

Notification date: 13 January 1989

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

SITE NAME: CHROME AND
PARKHOUSE HILLS

DISTRICT: DERBYSHIRE DALES

SITE REF: 15 WKE

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

Local Planning Authority: PEAK PARK JOINT PLANNING BOARD, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 075671 Area: 29.8 (ha.) 73.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 119 1:10,000: SK 06 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951 Date of Last Revision: 1972

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1989 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Site boundary alteration (deletion).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Chrome and Parkhouse Hills lie to the north of the River Dove on the Derbyshire–Staffordshire Border some 3 km (2 miles) north-west of Longnor. Their distinctive and unusual shapes are the result of erosion of massive reef limestones laid down in the Carboniferous Period. These are surrounded by blue-grey shales of Upper Carboniferous age making up the lower slopes of the hills. Soils are mainly shallow, well drained loams which grade through very shallow organic soils to bare rock on the hill tops.

The site is important for its limestone flora including the distinctive communities on the ungrazed rock ledges and steeper slopes. Acidic grassland communities are found on the deeper soils.

The short, species-rich limestone turf is dominated by sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* and meadow oat grass *Avenula pratensis* with typical calcicole (lime loving) plants including wild thyme *Thymus praecox*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, musk thistle *Carduus nutans* and common rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*.

The rock ledges which are not accessible to grazing animals, support a different community, including several nationally scarce species. On the southerly ledges and rock outcrops are found species such as limestone bedstraw *Galium sternerii*, wall whitlowgrass *Draba muralis*, hoary whitlowgrass *D. incana*, kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, orpine *Sedum telephium* and the hawkweed *Hieracium brittanicum* which is restricted to the Peak District. North facing ledges tend to be richer in ferns and tall herbs, with occasional stunted and wind-cut hazel *Corylus avellana*. Ferns include limestone polypody *Gymnocarpium robertianum*, brittle bladder fern *Cystopteris fragilis* and maidenhair spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes*.

The nationally rare Jacob's-ladder *Polemonium caeruleum* has its stronghold in the Peak District and grows in profusion in one area.

Within the site deeper pockets of acid soils occur with a corresponding and contrasting calcifuge (lime hating) flora with species such as heath bedstraw *Galium*

saxatile, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and some more local species, such as moonwort
Botrychium lunaria.