

COUNTY: WARWICKSHIRE SITE NAME: LOBBINGTON HALL FARM MEADOW

DISTRICT: Stratford-on-Avon

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 309503

Area: 4.68 (ha.) 11.56 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 151

1:10,000: SP 35 SW

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 18 November 1998

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Lobbington Meadow is an unimproved species-rich hay meadow which faces north east on the banks of the River Dene and exhibits ridge and furrow topography. The meadow overlies Lias clays and shales which have given rise to a calcareous soil. This is reflected in the herb-rich vegetation which is the lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* variant of the crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*-common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* grassland.

This grassland type was once widespread and common in some parts of Britain, particularly the Midlands, but due to agricultural improvement it has declined severely during the twentieth century. In several counties in the East Midlands it has almost disappeared and in Warwickshire very few sites are known.

The meadow has an exceptionally herb-rich tight sward and the density of herbs is very striking. Among the wide range of grass species present, characteristically none appear dominant. The most abundant species are crested dog's-tail, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. Yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, quaking grass *Briza media* and meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum* are also frequent. Herbs characteristic of this type of grassland and found in abundance in this meadow include common knapweed and lady's bedstraw and locally abundant, spiny restharrow *Ononis spinosa*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor* and pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus*. Cowslips *Primula veris* are frequent and dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaulon*, is occasional. County rarities present in the meadow include dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*.