

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 22 AUGUST 1986

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE
GRIPS

SITE NAME: HOLLINHILL AND MARKLAND

DISTRICT: BOLSOVER

SITE REF: 15 WMT

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

Local Planning Authority: DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, Bolsover District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 510750

Area: 20.7 (ha.) 51.1 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 120

1:10,000: SK 57 SW, SK 57 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1963

Date of Last Revision: 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Site boundary modified (extension & reduction).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Hollinhill and Markland Grips lie between Clowne and Cresswell in the north east corner of Derbyshire. The site lies on the narrow band of Magnesian Limestone which runs south from Durham to the Derbyshire-Nottinghamshire border. At this southern end it is cut by a series of valleys often with vertical cliff-like sides, one of the most striking examples of which is known as Hollinhill and Markland Grips.

Hollinhill and Markland Grips run east-west consequently there is a contrast between the vegetation of the north and south facing slopes and cliffs, the north facing being moist and subject to less temperature fluctuation. Magnesian and Carboniferous limestone grasslands in Derbyshire differ from each other in the presence or relative abundance of a number of plants that cannot be accounted for by differences in altitude, topography or climate. Tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* dominates the dryer Magnesian Limestone grasslands but is uncommon on the Carboniferous Limestone. Common centaury *Centaureum erythraea* like tor grass is uncommon on the Carboniferous but common on the Magnesian Limestone and yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* is common in wetter areas in the Magnesian Limestone but absent from semi-natural sites on the Carboniferous Limestone.

Unimproved Magnesian Limestone grassland is generally uncommon and at many sites has been depleted by scrub and woodland encroachment. At Hollinhill and Markland Grips larger areas have survived than at other similar sites. The floor of Markland Grips consists of damp calcareous grassland which is grazed. The presence of adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, confirms its unimproved nature. The warmer dryer grassland below the south facing crags is locally dominated by tor grass. However on the plateau, in clearings in the scrub and woodland and above the edges of the crags grassland is dominated by false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum* and glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*. In places the nationally rare soft-leaved sedge *Carex montana* occurs with saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and other more common calcareous grassland herbs. In one area where the valley opens out to a less steep profile red fescue *Festuca rubra* and spring-sedge *Carex caryophyllea* are dominant with common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* and salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor* and a wide range of other species. In this area another notable species the rare spring-sedge *Carex ericetorum* is present.

The woodland and scrub on the crags and on the scree below is very varied with pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and birch *Betula pubescens* and *Betula pendula* where the soils have become leached and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and wych elm *Ulmus glabra* elsewhere with small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis*. Of particular note is the presence of the nationally rare large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos* along the cliff top and the abundance of yew *Taxus baccata* along the cliff edge. The scarce wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus* is scattered throughout the woodland. The scrub is notable for the presence of alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus* here found in dryer and more calcareous conditions than elsewhere in Derbyshire. Hazel *Corylus avellana* is the dominant shrub on the cliff tops and edges but elder *Sambucus nigra* is dominant in the moist areas below the cliffs and on the scree. The nationally rare mountain currant *Ribes alpinum* is present in these areas.

Little is at present known about the fauna of the grips although the scrub is important for many nesting birds and provides winter food for many others. What is known of the invertebrates suggests that a rich fauna is present.

Hollinhill and Markland Grips are part of a series of international archaeological and geological sites centered on Cresswell Crags which are of interest for their Quaternary deposits.