

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: FLAT COPPICE

DISTRICT: South Shropshire

SITE REF: 15WZW

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

Local Planning Authority: SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
South Shropshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 394868 Area: 19.42 (ha.) 48 (ac.).

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 137 1:10,000: SO 38 NE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 Date of Last Revision:

Other information:

Site formerly known as Plowden Wood & Flat Coppice.

SITE NAME: FLAT COPPICE

NOTIFICATION DATE: 28 November 1985

Reasons for Notification:

The largest surviving semi-natural remnant of the once extensive Plowden Woods lying on the southern side of the Onny Valley. Most of these Woods have been converted to coniferous or mixed plantations since the Second World War.

Flat Coppice contains two types of woodland. Parts of the site consist of sessile oak (Quercus petraea) with hazel (Corylus avellana) on well drained soil. Elsewhere, on damp, base-rich soils, mainly in a comparatively flat area above the sides of the valley, there is woodland characterised by alder (Alnus glutinosa) and bird cherry (Prunus padus). This is the only extensive example of this type of woodland known in Shropshire.

The sessile oak woodland has a flora which is largely characteristic of acid soils, including bilberry (Vaccinium myrtillus), wavy hair-grass (Deschampsia flexuosa), great woodrush (Luzula sylvatica) and common cow-wheat (Melampyrum pratense). Less common species include betony (Stachys officinalis) and bitter-vetch (Lathyrus montana). Wild service tree (Sorbus torminalis) is locally abundant.

The damp woodland on the plateau is dominated by large oaks and ashes (Fraxinus excelsior), with abundant alder and bird cherry (a rare species in Shropshire). The ground flora includes plants typical of base-rich soils, such as ramsons (Allium ursinum), dog's mercury (Mercurialis perennis), sweet woodruff (Galium odoratum) and meadowsweet (Filipendula ulmaria).

The flora of the rides and tracks is comparatively rich and includes two uncommon sedges, pale sedge (Carex pallescens) and thin-spiked wood sedge (C. strigosa) as well as devil's-bit scabious (Succisa pratensis) and lady's mantle (Alchemilla xanthochlora).

There is a varied bird fauna. Breeding birds are believed to include woodcock (Scolopax rusticola), buzzard (Buteo buteo) and pied flycatcher (Ficedula hypoleuca).