COUNTY: CAMBRIDGESHIRE **SITE NAME:** SAWSTON HALL MEADOWS

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

Local Planning Authorities: South Cambridgeshire District Council

National Grid Reference: TL 491491

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 154 **1:10,000:** TL 44 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1959 **Date of Last Revision:** 1971

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1982 **Date of Last Revision:**

Area: 7.4 ha 18.0 ac

Other information: A boundary amendment has been made in 1982 to include the whole of the meadows within the site.

Description and Reasons for Notification

This area of meadows overlying spring-fed peat over chalk is a relic of a once common type of wet pasture land found at the margins of the East Anglian Fenland. The plant and animal communities which it supports are generally scarce and poorly represented in Cambridgeshire.

The grassland communities range from marshy grassland into drier calcareous grassland. The former is characterised by the presence of a variety of sedges such as brown sedge *Carex disticha*, hairy sedge *C. hirta*, false fox-sedge *C. otrubae*, glaucous sedge *C. flacca* and carnation sedge *C. panicea*, together with jointed rush *Juncus articulatus* and hard rush *J. inflexus*. Other species present include water mint *Mentha aquatica*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, fen bedstraw *Galium uliginosum*, wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica* and marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*.

The drier grassland is characterised by the presence of tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and supports a variety of herbs including common milkwort *Polygala vulgaris* and spotted-orchid *Orchis fuchsii*.

The site is additionally noted for the presence of the nationally rare umbellifer *Selinum carnifolia*, now only found in Cambridgeshire. Also of note is the presence of saw wort *Serratula tinctoria* and the great fen-sedge *Cladium mariscus*.

Thick belts of scrub and areas of open water provide additional habitat and further enhance the value of the site for animal life, in particular invertebrates.