SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: HEATHFIELD WOOD

SITE CODE: 001434

Part privately and part Coillte owned, and situated some 11km south-east of Newcastle west, Heathfield wood is a small, mature Beech plantation woodland.

The Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) is young, now 12-15m feet tall. Mixed with the Beech is Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) which is possibly planted in origin. There are also saplings of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), and Beech naturally generated, with Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). There is a prominent shrub layer of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) over most of the wood. It is typical of Beech stands that the ground flora is poorly developed with many unvegetated areas, and areas just containing the moss *Rhytidiadelphus triquetris*, but amongst the ground flora can be found several species characteristic of slightly acidic woodland, such as Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) and Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), along with other common woodland species such as Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*).

Although planted in origin, and composed predominantly of non-native species, this small woodland contains few coniferous trees, and has been allowed to generate a more natural secondary shrub cover.

20.11.2009