

Report on the junipers *Juniperus communis* on Naphill Common

Site: Naphill Common, Naphill, High Wycombe, Bucks. SU 839 972
Elevation approx. 186m, fairly level ground.

Date: 18th June 2010.

General details: In the 19th Century Naphill Common was open wood-pasture with pollarded beech and oak trees. At the beginning of the 20th Century much of it had become a "juniper forest" together with gorse and heather. In 1911, G. Eland wrote of Naphill Common: 'Among scattered and misshapen oaks and scrubby beech rise great bushes of juniper and gorse, eight or ten feet high...' (*The Chilterns and the Vale*, Longmans, Green and Co., London. p.17.) The Common is now almost completely oak and beech woodland with much holly, yew and bracken. There are four juniper bushes remaining, three in a group and one on its own. The soil is acid: a heavy red clay with flints. Cuttings were taken from all four bushes on 17th January 2010 by Andy McVeigh, Bucks CC Field Officer and sent for culture with the ultimate aim of reintroduction. Each bush was tagged.

The junipers:

(1) At SU 84174 96983 Longest limb 4.10m; Girth 22cms. Very old. One of a group of three.

Sex: Indeterminate: no berries or male cones.

Condition: Collapsed. Some broken limbs. Some bark damage. Some brown leaves. Mossy limbs. No sign of browsing.

Environment: Seriously overshadowed by oaks and dense holly in ungrazed woodland. Deer and a few rabbits present.

Tag number: NH01

(2) At SU 84204 96976 Longest limb 2.50m. Girth 14.5cms. Very old. One of group of three.

Sex: Indeterminate: no berries or male cones.

Condition: Collapsed. Some broken limbs. Some bark damage. Some brown leaves. Mossy limbs. No sign of browsing.

Environment: Seriously overshadowed by oaks and dense holly in ungrazed woodland. Deer and a few rabbits present.

Tag number: NH02

(3) At SU 84202 96972 (1.7m from (2)) Longest limb 3.2m. Girth 17cms. Very Old. One of group of three.

Sex: Indeterminate: no berries or male cones.

Condition: Collapsed. Some broken limbs. Some bark damage. Some brown leaves. Mossy limbs. No sign of browsing.

Environment: Seriously overshadowed by oaks and holly in ungrazed woodland. Deer and a few rabbits present.

Tag number: NH03

Note: In January 2010 an oak bough fell across (2) and (3) causing some damage.

(4) At SU 8524 96952 Height 4.7m. Girth 42.5cms. Very Old. Isolated.

Sex: Male. Numerous male cones which produced copious pollen in spring 2010.

Condition: Collapsed. It was fairly erect until the snow in December 2009 weighed it down and snapped it off at the base. Only a small amount of bark is now intact at the underside of the base but the bush appears to be alive and there is no obvious wilting. It has been propped up on an 'A' frame and rests at an angle of approx 30 degrees from the horizontal. Several dead limbs. Some brown foliage. No sign of browsing.

Environment: Some overshadowing by oaks and dense holly in ungrazed woodland. There has been some attempt to clear around the bush over the past ten years or so. Deer and a few rabbits present.

Tag number: NH04 (Friends of Naphill Common Survey Tag number 409)