

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: MAINS WOOD

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS

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, Malvern Hills District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 644387

Area: 8.49 (ha.) 21 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 149

1:10,000: SO 63 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1969

Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

A remnant of ancient primary woodland lying on the north eastern edge of the Woolhope Hills. It is part of the larger Mains Wood complex and is the only remaining piece unaffected by modern forestry.

The woodland lies on neutral to acidic soils overlying the Old Red Sandstone. It is mainly dominated by sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, but includes other species such as ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, birch *Betula pendula*, yew *Taxus baccata*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*. Sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* is also present and managed as coppice.

The ground flora includes a number of species which are locally rare or uncommon in this part of the West Midlands, including violet helleborine *Epipactis purpurata*, broad helleborine *E. helleborine* and birds nest orchid *Neottia nidus-avis*. In the more acidic parts of the woodland, ling *Calluna vulgaris* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* occur.

The woodland is noted for the richness of its lower plant groups particularly ferns and fungi. The ferns include hard fern *Blechnum spicant* and mountain fern *Thelypteris limbosperma*, species more characteristic of upland areas and rare in this part of Herefordshire. Over 120 species of fungi have been recorded from the Wood, including several very uncommon species such as *Boletus parasiticus*, *Cortinarius puniceus* and *Pholiota tuberculosa*.