

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

BRYN-BWCH

Date of Notification: 1954, 1965, 1978, 1979, 1999

National Grid Reference: SN920108

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 160
1:10,000 Sheet number: SN 91 SW

Site Area: 10.3 ha

Description:

Bryn-bwch is of special interest for its extensive area of fen-meadow, with associated mire, wet heath and wet woodland communities. The fen-meadow community, which is characterised by the presence of meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, is a scarce and localised vegetation type in England and Wales.

The site comprises a series of contiguous enclosures, situated to the south of Ystradfellte. The land occupies a long narrow depression on a shoulder of land above the Afon Mellte at a height of 240 m. Drainage is impeded, with peaty soils overlying Carboniferous rocks of the Millstone Grit and Lwer Coal Measures.

Throughout the site, areas of fen-meadow, consisting of a short, well grazed and sedgy sward are interspersed with tall purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* tussocks. Meadow thistle, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, marsh valerian *Valerian dioica*, tawny sedge *C. hostiana*, yellow sedge *C. demissa* and bog pimpernel *Anagallis tenella* are all frequent. In the north of the site the community is grassier, and the central, most flushed area, has scattered common butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris* and abundant flea sedge *Carex pulicari*.

In the large northern enclosure there is a short, grassy, species-rich sward, where purple moor-grass is again dominant. Here it is accompanied by tormentil, common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium* carnation sedge, the mosses *Polytrichum commune* and *Aulacomnium palustre* and the bog mosses *Sphagnum papillosum* and *S. subnitens*. A small strip of mire at the northern end of the site is less heavily grazed. Here the purple moor grass forms dense tussocks and associated species include marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre* and meadow-sweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. There are also extensive areas of almost pure purple moor-grass throughout the site.

Within the mire vegetation there are patches of wet heath dominated by deergrass *Scirpus cespitosus* and the bog moss *Sphagnum papillosum*, with frequent purple moor-grass, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, common cotton-grass, mat grass *Nardus stricta* heath rush

Juncus squarrosus, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*, common sedge, *Carex nigra* and the liverwort *Odontoschisma sphagni*.

The site has several well-defined flushes where bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. are dominant. Associated species here include star sedge *Carex echinata*, purple moor-grass, round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, common sedge, carnation sedge, mat grass and sheep's fescue.

There are fringing stands of wet alder *Alnus glutinosa* and alder/ash *Fraxinus excelsior* woodland at the northern end of the site. The mire grades into grassland dominated by sheep's fescue and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* on the drier ground and additional interest is provided by a small clump of dry woodland containing old sessile oaks *Quercus petraea* close to Clyn-gwyn farmhouse.

Remarks:

This site lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park.

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