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Bra181. Markshall Woodlands (173.1 ha) TL 829261

This complex of woods constitutes a large and extremely valuable habitat.

Nunty's Wood comprises ancient stands of Small-leaved Lime coppice with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards and both Silver and Downy Birches (*Betula pendula* and *B. pubescens*) amongst which conifers have been planted. The ground flora is limited under the conifers and overgrown Lime coppice, prompting the need to remove the former and manage the latter. A rich flora does thrive, however, along the rides and wood margins. Here, Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), Hairy Wood-rush (*Luzula pilosa*), Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) occur in a rich flora. Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) has also been recorded.

The adjacent Grange Wood has survived degradation from coniferisation and comprises abundant Small-leaved Lime coppice along with much Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and invasive Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). Standards are primarily Oak. The densely shaded ground flora includes Wood Anemone, Pendulous Sedge, Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*) and Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*).

To the south of Grange Wood is Little Monks Wood. This large ancient wood comprises coppiced Small-leaved Lime, Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) with standards of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and also much Birch (*Betula* spp.).

Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) seedlings abound. In all, 19 species of tree and shrub were recorded amongst which Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) is of note.

Connecting to the east side of Nunty's and Grange woods are the Cleveland/Lilly/Markshall woods. The original composition of this complex of ancient woods was coppiced Small-leaved Lime and Hazel, Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Pedunculate Oak standards. Old planting of Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and invasion of Sycamore has added to the total of at least 19 woody species. More recently, much of the canopy has been replaced by conifers, with a correspondingly poorer ground flora. Much of the floral diversity is due to the wide rides and less densely shaded wood margins. Here, a scattered ancient woodland assemblage includes Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*) and Lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*).

Three blocks of woodland form the eastern part of the Markshall complex. These are Deer Park, Thrift Wood and Crowland Wood. Although not recorded as ancient woodland and being coniferised to a greater or lesser extent, Thrift Wood and the Deer Park are of considerable value for its fauna and flora and complements the series of large ancient woods immediately to the west. Native tree species include Silver Birch, Pedunculate Oak, Wild Service Tree, Small-leaved Lime, Field Maple and Ash. A good general woodland flora thrives along the numerous wide rides and around several ponds. Species of particular interest include Greater Butterfly Orchid, Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), Primrose and Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*).

Crowland Wood extends as a narrow limb to the Deer Park. This strip of semi-natural broadleaved wood is dominated by old coppiced Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). The marshy ground flora is characterised by Remote Sedge, Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) and Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*) amongst Nettles (*Urtica dioica*).

Selection Criteria: HCr1(a), HCr2(a), HCr2(b),HCr2(d), SCr6, SCr13