



Flushes, resulting from impeded drainage, are an important feature of this site. They occur on the Gault Clay where they tend to be acidic or neutral in character and also on the Fuller's Earth where they support vegetation more characteristic of base-rich conditions. In acidic flushes on the Gault, the dominant grasses are Purple Moor Grass *Molinia caerulea* or Brown Bent *Agrostis canina* together with a variety of sedges *Carex* spp. and abundant mosses such as *Sphagnum recurvum*. The flushes have frequent Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* and Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* with Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix* and Heath Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*. Many plants of very local distribution occur here, including Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, Petty Whin *G. anglica*, Wood Horsetail *Equisetum sylvaticum*, Marsh Orchid *D. incarnata* and often abundant Marsh Violet. *Viola palustris*. Flushes of higher base status also occur on the Gault and here Greater Tussock Sedge *C. paniculata* or the Rushes *Juncus articulatus* and *J. effusus* may dominate with frequent herbs such as Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*. There are also base-rich flushed areas on the Fuller's Earth, which have Hard Rush *J. inflexus* and Giant Horsetail *E. telmateia* with herbs such as Fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica* and Common Spotted and Southern Marsh Orchids *D. fuchsii* and *D. praetermissa*. These areas also contain the local Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and Bristle Club-rush *Isolepis setacea*.

Small areas of woodland are dominated by Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* or Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* over a shrub layer of Hazel *Corylus avellana* on the drier ground. In wetter conditions Common Sallow *Salix cinerea* and Alder *Alnus glutinosa* dominate. This woodland, together with a well developed network of hedgerows adds considerably to the diversity of the site. Further habitat diversity is provided by the various watercourses which have both shallow fast-flowing stretches as well as deeper, slower reaches with wooded banks.

The fauna of this site has not been well studied but Marsh Fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia* and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary *Boloria selene*, both local and declining butterflies, are known to be present and the Beautiful Demoiselle Damselfly *Calopteryx virgo*, a local insect in Dorset, is abundant on the Hooke River.