

13. *Appendices*



Western hemlock in Bedgebury National Pinetum

COUNTY: EAST SUSSEX

SITE NAME: DARWELL WOOD

DISTRICT: ROTHER

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Local Planning Authority: ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 710202

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 199

1:10,000: TQ 72 SW, TQ 71 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1966

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: –

Area: 37.6 (ha.) 92.9 (ac.)

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

This site consists of a relatively large area of broadleaved woodland deeply dissected by a number of streams which drain into Darwell Reservoir to the north. The site probably represents the best example of hornbeam coppice with oak standards in Sussex. A number of other woodland types are also found which are rare in the national context. A wide range of woodland birds also breed on this site.

Darwell Wood has developed over formations of the Ashdown Sands, Purbeck Beds and Wadhurst Clay. The resulting variation in geology has influenced the types of plants which are able to grow in different areas.

The majority of the site is dominated by mature hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* coppice with oak *Quercus robur* standards. Under the dense canopy the ground flora is sparse and consists mainly of mosses, although occasionally bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* form a more dense cover. On higher ground the oak/hornbeam woodland gives way to a more open silver birch *Betula pendula*-oak woodland, often with hazel *Corylus avellana* and some sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* coppice. The ground flora here includes wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and sanicle *Sanicula europea*.

In the west of the site calcareous soils support an ash *Fraxinus excelsior*-hazel wood with a ground flora comprised of plants indicative of base rich soils, amongst them ramsons *Allium ursinum*, bee and pyramidal orchids *Ophrys apifera* and *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, as well as several calcicolous mosses.

The streams which traverse the site have cut deeply into the underlying rock to produce steep sided valleys. The valley floors are dominated by alder *Alnus glutinosa*, with local abundancies of grey willow *Salix cinerea* above a ground flora of pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, water mint *Mentha aquatica*, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*.

The woodland supports a rich community of breeding birds which includes woodcock, green woodpecker, sparrowhawk and tawny owl.

COUNTY: WEST SUSSEX

SITE NAME: ST. LEONARD'S FOREST

DISTRICT: HORSHAM

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Local Planning Authority: HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 230295

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 187

1:10,000: TQ 22 NW, TQ 23 SE & SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954

Date of Last Revision: 1980

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987

Date of Last Revision: –

Area: 84.5 (ha.) 208.8 (ac.)

Other Information:

The SSSI is a Forest Conservation Area owned by the Forestry Commission, while parts of the site are managed by the Sussex Trust for Nature Conservation. Large areas have been deleted from the former boundary.

Reasons for Notification:

This site includes the remnants of a formerly more extensive deciduous forest on the Tunbridge Wells Sands (Hastings Beds) 3km east of Horsham. Examples of high forest remain and the ground vegetation is still varied, and the streams which cross the site retain relict flora from the 'Atlantic' period of some 5000 years ago. The woodland bird population is varied, and includes some of the more local species of old woodlands. The woodlands also support a population of the purple emperor *Apatura iris*, a butterfly with a restricted British distribution.

Much of the deciduous woodland is dominated by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* with silver birch *Betula pendula*, common birch *B. pubescens* and beech *Fagus sylvatica*. The shrub layer includes holly *Ilex aquifolium* and hazel *Corylus avellana* with hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and guelder rose *Viburnum populus*. Also included in the site are areas of conifer plantation, largely consisting of Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* and Corsican pine *P. nigra*.

The ground flora of the deciduous woodland is dominated by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, with bluebell *Endymion non-scriptus*, primrose *Primula vulgaris* and common violet *Viola riviniana*. At Lilybeds there is a large colony of wild Lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis*. In the more open areas of woodland, and along the rides in the plantations, species characteristic of heathland occur including ling *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and ivy-leaved bellflower *Wahlenbergia hederacea*.

The humid microclimate of sheepwash gill has enabled the 'atlantic' bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) *Hookeria lucens*, and *Hyoconium flagellare* to survive. The presence of these plants indicate the continuity of woodland cover at this site for the past 5000 years. The damp areas adjacent to the gills have stands of alder *Alnus glutinosa* with common sallow *Salix cinerea*. Along the edge of Hawkins pond damp woodlands grade through alder and willow carr to emergent vegetation dominated by reedmace *Typha latifolia* with water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, bulrush *Schoenoplectus lacustris* and bladder sedge *Carex vesicaria*. Hawkins pond itself is largely free of floating vegetation although in the shallow areas there are rafts of broad-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton natans*, yellow water lily *Nuphar lutea* and water crowfoot *Ranunculus peltatus*. The rare moss *Micromitrium tenerum* has been recorded on patches of drying mud, while the rare liverwort *Riccia huebeneriana* also occurs in the pond.

The woodlands support populations of the rare purple emperor butterfly *Apatura iris* and a diversity of woodland breeding birds including all three British woodpeckers, nightjar, redstart and wood warbler.