COUNTY: LEICESTERSHIRE/DERBYSHIRE SITE NAME: DIMMINSDALE

DISTRICT: NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE/SOUTH DERBYSHIRE

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

Local Planning Authority: NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL, South Derbyshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 377 218 Area: 37 (ha.) 91.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 1:10,000: SK 32 SE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
Formerly known as 'Staunton Harold Reservoir SSSI'.

Description and Reasons for Notification:
This site contains ancient semi-natural woodland of a type uncommon in lowland Britain, one of the largest areas of unimproved acidic grassland remaining in Leicestershire and disused lead workings of national geological importance.

Biology
The western slopes of Spring Wood support stands of alder *Alnus glutinosa* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* over a ground flora dominated by tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas* and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. The wetter hollows support lady fern *Athyrium filix-femina*, remote sedge *Carex remota*, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and locally uncommon species such as large bitter-cress *Cardamine amara* and thin-spiked wood-sedge *Carex strigosa*.

Secondary woodland around old water-filled limestone quarries reflects marked differences in the underlying geology: stands of ash and alder in the valley bottom, with a rich ground flora of lime-loving plants such as giant bellflower *Campanula latifolia* and hart's-tongue fern *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, give way to stands of birch *Betula* spp and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* with an acidic woodland ground flora on the millstone grit slopes above.

Extensive areas of unimproved grassland also overlie the millstone grit and are dominated by brown bent *Agrostis vinealis*, wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* and sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*, with frequent heath grass *Danthonia decumbens*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and harebell *Campanula rotundifolia.*

Geology
Earl Ferrers mines have enormous potential for the study of mineral genesis. The association of galena (two generations), zinc blende, chalcopyrite, calcite (two generations), baryte, dolomite and abundant asphaltite is characteristic only of this locality. The mineralising mechanism is unknown but may be related to neptunean mineralisation of Hercynian age invading the Karst topography in Triassic times. The sequence of formation of the mineral veins is complex and contains many elements, but is little understood. Specimens from this locality appear in all the major mineral collections in Britain and in many other parts of the World. All show controversial features which make the material unique. Much more intense research is required to build upon King's records of the essential mineralogical data.

Date Notified: 12 December 1986