

County: South Yorkshire **Site Name:** Anston Stones Wood

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981

Local Planning Authority: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SK 531831 **Area:** 33.7 (ha) 88.3 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 111 **1:10,000:** SK 58 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955 **Date of Last Revision:** 1977

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 **Date of Last Revision:**

Other Information:

Site boundary changed at renotification by partial deletion.

Reasons for Notification:

Anston Stones Wood is situated 6–7 km north west of Worksop in the Anston Brook valley and lies between 60–110 m above sea level.

The site is underlain by Lower Magnesian Limestone which outcrops as natural crags on the valley slopes and within the railway cutting.

Anston Stones Wood contains the second best example of limestone woodland in South Yorkshire. It is ranked second to Kings Wood which contains a greater variety of woodland stand types. The lower valley slopes support ash *Fraxinus excelsior* – wych elm *Ulmus glabra* woodland. Both native species of lime *Tilia cordata* and *Tilia platyphyllos*, yew *Taxus baccata*, field maple *Acer campestre* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* are commonly associated with this stand type. Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*, and elder *Sambucus nigra* are common in the understorey with less frequently buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus* and wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*. The field layer which is largely dominated by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana* and ivy *Hedera helix* contains several uncommon plants such as early dog-violet *Viola reichenbachiana*, toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*, wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*, fingered sedge *Carex digitata* and mountain melick *Melica nutans*. These species are generally confined to ancient woodland and have a very limited distribution in South Yorkshire.

The upper valley slopes and plateau are characterised by oak *Quercus* spp., - ash-lime woodland which also contains substantial numbers of birch *Betula* spp. Alder woodland features along the streamside and contains the uncommon pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*. The remaining areas of woodland consist of beech *Fagus sylvatica* plantation and in places sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*.

Within the site is an area of ungrazed species-rich limestone grassland dominated by upright brome *Bromus erectus* and tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* but with species such as quaking-grass *Briza media*, cowslip *Primula veris*, yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* and yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* being frequent.