

COUNTY: WARWICKSHIRE      SITE NAME: SNITTERFIELD AND BEARLEY BUSHES

DISTRICT: STRATFORD-ON-AVON      SITE REF: 15WFR

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

Local Planning Authority: WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, Stratford-on-Avon District Council

National Grid Reference: SP 199605      Area: 66.0 (ha.) 168.0 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 151      1:10,000: SP 15 NE, SP 16 SE, SP 25 NW, SP 26 SW

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

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

Other Information:

Site formerly known as Snitterfield Bushes.

Site boundary modified (extension & reduction).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Snitterfield and Bearley Bushes were once part of a larger area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland that has been split by a war-time airfield. The site has been selected as an example of two types of woodland now scarce in Warwickshire. The rich ground flora contains several species uncommon in the county. The site is also important for its butterflies.

The site is predominantly a pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* woodland with a hazel *Corylus avellana* understorey. It was heavily cut over about 40 years ago and much of the woodland now consists of even-aged ash and silver birch *Betula pendula* with occasional standards of pedunculate oak. Despite this disturbance, two types of woodland associated with pedunculate oak can be recognised: ash with field maple *Acer campestre*, in both parts of the site and small areas of ash with wych elm *Ulmus glabra* in Bearley Bushes.

The diverse shrub layer is dominated by hazel with frequent field maple, wayfaring-tree *Viburnum lantana*, guelder rose *Viburnum opulus* and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*. The field layer is dominated by bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, but is very rich and includes several species with restricted distribution in Warwickshire; these are herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia* and several orchids including early-purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, greater butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha* and broad-leaved helleborine *Epipactis helleborine*.

This site is also notable for its lepidoptera with 26 species of butterfly recorded including brown argus *Aricia agestis*, silver-washed fritillary *Argynnis paphia*, and the uncommon wood white *Leptidia sinapis*.