

COUNTY: NORFOLK            SITE NAME: SEXTON WOOD

DISTRICT: SOUTH NORFOLK

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

Local Planning Authority: South Norfolk District Council

National Grid Reference: TM 299916            Area: 37.55 (ha.) 92.79 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 134            1:10,000: TM 29 SE/TM 39 SW

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

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

Other Information:

Description:

Sexton Wood is one of the largest woods in south-east Norfolk and is almost entirely of ancient origins. The structure is largely coppice-with-standards, with a few areas of high forest. The main stand-type is hornbeam-pedunculate oak on a boulder clay plateau, and the ground flora is characteristic of an ancient wood of this type.

The standard trees are mostly of oak *Quercus robur* with some hornbeam *Carpinus betula* and suckering elm *Ulmus sp.* The coppice is chiefly hornbeam with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, field maple *Acer campestre* and sallow *Salix caprea*. Other shrub species present include midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*, spindle-tree *Euonymus europeaus* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*. Coppicing is still continued in the wood, and as a result, a diverse ground flora is present. Dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* is dominant with bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, Primrose *Primula vulgaris*, bluebell *Endymion non-scriptus*, ransoms *Allium ursinum*, woodruff *Galium odoratum*, wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, and early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*. The areas of high forest are chiefly of oak over a ground flora of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*.

Many species of bird breed in the wood including sparrowhawk and hawfinch. The ride system is unusual in that most were concreted during the 1939--45 war to serve as storage areas.