

CITATION

**ABBEY CRAIG
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Stirling**

Site code: 3

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NS 809954

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 57
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 366

AREA: 8.23 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological: Woodlands: Upland mixed ash woodland
Invertebrates: Beetle assemblage

DESCRIPTION

The mixed ash woodlands at Abbey Craig are located on the slopes below the Wallace Monument on a prominent volcanic rock outcrop on the east side of the City of Stirling. They form one of the largest examples of this type of woodland in the Stirling Council area.

The woodland which has developed on these south-west facing basaltic cliffs is dominated by a mixture of mature ash and sycamore, with occasionally frequent gean, bird cherry, hazel, holly, hawthorn and blackthorn. The characteristic field layer includes wild garlic *Allium ursinum* and bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, along with broad buckler-fern *Dryopteris dilatata*, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis*, although many areas are bare due to soil and rock slippages. In places at the break of slope, mature oak dominates the canopy, sometimes with pine; here the ground flora is of a more acidic, mossy nature. Standing dead elm trees also occur throughout the wood. The site is also characterised by inaccessible areas of wooded dry, rocky cliff/scree and thus provides a good example of drier ash woodland on freely draining soils.

The site also supports an outstanding fauna of beetles. These include the Red Data Book (RDB) species *Ptinella limbata* and the Nationally Scarce beetle *Phyllodrepoidea crenata*, both of which are saproxylic species living under dead wood, in fungi on dead wood, and in sap runs. Other beetles include the Nationally Scarce flower beetle *Oedemera femoralis* known only from this site in Scotland.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1973

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 12 October 1984 (with a 1.9 ha decrease in area).

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 2 November 2009

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 8.82 ha)