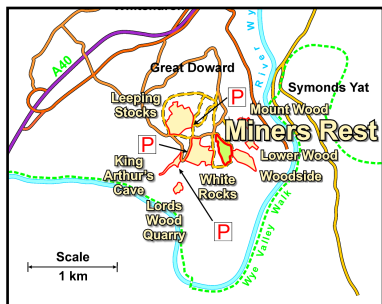


Miners Rest

Great Doward SO553158 (Outdoor Leisure 14)

Mixed ancient & secondary broad-leaved woodland.



Visitor Guidelines

Some areas of the reserve are stony, while others can be wet and muddy, even in summer; stout shoes/boots are advised. If you enter the two deer-fenced areas, it is vital to ensure that the gates are secured when you leave, to prevent grazing damage to regrowing *coppice stools*.

Description

Today, much of the reserve consists of broad-leaved woodland, apart from a few open rides and clearings. Although seemingly uniform now, the woodland areas have had a complex history over the last two centuries. In 1840 the area covered by the reserve was divided into about ten enclosures, some woodland (presumably *ancient*), some grass and some arable land. The original field divisions can still be seen in many places as tumbledown walls of broken limestone. Multi-stemmed and often strangely twisted beech trees grow in or on these walls, the outgrown survivors of the original beech hedges. Although no buildings were present in 1840, the remains of two later structures can be found on the reserve today. One lies near the entrance gate; the other is situated near the south-east boundary path, and is traditionally said to have been an old cider house frequented by iron-ore miners of the period - hence the name given to the reserve. Evidence of former extraction industry can be also be seen in the form of old sand pits and a small stone quarry. Since this peak in human activity in the 19th century, the area has seen increasing neglect, as first arable and then grazing land went out of use, allowing scrub and later, *secondary woodland*, to encroach once more. This succession over time has produced a rich mosaic of habitats in the reserve, which in turn support an unusual variety of plants and animals.

Apart from past human intervention, the Carboniferous limestone rock underlying the whole reserve is the other dominant influence on the vegetation pattern. A rich calcicole flora has developed, particularly in the more open areas, including Meadow Saffron, Columbine, Yellow-wort, Fairy flax and Quaking grass. The woodland is dominated by Beech, together with some Oak and Ash, which has been *coppiced*, either in the last five years (as in the two deer-fenced enclosures), or at intervals during the past two centuries. Whitebeam and Wild Service trees are frequent. The rides, clearings, and latterly, the newly *coppiced* areas are of great entomological

interest, with stable populations of a variety of butterflies including Grizzled Skipper and the nationally scarce Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

Present Management

Management aims to retain a mix of *ancient* and developing *secondary woodland*, open grassy areas and scrub and to restore the traditional *coppicing* regime which will benefit the *coppice*-follower butterflies (Grizzled Skipper and Pearl-bordered Fritillary), and allow the calcicole flora to flourish. To date, two *coppice coupes* have been cut, one during the 1996/7 winter, the other during 1998/9. As new *coupes* are created, connecting rides will be provided, allowing colonisation by butterflies moving from older *coupes* into newly cut areas.

Acquisition Details

Freehold purchased in 1984 with generous assistance from Mr. J.C. Cadbury.

General Information:

Best time to visit:

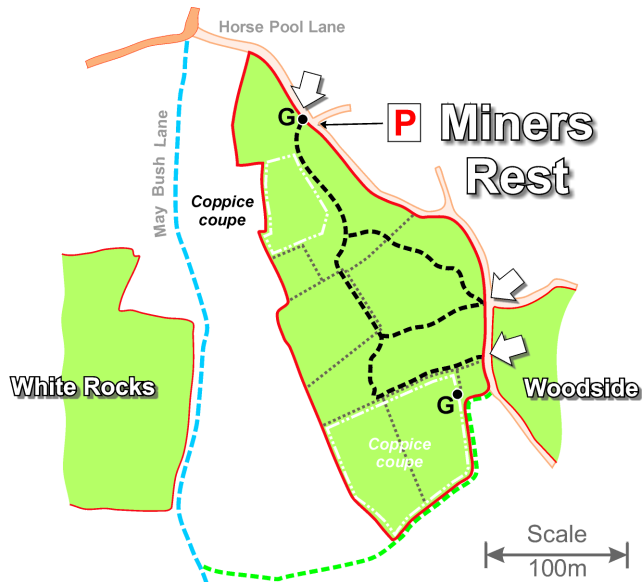
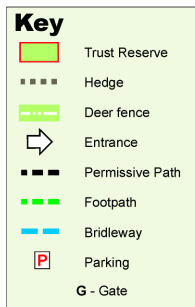
Habitat: Ancient broad-leaved woodland & limestone grassland.

Size: 3.1 hectares (7.7 acres).

Specialities: Grizzled Skipper (5-6), Pearl-bordered Fritillary (4-5), Holly Blue (4-8), Silver-Washed Fritillary (6-8). Meadow Saffron (8-9), Yellow-wort (6-10), Columbine (5-7), Greater Butterfly Orchid (6-7), Wild Service Tree.

Parking: There is limited parking in the reserve entrance.

Nearby reserves: Woodside, White Rocks, Leeping Stocks, Lord's Wood Quarry, King Arthur's Cave.



Reserve map based on Ordnance Survey 1:10000 and 1:25000 maps © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence no. AL 100035880