

COUNTY: EAST SUSSEX SITE NAME: BREAM WOOD

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 Reference: TQ 523329 Area: 7.6 (ha.) 18.78 (ac.) approx.

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 188 1:10,000: TQ 53 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 Date of last Revision: 1965

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

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

Bream Wood is a typical example of a wealden ghyll woodland. The valley alder carr supports a rich 'Atlantic' flora including several locally rare ferns and mosses.

The ghyll has been formed by a stream down-cutting through the Lower Tunbridge Wells sandstone into the underlying Wadhurst clay.

Alder *Alnus glutinosa* carr occupies the deep central valley and is characterised by small pools with abundant wood clubrush *Scirpus sylvaticus* and sedges *Carex* species. Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* is more frequent in drier places with a ground flora which includes opposite-leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*. On steeper slopes ash is replaced by birch *Betula pendula* over a bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* dominated ground flora. Willows *Salix* species are locally frequent.

The sheltered valley has a moist, mild microclimate which favours a number of ferns and mosses more commonly found in the west of Britain. Acid springs rising at the base of the sandstone produce rich flushed areas where the rare moss *Dicranodontium denudatum* is found at one of only two localities in the south-east of England. Other uncommon species include royal fern *Osmunda regalis*, mountain fern *Oreopteris limbosperma*, hay-scented buckler fern *Dryopteris aemula* and the mosses *Trichostomum tenuirostre* and *Dicranodontium longirostre*.

The upper drier slopes carry ancient woodland dominated by oak *Quercus robur* and ash with an understorey of hazel *Corylus avellana*. Holly *Ilex aquifolium* is also present, and the ground flora is dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus*. Small areas of conifer plantations are present on the eastern side of the valley. A small pond in the extreme south of the site supports a variety of species including rushes *Juncus* species and yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*.