

Citation

County: Hampshire

Site name: Trodds Copse SSSI

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

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council
Test Valley Borough Council

National grid reference: SU 417 224

Ordnance Survey sheet: 1:50 000 185 1:10 000 SU 42 SW

Hectares Acres: 25.23/62.34

Date notified (under 1981 Act): 27 April 1989

Confirmed: 9 January 1990

Description and reasons for notification

Trodds Copse Site of Special Scientific Interest comprises ancient semi-natural woodland, unimproved meadows and flushes overlying Bracklesham Beds, Bagshot Sand, peat and alluvium. The habitats are drained by tributaries of the Monks Brook, a branch of the River Itchen. The diverse geology and varied drainage conditions give rise to a wide range of habitats. At least ten woodland types can be identified, of which four are considered nationally rare. The diversity of woodland types is matched by an extremely rich ground flora. The antiquity of the woodlands is reflected in the very high number of ancient woodland indicator species recorded within the site. Over fifty such species occur, including a number of rare or local plants such as tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum* making it one of the botanically richest woods in Hampshire. Trodds Copse and surrounding land has been well documented since the late sixteenth century. The whole site was enclosed from common land prior to 1588 and woodland boundary banks can be clearly discerned. There is evidence that some areas were managed as wood pasture but by the early nineteenth century this practice had ceased, the land being converted to pasture or coppice woodland.

The oak-dominated woodland contains four definable types which vary according to soil conditions and were formerly managed as coppice-with-standards. Heavy, poorly-drained stagnogley soils support herb-rich acid pedunculate oak-hazel-ash *Quercus robur-Corylus avellana-Fraxinus excelsior* woodland. Better-drained soils formed from the Bagshot Sands support a rare type of acid pedunculate oak-hazel-ash woodland where oak is only occasional and the ash occurs as old coppice stools. Where ash is absent, hazel-pedunculate oak woodland or the rare hazel-birch type occur, the latter having been created by clear felling of oak. The most acid brown sands support birch-pedunculate oak woodland where, in the absence of hazel, oak has been coppiced. The ground flora of the oak woodland is dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and ivy *Hedera helix* and includes a population of the rare purple loosestrife *Epipactis purpurata*.

Three types of alderwood occur within the SSSI. On alluvial deposits forming groundwater gleyed soils, a form of neutral valley alderwood occurs where coppiced alders *Alnus*

glutinosa are accompanied by ash and hazel. The rich ground flora contains water avens *Geum rivale*, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysoplenium oppositifolium* and yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*. Peat deposits support a rare form of sump alder wood containing willow *Salix* species and occasional hazel with a fen-like ground flora. Where the peat is very acid the ground flora is dominated by bog mosses including *Sphagnum palustre* and *S. flexuosum* under a canopy of acid sump alder woodland. Species associated with the alder woodlands include tussock and remote sedges *Carex paniculata* and *C. remota*, marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*, gipsywort *Lycopus europaeus* and the rare wood club rush *Scirpus sylvaticus*. Peat deposits on a sloping seepage mire support birch with willow and alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus*. Here the bog moss *Sphagnum recurvum* var. *mucronatum* and smooth-stalked sedge *Carex laevigata* occur.

Other woodland types found within the Copse include a fragment of ash-maple *Acer campestre* woodland and areas of rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*-birch woodland.

Habitat diversity is increased by the presence of grasslands and fen-type vegetation within the SSSI. The grasslands are dominated by velvet bent *Agrostis canina*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and tall oak *Arrhenatherum elatius*, associated plants including a number of species which are indicative of agriculturally unimproved grasslands or which are uncommon and fast declining, for example, devil's bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, brown sedge *Carex disticha*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica* and fen bedstraw *Galium uliginosum*. The fen areas are dominated by meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum* and sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, other species including yellow loosestrife *Lysimachia vulgaris*, marsh marigold *Caltha palustris* and marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*.

The wide range of habitats is reflected by the diverse invertebrate fauna present within the site. For example, the woodland supports a hoverfly fauna characteristic of ancient woodlands in south-central England, including such notable species as *Volucella inflata* and *Criorhina asilica*. The mosaic of fen and alder woodland is also of particular value, with populations of notable species such as the tachinid fly *Alophora hemiptera*, the robber fly *Laphria marginata* and the nationally rare bee *Macropis europaea*.