

County: Devon **Site Name:** Hunshaw Wood

District: Torridge

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

Local Planning Authority: Devon County Council, Torridge District Council

National Grid Reference: SS 510160 **Area:** 18.6 (ha) 46.0 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 180 **1:10,000:** SS 51 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 **Date of Last Revision:** 1976

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

The site has been renamed: it was formerly known as Hollam and Kennicks Wood. The site boundary has been amended by deletion.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This woodland is a relic of the ancient semi-natural oak woodlands of north-west Devon. It contains a large number of plants typically associated with such ancient woodland sites.

The wood lies predominantly at an altitude of between 30 and 150 m on the north side of a steep-sided valley cut by a stream that flows eastwards into the River Torridge. The geology is Carboniferous Shales and Grits on which a patchwork of clay and sandy soils has formed, resulting in a wide variety of soil drainage conditions.

The most abundant tree is oak: both sessile oak *Quercus petraea* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*. Some trees have grown from coppice stools, others are maidens.

Hazel *Corylus avellana* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* are the most abundant shrub species; crab apple *Malus sylvestris* and guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus* are less common. There is also a small area of hazel and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* coppice with standards. Alder *alnus glutinosa* and willow *Salix* spp. grow by the stream which flows along the southern edge of the wood.

The variety of soil conditions present gives rise to a diverse ground flora, with an exceptional number of plants associated with ancient woodland being present. For example, in the wetter areas six sedges, *Carex laevigata*, *C. pallescens*, *C. pendula*, *C. remota*, *C. strigosa* and *S. sylvatica* occur, together with early-purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, primrose *Primula vulgaris* and yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon*. On drier ground higher up the valley side, bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and heather *Calluna vulgaris* are abundant, with common cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense*, goldenrod *Solidago virgaurea* and tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum* among the herbs present.

Site Notified to Secretary of State on 29 October 1986