

County:	Lancashire	Site Name:	Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods
District:	Preston		
Status:	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.		
Local Planning Authority:	Preston Borough Council		
National Grid Reference:	SD 590324	Area:	63.9 (ha) 157.89 (ac)
Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50 000	102	1:10 000	SD 53 SE
Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):	1979	Date of Last Revision:	–
Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):	1986	Date of Last Revision:	1986

Other Information:

1. A large part of the site is managed as a Nature Reserve by the Lancashire Trust for Nature Conservation.
2. Site boundary altered by minor deletions and small extension on renotification.

Reasons for Notification:

Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods (including also Boilton and Nab Woods) are situated east of Preston between Ribbleton and Grimsargh on the steep escarpment of the River Ribble and in the ravine of its tributary the Tun Brook. They contain particularly extensive examples of western valley ash-wych elm wood and valley alderwoods on neutral-alkaline soils, which are typical of woodlands in the Ribble and Hodder valleys on soils derived from glacial drift. They constitute one of the largest areas of deciduous woodland in Lancashire and provide a valuable refuge for wildlife close to the urban areas of Preston.

Boilton, Tun Brook and Nab Woods consist of ash-wych elm woodland on neutral clay soils. The main trees are ash, wych elm and sycamore, with gean (wild cherry) occurring regularly and conspicuous when in flower. Alder occurs in places along the Tun Brook, occasionally extending to the top of the slope. Oak is sparse, having been felled out during the First World War but becomes more noticeable towards the upper end of Tun Brook Wood. Some parts have a well-developed understorey of wych elm accompanied by gean, sycamore, hawthorn, bramble and field rose. These areas have a rich ground flora including wood woundwort, enchanter's nightshade, dog's mercury, male fern, false frome and giant fescue. Where the understorey is sparse the ground vegetation tends to be more grassy with abundant creeping soft-grass and more locally tufted hair-grass, bluebell and patches of ivy. There are base-rich

Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods (cont...)

flushes in the lower parts of Tun Brook Wood but these are a much more conspicuous feature of Red Scar Wood.

Red Scar Wood consists of valley alderwood on neutral-alkaline soil situated on the steep escarpment of the Ribble. Alder, ash, wych elm and sycamore are the main trees, with much hawthorn and some elm and ash in the understorey. This type of woodland commonly occurs in narrow strips along streams but here extends from the river bank to the top of the slope, totalling about 6 ha of woodland. The steep clay slope is unstable and extensively slumped with numerous base-rich flushes supporting a rich and characteristic lime-loving flora. Pendulous sedge, not a common plant in Lancashire, and giant horsetail are the dominant plants, accompanied by woodruff, both the alternate and opposite-leaved saxifrage, and hairy St John's-wort. Of particular interest is the presence of yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, nearing its northern limit in Britain and scarce in the county. The river bank is dominated by the rampant alien Himalayan balsam. At the downstream end of the wood on a patch of sandy well-drained soil there is a small area of sessile oak and gean.

The woods support a good population of birds, including hawfinch, and there are badger setts. The white letter hairstreak butterfly, whose caterpillars feed on wych elm leaves, has recently extended its range to these and other woods in the Ribble Valley, its only location in North West England. The oak bush-cricket, another notably rare species in North West England, has also been recorded.