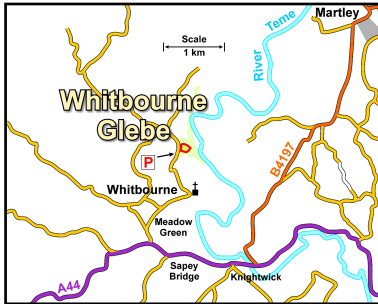


Whitbourne Glebe

Whitbourne SO723576 (Explorer 204)

Ancient coppiced woodland



Visitor Guidelines

Once over the stile into the reserve, there is an obvious circular path, which takes you around the perimeter of this small site. Parts of this walk may be slippery or muddy in wet weather.

Description

This small piece of Oak/Ash woodland is surrounded by other wooded areas, and lies on the west-facing slope of a ridge of Old Red Sandstone. It has been in the ownership of the church in Whitbourne for almost 400 years. The Glebe was shown as *coppice* on the 1834 Tithe map and was then known as Hillfield Coppice. There has certainly been woodland here for hundreds of years, long enough for it to have acquired many of the characteristic plants of *ancient woodland* and to be classified as such. Some of the dominant Oak trees give evidence of having grown up from former *coppice*, but there are also many fine *standards*. Beneath the *canopy*, there is a rich and varied understorey dominated by *coppiced* Hazel, with some large and clearly very old *stools*. Also found are Holly, Elder, Hawthorn, Field Maple, Silver Birch, Wild Cherry, Honeysuckle and Spindle. Particularly notable are a few well-grown examples of Spurge Laurel, a local shrub in Herefordshire and more usually associated with base-rich soils. The moist humus-rich soils carry a carpet of Bluebells in early spring, together with other ancient woodland indicators like Ramsons, Dog's Mercury, Primrose and Yellow Archangel. Nettle-leaved Bellflower has also been recorded in mid-summer. The wood contains a considerable amount of dead fallen timber and rotting tree hulks, which provide valuable micro-habitats for fungi and wood-boring insects.

Present Management

The wood is to be managed as traditional *coppice* with *standards* for the benefit of the parishioners of Whitbourne as well as for the wildlife.

Acquisition Details

Leased by HNT since 1986 at a peppercorn rent from the Hereford Diocesan Board of Finance.

General Information:

Best time to visit: Early spring to late summer.

Habitat: *Ancient* Oak/Ash *coppice* with *standards* woodland.

Size: 0.4 hectares (1 acre).

Specialities: Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Chiffchaff (3-7), Bullfinch.

Dormouse. Nettle-leaved Bellflower (7-9), Ramsons (4-6), Bluebell (4-6).

Parking: Parking is very limited, with room for only two cars on the verge opposite the entrance.

Nearby HNT reserves: Cother Wood.

