

KNEPP CASTLE WILDLAND PROJECT
BOTANICAL SURVEY OF HORSHAM COMMON SNCI
DOLPHIN ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS
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1.0 METHODOLOGY

A botanical survey of the Horsham Common SNCI (H30) was carried out by Kate Ryland of Dolphin Ecological Surveys over a period of several days during late April and early May 2008. Horsham Common SNCI lies within the Knepp Castle estate in West Sussex at central grid reference TQ157237.

The purposes of the survey were to obtain an overview of the vegetation of the SNCI complex, to identify those areas of greatest botanical interest within the site and to collect baseline information about the composition of most botanically diverse areas.

The first part of the survey consisted of a walkover assessment of the site recording vascular plant species in each of the six separate woodland sections of the SNCI. The plant species recorded in each area are shown on an accompanying spreadsheet and the abundance of each species is given on the DAFOR scale.

The areas of greatest botanical interest within the site were marked on a map (Map 1) and primarily comprise areas of ancient semi-natural woodland ground flora, rich in Ancient Woodland Indicator species (AWIs). Map 2 shows the location of numbered target notes that correspond to notes in the text below where the different areas of woodland are described.

Having identified those areas of chief botanical interest on the site the second part of the survey was to record a set of random stratified quadrats in the SNCI. The two, broadly defined strata within the site were simply the areas of high botanical interest and those areas of lower botanical interest.

Ensuring true randomness of quadrat locations in advance of the field survey was difficult because the shape of the high botanical interest strata is very long and narrow in places, particularly where diverse woodland ground flora is located along streamlines or on woodland edges. This meant that using a random number generator to choose sample plots was not practical for all areas. Instead a series of plots in each woodland block were selected on the site map within high interest areas prior to field survey. This amounts to haphazard sampling more than random sampling, but nevertheless avoids the worst bias of choosing plots on the ground.

The series of 40 2m x 2m quadrats were only located in the areas of high interest because these are the areas of most importance to future monitoring of the woodland ground flora vegetation communities. Vascular plant species within each quadrat were recorded and their abundance noted on the DOMIN scale. The quadrat data is given on an accompanying spreadsheet and the location of the quadrats is shown on Map 3.

2.0 TARGET NOTES

Numbers in brackets in the text correspond with the target note numbers on Map 2.

2.1 COATES FURZEFIELD (1)

2.1.1 Overview

Coates Furzefield is an almost square block of woodland with a stream along its northern edge, quite distinct woodland banks along the southern and western edges and a faint, relict bank on the eastern side. It has wide, grassy rides around the perimeter, set into the woodland on average about 3-5m and two interior rides that divide the copse into 4 quadrants. There are signs of livestock grazing throughout the area.

2.1.2 Woodland interior

The whole of the central area of Coates Furzefield is replanted with oak, sycamore and birch below occasional older oaks. Some of the planted trees still retain tree-tubes and there are numerous old tubes scattered around the area.

The ground flora in the copse is dominated by abundant bracken with bluebell, wild daffodil and foxglove prominent in places. The ground flora is most diverse and contains a higher proportion of Ancient Woodland Indicator species (AWIs) around the edges of the copse and along the stream, whilst the interior has a ground flora that clearly reflects a period of intense disturbance (cause by replanting). Deadwood and old mossy stumps are present throughout.

To the north of the central east-west ride there is much small diameter birch and sycamore that has been felled and left in situ. Bracken, honeysuckle and bluebell are prominent with a patchy carpet of bluebell in places but some areas completely dominated by bracken. Oak and birch predominate in this half of the copse. There is a pheasant feeder in the centre of this area.

To the south of the ride there are recently coppiced sycamore stools and a stand of rhododendron in the southwest quadrant. Sycamore regeneration is prolific throughout this part of the copse and the birch is even-aged. The ground flora in this half of the area is dominated by bracken but with relict patches of bluebell and wild daffodil, both of which are more noticeable in the south of the copse. Honeysuckle, wood sage and foxglove are frequent with some mossy patches of ground and occasional stands of nettle on disturbed areas and old fire sites.

2.1.3 Woodland edges and rides

The woodland banks on the southern and western edges support occasional old field maple and hazel coppice stools and older oaks. Rabbit warrens are prominent along the banks. The southern edge of the block has a patchy scrub margin dominated by blackthorn and hawthorn.

The grassy and mossy rides around the perimeter of this copse have a flora generally indicative of some disturbance and compaction to the surface of the rides. Species on the rides include much selfheal, bugle, ground-ivy and creeping buttercup with more infrequent nettle, lesser burdock and germander speedwell. The ride edges, especially on the woodland banks, have a much more rich, relict ancient woodland ground flora that includes AWIs such as bluebell, wild daffodil, wood spurge and yellow archangel.

On the eastern edge of the wood bluebell and wild daffodil extend from the ride edges into the central grassy ride and there is a higher proportion of acidophilous species such as tormentil and heath speedwell. Pignut is also prominent in this area. There are occasional wet flushes on some of the rides around the woodland perimeter and in the wide north-south and east-west orientated rides that divide Coates Furzefield into 4 sections.

There is a steep-sided, mossy-banked stream (2) along the northern edge of the woodland with a strip of semi-natural, unplanted woodland between the stream and the northern perimeter ride. Wet hollows along the eastern part of the stream have patches of mixed scrub associated with them. Pendulous sedge, bluebell, dogs mercury, wood anemone and wild daffodil are prominent in the ground flora of this strip below a mixture of hazel, willow, oak, sycamore and birch.

The northern perimeter ride (3) has a generally fine, slightly acidic sward with several damp flushes. This ride flora is characterized by rushes, tormentil, marsh thistle, field woodrush, bent-grass, wood sage, foxglove and marsh stitchwort along with stands of bluebell and wild daffodil on the margins. A few stands of nettle indicate areas of disturbed or enriched ground. A dense stand of bracken is present along the northern edge of this ride, intermixed with a low dead-hedge.

The western ride (4) has a very short, grassy sward with stands of bluebell and wild daffodil on the edges, but appears to have suffered more disturbance than some of the other rides and is severely affected by rabbit activity extending from the warrens on the western edge of the copse.

The central east-west ride (5) is particularly wet and has a small ditch running parallel to it that feeds into the pond (see below). Wood sage is prominent on the ride edges whilst rushes, lesser spearwort, marsh thistle, bugle, tormentil and field woodrush are typical of the ride flora.

2.1.4 Pond (6)

The pond on the western edge of the copse has a rich aquatic and semi-aquatic flora that includes common bulrush, soft rush, purple loosestrife, gipsywort, common duckweed, common water-plantain, branched bur-reed, common club-rush, floating sweet-grass and lesser spearwort.

2.2 CONSTABLES FURZE (including the open area between Constables Furze and Horsham Common)

2.2.1 Overview

This block of woodland is quite varied and includes a scrubby area between two stream valleys that has a relict woodland ground flora in the south and grades into an area of species-rich, slightly acidic grassland (which should benefit from livestock grazing). Scrub is present along the edges of the grassy clearing and shows some signs of encroaching into the open area. The main part of Constables Furze comprises mixed coppice of hornbeam, hazel, ash, sycamore and field maple with oak standards. The ground flora in the main part of the copse is dominated by dense carpets of bluebell. Along the stream valley, which extends along the copse's northern edge and becomes a small gill at the northern tip, the ground flora is particularly diverse. There are patchy signs of livestock grazing throughout the area.

2.2.2 Open area (7)

This narrow neck of land that links the two woodland blocks of Constables Furze to the north and Horsham Common to the south is bordered on its north and south edges by small, steep sided streams. The stream valleys have a woodland character with carpets of bluebell and mixed shrub species below oak trees whilst the southern part of this area has areas of old hawthorn with occasional oak and ash trees over a mossy ground flora that includes much ground-ivy along with dogs mercury, bugle, enchanters nightshade, three-veined sandwort and scattered bluebell.

The ground appears to have been disturbed in the past with several mounds evident and there is a central, well-used track. At the northern end of this zone the scrub gives way to an open, grassy clearing (8) with a species-rich sward that includes some grassland species of note such as devils-bit scabious, knapweed, agrimony, wild strawberry and betony along with frequent common sorrel, creeping thistle and ribwort plantain. In 2005, the unimproved sward of this glade was structurally diverse and very species-rich. It is felt that some of this diversity has been lost due to natural succession, and that grazing will help to restore the botanical interest. Bramble is present in this open area and there are some planted oak trees. A large pheasant pen (9) is situated on the edge of the grassy clearing and extends into Constables Furze.

2.2.3 Constables Furze (10)

Constables Furze is separated from the open area by a woodland bank and there are also old banks around its margins. The copse contains a mixture of coppice species, predominantly hornbeam but with areas of hazel, ash, field maple and sycamore stools. Hazel and sycamore stools are prominent in the southeastern corner, hazel alone in the northern gill whilst ash and field maple are present along the northern stream edge. Oak standards are frequent across the copse and there are scattered Scots pines.

The ground flora is dominated by a carpet of bluebell over most of Constables Furze, though in the southeastern corner the ground appears disturbed and dogs mercury and ground-ivy largely replace bluebell. Hazel, ash, birch and sycamore occur in this part of the wood where there has been some recent coppicing with cut material left in situ. Bracken is locally frequent in the resultant open glade, sycamore regeneration is prolific and there is much rabbit activity.

The eastern edge of the copse has predominantly coppiced sycamore and hazel over a carpet of bluebell with scattered bracken.

The pheasant pen extends over much of the western part of Constables Furze and although not entered for this survey it was seen to enclose a mixture of hornbeam and oak over bluebell with patches of grass and scrub around the central track.

At the eastern end of the pen an area of ash and hazel had recently been thinned creating an open glade where the ground flora is more diverse than the surrounding, bluebell dominated zones. Wood spurge, dogs mercury, common dog-violet, early purple orchid, primrose and ground-ivy all occur in the glade.

Along the northern edge of Constables Furze there is a narrow strip of woodland along the stream valley and outside the pheasant pen. Ash and field maple coppice, including some very

old stools, occur over a rich ground flora with a lower proportion of bluebell than in the body of the copse, but with more dogs mercury, wood spurge, primrose, wood anemone and dog-violet.

The northern part of the stream valley forms a narrow gill (11) with mainly hazel coppice and some old hornbeam stools along with oak, field maple, ash and holly. This area has a particularly rich ground flora with several AWIs including wood anemone, bluebell, early purple orchid in some abundance, wild daffodil, primrose and wood melick.

To the north of the track, upstream of the gill, there is an old wooded pit (12) that contains metal debris and was probably used as a farm dump in the past. Disturbed ground is evident in places but there are some old coppice stools and relict wood banks on its edges. The damp central part of the pit supports mainly nettle and willow, but on the drier banks field maple, hazel, oak and hawthorn occur over patches of wood anemone, dogs mercury, wood melick and occasional bluebell.

2.3 HORSHAM COMMON

2.3.1 Overview

Horsham Common is a large block of woodland that lies between Constables Furze to the north and Alder Copse to the south. For the purposes of this survey the boundary between Horsham Common and Alder Copse was taken to be a distinct woodbank (13) on the southern side of a main ride where the generally level ground of Horsham Common starts to slope downwards into the floodplain of the river and the wet woodland of Alder Copse.

There are small streams along the eastern and western sides of Horsham Common, which feed into the river through Alder Copse. The western stream extends northwards into a long, narrow, scrubby gill (14) where recent felling of the tangled shrub layer limited access for survey.

Much of Horsham Common is replanted and comprises oak and ash dominated canopy layer with mainly hazel coppice of varied ages and occasional areas of hornbeam and field maple coppice. The shrub layer includes frequent hawthorn and stands of blackthorn with occasional spindle. There are scattered planted conifers, cherry and dogwood in places.

The ground flora of Horsham Common is most diverse along the eastern and western stream valleys where intact ancient woodland plant communities characterized by bluebell and wood anemone occur. The rich ground flora also extends a short distance from the margins into the southern and eastern edges of the main woodland compartments.

The remainder of Horsham Common has a generally quite coarse ground flora on the wet, formerly disturbed soils. Mossy areas are frequent and there are characteristic dense stands of pendulous sedge, bramble, dogs mercury, ground-ivy and ferns. However, patches of violets, primrose, barren strawberry and bluebell are also present.

The wide woodland rides that separate Horsham Common into 5 large compartments are generally quite wet and typically support a high proportion of sedges with bugle and ground-ivy often prominent.

There is a large pheasant pen in the southwestern part of the wood.

2.3.2 Southwest compartment (15)

A large pheasant pen occupies much of the southwestern compartment of Horsham Common. Oak and hazel predominate over a ground flora that includes extensive stands of dogs mercury, much enchanters nightshade and bramble and occasional bluebell, primrose and wood sedge. Brash piles are frequent in this area. Within the pen pendulous sedge and docks are prominent with occasional bluebell. Wide, wet, rutted paths surround this compartment.

2.3.3 Western stream (16)

Oak standards are present over ash and hazel coppice stools along the western stream valley. The rich ground flora includes stands of dogs mercury along with areas of bluebell, wood anemone and wild daffodil.

2.3.4 Northwest compartment (17)

Oak and hazel also dominate this compartment though there are also some planted *Prunus* species. The ground flora includes large stands of pendulous sedge and bramble along with much wood sedge, dogs mercury and ground-ivy. Primrose, bluebell and wood spurge are occasional. Dead wood from coppicing and thinning has been left in situ and used to form low dead hedges. There are some bare and disturbed areas of ground in this compartment where nettle is locally frequent. Signs of livestock grazing and browsing were frequent in this area.

2.3.5 Northern gill

The narrow wooded stream to the north of Horsham Common has been fenced to exclude livestock. This small gill contains a mixture of trees and shrubs including oak and hawthorn with occasional hazel, holly and ash. A considerable amount of recent felling and thinning has taken place in this area with the deadwood left to form a dense tangle of brush, effectively limiting access to the upper parts of the gill. Coarse species including nettle and pendulous sedge are dominant along the stream edges, suggesting a degree of nutrient enrichment. The ground flora contains patches of more typical woodland species along upper slopes of the gill, especially the eastern bank with species such as bluebell, wood sorrel, wood anemone, lesser celandine, enchanters nightshade, primrose and dogs mercury. There are occasional grassy areas along the western bank of the gill and shaded, mossy zones where the scrub is most dense.

2.3.6 Main rides

Wide, damp rides surround the 5 compartments of Horsham Common and run along the margins of the main woodland blocks, separating them from the stream valleys. The main components of the ride flora include wood sedge, pendulous sedge, creeping buttercup, bugle and ground-ivy with primrose, yellow pimpernel and creeping cinquefoil often prominent.

2.3.7 North central compartment (18)

This central northern compartment contains more mixed coppice species than other parts of Horsham Common with oak standards over hazel, ash and blocks of hornbeam coppice in the north and east. The central part of this compartment has been heavily thinned to leave a fairly open glade with well-spaced oaks. The ground flora again comprises a community typical of wet,

disturbed woodland soils including much pendulous sedge with dogs mercury, enchanters nightshade, ground-ivy, bramble, common figwort and frequent male fern.

2.3.8 Northeast compartment (19)

This northeastern compartment is quite varied compared to the western part of Horsham Common and contains a mixture of oak, ash, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, wild cherry and scattered planted conifers. There are fewer hazel stools in the north of this block and a higher proportion of scrubby species and conifers. Ground disturbance is also very noticeable in this area and there are some large moss-dominated zones. However, the ground flora is rather more diverse and although there are still dense areas of pendulous sedge, dogs mercury, ground-ivy, enchanters nightshade and bramble throughout most of the compartment there are also AWIs such as wood anemone, wood spurge and primrose present along the southern and eastern edges of this compartment near the eastern stream valley.

2.3.9 Northern edge of Horsham Common (20)

There is a deep ditch and relict wood bank along the northern edge of Horsham Common. Large old tree stumps, mature oak, hazel stools and a section of outgrown field maple hedge mark the boundary of the woodland. There is also a greater concentration of AWIs along this feature including bluebell and wood anemone. *Prunus* trees have been planted along the edge of the track that runs parallel to the old bank and ditch. There is a small, shallow pool on the northern boundary of Horsham Common where a field boundary meets the woodland edge.

2.3.10 Eastern stream (21)

There is a distinct wood bank between the ride along the eastern edge of Horsham Common and the eastern stream valley. Within the streamside area there is a mixture of oak, ash, hazel, hawthorn, field maple and holly. The diverse ground flora in this zone includes abundant bluebell with primrose, wood anemone, barren strawberry, wood spurge, dogs mercury, yellow archangel, wood melick and early purple orchid. In the southern part of the eastern stream valley the canopy comprises largely ash over a ground flora dominated by dogs mercury but with many AWIs also present.

2.3.11 Southeast compartment (22)

This southeastern compartment contains a mixture of oak, hazel (especially in the west and south) and ash with field maple and hornbeam in the shrub layer. Much of the hazel is quite young and there is dense ash regeneration. The ground flora is varied and most diverse in the eastern and southern parts of the compartment. It lacks the extensive stands of pendulous sedge found in other compartments. Dogs mercury, pendulous sedge, wood sedge, primrose, ground-ivy, violet, bugle, barren strawberry and common spotted orchid all occur in this zone and there are many small ditches across the area.

2.4 ALDER COPSE

2.4.1 Overview

Alder Copse comprises a varied area of woodland with the main stream running through its southwestern part and two small streams entering the river from Horsham Common to the north. Much of this area has been replanted with both poplars and conifers, but there are still strong ancient, semi-natural woodland characteristics throughout. There is an area of drier woodland on

a south-facing slope to the north of the main east-west ride and some steep, dry banks around the southern edges. The area around the river comprises wet, floodplain woodland.

2.4.2 Western stream (23)

This is a continuation of the stream valley that runs along the western edge of Horsham Common and comprises mixed hazel, field maple and hornbeam coppice with some planted conifers and poplars as well as oak and ash standards. The ground flora is diverse and includes frequent bluebell and dogs mercury.

2.4.3 North of the main ride (24)

This block of Scots pine plantation on a south-facing slope has occasional hazel coppice stools along with silver birch and field maple over a locally quite species rich ground flora dominated by bluebell, foxglove and bramble. Elsewhere in this area ground disturbance is marked and pendulous sedge, bramble and ground-ivy are locally abundant. There are some grassy patches where evidence of livestock grazing is frequent. Wet flushes, especially around the north-south ride in this area typically support rushes, sedges, creeping buttercup, water mint and marsh thistle. Wood spurge is locally frequent along the ride edges

East of the ride is an east-facing slope (25) down to the stream where the canopy is dominated by poplar, ash and alder. Dogs mercury is abundant along the streamsides with grassy patches, scattered stands of bluebell, wood anemone and yellow archangel elsewhere. Deadwood is abundant near the stream.

The main east-west ride (26) is very wet and poached with stands of nettle, hemlock water-dropwort and bramble in the wettest flush at its junction with the north-south ride.

To the east of the stream (27) there is an area of rather open poplar plantation with occasional oaks and a very sparse shrub layer over wet flushes. The ground has been severely disturbed so the ground flora is varied but it includes a range of species including woodland species such as bluebell, wood spurge, wood anemone, barren strawberry and yellow archangel as well as species typical of wet and disturbed areas including pendulous sedge, creeping buttercup, rushes and bramble. Bracken is locally frequent on the drier upper slopes of this area and there are some grassy patches. There is much deadwood on the ground especially along the eastern edge of this zone as well as recently coppiced alder and ash stools.

2.4.4 South of the main ride (28)

To the south of the main ride the eastern half of Alder Copse contains scattered mature Scots pine and hybrid poplars within mixed, semi-natural hazel, hornbeam and alder coppice. The ground flora on the drier east bank comprises a carpet of bluebell whilst in the wetter, floodplain area a more sparse, open ground flora includes pendulous sedge, nettle, dogs mercury, lesser celandine and ground-ivy. This area is very trampled by cattle. The large pond in this area (29) has stands of common bulrush and branched bur-reed along with young alder, bramble, nettle and willows on the margins. There is a very extensive badgers' sett on the south side of the pond and around the steep stream banks in the south of Alder Copse.

In the southern part of the wet woodland there is a second, smaller and shallower pond (30) separated from the large pond by a scrubby bank. There is a steep, bluebell-dominated bank on the southeastern edge of the wood and to the west of the southern pond the ground flora below poplar, alder and hazel is dominated by ramsons.

The southwestern quadrant of Alder Copse (31) comprises an excellent area of wet woodland with a block of hornbeam coppice stools near the main path and planted hybrid poplars forming an open canopy over hazel, ash and alder coppice stools. The ground flora throughout this area is generally dominated by ramsons with varying amounts of bluebell and frequent wet flushes and pools. Hybrid poplar and ash stools replace alder towards the west of this block.

There is an internal woodland bank parallel to the western edge of Alder Copse and scattered Scots pine trees and hornbeam stools predominate in this drier section of the woodland. Old hazel stools occur on the southern edge of the copse and there are some huge old tree stumps along the western side of Alder Copse. The ground flora is generally more diverse on the drier ground below hornbeam coppice and ramsons are replaced by bluebell with wood anemone, yellow archangel, dogs mercury, ground-ivy and patches of early purple orchid.

2.5 POPLAR PLANTATION (32)

There is a narrow strip of very open, mature poplar plantation on the northern side of the stream that links the woodland areas of Alder Copse and Hartsgravel Wood. Hazel, field maple, alder, ash and oak occur on the edge of the river but most of the area supports mature hybrid poplars and scattered elder shrubs. A mixed hedgerow and wet, grassy track (33) run along the northern edge of this area and there is a scrubby bank with hawthorn, blackthorn and elder on the south side of the track. The eastern end of the plantation has a pheasant feeder and a very trampled and poached area next to the main track that separates it from Alder Copse.

This wet plantation woodland has a mainly grassy, coarse ground flora with some wetland species, but also contains relict areas of ancient woodland species on the streamside, including clumps of ramsons, and along the steep bank on the path edge in the north, for example yellow archangel, early purple orchid, wood spurge, bluebell and crab apple. Common dog violet and dogs mercury are also present along this bank. The ground flora in the main part of the plantation includes stands of bracken, abundant docks, meadowsweet, common cleavers, creeping thistle, cuckoo flower, lesser burdock and a range of coarse grasses as well as occasional AWIs including wood anemone and goldilocks buttercup.

2.6 HARTSGRAVEL WOOD

2.6.1 Overview

Most of Hartsgravel Wood comprises hazel coppice and oak standards with a diverse ground flora locally dominated by carpets of bluebell. There is a clear bank and ditch around the eastern and northern boundaries of the wood. The stream defines the southern edge of the woodland and in the floodplain between the stream and the main east to west ride there is a rich area of wet woodland over a diverse ground flora. The main east-west ride is grassy, wet and poached in places. There is a small stream within the wood that runs parallel to the secondary ride that goes from north to south and bisects the woodland. A large area in the eastern part of Hartsgravel Wood has been replanted with a mixture of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

2.6.2 East of the north-south ride (34)

Apart from the replanted area (see below) this half of Hartsgravel Wood comprises a mixture of hazel coppice with a few hornbeam stools below a canopy of oak and occasional ash. There are many old, mossy stumps present and the ground flora is typically dominated by a carpet of bluebell, though yellow archangel is locally frequent and there is an area where dogs mercury is prominent on the eastern edge of the wood. Hazel stools along the eastern edge of the wood have been cut to a height of approximately 1m and there has been some selective coppicing within the woodland with the brash left in situ.

2.6.3 Replanted area (35)

This area extends northwards from the main east-west ride along the eastern side of the north-south ride. A mixture of oak and fir has been planted in this zone and there are also some mature sweet chestnut stools present in the south of the area. Disturbed ground and prolific growth of rhododendron characterise this area where the ground flora includes a high proportion of grasses, stands of bracken and bramble, foxglove, wood sage and some wet areas where rushes occur. In the north bluebell occurs in increasing frequency as the grasses decline with increased shade from the intact hazel coppice. Recent management of the rhododendron has left some extensive bare areas within this zone.

2.6.4 West of the north-south ride (36)

Most of this half of Hartsgravel Wood is intact hazel coppice with oak standards. There is a small, dense stand of holly near the ride and in the south-western corner the shrub layer is more open with younger and fewer hazel stools over a ground flora that includes much bramble, bracken, grasses, honeysuckle and wood sage. Across most of this area, however, the ground flora comprises a typical mixture of AWIs with dominant bluebell, yellow archangel and wood anemone locally prominent, especially along the small stream (37) that runs from north to south through this area. There is a small area in the north of the wood where there appears to have been some disturbance and ground-ivy is locally dominant and elsewhere honeysuckle is prominent in the field layer.

Along the western edge of Hartsgravel Wood there is a stock-proof fence approximately 10m in from the edge of Shipley Road, leaving a wooded, but ungrazed strip including a woodbank and ditch along the roadside. There is a trampled and rutted track along the fenceline and within this more open strip bracken and bramble are more prominent than in the body of the wood.

2.6.5 South of the main ride (38)

Between the main ride and the stream is a rich area of wet woodland with a mixture of alder, wych elm, ash, hazel, oak, field maple, spindle, blackthorn, hawthorn and elder. The ground flora in this area is very diverse and locally dominated by ramsons but also includes many other AWIs including bluebell, wood anemone, yellow archangel, wild daffodil, pendulous sedges and moschatel as well as stands of dogs mercury and nettle. There are several wet flushes rich in wetland species where the small stream from the north joins the main stream.