

23 Osgathorpe Road Woodland



Introduction

The site consists of mature, broadleaf woodland. It is small with a dense canopy of trees and dense ground flora. There is no obvious access to the site from the park, it is adjacent to a Dept' of Health building where, with permission, access can be gained. The site consists of a rectangular area with steep north facing slopes that level out to an even area of dense ground flora. The site is carpeted with ramsons and there is a mass of bluebells. There is a small pond in the wood that seems to be fed by a small spring.

Osgathorpe Rd Wood is a very valuable small pocket of woodland. Although there is no documentary evidence to support its claim as ancient woodland it does contain ancient woodland indicators and mature native trees such as hazel, holly, dogwood and rowan.

The floor of the woodland is carpeted in ramsons; this is very unusual for the area as it is usually found in old woodlands alongside rivers. Bluebells also carpet part of the wood, these are primarily native bluebells and are also ancient woodland indicators.

A lot of the mature trees are sycamore; this is mixed with horse chestnut, Japanese knotweed and a range of trees and shrubs, native and non-native.

Osgathorpe Park Wood is important for wildlife as any plants, birds and animals can shelter and feed in relative peace, free from human intervention.

There is a lot of dead wood in the park from rotting stumps to fallen branches; these are ideal for many invertebrates. Osgathorpe Park Wood is unmanaged at present.

Site details

Site name

Osgathorpe Road Woodland/Osgathorpe Park Wood

Location

SK 363 897

Land owner

Sheffield City Council Environmental Health Department

Nearest road/street

Osgathorpe Road is to the north east, and Gayton Road is to the south.

Adjacent land use

The wood is enclosed between the department of health buildings to the south, gardens to the west and north, and a path alongside Osgathorpe Park to the east. Either fences or walls also enclose the wood.

Size

The site covers an area measuring 0.540828 hectares.

Present management

Osgathorpe Park Wood is unmanaged at the present although there are plans for some sensitive management work taking place in the wood after this report to clean up the pond and plant more native trees in the wood whilst retaining its special character.

UDP designations

Local Nature Site

Location map



Ecology

Phase I ecological survey

Site description

This is a mature plantation, broadleaf woodland. It is small with a dense canopy of trees and dense ground flora.

The dominant trees on the slopes are sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). Lime (*Tilia sp.*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), horse chestnut, and elder (*Sambucus nigra*) are mixed with the dominant species. The main ground flora are ramsons (*Allium ursinum*) on the slopes and bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptum*) elsewhere in the wood.

There are patches of brambles and ivy throughout. There is a small old pond in the wood that is suffering from neglect.

The level part of the wood is more varied but the dominant species is elder, this is mixed with oak (*Quercus petraea*, rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), wild cherry (*prunus avium*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) amongst others. There is no obvious access to the site from the park, it is adjacent to a Dept' of Health building. The site consists of a rectangular area with steep north facing slopes that level out to an even area of dense ground flora.

Habitats of interest

Sheffield LBAP Priority Habitats

Ponds and standing water.

UK BAP Priority Habitats

None

The pond is used by mammals and birds.

Species of interest

UK BAP Priority Species

Birds-Song thrush and bullfinch.

Sheffield LBAP Priority Species

Birds- Starling and song thrush.

UK BAP Species of Conservation Concern

Plants- Bluebell.

Birds- Greenfinch, Great spotted woodpecker, blue tit, great tit, bullfinch, chiffchaff, blackcap, wren and song thrush.

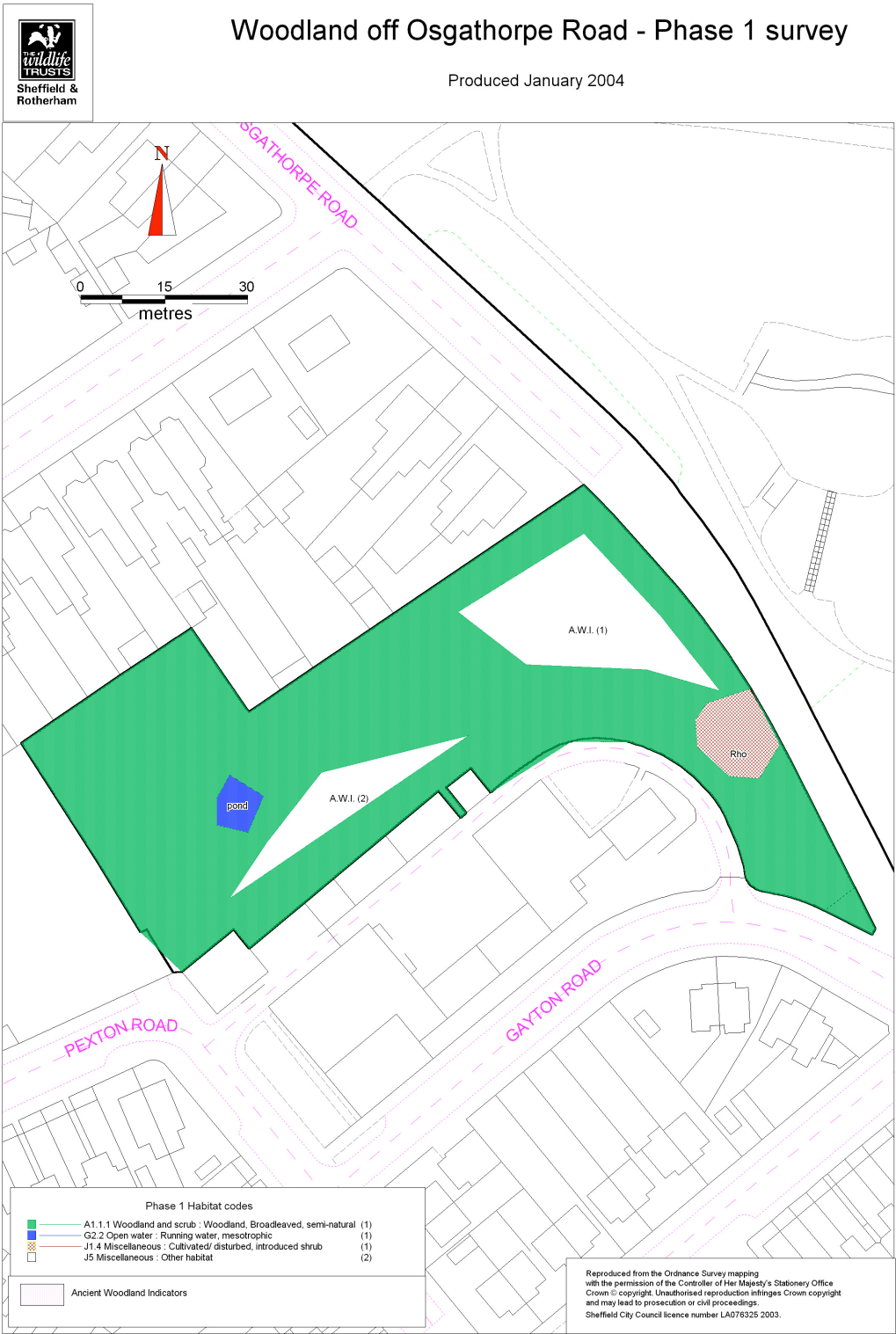
UK Red List Birds

Song thrush, starling and bullfinch.

UK Amber List Birds

Mistle thrush.

Phase 1 habitat map



The ancient woodland indicators that are noted on the map are:

A.W.I. 1=bluebells, A.W.I. 2= ramsons

Invertebrate survey

A full invertebrate survey was not carried out on this site as, due to limited funding, only a few sites could be chosen; The sites that were surveyed are believed to hold greater invertebrate interest.

A full invertebrate survey is recommended in the future. Species were noticed during site visits.

There were hoverflies, wasps, beetles and moths on the site.

There were no species on site that we could positively identify. Further surveys are recommended. The site should be interesting for invertebrates due to the amount of dead wood around the site.

Vertebrate Survey

Mammals

There are foxes and hedgehogs on site; there is at least one fox earth on the site. There has been evidence of smaller mammals around the pond, i.e. tracks, but species identification has not been possible. The pond in the wood is extremely important for invertebrates as it may attract species that have not been noticed whilst surveyors have been on site.

Bird survey

Birds seen on at least one occasion between May & August 2003	Possible Breeding Species ¹	Probable Breeding Species ²	Confirmed Breeding Species ³	Number of Territories held by selected species
Wren 5 Robin Blue tit 5 Magpie Long tailed tit Great tit 5 Wood pigeon Bullfinch 4 Starling Greenfinch 5 Blackbird Greater spotted woodpecker 5 Song thrush 4 Blackcap 5 Chiffchaff 5		Great tit 5 Greenfinch 5 Wren 5	Mistle thrush	Greater spotted woodpecker 5 1 Blackbird 2 Robin 2

¹ Evidence: present on more than one occasion in suitable breeding habitat.

² Evidence: singing/displaying male in suitable breeding habitat on more than one occasion; pair in suitable habitat showing courtship or territorial behaviour; bird visiting probable nest site; nest building; anxiety calls; recently used nest.

³ Evidence: Adult carrying food or faecal sac; adult sitting on nest; nest with eggs/young; eggshells found away from nest; recently fledged young.

⁴ Priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

⁵ Species of Conservation Concern in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Evaluation

Osgathorpe Park Wood is a very valuable small pocket of broad leaved secondary woodland. Although there is no documentary evidence to support its claim as ancient woodland it does contain ancient woodland indicators, (the site was known to be agricultural land before Osgathorpe House was built). The site may be secondary ancient woodland.

The floor of the woodland is carpeted in ramsons, this is very unusual for the area as it is usually found in old woodlands alongside rivers. Bluebells also carpet part of the wood, these are primarily native bluebells and are also ancient woodland indicators

Osgathorpe Park Wood is important for wildlife as any plants, birds and animals can shelter and feed in relative peace free from human intervention.

Water, in the form of ponds and rivers, is scarce in Burngreave. The pond in the wood is immensely important for birds and wildlife, especially in times of drought. It is very important that this pond is maintained to ensure that there continues to be a valuable water source here.

Osgathorpe Park Wood should have a management plan that involves as little change to the woodland as possible; this is the best thing for wildlife in the area. Because there is no public access there is an opportunity to leave dead wood standing or lying where it falls. This is very good for invertebrates but is not always practical in most public woodlands due to fears of injury from falling branches etc.

Recommendations and Suggestions

The spring that feeds the pond needs to be kept free from obstruction; clearing a small channel to the pond to ensure that it does not become blocked with vegetation or silted up occasionally would greatly benefit the wildlife.

After clearing the path of the stream regular monitoring of the water purity should be undertaken.

Osgathorpe Park Wood should retain its no access policy. A management plan should be drawn up that encourages a minimum of disturbance. Japanese knotweed and some of the rhododendron should be removed before they become invasive and cause problems. The wire fence above the wall that shields the wood from Osgathorpe Road should be repaired.

Regular monitoring of ancient woodland indicator species and water levels in the pond could be undertaken regularly.

A minimal coppice plan could be tied with the removal of some of the sycamore and non-native species. This would have to be undertaken carefully as access to the site with tools could be dangerous, also because of the small area of the site any disturbance could be catastrophic. Small scale planting of

more native species such as oak, blackthorn and rowan would increase the value of the wood for birds and invertebrates.

There are draft plans for development on the site of the environmental services depot on Gayton Road. If there is any work on or near the depot then the woodland must remain protected, no dumping or storage should encroach onto the area of woodland.

If any work is planned then a protective fence around the edge of the site to protect the woodland should be a priority before any work takes place.

Species found

A (tree or

<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	sycamore
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	horse-chestnut
<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	cherry laurel
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	dogwood
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	hazel
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn
<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Japanese knotweed
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	ash
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	holly
<i>Laburnum anagyroides</i>	laburnum
<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>	garden privet
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	lilac
<i>Prunus avium</i>	wild cherry
<i>Quercus petraea</i>	sessile oak
<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	rhododendron
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	bramble
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	elder
<i>Sorbus aria</i> agg.	common whitebeam
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	rowan
<i>Sorbus intermedia</i> agg.	Swedish whitebeam
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	snowberry
<i>Tilia x europaea</i>	lime
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	wych elm

B (herb)

<i>Allium ursinum</i>	ramsons
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	rosebay willowherb
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	wood avens
<i>Hedera helix</i>	ivy
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	hogweed
<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i>	Spanish bluebell
<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica x non-scripta</i>	hybrid bluebell
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	bluebell
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	tutsan
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	honeysuckle
<i>Muscari neglectum</i>	grape hyacinth
<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>	cultivated daffodil
<i>Petasites fragrans</i>	winter heliotrope
<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>	gooseberry
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	hedge woundwort
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	dandelion
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	common nettle
<i>Veronica filiformis</i>	slender speedwell

C (grass)	<i>Holcus mollis</i>	creeping soft-grass
E	<i>Dryopteris filis-mas</i>	male fern
	<i>Dryopteris dilitata</i>	broad buckler fern
G (fungi)	<i>Auricularia auricular judae</i>	Jew's ear fungus
	<i>Daldinia concentrica</i>	King Alfred's cakes
	<i>Lycoperdon perlatum</i>	common puffball
	<i>Nectria cinnabarina</i>	coral spot

Habitats/species of nature conservation importance

UK BAP Priority Habitats

None

(The woodland has not been continually wooded since 1600; this is how ancient woodland status is normally determined. The woodland may be a remnant from before the land was used for agriculture that has been given the opportunity to blossom due to being replanted when Osgathorpe House was built).

Sheffield LBAP Priority Habitats

Ponds and standing water

UK BAP Priority Species

Bullfinch

Song thrush

Sheffield LBAP Priority Species

Greater spotted woodpecker

Song thrush

Starling

UK BAP Species of Conservation Concern

Plants- Bluebell.

Birds- Greenfinch, Great spotted woodpecker, blue tit, great tit, bullfinch, chiffchaff, blackcap, wren and song thrush.

UK Red List Birds

Song thrush, starling and bullfinch.

UK Amber List Birds

Mistle thrush

Local Red Data Book Species

None

Previous Surveys

Author/Recorder	Date	Coverage	Location
J.Fox	5/8/87	Sheffield Inner City Phase 1 Habitat Survey	Sheffield Wildlife Trust & Sheffield City Council Ecology Unit File #140

History and Geology

Geological survey

The site is underlain by sedimentary rocks from the Lower Coal Measures series, deposited during the Upper Carboniferous period. The wood is situated on a band of shale that separates Grenoside sandstone from Penistone Flags. There are no outcrops within the site.

Archaeological survey

There is a brick wall underground; this appears to be an old cellar. This indicates a house used to stand in the woods. This is close to the area where the pond is; there is an earthen bank that appears as though it was built up some time ago. This seems to separate the pond from the flat area to the east. The steep sloping bank is not far from the underground wall which would indicate that either the building was not very wide at this point or that the steep slope covered part of the ground area of the house. There is nothing listed about this site in Sheffield City Council Archaeology Department files.

The feature above is likely to be part of Osgathorpe House; see below.

Historical survey

Osgathorpe Park Wood appears to have been on the site of the former Osgathorpe House and its grounds. This is indicated on the 1855 map.

The flora of ramsons and bluebells suggest that the wood probably covers an old area of ancient woodland that has been cleared and remained that way for some time probably due to Osgathorpe House. The pond and privet hedges suggest the site was used as a garden and the large amount of building rubble could be the remnants of the buildings that were here before the department of health buildings were constructed. Some of the beech trees are quite large and there are rotten stumps of some larger trees; these could be remnants of the garden.

Community

No community survey was carried out.