SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: PRIORY WOOD, LISMIRE

SITE CODE: 001072

Priory Wood, situated in Co. Cork, covers the valley sides of the Owenanare River, 4km east of Newmarket.

South of the bridge is young, open wood with coppice oak (*Quercus* spp.) re-growing from former felling. Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) is quite frequent also, with Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), birch (*Betula* spp.), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and some Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), now weak through shading. The ground vegetation is heathy in character. Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) and Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) occur with Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Wood Sage (*Teucrum scorodonia*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). Springs emerge in places on the slope, and with the valley floor, do much to increase the habitat diversity and the number of species that are found. Sedges (*Carex flacca* and *C. laevigata*), Marsh Violet (Viola palustris), Irish Spurge (*Euphorbia hyberna*), Stone Bramble (*Rubus saxatilis*), Wood Horsetail (*Equisetum sylvaticum*) and Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*) give some indication of the community type found here.

North of the bridge conifers have been planted in places on both sides of the valley but enough deciduous woodland remains to have ecological value. Here taller oaks prevail above a more uniform ground flora of Bilberry and Heather. Mosses are abundant here with *Dicranum scoparium, D. majus, Thuidium tamariscinum* and *Diplophyllum albicans*. In clearings on the valley floor, Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Golden-saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*) and Common Liverwort (*Marchantia polymorpha*) are all common.

Priory Wood has a large species list for such a small area and together with oak woodland at various stages of growth it has sufficient interest to be of local importance. Non native species such as Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) are rare and there is a moderate amount of regeneration. Broadleaved woodlands are scarce in this area.

17.11.2009