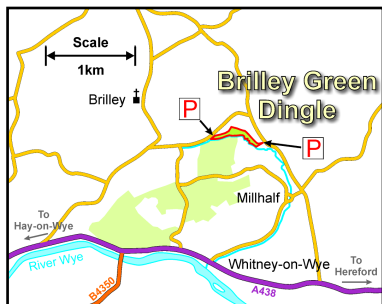
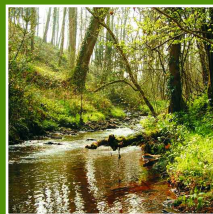


Brilley Green Dingle

Brilley SO271488 (Explorer 201)

Ancient woodland



Visitor Guidelines

There is a clearly defined circular route running around the reserve. In winter or during prolonged wet weather, some lower parts of the reserve become extremely muddy and difficult to negotiate. Boardwalks have been installed on some sections to alleviate this. There are several flights of steps running up the steep valley sides.

Description

Brilley Green Dingle reserve lies on the south-facing slope of a steep-sided valley running from east to west. The rapidly-flowing Millhalf Brook running through the valley has, over time, cut deeply into the underlying Old Red Sandstone formations exposing small cliffs and rock slabs along the stream bed. The whole Dingle is wooded with much of the western end consisting of ancient semi-natural Oak/Ash woodland, while the eastern part comprises plantation woodland on an ancient site.

Originally part of Brilley Green Common, in the 18th century the Dingle was unenclosed and grazed by *commoners'* livestock. Some of the largest old trees probably date from this period, their gnarled bases providing evidence of early coppicing activity. A century later, the Dingle was enclosed and the east end had been planted with conifers. Meanwhile, the western end had developed into broad-leaved woodland, with more Oaks probably being planted at this time. Since then, the conifers have been felled, to be replaced by Beech and some Sweet Chestnut. Thus the two parts of the Dingle have had a quite different management history, and these differences are reflected in the ground vegetation today. The flora of the western end is considerably richer than that of the much altered eastern section. There is also an interesting and very noticeable vertical zonation in the flora of the Dingle, depending on the nature of the underlying soils. On the upper slopes, the soil is shallow, dry and acidic, and supports acid-loving plants like Silver Birch, Gorse, and Wood Sage. Nearer the valley floor, the soils are much deeper, less well drained, and generally more lime-rich or neutral. Here a range of woodland flowers carpet the ground in Spring. The slopes of the western ancient woodland contain a wide variety of trees and shrubs, including Wych Elm and Wild Cherry, with an understorey dominated by Hazel and Holly. Alders and Willow are typical trees alongside the brook. Bracken and the ubiquitous Bramble have taken over the more open parts of the eastern planted section.

The clear, well-oxygenated waters of the Millhalf Brook are home to a number of interesting invertebrates, notably the increasingly threatened White-clawed Crayfish. In recent years signs of Otters have been found, while Dippers have been recorded exploring the waterfalls and rapids.

Present Management

Management aims to maintain and enhance the character of the ancient woodland at the western end by treating it as *high forest*. Any dead standing or fallen timber trees will be kept, where they do not present a hazard, to provide a habitat for bryophytes, fungi, wood-boring insects and hole-nesting birds. The remaining woodland to the east is being managed as *coppice with standards* with additional selective *thinning* in some areas.

Acquisition Details

Freehold bought by HNT in 1987 with generous assistance from several residents of Brilley and a bequest from Mrs. R.B. Sheward.

General Information:

Best time to visit: All times of year.

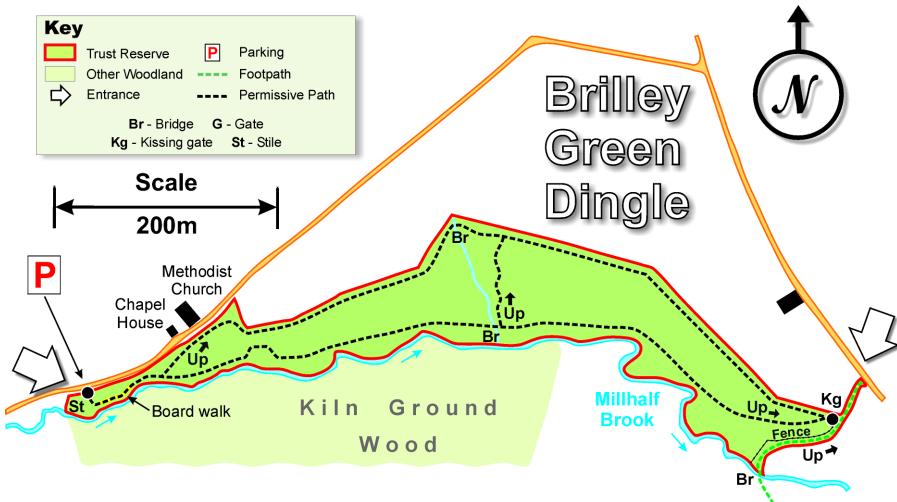
Habitat: *Ancient semi-natural woodland*; plantation broad-leaved woodland; a fast-flowing, unpolluted, freshwater stream.

Size: 4.5 hectares (11 acres)

Specialities: Wood Warbler (5-6), Tree Pipit (4-7), Pied Flycatcher (4-7), Dipper, Early Purple Orchid (4-6), Moschatel (3-5), Sanicle (5-7), a wide variety of fungi including *Amanita rubescens* and *Coprinus lagopus*.

Parking: There is space for two cars at the eastern entrance.

Nearby reserves: Holywell Dingle, Quebb Corner Meadow, Upper Welson Marsh.



Brilley Green Dingle

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