

Ramblers' Association East Yorkshire and Derwent Area	East Region 8	Sheet 1 of 1
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RA Map	Site references	Name on Map	OS Grid Ref	Area (ha)	Parcels
7	A B C D E	Horse Dale, Harper Dale & Holm Dale	SE 87 56		
Qualifying type	Vegetation Type	Justification for inclusion			
Mountain	Heather Moor	Predominance of qualifying type (M, M, H, D)			
Moor	Rough acid grassland	Contiguous to large parcel of open country			
Heath	Calcareous grassland	*	Contiguous to existing access land or common land		
Down	Scattered trees or scrub	*	Provides clearer physical boundary to larger area		
	Bracken		Local value of small parcel (view, feature, accessible, PROW etc)		
	Rock outcrops		Provides means of access to other access land		
			Steep sided		

This submission supports the inclusion of the area already shown on the draft map and seeks to extend the boundaries of open country.

Description of land submitted

The site defined as Horse Dale, Harper Dale and Holm Dale consists of three unimproved chalk grassland banks within adjacent dry valleys, which converge to form a star-shape.

Comments supporting vegetation type and justification for inclusion:

Phase II Habitat survey for the whole site recorded 19 grasses and 64 other herbs, of which 25 were calcicolous indicator species. Analysis of the data showed that the composition of the swards corresponded to mosaics of NVC CG2 and CG4 communities (see Table).

The north-west facing bank of Horse Dale (A) and the south-west facing slope of Holm Dale (C) are **SSSIs** and are described in the citation as unimproved chalk grassland banks within adjacent dry valleys. These two banks and the south-east facing bank of Horse Dale (B) are described in the Phase II survey. The north-east facing bank of Holm Dale (D) is a CSA (Chalk and Limestone). The un-named dale (E) running north-east from the junction, has not been surveyed in detail but inspection of aerial photographs of areas D and E suggest that they have a similar vegetation cover to that of areas A, B and C.

The north-west facing bank of Horse Dale (A) include swards of chalk grassland sub-communities CG2c and CG4c. The **SSSI** citation states that sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* is dominant over much of A with a variety of other fine grasses including sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, quaking grass *Briza media*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, crested hair-grass, *Koeleria macrantha*, and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. Tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* is locally abundant. Predominantly calcicolous herbs (indicators) characteristic of chalk recorded in area A include: rock rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, hairy violet *Viola hirta*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, field scabious *Knautia arvensis*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, lesser (hairy) hawkbit *Leontodon taraxacoides*, purging (fairy) flax *Linum catharticum*, burnet saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, cowslip *Primula veris*, bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor* and devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*.

The south-east facing bank of Horse Dale (B) supports the chalk grasslands sub-communities CG2d and CG4c. 9 species of grass were recorded with sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* predominant. Chalk grassland indicator herbs include: rock rose *H. nummularium*, glaucous sedge *C. flacca*, lady's bedstraw *G. verum*, field scabious *K. arvensis*, lesser (hairy) hawkbit, *L. taraxacoides*, burnet saxifrage *P. saxifraga*, cowslip *P. veris*, bulbous buttercup *R. bulbosus*, salad burnet *S. minor*.

The vegetation on the south-west facing slope of Holm Dale is a mosaic of coarse tor-grass (CG4c) interspersed with short turf areas including sheep's fescue and another 7 species, maintained by cattle and rabbit grazing. The SSSI citation states that the closely grazed sheep's fescue grassland is extremely species-rich, with abundant harebell, felwort *Gentianella amarella*, bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, thyme *Thymus praecox*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella* and the following indicator species: glaucous sedge *C. flacca*, lady's bedstraw *G. verum*, cowslip *P. veris*, burnet saxifrage *P. saxifraga*, lesser (hairy) hawkbit *L. taraxacoides*, salad burnet *S. minor*, bulbous buttercup *R. bulbosus*, rough hawkbit *L. hispidus*, purging flax *Linum catharticum*, rock rose *H. nummularium*, small scabious *S. columbaria* and hairy violet *Viola hirta*.

Our study of **aerial photographs**, taken in 2000, suggests that areas A, B and C have not been improved since the Phase II survey.

Conclusion

We think the evidence presented here suggests that the area mapped is predominantly unimproved calcareous grassland and should be mapped as open country.

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