

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 9 OCTOBER 1987

COUNTY: DORSET                      SITE NAME: LORTON

DISTRICT: WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND

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

Local Planning Authority: WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL,  
Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SY 676824                      Area: 21.0 (ha.) 51.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 194                      1:10,000: SY 68 SE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987                      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

A new site.

Adjacent to Lodmoor Site of Special Scientific Interest

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site to the north of Weymouth overlays the Oxford Clays of the Jurassic and the associated soils of the Denchworth Series. The area supports a neutral grassland community now much reduced throughout Britain as well as the largest remaining area of semi-natural woodland within the Borough, part of which is ancient in origin.

Among the many grasses which comprise the sward Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris* and Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* are abundant. Meadow Barley *Hordeum secalinum* and Quaking Grass *Briza media* are also frequent, Glaucous Sedge *Carex flacca* is widely distributed and Hairy Sedge *C. hirta* and Spring Sedge *C. caryophyllea* occur locally.

A variety of herbs is present, forming a significant component of the sward. Common Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, Oxeye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, Red and White Clovers *Trifolium pratense* and *T. repens* and Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris* are abundant. Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, Rough Hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus* and the local Pepper Saxifrage *Silaum silaus* are also frequent and generally distributed, as is Corky-fruited Water Dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides*, a plant restricted to central southern England.

A more calcareous influence is evident in places, with Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum* and Salad Burnet *Sanguisorba minor* locally frequent and Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* also occurs. Hoary Ragwort *Senecio erucifolius* and Strawberry Clover *Trifolium fragiferum*, which are present, in contrast are typical of heavier, clay pastures.

There are also a few wet areas, influenced by a degree of flushing. These are characterised by the presence of Jointed Rush *Juncus articulatus* and Hard Rush *J. inflexus* and the herbs Bugle *Ajuga reptans*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Cowslip *Primula veris*. The local Bristle Club-rush *Isolepis setacea* is also frequent here.

The semi-natural woodland of Two-Mile Coppice is dominated by Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Field Maple *Acer campestre*; English Elm *Ulmus procera* was also formerly important here. There is a diverse understorey with shrubs including Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Guelder Rose *Viburnum opulus*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Dogwood *Cornus sanguineus* and Privet *Ligustrum vulgare*. There is also a rich ground flora which includes frequent Stinking Iris *Iris foetidissima*, and, in the wetter areas Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula*. Four orchid species occur, including Greater Butterfly Orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*, as does the local Tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum*.

Over 30 species of birds are known to breed within Two-Mile Coppice, and the woodland and herb-rich grassland which it adjoins provide good habitat for insects.