

COUNTY: LANCASHIRE

SITE NAME: BURTON WOOD

DISTRICT: LANCASTER

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

Local Planning Authority: Lancaster City Council

National Grid Reference: SD 543664

Area: 18.0 (ha.) 44.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 97

1:10,000: SD 56 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1976

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

1. This site is listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review' edited by D A Ratcliffe (1977), Cambridge University Press.
2. The boundary of the site remains unchanged.
3. The site is within the Forest of Bowland A.O.N.B.

Reasons for Notification:

Burton Wood is situated on the steep south facing side of the Lune valley 2km upstream of Caton. It contains good examples of several of the northern deciduous woodland types characteristic of the Lune valley and its tributaries draining the north side of the Bowland Fells. These types are developed on soils ranging from shallow acidic podsoils to flushed brown earths derived from the underlying Carboniferous sandstone, mudstone and calcareous shales of the Bowland Series. Burton Wood is the second best example of these stand types in the area, the best example being Roeburndale Woods.

The main stand type is upland sessile oak woodland with an uneven aged canopy including gean. There are smaller areas of acid sessile oak-hazel-ash woodland on the slopes and western valley ash-wych elm woodland in the gullies. The ground flora is dominated by bilberry and wavy hair grass on the acidic soils, with dog's mercury, bluebells and ferns on the more neutral soils.

An outstanding feature of this wood is the development of ash-wych elm woodland on the lower slopes and extending up the sides of the numerous stream gullies, containing elm, ash and oak with frequent small-leaved lime and a shrub layer (noticeably absent elsewhere in the wood) of rowan, hazel and hawthorn. These represent pockets of relict woodland which have probably never been cleared and are little altered in composition by past management. In other woods in this area alder woodland typically occupies this habitat.

Further interest is added by the flushes which support both the opposite -- and the alternate -- leaved golden saxifrages, and pendulous sedge whilst abundant soft shield fern and the very local liverwort *Lophocolea fragrans* grow in the ravines.