

Notification Date: 31 July 1987

COUNTY: HEREFORD AND WORCESTER SITE NAME: UPPER HALL FARM,
QUARRY AND GRASSLAND

DISTRICT MALVERN HILLS SITE REF: 15 WQQ

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

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

National Grid Reference: SO 717384 Area: 8.5 (ha.) 20.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 149 1:10,000: SO 73 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1969 Date of Last Revision: 1973

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
Site boundary alteration (extension).

Description and Reasons for Notification:
Upper Hall Farm Quarry and Grassland is a complex of quarries, woodland, scrub and
grassland on the slopes of a Silurian limestone hill to the west of the Malvern Hills.

The site has been selected as one of the few remaining areas of unimproved Silurian
limestone grassland in this part of Britain, with associated scrub and woodland.
Silurian limestone grassland is nationally rare. The range of species here suggests a
geographical link between the Jurassic limestones of the Cotswolds and the
Carboniferous limestones of the south west and South Wales.

The fields, one of which is managed as a traditional hay meadow, have a
characteristically rich flora. A feature of all the fields is the dominance of upright brome
Zerna erecta. This is associated with other typical calcicole (lime loving) species such as
quaking grass *Briza media*, yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, sheep's-fescue
Festuca ovina, crested hair-grass *Koeleria cristata* and sweet vernal-grass
Anthoxanthum odoratum. Tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* which is common on the
Cotswold limestones is only present in one small area.

The south-west facing grassland has developed on thin soils overlying the limestone
and has a rich assemblage of herbaceous plants including common rock-rose
Helianthemum nummularium, wild thyme *Thymus praecox*, burnet saxifrage
Pimpinella saxifraga, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor* and dyer's greenweed *Genista
tinctoria*. The last species is recognised as a particular feature of Silurian limestone
grasslands.

The hay meadow overlies deeper and richer soils, and as a result taller plants occur such
as agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, wild basil *Clinopodium vulgare*, common knapweed
Centaurea nigra and field scabious *Knautia arvensis*.

The old disused quarries and their spoil heaps have developed rich plant communities
which include species such as autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, fairy flax *Linum
catharticum* and yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata*. A particular feature of these areas is
the great abundance of common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*.

Scrub and woodland has developed on the perimeter of the site mainly associated with old hedgerows. Shrubs include spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus*. Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* is the main species in the canopy of the small area of woodland.

The mosaic of woodland, scrub and grassland has encouraged a rich diversity of insect life particularly butterflies and moths. These include marbled white *Melanargia galathea*, dingy skipper *Erynnis tages*, and brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni* which is here on the western edge of its range. Wood white *Leptidea sinapis* has also been recorded in recent years. Four nationally rare species of micro-moth have also been recorded from the site including *Stigmella aceris*. This species has only been found at one other site in this part of Britain.