

**COUNTY:** LEICESTERSHIRE

**SITE NAME:** ALLEXTON WOOD

**DISTRICT:** HARBOROUGH

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Harborough District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SP 821994

**Area:** 26 (ha.) 64.2 (ac.)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** No 141

**1:10,000:** SP 89 NW

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1956

**Date of Last Revision:** 1981

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1983

**Date of Last Revision:** –

**Other Information:**

**Reasons for Notification:**

The site comprises one of the best remaining ash-hazel-maple ancient coppice woodlands in Leicestershire and is representative of ancient semi-natural woodlands developed on the heavy clays of eastern central England.

**Biology:**

Allextion Wood once formed part of the old Lieghfield Forest which formerly covered extensive areas of east Leicestershire. Developed on soils derived from Glacial Boulder Clays and clays of the Jurassic Upper Lias it is dominated by ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and locally by elm *Ulmus procera*, with pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* being fairly widespread. The shrub layer is characterised by the abundance of field maple *Acer campestre*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and sloe *Prunus spinosa*. Dogwood *Swida sanguinea* and elder *Sambucus nigra* are fairly frequent. The ground vegetation, which is dominated by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and bluebell *Endymion non-scriptus*, is characteristic of ancient clay woods and includes such typical plant species as giant bellflower *Campanula latifolia*, yellow archangel *Galaeobdolon luteum*, toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*, wood millet *Millium effusum* and primrose *Primula vulgaris*. A number of small watercourses flow through the wood and these possess populations of the opposite-leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*. A network of rides adds diversity to the wood which is also of interest for its breeding bird community and invertebrate fauna.