COUNTY: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  SITE NAME: GEDDINGTON CHASE

District: Kettering and Corby

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

Local Planning Authorities: Kettering Borough Council
Corby District Council

National Grid Reference: SP 905846

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 141  1:10,000: SP 98 NW, SP 98 SW, SP 88 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955  Date of Last Revision: 1970

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984  Date of Last Revision:

Area: 38.8 ha  95.9 ac

Other Information: Boundary modifications have considerably reduced the size of the site.

Description and Reasons for Notification

Geddington Chase is the third largest extant ancient wood in Northamptonshire and was formerly part of the once extensive Royal Forest of Rockingham. The bulk of the Chase is now commercially reafforested and the SSSI defines the biggest discrete block of remaining semi-natural broadleaved woodland.

The site is a good example of the wet ash-maple woods of the Midland Boulder clay, a type which has declined significantly in the county in the last 40 years. In places the original coppice-with-standards structure is well preserved and elsewhere oak-ash high forest provides a contrasting habitat.

The tree canopy is predominantly pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* over a mixed scrub and coppice layer of hazel *Corylus avellana*, Midland hawthorn *Crataegus oxyacanthoides*, field maple *Acer campestre*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, dogwood *Thelycrania sanguinea* and grey willow *Salix cinerea*.

Mixed plantations occur in some areas.

The ground flora is typically diverse with bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*, dog’s mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, ramsons *Allium ursinum* and yellow archangel *Galeobdolon luteum* all locally dominant. The wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* which is rare in Northamptonshire, occurs sparsely.

Some of the rides contain botanically-rich permanent grassland with characteristic species such as sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, field woodrush *Luzula campestris*, Lady’s mantle *Alchemilla vestita*, cowslip *Primula veris* and pignut *Conopodium majus*.

The whole complex supports a wide range of common birds and insects.