

**COUNTY:** NORTHAMPTONSHIRE    **SITE NAME:** RACECOURSE FARM FIELDS

**District:** East Northamptonshire

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

**Local Planning Authority:** East Northamptonshire District Council

**National Grid Reference:** TF 018042

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 141                      **1:10,000:** TF 00 SW

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1970                      **Date of Last Revision:** 1970

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1983                      **Date of Last Revision:**

**Area:** 4.6 ha 11.4 ac

**Other Information:** Part of the site shown on the previous schedule has been deleted.

### **Description and Reasons for Notification**

A small meadow on the site of a former limestone quarry, comprising an excellent example of grazed Jurassic limestone grassland. This vegetation type is confined to the Cotswolds and a discrete part of the East Midlands.

The short sward, produced by all year round grazing of sheep and cattle, shows interesting contrasts with the nearby Collyweston Quarries and Barnack Hills and Holes SSSIs. The sward is floristically-rich, parts containing more than 30 flowering plant species in a square metre.

Upright brome *Bromus erectus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, or tor grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* are the dominant grasses. Quaking grass *Briza media*, crested hair-grass *Koeleria cristata*, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and glaucous sedge *Carex flacca* are abundant throughout.

A number of county rarities and locally uncommon plants are present including rock rose *Helianthemum chamaecistus*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata*, small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria* and dodder *Cuscuta epithimum*.

Several small pits provide microclimatic and soil differences which extend the range of species and habitats; one pit has an exposure of geological interest.

Re-presentation of details approved by Council. Re-typed September 1999.