

KENT LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE

KWT File No.: 900445

Site:	Dering Wood, Pluckley	Site Ref. No:	AS 32
LPA:	Ashford	Central Grid Refs:	TQ 900445, TQ 895455
Parish:	Smarden / Pluckley / Egerton	Category:	Broadleaved woodland, grassland, running water
Owner:	Woodland Trust / Private	Natural Area:	Low Weald
Area:	221.35 ha	AONB:	No
First notified:	1986	TPO:	Yes
Dates revised:	August 1998, May 2009		
Last approved:	Oct 2010		

REASON FOR DESIGNATION

Predominantly ancient woodland containing external and internal woodbanks and with 29 ancient woodland indicator plant species recorded during the 2009 walk over survey.

RATIONALE FOR SITE BOUNDARY

The boundary surrounds the whole of Dering Wood and includes some assarts to the east. It also takes in most of Frith Wood as well as Acorn and Wheeler Woods to the north. The site includes the ancient woodland and some small adjacent areas of younger woodland and the adjacent neutral grassland of the assarts.

DESCRIPTION

This site comprises a large area of mainly unmanaged, ancient mixed broadleaved woodland on Weald Clay. The heavy clay soils vary from slightly acidic at the southern end of the complex to more calcareous at the northern end, especially on lower ground associated with streams in Frith Wood.

Large areas of hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* coppice are present, much of it over-mature and in need of re-coppicing, although some areas have been cut recently. There are also small compartments of sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* coppice. Mixed coppice of ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, field maple *Acer campestre* and hazel *Corylus avellana* occurs at the northern end of Dering Wood, but is more common with hornbeam in Frith Wood, where alder *Alnus glutinosa* fringes the stream. Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* is the main standard tree, but there are also large areas of overstood sessile oak *Q. petraea* coppice. Wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis* is found along the western margin of Dering Wood, and alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus*, both downy and silver birch *Betula pubescens* and *B. pendula*, Midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus* are present in the shrub layer. External and internal woodbanks are a feature of the woodland.

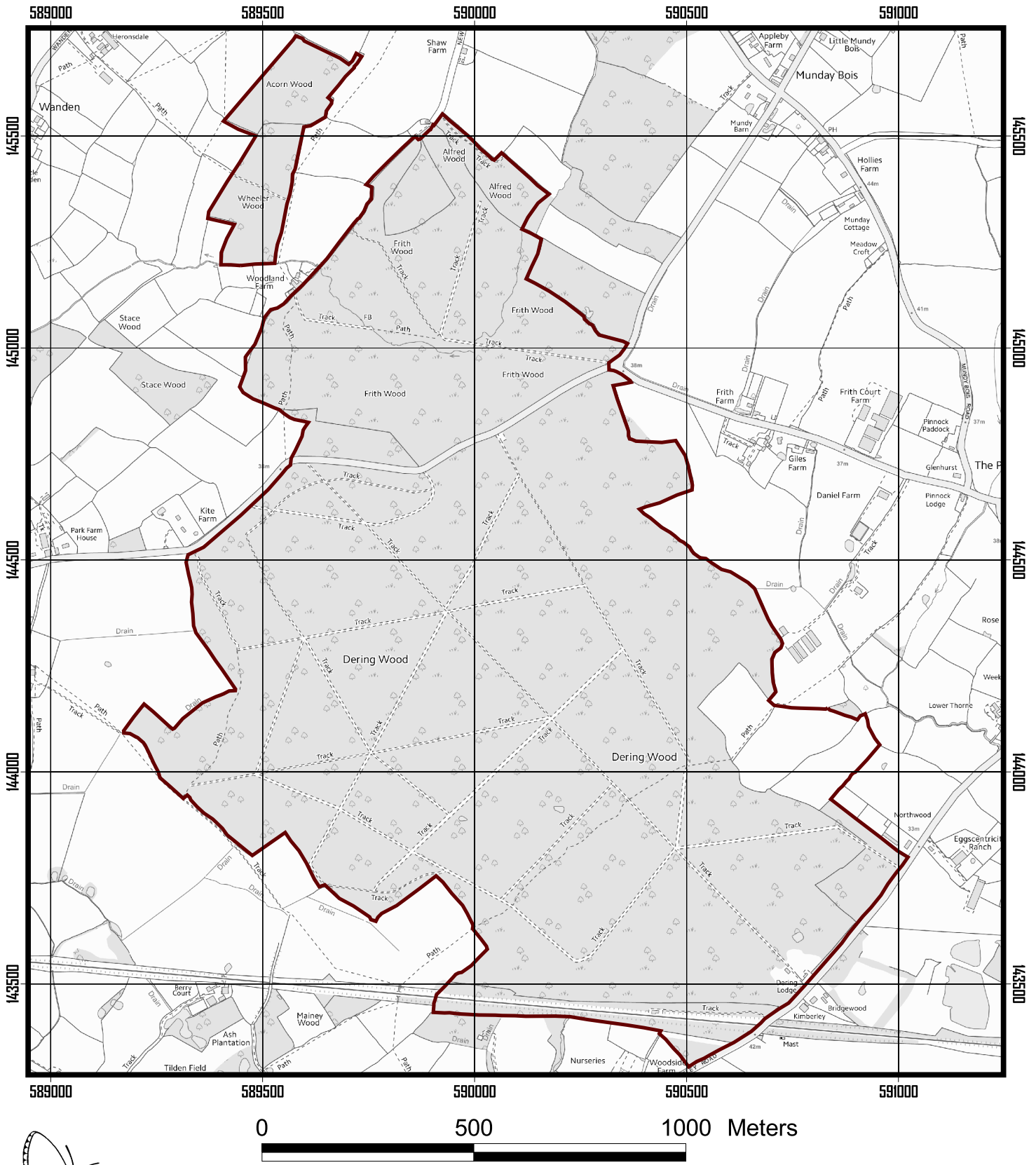


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Site Ref No: **AS32**

Site: **DERING WOOD, PLUCKLEY**

Map ref: TQ 900445
TQ 895455



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Last approved: Oct 2010

The wood suffered some windblow in the storms of 1987, particularly along the western boundary although this is barely noticeable now. Ground flora is generally sparse under the heavy canopy of the over-mature coppice, but bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. are locally dominant, and wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, bluebell ¹*Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and yellow archangel *Lamiastrum montanum* are present. The wider rides are quite rich in woodland species, with betony *Stachys officinalis*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and eleven species of sedge, including yellow-sedge ²*Carex viridula* and pale sedge ²*Carex pallescens*. The more acidic soils on the western side of the wood support heather *Calluna vulgaris* and lousewort ²*Pedicularis sylvatica* is abundant in one damp ride. Violet helleborine *Epipactis purpurata* is widespread under the hornbeam coppice, and a colony of yellow bird's-nest ^{2,3}*Monotropa hypopitys* has been recorded at the northern end of Dering Wood. 29 ancient woodland indicator plant species were recorded during the 2009 brief walk over survey but in more detailed, past surveys a total of 43 ancient woodland indicator higher plant species have been recorded.

Two semi-improved neutral grassland fields adjoining the eastern side of Dering Wood at TQ 907441 were added to the site in 1998. These assarts have good shaws of oak around their margins. The fields support a variety of grass and herb species, including common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and adder's-tongue ²*Ophioglossum vulgatum*. They are presently sheep-grazed.

Over 60 species of bryophytes have been recorded. *Rhytidiadelphus loreus* and *R. triquetrus* are conspicuous on woodbanks. Epiphytic bryophytes have increased since the last survey.

The woodland supports a rich fungus flora with over 300 species recorded. Mycorrhizal agarics include 20 boletes, and over 50 *Russula* species include a number of rarities and uncommon species.

26 species of butterfly recorded include the county important white admiral ³, purple hairstreak, grizzled skipper ³, dingy skipper ³ and silver-washed fritillary ⁴. Others include red admiral, speckled wood, green-veined white, peacock, brimstone, orange tip and small copper. 14 notable beetle and fly species have recently been recorded, including the Red Data Book picture-winged fly ⁵*Myopites inulaedysentericae*.

The bird fauna includes common woodland species. Nightingale ^{6,7} is common in the more open parts of the wood, and kingfisher ^{1,6} has been recorded along the stream edge in Frith Wood.

Dormouse ^{1,3,8}, pygmy shrew, yellow-necked mouse, wood mouse, fox and roe deer are found in the woodland. Grass snake ^{1,3}, slow worm ^{1,3}, toad ^{1,3}, common frog ¹ and palmate newt ¹ have been recorded recently.

- 1 Protected under Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
- 2 County Scarce. Atlas of Kent Flora. Philp 1982
- 3 Priority Species, UK Biodiversity Action Plan. 1998
- 4 Kent Red Data Book Status 1. A. Waite (Ed.) 2000
- 5 RedList_GB_Pre94:NR
- 6 Amber List. Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-2007
- 7 Kent Red Data Book Status 3. A. Waite (Ed.) 2000
- 8 National Red Data Book Status

