LAND AT UPPER PARK FARM, IPSTONES
ECOLOGICAL SCOPING STUDY.

INTRODUCTION

1. The main purpose of this report is to determine whether the site is improved or semi-improved grassland and whether there is anything else of special ecological interest on the site where it is intended to build a 40 metre by 20 metre all-weather riding area or manège.

2. Improved grasslands are those meadows and pastures which have not been ploughed or re-seeded or have not been so affected by heavy grazing, drainage, or the application of herbicides, inorganic fertilisers, slurry or high doses or manure that they have lost many of the original species which one could expect to find in an unimproved sward. Such grasslands are rare and rich in species diversity.

3. Improved grasslands are the opposite; these have been ploughed and re-seeded or heavily affected by heavy grazing, drainage, or the application of herbicides, inorganic fertilisers, slurry or high doses or manure and as a result have lost many of their species. They have a very limited range of grasses and few herbaceous flowering plants.

4. Semi-improved grassland is a transition category made up of grasslands which have been modified by artificial fertilisers, slurry, intensive grazing, herbicides or drainage, and consequently have a range of species which is less diverse and natural than unimproved grasslands. Such grasslands may still of some conservation value.

THE SITE

5. The application site forms part of a pasture field to the south-west of Upper Park Farm and is situated in the south-west corner of the field. The field is part on a hillside which falls from Ipstones Edge to the north site relatively steeply to Post Lane to the south. The site of the proposed development is a relatively flat (see photo) part of the field although it is not completely flat and slopes from west to east towards a small stream which crosses the farm track to the south-east. The fields on the farm are



The site looking south from the north

currently grazed by two horses and several sheep. The perimeter of the field is formed by drystone walls which are a common feature in the locality.

6. As can be seen in the photo on the previous page the grass is closely grazed with a continuous sward. The western and southern borders of the field contain flowers such as foxgloves, thistle and nettles. The main sward contains Creeping Buttercup, Ribwort Plantain, Dock and Dandelion. See below for the full list of botanical names.

THE SCOPING STUDY

7. Walk-over surveys took place on 20 April and 14 July this year. The site of the proposed development and the field generally were inspected. The surveys were carried out by Ken Wainman, a qualified landscape architect.

8. No sign of badgers was found during the survey.

9. The flora is consists of agricultural grasses with relatively few flowering species. The species identified were:

- Grasses:
    - Alopecus pratensis *(Meadow Foxtail).*
    - *Holcus lanatus* (Yorkshire Fog)
    - *Juncus effusus (Soft Rush*). In a damper patches but not on the application site.

- Flowering plants:

    <u>In main sward:</u>
    - *Plantago lanceolata* (Ribwort Plantain)
    - *Ranunculus repens* (Creeping Buttercup)
    - *Rumex obtusifolius* (Dock)
    - *Taraxacum spp.* (Dandelion)

    <u>In Field Edges</u>
    - *Cirsium vulgare* (Spear Thistle.
    - *Digitalis purpurea* (Foxglove)
    - *Urticaria dioica* (Nettle).

CONCLUSION

10. The field is improved grassland of little conservation value.