

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: BOMERE, SHOMERE AND
BETTON POOLS

DISTRICT: Shrewsbury and Atcham

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

Local Planning Authority: SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SJ 504078

Area: 59.08 (ha.) 146 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 126

1:10, 000: SJ 40 NE and SJ 50 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954

Date of Last Revision: 1963

Date Notified (Under 1931 Act): 1983

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

The Meres & Mosses of the north west Midlands form a nationally important series of open water and peatland sites. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by the ice sheets which covered the Cheshire-Shropshire plain some 15,000 years ago, The majority lie in Cheshire and north Shropshire, with a small number of outlying sites in adjacent parts of Staffordshire and Clwyd.

The origin of most of the hollows can be accounted for by glaciation but a small number have been formed at least in part by more recent subsidence resulting from the removal in solution of underlying salt deposits.

There are more than 60 open water bodies known as 'meres' or 'pools' and a smaller number of peatland sites or mires known as 'mosses'. They range in depth from about one metre to 27 metres and have areas varying between less than a hectare to 70 hectares.

Although the majority of the Meres are nutrient rich (eutrophic) the water chemistry is very variable reflecting the heterogeneous nature of the surrounding drift deposits. Associated fringing habitats such as reedswamp, fen, carr and damp pasture add to the value of the meres. The development of these habitats is associated with peat accumulation which in some cases has led to the complete infilling of the basin. During this process the nutrient status of the peat surface changes and typically becomes nutrient pool (oligotrophic) and acidic thus allowing species such as the bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. to colonise it. The resulting peat bogs are the mosses. In a few cases colonisation of the water surface by floating vegetation has resulted in the formation of a quaking bog known as a 'schwingmoor'.

Bomere, Shomere & Betton Pools, as a group, are particularly important for the variety of water chemistry, and hence flora and fauna, which they display. The site also includes a small basin mire, a more extensive area of peat around Shomere and an area of woodland.

Bomere Pool is one of the most oligotrophic (infertile) meres. It has an extensive area of white and yellow water-lilies *Nymphaea alba* and *Nuphar lutea* and is particularly notable for the presence of a large population of six-stamened waterwort *Elatine hexandra*. Fringing vegetation is dominated mainly by lesser reedmace *Typha angustifolia*.

Shomere Pool is a small mere with a peat substrate, and a good population of both species of water-lily. Here, and at Bomere Pool, royal fern *Osmunda regalis* occurs. Shomere Pool is surrounded by bog and alder carr communities.

Betton Pool is of moderate fertility, and has good populations of aquatic macrophytes, including blunt-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton obtusifolius* and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*.

All three pools are of particular interest for their invertebrate fauna. Betton Pool is one of the best mesotrophic meres for aquatic invertebrates, and the site as a whole is especially important for dragonflies.

A considerable part of the site consists of woodland, which virtually surrounds Bomere and Shomere Pools. On the drier banks, mixed deciduous woodland is present with oak on acid soils. Wild cherry *Prunus avium* is particularly abundant locally, and exceptionally large specimens occur. On peat, secondary woodland dominated by birch, mainly *Betula pubescens*, has developed.