

COUNTY: EAST SUSSEX

SITE NAME: BUXTED PARK

DISTRICT: WEALDEN

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

Local Planning Authority: WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Ref: TQ 488225

Area: 83.43 (ha.) 206.16 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 198, 199

1:10,000: TQ 42 SE

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1989

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Reasons for Notification:

Buxted Park is an old deer park consisting of a variety of unimproved grassland communities with parkland trees and areas of woodland which as a whole support a large invertebrate population. It lies on neutral-acidic soils over Tunbridge Wells Sandstone, Wadhurst Clay and various superficial deposits in the valley of the River Uck.

The acidic grassland east of the River Uck is of a type very scarce in south east England. The sward is dominated by the grasses red fescue *Festuca rubra* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* with numerous herbs including creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans* and white clover *Trifolium repens*. Ant-hills occur throughout, upon

which yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* occur. Drier areas support bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and large thyme *Thymus pulegoides*, whilst hairy sedge *Carex hirta* and jointed rush *Juncus articulatus* are common in damp patches.

Marshy grassland, often dominated by tufted hair grass *Deschampsia caespitosa*, and fen communities occupy land close to the river and in one area a fine greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculata* swamp has developed. Species-rich neutral grassland is also represented supporting quaking grass *Briza media*, common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and black knapweed *Centaurea nigra*. One small area of grassland has a ridge and furrow topography resulting from temporary cultivation in the 19th Century or before.

Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is well established in places and parkland trees are scattered throughout the site. The ancient Culver Wood consists largely of hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* coppice with hazel *Corylus avellana* and alder *Alnus glutinosa* in wet areas. The ground flora is sparse in places, due to deer grazing, though wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* occurs.

The park has been found to be of exceptional importance for conservation of invertebrates, especially beetles and flies which are found on the marshlands and riverbanks, but more importantly, found in association with over mature trees and dead wood. Rot holes, sap runs and fungi growing on trees are of particular significance. Three nationally rare species of beetle; *Ptenidium gressneri*, which is an extremely small brown-black beetle, *Aderus brevicornis* and *Prionocyphon serricornis* are associated with rotten wood of large, old trees, the latter species with water-filled holes. One other nationally rare beetle, *Aleochara sanguinea* has been found in putrid fungi. Over fifty nationally scarce beetles have been recorded, along with several nationally scarce flies, including the hoverfly of fen and marshes, *Orthonevra*

*brevicornis* and the large-headed fly of woodland in southern England, *Nephrocerus flavicornis*.