

COUNTY: EAST SUSSEX

SITE NAME: BINGLETTS WOOD

DISTRICT: WEALDEN

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

Local Planning Authority: Wealden District Council

National Grid Ref: TQ 623211

Area: 15.86 (ha.) 39.2 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 199

1:10,000: TQ 62 SW

Date notified (Under 1949 Act): 1966

Date of Last Revision: –

Date notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

This area of ancient woodland lies on Ashdown beds and Purbeck limestone. The main feature of the site is the ghyll woodland which contains several plants with an 'Atlantic' distribution. This habitat type and its associated flora is restricted in Britain to the Weald and the west of the country.

Although parts of the plateau area have been modified by the planting of sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* coppice the majority of the woodland, including the ghyll, remains semi-natural. The steep sided ghyll has been created by vigorous down-cutting of the stream through the strata leaving a range of soil types and blocks of exposed Ashdown sandstone. The warm and moist microclimate of the ghyll has allowed the retention of an 'Atlantic' flora which is particularly rich in bryophytes (mosses and liverworts). A small glade with two ponds occurs in the middle of the wood.

The ghyll woodland is variable and consists, on the valley side, of mature beech *Fagus sylvatica*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* above patches of hazel *Corylus avellana* coppice and hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* coppice. The Midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* is a notable plant of the shrub layer while the rich field layer includes dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*, ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea* and the locally uncommon violet helleborine *Epipactis purpurata*. Alder *Alnus glutinosa* and ash line the stream and the small lateral flushes which run into it. Notable 'Atlantic' plants which occur in the ghyll include hay-scented fern *Dryopteris aemula*, Cornish moneywort *Sibthorpia europaea* and three uncommon bryophytes: *Hyocomium flagellare*, *Saccogyna viticulosa* and *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*. Binglets Wood has the only recent record in lowland Britain for the fir club moss *Lycopodium selago*.

The remaining semi-natural woodland on the plateau consists of hazel and hornbeam coppice below oak standards. Downy birch *Betula pubescens* is also present above the

field layer of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and slender false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*.

The woodland glade (TQ 622213) consists of grassland around two ponds. The ponds support white water lily *Nymphaea alba* and pondweeds *Potamogeton* species and the glade is visited by dragonflies.