COUNTY: OXFORDSHIRE **SITE NAME:** HOLLY WOOD

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

Local Planning Authorities: South Oxfordshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SP588100

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 164 **1:10,000:** SP51 SE, SP50 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955 **Date of Last Revision:** 1977

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

Area: 24.2 ha 60.2 ac

Description and Reasons for Notification

Holly Wood is a fragment of the Royal Forest of Shotover retaining the characteristics of an ancient broad-leaved wood. It is a coppice-with-standards woodland on Oxford Clay, which is still traditionally managed for coppice products. Like its neighbouring woods, Holly Wood possesses a diverse invertebrate fauna including several uncommon butterflies.

The wood consists mainly of uneven-aged oak standards and hazel-maple coppice. Old coppiced ash stools and tall ash coppice also occurs. Invasive sycamore occurs locally in the coppice. There is also a limited area of wet ash-maple woodland and a small coniferous plantation. The shrub layer includes midland hawthorn, spindle, holly, guelder rose and goat willow. The wood contains the diverse structure of traditional coppiced woodland with brambles and honeysuckle dominating the recent clearings. The field layer is dominated locally by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and ransoms *Allium ursinum*. Species indicative of ancient woodland include goldilocks buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus*, early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, wood meadow-grass *Poa nemoralis* and wood small-reed *Calamagrostis epigejos*. Pale sedge *Carex pallescens* and pendulous sedge *C. pendula*, both virtually absent in the other remaining woods of Shotover Forest, are frequent here in the broad rides of the wood.

Holly Wood shares with other woods in Shotover and Bernwood Forests a wide range of butterflies which includes breeding black hairstreak *Strymonidia pruni* and purple emperor *Apatura iris*.