

County: Lancashire **Site Name:** **Roeburndale Woods**

District: Lancaster

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

Local Planning Authority: Lancaster City Council

National Grid Reference: SD 609657 **Area:** 41.7 (ha) 103.0 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50 000 97 **1:10 000** SD 66 NW, SW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983/1984 **Date of Last Revision:** 1983

Other Information:

1. This site is listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review', edited by D. A. Ratcliffe (1977), Cambridge University Press.
2. The site contains red squirrels, a protected species listed in Schedule 5 of the above Act.
3. The boundary of this site has been revised by a small extension.
4. The site is within the Forest of Bowland AONB.

Reasons for Notification:

The extensive woodlands of the Roeburn gorge lie south of the village of Wray in the Lune valley. They contain the best examples of the range of northern deciduous woodland types characteristic of the River Lune and its tributaries draining the north side of the Bowland Fells. These nationally important woods lie mainly on the steep east side of the gorge but extend in places onto the plateau above. They are ungrazed by farm stock, have been little altered by conifer planting, are believed to be an ancient woodland site, and constitute one of the largest areas of broad-leaved woodland in the county.

The Carboniferous sandstone, mudstone and calcareous shales of the Bowland Series give rise to a wide range of soils from acidic podzols to the very basic brown earths which is reflected in the range of woodland types. The most extensive of these is the upland sessile oak wood with a characteristic ground flora including wavy hair-grass, bilberry and heath mosses in the most acid locations such as on the sandstone outcrops of Hill Kirks Scar, but dominated by ferns on the gentler slopes of

Outhwaite Wood where a high proportion of birch occurs in many places. The basic soils of Hill Kirks Wood support western valley ash-wych elm wood with a characteristic ground flora including dog's mercury, wood brome and ramsons. Between this and Outhwaite Wood, and downstream in Alcocks Wood, areas of more intermediate soils support acid sessile oak-hazel-ash woods. The lines of streams are marked by narrow strips of valley alder wood and this expands to occupy Bowskill Wood End and Pasture Wood at the upstream end of the SSSI. On the flood plain below Outhwaite Wood is a small area of bird cherry-alder wood. Small-leaved lime occurs at scattered locations including some fine trees in Bowskill Wood. Other plants of interest include a colony of the rare grass wood fescue *Festuca altissima* and the rare moss *Rhytidiadelphus subpinnatus*. Red squirrels, a protected species, are resident in the wood.