

**None of these fields have ever been sprayed or had artificial fertilisers used on them.**

**Historically, these fields were grazed with a combination of cattle and horses in the 1970's and then for a period of about 8 years in the 1980's with rare breeds of sheep, principally hebridean sheep. Fencing the sheep became problematic and expensive for such a poor quality area of grassland.**

**Therefore, a return was made to horse grazing – a series of paddocks were created and have been grazed as such through the 90's and up to the present day. Informal rabbit grazing plays an important role in the way the grassland is affected, particularly in the more central paddocks.**

**As you look up the hill, the cutting was reinstated in 2010 using tractor and cultivator – historically the cutting has been there for 200 years. Straw Hall itself is circa 500 years old and was originally a gamekeeper's cottage.**

**Typical species include cowslips, wild mint, marjoram, birdsfoot trefoil – there are potentially hundreds of species of wild flowers in this area and the field was considered in the early 1990s as an Area of Special Scientific Interest. However, it was not included as English Nature did not deem there to be a threat of the field being ploughed up.**

**Hardwick Estate Office June 2012**