

File ref:

County: Nottinghamshire **Site name:** Pleasley Vale Railway

District: Mansfield

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

Local Planning Authority: Mansfield District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 519649 **Area:** 3.87 (ha)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 120 **1: 10 000:** SK 56 SW, SK 56 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981 **Date of Last Revision:**

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

The site contains some of the best remaining calcareous grassland developed on soils derived from the Magnesian Limestone in Nottinghamshire, and is representative of grassland developed on soft limestones in Central and Eastern England. Also represented are examples of calcareous woodland and scrub, and limestone crags and fissures.

Biology:

The site comprises a disused railway cutting constructed through strata of the Permian Lower Magnesian Limestone, together with immediately adjacent land. The rock sides of the cutting are partly covered by calcareous grassland dominated by tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, and smooth meadow-grass *Poa pratensis*, and containing a rich herb flora characterised by the abundance of bird's foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, wild basil *Clinopodium vulgare*, zigzag clover *Trifolium medium*, greater burn saxifrage *Pimpinella major*, knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, hairy violet *Viola hirta* and hairy rock cress *Arabis hirsuta*. The site also includes areas of woodland which in part are semi-natural and in part secondary. The semi-natural woodland is dominated by wych-elm *Ulmus glabra* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* while the secondary woodland has a greater proportion of oak *Quercus robur* and birch *Betula verrucosa*. The woods have a rich shrub layer with abundant hazel *Corylus avellana* and goat willow *Salix caprea*, while the ground flora is characterised by the abundance of false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, wood melick *Melica uniflora*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, sweet woodruff *Asperula odorata*, yellow archangel *Galaeobdolon luteum*, wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*,

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Pleasley Vale Railway (cont...)

and by the presence of nettle-leaved bellflower *Campanula trachelium*, Solomon's seal *Polygonatum multiflorum* and mountain currant *Ribes alpinum*.

Additional interest is provided by the flora of the track side and by the presence of calcareous scrub; the whole site supporting a range of habitat types and providing suitable conditions for a varied invertebrate fauna including butterflies. The railway cutting itself has exposed in its sides the entrances to a series of underground cave and fissure systems, which as yet have not been fully scientifically investigated, but which potentially are of considerable scientific interest.