

**COUNTY:** BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

**SITE NAME:** TURVILLE HILL

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

**Local Planning Authorities:** Wycombe District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council

**National Grid Reference:** SU769913

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 175 **1:10,000:** SU79 SE

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1984 **Date of Last Revision:**

**Area:** 2.19 ha 54.1 ac

**Other information:** Within the Chilterns AONB.

### **Description and Reasons for Notification**

A steep slope of mainly south-westerly aspect, well known for its windmill and spectacular views of the Turville and Hambleden valleys, and containing the largest and finest example of grazed chalk grassland remaining in the southern part of the Buckinghamshire Chilterns. There is an exceptional variety of attractive plants, and the invertebrate fauna includes two rare and declining butterfly species of national importance.

Among the numerous chalk plants are Chiltern gentian *Gentianella germanica* (abundant here, particularly in the rough turf of the westernmost field, but rare outside the region), houndstongue *Cynoglossum officinale*, verain *Verbena officinalis* and fragrant, pyramidal, bee and autumn ladies' tresses orchids *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, *Ophrys apifera* and *Spiranthes spiralis*. The latter is particularly uncommon in the county.

The flora includes larval food plants for the important butterflies of the site. Sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* has special significance here since its occurrence (on the slopes east of the windmill) in scattered tufts interspersed with bare ground provides ideal habitat for the silver spotted skipper *Hesperia comma*, a national rarity of Red Data Book status. Horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa* is the food plant of the Adonis blue *Lysandra bellargus*, another nationally rare butterfly in its sole Buckinghamshire locality at Turville, as well as the beautiful chalk-hill blue *Lysandra coridon*. Larvae of the small blue *Cupido minimum* rely on kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*. Plants forming an important source of nectar for the adult insects include marjoram *Origanum vulgare*. A predator on some of the small invertebrates is the robber-fly *Asilus crabroniformis*, another Red Data Book species.

The pockets of scrub, scattered trees, cleared woodland and wood-edge communities provide additional habitats of supplementary importance. Unusual for an essentially grassland site is spurge laurel *Daphne laureola*. Wayfaring tree *Viburnum lantana* supports the rare orange clearwing moth *Aegeria andrenaeformis*.