

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER
MEADOW

SITE NAME: EARL'S CROOME

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS

SITE REF: 15 WQF

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 862420 Area: 1.2 (ha.) 3.0 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150 1:10,000: SO 84 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971 Date of Last Revision: 1975

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

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Earl's Croome Meadow is a traditionally managed hay meadow lying on neutral soils overlying the Lower Lias in South Worcestershire. Traces of ridge and furrow are evident over much of the site.

It has been selected as a species rich neutral grassland which is particularly important for the large number of green-winged orchids *Orchis morio* which are present. They occur here in greater numbers than at any other site in Worcestershire.

The grassland is dominated by grasses such as meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. The upper slopes of the meadow, particularly on the tops of the 'ridge and furrow', are very diverse with quaking grass *Briza media* and hoary plantain *Plantago media* commonly occurring, as well as adders tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. An unusual feature of this meadow is the presence of betony *Stachys officinalis* as a common component of the sward.