

encourage the growth of native wild flowers. Leaving the meadow uncut allows only a few vigorous plants such as thistles, coarse grasses and eventually young trees to invade as has happened in the past. As a result wild flowers and insects that survive in this type of grassland are lost.



Several ponds are located throughout the site containing a variety of aquatic plants and insects. These are valuable

habitats and essential sources of water for woodland birds, animals, amphibians and reptiles.

Geology

The northern part of the wood is underlain by Tunbridge Wells sand and the lower slopes and adjoining fields are on Wadhurst clay. The junction between the permeable sand and the impermeable clay is marked by the presence of seepage lines and springs on some of the slopes in the wood. These areas are often indicated by a large grass like plant, which is actually pendulous sedge.

Protection

Please help us protect the wildlife by keeping the area free from litter. Please keep dogs under control and do not allow your dog to foul in this area as it is now covered by the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.

This reserve is managed by Mid Sussex District Council and is subject to Local Authority Bylaws which are displayed on site.

This site is regularly patrolled by the Council's Leisure Rangers. If you wish to contact them about any issues relating to the use of the site call them directly on 01444 458795.

Nature Conservation in Mid Sussex

Mid Sussex District Council is involved in all aspects of nature conservation in the District. We help identify and protect important sites by creating nature reserves and new wildlife sites on Council-maintained land by offering advice and information to the local community.

There are various leaflets available about other nature conservation areas in the District, as well as the Leisure Ranger Service and dog fouling. Copies are available from Mid Sussex District Council at the address opposite.

How can you help?

Mid Sussex District Council manage the site, which is leased from the owners East Grinstead War Memorial Limited, with the assistance of the Ashplats Conservation Group. A Steering Committee advises the District Council on the management of the site and other projects and initiatives as they arise.

If you wish to get involved or simply require information please either contact us (details below) or the Community Development Manager at the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers - telephone 01243 814481, e-mail Eartham@BTCV.org.uk.

Where is Ashplats Wood?



For local information contact East Grinstead Help Point: 01342 300780.

For public transport enquiries call Travel Line Information: 08457 959099.

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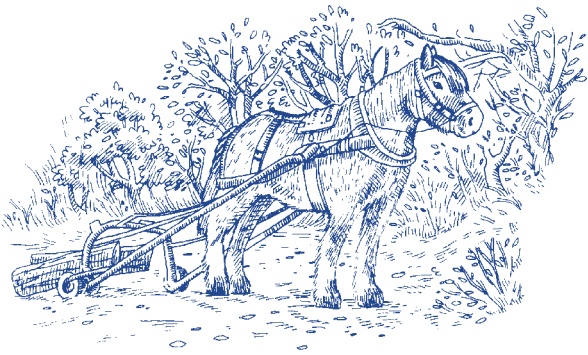
Discover 
Mid Sussex

ASHPLATS WOOD NATURE RESERVE







EAST GRINSTEAD

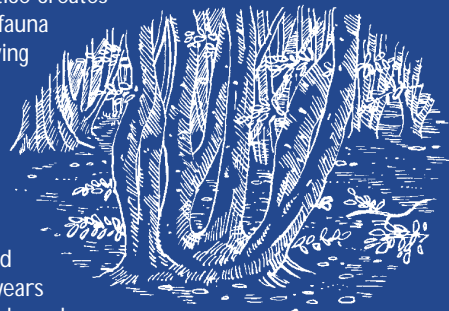


ASHPLATS WOOD



KEY

-  Broadleaved wood
-  Pond
-  Stream
-  Path
-  Access point
-  Site Boundary



Introduction

Ashplats Wood is an important site for wildlife. Part of the wood is probably ancient woodland, ie it has been continuously wooded for at least 400 years. The tithe map of 1843 shows the wood to be smaller than it is today. The wood comprises a mixture of sweet chestnut, oak, ash and hazel coppice. The site is designated as a West Sussex Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Management

Coppicing, the practice of cutting down trees to ground level on a rotational basis and allowing regrowth to occur, appears to have ceased about 20 or 30 years ago. This ancient practice creates a rich and varied fauna and flora by allowing light to penetrate to the woodland floor. Woodland flora, butterflies and other insects benefit from the increased light in the early years of the coppice cycle and as the trees grow back the dense growth provides cover for birds and woodland animals. In addition the life of individual trees is considerably prolonged by coppicing, up to several centuries in some cases. A local contractor, who uses a horse to remove the cut wood, has commenced coppicing a section of sweet chestnut, which is durable and is widely used for fencing materials especially in Sussex.

There are areas of hazel coppice and it is planned to cut this on a regular cycle.

Invasive species such as rhododendron - *Rhododendron ponticum* and bracken - *Pteridium aquilinum* have become established in some areas and caused a deterioration in the quality of the woodland habitats by out-competing other species. An ongoing programme to eradicate these most invasive weeds has commenced.

An old meadow is being restored with the removal of bracken and self-seeded trees. It is hoped that this can be cut annually in the future. The cut hay would be removed from site so as to maintain, enhance and