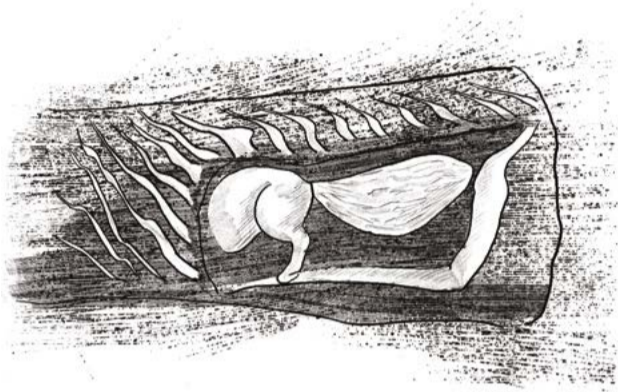


4 Fox

This unique sculpture was hand carved on site using a chainsaw. It has intentionally been placed behind the fallen tree to encourage visitors to explore further into the woodland.

Foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) are most likely to be seen at dawn or dusk and may be heard calling at night, particularly in the breeding season. They have an extra layer of light-sensitive cells in their eyes, so their night-vision is very sharp. Foxes do not hibernate and can be seen year round. They are omnivores, eating virtually anything. Foxes may live for one or two years, although they have been known to survive for up to nine years. They are territorial and for most of the year, they live in small family groups in their 'den'.

Foxes are members of the dog family, although they are the only type of dog able to retract their claws like cats. A female fox is called a 'vixen', a male is a 'dog fox' or 'tod' and young are known as 'pups', 'kits' or 'cubs'. A group of foxes is called a 'skulk' or a 'leash'.



This leaflet was produced by Bracknell Forest Council. Sculptures by Nick Speakman of 3D Wood 2017 © Metal sculptures in association with Alan Ross, of Art in Steel 2017 ©

Illustrations by Kate Ratcliffe 2017 ©

Copies of this leaflet may be obtained in large print, Braille, on audio tape or in other languages. To obtain a copy in an alternative format, please telephone 01344 352000.

Introduction

South Hill Park is a large, attractive, historic park located south of Bracknell town centre. The grounds are open to the public every day of the year. They extend across 56 acres and include landscaped gardens, lawns, lakes and woodland habitats.

It is home to a number of specially commissioned hand sculptured art works by Nick Speakman. These sculptures have been specifically designed to encourage our visitors to explore all of our beautiful landscape, away from the trappings of modern life, looking high and low for the hidden treasures South Hill Park has to offer.

1 Bats

The sculptures on this beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*) identify this as a bat roost. There are 30 different bats in the UK and South Hill Park is very fortunate to be home to Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

This tree required work in 2016 to prevent further damage and as bats are protected by UK law, the crown was reduced and the tree monolithed to the shape you see now. The nest entrances can be seen with black staining underneath, the result of the bats emitting waste before entering their roost. Bats may have one baby a year in the summer and all the family groups roost together in a nursery colony. They hibernate in the winter, occasionally waking to have a little food and water.

Bats' eyesight is nearly as good as humans. They use 'echo location' enabling them to fly at speed through the park using a sound inaudible to humans, which bounces off the trees indicating the route they should take. Although the exact frequency can vary, these sounds can be picked up by a bat detector. Bats can eat up to 8,000 flying insects per night! The sculpture itself is made of weathered steel and has been chemically treated to change colour as it ages. Looking at it from a variety of angles also alters its appearance, as does the changing light throughout the seasons.

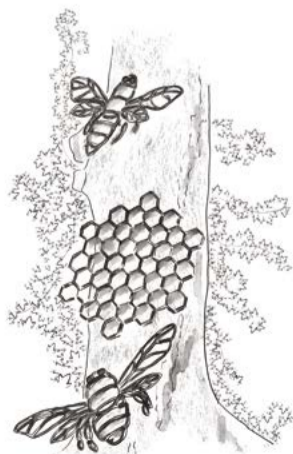


2 Bees

Over 270 species of bee have been recorded in Great Britain. Honey bees and bumblebees live socially in hives led by a queen, alongside male drones and female worker bees. Solitary bees tend to be smaller and their family unit is made up of a single pair. Many solitary bees can be found in one area, but they operate alone. Solitary bees include mason bees, leaf-cutter bees and mining bees.

Bees are not protected by law and unfortunately, the UK has lost 13 species of bee since 1900 and a further 35 are considered under threat of extinction. In South Hill Park, we aim to provide a variety of nectar-rich flowering plants for the bees enabling them to forage all year round, together with two wildflower meadows providing a wide range of food for bees and other insects.

Bees have been frequently used in literature, ranging from Charles Dickens' Mr Bumble in *Oliver Twist* to JK Rowling's Dumbledore (a Cornish word for bumblebee) in *Harry Potter*.



South Hill Park Nature Trail



Your guide to the nature sculptures of South Hill Park.

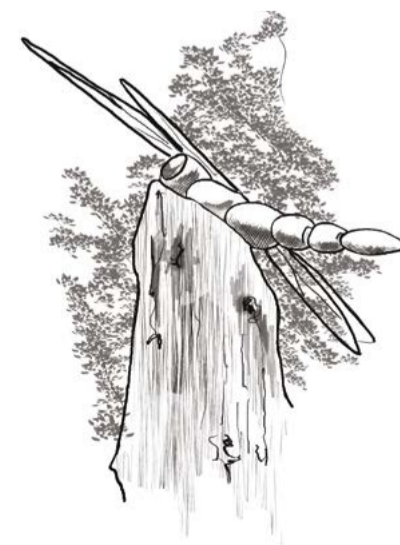
3 Dragonfly

This dragonfly sculpture has been created using beautiful, colourful wood from the Yew tree (*Taxus baccata*) with eyes formed from copper which in time, will change to become greener in colour. The wings are created from stainless steel, a joint collaboration between wood and metal sculptors.

Dragonflies are fast-flying, four-winged insects with long bodies and very large eyes. Dragonflies can be divided into two sub-groups, Anisoptera which includes large, fast-flying dragonflies and Zygoptera covering the smaller, slower-flying damselflies.

South Hill Park surveys show that we have a wide range of dragonflies visiting the park including the Emperor dragonfly, Broad-bodied Chaser dragonfly, Black-tailed Skimmer, Common Blue damselfly, Red-eyed damselfly and the rarer Small Red-eyed damselfly.

All dragonflies are carnivorous as both larvae and adults, feeding on other smaller water dwellers and flying insects. The nymphs live entirely under water, in ponds, lakes and canals until they hatch into adults, when they live for little more than one month. Fossilised remains of dragonflies show that they were on earth 300 million years ago, making them among the oldest insects in the world.



5 Hedgehog

This hedgehog sculpture, carved from Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) sits in this woody glade by the lake. Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) are easily identifiable, having up to 5,000 spines, each lasting about a year. This is excellent protection for them from predators, and their strong muscular frame allows them to curl up into a tight ball.

The word hedgehog was first used in the English language around 1450. Other names include 'hurcheon', 'urchin' or 'hedpig'. Baby hedgehogs are known as 'hoglets' and a group of hedgehogs is known as an 'array'. There is only one species of hedgehog in the UK and it is sadly in decline. They have poor eyesight, but excellent hearing and sense of smell. Hedgehogs are nocturnal and can travel very fast, up to 6 feet per second foraging for slugs, snails and worms. They store up as much food as they can to enable them to hibernate through winter, only waking occasionally for food or water.

Hedgehogs can be encouraged into gardens by leaving areas of the garden natural and wild, providing a hedgehog home or shelter, avoiding using chemicals in the garden, making a compost heap and ensuring ponds are safe for the hedgehog to escape if they fall in. Hedgehogs are also lactose intolerant, but dog/non-fish cat food can be provided.



6 Badger

Badgers (*Meles meles*) like to create their 'setts' in woodland, creating a network of underground tunnels to protect their social group of between 4 and 12 badgers. There are many active badger setts within Bracknell and the badger is the emblem of the local primary school. Badgers live for up to six years, growing up to one metre in length and can weigh up to 15kg.

Male and females are called 'boars' and 'sows' and their offspring are 'cubs'. Badgers are nocturnal, eating worms, small mammals and amphibians. Signs of badger activity include heavily worn badger paths with distinctive 5-toed footprints, claw marks on trees, dung pits, mounds of earth outside the entrances to setts and wiry, coarse badger hair.

Adult badgers have no natural predators, only threatened by the environment, humans and other badgers. They are protected by law, and in woods where there are known badger setts, works are carefully managed to create as little disturbance as possible.

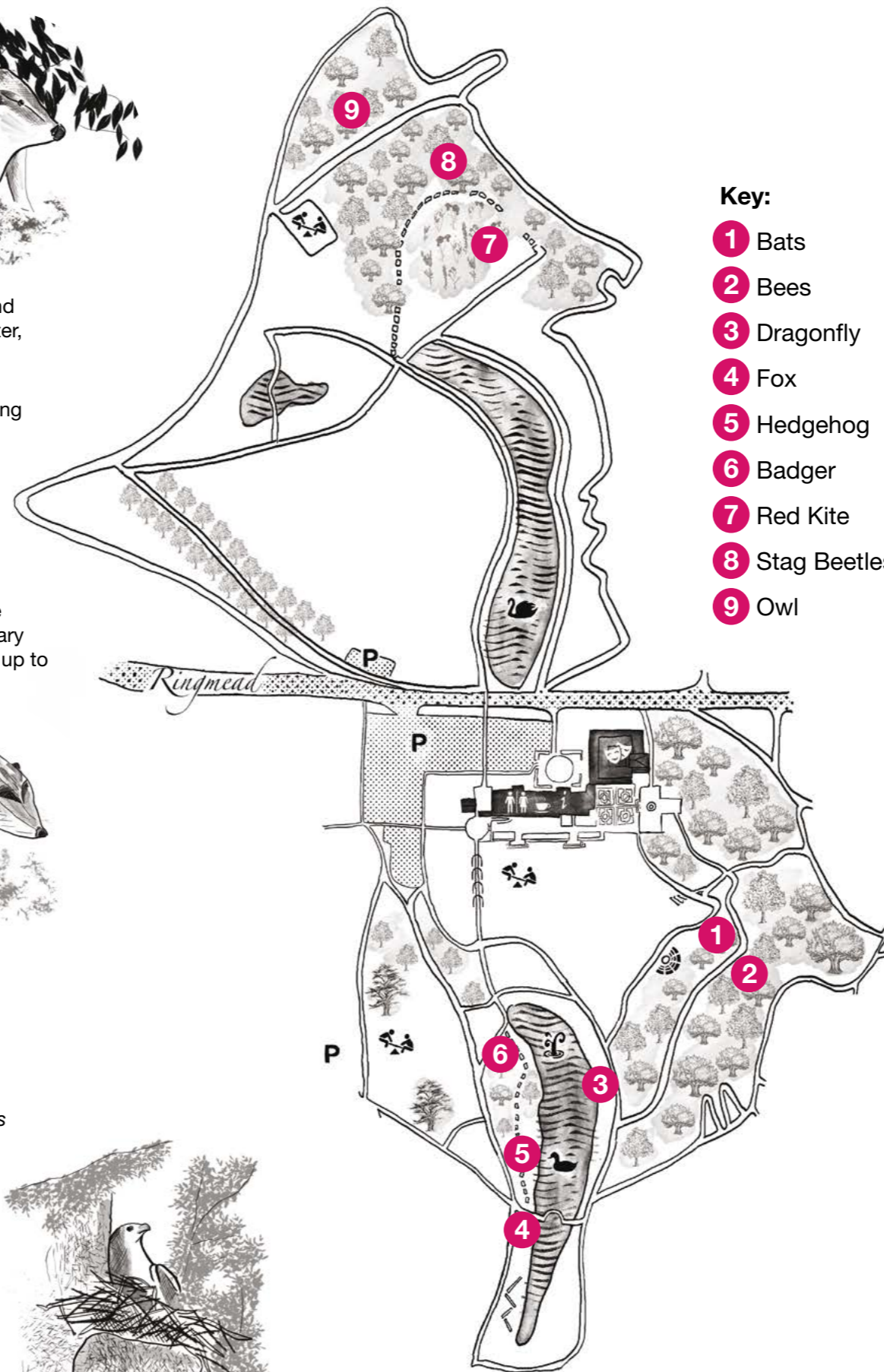


7 Red Kite

This incredibly life-like sculpture appears to follow you with her eyes as you climb the hill through the wildflower meadow. She sits on her nest in the Cedar of Lebanon tree (*Cedrus libani*) looking across North Lake, watching all who pass. This kite sculpture is free-carved from Western Red Cedar.

Red Kites (*Milvus milvus*) can grow up to 66cm in length and have a wingspan of 175-195cm. Although once a threatened species in the UK due to historical egg collection and environmental impact, the Red Kite was re-introduced to the Chilterns in the 1980s and has seen a remarkable growth in numbers. Red Kites are now a common site at South Hill Park, often heard screeching overhead.

Both males and females build their nest on a main fork or a limb approximately 12-20m above the ground. The nests are made up of dead twigs and lined with grass, animal wool and leaves. Just before the eggs are laid the kites decorate the nest with rubbish and oddments found nearby, paper, rags, litter etc. New material is added throughout the breeding season and the same nest may be used for several years, growing to a considerable size. They eat mainly carrion and worms, but will occasionally take small mammals.

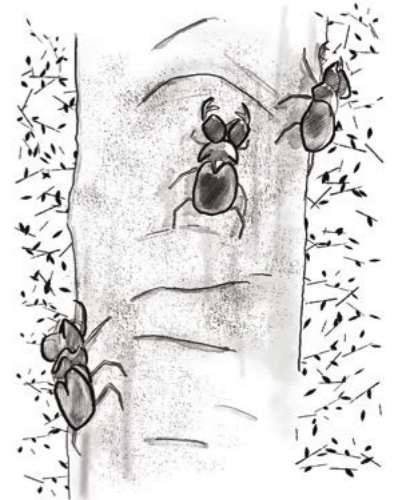


8 Stag Beetles

Also known as a 'horse pincher' or 'thunder beetle', the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) lives for 3 - 7 years and spends the vast majority of their life under ground. Males can grow to up to 75mm in length, the females being much smaller between 30-35mm.

Larvae feed on decaying wood under the ground. Adults cannot eat solid food, but rely on the fat reserves they have built up whilst developing as a larva. They are able to drink sap and juice from fallen fruit. A fully-grown stag beetle larva (grub) can be up to 110mm long. They are fairly smooth skinned, have an orange head and legs and brown jaws. They are nearly always found below ground and can be as deep as 50cm down.

Stag beetles are harmless and do not bite. They do not harm wood and only feed on rotten material.



9 Owl

South Hill Park is fortunate enough to attract both Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) and Tawny Owls (*Strix aluco*), due to the wide variety of woodland available. There are also several boxes installed around the park to encourage Little Owls (*Athene noctua*).

Tawny owls make the familiar 'too-wit too-woo' call during the night and early hours which is a male and female owl calling to each other. The female makes the 'too-wit' sound and the male answers with 'too-woo'.

Owls can turn their necks 135° in either direction, giving 270° of total movement. Rather than spherical eyeballs, owls have 'eye tubes' that go far back into their skulls fixing their eyes in place, so they have to turn their heads to see.

Barn Owl feathers are extremely soft, helping them hunt silently at night. Owls have excellent hearing, with one ear higher than the other, helping them to pinpoint their prey exactly. The prey is swallowed whole and regurgitated as a pellet about ten hours later with the bones, fur and other remains they were unable to digest. One owl can eat up to 1,400 mammals per year! A baby is called an 'owlet' and a group of owls is known as a 'parliament'.

