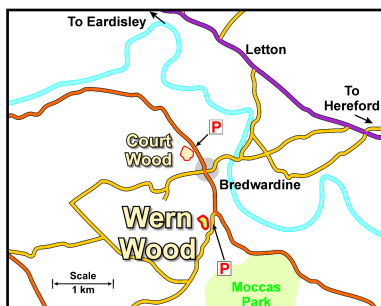


Wern Wood

Bredwardine SO331436 (Outdoor Leisure 13)

Ancient woodland



Visitor Guidelines

Wern Wood lies on a very steep NE-facing slope and there are currently few access paths. In summer, plant growth at the base of the slope may hide the several small streams, flushed areas and ditches present. Movement along the upper slopes can be difficult and slippery in wet weather and may cause a brisk descent if care is not taken!

Description

The wood lies on a slope bounded on the east by a stream running in a deeply-cut dingle. The lower north-eastern slopes run down to the *pasture* field which gives access to the reserve. About one third of the trees on these lower slopes have been felled in recent years, including a number of Poplars running parallel to the boundary fence, and this area is much overgrown. The upper woodland is predominantly young to mature Oak with some Ash, and there is a rookery of some 20 active nests at the southern end of the wood. Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly, Gean, Willow, Elm and Elder are present in the understorey. There has been considerable natural regeneration of Ash and Gean since sheep grazing was stopped when the wood was bought in 1977. The presence of many *indicator* plant species, together with the shady aspect and difficult access for cultivation, all suggest that this is an *ancient woodland* site. The Moccas estate records show active *coppicing* here in the 19th century. Apart from the Poplars, other trees planted into the wood include Sweet Chestnut.

The soils of the wooded slope covered by the reserve are largely neutral or acidic, and derive from the underlying Old Red Sandstone marl and sandstone rocks. However, three small streams arise within the wood and produce lime-rich flushes covered with Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage on the lower slopes. The characteristic *tufa* deposits found in these flushes and streams probably comes from lime dissolved out of cornstone bands deep within the Old Red Sandstone. Lime encrustation is also found in the fast-flowing dingle stream, which has a varied invertebrate fauna, including stonefly and damselfly nymphs.

Present Management

As mentioned above, approximately one third of the wood has been recently converted to *coppice*. It is hoped that this will encourage growth of the two bellflower species, the Giant Bellflower and the much scarcer Spreading Bellflower found on the middle and lower slopes. Otherwise, management will be aimed at eliminating non-native species, replacing them with Aspen and encouraging further natural regeneration to produce a more varied age structure.

Acquisition Details

Freehold purchased in 1977 with the help of a grant from WWF.

General Information:

Best time to visit: Spring and mid-summer.

Habitat: *Ancient semi-natural woodland*.

Size: 0.8 hectares (2 acres).

Specialities: Rookery, Stoneflies and Damselflies in the dingle stream. Toothwort (4-5 on the poplar stumps), Giant Bellflower (7-9), Spreading Bellflower (6-7), Pignut (5-7), Herb Paris (5-6), Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage (4-7).

Parking: There is room for 1-2 cars in the lay-by.

Nearby reserves: Court Wood, The Sturts and Waterloo.

