

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: CHERRY HILL WOOD

DISTRICT: SOUTH HEREFORD

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, South Hereford District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 577353 Area: 38.69 (ha.) 95.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 149 1:10,000: SO 53 NE and SO 53 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Nupend Wood is owned and managed by the Hereford & Radnor Nature Trust. The site lies within the Wye Valley AONB.

Reasons for Notification:

The woodlands of the lower Wye Valley form one of the most important areas for woodland conservation in Britain, comparable with the Caledonian pinewoods, the oceanic oakwoods of Western Britain, the New Forest and the mixed coppices of East Anglia. Semi-natural woodland is abundant and virtually continuous along the gorge. The woods are a mixture of many types, some of which are very localised, eg the lime-sessile oak stands on limestone, beech stands on both acid and alkaline soils in which lime *Tilia* spp., elm *Ulmus* spp., oak *Quercus* spp. and other species share dominance. Most woods are a rich mixture of stand types which are believed to be similar in composition to the original natural woods of the valley. Many rare and local species are present, including some of the rarest native tree species, eg large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos*, whitebeams *Sorbus* spp. and trees close to the edge of their European range eg Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* and beech *Fagus sylvatica*. Furthermore these woods lie in a matrix of unimproved grassland and other semi-natural habitats which together with the woods, make the Wye Valley one of the most diverse, rich and attractive areas in southern Britain.

Cherry Hill Wood consists of two blocks of woodland lying on soils derived from the limestones of the Silurian series near the village of Fownhope. The woodland is mainly dominated by sessile oak *Quercus petraea* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, with abundant yew *Taxus baccata* and cherry *Prunus avium* in certain areas. On the steeper lower slopes of Cherry Hill encampment, wych elm *Ulmus glabra* becomes more abundant. Spurge laurel *Daphne laureola*, wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis* and wayfaring tree *Viburnum lantana* are amongst the more notable species in the shrub layer of these woods. On the western slopes of Cherry Hill there is an area of dense scrub and secondary woodland dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, field maple *Acer campestre* and ash.

The ground vegetation is also extremely rich and diverse, particularly on the eastern and southern slopes. Notable are abundant colonies of stinking iris *Iris foetidissima* and stinking hellebore *Hellebrous foetidus*. Common twayblade *Listera ovata* and bee orchid *Ophrys apifera* also occur.