

COUNTY: CAMBRIDGESHIRE/SUFFOLK **SITE NAME:** OVER AND LAWN WOODS

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

Local Planning Authorities: South Cambridgeshire District Council
West Suffolk District Council

National Grid Reference: TL 636484

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 154 **1:10,000:** 64

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1959 **Date of Last Revision:** 1971

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

Area: 45 ha 111 ac

Other information: A part of this wood lies within Suffolk.

Description and Reasons for Notification

This woodland is of ancient origin and as such holds well developed plant and animal communities, many of the species represented being confined to such ancient woodlands which are restricted to lowland England where their extent has declined in recent years. Over and Lawn Woods, lying on chalky Boulder Clay, holds a variety of woodland community types and are noted in particular for the heavy soil form of the hazel-ash stand type. Other associations represented are wet ash-maple, together with more restricted areas of hazel-pedunculate oak and wet ash-wych elm.

The traditional management of these woods has been of coppice-with-standards, a practice which has retained the 'natural' distribution of tree species and maintained a diversity of structure and hence of plant and animal life. The dominant tree species are pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* standards together with ash, hazel *Coryllus avellana* and field maple *Acer campestre* as coppice. Shrubs include spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, guelder rose *Viburnum opulus* and wayfaring-tree *V. lantana*. Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* is also frequently found.

The ground flora is characteristically of the dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*-bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* type together with a rich variety of additional ancient woodland plants including ramsons *Allium ursinum*, yellow archangel *Galeobdolon luteum*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and sanicle *Sanicula europaea*. Of additional note is the presence of a number of locally rare species such as wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, woodruff *Galium odoratum*, yellow pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum* and the moss *Fissidens exilis*. The wood also supports the nationally restricted oxlip *Primula elatior*.

Additional structural and species diversity is provided by the system of rides and glades. These support a variety of grasses and herbs including meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, field woodrush *Luzula campestris* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. A stream and pond within the woods add additional habitat variety and further enhance the value of the area for animal life.