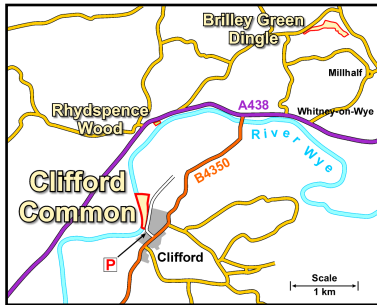
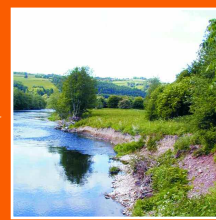


Clifford Common

Clifford SO244461 (Explorer 201)

Open scrub-invaded common land

SSSI



Visitor Guidelines

Access to this reserve is RESTRICTED. The river bank is subject to continuous erosion and is unsafe at certain times of the year. Contact the trust for further information.

Description

At the time of the Tithe Map in 1842, the reserve area was described as 'common and waste'. Present-day *commoners* still have rights for grazing, estovers (removal of small-wood for winter fuel) and coarse fishing, but grazing ceased many years ago, allowing rank vegetation to develop, mixed in with encroaching scrub plants like Bramble and Hawthorn. The path leading from the reserve entrance partly follows the remains of an old horse-drawn tramway from Hay-on-Wye, constructed about 1818 as an embankment along the eastern edge of the *common*. Two branch lines from this tramway originally led up to the village. The western edge of the reserve is the middle of the river, while the eastern boundary is backed by a former river-cliff and tramway track, now covered by scrub, Bracken and mixed secondary woodland. The *common* land in between is low-lying grassy scrub, with much rank growth resulting from the annual fertile silt deposition carried by the river floods. Drainage is good, however, due to the under-lying river gravels. The river bank is lined with a number of well-grown Alders, together with some planted Oak. These trees trap a large amount of woody flood debris, which piles up in drifts along the bank edges.

The chief interest of this reserve lies in its potential as an Otter refuge, together with the four main habitats found here: the river itself, with a stony bed rich in invertebrate life; the tree-lined river bank; the flat flood-plain with its mixture of damp-loving plants including Tansy, Hemlock, Angelica, Meadowsweet and dominated in late summer by the invasive alien Himalayan Balsam; and fourth, the steep bank to the east covered by mixed deciduous woodland much frequented by woodland birds.

Present Management

Because of its potential importance as an Otter refuge, it is important that human disturbance is kept to a minimum. Management is currently limited to routine

maintenance of gates, steps and fences, preventative measures to reduce further erosion of the river-bank, some periodic scrub clearance and a small amount of *coppicing*.

Acquisition Details

Gifted to the Trust by Mrs. Hope of Whitney Court in 1985.

The reserve is a designated *SSSI*.

General Information:

Best time to visit: Spring and summer.

Habitat: The River Wye and associated aquatic flora/fauna, scrub invaded *flood-plain grassland*, mixed *secondary woodland*.

Size: 3.6 hectares (9 acres).

Specialities: Otter. Grey wagtail, Kingfisher, Goosander, Yellow wagtail (4-7), Dipper. Dragonflies. Tansy, Wild Angelica.

Parking: Parking on grass verge at top of lane. Walk to reserve

Nearby HNT reserves: Brilley Green Dingle, Rhydspence Woodland.

