

NOTIFICATION DATE: 17 DECEMBER 1986

COUNTY: STAFFORDSHIRE/HEREFORD & WORCESTER  
SITE NAME: KINVER EDGE

DISTRICT: South Staffordshire/Wyre Forest    SITE REF: 15WDR

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

Local Planning Authority: STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY  
COUNCIL/HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, South  
Staffordshire District Council/Wyre Forest District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 831829    Area: 124.8 (ha.) 308.3 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138    1:10,000: SO 88 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1968    Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986    Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Part owned by National Trust.

Part lies within Kingsford Country Park.

Site boundary modified (extension).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The site lies on a ridge of soft red Permian sandstone which is crowned by an Iron Age hill fort. The acidic soils derived from the sandstone support heathland communities on the dip slope and acidic oak-birch woodland on the scarp slope. The Kinver heathland is one of a series on similar soils extending from Cannock Chase in Staffordshire to Hartlebury Common in Worcestershire. The invertebrate fauna includes a number of species of Lepidoptera which are restricted in their national distribution. The site is also important for its exposures of Permian sandstone.

Biology

The thin, leached soils of the south and east facing dip slope support a mosaic of dry heath and acidic grassland which is being invaded by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and silver birch *Betula pendula*. Ericaceous species include bell heather *Erica cinerea*, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, which is notable for the abundance of the hairy form var. *hirsuta* and a little bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. Smaller areas of acidic grassland are dominated by wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* with harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*. Grey hair-grass *Corynephorus canescens*, a rare grass of sand-dunes on the east coast, grows on areas of bare sand and the edges of paths at the foot of the dip slope.

The north-west facing scarp slope is cooler and moister with better developed soils which have developed a pedunculate oak-birch woodland providing an excellent contrast with the vegetation of the drier dip slope. The increased cover of bilberry is clearly in response to these conditions. The woodland is dominated by silver birch at the south end of the site with the greatest species diversity at the northern end. Hazel *Corylus avellana* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* are present in the understorey whilst the ground flora reflects the acidic nature of the soils with wavy hair-grass, creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg, and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*.

In recent years the Lepidoptera have been well studied. Interesting species of the oak-birch woodland include angle-striped sawfly *Enargia paleacea* and two southern species, red-necked footman *Atolmis rubricollis* and waved black *Parascotia fuliginaria*. The heathland areas support anomalous *Stilbia anomala*, scarce footman *Eilema complana* at its only Staffordshire site, archer's dart *Agrotis vestigialis* which is normally found on coastal sand dunes and only rarely inland, and annulet *Gnophos obscuratus* as the yellow form *ab. argillacearia* found in sandy areas. Adder *Vipera berus* and common lizard *Lacerta vivipara* have also been recorded from the heathland.

#### Geology

The Bridgnorth Sandstone of the Lower Permian is seen in superb three-dimensional exposures at Vale's Rock, Nanny's Rock, and Holy Austin Rock. The Bridgnorth Sandstone displays large-scale, high-angle cross-bedding, indicating winds blowing mainly from the east during Permian times. A number of other characteristic aeolian features are well displayed making this an important site for the elucidation of Permian environments in the English Midlands.