

Submission : PINS Ref. CROW/8/M/04/ 3144 Sancton Dale south of Dale Road

Case Officer : Paul Eland

From : Martin Biggs
Area Access Officer
East Yorkshire & Derwent Area of the
Ramblers' Association
Wynstow
7 Caedmon Close
York YO31 1HS

Tel 01904 424072

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Contents

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Methodology**
- 3 Comments on the Grounds of Appeal**
- 4 Site Map and photographic views**

1 Introduction

This submission is made on behalf of the Ramblers' Association (RA) in the interests of those who wish to exercise the right to enter and remain on access land for the purposes of open air recreation as conferred by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW).

The submission seeks to prove that the site qualifies as 'down' under the terms of the CROW Act and that the appeal is invalid.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 Botanical evidence :** the botanical evidence consists of an analysis of historical survey data which was supplemented by site visits by a team of specially trained volunteers. The basis for this analysis is fully described in the document entitled "Habitat classification systems and data sets used". We have supplied Jenny Tynan at the PINS office with an electronic copy of this document and she has undertaken to produce and distribute copies to each inspector and all the parties to an appeal where we have submitted evidence.
- 2.2 Geological evidence :** we have cited the National Landscape Typology Definitive Attributes Survey (taken from www.magic.gov.uk) as geological proof of the calcareous nature of the underlying soil where it applies to the site being submitted.

2.3 Topographical evidence : we have described the topography of the site as observed from the site visits wherever this was possible and in many cases have submitted photographs to support our view that the area does qualify as ‘open country’. We have also cited countryside stewardship agreements and archaeological evidence where appropriate.

2.4 Previously submitted evidence : much of the evidence referred to above was submitted to the Countryside Agency (CA) at the Draft Map stage. Where this is the case we have simply summarised the main points in this submission, as we understand that the CA will have sent copies of all such evidence to the inspector.

The inspector should have the following documents in relation to this appeal, under the heading

RA Map Ref no 43, Sancton Dale (area A)

- 1 A submission form containing the text setting out the evidence for the inclusion of the site on the map.
- 2 A species list of grasses and herbs indicating the nature of the grassland*
- 3 A map identifying the site marked with references to the text.
- 4 An aerial photograph of the site.
- 5 A map showing the extent of such features as the Grassland Inventory, and Countryside Stewardship Agreements where these apply to the site (taken from www.magic.gov.uk)

3 Comments on the Grounds of Appeal

We disagree with the appellant’s ground of appeal, which is:

3.1 Ground 4.....the land is outside your mapping description of “open country”

The description of ‘down’ given in the Countryside Agency’s (CA) Mapping Methodology (MME) (revised July 2002) [2] is as follows:

In describing down as being ‘generally within an open landscape’ we mean that, whilst individual parcels might comprise enclosures of varying size, they will be part of a typical chalk or limestone landscape, sometimes with open vistas across undulating countryside and sometimes comprising steep-sided scarp slopes and dry valleys with more limited views”.

The site complies with this description being in one of a number of steep-sided dales in this area of the southern Yorkshire Wolds. We enclose photographic evidence which supports this view.

- 3.2** The appellant makes no comment about the vegetation in his appeal. In order to add further weight to the fact that we believe this area is unimproved calcareous grassland we add the following comments to our submission.

The Phase II Habitat Survey which was carried out in this area of Sancton Dale recorded a number of calcicolous indicator species which are listed in the RA submission after the Draft Map was published [3]. During a visit to the site in December 2004 salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, crested hair-grass *Koeleria macrantha*, fescues *Festuca* spp and tor grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* were seen which are indicative of unimproved calcareous grassland. Of these species, salad burnet, fairy flax and tor grass are listed in the Inspectors' Handbook [1] as key plant indicator species for downland.

3.3 Summary

The Agency's criteria for identifying Down include:

- (a) the equivalence of 'down' to 'unimproved calcareous grassland'
- (b) the recognition of the Yorkshire Wolds as being part of the English downland.

We think, on the basis of the information we have provided previously [3] and the additional information provided here that this area qualifies as 'down' as a result of its vegetation, which is predominantly unimproved calcareous grassland, and its degree of openness.

3.4 Conclusion

We therefore conclude the Countryside Agency has correctly mapped the area as open country on the Provisional Map.

References

- [1] Inspectors' Handbook, (a) Annexe 5.4.2, (b) Annexe 5.4.3, (c) Annexe 5.4.7.3.
- [2] A Survey of Chalk Grassland in Humberside and North Yorkshire, England Field Unit, Project 30, M J Wiggington (Coordinator), 1985.
- [3] Ramblers' Association's Comments on the Draft Map, Ref.no 43, area A, Sancton Dale, November 2003.
- [4] Mapping Methodology for England, Countryside Agency, (revised) July 2002.

