SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 25 MARCH 1997

COUNTY: SOMERSET SITE NAME: HURCOTT LANE CUTTING

DISTRICT: SOUTH SOMERSET

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

Local Planning Authority: SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL, South Somerset District Council

National Grid Reference: ST 3985 1635 Area: 0.48 (ha.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 193 1:10,000: ST 31 NE, ST 41 NW

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1996, 1997 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
Hurcott Lane Cutting is a new GCR site.

Description and reasons for notification:
Hurcott Lane Cutting is located approximately 1 kilometre south of Shepton Beauchamp and 4 kilometres north east of Ilminster. The site includes the eastern and western sides of the sunken lane and extends south from the Hurcott-Shepton Beauchamp crossroads for a distance of 215 metres.

The rocks exposed in the lane cutting comprise Lower Jurassic (Toarcian) aged rubbly to massive pale limestones and marls belonging to the 'Barrington Member' of the Upper Lias 'Junction Bed' Formation. The total sequence exposed is at least 2.6 metres thick and includes a capping of upper Toarcian Yeovil Sands. The 'Junction Bed' strata are very fossiliferous, yielding numerous ammonites including the characteristic genera *Harpoceras*, *Hildoceras*, *Dactylioceras*, *Haugia*, *Phymatoceras*, *Grammoceras* and *Pseudogrammoceras*. Hildoceratid ammonites are prevalent over dactylioceratid forms and represent a virtually complete sequence through the 'Junction Bed' facies encompassing the Falciferum (upper part), Bifrons, Variabilis and Thouarsense Zones. The Bifrons Zone also commonly contains fossil belemnites, bivalves and nautiloids, *Cenoceras*.

Hurcott Lane Cutting is the best available representative section through the classic 'Junction Bed' facies of south Somerset and provides a suitable reference locality for the formal definition of the 'Barrington Member'. The site is of national importance for Toarcian biostratigraphy and palaeobiogeography. The ammonite faunas are of particular importance for international correlation and show strong Sub-Mediterranean affinities.