

Notification Date: 9 December 1986

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: GREAT DOWARD

DISTRICT: SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE

SITE REF: 15 WDB

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, South Herefordshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 549159, SO 548163

Area: 1.1 (ha.) 2.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 162

1:10,000: SO 51 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1969

Date of Last Revision: 1979

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

This site incorporates the two existing SSSI's of Kiln Tumps and Webbs Quarry. The site lies within the Wye Valley 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. Kiln Tumps is managed as a nature reserve by the Hereford and Radnor Nature Trust. Site boundary modified (extension).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site consists of two areas of limestone grassland, with associated scrub and woodland communities, situated on the south west facing slopes of the Great Doward Hill which lies above the River Wye between Symonds Yat and Monmouth.

The Doward hills represent the only major outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone in Hereford & Worcester. Formerly there were fairly extensive areas of unimproved limestone pasture on these hills, but very little now remains owing to agriculture improvement and afforestation. The site includes the two most important areas of limestone grassland on the hill.

Webbs Quarry is an area of old quarry workings, which over a long period has become colonised by a rich limestone flora. This includes such characteristic calcicole (lime-loving) species as salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, wild thyme *Thymus praecox*, wild basil *Clinopodium vulgare* and hairy violet *Viola hirta* as well as wild madder *Rubia peregrina* and fly orchid *Ophrys insectifera* both of which are of local distribution. Webbs Quarry is also important as a site for the nationally rare fingered sedge *Carex digitata*.

Kiln Tumps is an area of ancient limestone pasture, where the grassland community is exceptionally rich, with over 140 plant species recorded. These include less common species such as greater butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*, autumn lady's-tresses *Spiranthes spiralis* and green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*.

Both areas have been colonised by scrub communities which include wayfaring tree *Viburnum lantana* and buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus* both of which are rare in the south west midlands.

Webbs Quarry is bounded by an area of mature native woodland dominated by beech *Fagus sylvatica* associated with yew *Taxus baccata*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and common whitebeam *Sorbus aria*. The ground flora in the beech woodland is characteristically sparse, but includes broad-leaved helleborine *Epipactis helleborine*.

The association of grassland, scrub and woodland on the Great Doward provide habitats for the rich insect fauna, particularly butterfly species. These include marbled white *Melanargia galathea*, small pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria selene* and white admiral *Ladoga camilla* as well as the nationally restricted wood white *Leptidea sinapis* and pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne*. The only confirmed record for purple emperor *Apatura iris* in this part of the midlands is from Great Doward. Also present are two nationally restricted moths *Digitivalva perlipedella* and *Lobesia occidentis*.