

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

MONMOUTHSHIRE

MAES-YR-UCHAF WOOD

Date of Notification: 1981, 1982

National Grid Reference: SO 477088

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 161
1:25,000 Sheet number: SO 40

Site Area: 2.5 ha

Description:

The woodlands of the lower Wye Valley form one of the most important areas for woodland nature conservation in Britain, comparable with the Caledonian pinewoods, the oceanic oakwoods of western Britain, the New Forest and the mixed coppices of East Anglia. Unlike most other regions, semi-natural woodland is abundant and virtually continuous along the gorge. The woods are a mixture of many types, some of which are very localised, e.g. the lime-sessile oak stands on limestone; beech stands on both acid and alkaline soils in which lime, elm, oak and other species share dominance. Most woods are a rich mixture of stand types, which are believed to be similar in composition to the original natural woods of the valley. Many rare and local species are present, including some of the rarest native tree species (e.g. large-leaved lime, whitebeams), and trees close to the edge of their European range, e.g. hornbeam, beech. Furthermore, these woods sit in a matrix of unimproved grassland and other semi-natural habitats which, together with the woods, make the Wye Valley one of the most diverse, rich and attractive areas of southern Britain.

Maes-Yr-Uchaf Wood is an area of relict mixed woodland on the Trellech Plateau with an unusual combination of woodland types of local occurrence in the county. The dominant canopy species are field maple *Acer campestre*, alder *Alnus glutinosa* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. There are a number of good indicators of ancient woodland in the ground flora, including wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and herb paris *Paris quadrifolia*. Streams and boundary banks and ditches are additional features of interest.

Remarks:

Within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

*This document is **NOT** a definitive legal version and has been formatted, updated and partially edited for use on the CCW Web site. This document should not be used in any legal proceedings, public enquiry or any other hearing or appeal. If you require a full legal copy of the document please contact CCW in writing.*