

County: Greater London **Site Name:** Downe Bank and High Elms

District: Bromley

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

Local Planning Authority: Bromley

National Grid Reference: TQ 438610 & TQ 446625 **Area:** 86.8 (ha) 214.6 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 177, 187 **1: 10 000:** TQ 45 NW, TQ 46 SE, SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951 (pt) **Date of Last Revision:** 1975

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

Other Information:

Downe Bank is owned and managed by the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation. Part of the site is covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

Reasons for Notification:

An area of woodland and chalk grassland on the western slope of a northward-running dry valley in the North Downs. The woodland at the top of the escarpment is chiefly beech and oak. Lower down is an area of hazel coppice with a rich ground flora including toothwort and spurge-laurel. The small areas of grassland have been subject to some scrub encroachment, but remain rich in plant species. The area is well known for its association with Charles Darwin, who lived nearby.

High Elms is a large, formerly private estate on a gentle north-facing slope of the Chalk. Most of the area is woodland which was formerly beech, but has been modified and extended by planting during the last hundred years. Although alien tree species have been planted, much of the original ground flora remains, including locally uncommon species such as green hellebore, bird's-nest orchid, spurge-laurel and yellow bird's-nest. A few open chalk grassland areas occur.