

County: Devon **Site Name:** Lords Wood

District: South Hams

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

Local Planning Authority: South Hams District Council

National Grid Reference: SX 874539 **Area:** 20.7 (ha) 51.1 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 202 **1:10,000:** SX 85 SE

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

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

Other Information:

The site lies within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site boundary has been amended.

Description:

The site comprises one of the best examples of oak-hazel-ash woodland in Devon and is an important representative of woods developed on loamy soils in western and northern Britain.

Lords Wood occupies an outstanding scenic position lying on steep north and east facing slopes overlooking the tidal reaches of the lower River Dart. Soils are derived from shales and slates of Devonian age and comprise, in the main, freely-draining, somewhat acid, clay loams which show evidence of base-enrichment locally. The wood is dominated by sessile oak *Quercus petraea* which occurs together with pedunculate oak *Q. robur*, sessile-pedunculate oak hybrids, beech *Fagus sylvatica* and, in the southern part of the wood, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and silver birch *Betula pendula*. The shrub layer is characterised by the abundance of hazel *Corylus avellana* and holly *Ilex aquifolium* and there is vigorous development of woody climbers and ramblers, particularly bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and ivy *Hedera helix*. In the boundary hedges spindle *Euonymus europaeus* and wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis* occur. The ground flora is dominated by bramble and great woodrush *Luzula sylvatica* and contains male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas* and broad buckler-fern *D. dilatata*. A wide variety of herbs characteristic of ancient woodland occurs including woodruff *Galium odoratum*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, wood spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides*, goldenrod *Solidago virgaurea*, wood violet *Viola reichenbachiana* and, in wetter areas, opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*. There are also a number of plants of local or restricted distribution, including butcher's broom *Ruscus aculeatus*, pale sedge *Carex pallescens*, narrow buckler-fern *Dryopteris carthusiana* and wild madder *Rubia peregrina*.