

Can you find Brenchley Wood's hidden past?

It may be a peaceful nature reserve today but for hundreds of years this wood has been a hive of activity. Look out for the clues to its industrious past...

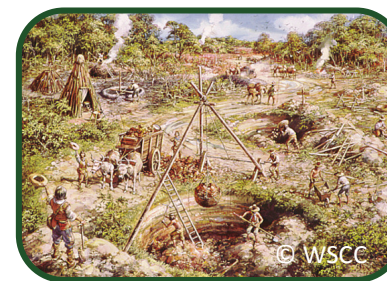
1. As you enter the reserve from Foxhole Lane, look to your left. This area once accommodated a small cottage, garden, and a hop field called The Wish. Its eastern boundary bank is still visible from the track. The sweet chestnut coppice produced straight and strong poles that were essential for hop farming.



2. As you walk north along the track look on the right for a raised bank with a levelled area. This was once a charcoal hearth where underwood such as alder, seen to your left, was turned into charcoal in a kiln made of wood, turves and soil.



3. A sunken track appears in the north western area of the reserve as the path bends round to the east. This is possibly a mineral extraction route which, if you follow it down, leads to a pond, a relic from the iron working days.



HIGH WEALD
JOINT
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE



Cinderhill

4. The north eastern section of the reserve is dominated by sweet chestnut coppice.



Look out for old stubs that once marked the divisions between the sections, which are also known as coupes or cants.

5. As the track straightens you'll notice an oblong hole about 3 by 1.5m. This is an old saw pit where the coppiced timber was cut using a two-handed saw.



Imagine...

Local woodsmen felling trees, sawing logs, collecting firewood and making charcoal for the local iron industry. A very busy place to be!



About Branchley Wood

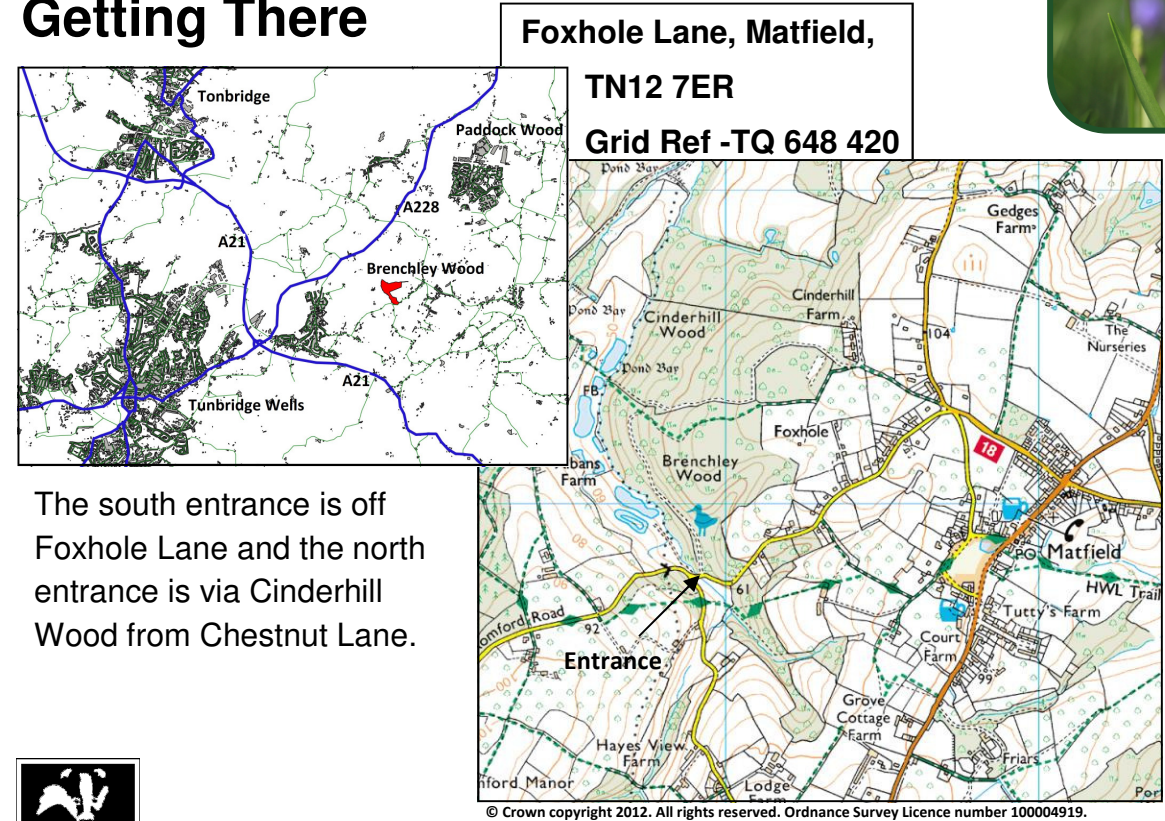
Branchley Wood is a 37 acre Kent Wildlife Trust nature reserve with a wonderful range of habitats. The site hosts ancient woodland, rare heathland, sweet chestnut coppice, sphagnum bog, a pond, and the meandering Tudeley Brook, providing homes for a wide variety of wildlife.



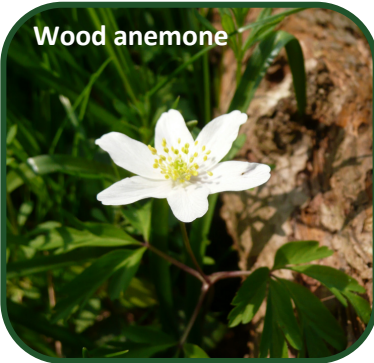
Protecting our future using the knowledge of our past

Woodland archaeology surveys help us to find and understand historical features within woodland. Once identified, these features can be protected and we can understand how the wood has been used in the past. This knowledge can then be used to help maintain valuable habitats and woodlands as they have been, and protect them for people and wildlife for the future.

Getting There



The south entrance is off Foxhole Lane and the north entrance is via Cinderhill Wood from Chestnut Lane.



Wildlife
to look
out for!



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