

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

**BRIDGEND
RHONDDA CYNON TAFF**

BRYNNA A WERN TARW

Date of Notification: 2003

National Grid Reference SS 974834

OS Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 170
1:10,000 Sheet number: SS 98 SE

Site Area: 130.7 ha

Description:

Bryнна a Wern Tarw is of special interest for its extensive area of mixed, species-rich lowland grassland, including significant areas of marshy and dry neutral grassland, and for the association of these habitats with others including broadleaved woodland and heath.

The site is located between the village of Bryнна and the hamlet of Wern Tarw, approximately 2 km north east of Pencoed and 8 km north east of Bridgend. It comprises a large number of enclosed pastures, interspersed with small woodlands and hedgerows which are often dominated by mature trees. The fields are located on gently-sloping land which ranges in altitude from 107 m in the north to 45 m in the south. The land is drained by small tributaries of the Ewenny River, principally the Nant Ciwc. The soils are surface-water gleys which overlie boulder clay over Coal Measures. Marshy and dry grassland both occur throughout the site, although most of the former is concentrated in the north-western block and most of the latter in the south and east.

The dry neutral grassland is typified by grasses such as common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*, with a range of broad-leaved herbs including common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*. In areas where the soil is a little more acidic, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and tormentil *Potentilla erecta* are frequent.

Much of the marshy grassland has abundant purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and is mildly base-enriched, with frequent meadow-thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, devil's-bit scabious, tormentil, and carnation sedge *Carex panicea*. In a few places the base-loving sedges tawny sedge *Carex hostiana* and flea sedge *Carex pulicaris* are frequent, and marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica* is present locally. Other areas of purple moor-grass pasture are more acidic; some are characterised by the frequency of grasses such as sweet vernal grass and common bent; others are more heathy and flushed, with cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and a low cover of bog mosses *Sphagnum species*.

In other places the marshy grassland is dominated by rushes, most commonly sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, accompanied by the sprawling herbs greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus*

pedunculatus and common marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*. A few areas of marshy grassland are dominated by velvet bent *Agrostis canina* and short sedges.

Other habitats on the site include broadleaved woodland, scrub, bracken and overgrown hedgerows, which form a continuous network throughout the site. There is also a very small amount of acid grassland. Small patches of acidic mire are scattered throughout the site. These are typified by purple moor-grass, carnation sedge, cross-leaved heath, common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium* and bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, with an underlying carpet of bog-mosses. Both wet and humid heath are also present; the latter is distinguished by western gorse *Ulex gallii*, bristle bent *Agrostis curtisii*, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and heather *Calluna vulgaris*.

Of note are populations of several uncommon plants, including whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*, petty whin *Genista anglica* and royal fern *Osmunda regalis*. The latter is rare in the eastern part of Glamorgan.

The site is a core area of habitat on which a metapopulation of the marsh fritillary butterfly *Eurodryas aurinia* is centred. In South Wales this species is confined to marshy grasslands such as these, where its food plant, devil's-bit scabious, grows in profusion. In addition, the hedgerows and areas of mature scrub, including those adjacent to the former railway line, provide habitat for dormice.

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