

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 23 MARCH 1987

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

SITE NAME: SHINING CLIFF WOODS

DISTRICT: AMBER VALLEY

SITE REF: 15 WNC

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

Local Planning Authority: DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, Amber Valley District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 335530

Area: 120.0 (ha.) 296.5 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 119

1:10,000: SK 35 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954

Date of Last Revision: 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Site boundary alteration (extension & reduction).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Shining Cliff Woods lie on east facing slopes of Millstone Grit above the River Derwent north of Belper. This ancient semi-natural oak *Quercus* spp. woodland is one of the few remnants of the mediaeval hunting forest of Duffield Frith, whose documented history is traceable back to 1284.

The tree cover is mostly of sessile oak *Quercus petraea* which in places is supplemented by pedunculate oak *Q. robur*. Throughout most of the wood the oak is mixed with downy birch *Betula pubescens* and silver birch *B. pendula* together with holly *Ilex aquifolium*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and hazel *Corylus avellana*. The acid soils derived from the Millstone Grit support a species-poor ground flora of wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*, bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*. In places this flora is more diverse with bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, wood millet *Milium effusum* and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*. Sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa*, Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* and European larch *Larix decidua* have been planted.

Within the woodland are areas of wetter ground where springs or streams occur and in these areas alder *Alnus glutinosa* is dominant with birch or ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and hazel with occasional bird cherry *Prunus padus*, small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and the rare large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos*. The ground flora around these flushes is much richer, often with a thick bryophyte (moss) layer which in the wettest areas includes five species of bog moss *Sphagnum* spp. Alongside the stream soft shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*, beech fern *Phegopteris connectilis* and greater tussock-sedge *Carex paniculata* are found. At the upper edge of the wood, the canopy is more open and woodland gives way to small areas of grassy heath with heather *Calluna vulgaris*.

In moist areas close to the stream a number of molluscs of local distribution which are associated with ancient woodland occur. These are *Limax cinereo niger*, *L. tennellus*, *Leiostyla anglica*, *Vertigo substriata*, and *Zenobiella subrufescens*. In the drier parts of the wood, the hairy wood ant *Formica lugubris* is abundant. Some beetles associated with these wood ants occur, notably *Clytra quadripunctata* whose larvae feed on the ant nest material.

Many birds breed in the woods including pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* and wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* and in winter they are used by large flocks of brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*.