

COUNTY: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE **SITE NAME:** PIPEWELL WOODS

District: Kettering

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

Local Planning Authority: Kettering District Council

National Grid Reference: SP 833862

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 141 **1:10,000:** SP 88 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955 **Date of Last Revision:** 1970

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

Area: 81.0 ha 200.1 ac

Other Information: The site is listed in *A Nature Conservation Review*, ed. D A Ratcliffe, Cambridge University Press, 1977. A Tree Preservation Order (1978) covers the whole of the woodland.

Description and Reasons for Notification

Pipewell Woods consist of several small contiguous woodlands which together comprise one of the largest remaining remnants of the ancient Royal Forest of Rockingham. They lie on calcareous Boulder clay and constitute a good example of wet ash-maple woodland both in its typical form and in a nationally rare form. The structure of the woods is interesting, being almost entirely coppice with standards under active management until very recently. This kind of woodland habitat is declining both nationally and within Northamptonshire and is of special interest for the history of its past management.

The canopy is dominated by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* with ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and occasionally birch *Betula pendula* present in some areas. The coppiced shrub layer is of various ages with the majority over-mature, and consists mainly of hazel *Corylus avellana*, field maple *Acer campestre* and ash, with dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* occurring occasionally.

The ground flora is diverse and variable with dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and false brome-grass *Brachypodium sylvaticum* occurring in the drier areas and tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, sedges and rushes found on the damper soils. The county rarities giant bellflower *Campanula latifolia*, herb Paris *Paris quadrifolia* and wood speedwell *Veronica montana* have been recorded.

Rides and open grassy areas provide additional habitats for plants, invertebrates and birds. Several old boundary banks and ditches with occasional pollarded oaks are also of interest.

Re-presentation of details approved by Council. Re-typed August 1999.