

File ref:

County: Hampshire **Site Name:** Old Burghclere Lime Quarry SSSI

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SU 473573

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 174 **1:25,000:** SU 45

Area: 4.61 (ha) 11.38 (ac)

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1979 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

A Hampshire and Isle of Wight Naturalists' Trust nature reserve managed under an agreement with the owner. Formerly named Burghclere Old Limeworks.

Reasons for Notification:

The disused limeworks at Old Burghclere exhibits various stages in the succession from bare chalk on the steep quarry sides through chalk grassland to scattered and dense scrub.

Actively worked into the beginning of this century, some of the quarry faces have not had time to become completely recolonised. Among the opportunist species able to establish themselves in the raw tallus and in the crevices of the solid rock are creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, coltsfoot *Tussilago farfara*, yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* and ribbed melilot *Melilotus officinalis*.

In contrast the quarry floor has been almost wholly recolonised, and grazing by rabbits, together with limited scrub control, has effectively maintained a short turf rich in herbs, with fescues *Festuca ovina* and *F. rubra*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, and locally quaking grass *Briza media* and mouse-ear hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum* as dominants. The flora includes large colonies of fly orchids *Ophrys insectifera*, spotted orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, pyramidal orchids *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and felwort *Gentianella amarella*. Where soil has accumulated at the toe of quarry sides, nettle *Urtica dioica* and tall grasses, such as false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* are abundant.

The scrub community, dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and goat willow *Salix caprea*, with typical calcicole shrubs such as dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and wayfaring tree *Viburnum lantana*, is already beginning to exhibit early indications of an eventual succession to woodland, with a young ash *Fraxinus*/birch *Betula* component.

The varied vegetational structure of the chalk grassland and scrub habitats supports a rich invertebrate fauna including a colony of the scarce small blue butterfly *Cupido minimus*.