

## Leeds Nature Area – Evaluation Against Local Wildlife Site Criteria

<b>Site Name/ Code:</b> Barnbow Common, SEGI 04	<b>Location:</b> about 2.5km east of Seacroft and Crossgates
<b>Date of Survey:</b> 28/08/2013 – 29/08/2013	<b>Surveyor:</b> E. Skinner, West Yorkshire Ecology
<b>Grid Reference:</b> SE386348	<b>Site Area (Ha):</b> 18.00 proposed LWS boundary (21.39 original SEGI boundary)
<b>Natural Area:</b> Coal Measures	<b>Public Access:</b> yes, to most of site
<b>NVC Communities:</b> MG5, MG9, M27, U4, W10, W15, W16	

### Site Description

The Barnbow Common site is located about 2.5km to the east of central Crossgates and Seacroft. A munitions factory was located on this site and there are some archaeological remains that are of interest. The site is bordered by agricultural land; crop fields and grazing land. The cock beck runs through the site, from west to east. The habitats present comprise of unimproved neutral grassland, mire/ swamp, scrub and woodland.

The area of highest botanical interest is to the central part of the site and is MG9 unimproved neutral grassland with scattered scrub. Species present include abundant *Deschampsia cespitosa*, occasional *Stellaria graminea*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Trifolium medium*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Pimpinella major*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Crataegus monogyna*, locally abundant *Juncus acutiflorus*, and locally frequent *Silvaum silaus* and *Juncus conglomeratus*.

There is also a field, to the central part of the site, which is host to MG5 neutral grassland. This has been grazed but was not being grazed at the time of the survey visit. The species list consists of frequent *Festuca rubra*, occasional *Agrostis stolonifera*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Lathyrus pratensis*, *Lotus pedunculatus* and *Trifolium pratense*, and rare *Agrimonia eupatoria*, *Silvaum silaus*, *Stachys officinalis*, *Succisa pratensis* and *Stellaria graminea*.

There is a tiny patch of U1 acid grassland within this field, which contains abundant *Festuca ovina* and occasional *Rumex acetosella*.

There is also a banked up strip in this field, which has MG1 grassland established along it.

To the northern arm of the site there is a woodland area. This contains W10, W15 and W16 acidic woodland communities. The W10 has a canopy layer of abundant *Betula pubescens* and occasional *Quercus petraea*, with a shrub layer of: occasional *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Betula pubescens*, *Acer campestre* and *Quercus robur*. The ground flora contains species such as: frequent *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, occasional *Rubus fruticosus* and *Deschampsia cespitosa*, locally abundant *Holcus mollis* and rare *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Digitalis purpurea* and *Dryopteris dilatata*.

The W15 covers most of the northern and western parts of the wood and is host to abundant *Fagus sylvatica*, frequent *Acer pseudoplatanus* in the canopy and occasional *Pinus sylvestris* in the canopy, with frequent *Rubus fruticosus*, locally

abundant *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and occasional *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Agrostis capillaris* and *Dryopteris filix-mas* in the ground flora.

The W16 is only present to the south-west corner of the woodland and has a canopy of *Pinus sylvestris*, with *Ilex aquifolium* rare in the shrub layer and in the ground flora are: frequent *Agrostis capillaris*, occasional *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Deschampsia flexuosa* and *Lonicera periclymenum*.

To the south of the beck there is a grazed area of grassland to the west, with patches of *Crataegus monogyna*. This is B22 semi-improved neutral grassland, with frequent *Festuca rubra* and *Agrostis capillaris*, occasional *Dactylis glomerata*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Rumex acetosa* and *Sanguisorba officinalis* and rare *Cardamine pratense*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Pilosella major* and *Succisa pratensis*.

To the east of this, there is a dense stand of S4 *Phragmites australis* as well as some dense M27 mire, in which *Filipendula ulmaria* is abundant, *Angelica sylvestris* is frequent and *Lathyrus pratensis* is occasional. There is also some more of the MG9 vegetation with scattered scrub.

To the central part of site, around the eastern boundary, there is a broad dense area of scrub. The most abundant species is *Crataegus monogyna*, with some *Salix caprea*.

The southern end of the site contains a mix of U4 acid grassland and quite heavily grazed neutral grassland, which is somewhat less species diverse than those grasslands described above. The dominant species in the neutral grassland are *Holcus lanatus* and *Agrostis capillaris*, with areas of more acidic grassland also being host to these grasses as well as: *Lotus corniculatus*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Luzula multiflora* and *Potentilla erecta*.

There was a range of fauna recorded during the site visit: great tit (alarm calling), red kite (flying low over adjacent field), whitethroat (in dense tall herb), wood pigeon (singing male) and blackbird (alarm call). Two hind roe deer were seen in the woodland, a shrew was heard calling in the grassland and mole hills were seen. Invertebrates seen on site were: peacock and green-veined white butterflies, cranefly adults, 7-spot ladybird, harlequin ladybird, common carder bee, red-tailed bumble-bee and freshwater shrimp in the beck.

### **Ecological Evaluation**

The MG5 grassland meets Criteria Gr1, as it is an uncommon grassland type and is well over the minimum size threshold of 0.1ha.

The MG9 grassland, with scattered scrub, meets Criteria Gr3, as it is host to a good diversity of species, 17 in total, with 9 being greater than a rare DAFOR abundance level. The minimum threshold for Gr3 is 8 points.

The woodland, to the northern part of the site, meets Criteria Wd5, as it contains some dense bluebell cover: 40% DOMIN density or greater across about 10 – 15% of the woodland floor.

This site also has archaeological interest, and is a designated archaeological site.