

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: SCOTNEY CASTLE

DISTRICT/BOROUGH: TUNBRIDGE WELLS

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

Local Planning Authorities: TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 690350    Area: 111.9 (ha.) 276.5 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 188    1:10,000: TQ 73 NW, TQ 63 NE & SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1991

Other Information:

The Scotney Estate is owned and managed by the National Trust.

Reasons for Notification:

Located on the Wadhurst Clay, Tunbridge Wells Sandstone and river valley alluvium the site contains a variety of habitats including parkland with some unimproved grassland, several ponds and woodland. Associated with these habitats are a diverse community of epiphytic lichens, several plants which are scarce in Kent, a number of nationally scarce invertebrates and the dormouse *Muscardius avellanarius*, a species which is protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Much of the interest of the site relates to its management in the past. The woodlands are coppiced, the parkland is grazed, and several of the ponds are old marl pits. The moat is also man-made.

Broadham Wood consists of ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and hazel *Corylus avellana* coppice with pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* standards. There is a diverse flora which includes yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* and common cow wheat *Melampyrum pratense*. The damper parts of Broadham and Kilndown Woods are covered by alder *Alnus glutinosa* with ramsons *Allium ursinum*, opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and narrow buckler fern *Dryopteris carthusiana*. Much of Kilndown Wood is sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* coppice. One ride through the coppice is particularly species-rich, with much heather *Calluna vulgaris*, and locally scarce plants such as allseed *Radiola linoides* and chaffweed *Anagallis minima*.

In the park the scattered large trees, mainly pedunculate oak, ash, field maple *Acer campestre* and beech *Fagus sylvatica* have a rich epiphytic lichen flora. This includes the nationally scarce species *Gyalecta flotowii* and *Parmelia crinita* at its only locality in Kent. The surrounding grassland is largely 'improved' but there are several species-rich areas. One of these, dominated by fine leaved grasses such

as sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and red fescue *Festuca rubra* has a population of green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*, a species which has declined considerably in Kent in recent years. Another declining species is the adder's tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum* which occurs in several parts of the park.

The ponds add to the diversity of the site. Where they are not shaded by trees the bankside flora includes yellow flag iris *Iris pseudacorus*, hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum* and marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*. Floating water lily *Nymphoides peltata* is recorded from the moat.

Several scarce invertebrates occur on the site. The ponds support a number of dragonflies (Odonata), including the red-eyed damselfly *Erythromma najas* which hunts from the floating leaves of aquatic plants, and the brilliant emerald *Somatochlora metallica*, which hunts around the shady margins of the ponds. Old trees on the estate support several species associated with dead wood such as the black headed cardinal beetle *Pyrochroa coccinea*. Broadham Wood supports the scarce Rolph's door snail *Macrogaster rolfii*, while the dormouse can be found in the coppiced woodlands.