

EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Lydden and Temple Ewell Downs
Unitary Authority/County: Kent
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: TR277454
SAC EU code: UK0012834
Area (ha): 61.70
Component SSSI: Lydden and Temple Ewell Downs SSSI

Site description:

This site includes some of the richest chalk grassland in Kent, with outstanding assemblages of plants and invertebrates. Most of the grassland is situated on the steep south-west facing slopes on the thinnest soils and is dominated by tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*, sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina*, creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, and upright brome *Bromopsis erecta*. Grazing pressure varies over the length of the site, resulting in a gradation within the habitat from a rank tor-grass sward to close-cropped fescue grassland. The history of continued grazing on this site has resulted in the retention of many characteristic downland herbs such as squinancywort *Asperula cynanchica*, horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*, chalk milkwort *Polygala calcarea* and fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*. It contains an important assemblage of rare, scarce and uncommon species, including early spider-orchid *Ophrys sphegodes*, burnt orchid *Orchis ustulata*, musk orchid *Herminium monorchis* and autumn lady's-tresses *Spiranthes spiralis*.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (important orchid sites). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites)*

Annex I priority habitats are denoted by an asterisk (*).

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.

Register reference number: UK0012834

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs