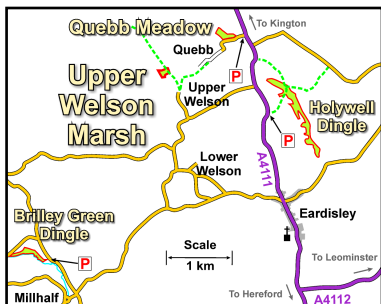
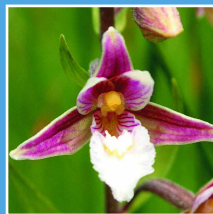


Upper Welson Marsh

Eardisley SO292515 (Explorer 201)

SSSI

Wet fen with adjacent broad-leaved woodland.



Visitor Guidelines

Access to this reserve is RESTRICTED. Permission to visit must be obtained in advance from the Trust office. The marsh vegetation in this reserve is easily damaged by trampling, and visitors are asked to stick to the marked path through the area. The reserve is reached via a public footpath across two fields owned by the farm at the end of the lane. Please keep to this footpath.

Description

The wet central part of the reserve has probably been a marsh for over 150 years, as the area was known as "the Moors" (i.e. marsh/fen) at the time of the 1844 Tithe map, although the official description referred to pasture. Since that time there has been much woodland encroachment, and the present-day marsh, now surrounded by farm pasture, is the only surviving fragment of a once much larger wetland area. Situated on the edge of the central Hereford plain, the ground is poorly drained, and remains permanently water-logged thanks to several lime-rich flushes, plus a stream which flows into the reserve from the nearby sandstone ridge to the north. The fringing woodland around the marsh is dominated by Alder coppice in the wetter margins, while well-grown Ash and Oak with some Hazel understorey feature in the wooded areas in the north of the reserve.



Fragrant Orchid (Chris Harris)

The main interest of this site lies in the very rich marshland flora which includes a number of nationally rare or local species. One of the most spectacular plants in early May is the Globe Flower, growing here in quite large drifts at the southern-most limit of its range in Britain. Other notable species are Marsh Helleborine, Fragrant Orchid, Petty Whin, Butterwort, Greater Butterfly Orchid, Bog Pimpernel and Cotton Grass. There is a good variety of bird life, both migrant and resident, while the now very local Wood White butterfly can be seen on the wing in early summer. Frogs breed regularly in the small pools within the marsh.

Present Management

Maintenance of the distinctive marshland flora is the chief priority, so reserve management is mainly geared to preventing further encroachment by willow and alder scrub, and regular cutting and removal of rank vegetation in the more sensitive areas.

Acquisition Details

Freehold purchased in 1972. The reserve is designated as a **SSSI**.

General Information:

Best time to visit: Early spring to late summer.

Habitat: Wet fen with adjacent broad-leaved woodland.

Size: 0.8 hectares (2 acres).

Specialities: Wood White butterfly (4-6). Marsh Helleborine (7-8), Fragrant Orchid (6-7), Petty Whin (4-6), Butterwort (5-7), Greater Butterfly Orchid (6-7), Globe Flower (5-8), Bog Pimpernel (5-9), Cotton Grass (4-5), Cowslip (4-5).

Parking: Park at lay-by on A4111 and walk to reserve (2km).

Nearby reserves: Quebb Corner Meadow, Brilley Green Dingle and Holywell Dingle.

