**KENT** **WILDLIFE** **TRUST** Site of Nature Conservation Interest

Old Park Wood, Iden Green Ref: TQ 749386

DESCRIPTION

Formerly ancient mixed broadleaved woodland and heath land, this site has now been largely converted to conifer plantation and chestnut coppice, particularly on the higher ground where the soils, which are derived from Tunbridge Wells Sands, are very acid. The most interesting areas are restricted to the southern and western edges along the sides of streams, where the original broadleaved woodland is still present.

The soils, derived from Wadhurst Clay, are damp and heavy and support a richer flora. Sessile oak and pedunculate oak are present together with chestnut, hornbeam and hazel coppice. Downy birch is common, with guelder rose and Midland hawthorn in the under storey. Alder and ash occur in the floodplain at the southern end, where the ground flora includes opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium,,* moschatel *Adora oschatellina,* large bitter-cress *Cardamine amara* and marsh violet *Viola palustris.* Both pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* and remote sedge *C. remota* are common.

On the plateau, despite the interest being reduced along the rides, small damp patches occur rarely, containing *Sphagna,* lesser skullcap *Scufellaria minor* and smooth-stalked sedge *Carex laevigata.* Drier rides which have not been made up are edged with heathy vegetation which includes bell heather *Erica cinerea,* ling *Calluna vulgaris,* wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa,* tormentil *Potentilla erecta,* green-ribbed sedge *Carer bineris* and devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis.* Sallow, rowan, silver birch and, rarely, alder buckthorn are present on the margins of the coppice where the management has been less intensive.

Relict woodbanks are present occasionally and support acid-loving bryophytes, wood-rushes *Luzula spp.* and wood sorrel *Rumex acetosella.* Over 70 species of bryophyte reflect the range of soil types and the site supports an excellent fungus flora. At the western end of the complex, at Knights Hole, an area of rich alder carr is present along a stream, with pendulous sedge, marsh marigold *Caltha palustris,* large bitter-cress and opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage.