

**COUNTY:** DERBYSHIRE

**SITE NAME:** CHATSWORTH OLD PARK

**DISTRICT:** DERBYSHIRE DALES

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

**Local Planning Authority:** PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
Derbyshire Dales District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SK 263689                      **Area:** 72.53 ha

**Ordnance Survey Sheet:** 1:50,000:              119

1:10,000:              SK 26 NE

**Date Notified:**              1998                      **Date of last revision:**  
**(Under 1981 Act)**

**Other Information:**              New site

## CHATSWORTH OLD PARK

### Description and Reasons for Notification

Chatsworth Old Park is situated to the south of Chatsworth House on the eastern bank of the River Derwent, 5 km east of Bakewell. The site covers the part of Chatsworth Park where ancient pollarded oaks are concentrated. This area is all that remains of a much larger mediaeval walled deer park.

Chatsworth Old Park has a rich and diverse deadwood invertebrate fauna which is primarily dependent upon the large number of surviving mature and over mature trees, mostly pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*. The area probably once formed the western edge of Sherwood Forest. Some of the trees are over 400 years old and provide a link through time with the open structured wood-pasture which was once common across much of Britain. The highly specialised deadwood invertebrates found at Chatsworth are supported by trees that are hundreds of years old and consequently furnished with a wide range of small scale habitats including living and dying wood together with dead wood in every type and stage of decay. Together with the wood rotting fungi, this community of organisms comprise a complex system of nutrient recycling rarely found in woodlands today.

Numerous species of beetle associated with dead and decaying wood have been recorded at Chatsworth Old Park. These include several species listed as nationally rare: the rove beetle *Lathrobium pallidum*; the silken fungus beetle *Cryptophagus micaceus*, found in the nests of tree-living wasps and often found in oak trees and the mould beetle *Corticaria longicollis* found in ancient broad-leaved woodland. The site also supports a number of nationally scarce beetles. These require a wide range of habitat conditions, such as the longhorn beetle *Saperda scalaris* which breeds in dead wood; the cobweb beetle *Ctesias serra* which feeds on the dry remains of insects caught in spider webs under very dry bark; the wood boring beetle *Dorcatoma flavicornis*, associated with rotten wood and the plaster beetle *Enicmus rugosus*, found in fungi on trees. Many of the beetles found here are considered indicative of long continuity of mature woodland habitat.

The nationally scarce solitary wasp *Crossocerus binotatus* has been recorded at Chatsworth Old Park, nesting in hard rotten wood and feeding on flies. The alder kitten moth *Furcula bicuspis*, a nationally scarce species, has also been found here, although this species is not associated with dead wood.

Much of the ground flora has been agriculturally improved to provide better grazing for deer and sheep. However, the rocky slopes on the eastern and south eastern sides of the park are unimproved acidic grassland with bracken and herbs such as heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and tormentil *Potentilla erecta*. Flowering herbs and shrubs provide important nectar sources for adult insects. Ancient trees similar to those found within the open parkland occur in the woodland along the gritstone edge at the eastern edge of the Old Park.

A rich assemblage of lichens grow on the ancient trees in the Old Park, including several nationally rare and nationally scarce species. Many of the lichens found here occur at only a few sites in the Peak District.