

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

8 Bluebells

This is the main crossroads in the wood – at the junction of the Main and Cross Rides. From here you have an excellent view 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.

7 The Crossroad

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.

6 The Wild Pears

Conifer trees have been removed in this area to allow native trees to regenerate. Wide, sunny grassy rides were created to encourage wildflowers and insects.

5 The Cross

Dug as a convenient source of water by the wood's previous owners, the ponds are now home to a great wealth of aquatic creatures.

4 Ponds

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

3 The Great Glade

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.

2 Cherries and Chequers

Bordering the wood's entrance these magnificent trees are also known as 'The Master Oaks' and 'The Sentinel Oaks';

1 The Major Oaks

How to get here

OS Sheet 153 Grid Reference TL 184 698
what3words ///paint.handsets.dome

1.5 miles west of Brampton, on minor road to Grafham Village. For Sat Nav use PE28 ODB and continue west, away from A1/A14, for 3/4 mile.

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

*From August to April, dogs may be off lead but MUST be kept in sight and under control (see notice boards for latest information on dogs).

More information

Before you visit, please look at 'Know before you go' page on our website:



wildlifebcn.org/explore/reserve-updates.

You will find current disruptions, notices, and all the latest information about our reserves.



Primrose

Photo: Brampton Wood by Sophie Baker
Wildlife illustrations by Mike Langman



Wood anemone

The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Northamptonshire. Registered charity no: 1000412

We hope you enjoy your visit

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

If you would like more information about this reserve, other reserves in Cambridgeshire or about how you can support us, please contact:

E-mail: cambridgeshire@wildlifebcn.org

Love wildlife? Find out more and join online:
www.wildlifebcn.org/join

To join the Wildlife Trust, please contact the Membership Manager, The Wildlife Trust,
The Manor House
Broad Street
Great Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6DH

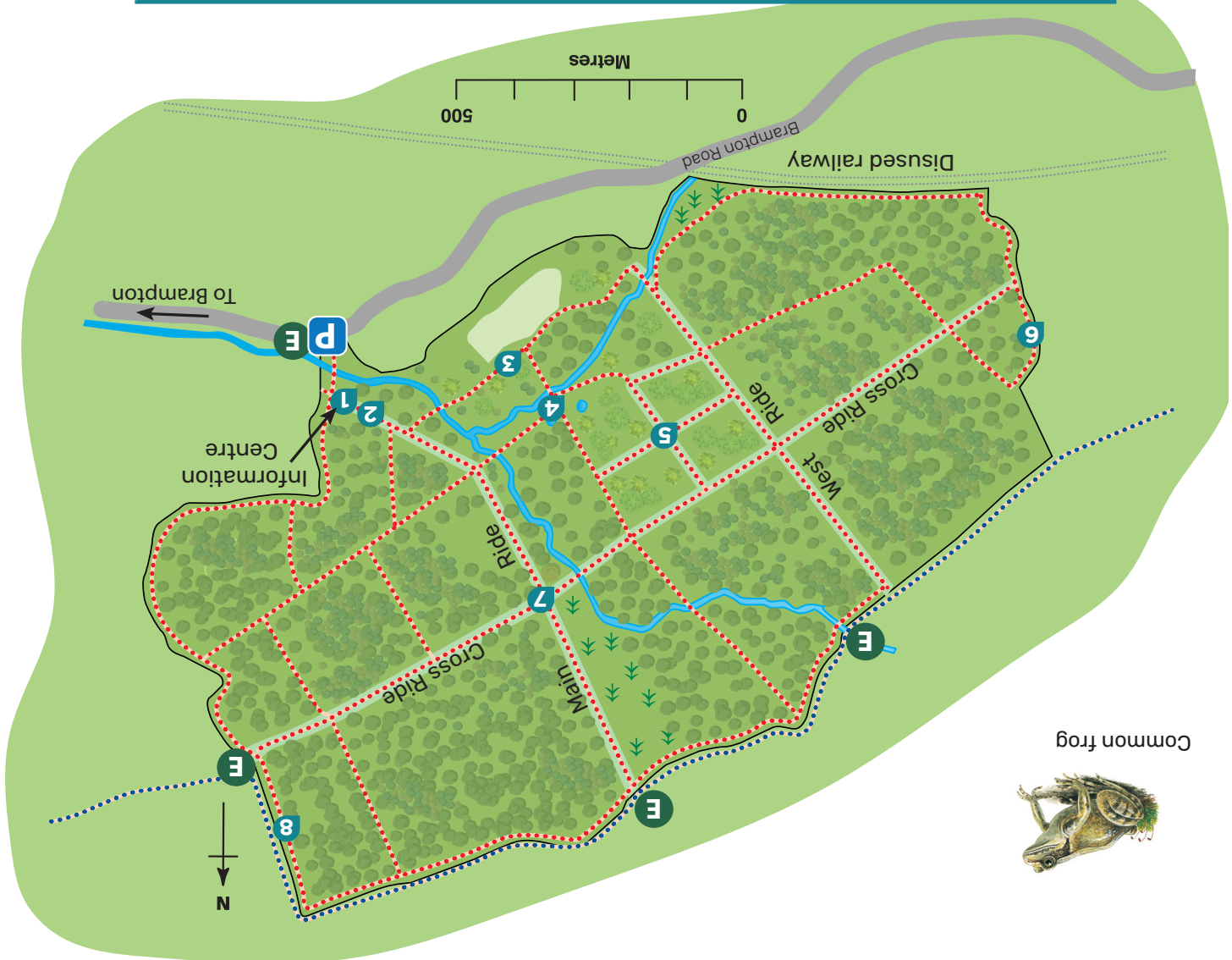


Tel. 01954 713500

Key To Map

Our nature trails and wider path network is made up of designated Public Rights of Way and permissive paths. We reserve the right to close or vary the permissive paths on this reserve.

	Nature reserve		Coniferous woodland
	Dry grassland		Scrub
	Deciduous woodland		Permissive footpath
	Parking		Entrance
	Public bridleway		



Wildlife Trust for
**Beds, Cambs
& Northants**

Welcome to

The Wildlife Trust Brampton Wood nature reserve

wildlifebcn.org

[wildlifebcn](https://wildlifebcn.org)

Welcome to Brampton Wood

Designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1954, Brampton Wood is an exceptional example of ancient woodland and the second largest woodland in Cambridgeshire. At least 900 years old and spanning 132 hectares, the wood hosts a myriad of plant, animal and fungi species. Following a successful appeal to conserve this magnificent area, the Trust purchased the site in 1992.

The Woodland

Dissected by streams and grassy rides and characterised by variable geology, the woodland boasts a great variety of habitats. These habitats are host to several rare and protected plant and animal species. Dominated by chalky boulder clay soils, lime-loving plants like the common spotted orchid thrive here. Whilst in isolated patches, the soil is acid enough to support pockets of bracken. A mixture of oak, ash, aspen, birch and field maple form the bulk of the canopy, which hangs above an understorey of hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn.



Badgers

History

The first records of Brampton Wood date back to the Domesday Book of 1086AD. Created in the Middle Ages, the boundary of the wood is marked by a ditch and large earth mound, which would have served to protect the woodland from wandering livestock.

For centuries the woodland has been managed for resources such as timber, hay and hazel poles and to provide pasture for livestock. The first map of the wood, drawn for the Earl of Sandwich in 1757, illustrates three principal rides - Main Ride, Cross Ride and West Ride. Likely much older than the map indicates, these rides were the highways of the woodland; roads by which timber and other woodland products could be extracted. As time passed and industries changed, new uses of wood were explored. In the 1860s, bark stripped from the large oaks became an important product in the tanning industry.



Speckled wood butterfly

The wood has changed hands several times since the 1950s. In 1956 The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food purchased the site from timber merchants, primarily as a safety zone for the Grafham firing range. The land was subsequently managed by the Forestry Commission, who re-planted about one-fifth of the woodland with conifers.

Shortly after, in the 1980s, the Ministry of Defence took over management of the wood until the range's closure in the early 1990s. At this time, the future of the woodland was uncertain, but following a hugely successful appeal to save and conserve this magnificent site, the Wildlife Trust purchased the wood and took over management in 1992.



Common spotted orchid

Wildlife

With almost 3400 recorded species, Brampton Wood hosts an excellent diversity of wildlife. From ancient woodland to grassy rides, streams and ponds, this magnificent site supports a great array of wildlife throughout the seasons.

Flora

Over 340 plant species have been recorded at Brampton Wood. Ancient woodland indicator species such as dog's mercury, bluebell, wood anemone, yellow archangel, primrose, wood sedge and violets can all be found in the woodland. Visit in spring to admire the conspicuous bluebell blooms that carpet parts of the site.



Bluebells

In summer, the bright grassy rides provide stark contrast to the muted tones of the woodland. Stretching for over two miles, they host plants more typical of open meadows, such as common spotted orchid, devil's-bit scabious, water purslane 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.



Devil's-bit scabious

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 here are poisonous and inedible. Distinctive species include plums and custard, false death cap, common bonnet and King Alfred's cakes.



Plums and custard

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.



Hazel dormouse

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



Black hairstreak

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, including purple and white-letter hairstreaks, brown argus, white admirals and silver-washed fritillary.



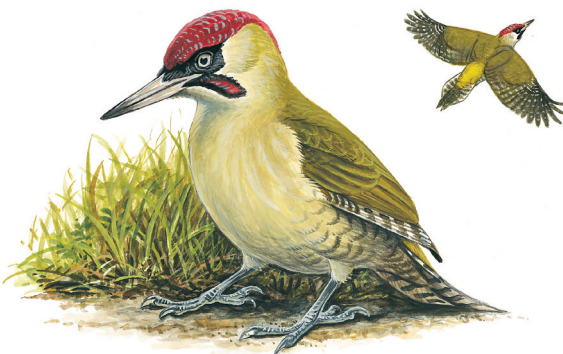
White admiral

The site 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.



Nightingale

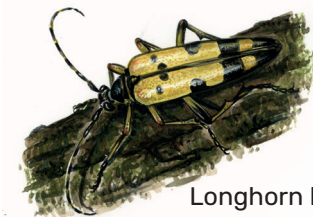
Many smaller creatures also frequently visit. Rotting wood piles are rife with beetle larvae, including that of nationally rare Longhorn beetles, whilst ponds provide homes for frogs, toads and newts, including the nationally rare great crested newt.



Green woodpecker

How the Trust cares for the reserve

At Brampton, a team of staff and volunteers work year-round to encourage the 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.



Longhorn beetle

wildlifebcn.org/brampton-wood