

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: MARDEN MEADOWS

BOROUGH: MAIDSTONE

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

Local Planning Authority: MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 762445    Area: 3.5 (ha.) 8.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 188    1:10,000: TQ 74 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981    Date of Last Revision: –

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

Other Information:

Part of the site is owned and managed by the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation.

Reasons for Notification:

This site is one of the best examples of unimproved neutral grassland remaining in Kent. This habitat type is increasingly uncommon owing to habitat destruction. The ponds and old hedgerows are also of interest.

The three meadows are cut annually for hay and then grazed. Several scarce species are present which indicate that the meadows have not been ploughed for many years. These plants include adder's tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, green-winged orchid *Orchis morio* and meadow saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata*. Grasses such as fescues *Festuca*, bents *Agrostis* and foxtails *Alopecurus* are abundant and the less common meadow brome *Bromus commutatus* also occurs. Oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, bugle *Ajuga reptans* and common sorrel *Rumex acetosa* are among the typical meadow plants found on the site.

The ponds and hedgerows are thought to be of ancient origin. The most abundant plants in the ponds are bulrush *Typha latifolia*, lesser bulrush *Typha angustifolia* and branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*. Two scarce plants, water violet *Hottonia palustris* and bladder-sedge *Carex vesicaria* are also found. The hedgerows are diverse with hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and hazel *Corylus avellana* being the most frequent species. The less common midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* and wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis* are also present.