

Additional Information S1. Description of Burleigh Woods

The following information has been copied with permission from Loughborough University's *Burleigh Wood, Holywell Wood & Associated Woodland Management Plan 2018-2023*.

Composition and structure

The canopy is formed by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, which are frequently multi-stemmed, and silver birch *Betula pendula* with ash relatively frequent. In many areas a well-developed understorey is present, formed by various species but with hazel, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and elder *Sambucus nigra* the principal components. In some areas the understorey is absent, and the woodland is very open.

In spring, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* dominates the field layer through most of the wood, but is then replaced in summer by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*. Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. is present in varying abundance, and ferns (mainly male-fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*) are ever present. The path edges and woodland edge support a slightly more diverse flora. Approaching Horseshoe Wood there is a slight transition to more of an ash type of woodland. There is a reasonable deadwood resource present including standing deadwood, decaying fallen trees, and brash.

Type

The composition of the different woodland layers is highly indicative of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) D W10 Pedunculate Oak-Bracken-Bramble woodland.

Additional features

Two small ponds in the north-eastern corner, and a small brook which forms the western boundary, provide additional diversity. The stream issues close to the wood and is therefore relatively small in stature but has good structure with sections flowing over exposed bedrock and with small woody debris dams present. Like many waterbodies during the exceptionally dry summer of 2018, the ponds were dry during the survey. The most easterly of the two is heavily shaded but does have a stand of yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus* on its western edge. West of this, the second pond has a more diverse marginal/emergent vegetation with frequent branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum* and small amounts of other species like gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus* and soft-rush *Juncus effusus*. Other aquatic plants noted included waterstarwort *Callitriche* sp. and common duckweed *Lemna minor*.

Whilst the multi-stemmed canopy trees are clearly very old, there are other trees of interest present. Close to the northern boundary there are a couple of old crab apple *Malus sylvestris* with good deadwood features. In the north-east section of the wood there is an old wind-thrown field maple *Acer campestre* which has regenerated by throwing up new stems along the length of the now horizontal trunk.

History

A feature of the wood is that most of the mature oak are formed by multiple large stems, which have resulted from coppice re-growth following clear-fell, most likely during the War years. In more recent times it appears that the previous owner (British Gas) undertook hazel coppice work for conservation objectives.

The University has been responsible for management since 2003 and this management has predominantly involved access management with small amounts of localised hazel coppice, normally associated with the need to generate material for 'dead hedging' or 'hazel weaving' to block off unauthorised access points.

Access & Usage

The wood is used frequently by local residents, with the circular path and central cross path providing two circular walks, one approximately 0.75km and the other just over 1km. A series of boardwalks and footbridges cross small ditches and damp areas.