Welcome to Brampton Wood

We hope you enjoy your visit.

How to find the reserve

OS Sheet 153 Grid Reference TL 184 698

Leave the A14 at exit 22 (Brampton), one mile east of the A14/A1 junction. Take the Brampton exit (B1514) at the first roundabout. At the next mini-roundabout turn right into Grove Lane, then after 100m turn right again at the T-junction. Follow this road through the village, over the A1, towards Granton village. The reserve is on the north side of the road 1.5 miles out of Brampton. The reserve entrance is signposted with a Wildlife Trust sign. Park in the small car park.

Paths are mostly grassy and compacted earth so can be muddy and occasionally flood in wet weather. Please stay on the paths and keep dogs on a lead.

More information

Your local Wildlife Trust protects the special wildlife and habitats of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. We are a charity dependent on voluntary contributions.

Brampton Wood

For over 500 years of protection, Brampton Wood is located 13 miles out of St Ives in a designated area of ancient woodland, adjacent to the River Granta. With just 2% of our ancient woodland left, this magnificent wood was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1974. Brampton Wood is an exceptional example of ancient woodland in Cambridgeshire.

This reserve is supported by:
Welcome to Brampton Wood

In summer, the bright grassy rides provide stark contrast to the muted tones of the woodland. Stretching for nearly two miles, they host plants more typical of open meadows, such as common spotted orchid, devil's bit scabious, water purlseine and both hairy and trailing St John’s wort.

The wood is also home to some unusual trees; yews, wild cherries and rare wild service trees can be found along the Main Ride. Two magnificent wild pears, found along the western edge of the wood, are two of the best specimens in Cambridgeshire.

Fungi

Over 500 species of fungi exist in the wood and autumn is the best time to find many of them. Often boasting attractive or quirky names, many of the fungi found in the wood are poisonous and inedible. Distinctive species found here include plums and custard, common bonnet and King Alfred’s cakes.

Fauna

From beautiful butterflies to the striped badger, the many and varied habitats within the woodland attract an array of species from across the animal kingdom.

In 1992, Brampton Wood became one of the first re-introduction sites for the hazel dormouse in the country. Due to its nocturnal habits and arboreal lifestyle this charismatic critter is exceptionally difficult to see. But regular monitoring of the dormouse by local volunteers informs us that the population has survived to this day and has successfully expanded into most areas of the wood.

The black hairstreak, one of Britain’s rarest butterflies, has several colonies in the wood making Brampton Wood one of the best UK sites to see this attractive insect. Many other unusual butterflies can be spotted regularly at the wood including purple and white-letter hairstreaks, brown argus, white admirals and silver-washed fritillary.

The wood is also home to many bird species. From the robust and conspicuous green woodpecker to the enchanting nightingale and the stealthy sparrowhawk, the wood provides ample feeding and breeding opportunities for many birds to thrive.

Many smaller creatures also frequently visit the woodland. Rotting wood piles are rife with beetle larvae, including that of nationally rare Longhorn beetles. Whilst ponds provide homes for frogs, toads and newts, including the nationally rare great crested newt.

How the Trust cares for the reserve

At Brampton, a team of staff and volunteers carry out works year round to encourage diversity of habitats and species. The rides are cut annually on alternate sides and regularly widened to prevent shading. This encourages the diversity of wildflowers and insects found along the rides. The ride edges are also being returned to a coppice cycle to improve the area for insects, birds and woodland plants.

The parts of the woodland converted to conifer plantations are being restored by removing conifers, encouraging the native deciduous woodland trees to regenerate in their place.

Map key

1. The Major Oaks
   Bordering the wood’s entrance these magnificent trees are also known as ‘The Master Oaks’ and ‘The Sentinel Oaks’.

2. Cherries and Chequers
   A previous owner planted this group of cherry and wild service trees. Typically a rare tree of ancient woodland, the bark of a wild service tree has a chequered pattern - hence the chequer tree.

3. The Great Glade
   Cleared of conifers and cut annually, the great glade is home to a great variety of wildflowers and insects.

4. Ponds
   Dug as a convenient source of water by the woods previous owners, the ponds are now home to a great wealth of aquatic creatures.

5. The Cross
   Conifer trees have been removed in this area to restore the native trees. Wide, sunny grassy rides were created to encourage wildflowers and insects.

6. The Wild Pears
   Two old and magnificent wild pear trees grow here along the edge of the wood and are two of the best examples in Cambridgeshire. They still fruit occasionally, although the pears are small and hard.

7. The Crossroads
   This is the main crossroads in the wood - at the junction of the Main and Cross Rides. From here you have an excellent view of the rides and can see the land rising north and east. A crab apple tree is nearby; one of several good examples of Britain’s only native apple tree.

8. Bluebells
   In spring, this is one of several excellent places to see a wonderful display of our most popular native woodland flower.

Be part of it
/wwildlifebcn
@wildlifebcn
Visit: www.wildlifebcn.org