

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

LOWER CAERFAELOG PASTURES

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1990
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SO 109737
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 136 1:25,000 Sheet number: SO 17
<u>Site Area:</u>	2.9 ha

Description:

This site comprises areas of damp pasture, fen and species-rich dry banks lying on either side of the Dorthau Brook north of Llanbister. The range of vegetation types present displays a great diversity of plant species, including some that are locally uncommon.

North of the brook, hillside springs give rise to pasture dominated by sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*. Associated species include soft-rush *J. effusus*, common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*, ragged-robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* and marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*. Purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and carnation sedge *Carex panicea* are locally prominent along with meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, which approaches the northern-most edge of its Welsh distribution here. Locally, the pasture is less rush-dominated, with abundant common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, and frequent sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, fescues *Festuca* spp., glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* subsp. *ericetorum*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, and red clover *Trifolium pratense*. Immediately adjacent to the brook the ground is wetter and species such as marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*, lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis*, white sedge *C. curta* and water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* are common components of the rush-dominated vegetation. Lesser pond-sedge achieves overall dominance in places and is accompanied by the locally uncommon wood club-rush *Scirpus sylvaticus*.

South of the brook the gently sloping ground supports extensive rush-dominated communities, similar to those described already, interspersed with purple moor-grass dominated vegetation supporting frequent common bent, sweet vernal-grass, sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina*, mat-grass *Nardus stricta*, carnation sedge, heath spotted-orchid, tormentil and devil's-bit scabious, with occasional heath wood-rush *Luzula multiflora* and

saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*. Drier hummocks within this damp pasture support a sward dominated by common bent, crested dog's-tail and fescues, with a variety of herbs including wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, devil's-bit scabious and the locally uncommon dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*.

The south-west corner of the site comprises a steep bank which supports an unusual community dominated by sheep's-fescue and common bent, with frequent heath bedstraw, pignut *Conopodium majus*, tormentil, harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, bitter-vetch *Lathyrus montanus*, common bird's-foot-trefoil, betony, devil's-bit scabious and mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella*. Also occurring occasionally here are quaking-grass, intermediate lady's-mantle *Alchemilla xanthochlora*, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga* and great burnet.

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