COUNTY: SURREY  SITE NAME: STAFFHURST WOOD

DISTRICT: TANDRIDGE

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Part of the site is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Local Planning Authority: TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 414 485  Area: 49.8 ha (123.1 acres)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 187  1:10,000: TQ 44 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1972  Date of Last Revision: 1975

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

Other Information: This site lies within the Low Weald Natural Area. Staffhurst Wood is a nationally important site listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review' edited by D A Ratcliffe, Cambridge University Press, 1977. The site includes two areas of Common Land.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Staffhurst Wood is an ancient wooded common lying on the Weald Clay. Historical information indicates that the site has been continuously wooded since Saxon times.

Past woodland management has resulted in a structurally diverse site with many old trees remaining. Little or no replanting has occurred in recent times and thus a complex mosaic of semi-natural stand types has been maintained.

The canopy is composed largely of pedunculate oak Quercus robur which occurs in pure stands or in association with birch Betula spp., beech Fagus sylvatica ash Fraxinus excelsior and wild service-tree Sorbus torminalis. Hazel Corylus avellana coppice occurs throughout, except in areas dominated by beech. Hornbeam Carpinus betulus coppice is frequent, especially in the western part of the wood.

Some parts of the site support a sparse ground flora of bracken Pteridium aquilinum, other areas are carpeted with bluebells Hyacinthoides non-scripta, bramble Rubus fruticosus, wood sorrel Oxalis acetosella and ferns Dryopteris spp.

In damper hollows the ground flora is rich and includes primrose Primula vulgaris, yellow pimpernel Lysimachia nemorum, bugle Aguga reptans and thin-spiked wood-sedge Carex strigosa which is rare in Surrey.

More base-rich areas in the south-eastern part of the wood are characterised by dog's mercury Mercurialis perennis, false brome Brachypodium sylvaticum and sanicle Sanicula europaea.
The old oak trees support a rich lichen flora including *Pertusaria coccodes*, *P. hemisphaerica* and *Cetraria glauca* which is usually found in western Britain.

Staffhurst Wood supports an outstanding moth fauna (Lepidoptera) including six uncommon species. One of these *Orthosia populeti* has its best known English location at this site.