget me not, ox eye daisies, dead nettles, buttercup, self seeded rowan and oak, and probably more.

Our current aim is to keep the perimeter clear of invasive plants, in the hope that a wider variety of flowers will appear.

Bird boxes and birds are monitored by a young local volunteer ornithologist. Plants surveys have been carried out by a young graduate volunteer.

The land around the Folly Tower and woodland is owned by Faringdon Estates and farmed by a local farmer.

The tarmac path leading to the Folly is a public footpath and maintained by Oxfordshire County Council.

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