

## **Bradford Wildlife Area – Evaluation Against Local Wildlife Site Criteria**

<b>Site Name/ Code:</b> Elam Wood, BWA 013	<b>Location:</b> North of Keighley
<b>Date of Survey:</b> 10/06/2011	<b>Surveyor:</b> E. Skinner, West Yorkshire Ecology
<b>Grid Reference:</b> SE065431	<b>Site Area (ha):</b> 7.50 proposed LWS boundary (8.94 original BWA boundary)
<b>Natural Area:</b> Southern Pennines	<b>Public Access:</b> yes, to most of the site.
<b>NVC Communities:</b> MG1, W7, W8, W10, W15	

### **Site Description**

Elam wood is located to the northwest of Riddlesden and just north of Beechcliffe. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal borders the site to the west side. There is a road suitable for car use which runs through the middle of the site as there are a handful of houses through the wood. A stone wall encircles the site. The surrounding area is largely agricultural grazing land. There is some evidence of mining having taken place, in the past, to the north part of the wood there are old pits. There are a couple of springs in the site, as well as Clough beck, which runs through the western side of the site. They all contain clean, clear water.

To the north of the site is a section of recorded ancient woodland, part semi-natural (0.8ha) and part replanted with beech. This section is shown on the ancient woodland inventory but there are a range of species present throughout much of the rest of the wood which indicate that the majority of the site is longstanding as woodland. A map from the early 1850's shows all of the Elam Woodland site as woodland cover.

The main community is W10 oak woodland and it is host to quite a range of species, including: abundant *Acer pseudoplatanus*, occasional *Fraxinus excelsior*, locally frequent *Betula pubescens*, and rare *Quercus robur* and *Fagus sylvatica* in the canopy, with occasional *Corylus avellana*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Sambucus nigra* and *Ilex aquifolium* in the shrub layer, and occasional *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Carex sylvatica*, *C. remota*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Melica uniflora*, *Poa trivialis* and *Oxalis acetosella*, locally abundant *Rubus fruticosus*, and locally frequent *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* in the ground layer. The small springs running down through the wood are host to *Cardamine armara* and *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*. Freshwater shrimp, leech and oligochete worm were recorded.

There are a few smaller sections of more base-rich woodland to the central part of the wood, where there is generally less bramble present. This is mapped as W8 and, although it contains a similar canopy and shrub layer as the W10 community, it has more of the base-rich ground flora species, with locally abundant *Mercurialis perennis* and *Hedera helix*, occasional *Arum maculatum*, *Geum urbanum*, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and *Anemone nemorosa*, locally frequent *Circaea lutetiana* and *Solanum dulcamara*, and rare *Silene dioica*, *Melica uniflora* and *Carex sylvatica*.

There is a section of beech woodland to the north end of the site, which is the W15 community, and is characteristically species poor in ground flora. *Fagus sylvatica* is frequent and *Acer pseudoplatanus* is occasional in the canopy, with a ground flora of

frequent *Rubus fruticosus* and *Pteridium aquilinum*, occasional *Holcus mollis*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum* and *Deschampsia cespitosa*.

A small section to the northern tip of the site and running along the streamside is W7 wet woodland and contains rare *Acer pseudoplatanus*, as well as *Alnus glutinosa* and *Salix caprea*, and quite a range of ground flora including occasional *Allium ursinum*, *Geranium robertianum*, *Veronica montana*, *Carex amara*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Lamium galeobdolon* and *Melica uniflora*, and rare *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Lysimachia nummularia* and *Carex remota*.

There is a small area of MG1 neutral grassland, which contains occasional *Agrostis stolonifera*, *A. capillaris*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Galium aparine*, *Heracleum sphondylium*, *Taraxacum* agg. and *Rumex obtusifolius*, and rare *Anthriscus sylvestris* and *Alopecurus pratensis*.

Two other small sections are present, one containing scrub which consists of occasional *Corylus avellana*, *Crataegus monogyna* and *Sambucus nigra*, and frequent *Acer pseudoplatanus* saplings. Next to this section is a small amount of OV27 which contains abundant *Chamaedris angustifolium*, frequent *Calystegia sepium*, and occasional *Urtica dioica*, *Galium aparine* and *Arrhenatherum elatius*.

A range of birds were recorded during the site visit. Singing males of chiffchaff, song thrush and wren were heard and a robin was seen with nesting material. Blackbird, great tit, long-tailed tit, coal tit, blue tit, tree creeper, bullfinch, magpie and wood pigeon, as well as freshwater shrimp, leech and oligochaete worm.

### **Ecological Evaluation**

The W10 to the north-west of the site is ancient semi-natural woodland and so meets Criteria Wd1. The rest of the ancient woodland has been replanted with beech and is W15.

The site also meets Criteria Wd3, as the acidic woodland, particularly the W10 woodland, contains a range of species indicative of long standing woodland, scoring 12 points for species diversity, with the minimum threshold score being 8.