

Notification Date: 29 January 1987

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: MAYHILL WOOD

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS

SITE REF: 15 WRR

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

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

National Grid Reference: SO 723370

Area: 7.2 (ha.) 17.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 149

1:10,000: SO 73 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1975

Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Mayhill Wood lies on a ridge of Silurian limestone on the western side of the Malvern Hills near Ledbury.

It has been selected as an example of the characteristic sessile oak *Quercus petraea* woods with ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* which are found on the limestones in the Malvern area.

A special feature of this woodland is the abundance of yew *Taxus baccata* which here achieves complete dominance in certain areas of the wood forming pure stands. Such a dominance of yew is unusual in Britain and only found in certain areas such as the South Downs in Sussex and Hampshire.

In the rest of the wood where yew is less dominant, a wide variety of trees and shrubs occur including silver birch *Betula pendula*, wild cherry *Prunus avium*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, and wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis*, the last being an indicator of ancient woodland. Hazel *Corylus avellana* dominates much of the shrub layer but other characteristic species are also present, such as wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and wayfaring-tree *Viburnum lantana*.

The ground flora is sparse in the yew dominated areas, where dense shade prevents plant colonisation. In other areas, a variety of lime-loving species occur including wood spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea* and woodruff *Galium odoratum*.

The woodland fauna includes native polecat *Mustela putorius* and dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*. The invertebrate fauna is significant with a number of local moth species such as satin beauty *Deileptenia ribeata* and beautiful hook-tip *Laspeyria flexula* whose larvae are associated with the yew trees.