

County: Lancashire **Site Name:** Jack Scout

District: Lancaster

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

Local Planning Authority: Lancaster City Council

National Grid Reference: SD 459737 **Area:** 6.63 (ha) 16.38 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50 000 97 **1:10 000** SD 47 SE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1991 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

1. This site is within the Arnside–Silverdale AONB
2. The Lancashire whitebeam *Sorbus lanceolata* is listed in the British Red Data Book, ‘Vascular Plants’.
3. The western boundary of the site is contiguous with the boundary of Morecambe Bay SSSI.
4. The site is subject to a Limestone Pavement Order under Section 34(2) of the Wildlife Countryside Act, 1981.
5. This is a new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Jack Scout lies about one and a quarter kilometres south of Silverdale village. The western boundary of the site is contiguous with the boundary of Morecambe Bay SSSI.

The site lies on Carboniferous limestone and is important for supporting an area of calcareous grassland, a habitat which is now highly restricted in its distribution. The site is also important for several rare and notable plants.

The limestone grassland found at Jack Scout consists of three different community types, which result from variations in the soil and topography of the site. The most extensive type found is blue moor-grass–limestone bedstraw *Sesleria albicans*–*Galium sternerii* grassland which has developed on thin soils over limestone slopes and outcrops. Both blue moor-grass and limestone bedstraw are

nationally scarce plants as are two other species found in this community, rare spring-sedge *Carex ericetorum* and spring sandwort *Minuartia verna*. Also present in this community is squinancy wort *Asperula cynanchica*, which is rare in north-west England, green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*, a plant which is declining nationally, a thriving colony of Autumn lady's tresses *Spiranthes spiralis* and local species such as dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and carline thistle *Carlina vulgaris*.

On the deeper soils at Jack Scout, derived from loess deposits over the calcareous bedrocks, two further communities have developed. The first is a species-rich sheep's fescue–moat oat-grass *Festuca ovina*–*Avenula pratensis* grassland in which the moss *Dicranum scoparium* is prominent. Other plants present are primrose *Primula vulgaris*, Autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, field gentian *Gentianella campestris* and bell heather *Erica cinerea*, the presence of the latter resulting from localised leaching of the loess deposits.

The second type of limestone grassland community which has developed on the deeper soil is sheep's fescue–common bent–wild thyme *Festuca ovina*–*Agrostis capillaris*–*Thymus praecox* grassland. This has a more acidic flora with species such as heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, mat-grass *Nardus stricta* and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*. It also supports many of the species common to the former communities, with, in addition, hairy sedge *Carex hirta*, heath speedwell *Veronica officinalis* and red clover *Trifolium pratense*.

The other important habitat at Jack Scout is broad-leaved semi-natural woodland dominated by ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and sessile oak *Quercus petraea*. Several rare species of trees are found here including the Lancastrian whitebeam *Sorbus lancastriensis*, rock whitebeam *Sorbus rupicola*, wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis* and the small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*. Also present are a number of mature juniper bushes and a ground flora which includes soft shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum* and wood melick *Melica uniflora*.

Other habitats present within the site include a small fragment of limestone pavement, maritime limestone cliffs and extensive scrub of gorse *Ulex europaeus*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*.