

Notification Date: 9 October 1989

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: HAUGH WOOD

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS,
SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE

SITE REF: 15 WD9

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

Local Planning Authority : HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, Malvern Hills District Council, South Herefordshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 591367

Area: 342.5 (ha.) 846.3 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 149

1:10,000: SO 53 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1931 Act): 1989

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Within the Wye Valley AONB. Includes two previously notified SSSIs – Rudge End Quarry and Penteloe Glen. Four areas within Haugh Wood are managed as nature reserves by the Herefordshire Nature Trust.

Site boundary alteration (extension).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Haugh Wood is a large block of woodland situated in a prominent position on the top of the Woolhope Dome to the south-east of Hereford. The soils which are derived from Silurian limestones, shales and sandstones, are largely light textured and acidic on the higher ground, with heavier, base-rich soils on the slopes. The site has been selected primarily for its exceptionally rich invertebrate fauna which is of national importance. It is the best woodland in Herefordshire for butterflies and moths *Lepidoptera* with over six hundred and fifty species recorded, including twenty-nine species which do not occur anywhere else in the county.

Much of Haugh Wood has been converted to conifer or hardwood plantation but, as at other nationally important invertebrate sites, such as Bernwood Forest in Oxfordshire and Bentley Woods in Wiltshire, the interest is largely associated with small blocks of remnant semi-natural woodland and the broadleaved edges of the extensive ride systems. These scattered small blocks of woodland include a number of types which are nationally scarce (see below). Of the invertebrates in the wood the butterflies include several nationally rare or scarce species such as high brown fritillary *Argynnis adippe*, wood white *Leptidea sinapsis*, pearl bordered fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne* and white letter hairstreak *Strymonidia w-album*. Amongst the large number of moths, many are nationally or locally rare, such as lunar hornet clearwing *Sesia bembiformis*, drab looper *Minoa murinata*, triple spotted pug *Eupithecia trisignaria* and barred hook-tip *Drepana cultraria*. Other groups are also well represented and include three nationally rare species. These are two craneflies, *Ormosia bicornis* and *Gonomyia alboscuteolata*, the latter known from only two other sites in Britain, and a bee, *Osmia pilicornis*.

Within the small blocks of woodland, that dominated by sessile oak *Quercus petraea* and silver birch *Betula pendula* is the predominant type. The shrub layer is generally sparse but some areas have an understorey of coppiced hazel *Corylus avellana*. The uncommon wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis* is also a feature of these blocks. The ground flora is dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, with male-fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*, tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and great wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica*. In the more acidic

areas the dominant species are bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis*.

In the northern part of the site are two types of woodland which are of limited national distribution. These are sessile oak – small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* – maple *Acer campestre*. Within the latter are several locally uncommon species such as meadow saffron *Colchicum autumnale*, columbine *Aquilegia vulgaris*, herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia* and greater butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*. Alder *Alnus glutinosa* woodland is found in the wetter areas, bordering Pentaloe Brook. Here a rich ground flora includes pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, hard fern *Blechnum spicant*, wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* and opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*. Adjoining the brook is a small, base rich flush with a strong colony of marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris* with common twayblade *Listera ovata*, fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea* and wood small-reed *Calamagrostis epigejos*.

At the southern end of the site is a small, disused limestone quarry with scree slopes supporting a rich community of lime-loving plants such as yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata*, carline thistle *Carlina vulgaris*, wild liquorice *Astragalus glycyphyllos* and the nationally scarce stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*.

The wood has a rich mammal fauna which includes fallow deer *Dama dama*, badger *Meles meles*, dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* and pole cat *Putorius putorius*. The site is also of considerable ornithological interest with species such as sparrowhawk *Accipiter nissus*, tawny owl *Strix aluco*, woodcock *Scolopax musticola*, nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* and lesser spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopus minor*.