

**What is ancient woodland?**

Ancient woodland is land that has been continuously wooded since at least the 17th century. It's one of our richest habitats, supporting more threatened species than any other UK habitat, and it's irreplaceable. Sadly, half of the ancient woodland that survived until the 1930s has since been lost or damaged – mainly due to conifer plantations, farming and development. Today, ancient woodland covers only 2% of the UK. This rare and fragile habitat needs our urgent protection.

With lots more to discover, including stunning views, Hucking Estate offers something for everyone to enjoy.

- Just some of the species found here:**
- Skylark
  - Toothwite
  - Lords-and-ladies
  - White admiral butterfly
  - Brown long-eared bat
  - Marbled white butterfly

Hucking Estate sits within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Woodland Trust bought the estate in 1997 and began the lengthy process of habitat restoration and creation. Since then, more than 180,000 native trees and just over 1.5km of hedgerows have been planted, and 55 hectares (135 acres) of grassland established.

Use our trails to explore the site with its mosaic of nationally important and rare habitats. You will find a good selection of UK species here, particularly butterflies and wild flowers. So get your spotter guide out and see how many you can find!

Over the past 50 years, massive changes have taken place in our countryside, and the landscape around Hucking Estate is no exception. Farming practices since the 1940s have destroyed and fragmented ancient woodland and hedgerows. Changes in grazing patterns and an increase in arable farming have damaged much of the chalk grassland habitat that was distinctive to this area.

## Explore Hucking Estate



### Our sculptures

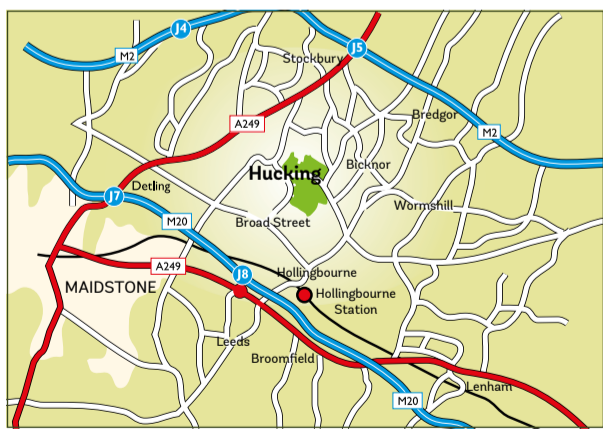
The Landscape Trail features four wooden carvings by local artists Nick Speakman and Rob Dyer, covering Hucking's social, cultural and species' history. They demonstrate how the site was used for highlighting species which were once common and are now rare, as well as the species that now inhabit the site. How many can you find?



### How to get here

**By train:** The nearest station is at Hollingbourne, around a 35-minute walk away. For details of train services call **0871 200 22 33** or visit [traveline.info](http://traveline.info)

**By car:** From junction 7 of the M20 – follow the A249 towards Sittingbourne for approximately 7.1km (4.4 miles). Turn right, following the brown tourist signs for Hucking Estate. Remain on this narrow road for approximately 3.2km (2 miles), turning left onto Church Road opposite the Hook and Hatchet where parking is available for the inn's visitors. The Woodland Trust car park is a further 1.2km (0.75 mile) to the east of Hucking village.

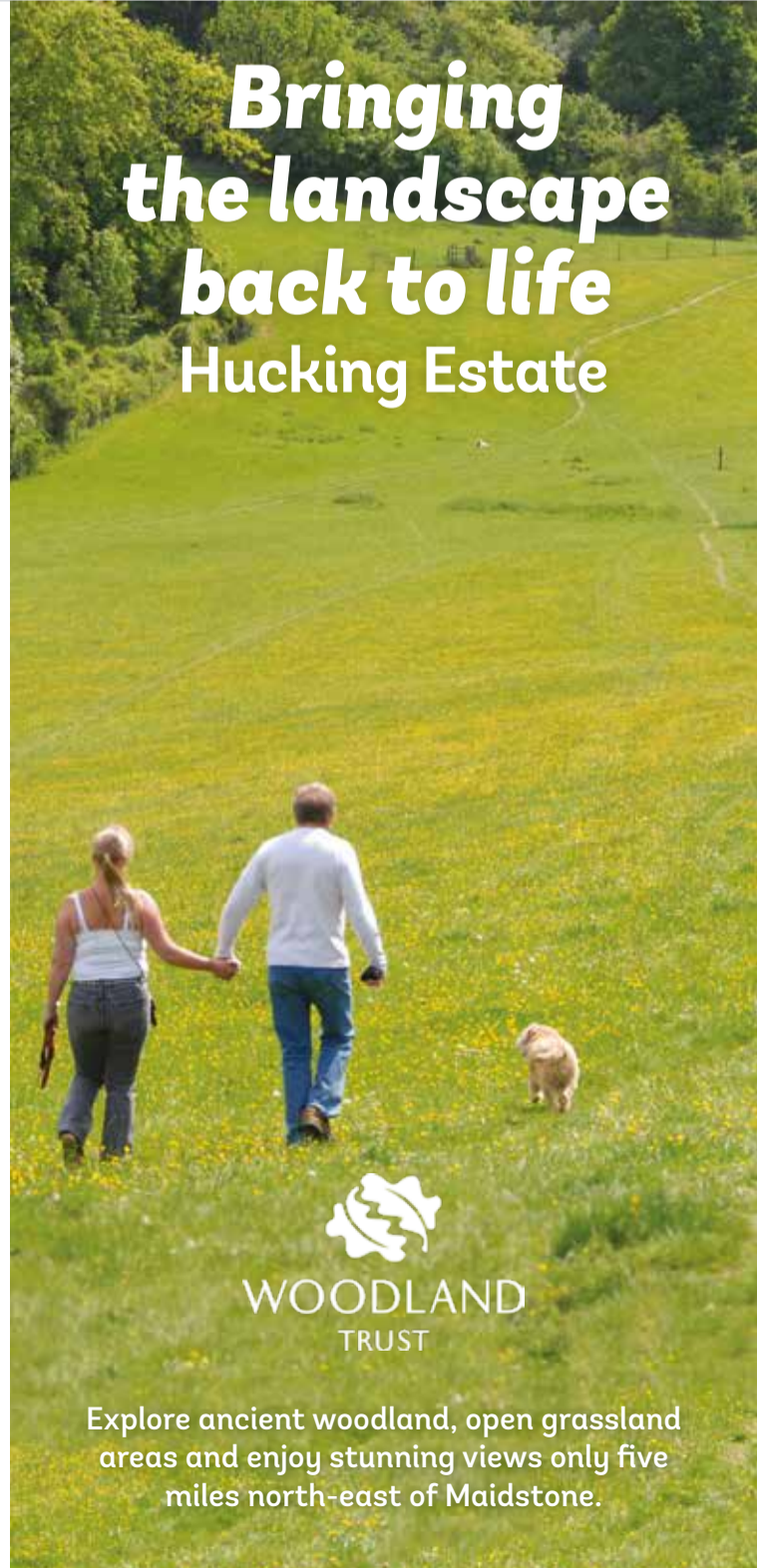


**WOODLAND TRUST**  
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## Bringing the landscape back to life Hucking Estate



**WOODLAND TRUST**

Explore ancient woodland, open grassland areas and enjoy stunning views only five miles north-east of Maidstone.

# Explore Huckling Estate



## From the Woodland Trust car park:

The Landscape Trail (the green route) is a 4km (2.5-mile) circular walk, returning to the car park. It will take you through young woodlands planted after 1998, mature ancient woodlands, and grassland grazed by sheep; and provide stunning views across the Weald of Kent.

There are a number of carved features to discover along the trail which tell the story of this evolving landscape. Why not start or end your visit with a picnic at our large table near the car park.

The land at Huckling Estate is open access, so feel free to explore some of the paths off the main trails (lilac pathways).



## From the Hook & Hatchet Inn:

Entering the field immediately beside the pub, you can follow the Blue Trail – a shorter walk but still taking in many of the interesting features Huckling has to offer. This route is a 1.8km (1.1-mile) circular walk, returning you back to the pub.



## Look out for

**Forest Research test plots:** There are two test plots at Huckling, one planted in 2013 to look at ash trees and establish if there is resistance to the ash dieback fungus; and the other, planted in 2011 to examine the effect of climate change on trees.

**The Droveway:** This old road was once used by herdsman to drive their animals to and from the wood pastures in the central Weald of Kent from the North Downs. These pastures were called 'dens' and may be the origin of nearby places, such as Tenterden, Biddenden and Smarden. Today, this droveway is a byway open to people, vehicles and horses.

**North Downs Way:** The yellow route, which is way-marked on the ground, takes you from the North Downs Way to Huckling's spectacular viewpoint and back again.

**Coppicing:** Areas of the site are managed by coppicing, a traditional method of cutting back trees in rotation to maintain an important habitat for many butterfly, moth and bird species. Some of the path edges are managed in the same way.

**Chalk pits:** In winter, when the trees are bare, look out for a series of shallow pits dug into the valley sides among the trees. This was common practice between 1700 and 1800 to obtain chalk for spreading on fields to improve soil fertility.

**Woodbanks:** Earthen banks with ditches usually denote a boundary line and date back to medieval times. Mostly found in areas of ancient woodland and often with pollarded hornbeam, a common woodfuel crop at that time. These trees were pollarded rather than coppiced so that the new shoots were out of reach from browsing cattle and deer.

**St Margaret's Church at Huckling:** The architecture of this grade II listed Norman church suggests it was built in the 12th century and extended in the 13th.

**The Hook & Hatchet Inn:** This dog-friendly pub is well worth a visit for a meal and a drink.



WTML/Martin Felstead



WTML/Nick Spurling



WTML/Martin Felstead



WTML/Timothy Dent



WTML/Nick Spurling

Key	
	Permissive paths and public right of way/bridleway
	Blue Trail (waymarked)
	Landscape Trail (waymarked)
	North Downs Way link path
	Sculptures
	Parking
	Viewpoint
	Grassland
	Ancient woodland
	New woodland
	Forest Research test plot

Ancient woodland, fascinating heritage and spectacular views await you at the Woodland Trust's Huckling Estate near Hollingbourne.

You are free to explore this 232-hectare (573-acre) site or you can follow our trails to discover more about the natural and cultural history of the area. Find your own secret picnic spot, or use our giant picnic table by the Woodland Trust car park.

Before your next visit, go to [naturedetectives.org.uk](http://naturedetectives.org.uk)

and download a spotter sheet and other activity ideas. They inspire children to become wildlife experts and are great for nature walks.