

**COUNTY:** CAMBRIDGESHIRE **SITE NAME:** WARBOYS AND WISTOW WOODS

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

**Local Planning Authorities:** Huntingdonshire District Council

**National Grid Reference:** TL 301819

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 142                      **1:10,000:** TL 38 SW

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

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1983                      **Date of Last Revision:**

**Area:** 41.7 ha 103 ac

**Other information:** This site was previously scheduled under the name Warboys Woods and Clay Pits. The latter now constitutes a separate site. Wistow Wood is a nature reserve of the Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire Naturalists' Trust.

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

These woodlands are of ancient origin and of the ash-maple community type which has a national distribution restricted to lowland England. Since 1945 such woodlands have declined in extent particularly in the more intensively farmed regions and the fraction which remain are therefore of high conservation value. In a Cambridgeshire context, these woods are additionally noted for their diversity of flora and associated fauna.

The woodland structure is dominated by coppice of ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and field maple *Acer campestre* with shrub layer of hazel *Corylus avellana*, Midland hawthorn *Crataegus oxyacanthoides* and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. In wet areas aspen *Populus tremula* is frequent. The ground flora is predominantly of dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus* with a variety of other plants characteristic of ancient woodland such as wood melick *Melica uniflora* and wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*. The rides provide for additional variety and support woodland grassland plants such as meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and ragged Robin *Lynchnis flos-cuculi* together with a variety of sedges.

The woodlands are also noted for their invertebrate fauna.