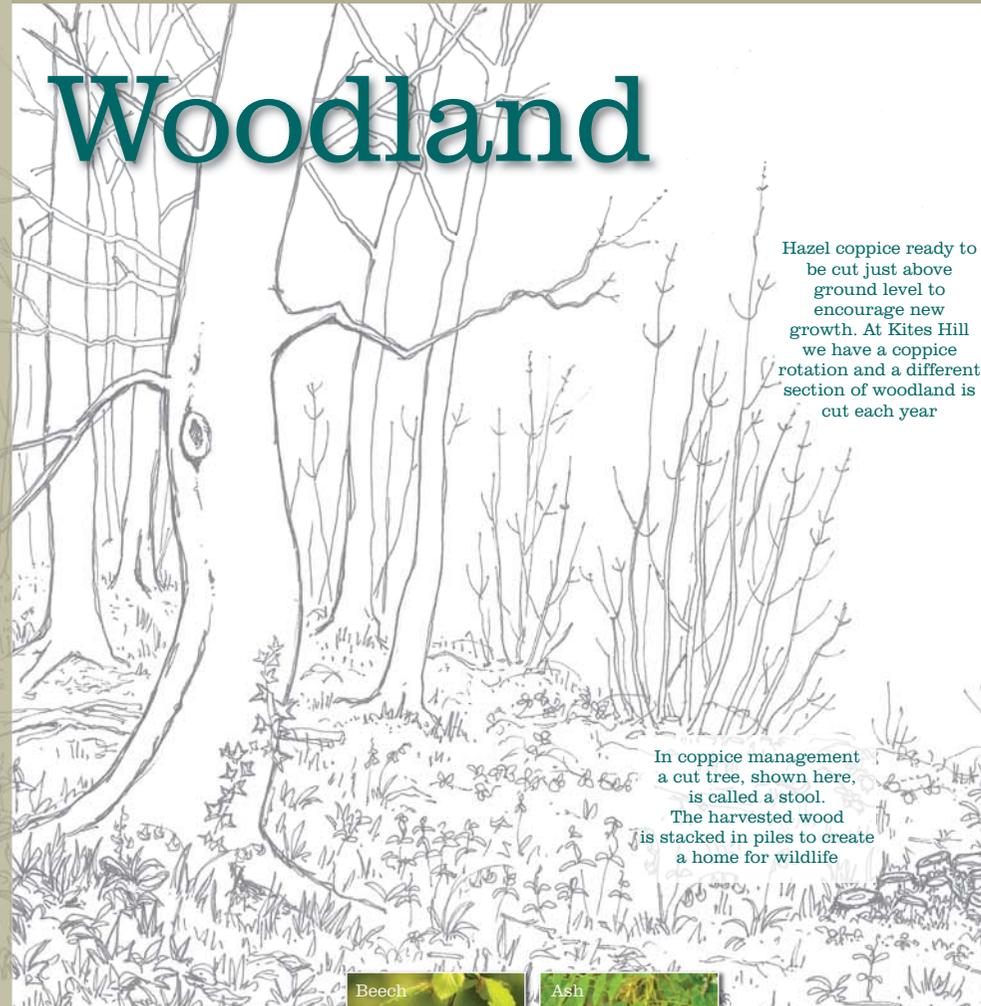


welcome to Kites Hill

You are standing in part of one of the best examples of ancient Beech woodland in the UK. This woodland is part of a larger protected area called the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), also recognised at a European level as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). As you continue your walk through Kites Hill reserve, look out for some of the woodland's characteristic species.

Woodland



Hazel coppice ready to be cut just above ground level to encourage new growth. At Kites Hill we have a coppice rotation and a different section of woodland is cut each year

In coppice management a cut tree, shown here, is called a stool. The harvested wood is stacked in piles to create a home for wildlife

Stool with regrowth, which adds variety to the woodland structure and provides cover for nesting birds

Attracting wildlife

Beech woodlands have a long history of management for timber and we continue this practice at Kites Hill. Sections of woodland are coppiced annually in rotation (see below). We also remove some invasive Sycamore to allow light to the woodland floor and provide open areas for plants and butterflies. A healthy woodland is a little bit untidy – look out for log piles and dead wood, all purposefully left to encourage invertebrates and fungi.

At Kites Hill birds are given an extra helping hand - scan the trees for nest boxes of different shapes and sizes!

Tit box



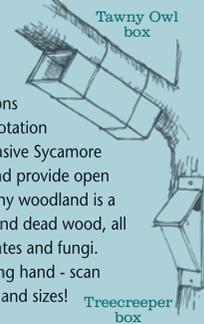
Tawny Owl



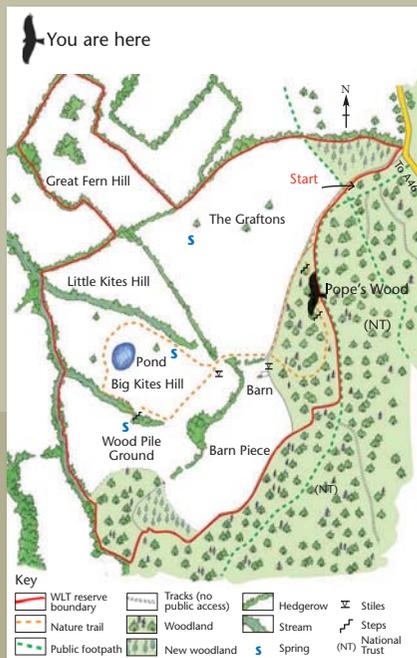
Coal Tit



Nuthatch

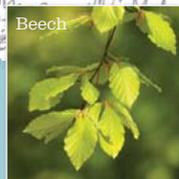


Treecreeper box

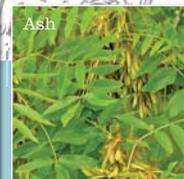


Trees

The broadleaf semi-natural woodland of Kites Hill has a high canopy of mostly Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) along with fine examples of Pedunculate Oaks (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and non-native Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). The Beech trees are easily distinguished from the other woodland trees by their silvery, smooth, straight trunks and oval green leaves with wavy edges, which turn bright orange and red in autumn.



Beech



Ash



Oak



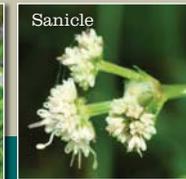
Hazel

Plants

One of the reasons beech woodland in the UK is so important is because it is home to species often missing or rare in the rest of Europe, such as the much loved Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). Did you know the UK has 50 per cent of the world's total population of this species? You can see them flowering throughout the woodland in May. Other characteristic species include Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*) and Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*). Also look out for Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*).



Bluebell



Sanicle



Common Dog-violet

To do:

Can you spot this year's coppice?

Coppicing is a traditional method of woodland management



www.worldlandtrust.org



Credits: Beech & Oak, Sherie New/www.seeing.org.uk; Hazel, Mike Taylor/www.seeing.org.uk; Bluebell, Charlotte Bechham; Sanicle, Common Dog-violet, Ash, Coal Tit & Nuthatch, John Bridges/www.northeastwildlife.co.uk; Tawny Owl, Graham Carey/www.wildlife-galleries.co.uk; Design and illustration, www.wearedrab.net.