

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: BERRINGTON POOL

DISTRICT: Shrewsbury & 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 & Atcham Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SJ 525072

Area: 4.69 (ha.) 11.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 126

1:10,000: SJ 50 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

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 poor (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'.

Berrington Pool is a small but deep mere in a steep-sided hollow, with water of comparatively low fertility. There is a rich flora of emergent species, including some which are uncommon, notably slender sedge *Carex lasiocarpa* at one of its most southerly localities in Britain. There are extensive beds of white water lily *Nymphaea alba*. Vegetation dominated by water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* and bottle sedge *Carex rostrata* is better represented here than at any other Shropshire mere. Other emergent plants include greater reedmace *Typha latifolia*. The aquatic fauna is of interest, especially for dragonflies, of which ten species are known to breed here. The site includes an area of fen at the western end of the pool, with a flora which includes bladder sedge *Carex vesicaria* and, in a ditch, water violet *Hottonia palustris*.