

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

MONMOUTHSHIRE

LOWER NEX MEADOWS, DEVAUDEN

Date of Notification: 1992

National Grid Reference: ST 479980

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 171
1:25,000 Sheet number: SO 49

Site Area: 2 ha

Description:

Lower Nex Meadows are situated to the south of the village of Devauden at an altitude of 210 metres. The underlying geology consists of Brownstones of the Old Red Sandstone and the soils are classified as brown earths of the Oglethorpe Association. The meadows slope gently to the south west and are freely drained. The site supports a traditionally managed unimproved neutral grassland community with a restricted distribution in Gwent.

The vegetation is uniform and is best described as the *Lathyrus pratensis* sub-community of the *Centaurea nigra* – *Cynosurus cristatus* type of neutral grassland. This site supports the largest area known in Gwent of this vegetation type.

The most frequent grasses are red fescue *Festuca rubra*, crested dog's tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. Quaking-grass *Briza media* is less frequent. Spring-sedge *Carex caryophyllea* is the only sedge species present.

A particularly noticeable feature of the meadows is the widespread abundance of oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, a reliable indicator of nutrient poor soils. Other herbs of interest include yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, cowslip *Primula veris*, eyebright *Euphrasia sp.* and betony *Stachys officinalis*. Orchids are well represented with heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, common twayblade *Listera ovata*, early-purple orchid *Orchis mascula* and green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*.

Remarks:

Adjoins the boundary of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

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