

**COUNTY:** CAMBRIDGESHIRE **SITE NAME:** HAYLEY WOOD

**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

**National Grid Reference:** TL 291529

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 153                      **1:10,000:** TL 25 SE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1955                      **Date of Last Revision:** 1971

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1986                      **Date of Last Revision:**

**Area:** 52.1 ha 128.7 ac

**Other information:** A boundary modification has been made at the 1984 revision. The site is listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review' (Cambridge University Press, 1977, ed. D A Ratcliffe). Hayley Wood is also a nature reserve of the Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely Naturalists' Trust.

### **Description and Reasons for Notification**

Hayley Wood is one of the largest oxlip *Primula elatior* woods on the chalky Boulder Clay in Britain. Most of the wood is primary and has a recorded history of over 700 years.

Structurally, the wood is coppice-with-standards of field maple *Acer campestre*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and hawthorn *Crataegus* spp. below a canopy of pendunculate oak *Quercus robur*. Small areas have been invaded by small-leaved elm *Ulmus minor*.

The soil is heavy and frequently waterlogged, favouring oxlip and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* in the wettest areas with bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon* present in the drier parts. Many typical ancient woodland plants occur as well as some local ones such as bird's-nest orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* and pale sedge *Carex pallescens*.

The rides and adjacent grass tracks also hold a rich vascular plant flora. The old parish boundary hedge to the north is also of high wildlife value and is estimated to date from at least the 11th Century.

Ponds are present in the wood and these provide an additional habitat of general wildlife value.