

Long-horned beetle



Many mammals live in both the new wood and old, including badgers, hares, rabbits, muntjac deer, voles and mice. Although you may not be lucky enough to see them, you should find evidence of them: look out for footprints in soft ground or dung in the undergrowth.

Speckled wood



Lots of birds make their homes in the wood and in the new growing woodland at Sugley. During a visit to this nature reserve you might hear or see a variety of birds in the different habitats, from skylarks and barn owls to buzzards and great spotted woodpeckers.

Many kinds of insect live in Gamlingay Wood. In summer you may see longhorn beetles sipping nectar from wildflowers along the paths, or butterflies such as ringlets, speckled woods and purple hairstreaks.

## Management and woodland creation

Many conifers were planted after the Second World War and we are gradually removing most of them to restore traditional woodland. We manage the old woodland by coppicing, and mowing the rides and glades. Some moths and fungi are found only with conifers, so we have left some conifers to help maintain the wood's variety.

We rely on the help of our volunteer wardens and their work parties to manage Gamlingay Wood. We are extremely grateful for all of their efforts. If you'd like to find out how you could help us manage this wonderful woodland, please contact us (details at the end of this leaflet).

## Rob Rippengal's Walk

Robert Rippengal, an archaeologist by training, was founder and director of a Cambridge-based company selling wood fuelled renewable heating systems. He enjoyed walking in the woods and was inspired by the Trust's Vision of expanding and joining its woodlands. After he died tragically while walking in the mountains, his friends and family felt that supporting the Trust's woodland work was a fitting memorial. If you would like to find out more about leaving a lasting legacy to wildlife, please contact us for confidential advice.



Oxlip

Purple loosestrife



The trees are mainly oak, ash and field maple. The bushes and shrubs beneath these trees, known as the understory, include plenty of hazel and hawthorn. Hundreds of types of mushroom and toadstool grow on the nature reserve. They have all sorts of strange names, like plums and custard, the blusher, and wood woolly foot.

Gamlingay Wood's flora is very varied due to the different soil types. On the sandier soils, you will find bracken, primroses and foxgloves, whereas bluebells, oxlips and many other flowers grow in the clay areas. Hundreds of species have been recorded in the wood, although some, like the butterfly orchids, do not appear every year.

### Flora

The woodland is enclosed by an earth mound or woodbank which protected it from livestock. It is divided by a ditch that was dug when two separate lords of the woodland owned the wood. In the 20th century, the wood was harvested more widely for timber and replanted with a mixture of oak and conifers.

Purple hairstreak



Gamlingay Wood was first recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086. It has not changed shape since Sugley Wood was felled 400 years ago. The woodland has been used as 'pannage' for pigs (which fed on the acorns) and was harvested for firewood and building materials. It even supplied giant timbers for huge mediaeval barns.

## History

Early spring sees a fine display of traditional woodland flowers including bluebells, oxlips and purple loosestrife in summer. Autumn brings russet leaves and fruiting mushrooms, and in winter frost covers the skeleton trees and shrubs in glittering crystals. Gamlingay Wood is a fine example of ancient woodland in Cambridgeshire and next door, Sugley Wood is a very young, naturally developing woodland. Both are home to many rare and unusual plants, animals and fungi. The ancient wood has a long history of use by local people for firewood, timber and more recently recreation.

## Welcome to Gamlingay and Sugley Woods



Bedfordshire  
Cambridgeshire  
Northamptonshire  
Peterborough

We hope you enjoy your visit.

## How to find the reserve

OS sheet 153 Grid reference TL 242 535

Take the B1040 from Gamlingay to Waresley. After half a mile (at the brown sign), a track on your right leads up to the nature reserve. Drive up the track and park by the wood. You can also reach Gamlingay Wood by foot along a track to the south.

## More information

Your local Wildlife Trust protects wildlife and the countryside for people to enjoy in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough. We are a charity dependent on voluntary contributions.

If you would like more information about this reserve, other reserves in the area or to find out how you support us or get involved, please contact The Wildlife Trust, The Manor House Broad Street, Great Cambourne CB23 6DH, Telephone: 01954 713 500 or email [Cambridgeshire@wildlifebcnp.org](mailto:Cambridgeshire@wildlifebcnp.org)

[www.wildlifebcnp.org](http://www.wildlifebcnp.org)

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## Welcome to Gamlingay & Sugley Wood

Protecting wildlife close to home



Oxlip



Common spotted orchid



Chicken of the woods



Purple loosestrife



Parasol mushrooms

## 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?



Dryad's Saddle;