

## LANCASHIRE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

## LOWLAND MOSS & GRASSLAND/SCRUB

### Definition:

This represents the last remaining vestiges of a once widespread landscape, which three hundred years ago extended over many thousands of hectares. Lowland moss originated some 10,000 years ago developing in hollows left after glaciation or low-lying water-logged basins. It has been reduced through the cutting of peat for fuel and the improvement of land through drainage. Even in the small areas where lowland moss survives it has usually been truncated by earlier digging and has shrunk due to the dewatering of the surrounding improved farmland.

### Typical historical and archaeological components

The most significant archaeological component of the type is the likelihood of well-preserved prehistoric remains, both organic and inorganic, under and within the mossland peat. In addition mossland may contain evidence for early roads and tracks, boundary markers and failed reclamation schemes, which may include the layout of drainage ditches and sluices. Eroded areas of peat in West Lancashire, and particularly within the Fylde, show considerable potential for increasing the archaeological understanding as finds and sites become visible. However, preservation of such sites is severely compromised by the fact that erosion down through the peat has to take place to uncover these remains. This highlights the importance of the remaining areas of peat, both in this **Lowland Moss and Grassland/Scrub** HLC type and in the HLC **Enclosed Land** types derived from the drainage of former mossland. Areas of old grassland and scrub may preserve earthworks and other features as well as below-ground undisturbed archaeological deposits.

### Enhancing and safeguarding the type

- *Avoid development or changes in land management regimes that have a significant dewatering effect upon the surviving areas of lowland moss. All such proposals should be informed by an appropriate impact assessment that pays specific regard to the palaeo-environmental potential of the type.*
- *Encourage re-wetting options, primarily as a part of agri-environment scheme agreements.*
- *Preserve the last substantial site of surviving 'topmoss' in the county at Fenton's Cottage (SD 40404493).*
- *Much of the type is protected by SSSI legislation. Other designations such as SPA or Lancashire Biological Heritage Site status sometimes also apply.*
- *Those areas not so protected should be assessed for their possible inclusion as SSSIs.*
- *The mosses are important potential reservoirs of archaeological information and as such any proposed changes to them and their extent should be fully discussed with the Specialist Advisor for Archaeology and Heritage at Lancashire County Council.*