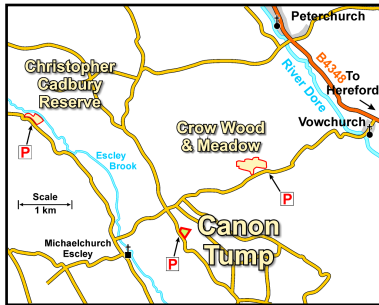


# Canon Tump Common

Michaelchurch Escley SO327345 (Explorer OL13)

Common land



## Visitor Guidelines

Parts of the reserve may be very wet, so waterproof footwear is advised.

## Description

Canon Tump is a registered *common* in the foothills of the Black Mountains, west Herefordshire. The reserve is roughly triangular in shape and consists mainly of neutral grassland, bounded on the north and south by woodland, grading into overgrown hedgerows. A deep, permanently wet ditch runs along the south-western side, parallel to the roadside boundary fence. Previously used as a travellers' camping ground, the *common* has been the subject of a major rehabilitation scheme by HNT to clear rubbish and restore the grassland, helped and supported by local people. With restoration complete, the reserve now consists of an interesting mosaic of habitats, including *coppice* woodland, scrub and flower-rich grassland containing seasonally wet sumps and small pools. Over 150 species of plant have been recorded on the reserve, among which Cowslip, Spotted Orchid, Bluebell, Broad-leaved Helleborine, Betony and Cow-wheat are notable. Registered local *commoners* exercise their rights to graze animals on the reserve, and as there are no internal fences, the stock can roam and graze unchecked. Over time, it is hoped the grazing regime will benefit the ground flora, which is rather sparse in some areas. Within the grassy area are two scrub-covered islands - one dominated by Bracken and Aspen suckers, the other by the introduced undershrub *Gaultheria shallon*, which has pink flowers followed by black fruits. Many trees and shrubs on the site are multi-stemmed, indicating *coppicing* in the past, and the Trust has re-instated small-scale *coppicing* on the wooded fringes of the *common*. Despite its altitude (260m.), the under-lying clayey soils ensure that parts of the reserve remain semi-waterlogged throughout the year, adding additional interest to the site, and supporting a local abundance of Aspen and Willows. In the drier south-east part of the site, suckering Blackthorn makes dense thickets.

### Present Management

As already mentioned, the **common** is now regularly grazed, which should over time reduce the vigour of the dominant grasses *Deschampsia caespitosa* and *Holcus mollis*, and encourage the spread of herbaceous plants like Cowslip, Bugle and Knapweed. Other management involves periodic cutting back of encroaching Bracken, Willow and Blackthorn. Each year a small block of boundary woodland is felled, so that over a 12 year period the entire wooded boundary will return to a **coppice** regime.

### Acquisition Details

Bought by the Trust in 1992.

### General Information:

**Best time to visit:** Spring and summer.

**Habitat:** Neutral grassland on an ancient **common**.

**Size:** 3.75 hectares (9 acres).

**Specialities:** Chiffchaff (3-7), Willow Warbler (4-7), Long-tailed Tit. Common Frogs use the pools to spawn in early spring. Ringlet (6-8), Meadow Brown (6-9) and Small Skipper (6-9) butterflies. Broad-leaved Helleborine (7-9), Spotted Orchid (6-8), Common Cow-Wheat (5-9).

**Parking:** There is room for 1-2 cars to park at the entrance.

**Nearby HNT reserves:** Christopher Cadbury Reserve, Crow Wood & Meadow.

