

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: HOPWOOD DINGLE

DISTRICT: BROMSGROVE

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL,
Bromsgrove District Council

National Grid. Reference: SP 035761 Area: 7.28 (ha.) 18 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 139 1:10,000: SP 07 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955 Date of Last Revision: 1978

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

The site is owned by the National Trust and is managed as a nature reserve by the Worcestershire Trust for Nature Conservation.

Reasons for Notification:

Hopwood Dingle lies on Keuper Marl on the west side of Wast Hill and consists of a series of steep sided, wooded, inter-connecting valleys.

Historical records show that the wood is very ancient. The presence of large numbers of fine specimens of wild service trees *Sorbus torminalis*, tends to confirm this.

Formerly characterised by having ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and wych elm *Ulmus glabra* as dominants, which is uncommon in this part of Worcestershire, most of the elms are now dead as a result of Dutch elm disease but the site has retained many of its characteristics. There is a dense shrub layer dominated by hazel *Corylus avellana*, with some dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*.

The ground flora is largely dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, but sweet woodruff *Galium odoratum* is locally abundant with, in places, town-hall clock *Adoxa moschatellina*. Wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus* which is only known from one other woodland in Worcestershire, is found in part of the wood.

The bottoms of the valleys are important for ferns, eight species having been recorded, with soft shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum* particularly abundant. The streams are heavily shaded and in consequence have little growing in them, but crack willow *Salix fragilis* and alder *Alnus glutinosa* occur along their banks with abundant opposite-leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*.

Alongside the wood are two small fields, too steep to cultivate. These have remained unimproved and have a good population of adder's tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*.