

COUNTY: SURREY SITE NAME: RANMORE COMMON

DISTRICT: MOLE VALLEY

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

Local Planning Authority: MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Ref: TQ 143510                      Area: 221.8 (ha.) 548.2 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 187              1:10,000: TQ 15 NW, 15 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955              Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986              Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

This site is within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A large part of the site is owned by the National Trust.

Part of the site is Common Land and the boundary has been altered by several extensions and deletions.

Reasons for Notification:

This site is a large and continuous block of woodland situated mainly on plateau deposits on the crest of the North Downs. Some of the woodland (notably Bagden Wood and Dorking Wood) is ancient, but the remainder is secondary woodland which has developed over former heathland or rough pasture (some of which survives in the more open areas). The site supports a diverse community of breeding birds.

The plateau deposits which overly the chalk on the crest of the Downs have given rise to an acidic soil which supports open heathy woodland, dominated by oak *Quercus robur* and *Q. petraea* with a shrub layer of silver birch *Betula pendula*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and some yew *Taxus baccata*. Open areas within the woodland are dominated by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* and occasionally heather *Calluna vulgaris*. Other heathland plants are also found including harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, gorse *Ulex europaeus* and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*.

On the dip slope of the Downs, and in several small north-facing valleys where the chalk is close to the surface, the thinner soil supports oak and beech *Fagus sylvatica* woodland with some ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and yew.

Along the northern periphery of Ranmore Common, areas of more diverse woodland also include field maple *Acer campestre*, midland hawthorn *Crataegus oxyacanthoides* and crab apple *Malus sylvestris*. The ground flora is richer here too, and includes yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum*, sweet woodruff *Galium odoratum* and enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*.

Several species of butterflies and moths have been recorded including the satin-wave moth *Idaea subsericeata*, and the white admiral butterfly *Ladoga camilla*.

The site also supports a diverse breeding bird community, which includes sparrowhawk, woodcock, tree-pipit, nightjar, redstart and hawfinch.