

Coppice

The old sweet chestnut coppice is no longer worked commercially. Coppicing is the method of cutting trees down to near the ground leaving a 'stool' from which many new shoots grow in spring. In the past, the cut stems would have been used to make charcoal, tools, furniture and a lot of hurdles. These days coppicing is still carried out but the aim now is for nature conservation. Coppicing on a rotation of 10-15 years gives a variety of woodland habitats, from the fully grown shaded canopy of the uncut coppice to the open sunny canopy of the newly cut coppice where wild flowers do well.

Some of the coppiced stools are kept short to support permanent glades that are rich for wildlife. The stools in the glades are burnt to suppress re-growth, but the trees do not die and new shoots eventually grow again.

How to get to Brandy Hole Copse

1 ¼ mile, 30 minute walk from The Cross, Chichester, either along the B2178 road to Funtington or up the A286 to Midhurst, taking left hand turn along Brandy Hole Lane.

Bus stops:

No. 47 and 47A stop in Worcester Road near Bristol Gardens
No. 54 to Petersfield on B2178, stop near Brandy Hole Lane
No. 60 to Midhurst on A286, stop near Brandy Hole Lane

Parking on roadside along Brandy Hole Lane, take care, the speed limit is still 60 mph here!

Parking on roadside in Bristol Gardens, off Worcester Road on the East Broyle Estate.

Cycling is permitted only between Centurion Way (cycle path) and Brandy Hole Lane.

Please join the Friends of Brandy Hole Copse, only £5 a year.

Membership Secretary:

Mrs Michele Craddock, 9 Bristol Gardens, Chichester, PO19 5EA

Chairman:

Mr Graham Ault, 38 Croft Mead, Chichester, PO19 6RW

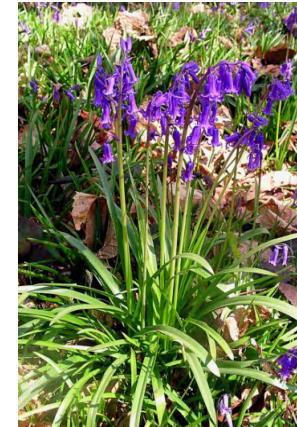
Secretary:

Mr Tom Snow, tomgsnow@btinternet.com



Brandy Hole Copse Tree Trail

www.brandyholecopse.org.uk



Brandy Hole Copse is Chichester's only designated Local Nature Reserve

15 acres of old sweet chestnut coppice
and mixed woodland;

many paths to explore the naturalness of this copse;

important for wildlife:
trees, wild flowers, pond life birds, bats and butterflies

Have fun on the tree trail!

Remember to look for the 🌳 symbol on 12 different trees in the Copse
How quickly can you find them?

The "Half-Dead" Tree (and piles of logs seen in Brandy Hole Copse)



Dead trees and log piles in Brandy Hole Copse are an important part of the woodland habitat. Holes in a dead tree may be home to woodpeckers and bats. Tap the tree trunk; does it sound hollow?

A pile of logs with twigs, bark and leaves left in a damp place will become a habitat for mosses, fungi and lichens and a whole world of mini-beasts and the bigger creatures that feed on them.



Scots Pine



Common folklore of Scots pine is their use as markers in the landscape. In England they were commonly used to mark drove roads and edges of meadows on which passing drovers and their herds could spend the night. It is easy to imagine that this might be why

there are Scots pine here in Brandy Hole Copse. The thick ivy on the tree trunk is good for wildlife, for example the brimstone butterfly can hibernate, safely hidden, deep inside it.

Grey Willow



Also known as the 'Tree of Enchantment', the Grey Willow was thought to be of help in finding inspiration and its wood was often used for making

wands. In Celtic mythology it was said that the world had hatched from two eggs which were hidden in the boughs of the Grey Willow.

Coppice stool



Many trees can be coppiced such as the sweet chestnut you can see here, but also hazel and oak. Coppicing involves cutting the tree stems (trunks) down to nearly ground level, at an angle to let any rain drops drain away. The base left behind is called a 'stool.' The tree roots don't die, and in next spring many new shoots emerge up from the stool. In the past, trees in a coppice were cut on a rotation of about 10 years, when the stems had reached the thickness of a wrist or lower arm.

Beech



Folklore tells of the importance of beech trees in helping to grant wishes. A wish made with a twig of beech was pushed into the earth

under the tree. From there it was collected by the Wishing Fairies and carried deep into the under-wood for the Fairy Queen's consideration.



Sweet chestnut

Old sweet chestnut coppice is much in evidence in Brandy Hole Copse. In the past it would have been coppiced commercially, the cut stems being used for such things as hurdles and fencing, tools, furniture and charcoal.

Sweet chestnut has a history of its use rather than for any folklore though its fruit, the chestnut is recorded as being used as an offering to loved ones as an enchanting love spell.

Holm Oak



An evergreen oak, native of the Mediterranean region but cultivated in England since the 16th century. Also called the Holly Oak for it looks much like an enormous

holly tree. A closer view, however, will show that its leaves, although evergreen, are not prickly and are white and hairy underneath. Each leaf lasts two years, and there is a heavy fall of tough, brown, leathery leaves in May and June. Holm was planted mainly as a tree for shelter.

The Glades

Brandy Hole Copse is no longer used as a working coppice and is now managed for nature conservation. Because of this, you will see that alongside some of the paths the coppice is kept cut down to maintain glades on a permanent basis. The coppiced stools in the glades are burnt; this does not kill the trees but simply delays any re-growth of new shoots.

The sunny glades are important for wildlife such as the caterpillars of butterflies that live and feed on the plants that grow well there.





Field edges

The triangular field is not part of the copse but is important, along with the field edges, for wildlife in supporting many species that enjoy the proximity of open spaces and woodland, such as bats, tawny owls, woodpeckers and roe deer. Butterfly caterpillars feed on the sun-warmed expanses of nettles and cinnabar moth caterpillars feed on ragwort. Many wildflowers can do well in the fields such as rosebay willowherb.

Alder Buckthorn



A few young alder buckthorn have been planted in the glade near Willow Pond to provide the preferred food source for the yellow brimstone butterfly seen in the

Copse. The young trees are protected with rabbit-guard-tubes to give them a chance to get established.

Alder buckthorn is a small bushy tree up to 5 m tall. It has no thorns.

Ponds



Willow Pond and Cops Pond, at the western end of Brandy Hole Copse, were excavated in 1990 with volunteer help from members of the military police and their families who were based at the old Roussillon Barracks nearby. The ponds are rich in wildlife and popular for spotting frogs, toads, dragonflies and at dusk bats flying and feeding overhead.

Holly



In Celtic mythology the Holly King was said to rule over the half of the year from the summer to the winter solstice. In early England, young maidens & matrons are said to have carried walking sticks made of holly as protection against mad dogs, vicious beasts & other perils of the day. Hollies were frequently left uncut in hedges. This was apparently to obstruct witches who were known to run along the tops of hedges.

“Phoenix” Tree



Tree trunk lying in a horizontal position over the entrenchment path.

This sweet chestnut fell over during the great storm of October 1987.

However, some of the roots remained intact with the soil and the tree didn't die but grew shoots at right angles to the trunk, heading directly towards the sky.

Alder



Alder grows well in damp conditions. Alder wood does not rot and indeed becomes almost as hard as stone when left immersed in water. Apparently, most of Venice is built on piles made of alder trunks.

An English folk custom describes the tradition of placing alder branches in cupboards as a lure

for wood worm. The parent beetle apparently prefers alder over any other wood as the place to lay her eggs.

Golden Weeping Willow



This was planted by the Brandy Hole Copse

Conservation Group in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee (50 years of reign).

Oak

At one time oak was the main wood for making charcoal and the main construction material for houses and ships as it was strong and durable. In Elizabethan times a law had to be passed, protecting the Oak, to give the trees a chance to re-establish as so much of the great oak forests had been felled for building materials and fuel.

The caterpillars of the Purple hairstreak butterfly feed exclusively on oak and the adults spend most of their time in the tree canopy. Look up high to have any chance of seeing one.

In pagan mythology the Oak King (ruler of the waxing year) slays the Holly King (of the waning year) at Yule and is himself slain at midsummer by the Holly King.



“Phoenix” Tree (P)



Beech (B)



Grey Willow (GW)



Scots Pine (SP)



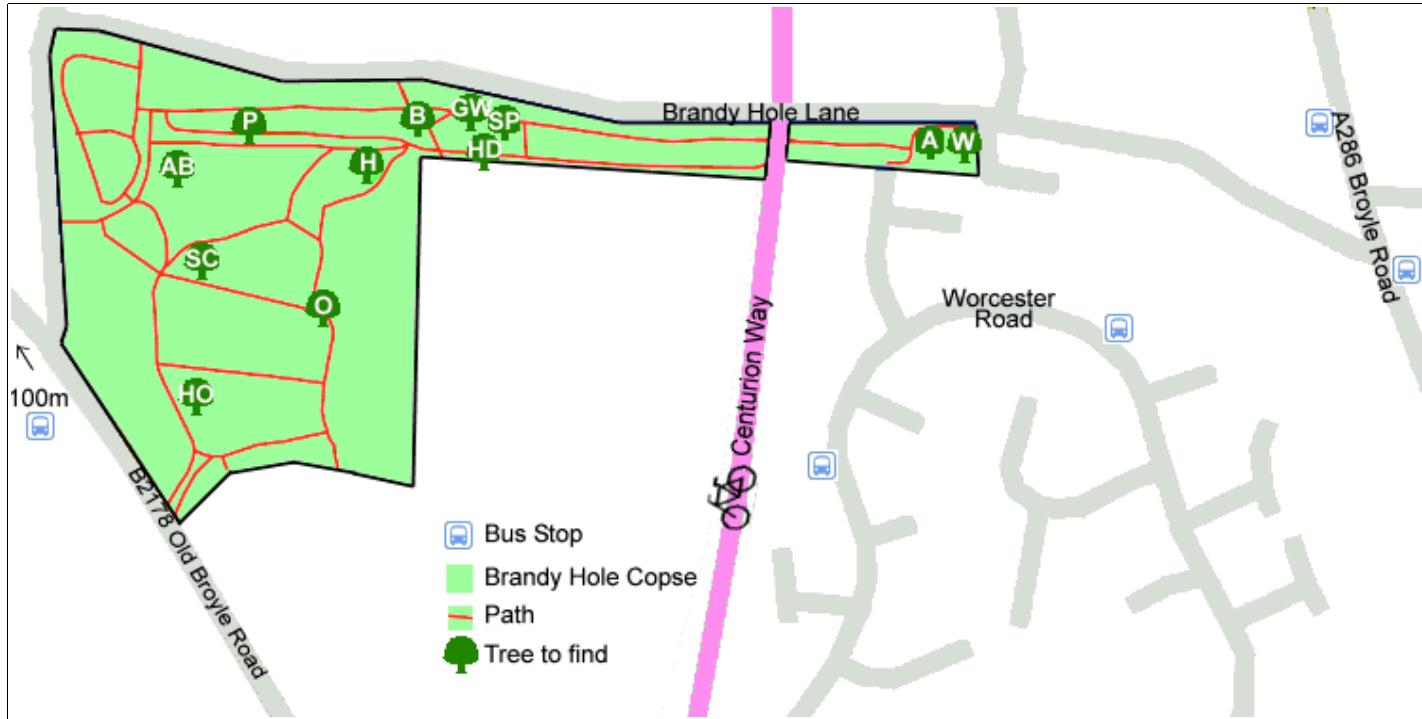
Alder (A)



Golden Weeping Willow (W)



Ponds



“Half-dead” Tree (HD)



Alder Buckthorn (AB)



Glades



Coppice Stool



Holm Oak (HO)



Oak (O)



Field Edges



Holly (H)



Sweet Chestnut (SC)

