

## PIPER'S WOOD, GLEN EY.

### HEATHER SALZEN

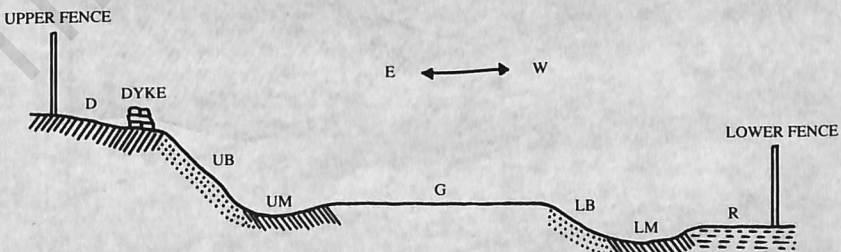
The deer fence completed in May 1989 has a perimeter of 537 metres and encloses an area of 1.47 hectares (4.33 acres). The plot includes some fixed river gravel, a wet marshy area between this and a low stony bank, a flat grassy area with the ruins of former croft houses, a steep higher bank with an old head dyke at the top and a strip of grass and heath above the dyke.

The surviving trees of Piper's Wood nearly all grow on the two banks. They are so few, scattered and in poor shape that at present the site is a wood only in name. Within the fenced plot there are 8 birches and 1 rowan on the upper bank and 8 birches on and below the lower bank. In autumn 1989 some 10 birches produced some seed, in most case only in small quantity. Birch seedlings are quite numerous, especially on heather hummocks above the dyke, on the upper bank, the lower bank and the fixed gravel beside the river. Many, if not most of these seedlings, are actually several to many years old, having been continually grazed down to ground level by deer and sheep. One of these is 20cm across and only 5cm high. With cessation of grazing small retarded birches like this one will, hopefully, grow upward and form many-stemmed bushy trees. First-year birch seedlings are very small and none were noted in 1989. If any are present they will be visible in their second year and, being ungrazed, should grow into normal straight-stemmed trees.

#### The ground vegetation of Piper's Wood.






The enclosed plot includes 5 distinct habitats – fixed river gravel, wet marsh, well-drained stony banks which may have been river terraces, level grassland, and mixed grass and heath above the dyke. Two of these habitats occur twice, so for convenience and extra precision in recording the plot has been divided into 7 zones as shown on the sketchmap (not to scale) and detailed as follows.

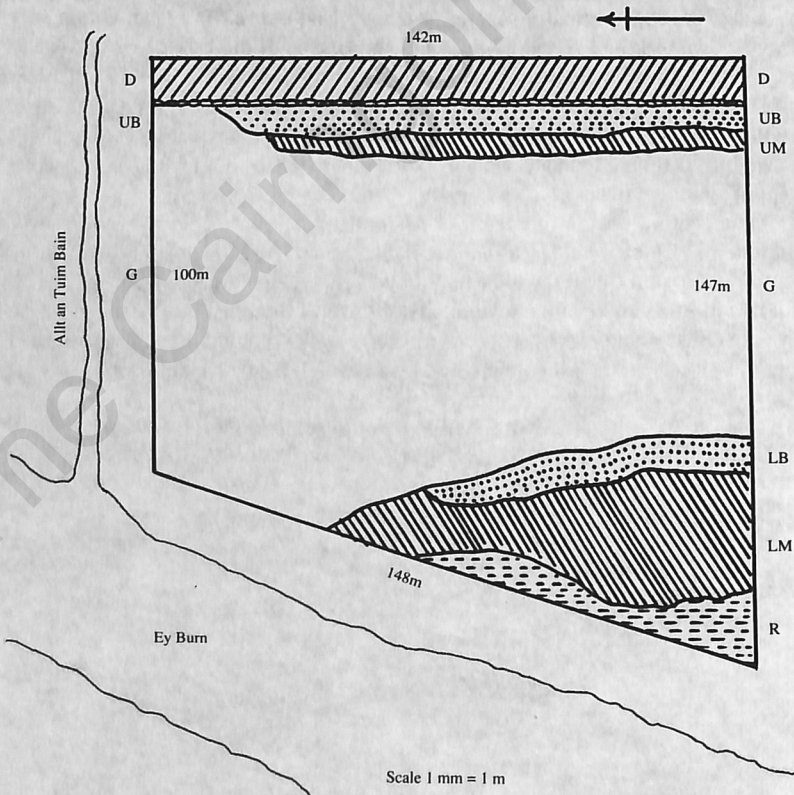
#### Site Profile – not to scale



The plot lies just below the 460m contour with a slight slope to the river interrupted by the upper and lower banks.

Habitat types and habitat zones – sketch map

-  Heath and Grass – Dyke and Strip Dyke/Upper Fence
-  Dry Stony Banks – Upper and Lower Banks
-  Wet Marsh – Below Upper and Lower Banks
-  Grassland
-  Fixed River Gravel



## Habitat zones—

**D — The dyke and the strip of grass and heather hummocks**

This lies between the dyke and the upper fence. A small drainage runnel enters near the SE corner and runs through the dyke and down the upper bank ending in a small area of marsh at the bottom of the bank.

This zone is remarkably rich in species for such a small area due to having well-drained turf, dry heather hummocks, the stones of the tumbledown dyke and a tiny wet area with running water. In 1989 there were two large flowering colonies of the fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*, one with 24 and one with over 50 flowering spikes.

A single spike of the marsh orchid, *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, a distinctive species now becoming very local, flowered where the runnel enters the dyke.

Species noted June to September 1989. For common names see "Flora of Piper's Wood"

<i>Alchemilla alpina</i>	<i>Juncus squarrosus</i>
<i>Antennaria dioica</i>	<i>Lathyrus montanus</i>
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	<i>Luzula campestris</i>
<i>A. ptarmica</i>	<i>Molinia caerulea</i>
<i>Briza media</i>	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	<i>Nardus stricta</i>
<i>Carex dioica</i>	<i>Nartheicum ossifragum</i>
<i>C. flava</i>	<i>Oxalis acetosella (dyke)</i>
<i>Cirsium heterophyllum</i>	<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>
<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
<i>Erica cinerea</i>	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
<i>Euphrasia brevipila</i>	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>
<i>Festuca ovina</i>	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
<i>Galium boreale (dyke)</i>	<i>R. flammula</i>
<i>G. saxatile</i>	<i>Salix repens</i>
<i>G. verum</i>	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>
<i>Gentianella campestris</i>	<i>Sieglingia decumbens</i>
<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>
<i>Helictotrichon pratense</i>	<i>Veronica officinalis</i>

UB – *The upper bank.*

Dry and quite steep. A colony of the moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* near the N end and in 1989 a large colony of the field gentian, *Gentianella campestris* is notable.

Specimens noted June to September 1989:

<i>Alchemilla alpina</i>	<i>Hieracium pilosella</i>
<i>A. glabra</i> agg.	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	<i>Luzula campestris</i>
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>
<i>Ajuga reptans</i> (S end)	<i>Linum catharticum</i>
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	<i>Luzula multiflora</i>
<i>Betula pubescens</i> (8 poor specimens)	<i>Polygonum viviparum</i>
<i>Botrychium lunaria</i> (near N end)	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>
<i>Carex panicea</i>	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	<i>Taraxacum</i> sp.
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	<i>Thymus praecox</i>
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
<i>Geranium pratense</i> (not flowering)	<i>Trientalis europaea</i>
<i>Erica cinerea</i>	<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>
<i>Euphrasia</i> sp.	<i>V. vitis-idaea</i>
<i>Galium saxatile</i>	<i>Veronica officinalis</i>
<i>G. verum</i>	<i>V. chamaedrys</i>
<i>Gentianella campestris</i>	<i>Viola riviniana</i>
<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	

UM – *Upper marsh.*

The narrow strip of wet ground at the base of the upper bank. At the end of May 1989 there was a small pool at the S end. By the end of a very dry June this was reduced to mud but by early September there was again some open water. The only locality within the plot where the marsh arrow-grass *Triglochin palustris* was noted in 1989.

<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>
<i>Carex dioica</i>	<i>Potamogeton</i> sp.
<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	<i>Triglochin palustris</i>
<i>J. conglomeratus</i>	<i>Selaginella selaginoides</i>
<i>Equisetum palustre</i>	<i>Viola palustris</i>
<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>	

**G – Grassland.**

The level, well-drained grassy turf, site of former habitation, inbye pasture and possibly cultivation. Notable for the presence of the spignel *Meum athamanticum* which occurs in the centre of the turf area in some numbers. Grasses remain to be identified when they come into flower with cessation of grazing.

<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>	<i>Meum athamanticum</i>
<i>A. millefolium</i>	<i>Linum catharticum</i>
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	<i>Nardus stricta</i>
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>
<i>Festuca ovina</i>	

**LB – Lower Bank.**

Below the grassland and much lower than the upper bank which is eroding at the top, is very dry and has some open soil. The flora is much more limited than on the upper bank but does include the following–

<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	<i>Hieracium pilosella</i>
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i> - 1 spike only
<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	<i>Nardus stricta</i>

**LM – Lower Marsh.**

The lower marsh occupies a level area below the lower bank and the fixed river gravel. This area is very wet most of the year especially at the S end and usually has two pools of open water. These dried out to mud in the summer of 1989.

<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i> on <i>Sphagnum</i>	<i>Festuca vivipara</i>
<i>Carex nigra</i>	<i>Geum rivale</i>
<i>C. dioica</i>	<i>Juncus squarrosus</i>
<i>C. panicea</i>	<i>Molinia caerulea</i>
<i>C. ovalis?</i>	<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	<i>Pedicularis palustris</i>
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	<i>Taraxacum palustre</i>

**R – River gravel.**

Dry, well-drained stony area beside the river now almost completely covered with low vegetation. A very restricted flora but many birch seedlings.

<i>Antennaria dioica</i>	<i>Genista anglica</i>
<i>Alchemilla alpina</i>	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	<i>Nardus stricta</i>
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	<i>Solidago virgaurea</i>
<i>V. vitis-idaea</i>	

## FLORA OF PIPER'S WOOD

Order and nomenclature as in "*Excursion Flora of the British Isles*" by Clapham, Tutin & Warburg Second Edition 1973.

Recorded by H. Salzen 1989

D = Dyke and ground above dyke to upper fence

UB = Upper bank. UM = Upper marsh below upper bank.

G = Grassland. LB = Lower bank. LM = Lower marsh.

R = River gravel.

### *Pteridophyta*

#### *Selaginellaceae*

SELAGINELLA SELAGINOIDES – Lesser clubmoss. UM, LM

#### *Equisetaceae*

EQUISETUM PALUSTRE – Marsh horsetail. UM

#### *Filicopsida*

BOTRYCHIUM LUNARIA – Moonwort. UB

BLECHNUM SPICANT – Hard fern. LB

### *Angiospermae – Dicotyledons*

#### *Ranunculaceae*

CALTHA PALUSTRIS – Kingcup. LM

ANEMONE NEMOROSA – Wood anemone. UB

RANUNCULUS ACRIS – Buttercup. D, UB, UM, G, LM

R. FLAMMULA – Lesser spearwort. D, LM

#### *Violaceae*

VIOLA RIVINIANA – Common violet. UB, LB

V. PALUSTRIS – Marsh violet. UM, LM

#### *Polygalaceae*

POLYGALA SERPYLLIFOLIA – Milkwort. UB, D

#### *Cistaceae*

HELIANTHEMUM NUMMULARIUM – Rockrose. D, UB

#### *Linaceae*

LINUM CATHARTICUM – Purging flax. UB, G

**Geraniaceae**

GERANIUM PRATENSE – Meadow cranesbill. UB

**Oxalidaceae**

OXALIS ACETOSELLA – Wood sorrel

**Leguminosae**

GENISTA ANGLICA – Petty whin. R

TRIFOLIUM REPENS – Clover. UB

LOTUS CORNICULATUS – Bird's foot trefoil. D, UB, R

LATHRYUS MONTANUS – Bitter vetch. D

**Rosaceae**

POTENTILLA ERECTA – Tormentil. D, UB

GEUM RIVALE – Water avens. LM

ALCHEMILLA ALPINA – Alpine lady's mantle. D, UB

A. GLABRA AGG. – Lady's mantle. UB

SORBUS AUCUPARIA – Rowan. UB

**Droseraceae**

DROSERA ROTUNDIFOLIA – Sundew. UM, LM

**Umbelliferae**

CONOPODIUM MAJUS – Earthnut, pignut. UB, G

MEUM ATHAMANTICUM – Spiguel. G

**Polygonaceae**

POLYGONUM VIVIPARUM – Viviparous bistort. UB

**Betulaceae**

BETULA PUBESCENS – Birch. UB, LB, R

**Salicaceae**

SALIX REPENS – Creeping willow. D

**Ericaceae**

CALLUNA VULGARIS – Heather. D, UB, G, LB, R

ERICA CINEREA – Bell heather. D, UB, R

VACCINIUM MYRTILLUS – Blaeberry. D, UB, LB, R

V. VITIS-IDAEA – Cowberry. UB, R

**Primulaceae**

TRIENTALIS EUROPAEA – Chickweed wintergreen. UB

**Gentianaceae**

GENTIANELLA CAMPESTRIS – Field gentian. D(S), UB(S), G(NW)

**Scrophulariaceae**

VERONICA OFFICINALIS – Common speedwell. D, UB  
 V. CHAMAEDRYS – Germander speedwell. UB  
 PEDICULARIS PALUSTRIS – Marsh lousewort. LM  
 EUPHRASIA MICRANTHA – Eyebright. UB, G  
 E. BREVIPILA – Eyebright. D, UB, G

**Lentibulariaceae**

PINGUICULA VULGARIS – Butterwort. D, UM, LM

**Labiatae**

THYMUS PRAECOX – Thyme. UB, LB  
 PRUNELLA VULGARIS – Self-heal. D, UB  
 AJUGA REPTANS – Bugle. UB(S)

**Plantaginaceae**

PLANTAGO LANCEOLATA – Ribwort. UB

**Campanulaceae**

CAMPANULA ROTUNDIFOLIA – Harebell. UB, LB

**Rubiaceae**

GALIUM BOREALE – Northern bedstraw. D  
 G. VERUM – Lady's bedstraw. D, UB  
 G. SAXATILE – Heath bedstraw. D

**Dipsacaceae**

SUCCISA PRATENSIS – Devil's-bit scabious. UB, G

**Compositae**

SENECIO JACOBAEA – Ragwort. D  
 ANTENNARIA DIOICA – Cat's foot. D, R  
 SOLIDAGO VIRGAUREA – Golden-rod. R  
 BELLIS PERENNIS – Daisy. UB  
 ACHILLEA MILLEFOLIUM – Yarrow. UB, D  
 A. PTARMICA – Sneezewort. D, G  
 CIRSIUM PALUSTRE – Marsh thistle. LM  
 C. ARVENSE – Field thistle. UB  
 C. HETEROPHYLLUM – Melancholy thistle. D  
 LEONTODON AUTUMNALIS – Autumnal hawkbit. D  
 CENTAUREA NIGRA – Lesser knapweed, hardheads. UB, LB



HIERACIUM PILOSELLA – Mouse ear hawkweed. UB  
TARAXACUM PALUSTRE – Marsh dandelion. LM

*Angiospermae – Monocotyledons*

*Juncaginaceae*

TRIGLOCHIN PALUSTRIS – Marsh Arrow-grass. UM

*Potamogetonaceae*

POTAMOGETON – Pondweed. UM, LM pools

*Liliaceae*

NARTHECIUM OSSIFRAGUM – Bog asphodel. D, UM, LM

*Juncaceae*

JUNCUS SQUARROSUS – Heath rush. D, G, UM, LM  
J. BUFONIUS – Toad rush. G, UM, LM  
J. CONGLOMERATUS – Conglomerate rush. UM, LM  
LUZULA CAMPESTRIS – Field woodrush. D, UB, LB  
L. MULTIFLORA – Many-headed woodrush. D, UB, LB

*Orchidaceae*

GYMNADENIA CONOPSEA – Fragrant orchid. D, G, LB  
DACTYLORHIZA INCARNATA – Marsh orchid. D

*Cyperaceae*

ERIOPHORUM ANGUSTIFOLIUM – Common cotton-grass. D, LM  
CAREX DIOICA – Dioecious sedge. D, UM, LM  
C. FLAVA AGG.  
C. PANICEA – Carnation sedge. UB  
C. NIGRA – Common sedge.  
C. OVALIS ? – Oval sedge. LM

*Graminea*

SIEGLINGIA DECUMBENS – Heath grass. D  
FESTUCA OVINA – Sheep's fescue. D, UB, G  
F. VIVIPARA – Viviparous fescue. LM  
BRIZA MEDIA – Quaking grass. D  
HELICTOTRICHON PRATENSE – Meadow oat. D  
ANTHOXANTHUM ODORATUM – Sweet vernal-grass. D, UB, G  
NARDUS STRICTA – Mat-grass. D, LB, R  
MOLINIA CAERULEA – Purple moor-grass. D, LM