

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: QUEENDOWN WARREN

DISTRICT: SWALE

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

Local Planning Authority: SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 828629    Area: 22.2 (ha.) 54.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 178    1:10,000: TQ 86 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951    Date of Last Revision: N/A

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983    Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Local Nature Reserve declared 1973 and 1977 managed by Kent Trust for Nature Conservation. The site is Grade II in ‘A Nature Conservation Review’.

Reasons for Notification:

In the grassland and woodland of this site two nationally rare plant species occur. In addition an outstanding assemblage of plants is present.

The grassland and woodland of this site are on the south-facing slope of a dry chalk valley. The grassland is largely dominated by upright brome *Bromus erectus* and sheep’s fescue *Festuca ovina* with numerous plants characteristic of grazed but otherwise undisturbed chalk grassland. Among the more interesting species are chalk milkwort *Polygala calcarea*, squinancywort *Asperula cynanchica*, horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa* and several species of orchids including the rare early spider orchid *Ophrys sphegodes*. Another rare plant present is meadow clary *Salvia pratensis*. The grassland is rich entomologically and two characteristic species, the adonis blue butterfly *Lysandra bellargus* and the rufous grasshopper *Gomphocerippus rufus* are found.

Potter’s Wood is mainly sweet chestnut coppice with oak standards, but with beech, hazel and other species along the southern edge. The other areas of woodland and scrub are also dominated by beech, but hornbeam, hawthorn and several other species are also frequent. Dog’s mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* are the dominant plants of the woodland floor, but among scarcer species are the lady orchid *Orchis purpurea* and yellow bird’s-nest *Monotropa hypopitys*. Some former grassland has been invaded by scrub in recent years; this scrub is of mixed species, including several, like wayfaring tree and wild privet, which are highly characteristic of the chalk soils.