

WEST SUSSEX SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

Site: Binsted Wood complex, Arundel

Grid Ref: SU 995 068

Site Ref: Ar 2

Owner: Private

District: Arun

Area: 217.3 hectares

Parish: Walberton & Arundel

Habitat: Semi-natural woodland

Date: Identified May 1992,
Revised May 1994 and 2003

Author: Louise Clark &
Graham Roberts

Summary

Binsted Wood is a complex of woodland sites which includes Hundredhouse Copse in the west and Stewards Copse to the east. There is a mixture of ancient woodland, recent woodland, conifer plantation, species rich pasture and old tracks and shaws. The mix of habitats and geology gives rise to a very rich and diverse flora. The paths and rides are especially species rich and Scotland Lane supports an outstanding wet ride flora that includes at least 11 species of sedge including Long-stalked Yellow-sedge (*Carex viridula ssp. brachyrhyncha*), a county rarity at its only recorded West Sussex location. This is the largest block of ancient semi-natural woodland south of the South Downs in Sussex.

Site description

Oak-Hazel woodland is the predominant type of this complex. Oak dominates the canopy with Birch and Sweet Chestnut and an irregular understorey of Hazel. Sweet Chestnut coppice dominates in some areas. The ground flora is mostly Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) with carpets of Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*).

Ash-Field Maple woodland also occurs. Ash, Wild Cherry, Birch and Oak form the canopy in these areas with a shrub layer of Hazel, Field Maple and Dogwood. Some very old Ash coppice stools are present. The ground flora is very rich. Species of particular note include Common Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*), Saw-wort (*Serratula tinctoria*), Tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*), Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*), Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) and Orpine (*Sedum telephium*). Early-purple Orchids (*Orchis mascula*) occur in abundance and have been counted in thousands in Ash Piece, for example. The rare Adder's-tongue Fern (*Ophioglossum vulgare*) has also been recorded here.

There is a rich butterfly fauna including Ringlet, Silver-washed Fritillary, White Admiral and Purple Emperor. Freshwater Cockles, first recorded from Binsted Brook in 1896, still occur there. Glow-worms have been seen.

Scotland Lane is a wide, damp ride with a very diverse flora including various sedges with large stands of Long-stalked Yellow-sedge as well as Green-ribbed Sedge *Carex binervis*, Wood Sedge *C. sylvatica*, Oval Sedge *C. ovalis* and Grey Sedge *C. divulsa* along with Lesser Skullcap *Scutellaria minor*, Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, and Betony *Stachys officinalis*. The drier margins of the ride support Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and Ling *Calluna vulgaris*.

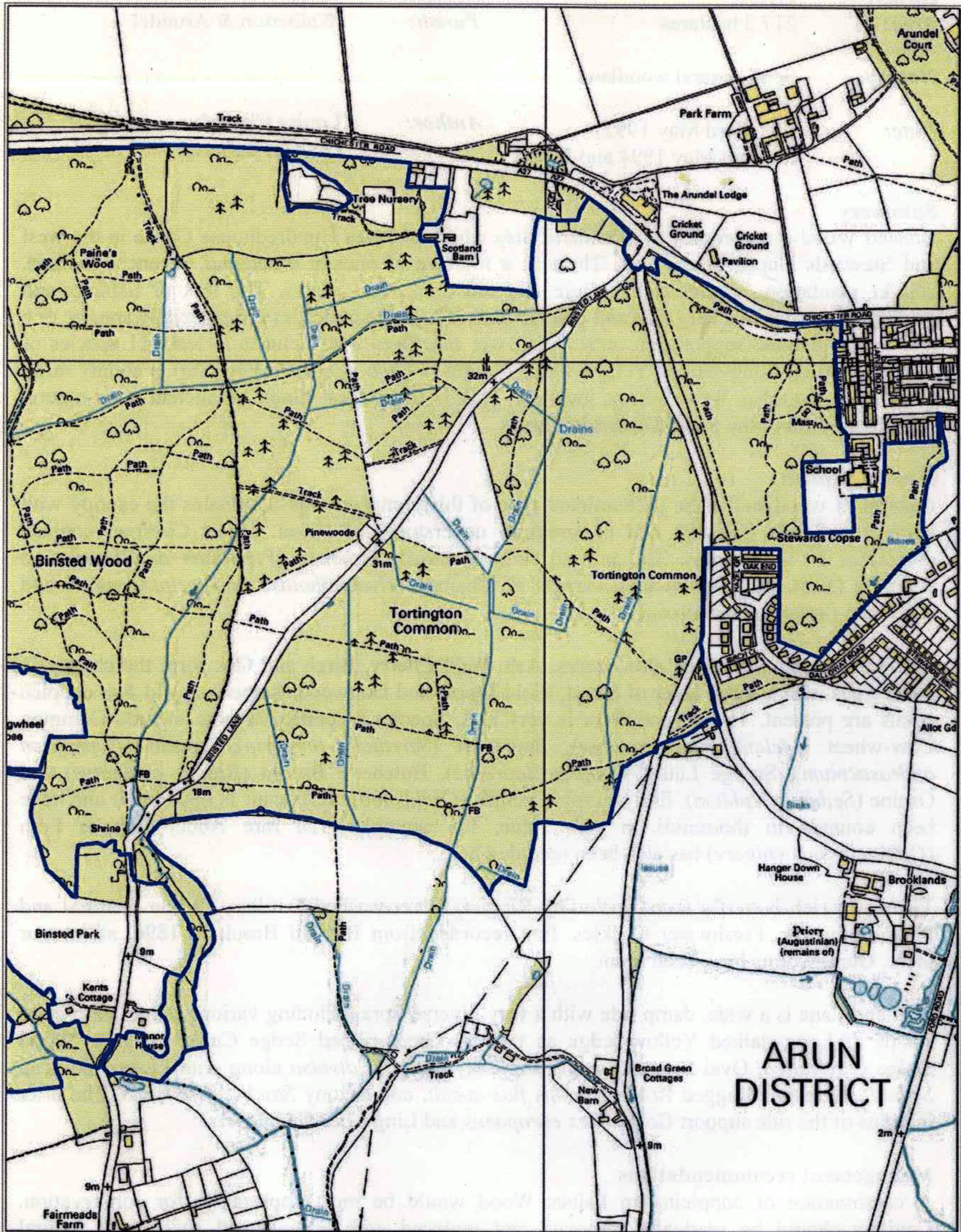
Management recommendations

A continuation of coppicing in Paines Wood would be most appropriate for conservation. Conifers should be gradually removed and replaced with broadleaved species by natural regeneration and some larger, heathy glades created on areas of more acid soils. Elsewhere intensive management is probably not desirable and low intensity coppicing or selective felling could be considered. However, re-opening some of the main rides through the complex would be of conservation benefit. Rhododendron and Sycamore should be controlled.

West Sussex Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

Site: Binsted Woods Complex
 Grid Reference: SU 995 068

Site Ref: Ar2



Scale 1:10000

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