

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER    SITE NAME: RYE STREET MEADOWS

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS                      SITE REF: 15 WSY

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, Malvern Hills District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 785356                      Area: 5.5 (ha.) 13.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150                      1:10,000: SO 73 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1975                      Date of Last Revision: 1975

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

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Rye Street Meadows are two adjacent damp unimproved pastures on neutral soils overlying the Keuper Marl on the eastern edge of the Malvern Hills.

They are dominated by grasses such as meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. In the lower lying, wetter parts rushes are common, particularly jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*. They are surrounded by largely unmanaged hedges consisting mainly of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, field maple *Acer campestre*, and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. This last species is now encroaching into the grassland. There is a small pond which dries up in dry weather in one of the fields.

The fields have been selected as an example of herb rich pastures characterised by having species such as pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria* in the sward. Over 130 plant species have been found and these include, as well as those mentioned above, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, devil's bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and adder's tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* all of which are scarce in Worcestershire.

They are also important for their large population of southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* which is a very local species in Worcestershire. Within this population are large numbers of common spotted orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* together with their hybrids.