

COUNTY: BERKSHIRE

SITE NAME: SWINLEY PARK AND BRICK PITS

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

Local Planning Authorities: Bracknell District Council, Berkshire County Council

National Grid Reference: SU895675, SU905670

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 175 **1:10,000:** SU86 NE, SU96 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1973 **Date of Last Revision:** 1975

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

Area: 86.8 ha 214.47 ac

Other information: This site was formerly included within the Windsor Forest SSSI and is included in the Minute of Intent signed by the Crown Estate Commissioners and the Nature Conservancy Council in 1972.

Description and Reasons for Notification

Part of the Crown Estate forest including, in Swinley Park, the most important concentration of ancient broadleaved trees remaining in the southern sector of Windsor Forest.

Most of the area consists of conifer plantation with patches of broadleaves, but scattered throughout are a number of ancient oaks, beech *Fagus sylvatica* and sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa*, notably along the rides and edges of forest compartments. Some of the oaks are pollards of great age and, although partially shaded by conifers, the decaying hulks of these ultra-mature trees provide habitats now rare in woodland. Many rare species of insect requiring dead and decaying large timber are known to be present. The area is also of interest for its birds, both hole-nesting species and birds of prey. An avenue of lime trees *Tilia europaea* supports a good local population of mistletoe *Viscum album*.

The site also includes Swinley Brick Pits, an area of old clay pits now much overgrown by birch, pine and rhododendron and including a number of small pools providing ideal habitat for several species of dragonflies, Odonata, and secluded cover for waterfowl, as well as breeding sites for all three species of newts.

Locally, where the ground is too wet for the proper establishment of coniferous trees, a wet heath flora has developed. A small colony of marsh clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*, rare in Berkshire, occurs in the brick pits area.