Rethinking Ancient Woodland: the Archaeology and History of Woods in Norfolk: 13

By Gerry Barnes, Tom Williamson

University of Hertfordshire Press, United Kingdom, 2016. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 244 x 170 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Ancient woodland is a term widely used in England for long-established semi-natural woods, shaped by centuries of traditional management. As an official designation, it describes woods which have existed since the early seventeenth century, and which today contain a distinctive range of plants which find it hard to colonise more recently wooded ground. Such woods are often assumed to provide a direct link with the natural vegetation of England, as this existed before the virgin forests were fragmented by the arrival of farming.This groundbreaking study questions many of these assumptions. Drawing on more than a decade of research in Norfolk, the authors emphasise the essentially unnatural character of ancient woods. Their distinctive ecological characteristics only emerged after they had been enclosed from the surrounding wastes in early medieval times, and began their career as factories for the production of wood and timber. Since then they have been dynamic environments, changing in response to wider economic trends and demographic pressures: and much of their botanical character has been forged by relatively recent history.Woods are, moreover, rather less stable features of...

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