



Points of interest

1 Woodbank and ancient ash coppice

As you enter the reserve and walk towards the ancient ash trees you will notice the woodbank beside you. It runs along most of the woodland boundary and was built to keep out grazing livestock. The ash coppice is estimated to be at least 450 years old; it is still growing well. Sometimes you can see large brackets of dryad's saddle fungus growing at the base. This fungus is also known as pheasant's back mushroom because of the pattern on the top when it is fresh.

2 New woodlands and new paths

The hut contains information about Sugley Wood, which was purchased by the Trust in 2002 and is growing back naturally into a wood. As you look around, you may notice trees beginning to grow above the grass. Wildflowers are starting to thrive too. Take time to explore this new area, and come back regularly to see how it changes.



3 Coppice plots

This area of the wood has six plots from which hazel is harvested. Coppicing is good for wildlife, as it means there are always areas of young flowery vegetation. It is good for the local community too because the coppiced wood has many uses ranging from thatching to bean poles. Just across the ride, there is a small glade and pond. The clearings around some of the surviving oak trees were created by volunteers.

4 A view over the parish and the local woodlands

The view from the edge of the wood has remained largely unchanged for centuries. As you look out you can see some of the other woodlands in the area. We are working with landowners to join up these woods with hedges and grassy strips to improve the landscape for wildlife. On a clear day you can just make out our Pegdson Hills nature reserve in Bedfordshire.

5 The ring ditch and woodland history

This circular ditch was rediscovered under the conifers and cleared to create the glade you see today. The information hut has more facts about the management of the ancient woodland and the possible origins of the ditch. Suggestions for the ditch's use range from dwellings to kilns, and even the site of a windmill. What do you think?

6 Restored woodland

It's hard to believe that 300 tons of conifers were cut down and removed from this part of the woodland in 1999. The remaining trees and shrubs have recovered well. Many other areas of the wood are also being restored and will look this good in a few years' time.

7 Main ride and common spotted orchids

This 'ride' or wide grassy path is worth visiting at different times of the year. It is a sunny sheltered spot with hundreds of orchids in the spring and the vibrant glow of purple loosestrife in the summer. A great spot to watch bats feeding on warm evenings, you may also notice a vanilla scent from the crushed stems of sweet vernal grass as you walk along.

8 Wild service tree

Pause a while under this rare tree to enjoy the sounds of the wood – from chirping crickets to calling birds. Originally thought to be the only wild service tree in the wood, we have now found a grove of others. This one is still the biggest. In autumn the leaves of this locally rare tree, sometimes known as 'chequers', turn a glorious flaming-red. Why not return just before the leaves fall to marvel at the display?