

County: Dorset **Site Name:** Lulworth Park and Lake

District: Purbeck

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

Local Planning Authority: Purbeck District Council, Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SY 846824, SY 855825, SY 862838 **Area:** 49.5 (ha) 122.3 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 194 **1:10,000:** SY 88 SW, SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1977 & 1964 **Date of Last Revision:** 1977

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1988 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

Formerly Lulworth Park SSSI and Lulworth Castle Lake SSSI. Boundary has been amended by extension and deletion. Within Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Lulworth Park was enclosed in the early seventeenth century and includes a fine range of ancient trees. The continuity of old trees, together with a location near the sea virtually free from atmospheric pollution probably accounts for the great importance of Lulworth Park for lichens. The site also includes Lulworth Lake, of interest for its wetland bird community.

The main parkland trees are oak *Quercus robur*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and beech *Fagus sylvatica*. The adjoining Bowling Green Wood, an ancient woodland site, has the same species with a higher proportion of beech. In the past elms *Ulmus* spp. were also important and their recent loss has limited the richness of the lichen flora. There are also several exotic species, as mature trees and in recent plantings.

The unshaded, acidic bark of mature oaks supports a typical and rich lichen community in which *Parmelia perlata* and *P. caperata* are abundant. A notable feature at Lulworth is the presence of a number of trees of the impressive *Lobaria pulmonaria*, a species now extinct over much of England due to atmospheric pollution. The even rarer *L. amplissima* also occurs here, otherwise only present in Dorset at Melbury Park. Other very restricted species of this *Lobarion* community include *Sticta limbata*, *S. sylvatica* and *Dimerella lutea*. On exposed trunks and branches of most tree species there is a well developed *Usneion* community, including 6 species of *Usnea* and in which *Usnea ceratina* is abundant. The lichen community typical of base-rich bark has been reduced by the loss of elms but still occurs, especially on ash. The most notable species of this association, *Teloschistes flavicans* is still present in what is now probably its easternmost location in Britain. In all some 130 species of epiphytic lichens are recorded, at least 13 of which are indicators of woodland sites with a long history of ecological continuity.

The lake, which is a relatively large freshwater body for Dorset, has been formed over London Clay. In the south and west, it has a fringing swamp of common reed *Phragmites australis* and greater pond-sedge *Carex riparia* with reedmace *Typha latifolia* and common sallow *Salix cinerea*. It supports several of the commoner breeding wetland birds and in winter holds good numbers of wildfowl, especially pochard *Aythya ferina*.