

# Steward's Copse



Surveyed 9<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and 17<sup>th</sup> June 2017  
by

**MAVES**

## Description

Deciduous woodland that is most similar to the National Vegetation Classification type W10c *Quercus robur*-*Pteridium aquilinum*-*Rubus fruticosus* woodland *Holcus lanatus* sub-community. Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* (with a trunk diameter of up to 0.8 m) are scattered throughout with areas of Hazel *Corylus avellana* coppice, Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa* and stands of dense Holly *Ilex aquifolium* underscrub. Other woody species include Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and small stands of Birch *Betula pendula* scrub.

There is a good amount of fallen and standing dead wood as well as rotting stumps which, together with old banks, increases the number of bryophytes and provides a habitat for a good number of invertebrates that use the dead wood habitat or burrow into banks. Some of these areas are more acidic and support bryophytes more commonly associated with heathland such as *Luecobryum glaucum* and *Hypnum jutlandicum*.

### Standing dead wood with Woodpecker holes



The field layer is extremely varied with some areas with patches of weakly growing Field Rose *Rosa arvensis* or Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and others with carpets of Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* with very weak growth of Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*. Other woodland species are scattered throughout and include ancient woodland indicators such as Wood Speedwell *Veronica montana*, Wood Millet *Milium*

*effusum*, Primrose *Primula vulgaris*, Hairy Wood-rush *Luzula pilosa* and Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*.

Less common woodland indicator species were observed along the footpaths such as Thin-spiked Wood Sedge *Carex strigosa* and Southern Wood-rush *Luzula forsteri*. The Thin-spiked Wood Sedge occurs in several clumps along a well-trodden footpath, which appears to be its favoured habitat. According to the Plant Atlas there has been a noteworthy decline of this species in Sussex and Kent.

The wayleave is a mosaic of dry and wet habitat with Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* growing alongside wetland species. This and a winter wet area also increase the diversity of the woodland, particularly with species more associated with damp and open habitats such as Soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, Marsh Thistle *Cirsium palustre*, Hemp Agrimony *Epilobium cannabinum*, Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* and Bittersweet *Solanum dulcamara*.

### **The fringes of the winter wet area with two Mandarin Ducks**



A good deal of bird activity was heard with the usual woodland and urban edge species such as Blackbirds and Robins abundant holding territories throughout. However, Marsh Tit (Red listed) was heard and seen, a Mistle Thrush (Red listed) was seen and the churring of the Nightjar (Amber listed) was heard from impenetrable vegetation in the Wayleave. Two Common Buzzards were flying low over the woodland.

The footpaths and the wayleave provide plenty of 'edge' habitats that are occupied by invertebrates. Speckled Woods and Ringlets were along the footpaths as well as the Wayleave. Other butterflies seen in the wayleave include a White Admiral (NERC Section

41), four Silver-washed Fritillaries, several Ringlets and numerous Meadow Browns. Dragonflies found breeding in ponds in the area were hawking along the wayleave and Broad-bodied Chasers, Common Blue and Azure Damselflies were seen.

## Public Impact

A number of pathways traverse the woodland, and, as a consequence, mammal activity appears to be much lower than in other areas of the Binsted Woods Complex. However, these areas tend to have a higher diversity of plants with a little more light penetration, and therefore more invertebrates.

The areas of the woodland adjacent to the gardens have piles of dumped garden waste, which occasionally penetrate deeper into the woodland. There are very occasional non-native species such as Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster sp.*, Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, and Spanish (or hybrid) Bluebell. However, other parts of the Binsted Woods Complex are much degraded by significant stands of Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* and so given its location Steward's Copse is faring reasonably well on this account, perhaps due to management.

## Plant Species List

Species recorded on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and 17<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Latin name	English name	Abundance
<b>Grasses, sedges and rushes</b>		
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent	lf
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome	o
<i>Carex pendula</i>	Pendulous Sedge	o / lf
<i>Carex remota</i>	Remote Sedge	o / lf
<i>Carex strigosa</i>	Thin-spiked Wood Sedge	vo
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	Wood-sedge	f
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	lf
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft-rush	lf
<i>Luzula forsteri</i>	Southern Wood-rush	r
<i>Luzula multiflora</i>	Heath Wood-rush	r
<i>Luzula pilosa</i>	Hairy Wood-rush	f
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	Wood Melick	f
<i>Milium effusum</i>	Wood Millet	f
<b>Flowering plants</b>		
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground-elder	lf
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugle	o
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard	o
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	Wood Anemone	o / lf
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	lf
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-Ladies	o
<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	Wavy Bitter-cress	o
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckooflower	o
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	Enchanter's-nightshade	o
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle	lf
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	o
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	Hemp-agrimony	lf
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood Spurge	o
<i>Ficaria verna</i>	Lesser Celandine	o / la
<i>Galium palustre</i>	Common Marsh-bedstraw	r
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert	o

Latin name	English name	Abundance
<b>Flowering plants contd.</b>		
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens	o
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	o
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	la
<i>Hyacinthoides x variabilis</i>	Bluebell hybrid	r
<i>Hypericum pulchrum</i>	Slender St. John's-wort	lf
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle	lf
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	lf
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Yellow Pimpernel	r
<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>	Creeping Jenny	o
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint	lf
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not	lf
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Green Alkanet	o
<i>Potentilla sterilis</i>	Barren Strawberry	lf
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose	o
<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	Lesser Spearwort	lf
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	lf
<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	Wood Dock	o
<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	Sanicle	o
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	Common Figwort	o
<i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>	Ragged-robin	r
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet	r
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort	o
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater Stitchwort	lf
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	Wood Sage	lf
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	lf
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	Ivy-leaved Speedwell	r
<i>Veronica montana</i>	Wood Speedwell	o
<i>Viola odorata</i>	Sweet Violet	o
<b>Woody species</b>		
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	vo
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	lf
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	la
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	r
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut	lf
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	lf
<i>Cotoneaster sp.</i>	a cotoneaster	r
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	o
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	o
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	o
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	f
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	la
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle	f
<i>Malus sp.</i>	an apple	r
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Cherry Laurel	r
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	lf
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak	f
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field-rose	lf
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble	o
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's-broom	o
<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Grey Willow	lf
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	r
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan	o
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	o
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse	lf

Latin name	English name	Abundance
<b>Ferns</b>		
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	Scaly Male-fern	o
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad Buckler-fern	o
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken	o
<b>Bryophytes</b>		
<i>Atrichum undulatum</i>		r
<i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i>		f
<i>Campylopus introflexus</i>		f
<i>Eurhynchium striatum</i>		f
<i>Fissidens taxifolius</i>		r
<i>Hypnum cupressiforme</i>		f
<i>Hypnum jutlandicum</i>		lf
<i>Hypnum resupinatum</i>		o
<i>Isotheicum myosuroides</i>		f
<i>Kindbergia praelonga</i>		f
<i>Leucobryum glaucum</i>		f
<i>Mnium hornum</i>		f
<i>Polytrichastrum formosum</i>		f
<i>Tetraphis pellucida</i>		f
<i>Thuidium tamariscinum</i>		o

Ancient woodland indicator species are highlighted