

## What am I?

The "What Am I?" in our last edition was **Sweet Chestnut** (*Castanea sativa*). The tenuous link with Christmas was "roasting chestnuts on an open fire". Sweet Chestnut is common in Kent, being regularly coppiced and used historically for hop poles, gate posts and hurdles.

Mr John Roberts from Hartley was the first person to identify it correctly. Well done!



Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*)

This issue we have another puzzle for you to think about...

What do you think this fragment of photograph is about?

Please let us have your thoughts on what it may be.

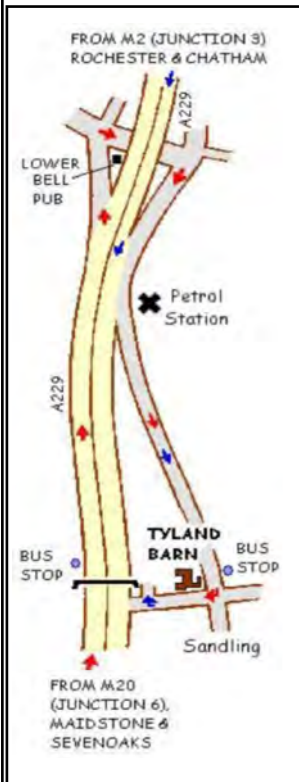


### Let us have your ideas.

We are always open to suggestions as to how we could improve our newsletter. If you have any ideas or articles that you would like us to include, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Similarly, if you have any friends or neighbours who would like a copy let us have their contact details. Thank you.

## Contact Us



If you have any news or success stories about species seen in your garden or elsewhere, we'd love to hear from you! If you would like more information about the Records Centre or other wildlife groups and organisations in Kent, feel free to contact us:

**KMBRC**

**Tyland Barn**

**Sandling**

**Maidstone**

**ME14 3BD**

Telephone: 01622 685646 or

01622 685780

(Editor Ann Watts)

- If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or require more recording forms please call us on 01622 685780 or email [info@kmbrc.org.uk](mailto:info@kmbrc.org.uk)
- If you would like to send in photographs for identification or have general queries, please email [info@kmbrc.org.uk](mailto:info@kmbrc.org.uk)
- If you know of any local publications which may be interested in including an article from us please contact us at the above addresses.
- Additional information and detail can be found on our website: [www.kmbrc.org.uk](http://www.kmbrc.org.uk)
- We are also available to give talks or presentations to interested local groups about the Records Centre and/or Kent's wildlife.
- We offer training in recording and the use of Recorder Software and GPS.

### Our Partners

We are very grateful to the following partners for providing funding and resources:

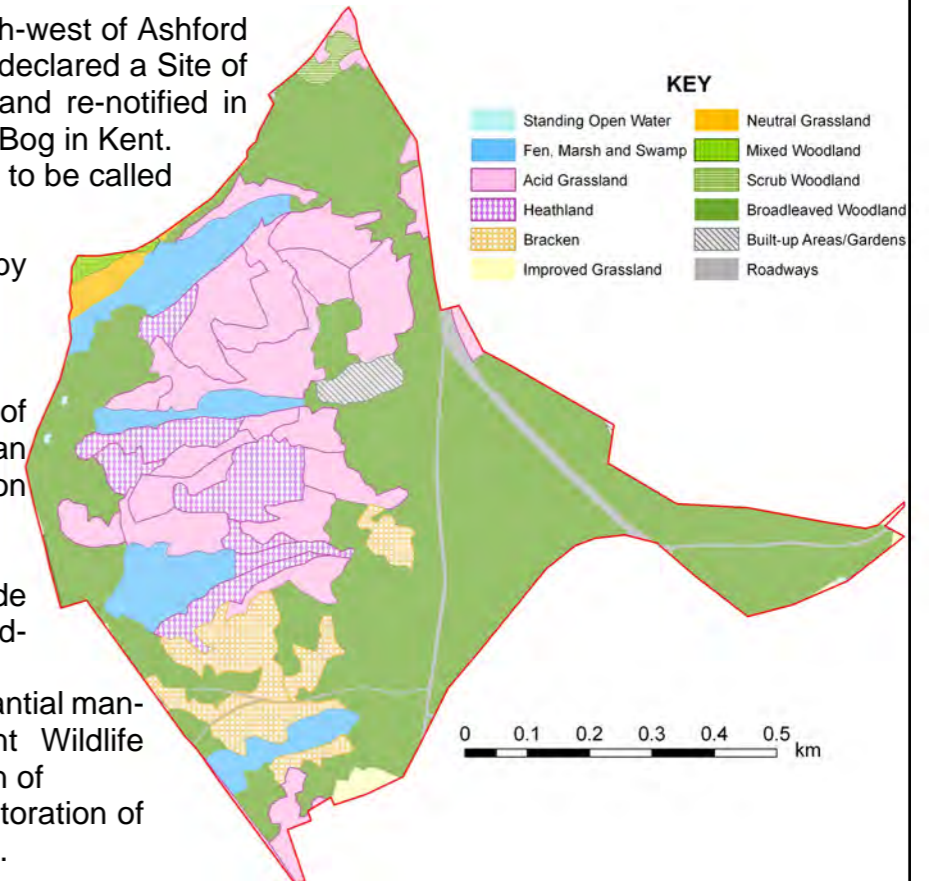


## Hothfield Heathland Project

The Kent Wildlife Trust reserve north-west of Ashford known as **Hothfield Common** was declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1951 and re-notified in 1985 as the best example of Valley Bog in Kent. To reflect its present status it is now to be called **Hothfield Heathland Reserve**.

In 1974 a Symposium, organised by the Kent Field Club, was held to demonstrate the importance of Hothfield. The proceedings were published in 1975 as a Transaction of the Kent Field Club and provide an invaluable baseline of information on this unique area of Kent.

A number of observations were made at the time of the symposium regarding land management and over the years since, there has been a substantial management programme led by Kent Wildlife Trust. This has included introduction of grazing, reduction in tree cover, restoration of bogs and creation of new wet areas.



Mosaic of Habitats at Hothfield based on surveying in May 2002.  
© The Kent Habitat Survey Partnership, 2003



Heath spotted orchid  
*Dactylorhiza maculata*  
at Hothfield Common  
© Richard Moyse

To reflect 35 years of management and environmental change since the earlier study, a new Recording and Research Project is now underway. This will include work by Specialist Recorders together with incidental records from Kent Field Club members and from the general public via Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre. It is hoped that the results of this Project will form an interesting theme for the Kent Wildlife Conference in autumn 2010.

The recording period of the project begins now and will continue until late Summer 2010. Please send all your **Hothfield sightings** to KMBRC, and we will forward them to appropriate specialist recorders for evaluation and inclusion in the final database.

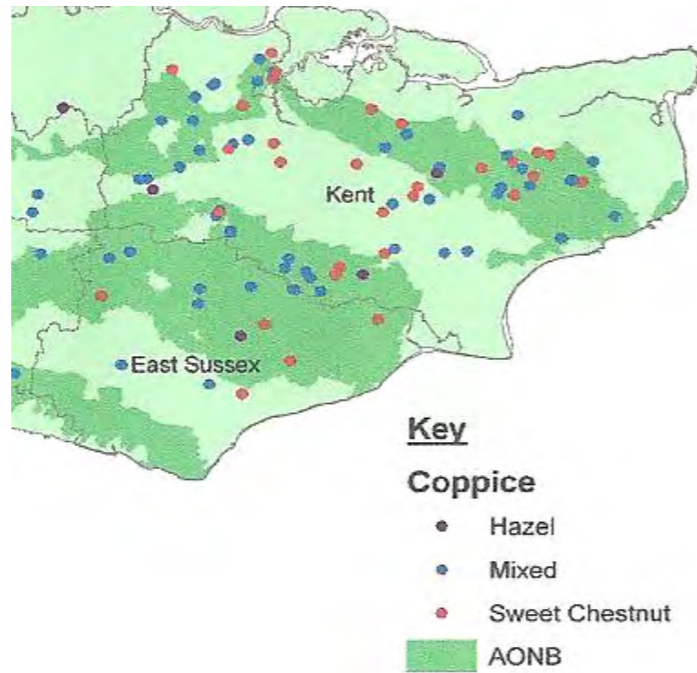
In 1975, 764 insect species were recorded although it was believed the site supported 2000+. Perhaps we can make this projection a reality!

## South-east England Coppice Survey

Coppicing is a traditional and sustainable way of managing woodland. Trees are cut down to ground level and then grow up with several stems. The process can be repeated indefinitely, the time between cutting depending on type of tree and intended use. Many different plants and animals – from butterflies to dormice – benefit from the increased light levels and shrubby re-growth that result from coppicing.

We need to know how much coppice is cut and where it is happening in order to target research, raise awareness of the industry and increase support for local coppice products.

The previous survey, carried out by Debbie Bartlett between 2000 and 2003 helped attract funding to support the industry, increasing woodland management and benefiting woodland wildlife. It is now being repeated.



Survey Results for the period 01/09/07 - 31/08/08

**Debbie wants to know where coppice is cut between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009.** If you see some coppiced woodland on your travels anywhere in the South East of England please fill in a survey form and send it to Debbie using the address on the form. You can download the form from [www.kmbrc.org.uk/recording/methods/dataforms.php](http://www.kmbrc.org.uk/recording/methods/dataforms.php) or contact us for a copy.

## Puzzle corner

	R	O	G	S	P			
P	W			R				F
W		P			A		G	
N				F				O
	G		N			F		P
A				G			P	W
			S	N	R	O	F	

This “wordoku” is just like a normal sudoku except that it is formed by nine unique letters instead of the numbers 1 to 9.

Each row, column and 3x3 square must contain each letter once and once only. All the nine letters you need for the puzzle are in the grid as clues.

When completed, this puzzle will reveal a seasonal word in the top row. Don't forget to send us your real-life sightings of the answer!

The complete solution will appear in the next issue of the KMBRC newsletter.

## Learning more about Recording

Kent Field Club is the Natural History Society of Kent and always welcomes new members. It aims to deepen the understanding and appreciation of the natural history of Kent. The membership ranges across the spectrum from professional experts to those who simply appreciate the aesthetic beauty of our countryside and love to walk in it, observing its wildlife in the company of like-minded people. The programme for 2009 is now available on their website: [www.kentfieldclub.org.uk](http://www.kentfieldclub.org.uk)

## The Million Ponds Project

Ponds are fantastic for wildlife, supporting many species that need freshwater to live in but also land animals and birds that use the pond for drinking and bathing. The Million Ponds Project will create an extensive network of new rural ponds across the UK. Ultimately the aim is to reverse a century of pond loss, ensuring that once again the UK has over one million countryside ponds.

A critical element of the project is that these new ponds will have clean water. This is important because most countryside ponds are now badly damaged by pollution, and evidence shows that pond wildlife is declining across the UK. Making clean, new ponds is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect freshwater wildlife.



Emperor dragonfly (*Anax imperator*)  
© Steve Smith

### The First Phase of the Million Ponds Project

Phase 1 of the project runs from 2008 - 2012 and aims to create 5,000 clean water ponds in England and Wales. Around a quarter of the ponds will be targeted to support some of the 80 or so **pond species** that are national priority for conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (including the characterful toad - see below).

The Million Ponds Project is a collaboration of partners, including major landowners and land managers, led and co-ordinated by Pond Conservation. The aim of this project is to create countryside ponds rather than garden ponds, although if you feel inspired to create a garden pond for wildlife then so much the better! More information, including a **pond creation toolkit**, a **form** where you can register your new pond with the project and a place where you make a **donation** towards the project can be found at: [www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds](http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds)

Of course, here at KMBRC we welcome all records of wildlife in existing and new ponds - as ponds mature they attract more species so they are always interesting to monitor over time.

### Help get Kent's toads out of a hole

A new project called “**Getting Toads Out of a Hole**” has been launched by the **Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group** (KRAG), the county's volunteer-led group that supports the conservation of amphibians and reptiles.



Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*)  
© Brett Lewis

KRAG wants to hear from anyone who sees toads or frogs anywhere in their gardens or in their localities.

KRAG spokesman Mike Phillips said: “The common toad has recently been made a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, which means that the animal is seen as important to conserve. However, we know relatively little about where toads are in the county and we are asking for people to help us find out more about where these animals are. There are concerns that toad populations are declining across Kent but the first step to conserving them is to locate them.”

Mike says that you can help by visiting the KRAG website [www.kentarg.org](http://www.kentarg.org) and filling in a simple form to report sightings of toads and frogs and their spawn. For more details contact Mike Phillips at [treasurer@kentarg.org](mailto:treasurer@kentarg.org)