County: Hampshire **Site name:** **Toyd Down and Quarry SSSI**

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

Local Planning Authorities: Hampshire County Council
New Forest District Council

National grid reference: SU 080191

Ordnance Survey sheet 1:500,000: 184 1:10,000 SU 01 NE

Hectares/Acres: 7.7/19.02

Date notified (1949) Act: **Date of last revision:**

Date notified (1981) Act: 20 March 1987 **Date of last revision**:

Other information:

Reasons for notification:

Toyd Down lies at the extreme east of the Dorset Downs on the Hampshire-Wiltshire border. The Site of Special Scientific interest falls into two distinct parts:-

(1) A steep west-facing downland slope, grazed by sheep, and heavily dominated by upright brome *Bromus erectus*. The sward comprises species-rich downland of the South Wiltshire type, with notable quantities of dwarf sedge *Carex humilis*, chalk milkwort *Polygala calcarea*, horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, field fleawort *Senecio integrifolius* and autumn gentian *Gentianella amarelle*. A good range of old cha k turf pants is represented.

(2) An abandoned chalk quarry believed to have been last worked around 1970. The contrast between the old and "new" grassland is of great interest, providing a good site for the study of colonisation of bare chalk next to well-established, species-rich downland. The vegetation of the two parts is noticeably different. In contrast to the closed sward of the old established turf, that of the quarry floor is very open, with much space between individual plants still to be colonised. Among the more abundant flowering plant species to have become established in the 15-year old sword are basil thyme *Acinosarvensis*, carline thistle *Carlina vulgaris*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilose11a*, both chalk and common milkworts *Polygala calcarea* and *P. vulgaris*, thyme *Thymus praecox* quaking grass *Briza media*, kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, hard poa grass *Catapodium rigidium* and blue fleabane *Erigeron acer*. Among the other early colonisers is the knapweed broomrape *Orobanche elatior*, hairy rock-cress *Arabis hirsuta*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella* and squinancywort *Asperula cynanchica*.

Toyd Quarry has a considerable and developing entomological interest, notably butterflies. It supports one of the strongest Hampshire colonies of the small blue *Cupido minimus* and an important relic population of the grayling *Hipparchia semele* in its "chalk form". This species is now very rare on inland chalk grassland and is known from only one other such site in Hampshire. Both Down and Quarry support colonies of the chalkhill blue *Lysandra coridon* and Essex skipper *Thymellicus 1ineola*.