

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: POLEBROOK FARM

DISTRICT: SEVENOAKS

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

Local Planning Authority: SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 506477    Area: 12.7 (ha.) 31.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 188    1:10,000: TQ 54 NW

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

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

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

This small farm is a good example of unimproved and species rich neutral grassland. The field layout is believed to have remained unchanged for at least seven hundred years, and the hedgerows and shaws have many tree and shrub species.

Most of the grassland is dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra*, creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, but at least 16 other species of grass are present. The sward contains many plants which are characteristic of long-established hay meadows, and which are seldom found in recently cultivated grasslands. These include pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica* and adder's-tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum* as well as several orchids including green-winged orchid *Orchis morio* and southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*. The differing botanical composition of the fields, brought about by various forms of management and soil types, are of particular note.

The hedgerows are very varied, with pedunculate oak, ash, hawthorn, willows, field maple and blackthorn all being abundant, as are dog rose *Rosa canina* and brambles. Other species of interest are midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus* and aspen *Populus tremula*. The shaws tend to be more uniform, being predominantly hazel coppice under a canopy of mature pedunculate oak. Also within the farm are five ponds, most of which are heavily shaded and currently with little aquatic vegetation, and a small stream which is similarly shaded.