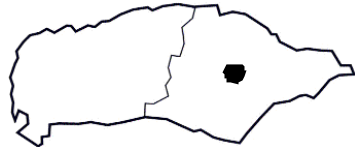


# Selwyns Wood

A mixture of woodland types with heathy glades and streams



The very name of Heathfield, just five kilometres from Selwyns Wood, is an indication of the kind of landscape that once existed in this area. The sandy soils of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are ideal for the development of heathland, but sadly there is very little of it left now outside Ashdown Forest.

However, at this nature reserve a heathy habitat is returning in patches where the tree cover has been reduced. The pale mauve flowers of heather cover one side of the valley in late summer, and the plant is sprouting up wherever enough light can seep in between the leafy canopy in rides and glades. Other acid soil-loving flowers are here too, such as the yellow-flowered tormentil, goldenrod and broom. Much of the woodland here is sweet chestnut coppice, typical of East Sussex, where it was grown and regularly cut to

## Highlights

Woodpeckers and other woodland birds; cuckoo, heather, rowan, bluebell and wood ant.

provide fuel for the local iron industry and poles for hop gardens. This wood is now used chiefly for fence posts as the wood is extremely durable and resistant to rot. In places, it has been allowed to grow into large trees; elsewhere coppice stools have been gradually thinned to provide a more open

heath, much loved by birds including woodcock. In other parts traditional coppicing continues to provide timber for use on the Trust's other nature reserves. There are also some areas where oak, hazel, hornbeam and cherry were planted after the 1987 storm. Here dormice scamper through the undergrowth looking for honeysuckle, a favourite food. Overall this reserve is an intimate mix of heath and different woodland types, fostering the diversity of wildlife that can be seen here at any time of year.

## Access

The single access point to this 11 hectare reserve is marked by a Trust sign at the entrance to a track off Fir Grove Road, next to a house called White Lodge. There is a small car park from which several good paths make circular routes around the reserve. Some tracks are rather muddy but they are mainly flat, except for the steep-sided gill.