

COUNTY: SUFFOLK SITE NAME: BRENT ELEIGH WOODS

DISTRICT: BABERGH

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

Local Planning Authority: BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TL 935465 Area: 31.9 (ha.) 78.9 (ac.)
 TL 940490
 TL 945485

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 155 1:10,000: TL 94 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1972 Date of Last Revision: –

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

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The Brent Eleigh group of woods contains Spragg's, Langley and Camps Woods. Each of these is an important ancient woodland of the wet ash-maple and or pedunculate oak-hornbeam, ash-maple variant type; the main 'heavy soil coppice type' of the calcareous clay soils of Eastern England. In addition, there are some smaller areas of the wet ash-lime-maple and the lowland wet ash-elm woodland types in Camps Wood.

Spragg's Wood is an ancient woodland with some original medieval boundary banks of well formed hazel coppice with Oak *Quercus robur*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Maple *Acer campestre* standards. Wild Pear *Pyrus pyraster*, Sallow *Salix caprea*, Woodland and Hedgerow Hawthorns *Crataegus monogyna* and *C. laevigata* are also present. The ground flora is dominated by Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, with a good population of Primrose *Primula vulgaris* and Orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*. The rides are of species-rich unimproved neutral grassland with Sanicle *Sanicula europaea* and Violets *Viola hirta* and *V. riviniana*.

Langley Wood is situated on a hilltop and is an important landscape feature. It lies on the site of an ancient wood and retains some of the original woodland of hazel coppice with oak and ash standards. It appears that some of the wood has been planted with Yew *Taxus baccata* and possibly oak. Other species include Elm *Ulmus sp.*, Birch *Betula pendula*, Small-leaved Lime *Tilia cordata*, Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Wild Cherry *Prunus avium* and Holly *Ilex aquifolium*. Shrub species include Spindle *Euonymus europaeus* and Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. The ground flora is dominated by Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* with Dog's Mercury scattered throughout and dominant in the areas of original woodland. A rich ground flora includes Violets, Primroses, Orchids, Nettle-leaved Bellflower *Campanula trachelium* and Wood Sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*.

Two ponds and a stream in the northern area of the wood create additional habitat diversity, supporting, amongst many other species Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula* and Ferns *Dryopteris filix-mas* and *D. dilatata*.

Camps Wood is a well documented and relatively undisturbed primrose wood, containing a mixture of primary and medieval woodland as evidenced both by the rich flora and giant stools together with the topography of moats and parish boundaries. Coppicing has been continued for several hundred years giving rise to some massive stools. Oak is dominant amongst the standards with Ash and Maple present in small numbers. The main coppice species are Maple, Ash, Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, Elm, Hazel and Lime. The NE corner of the wood, thought to be primary woodland, is dominated by Lime. The ground flora is mostly dominated by Dog's Mercury, with Primrose co-dominant in the northern and central, and Bluebell in the NE parts of the wood. Primrose/Oxlip hybrids, Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and Stinking Iris *Iris foetidissima* are also present.

There are two moderately sized and heavily shaded ponds in the wood.