

COUNTY: EAST SUSSEX SITE NAME: ERIDGE GREEN

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 554358 Area: 8.4 (ha.) 20.7 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 188 1:10,000: TQ 53 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1950 Date of Last Revision: 1978

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

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

This area of ancient woodland lies on Grinstead clays with outcrops of Tunbridge Wells sandstone. The sandstone outcrops support an unusual flora.

Eridge Green is shown as woodland on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1816 and it is likely that woodland cover has been maintained since at least the Middle Ages. The majority of the wood, however, has been modified by broadleaved and conifer plantations and *Rhododendron* is widespread. The woodland canopy helps retain a microclimate of high humidity which favours the sandrock flora.

The sandstone outcrops form a cliff face up to 10 metres high. The red or yellow sandstones have been weathered to a dark brown or black by re-deposited iron oxides. Notable species recorded from the rocks include the Tunbridge filmy fern *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense*, the mosses *Dicranum scottianum* and *Orthodontium gracile* and the liverworts *Scapania umbrosa*, *S. gracilis* and *Harpanthus scutatus*.

Only the woodland on steep slopes above the rocks is unmodified with mature beech *Fagus sylvatica* occurring with holly *Ilex aquifolium* and yew *Taxus baccata* above a sparse ground flora of bramble *Rubus fruticosus*. Elsewhere *Rhododendron* and planted sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* and larch *Larix decidua* are fairly widespread amongst the indigenous pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, birch *Betula pendula*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and beech. Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* form a dense ground flora in places. The woodland rides support a flora which includes water-pepper *Polygonum hydropiper* and corn mint *Mentha arvensis*. A small stream runs through the site but is heavily shaded by trees and contains little vegetation.