

# Sydenham Hill Wood

**Address:**  
Crescent Wood Road  
Sydenham Hill  
SE26 6LS

**Entrance:** Enter Sydenham Hill Wood via Crescent Wood Road (opposite Countisbury House).

**How to get here:** Sydenham train station is located near by and bus services 356 and 363 stop along Sydenham Hill.

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# 1. Facilities

**Parking** – There is no parking in Sydenham Hill Wood. Street parking can be found on Crescent Wood Road (be aware of restrictions).

**Access** – Gates prohibit access by wheelchair users. Footpaths are uneven and there are many steps because of the Wood's inclines. Benches are placed around the reserve.

**Toilets** – There are no toilets at the reserve.

# 2. Health & safety

Your group must have a mobile phone with service and a first aid kit. Make sure you know your nearest A&E and that you have the emergency contact details for all of the young people in your group.

Make sure you refer back to the Explorer pack for detailed instructions and advice on risk assessments and health and safety.



# Sydenham Hill Wood

## Local Nature Reserve

Nature Trail Map ———→ N

**How to find us by Rail and Bus:**  
 Sydenham Hill & Forest Hill  
 Bus: 363 & 356

**Additional Information:**  
 Open all the time  
 No wheelchair or pushchair access except by appointment  
 No cycling

**E Entrance**  
 South London is an important stronghold for the rare stag beetle. You can help them by leaving dead wood in your garden.

**Stag beetle**

**9. Oak and Hornbeam** are dominant trees a sign of the woods ancient origin.

**10. The Tunnel Mouth**, built in 1865 is one of two tunnels on the Crystal Palace line to the Great Exhibition.

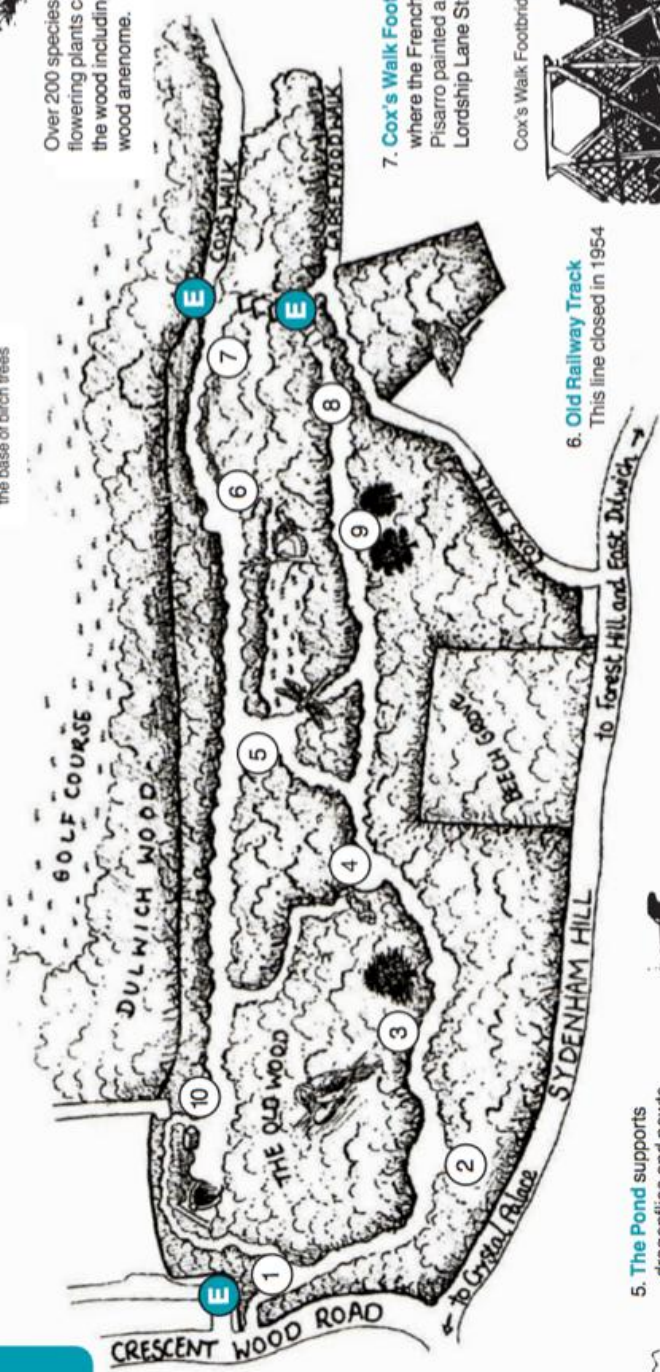
**8. The Fallen Beech Tree** is ideal for fungi.

**Fly agaric** found at the base of birch trees

**Bluebell and wood anemone**

Over 200 species of trees and flowering plants can be found in the wood including bluebell and wood anemone.

- 1. Crescent Wood Road Entrance**
- 2. The Old Tennis Court** is now managed as an open glade.
- 3. The Cedar Of Lebanon** is around 150 years old.
- 4. The Folly** is a ruin remaining from a Victorian garden.



**5. The Pond** supports dragonflies and newts. These search for food in the surrounding lush grass.



**6. Old Railway Track**  
 This line closed in 1954

**7. Cox's Walk Footbridge** was where the French impressionist Pissarro painted a picture of Lordship Lane Station.



## 4.1 History and facts

Sydenham Hill Wood is London Wildlife Trust's oldest site as well as the largest remanence of the Great North Wood, which stretched from Deptford to Selhurst. A special entrance to the wood is Cox's walk, which is oak lined and dates back to the 18th century. This ancient woodland was also part of the old Nunhead and Crystal Palace line that passed through the wood.

Dating back to the 19th century the woods was part of Dulwich Estate and during the 1850's many Victorian villas were built with large gardens during the building of crystal palace. However after the palace burned down the railway line closed in 1954 and many of the villas fell into disuse. In the 1980's the site was to be sold but after campaigns from the local communities the site was saved. It became the first ever London Wildlife Trust site. The disused railway tunnel is now a bat roost for the resident Sydenham Wood male bat.

## 4.2 Habitat

This key London Wildlife Trust site is a unique mix of ancient woodland consisting of oaks and hornbeam. These ancient trees are indicator signs of ancient woodland. During autumn and winter the woodland is managed by selective coppicing (cutting down) of small trees and removal of invasive shrubs like cherry and spotted laurel. As well as, restricting access to wild parts and keeping visitors to specific paths to allow wildlife to flourish.

### Things to see:

- **Common hornbeam**
- **Hazel**
- **Bluebell**
- **Green woodpecker**
- **Nuthatch**
- **Bluebell**
- **Wood anemone**
- **Sessile oak**
- **Kestrel**





## Enter

**Enter the wood through the Crescent Wood Road entrance.**

Historically the Great North Wood was managed to produce charcoal and timber for shipbuilding and tannin from the bark of oak trees for the leather-making industry, which was based in Bermondsey.

## Notice board

**Follow the right trail with the green notice board and number 1 stake.**

**Carry on walking straight until you reach an opening in the woods with a wooden stake with the number 2 on your right.**



## 1.0ld Tennis Court

Here you will find the ruins of an old Victorian tennis court found in the garden of one of the villas. An old oak has fallen down here which is now home to many species of fungi! See if you can spot any fungi species like jelly ear (looks like an ear).

**Carry on following the trail.**

## 2. Cedar of Lebanon



**Follow the path until you reach the cedar of Lebanon.**

The cedar of Lebanon is largest tree in the wood. This tree would have been planted in the 1800's in the garden of a Victorian villa. Demolished in the 1960s and 70s you can still see the foundations among the regrowth as woodland has recolonised (re - spread to places they used to be) the old empty gardens and mansion ruins.

**Follow the path until you reach a fork and an old ruin 'The Folly' on your left.**

## 3. Folly

By the 1980s the Victorians villas had fallen into disrepair and were demolished. The woodland quickly recolonised and now all that remains are a few ruined structures and some of the plants that the Victorians brought here. Here you can see the ruins of a folly (ornamental building).



**Turn around 180 degrees and walk back the way you just came, continuing forward past the long path you had just come from and take your first left. Follow the path.**



## 4. Pond

**The pond will be on your right.**

The pond provides a freshwater habitat for a many invertebrates and amphibians. Newts and frogs live here as well as several species of dragonfly. Vegetation covers a lot of this pond which makes it a great hiding place for all animals from predators and people walking by!



## Path

**Follow the path around the pond clockwise taking the second path it will seem open and light.**

**When you reach a fork in the path turn left.**



**Follow this path until you reach a large main path.**

**Walk straight over the large main path to the smaller path headed downhill. Follow this path.**



## 5. Cox's walk

**Take your first right and you will find Cox's walk.**

You are now on Cox's walk, an oak lined avenue cut through the wood sometime around 1739 by publican Francis Cox, owner of the Green Man Tavern. Walking along the avenue you can often hear and see great spotted woodpecker and parakeets, keep an eye out for the woodpecker drilling at trees.

## Activities

**Carry on walking along Cox's walk. You will find a large space for activities on your left. Carry on walking along Cox's Walk. Until you reach a clearing where the fencing stops.**



**Take your first right and then the next right. Walk along and take your first left down the stairs.**





## 6. Railway Tunnel



**Carry on walking straight and you will get to the railway tunnel.**

You are now at the old track bed of a railway line that once connected Nunhead to Crystal Palace. This tunnel entrance goes under Sydenham Hill and through to where Crystal Palace once stood. Crystal Palace burnt down in a large fire in 1936. The railway was closed in 1954, since then, nature has re-colonised much of the old track bed. Several species of bat roost in the tunnel including the Brown Long-Eared bat.

**Turn around 180 degrees back the way you came and follow the first path you reach up the stairs and to your left. Follow this all the way to the top and you will reach the exit (where you entered the woods).**