

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: YOCKLETTS BANKS

DISTRICT: SHEPWAY/CANTERBURY

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

Local Planning Authority: SHEPWAY DISTRICT COUNCIL, Canterbury City Council

National Grid Reference: TR 126477            Area: 25.3 (ha.) 62.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 179, 189            1:10,000: TR 14 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951            Date of Last Revision: 1968

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985            Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Most of this site is a Kent Trust for Nature Conservation reserve.

Reasons for Notification:

This woodland site is situated on the west-facing slope of a dry chalk valley. Hornbeam woodland, on the clay-with-flints soils on the gentle upper slopes, grades into beech with ash and field maple on the thin chalk soils of the steep lower slopes. The wood is noted for the many orchids that occur, including the scarce lady orchid *Orchis purpurea*. The uncommon round-leaved wintergreen *Pyrola rotundifolia* also grows in one of the open grassy clearings. A variety of woodland birds breed.

Hornbeam is predominant as old coppice on the upper slopes with some ash coppice and a few oak and ash standards. The ground flora is dominated by bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*.

Lower down the slope on the chalk soils the wood is more varied. Beech is often the commonest tree with hazel coppice beneath, but ash and field maple are also present. The ground flora is also more varied. Dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* is the most abundant plant but there are also violets *Viola* species, primrose *Primula vulgaris* and wood spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides*. Uncommon plants such as spurge-laurel *Daphne laureola* and butcher's broom *Ruscus aculeatus* can also be found. Lady orchid, fly orchid *Ophrys insectifera*, man orchid *Aceras anthropophorum* and common twayblade *Listera ovata* are some of the many orchid species found in the wood.

Areas of scrub and open grassland are maintained to provide a variety of habitats. The scrub consists of a mixture of shrubs common on chalk soils such as dogwood and wayfaring-tree. The grassland is dominated by false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*. Other common chalk plants include common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* and cowslip *Primula veris*. Orchids are also present including greater butterfly orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*.

Many typical woodland birds breed including great-spotted woodpecker, tawny owl, nuthatch and nightingale. There is also a large badger population.