

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: FARNINGHAM WOOD

DISTRICT: SEVENOAKS

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

Local Planning Authority: SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 540683    Area: 72.8 (ha.) 179.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 178    1:10,000: TQ 56 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951    Date of Last Revision: 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986    Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Part of this site is a nature reserve managed by the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation.

The boundary of the site has been slightly modified by a small extension.

Reasons for Notification:

This site is representative of woodland in Kent on Eocene deposits overlying Chalk. The ground flora is particularly rich and there is also a varied invertebrate fauna. A series of ponds in the centre of the wood supports several species of amphibian.

Thanet sands, and Woolwich and Blackheath Beds cap the Chalk giving rise to a range of soil conditions which, combined with the continuity of woodland cover, has resulted in the presence of a rich ground flora. Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* are generally dominant, but a number of species uncommon in Kent occur including lily-of-the valley *Convallaria majalis*, Solomon's seal *Polygonatum multiflorum* and bird's-nest orchid *Neottia nidus-avis*. There is also a colony of the nationally scarce Deptford pink *Dianthus a??ria*.

The canopy and shrub layers are similarly varied. Trees present include pedunculate and sessile oak *Quercus robur* and *Q. petraea*, hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, although some areas consist almost entirely of planted sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* coppice, especially on the more acidic soils. Shrubs are best represented on the more chalky soils and include spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, wayfaring tree *Viburnum lantana* and guelder rose *V. opulus*.

Amongst the invertebrates, a number of species indicative of ancient woodland occur including certain beetles and the hoverfly *Brachypalpoidea lanta*. The rationally rare fly *Volucella inanis* has been recorded recently.

Additional habitat variety is provided by the ponds in the centre of the wood. Although there is little aquatic vegetation, the ponds support 3 species of newt including the uncommon great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*.