

KENT WILDLIFE SITES

Local Wildlife Site		Site Ref:	AS 13
Site:	Hunt's Wood, Kenardington	Map Ref:	TQ 956340
LPA:	Ashford	Natural Area:	Low Weald
Parish:	Kenardington/Woodchurch	AONB:	No
Owner:	Private	SLA:	Yes
Category:	Woodland, running water, standing water	TPO:	No
		Protected species:	Yes
Area:	102.29 ha		
Date first notified:	1986		
Date amended:	May 2001		

DESCRIPTION

This series of rather uniform mixed broadleaved coppice-with-standards woodlands are situated mainly on heavy, slightly acidic clay soils and contain streams and shaded silted woodland ponds. Areas with drier sandy soils occur occasionally, particularly on the slightly higher ground in the northern part of the complex.

Some areas are managed, particularly where the coppice is mainly sweet chestnut, but much is unmanaged and is reverting to high forest with a dense canopy. Generally, hornbeam is the dominant coppice species, but sweet chestnut, hazel, and birch are frequent, with holly, Midland hawthorn, common hawthorn, goat willow and sallow in the shrub layer. Singled sessile oak coppice is present in Barn Wood. Ash is not common and is confined, together with alder, to the streamsides and floodplain areas. Storm damage from 1987 has affected the western edges of the woodland blocks in particular, and in some parts there are many fallen trees and patches of dense scrub or bracken.

Medieval external woodbanks with ditches form a notable feature of all the woods. Very old layered hornbeam and oak grow on these woodbanks, which also support wood-rushes *Luzula spp.*, wood melick *Melica uniflora*, ferns and mosses.

The ground flora is generally dominated by bluebell ¹ *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, with wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa* locally dominant in the damp areas. There are places under the dense canopy where the ground flora is very sparse. A more open area of woodland on the western edge of Southroad Wood, probably cleared following storm damage, is dominated by bracken. and creeping hair-grass *Holcus mollis*. Dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* is rare but is occasional inside the wood edges and on slightly drier land above the streams. Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* is locally frequent on the damp soils, together with wood speedwell *Veronica montana*, pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* and remote sedge *C. remota*, ramsons *Allium ursinum* and cuckooflower



Cardamine pratensis. Ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, primrose *Primula vulgaris* and bugle *Ajuga reptans* are common in the damp rides.

Where soils are drier, wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, heath speedwell *Veronica officinalis*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, bramble and bracken occur. Wood ants are common in these areas. 43 ancient woodland plant species recorded include early-purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, hard shield-fern *Polystichum aculeatum* and soft shield-fern *P. setiferum*.

The bryophyte flora is diverse and rich, especially along streamsides and woodbanks.

Several active badger ²setts occur in the complex, and evidence of deer, rabbit and fox has been observed.

Good numbers of woodland finches and tits, common warblers, great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and a large nightingale ^{3,4} population have been recorded recently.

¹ Protected under Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

² Protected under Protection of Badger Act 1992.

³ Amber List. Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-2007.

⁴ Kent Red Data Book Status 3. A. Waite (Ed.) 2000.

