

Greyfield Wood

This pocket guide should be regarded as a 'taster' of the delights to be found whilst wandering through Greyfield Wood, which also incorporates Withy Copse. More information is available on the Parish website which will be updated on a regular basis.

The Archaeology and History of Greyfield Wood. A wood is shown on a map of Berkshire published in 1761 extending north and south of the Bourne and this must be Greyfield Wood and Ironmongers Copse. The boundary between the two is marked by a low bank. Other banks mark the southern extent and divisions within the woods. The coppice stools and ground flora along the stream on the western edge show that this strip was used as an ash coppice for at least the last 400 years.

The Wildlife of Greyfield Wood

Trees. The conifers are mid-20th century additions, but the jewels in the crown of the wood are the gnarled and twisted ash coppice stools. Young ash trees were cut off at chest height when they were 6" (15cm) thick. The stumps sprouted poles that were harvested every



few years to make farm equipment. The stump carried on growing slowly forming these amazing shapes. Withy Copse is a younger area of ash coppice and Ironmongers Copse is a hazel coppice.

Ground Flora.

Again the most flower rich area is the strip along the western edge. Coppices were not ploughed and lack of disturbance and alternate periods of shade and sunlight when the poles were cut has allowed the delicate plants with poor seed dispersal to prosper.

Look for wood anemones, bluebells, wood spurge, wood sorrel, townhall clock and many others. These are all recognised Ancient Woodland Indicator Species



Mammals.

Mammals are shy and hard to spot, but look at the ground and you will see their tracks. Deer are plentiful, both the tiny muntjak and the larger roe. Grey squirrels abound and many trees show the damage they, and the deer, do by bark stripping.

Community ownership.

A sixty five year lease for Greyfield Wood was purchased by the Beenham Investment Group Ltd in 1995. The company was formed for the explicit purpose of obtaining the lease on the wood. The majority of the shareholders in the company still reside in the parish and it was their initial take up of the share offering that provided the capital with which the lease was purchased.

The ownership of the lease within the village ensures that the wood can be used for the foreseeable future by one and all for local walks in a superb location. The Beenham Investment Group remains committed to that objective and to preserving the wood as an important local habitat for trees, plants and wildlife.

Woods have to be managed otherwise they become too crowded and dark for either the trees or the ground flora to flourish. Cutting down trees in a planned manner is beneficial to flora, fauna and maturing trees.

Copies of this leaflet can be downloaded from the parish website

www.beenhamonline.org

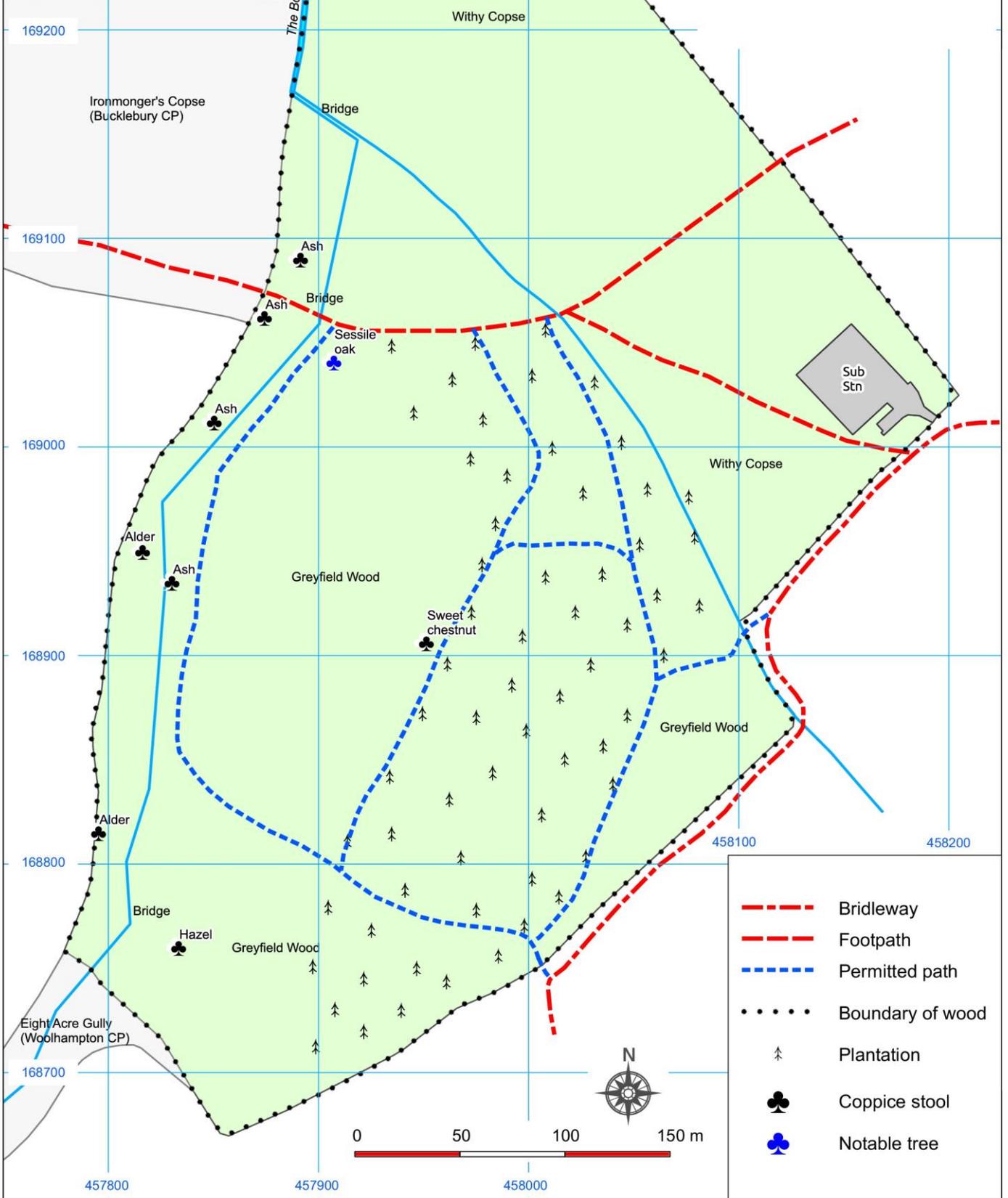


**BEENHAM PARISH
WEST BERKSHIRE**

A GUIDE TO GREYFIELD WOOD



GREYFIELD WOOD BEENHAM



- - - Bridleway
- . - Footpath
- - - Permitted path
- Boundary of wood
- ↑ Plantation
- ♣ Coppice stool
- ♣ Notable tree