

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

RHOSYDD NANT-YR-HENFRON

Date of Notification: 1998

National Grid Reference: SO 067753

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 148
1:10,000 Sheet number: SO 16 NW, SO 17 SW

Site Area: 12 ha

Description:

The site is of special interest for its fen meadow, mire, wet heath, rush pasture and acidic flush vegetation types, which occur in a complex mosaic related to underlying variations in soil chemistry and moisture levels. It is one of the few large areas of such “rhos pasture” remaining in Radnorshire. Many such areas have been lost as a result of drainage and agricultural reclamation.

Rhosydd Nant-yr-henfron consists of a series of pastures in the Crychell Brook valley to the north of Abbey-cwm-hir. They are situated on a gentle east-facing slope at an altitude of approximately 365 metres. The characteristic vegetation has developed on acidic peaty soil with impeded drainage that overlies Silurian rocks of the Wenlock series.

Much of pasture is dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, with frequent tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and mat-grass *Nardus stricta*. In places species such as sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, heath wood-rush *Luzula multiflora* and heath grass *Danthonia decumbens* are prominent, but elsewhere there is a distinctive heathy element, including cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp.

In places the purple moor-grass sward is particularly species rich. Characteristic plants here include meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, flea sedge *Carex pulicaris*, sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, cross-leaved heath, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and tawny sedge *Carex hostiana*.

The wet heath vegetation also contains abundant purple moor-grass, but it is accompanied by frequent deergrass *Scirpus cespitosus*, cross-leaved heath, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, carnation sedge, bog asphodel, mat-grass and the bog-moss *Sphagnum papillosum*. Other characteristic plants here include devil's-bit scabious, heath milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* and petty whin *Genista anglica*.

The wetter hollows are largely dominated by sharp-flowered rush with a range of characteristic associates including Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus* and marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*. In places, around acidic springs, there are areas dominated by sharp-flowered rush and soft rush *Juncus effusus* with frequent sedges *Carex* spp. and bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp.

The wildlife value of the site is enhanced by the presence of an abundance of broadleaved trees along field boundaries, along with patches of acidic grassland on drier banks.

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