

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: HOADS WOOD

DISTRICT: ASHFORD

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

Local Planning Authority: ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 953 426    Area: 78.2 (ha.) 193.3 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 189    1:10,000: TQ 94 SW, SE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1989

Other Information:

There has been a minor reduction in the boundary along Bethersden Road.

Reasons for Notification:

This site is a good example of a pedunculate oak-hornbeam woodland on Wealden Clay. The wood comprises mainly hornbeam coppice-with-standards and oak-hazel woodland with some sweet chestnut coppice. There is an outstanding assemblage of insects: moths and butterflies are particularly well documented. The wood also supports a diverse breeding bird community.

Coppicing has been the traditional management of the wood in the past but only a small part is still cut regularly. Ash, hazel, hornbeam and sweet chestnut are the usual coppiced species beneath oak standards.

The central part of the wood is on acidic soils and largely open woodland of oak, birch and sweet chestnut with clearings of bracken and heather *Calluna vulgaris*. The ground flora is dominated by bracken, brambles and creeping soft grass *Holcus mollis*. The woodland rides are more varied with hedge woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*, wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, and common cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense*.

The remainder of the wood is more calcareous: hornbeam and ash are common and there are many shrubs associated with calcareous soils such as dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and purging buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus*. Brambles and bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* are the commonest plants in the herb layer. Many other plants also occur including sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, common twayblade *Listera ovata* and broad-leaved helleborine *Epipactis helleborine*. The rides are fairly wet and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, hemlock water-dropwort *Oenanthe crocata* and gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus* occur along them.

The moths and butterflies have been well documented and include two nationally rare species, the black-veined moth *Siona lineata* and the broad-bordered beehawk

*Hemaris fuciformis*. Another rare moth, the sub-angled wave *Scopula nigropunctata* may occur here and many local and scarce species have also been recorded.

A variety of birds breed in the wood including nightingale, woodcock, nuthatch, great-spotted woodpecker and several kinds of tits and warblers.