

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

MONMOUTHSHIRE

BLACKLIFF-WYNDCLIFF

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1971, 1983
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	ST 531979
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet Number: 162 1:25,000 Sheet Number: ST 59
<u>Site Area:</u>	119.3 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.

Blackcliff-Wyndcliff is an extensive area of partially vegetated Carboniferous Limestone cliffs and native woodlands. The ancient semi-natural high forest and old coppice with standards contain important examples of calcareous woodland types with many rare or local plants in the ground flora. The relict beech *Fagus sylvatica* coppice above Blackcliff is a particularly fine example of this woodland type and the small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* stands in Wyndcliff are some of the best examples in the Wye Valley. The many subordinate tree and shrub species include a number of hybrids of *Sorbus* including *Sorbus aria* x *Sorbus aucuparia*.

Caves are located along the cliff faces are important roosting sites for several species of bat.

Remarks:

Within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Subject to a Forest Nature Reserve Agreement with the Forestry Commission.

The scheduled ancient monument of Blackcliff Wood Camp is included in this site.

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