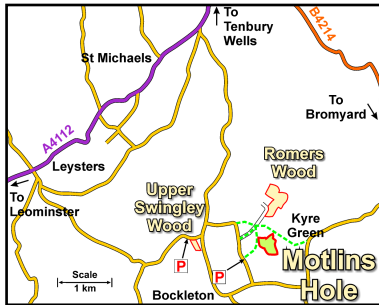


# Motlins Hole

Bockleton SO602624 (Explorer 203)

Ancient and planted broad-leaved woodland



## Visitor Guidelines

From the entrance area a ride runs south-east following the contour around the edge of the wood. This gives views across to **Romers Wood** and provides an idea of the character of the reserve. Unfortunately most of the rest of the reserve is inaccessible due to the heavy growth of scrub and bramble.

## Description

The name 'Motlins Hole' probably refers to the distinctive steep-sided bowl on which the reserve lies, at the head of the valley of the Cadmore Brook. Several springs rise in this bowl, two of which are within the reserve, and one of these is lime-rich and *tufa*-forming, having passed through alkaline cornstone beds sandwiched between the Old Red Sandstone marls and sandy rocks which underly the area. The upper and western parts of the wood are considered to be *ancient semi-natural woodland*. Evidence for this is provided by the situation on a steep slope unsuitable for agriculture, the presence of a well-defined woodland bank along the western edge, which also marks the Bockleton parish boundary, together with the presence of many typical *ancient woodland* plants such as Bluebell, Wood Anemone and Wood Sorrel. Before the Trust acquired the wood, it formed part of the Bockleton estate. During the 19th century the estate planted much Ash, Oak, Larch, Scots Pine and 4 Sweet Chestnuts (1 remains today) in what was then known as 'Maudlins Hole'.

The woodland now contains many fine semi-mature Oaks and Ash trees, together with a good variety of other species including Field Maple, Elder, Goat Willow, Small-leaved Lime, Alder, Hazel, Wych Elm, Holly and Guelder Rose. In 1995 two groups of trees were felled and the whole wood *thinned* to increase the range of age classes. All remaining conifers and most of the chestnuts were removed at the same time. The eastern fringe of the wood is the richest botanically with a large patch of Ramsons at the top of the slope, and a number of interesting species associated with damp woodland further down. These include Giant Horsetail around the head of the spring, and along the edge of the stream lower down may be found Meadowsweet, Brooklime, Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage, Marsh Marigold and Water Avens.

Birdlife in the reserve includes both common woodpeckers, five species of tit, and several pairs of both Jackdaw and Nuthatch. In most years, a pair of Wood Warblers

take up residence and Willow Warblers have bred in the new *coupe* areas. A survey of molluscs carried out in November 1980 revealed no particularly rare species but confirmed the presence of a number of snails characteristic of *ancient woodland*. Fungi are numerous in autumn but few positive identifications have been made and definite records would be most welcome.

### Present Management

Management is aimed at recreating *high forest*. Natural regeneration is being encouraged. The main upper ride is cut at least once during the year. Eventually it is hoped to make other areas of the reserve more accessible to Trust members and the general public.

### Acquisition Details

Motlins was most generously given to HNT, together with Romers Wood, in 1974 by Col. W.R. Prescott of Bockleton Court.

### General Information:

**Best time to visit:** Early spring to late summer.

**Habitat:** *Ancient* and planted broadleaved woodland.

**Size:** 6.25 hectares (15 acres).

**Specialities:** Wood Warbler (4-7), Willow warbler (4-7), Nuthatch, Marsh Tit, Great Spotted woodpecker, Pied Flycatcher (4-7). Marsh Marigold (3-8), Giant Horsetail (6-7), Bluebell (4-6), Ramsons (4-6).

**Parking:** Park on the grass verge next to the Memorial Hall.

**Nearby HNT reserves:** Romers Wood, Upper Swingley Wood.

