

Notification Date: 26 April 1993

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: ROMSLEY MANOR FARM

DISTRICT: BROMSGROVE SITE REF: 15 P3L

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

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

National Grid Reference: S0 966789 Area: 9.19 (ha.) 22.7 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 139 1:10,000: S0 97 NE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 24.3.93 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:  
New site.

#### Description and Reasons for Notification:

Romsley Manor Farm is located in not Worcestershire on high ground (260 m ASL) approximately 4 kilometres south of the Birmingham conurbation. The neutral to acidic soils are derived from the underlying rocks of the Permian and Upper Coal Measures. A series of springs rise at the junction of the Clent Breccia and Enville Beds on the lower east facing slopes.

The special interest of this site, comprising six fields, lies in the diversity of the semi-natural grassland sward which has been maintained under traditional management by hay cutting and grazing. The vegetation conforms with the mesotrophic (neutral) grassland type characterised by common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. Most of the grassland belongs to the acidic heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens* sub-community. The most frequent grasses, found throughout the site, are common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*. However, each field exhibits slight differences in composition and abundance of associated herb species.

The most southerly field is a steep north-east facing valley with short sward grassland containing mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella*, cat's ear *Hypochoeris radicata*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and pignut *Conopodium majus*. The locally uncommon lady's-mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis* ssp. *vestita* occurs scattered throughout. In the valley bottom a small spring flush occurs with Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and soft rush *Juncus effusus*.

The central field has a ridge and furrow system and an abundance of common knapweed. Zigzag clover *Trifolium medium* is locally dominant and other frequent herbs include ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* agg., and devils-bit scabious.

The south-east field has an abundance of devil's-bit scabious, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and betony *Stachys officinalis*. Woodland herbs within the sward include bugle *Ajuga reptans*, wood horsetail *Equisetum sylvaticum*, wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and common dog-violet *Viola riviniana*. Spring line flushes are more pronounced here with a gradation from neutral grassland, through rush pasture to

mire characterised by soft rush *Juncus effusus*, sharp-flowered rush *J. acutiflorus* and common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*. Dominant species present include jointed rush *J. articulatus*, which here has replaced sharp-flowered rush, tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, toad rush *J. bufonius*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus* and lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*. Locally scarce plants are common yellow-sedge *Carex demissa*, common sedge *C. nigra*, carnation sedge *C. panicea* and bristle club-rush *Isolepis setacea*.

The eastern field is particularly damp with flushed and waterlogged areas occurring throughout. Here tufted hair-grass, jointed rush and compact rush *J. conglomeratus* dominate the vegetation with greater bird's-foot-trefoil and occasional common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*. The drier grassland supports the meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* sub-community, with carnation sedge, wood horsetail, yellow rattle and tormentil.

The north-west field has frequent common knapweed, devil's-bit scabious, ribwort plantain, cat's-ear, and autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*. Several springs feed stream runnels across the field with rush pasture along the edges. The north-east field is more diverse with both MG5a and MG5c communities present in a mosaic pattern, interspersed with several spring flushes. Common spotted-orchid is frequent over the whole field with rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, yellow rattle, and devil's-bit scabious. Locally uncommon plants are heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* spp. *ericetorum*, eyebright *Euphrasia officinalis* agg., bristle club-rush, and pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*.

The field boundaries are formed by overmature hedgerows and a wooded green lane. Fifteen species of hedgerow tree and shrub, including old pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* pollards have been recorded. Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* with locally abundant holly *Ilex aquifolium* form areas of scrub along several hedgerows. Alder *Alnus glutinosa* is frequent as a hedgerow tree on the damper lower slopes and occurs as scrub on the edge of one field.

Hoverflies *Syrphidae* are attracted to the flushed areas and butterflies including meadow brown *Maniola jurtina*, small heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*, large skipper *Ochlodes venata* and small skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris* are abundant during the summer months.