

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE  
CRUMPSBROOK MEADOWS

SITE NAME: HILL HOUSES AND

DISTRICT: South Shropshire, Bridgnorth

SITE REF: 15WRY

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

Local Planning Authority: SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, South Shropshire District Council, Bridgnorth District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 634791, SO 633784,  
SO 631781, SO 628728

Area: 4.33 (ha.) 10.69 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138

1:10,000: SO 67 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1992

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:  
New site.

#### Description and Reasons for Notification:

Hill Houses and Crumpsbrook Meadows consist of a series of traditionally managed herb-rich meadows lying on the eastern flanks of Titterstone Clee Hill in south east Shropshire. The underlying soils, derived from Old Red Sandstone and Carboniferous Coal Measures, are neutral to mildly acidic and are of variable drainage. The meadows are a type of unimproved herb-rich neutral to slightly acidic grassland, characterised by crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, which is now nationally restricted. Variation in management, drainage and the nutrient status of the soil account for differences in the balance of species abundance between the meadows and the occurrence of a wide variety of species which are uncommon or rare in Shropshire.

There has been considerable loss of unimproved grassland in south Shropshire and especially in the upland margins of the Clee Hills where such species-rich meadows are now very scarce. These meadows include the best examples, being the most typical and most species diverse, of the few remaining neutral grasslands in this part of Shropshire. The site complements the range of heath and grassland habitats which occur on the nearby Catherton Common and Titterstone Clee Hill SSSIs.

The meadows contain a wide variety of grasses, the most abundant being sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and crested dog's-tail. A rich herbaceous flora includes species characteristic of traditionally managed pasture and hay meadows such as common knapweed, betony *Stachys officinalis*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis* with, more locally, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and cowslip *Primula veris*. Oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* and yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor* are especially prominent in four of the fields which are managed as hay meadows. A number of species which are rare or uncommon in Shropshire are also present including moonwort *Botrychium lunaria*, common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, heath spotted-orchid *D. maculata* ssp. *ericetorum*, green-winged orchid *Orchis morio* and adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*.

Locally the meadows have a more acidic appearance reflecting the poor nutrient status of the soil and the site's upland location. In these areas species such as heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* heath milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia* and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* form significant elements of the vegetation.

A particular feature of several of these meadows is the abundance of species more typical of woodland. Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, for example, are especially conspicuous in two of the meadows at Hill Houses.

On poorly drained soils the grassland grades into a rush pasture dominated by soft-rush *Juncus effusus* and jointed rush *J. articulatus*. Also present are a number of species characteristic of damper conditions including meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, marsh lousewort *Pedicularis palustris*, star sedge *Carex echinata* and the uncommon pale sedge *C. pallescens*.

The meadows are, in most cases, surrounded by mature mixed-species hedgerows, composed of mainly hazel *Corylus avellana*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, which provide additional habitats of importance for birds and invertebrates.