

**County:** Hertfordshire **Site Name:** Bricket Wood Common

**District:** St. Albans

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

**Local Planning Authority:** St. Albans District Council

**National Grid Reference:** TL 130010 **Area:** 70.0 (ha) 172.4 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** **1: 10 000:** TL 10 SW

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1953 **Date of Last Revision:** 1969

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1984 **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Other Information:**

**Reasons for Notification:**

Bricket Wood Common is a large remnant of a formerly extensive lowland heath that developed on heavy, base deficient soils of the Boulder Clay. The drainage is poor and wet habitats are characteristic of the site with some drier heath developed on areas with gravel capping. Lowland heath has a limited distribution in south eastern England where it has declined markedly and the site represents an important example in the county. Part of the site is ancient woodland of the Pedunculate Oak/Hornbeam type.

Changes in management and a cessation of the incidence of burning has allowed succession to take place and much of the heath has developed scrub and woodland. Despite this the main elements of the heathland flora still exist and recent management is benefiting the valuable relict heathland vegetation.

The woodland canopy is dominated by Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Sessile Oak *Quercus petraea* and Silver Birch *Betula pendula* over a shrub layer of overgrown coppiced Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* and Hazel *Corylus avellana* with a variety of other shrubs.

The ground flora is dominated by Bramble *Rubus spp.* with other species including Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis*. The wood also has the largest colony of Violet Helleborine *Epipactis purpurata* in Hertfordshire. Small clearings have an acidic grassland flora with incipient Birch scrub and Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*.

There is a rich bryophyte flora including species of *Sphagnum* characteristic of lowland heath which  
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### **Bricket Wood Common (cont...)**

carpet the wettest parts of the recently overgrown heath and where several small ponds also occur. The heathland species include Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, Heath Grass *Danthonia decumbens*, Heath Milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia* and Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, all species uncommon or rare in the county.

Additional habitats are provided by the rides.