

Notification Date: 8 April 1986

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: PENNY HILL BANK

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS

SITE REF: 15 WSG

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, Malvern Hills District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 754616

Area: 0.9 (ha.) 2.1 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138 & 150

1:10,000: SO 76 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1975

Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Owner and managed by Worcestershire Nature Conservation Trust as a nature reserve.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Penny Hill Bank is an area of Silurian limestone grassland situated on an east facing slope of one of a small range of hills lying to the north of the Malverns.

The Silurian limestone grasslands of the West Midlands are small in extent and of particular interest as their vegetational communities are considered to be an important link between the grasslands of the Oolitic limestone of the Cotswolds and those of the Carboniferous limestone of the Wye Valley and South Wales. This site has been selected as one of the remaining examples of this type of habitat still surviving in Worcestershire.

Over one hundred species of plants have been recorded. Characteristically the dominant grass species is upright brome *Bromus erectus*, associated with yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and quaking grass *Briza media*. The herb component contains many locally uncommon species including autumn gentian *Gentianella armarella*, common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, bee orchid *Ophrys apifera* and greater butterfly orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*. Dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, a species associated with Silurian limestone grassland, is also present.

A small area of mixed scrub occurs in the northern part of the site.

More than twenty species of butterfly have been recorded including marbled white *Melanargia galathea*, brown argus *Aricia agestis* and dingy skipper *Erynnis tages*, all of which are local in Worcestershire. The site also supports a population of glow worms *Lampyris noctiluca*, an insect which has become rare in Britain in recent years.