

COUNTY: EAST SUSSEX SITE NAME: DALLINGTON FOREST

DISTRICT: ROTHER

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

Local Planning Authority: ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Ref: TQ 652208 Area: 16.2 (ha.) 40.0 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 199 1:10,000: TQ 61 SW, SE, WE, NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1953 Date of Last Revision: 1965

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

There is an extension to this site.

Reasons for Notification:

This site is an area of ancient woodland which lies on fine grained silts, sandstones, shales and mudstones of the Ashdown beds. The main feature of the site is the ghyll woodland which contains a number of plants with an ‘Atlantic’ distribution. This habitat type and its associated flora occur only in The Weald and in the west of Britain.

The steep sided ghyll has been created by the vigorous down cutting of Willingford Stream through the geological strata leaving a range of soil types and occasional outcrops of sandstone. The warm, moist microclimate of the ghyll has allowed the retention of a rich ‘Atlantic’ flora. A small plateau woodland is present in the north of the site and there is a small meadow adjacent to it.

Three woodland types dominate the ghyll area. In the north beech *Fagus sylvatica* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* occur with holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, birch *Betula pendula* and the occasional yew *Taxus baccata* above a heathy ground flora of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and ling *Calluna vulgaris*. In the south beech is largely absent and oak, birch and hazel dominate above a ground flora of honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*. In the bottom of the valley there are stands of alder *Alnus glutinosa* above a rich ground flora of remote sedge *Carex remota*, yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, gipsywort *Lycopus europaeus* and *Sphagnum* mosses.

The following ‘Atlantic’ plants have been recorded from the ghyll area: wood fescue grass *Festuca altissima*, Cornish moneywort *Sibthorpia europaea*, hay scented fern *Dryopteris aemula*, ivy leaved bellflower, *Wahlenbergia hederacea* and the bryophytes (liverworts and mosses) *Hyocomium flagellare*, *Hookeria lucens* and *Saccogyna viticulosa*.

The meadow in the north of the site contains plants such as ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. The woodland behind it consists of oak, hazel, birch and hornbeam above a ground flora of wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*.