

COUNTY: BEDFORDSHIRE **SITE NAME:** ODELL GREAT WOOD

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

Local Planning Authorities: Bedford Borough Council
Bedfordshire County Council

National Grid Reference: SP 958590

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 153 **1:10,000:** SP 95 NE

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

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

Area: 85.69 ha 211.74 ac

Description and Reasons for Notification

A large and mostly unspoilt example of wet ash-maple woodland with an exceptionally rich flora. It is in many respects the best example in Bedfordshire of this type of woodland, which has become increasingly scarce throughout its range in southern and eastern England.

The dominant tree species are ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and oak *Quercus robur* over a well-developed shrub layer which includes hazel *Corylus avellana*, field maple *Acer campestre*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and privet *Ligustrum vulgare*. The diversity of wood species reflects the variation in soils from neutral Boulder Clay in the northern part to more calcareous soils derived from the Great Oolite over the majority of the wood. This has given rise to an extremely rich ground flora, including many local rarities such as wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* and herb paris *Paris quadrifolia*.

The extensive and well-developed system of rides is another important feature, adding greatly to the value of the site for flowering plants, butterflies and other invertebrates.