

Welcome to The Thicket

This narrow steep bank of Ash and Field Maple woodland is approximately 500 metres long and home to a variety of native woodland animals and plants.

We hope you enjoy your visit.



Access is from two entrances ✿ at either end of the wood off the Thicket path, part of the Ouse Valley Way. A public footpath runs north from the western access before turning west across the fields. A permissive path traverses the site and returns to the entrance at the eastern end of the wood. There are benches along the permissive path. It is not suitable for wheelchair access.

Old maps of St Ives show that woodland has covered this area of hillside for a long time. It is thought that such a steep, wet slope on heavy clay was not considered suitable for cultivation and was left to grow trees. Old Ash 'coppice stools' on the northern boundary show that timber was regularly harvested from the site.

Spurge Laurel

The presence of this evergreen shrub is a sign that the site has been wooded for a long time as it is a species which is found in old woodland: 'an ancient woodland indicator'. Look for its lime green flowers in late Winter, the nectar of which is welcome food for early insects.



The Herald

A beautifully coloured Moth, the Herald overwinters as an adult and is one of the first and last species to be seen in a year. Herald caterpillars feed on the leaves of Willow trees, which are plentiful in the wet woodland to the south of the Thicket and along the River Great Ouse.



These sites are managed by Countryside Services for your enjoyment



Lesser Stag Beetle

Lesser Stag Beetles lay their eggs in rotting wood. The eggs hatch into large white larvae which create tunnels in the wood, the size of an adult little finger, by eating through it.



PLEASE REMEMBER

- ✦ Take your litter home.
- ✦ Broken plastic and glass can injure or kill living creatures.
- ✦ Please do not let your dogs run freely through the woodland as this disturbs nesting birds.

SAFETY

- ✦ Some parts of the path may be muddy and slippery when wet.

KEY

- River/Stream
- Meadow
- Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Public Right of Way
- Permissive Path
- Site entrance

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Ash

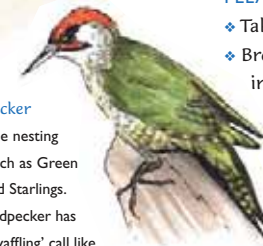
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Green Woodpecker

Old trees provide nesting sites for birds such as Green Woodpecker and Starlings. The Green Woodpecker has very distinctive 'yaffling' call like a shrill laugh. It feeds on ants found in the meadows nearby. Unlike other Woodpeckers it rarely drums into trees to find its food.

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Sweet Violet

When these dainty plants are in flower, on a sunny day in Spring, you may smell a fleeting sweet perfume. These flowers have been used to make perfumes since Classical Greece. Both deep purple and white forms of this species grow here.



King Alfred's Cakes

The black bun like shapes growing on dead Ash trees are a fungus called King Alfred's Cakes.

The story goes...that whilst sheltering in a countrywoman's cottage, King Alfred was asked to keep an eye on some cakes she was cooking whilst she did some errands. But he fell asleep and the cakes burnt! Ever since then, these fungi, which look just like burnt buns, have been commonly known as King Alfred's Cakes.



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