



Wychwood contains a species-rich limestone flora centred on an area of grassland on Newhill Plain and in some of the old quarries. These have a calcicole flora with plants such as pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, woolly thistle *Cirsium eriophorum* and wild liquorice *Astragalus glycyphyllos*. The quarries contain a mixed scrub of yew, dogwood and privet and associated plants include stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*, deadly nightshade *Atropa bella-donna* and hard shield-fern *Polystichum aculeatum*.

The butterfly fauna associated with the grassland includes marbled white *Melanargia galathea*, grizzled skipper *Pyrgus malvae*, white-letter hairstreak *Strymonidia w-album*, brown argus *Aricia agestis* and Duke of Burgundy *Hamaeris lucina*. The site is also a locality for the uncommon Roman snail *Helix pomatia*.

There are four shallow marl ponds, spring-fed from underlying limestones and with cold, clear water rich in dissolved lime. Such pools are nationally rare and these are the only substantial water bodies on the southern Jurassic limestone. Their aquatic flora is both abundant and diverse, and includes calcicoles such as shining pondweed *Potamogeton lucens*, mare's tail *Hippuris vulgaris* and stoneworts *Chara* spp. The margins of the ponds and inflow streams support a varied marsh flora which includes flat sedge *Blysmus compressus*.

The ponds support an invertebrate fauna characteristic of rich unpolluted waters, and include the increasingly rare freshwater crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, a species listed in the International Red Data Book of Invertebrates, and the local water bugs *Corixa panzeri* and *Micronecta scholtzi*. Fish present include ten-spined sticklebacks and bullheads, the latter being more usually a stream species. The specialised cold water fauna associated with the springs includes the planarian flatworm *Crenobia alpina* and several stoneflies (Plecoptera) and Helodid beetles.