

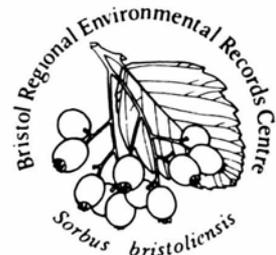
## BRISTOL SNCI FAVOURABLE CONDITION ASSESSMENT

SITE NAME: TROOPER'S HILL  
LOCATION: ST GEORGE, EAST BRISTOL  
GRID REFERENCE: ST628731  
SURVEY DATE: 02/08/2005  
WEATHER: HOT AND DRY

**This report contains confidential data**

BRERC  
Ashton Court Visitors Centre  
Ashton Court Estate  
Long Ashton  
Bristol  
BS41 9JN

August 2005



## 1 INTRODUCTION

BRERC have been commissioned by Bristol City Council to conduct a field survey of the SNCI located at Troopers Hill, as part of the BCC SNCI Audit- Favourable Conservation Status assessments. This is to include a full botanical survey of the grassland communities found on site and incidental notes of the species composition and status of the woodland and scrub areas.

The results of the botanical survey will then be treated with a statistical analysis devised by Phil Quinn 2004<sup>1</sup> on behalf of Bristol City Council to produce a numerical score for each community of plants on site. This score will lead to a final grading of each community of A (excellent) – D (Poor), with favourable management of the site being indicated by a + symbol and unfavourable management by a - symbol.

The site lies in Eastern Bristol and overlooks the River Avon to the South West (see **Figure 1**). It is part of a cluster of important wildlife sites, which includes Dundridge Wood, Crew's Hole, Eastwood Farm and the River Avon itself. Together these sites form a wildlife corridor linking the city to wildlife sites further east along the River Avon.

Industrial activity on and around Troopers Hill during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century has had a profound impact upon the appearance and ecology of the site.

The site is a Local Nature Reserve (designated in 1995) and the chimney with associated tunnel is a Grade 2 listed structure.

Access to the site is open and unrestricted to pedestrians. The main access points to the site are from Troopers Hill Road, the corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown and the north western corner of the site.

Bristol City Council and local group Friends of Troopers Hill have prepared a Local Nature Reserve Management and Action Plan in 2004. This can be accessed via the groups website [www.troopers-hill.org.uk](http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk). Where useful for the purposes of this report reference has been made to this document.

## 2 SURVEY

Species in **bold** are notable in the BRERC region.  
Other notable features are also in **Bold**.

### 2.1 Landform

The highest point of Troopers Hill is 254ft above sea level. The Hill is made up of pennant sandstone interbedded with small seams of mudstone, fireclays and coal. In places the coal seams outcrop on the surface of the hill. These rocks have weathered to produce thin free-draining acidic soils.

Much of the site has developed extremely thin and impoverished soils. The site as a whole is very exposed but gullies and depressions on the site give sheltered conditions in places.

## 2.2 Surrounding land

The site is surrounded by housing to the south and west. To the east a new housing development now separates the site from the River Avon beyond and dense scrub characterises the post industrial land of Crew's Hole. To the north lie disused allotment gardens and an area of amenity grassland.

All of the site falls within the Forest of Avon Community Forest

## 2.3 Habitat Overview

*Open sward of small tussocky grasses with an abundance of forbs showing an affinity with NVC U1 Festuca ovina – Agrostis capillaris – Rumex acetosella grassland. Healthy mosaic of lowland dry dwarf shrub heath. Scrub varying in height scattered across the site and small patches of Bracken Pteridium aquilinum.*

**Please note:** The survey methodology did not include quadrat surveying techniques and the determination of NVC community types are subjective judgements of the surveyors based on field observations made on the day of survey only.

## 2.4 Habitat Description

*Open sward of small tussocky grasses with an abundance of forbs showing an affinity with NVC U1 Festuca ovina – Agrostis capillaris – Rumex acetosella grassland. Healthy mosaic of lowland dry dwarf shrub heath. Scrub varying in height scattered across the site and small patches of Bracken Pteridium aquilinum.*

The most extensive vegetation type on the hill comprising abundant species **Wavy Hair-grass** *Deschampsia flexuosa*, Sheep's Fescue *Festuca ovina* and Mouse-ear Hawkweed and frequent **Velvet Bent** *Agrostis canina*, Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, False oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, **Heath Grass** *Danthonia decumbens*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, **Goldenrod** *Solidago virgaurea* and Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*. Where slopes are steep and soil stony and thinner, vegetation is more sparse, and there is frequent **Early Hair-grass** *Aira praecox* and acrocarpus mosses Bristly Haircap *Polytrichum piliferum* and Juniper Haircap *P. juniperinum*.

**Heather** *Calluna vulgaris* and **Bell Heather** *Erica cinerea* provide a mosaic of sub shrubs with fairly extensive areas found upon the southwest facing slopes of the hill.

To the north of the site where the soil is richer taller grassland is present and dominated by False Oat-grass and Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* with stands of Rosebay Willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium*.

Light scrub dominated by Broom *Cytisus scoparius*, Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg is scattered across the site and is particularly found upon the west facing slopes where associated herbaceous species include Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and Wood Sage *Teucrium scorodonia*.

Other notable plants occurring at low frequency are **Heath Bedstraw** *Galium saxatile* scattered across the site, **Buck's-horn Plantain** *Plantago coronopus* found near the chimney, single plant of **Greater Lettuce** *Lactuca virosa* near one of the exits, blocks of

---

**Rock Stonecrop *Sedum fosterianum***, two small patches of **Knotted Clover *Trifolium striatum*** and **Rat's-tail Fescue *Vulpia myuros*** rare on the steep slopes.

Dense scrub is growing predominantly along the western slopes where the boundary with Crew's Hole woodland. This scrub is dominated mainly by Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, English Oak *Quercus robur* and Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris*

Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* is present in the northwest corner of the site.

## 2.5 Boundaries

The site is bounded by fencing and scrub alongside Troopers Hill Road. To the north a relict hedge line and domestic garden fencing act as boundaries. A section of boundary within dense scrub bordering Crews Hole Woodland was not surveyed

## 3 MANAGEMENT

No management work is known to have been carried out between the 1930s and 1991. The management of the site has been addressed by the preparation and agreed undertaking of the Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve Management and Action Plan April 2004 – March 2009 by Bristol City Council and the Friends of Troopers Hill.

This document contains rationale and schedules of work to be carried out for the next five years.

## 4 FACTORS AFFECTING THE SITE

### 4.1 Public Use

The site is very well used for informal recreation by the public. The Friends of Troopers Hill group have monitored public use by survey during 2003 and have shown that the majority of people questioned visited the site more than once a week.

### 4.2 Educational Value/Amenity

This is obviously very high with school group visits being arranged through Bristol Parks' Local Nature Reserve Officer.

There are interpretive boards on site and a series of work party days and events are communicated to members of the group through the group's website and regular news letters.

---

### **4.3 Threats**

Providing apparent current ownership and management regimes, as outlined in the Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve Management and Action Plan April 2004 – March 2009 are maintained the favourable status of this SNCI is not likely to decline.

The presence of Japanese Knotweed on site may affect any proposed site activities and management and may need a written Control Strategy in order to fulfil Duty of Care responsibilities under Section 34 of The Environmental Protection Act 1990. Left unmanaged its invasiveness may accelerate the deterioration of the valuable ecological receptors on site. Guidance can be sought from the Environment Agency as statutory consultee.

## **5 RECOMMENDATIONS ON SITE STATUS AND SITE BOUNDARIES**

### **5.1 Site status, including SNCI Favourable Status assessment**

The application of the SNCI Favourable Status assessment methodology to the acidic grassland on this site results in the community being awarded 77 points and is therefore grade A site. Current management practices are supporting the communities on this site.

An overall grade of A+ is assigned to this site

### **5.2 Site boundary changes**

No changes recommended.

## 6 SPECIES RECORDED ON SITE

### 6.1 Species entered onto the BRERC species database

Notable species are emboldened.

DAFOR – Dominant/Abundant/Frequent/Occasional/Rare on area (only some species have been given a DAFOR rating, mostly only those frequent, abundant or dominant for scoring purposes) – L = locally eg. LD = locally dominant.

UKAP -	Currently listed as having a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP Species)
SWAP -	Currently listed in South West Biodiversity Action Plan (SW BAP Species)
Avon -	Currently listed in Avon Biodiversity Action Plan
Bnes -	Currently listed in Bath and North East Somerset Biodiversity Action Plan
Bristol -	Currently listed in Bristol Biodiversity Action Plan
NSom -	Currently listed in North Somerset Biodiversity Action Plan
SGlos -	Currently listed in South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan
SOCC -	Currently listed as a UK Species of Conservation Concern

### Troopers Hill ST628731

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abund.	UKAP	SWAP	Avon	Bnes	Bristol	NSom	SGlos	SOCC
<b>Buzzard</b>	<b><i>Buteo buteo</i></b>	pre			✓					✓
<b>Greenfinch</b>	<b><i>Carduelis chloris</i></b>	pre			✓					✓
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	pre								
<b>Raven</b>	<b><i>Corvus corax</i></b>	pre								
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	pre								
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<b><i>Parus caeruleus</i></b>	pre			✓					✓
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	<b><i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i></b>	pre			✓					✓
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	pre								
<b>Bullfinch</b>	<b><i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i></b>	pre	✓		✓	✓				
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	pre								
<b>Blackbird</b>	<b><i>Turdus merula</i></b>	pre								
<b>Long-winged Conehead</b>	<b><i>Conocephalus discolor</i></b>	pre			✓	✓				
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	2								
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i> <i>britannia</i>	2								
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha</i> <i>pamphilus pamphilus</i>	1								
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas eleus</i>	1								
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	10								
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	6								
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	4								
Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i> <i>britanniae</i>	15								
Sycamore (tree)	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	occ								

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abund.	UKAP	SWAP	Avon	Bnes	Bristol	NSom	SGlos	SOCC
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	occ								
<b>Velvet Bent</b>	<b><i>Agrostis canina</i></b>	fre								
Common Bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	fre								
Creeping Bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	occ								
<b>Brown Bent</b>	<b><i>Agrostis vinealis</i></b>	occ								
<b>Early Hair-grass</b>	<b><i>Aira praecox</i></b>	fre								
Barren Brome	<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	rar								
False Oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	fre								
Mugwort	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	occ								
Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	rar								
<b>Downy Birch</b>	<b><i>Betula pubescens</i></b>	occ								
a soft-brome	<i>Bromus hordeaceus ssp. hordeaceus</i>	rar								
Butterfly-bush	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	rar								
<b>Heather</b>	<b><i>Calluna vulgaris</i></b>	fre				✓				
Hedge Bindweed	<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	rar								
Common Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	occ								
Common Centaury	<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>	occ								
Common Mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	occ								
Rosebay Willowherb	<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	occ								
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	occ								
Spear Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	rar								
Traveller's Joy	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	rar								
a cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster sp.</i>	rar								
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	occ								
Smooth Hawk's-beard	<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	occ								
Beaked Hawk's-beard	<i>Crepis vesicaria</i>	rar								
Crested Dog's-tail	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	occ								
Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	occ								
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	occ								
<b>Heath-grass</b>	<b><i>Danthonia decumbens</i></b>	fre								
Wild Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	occ								
<b>Wavy Hair-grass</b>	<b><i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i></b>	abu								
Broad Buckler-fern	<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	rar								
Common Male Fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	rar								
Common Couch	<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	occ								
<b>Bell Heather</b>	<b><i>Erica cinerea</i></b>	fre								
Hemp-agrimony	<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	rar								
Japanese Knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	occ								
Sheep's Fescue [agg.]	<i>Festuca ovina agg.</i>	abu								
Meadow Fescue	<i>Festuca pratensis</i>	rar								
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra sens.str.</i>	occ								
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	rar								
<b>Heath Bedstraw</b>	<b><i>Galium saxatile</i></b>	occ								
Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	rar								
Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium molle</i>	rar								

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abund.	UKAP	SWAP	Avon	Bnes	Bristol	NSom	SGlos	SOCC
Herb-robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	rar								
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	occ								
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	occ								
a hawkweed	<i>Hieracium sp.</i>	rar								
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	fre								
Wall Barley	<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	occ								
Perforate St. John's-wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	rar								
Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	occ								
<b>Greater Lettuce</b>	<b><i>Lactuca virosa</i></b>	rar				✓				
White Dead-nettle	<i>Lamium album</i>	occ								
Autumnal Hawkbit	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	rar								
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	rar								
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	occ								
Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	occ								
Black Medick	<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	occ								
Ribbed Melilot	<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	rar								
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i> <i>sens.str.</i>	occ								
Mouse-ear-hawkweed	<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	abu								
<b>Buck's-horn Plantain</b>	<b><i>Plantago coronopus</i></b>	rar								
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	fre								
Greater Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	occ								
Knotgrass [agg.] (plant)	<i>Polygonum aviculare</i> <i>agg.</i>	rar								
Creeping Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	rar								
Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	rar								
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	rar								
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	fre								
Evergreen Oak	<i>Quercus ilex</i>	occ								
Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	occ								
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	occ								
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	fre								
Sheep's Sorrel [agg.]	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	fre								
Curled Dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	rar								
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	occ								
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	rar								
<b>Rock Stonecrop</b>	<b><i>Sedum forsterianum</i></b>	occ				✓				
Hoary Ragwort	<i>Senecio erucifolius</i>	rar								
Common Ragwort	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	rar								
Groundsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	rar								
<b>Goldenrod</b>	<b><i>Solidago virgaurea</i></b>	fre								
Prickly Sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus asper</i>	rar								
Smooth Sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	rar								
Tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	occ								

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abund.	UKAP	SWAP	Avon	Bnes	Bristol	NSom	SGlos	SOCC
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> <i>agg.</i>	occ								
Wood Sage	<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	occ								
Lesser Trefoil	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	rar								
Red Clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	occ								
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	occ								
<b>Knotted Clover</b>	<b><i>Trifolium striatum</i></b>	rar								
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	occ								
Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	occ								
Common Field-speedwell	<i>Veronica persica</i>	rar								
Bush Vetch	<i>Vicia sepium</i>	rar								
<b>Rat's-tail Fescue</b>	<b><i>Vulpia myuros</i></b>	occ								
Juniper Haircap	<i>Polytrichum juniperinum</i>	fre								
Bristly Haircap	<i>Polytrichum piliferum</i>	fre								

## 6.2 Records not entered onto the BRERC species database

## 7 FILES HELD AT BRERC FOR THIS AREA

ST67-0-034-008 This report (Bristol SNCI Favourable Condition Assessment, August 2005)

ST67-0-034-000 Troopers Hill

Bristol City Council SNCI Audit – Favourable Conservation Status Assessment Methodology

## Maps

Attached are maps showing **Fig 1** Site Location, **Figure 2** Habitats and **Fig 3** Notable and Invasive Species.