Keep Hill Wood

your Local Wildlife Site...



explore...

1 Enter Keep Hill Wood from Wendover Way (a path which runs along the edge of the Dyke) by crossing Warren Wood Drive. At the entrance an interpretation board details footpaths, bridleways and the way-marked circular walk which takes approximately one hour and leads you through most of the interesting aspects of the site.
A steep flight of steps cut into the hillside takes you through some densely shaded woodland consisting mainly of Beech, Yew and Sycamore trees with some Holly creating the understorey.
Ash sapling trees grow where larger trees have fallen.

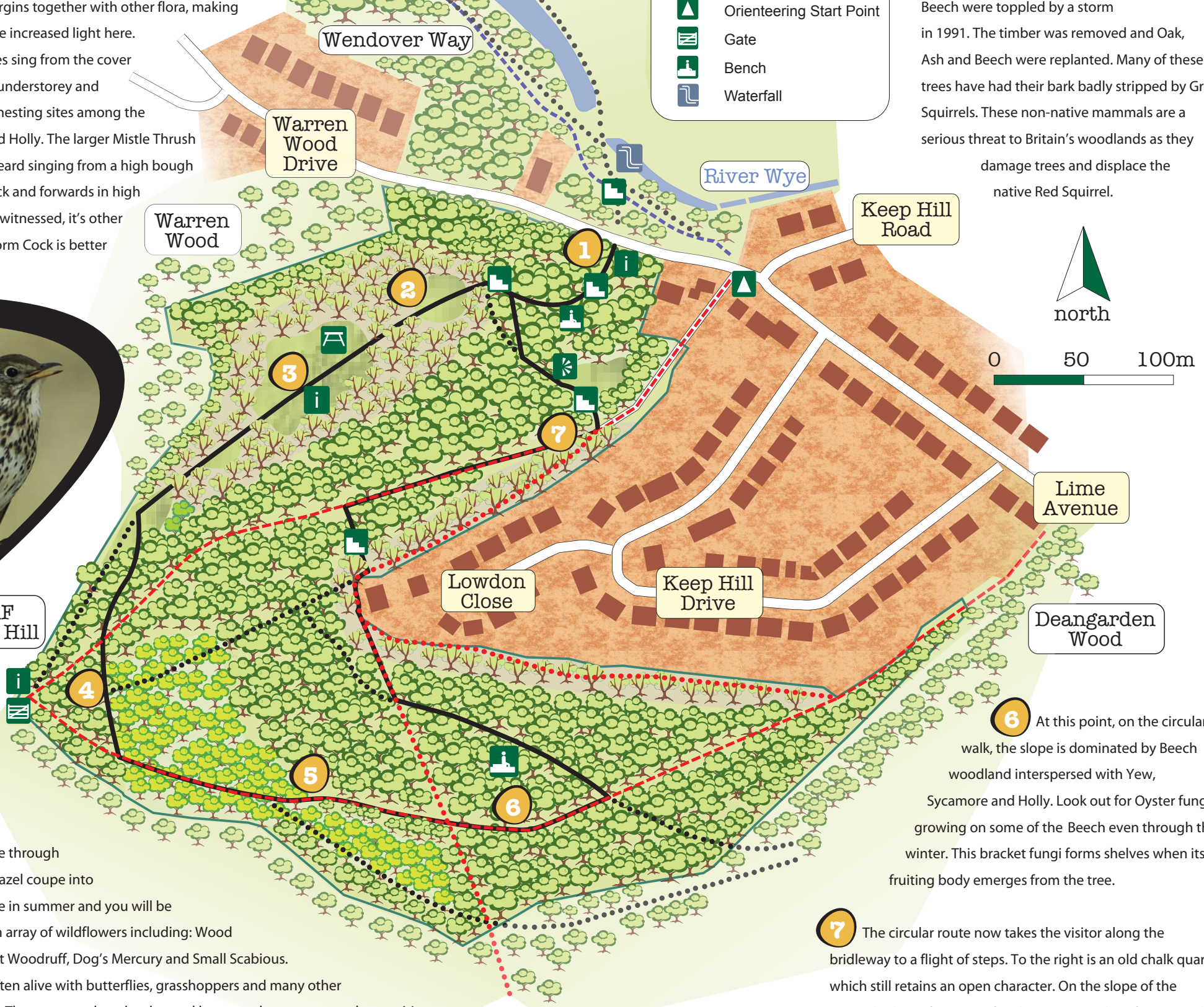
2 Here the path enters wide rides and glades as it nears the top of the hill. The open nature of the rides and glades give a flavour of Keep Hill as it was when grazed. Wild Parsnip and Carrot grow along the margins together with other flora, making the best of the increased light here. Song Thrushes sing from the cover of the dense understorey and find suitable nesting sites among the Hawthorn and Holly. The larger Mistle Thrush can also be heard singing from a high bough as it rocks back and forwards in high winds. When witnessed, it's other name, the Storm Cock is better understood.



Song Thrush

Key

- Mature woodland
- Coppice
- Young woodland
- Chalk grassland
- Bridleway
- Public footpath
- Permissive paths
- Circular Walk
- Cyclepath
- Steps
- Picnic Site
- Parking
- Viewpoint
- Information Board
- Orienteering Start Point
- Gate
- Bench
- Waterfall



3 Emerge through a managed Hazel coupe into an open glade in summer and you will be greeted by an array of wildflowers including: Wood Mellick, Sweet Woodruff, Dog's Mercury and Small Scabious. This area is often alive with butterflies, grasshoppers and many other invertebrates. There are two benches located here so take a rest – you deserve it! Young Ash trees dominate the surrounding woodland suggesting it was one of the last areas to remain open.

4 This area covers the highest point of the hill and has a large proportion of English Oak. There are also some mature Sycamore trees and a large amount of Sycamore saplings. The cutting of these saplings forms part of the woodland management as Sycamore can become invasive, crowding out other species.

5 An area of mature Beech were toppled by a storm in 1991. The timber was removed and Oak, Ash and Beech were replanted. Many of these trees have had their bark badly stripped by Grey Squirrels. These non-native mammals are a serious threat to Britain's woodlands as they damage trees and displace the native Red Squirrel.

6 At this point, on the circular walk, the slope is dominated by Beech woodland interspersed with Yew, Sycamore and Holly. Look out for Oyster fungi growing on some of the Beech even through the winter. This bracket fungi forms shelves when its fruiting body emerges from the tree.

7 The circular route now takes the visitor along the bridleway to a flight of steps. To the right is an old chalk quarry which still retains an open character. On the slope of the quarry look out for signs of Badgers. Large piles of excavated chalk can be seen just outside the entrances to a sett. The route soon brings you to the top of the flight of steps which lead to the site entrance on Warren Wood Drive.



Coralroot Bittercress