

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: TITTERSTONE CLEE

DISTRICT: SOUTH SHROPSHIRE

SITE REF: 15WJE

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

Local Planning Authority: SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, South Shropshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 595780

Area: 426.4 (ha.) 1053.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 138

1:10,000: SO 57 NE, SO 67 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1963

Date of Last Revision: 1963

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: –

#### Other Information:

Most of the site is registered as common land.  
Boundary alteration (extension & reduction).

#### Description and Reasons for Notification:

A prominent hill in South Shropshire composed of marls and sandstones of the Old Red Sandstone, overlain by shales and coals of the Middle and Lower Coal Measures and capped with dolerite. The site includes, at Benson's Brook, geological exposures of national importance.

#### Biology

Much of this site is rough acidic grassland or bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and includes a series of disused quarries. The flushes and block scree communities are of particular interest.

The block scree, composed of large angular boulders, occurs near the summit of the hill. It is particularly interesting for its moss flora, which includes some upland species which are rare in Shropshire, e.g. *Rhacomitrium fasciculare*, *R. lanuginosum* and *Andreaea rupestris*. This habitat also supports rare ferns, such as parsley fern *Cryptogramma crispa*, mountain male-fern *Dryopteris oreades*, oak fern *Gymnocarpium dryopteris* and the fir clubmoss *Huperzia selago*.

Flushes, dominated by mosses, have formed around springs and alongside streams. The flora of the flushes includes bog pimpernel *Anagallis tenella*, marsh lousewort *Pedicularis palustris*, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, lesser skullcap *Scutellaria minor* and, at one of very few Shropshire localities, ivy-leaved bellflower *Wahlenbergia hederacea*.

Moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* is locally abundant on the quarry spoil heaps.

Breeding birds include wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* and whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*.

#### Geology

This is the most important exposure of coal bearing strata in the Clee Hill Coalfield, clearly showing a sequence of grey shales and sandstones which lie conformably on the Cornbrook Sandstone Formation. Here there is an unusual concentration of sandstones compared with sequences of the same age in the Wyre Forest and Coalbrookdale coalfields, probably because, during Westphalian times, the Clee Hill Coalfield was near the southern edge of the main European basin of Coal Measures deposition (extending from Eire to Silesia in Poland). The site is also of significance because it yields fossil plants, indicating that these beds are middle Westphalian (probably lower Westphalian C) in age. The Clee

Hill sequence provides important evidence for the reconstruction of the palaeogeography of Britain during the middle Carboniferous and so, as the best available exposure, this site is of considerable geological significance.