

KENT LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES

KWT File No.: 718519

Site:	Quarry Wood etc Farleigh	Site Ref. No:	MA32
LPA:	Maidstone	Map Reference:	TQ 718519, TQ 727514
Parish:	West Farleigh/ East Farleigh/ Hunton	Category:	Woodland, stream, disused quarry
Owner:	Private	Natural area:	Wealden Greensand
Area:	70.1 ha	AONB:	No
Date first notified:	1987	TPO:	No
Dates amended:	2006		
Last approved:	March 2008		

REASON FOR DESIGNATION

Ancient woodland shown on the ancient woodland inventory and with 50 ancient woodland indicator plant species recorded in total in the update survey in 2006; 48 in the KWT reserve and 15 in the eastern half.

RATIONALE FOR SITE BOUNDARY

The boundary surrounds the two sections of Quarry Wood, the western section also being a Kent Wildlife Trust nature reserve. Pike Wood is included in the eastern section.

DESCRIPTION

The site consists of ancient mixed broadleaved woodland managed by coppice rotation on the slopes above the Medway on soils derived from Greensand series. Relict woodbanks are present along the western and southern boundaries.

On the plateau, the woodland has been converted in the past to pure sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* but fringes of original hazel *Corylus avellana* / ash *Fraxinus excelsior* / field maple *Acer campestre* coppice remain and occasional large sessile oak *Quercus petraea* or beech *Fagus sylvatica* standards are present. Areas of mixed coppice with standards of both oak and beech are more frequent on the slopes. Plantations of spruce *Picea* sp., pine *Pinus* sp. and poplar *Populus* sp. have been introduced in some areas.

The most interesting area is in the northern part of the western wood, where the soils are base rich being derived from the ragstone series. Found here are slopes, streamsides, and large alder *Alnus glutinosa* and elm *Ulmus* sp. stools along a woodbank (many affected by Dutch elm disease, however), with much moribund and dead wood. Here the ground flora is dominated by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* but herb paris ¹ *Paris quadrifolia*, golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, yellow archangel *Galeobdolon luteum* and other woodland herbs are common. Greater butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha* has been recorded on the base rich soils in the past. Also present are thin-spiked wood-sedge ¹ *Carex strigosa*, lady fern *Athyrium filix-femina*, hard and



soft shield-ferns *Polystichum aculeatum* & *P. setiferum*. The other areas are dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and bluebell ² *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* but other species do occur including early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*. A diversity of bryophytes reflects the soil types.

Other areas include an old Ragstone quarry now developed into ash and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* woodland, whilst at the north west end a number of large mature sycamore and Norway maple *Acer platanoides* have been planted in the past and have seeded into this section of the wood. The wood has suffered from changes in management over the years and some parts are rather disturbed, with nettles *Urtica dioica*, brambles and elder *Sambucus nigra* widespread in such areas. A rich and diverse bryophyte flora, reflecting the different soils is present.

Over 300 species of fungi have been recorded the KWT reserve and include the uncommon bracket fungi *Ganoderma lucidum* and *Ganoderma resinaceum*⁹.

The invertebrate fauna includes the notable diptera *Thaumastoptera calceata* a notable crane fly and *Rhingia rostrata*³ a hoverfly.

Dormice ² have been recorded in boxes which have been erected in the wood and are monitored regularly as part of the nest box recording scheme. Other mammals include badger ⁶, fox, rabbit, weasel ³, mole, grey squirrel, wood mouse, yellow-necked mouse, field and bank voles. Additionally, there are two linked ponds which have confirmed sightings of water shrew ^{3, 4, 5}. Noctule bats ^{2, 3, 7, 8} roost in trees on the reserve and bats have been seen feeding over the pond which are likely to be Daubenton's ^{2, 3, 4}.

The site is excellent for birds, 60 species have been recorded including kingfisher^{2, 10}, marsh tit¹¹, bullfinch^{8, 12, 13}, goldcrest^{3, 10, 14} and nightingale^{3, 10, 13, 14}.

- 1 County scarce plants. Atlas of Kent Flora. Philp. 1982
- 2 Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- 3 UK Biodiversity Action Plan Status C
- 4 UK Red Data Book
- 5 Kent Red Data Book
- 6 Badger Protection Act 1992
- 7 UK Red Data Book Status 2
- 8 Kent Red Data Book Status 2
- 9 Kent Red Data Book Status 1
- 10 Amber list, Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-2007
- 11 Red list, Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-2007
- 12 Priority Species UK Biodiversity Action Plan
- 13 Kent Biodiversity Action Plan species
- 14 Kent Red Data Book Status 3

