SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BALLYLYNAN

SITE CODE: 000857

About 5km south of Athy, between the village of Ballylynan and the River Barrow is found a system of wet meadows on calcium-rich glacial drift; those of the highest conservation significance have been designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA).

The land is poorly-draining and includes areas of undergrazed and rank grasslands with Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), invaded in places by Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), and wet, rushy grazed grasslands with Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*). Drainage ditches occur frequently and add a wetland dimension to the site, with such wetland species as water crowfoot (*Ranunculus* spp.) and water-starwort (*Callitriche* spp.) occurring. Areas of better-drained grassland found on the site support such species as Smooth Meadow-grass (*Poa pratensis*), Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) Meadow Fescue (*Festuca pratensis*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*).

The grassland vegetation here shows a continuity of sensitive management and it is evident that fertiliser has been generally used sparingly. Recently, botanically rich land in the area has been lost to forestry and intensive agriculture and further inroads into the site should be resisted. While there have been no great botanical discoveries on this site, the backdrop of a pastoral landscape that has become increasingly intensively farmed makes this a locally rare habitat.

12.11.2009