

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: BIRMINGHAM PLATEAU
GRASSLANDS, 3 LITTLE ROYAL
FARM PASTURES

DISTRICT: BROMSGROVE

SITE REF: 15 P1Z

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

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

National Grid Reference: SO 934743

Area: 3.32 (ha.) 8.20 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 139

1:10,000: SO 97 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 22.2.94

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Little Royal Farm Pastures are situated in north Worcestershire about one kilometre east of the village of Bournheath and are managed as permanent horse pasture. The pastures lie on neutral soils derived from the underlying Mercia Mudstones of the Triassic Period.

The special interest of the site lies in the diversity of the semi-natural grassland sward. The vegetation conforms to the mesotrophic (neutral) grassland characterised by crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, with a transition between the meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens* sub-communities.

The acidic nature of the pastures is indicated by lady's-mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis* spp *vestita*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. Other characteristic neutral grassland species are autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*, rough hawkbit *L. hispidus*, lesser hawkbit *L. taraxacoides*, field wood-rush *Luzula campestris*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*. Species characteristic of the damper areas are common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, red clover *Trifolium pratense*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris*.

The pastures are bounded by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* dominated hedges, with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and oak *Quercus* spp.