

Submission : PINS Ref. CROW/8/M/04/3505 Woo Dale

Case Officer : Sarah Harper

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

Tel 01904 424072

Date : 5 January 2005

Contents

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

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

2.3 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 33 Woo Dale

- 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, SSSI's 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 "... the appeal site consists predominantly of semi-improved and improved grassland which are non-qualifying vegetation types. Accordingly, this site fails the definition of Open Country set out within Section 1(2) of the CROW Act 2000."

3.2 Comment The appellant's contention that the site is predominantly semi-improved and improved grassland is based on the evidence of a vegetation survey, which he intends to submit at a later stage. Unfortunately the appeal timetable does not permit us to view this evidence prior to the deadline for presenting this submission. We therefore wish to give notice that we would hope to have the opportunity to comment on this survey at the hearing.

The area under appeal is the extreme South West tip of Long Dale and its southern appendage Woo Dale. The rest of Long Dale is in Region 5 and has been subject to 3 separate appeals in 2004 (CROW/5/M/04/2479, 2484 and 2238) all of which were dismissed. It is geographically part of the complex of dales lying to the south of Thixendale Village.

Our current view, detailed in the evidence submitted at the draft map stage and referred to above, is based on

- (i) The Phase II Habitat survey of the Long Dale included a broad selection of grasses and herbs of which 8 were calcicolous indicator species.
- (ii) The National Landscape Typology attributes for the area are RLE

(iii) The dale is listed in the Grasslands Inventory

(iv) The site is part of an SSSI (1004472) the citation for which (1985) provides added information on the species present. The management statement from English Nature requires it to remain agriculturally unimproved and it was visited by English Nature in 2003.

(v) Aerial photographs taken in 2000.

(vi) There is currently no public access to the site (but will be when the Open Access provisions for region 5 come into force later in 2005) . The site was however observed during a site visit during the hearing on October 12 2004 for appeals CROW/5/M/04/2479 and 2484 which are directly contiguous. The site appeared very similar to the other south facing slopes with a diversity of calcicolous species.

(vii) The site complies precisely with the description of the open character of ‘down’ as given in the Countryside Agency’s Mapping Methodology (revised July 2002) being part of a steep-sided dale typical of the Yorkshire Wolds.

We consider, on the evidence available to us, that the area is predominantly unimproved calcareous grassland.

3.3 Conclusion

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