

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

SITE NAME: HIPLEY HILL

DISTRICT: WEST DERBYSHIRE

SITE REF: 15 WMS

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Local Planning Authority: Derbyshire County Council, West Derbyshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 211546

Area: 22.4 (ha.) 55.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 119

1:10,000: SK 25 NW
SK 25 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1963

Date of Last Revision: 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Site boundary alteration (reduction).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The site occupies the steep west facing slopes of a dry valley to the east of the village of Ballidon. It is an example of species-rich limestone grassland in which are found a number of rare and local plants. It lies on the edge of the Derbyshire Carboniferous Limestone and includes a number of natural caves and rock outcrops.

At the top of the slope the grassland is neutral to acidic, owing to the leaching of the top soil. Lower down the slope the grasslands are dominated by meadow oat-grass *Avenula pratensis* and glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*. The flora has some similarities with southern chalk grassland as shown by the presence of dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaule*. This may be due to the lower altitude (200--250 m) and sheltered position on the edge of the limestone massif. It also includes a number of uncommon and local species such as angular Solomon's-seal *Polygonatum odoratum*, herb paris *Paris quadrifolia*, globeflower *Trollius europaeus* and mountain everlasting *Antennaria dioica*. In some moist areas grass-of-Parnassus *Parnassia palustris* and mossy saxifrage *Saxifraga hypnoides* occur. Burnt orchid *Orchis ustulata*, an increasingly rare species nationally, occurs in Derbyshire only in a small area round Ripley Hill and here is found with eight other orchid species. The colony of Jacob's-ladder *Polemonium caeruleum* is one of the largest in Britain.