

**County:** Essex **Site Name:** Garnetts Wood/Barnston Lays

**District:** Uttlesford District

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Uttlesford District Council

**National Grid Reference:** TL 636182 **Area:** 24.6 (ha) 60.8 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** 167 **1: 10 000:** TL 61 NW

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1974 **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1985 **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Other Information:**

'Access Woodland' owned and managed by Essex County Council for quiet public recreation.

**Reasons for Notification:**

Garnetts Wood/Barnston Lays are coppice-with-standards woods, mostly ancient, just over two miles south of Great Dunmow lying on glacial silt, sands and gravels, and Chalky Boulder Clay. They contain one of the best examples of lime woodland in Essex as well as several other types.

Small-leaved Lime *Tilia cordata* is the dominant tree in the larger Garnetts Wood. Here it is at the western limit of its range in the County. It is locally mixed with Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, with Oak *Quercus robur* or Birch *Betula sp.* Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* is found throughout the wood and Maple *Acer campestre* at the northern end. The smaller Barnston Lays is made up of a mixture of Ash and Maple with Oak and Hornbeam. It has some invasive Elm *Ulmus sp.* and, in the north, Wych Elm *U. glabra*. An area of woodland linking the two is mostly Oak and Ash with some Hornbeam and Chestnut *Castanea sativa*. There has been some modification of the stand in the past and there are scattered mature Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* and a few Norway Spruce *Picea abies* with little or no underwood. Hazel coppice *Corylus avellana* with Elder *Sambucus nigra* form the underwood in both Garnetts Wood and Barnston Lays. In the latter there is some Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and pure Hornbeam coppice.

The ground flora of the woods is mainly Bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg.* or Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, or mixtures of these species. In the south of Barnston Lays the Bramble is co-dominant with Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* in an open canopy area. The flora includes Wood

Sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* and Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. There are two ponds and Water Purslane *Peplis portula*, a species found infrequently in the county, is recorded on the site.