

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

MONMOUTHSHIRE

PLANTATION FARM AND THE GETHLEY

Date of Notification:

2002

National Grid Reference:

ST474974

O.S. Maps:

1:50,000 Sheet number: 171

1:10,000 Sheet number: ST 49 NE

Site Area:

17.1 ha

Description:

Plantation Farm and the Gethley SSSI is of special interest for its species-rich neutral grassland vegetation.

The site comprises a block of enclosures approximately 1.5 km south of Devauden. The land lies between 140 m and 240 m, generally with a south and east facing aspect. The relatively free-draining brown sandy soils are shallow in places and are derived from the underlying Old Red Sandstone. There are areas of impeded drainage, with a small collection of springs and flush lines in the central part of the site. The fields are enclosed by a network of hedgerows and mature trees.

Plantation Farm and the Gethley supports one of the largest remaining areas of unimproved neutral grassland in Monmouthshire. This grassland is characteristic of traditional low-input management regimes and has become increasingly rare in recent decades due to agricultural intensification. The grassland generally contains a high cover of herb species, typically common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus* and cowslip *Primula veris*. Grass species vary in abundance across the site and the typical species include crested dog's tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*.

The neutral grassland in the field immediately north-east of Gethley Farm displays a variation of this community, with species including tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, devil's bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and betony *Stachys officinalis*. The small runnels in this field support small areas of flushed vegetation, containing meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, bog pimpernel *Anagallis tenella*, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*.

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