

Date Notified: 13 March 1990

File ref: (L) SD 51/2

**County:** Lancashire **Site Name:** Charnock Richard Pasture

**District:** Chorley

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Chorley Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SD 564154 **Area:** 1.2 (ha) 3.0 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 108 **1:10,000:** SD 51 NE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** – **Date of Last Revision:** –

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1990 **Date of Last Revision:** –

**Other Information:**

1. This is a new site.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

This site lies at an altitude of about 60 m OD in the valley of the Clancutt Brook, which flows between the villages of Coppull and Charnock Richard, to the southwest of Chorley. It is important as one of the few species-rich unimproved grasslands remaining in Lancashire, a habitat which is becoming increasingly scarce nationally due to agricultural intensification.

Much of the field is on a steep, south-facing slope, although the ground levels out towards the brook which borders the site to the south. The main vegetation community type is knapweed – crested dog's-tail grassland growing on a thin, dry soil. This encloses smaller flushed and acidic areas which support additional plants. As a whole the pasture is exceptionally diverse, with over 120 plant species recorded, including 26 grasses. Many of these species are characteristic of old meadows, for example pignut *Conopodium majus*, lady's mantle *Alchemilla xanthochlora*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*.

The drier areas support an abundance of yellow rattle, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, the latter a plant that can only thrive where grazing pressures are not heavy. Also present is adder's-tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, which is very susceptible to agricultural improvement. Other plants of interest include common centaury *Centaureum erythraea*, burnet saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga* and common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*.

Water seepage on the slope has led to the formation of wetter, flushed areas. Here sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and jointed rush *Juncus articulatum* dominate whilst selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and greater birdsfoot trefoil *Lotus uliginosus* are also abundant.