

County: Humberside

Site Name: Cottam Well Dale

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

Local Planning Authority: East Yorkshire Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SE 975637

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 101 **1:10,000:** SE 96 SE

Area: 23.3 (ha) 57.5 (ac)

First Notified: 1985

Description:

Cottam Well Dale is a chalk grassland site lying on the eastern side of a dry valley with mainly westerly and north-westerly aspects. The site contains both grazed and ungrazed sections, with varying amounts of scrub invasions.

In the northern grazed unit, sheep's fescue and red fescue *Festuca ovina* and *F. rubra* and other fine grasses dominate large areas rich in characteristic herbs; widespread species include harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, clustered bellflower *C. glomerata*, lesser knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, felwort *Gentianella amarella*, rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and thyme *Thymus praecox*. Although coarser grasses such as tor grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* and upright brome *Bromus erectus* are present in the sward, they have generally been kept in check by grazing.

The two southern banks are ungrazed and support a coarse growth of tor grass and oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* with invading hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* scrub. However these areas are still locally rich with many of the above herbs.

The grassland is also rich in insects with 16 species of butterfly and several uncommon beetles recorded.