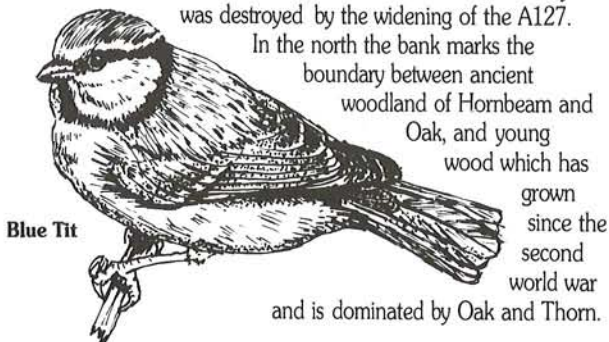


Hazel

The modern wood is confined to the steep slopes. At the crest of the hill are two giant Sweet Chestnut trees - a third was blown down during the great storm of October 1987 and its trunk lies on the ground. The lower and middle slopes are dominated by Oak and Hornbeam. The Rowan is commoner here than in most woods in south-east Essex where typically it is confined to steep slopes. Holly, Hazel and Elm all occur throughout the wood; Holly on the earth banks, Hazel towards the lower ground and Elm on the north east.

The limits of the ancient woodland are marked by earth banks to the north, east and south - the western boundary was destroyed by the widening of the A127.

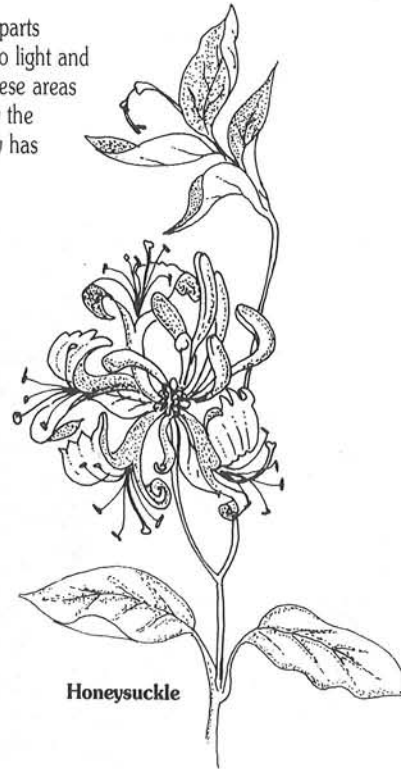
In the north the bank marks the boundary between ancient woodland of Hornbeam and Oak, and young wood which has grown since the second world war and is dominated by Oak and Thorn.



Blue Tit

Bluebells, Anemones, Cow Wheat and Campion are all common in the ancient wood but only scattered plants occur in the adjoining recent wood. Within the ancient wood are a series of broad terraces, formed by landslips from the steep slope. There is a series of springs along the base of these terraces.

Coppicing has opened parts of the woodland floor to light and the recolonisation of these areas by herbs shaded out by the dense overhead canopy has been encouraging.



Honeysuckle

ROCHFORD
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

This leaflet is one in a series published by Rochford District Council. The leaflets highlight a number of ecologically important sites and interesting circular walks in South East Essex.

*Further information can be obtained from:
Mr Patrick Keith McKenna
Woodlands and Environmental Specialist
Council Offices, South Street, Rochford, Essex.*

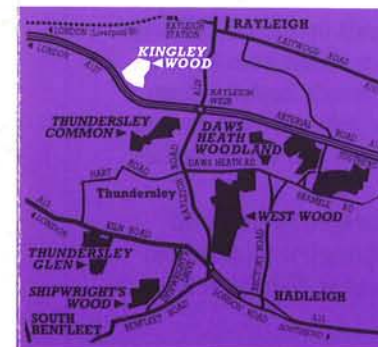
© 1994 Rochford District Council

WOODLAND WALKS

IN SOUTH-EAST ESSEX

KINGLEY WOOD

ONCE THE MEETING PLACE FOR MEDIEVAL COURTS



ACCESS
FROM WESTERN ROAD,
HOLLYTREE GARDENS,
WEIR FARM ROAD.

AREA
1.5 HECTARES

9

KINGLEY WOOD

WALK NINE



KINGLEY WOOD stands on a steep hill slope beside the A127 and is visible from several kilometres as you approach Rayleigh from London. The small wood is the only surviving ancient wood in Rayleigh but it has a rich and varied wildlife and well documented history. Kingley Wood is owned and managed by Rochford District Council and can be approached on foot from Western Road, Hollytree Gardens or Weir Farm Road.

■ The wood was earlier known as Kings Hill and was the seat of the Great and Little Lawless Courts of Rayleigh Manor. These were mysterious rites conducted by starlight (a lawless hour) upon the first cock crowing and concerned with the collection of farm rents. The proceedings of the Courts were held in whispers and written with a coal. Certainly today it is easy to see how the steep woodland slopes would have provided an amphitheatre for such a drama. By the nineteenth century these courts had been transferred to a public house in Rayleigh, but the wood still retained the ghost of a shrieking boy.

