

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

TORFAEN

TY'R HEN FORWYN

Date of Notification: 31 October 2008

National Grid Reference: ST 237 998

OS Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 171
1:10,000 Sheet number: ST 29 NW

Site Area: 4.75 ha

Description:

Ty'r Hen Forwyn is of special interest for its species-rich neutral grassland and for the association of this habitat with others including acid grassland, scrub, bracken and well-developed hedgerows.

The site is also of special interest for its large population of nationally scarce wood bitter-vetch *Vicia orobus*, an uncommon and declining grassland plant.

Ty'r Hen Forwyn consists of four fields, divided by large mature hedgerows. The site is situated adjacent to the unenclosed upland of Cefn-crib and 500m north of Cefn-crib village. All fields are free-draining, gently to moderately sloping, and have a westerly aspect at an altitude of between 320m and 350m. The underlying geology is Upper Pennant Measures the rocks consisting of sandstones and coal measure mudstones.

Species rich neutral grassland can be found throughout and is characterised by a high herb cover. Common bird's foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* occur frequently together with grasses such as crested dog's tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*.

Accompanying herbs include common cat's-ear *Hypochoeris radicata*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, eyebright *Euphrasia sp.*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, Bitter vetch, *Lathyrus linifolius*, and rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*.

In places, where there is a slightly acid or nutrient-poor nature to the soil, neutral grassland grades into vegetation more associated with acid grassland. Here, heath grass *Danthonia decumbens*, devil's-bit scabious, *Succisa pratensis*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* can be found.

Although acid grassland is generally a habitat of the uplands and upland fringe, in places at Ty'r Hen Forwyn it can have a marked 'lowland' character.

These areas can be particularly species-rich, with plants such as bird's foot trefoil, autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis* and common knapweed.

Ty'r Hen Forwyn is also of special interest for its large population of wood bitter-vetch. The site

is thought to have the best population in the Gwent AoS. It is found frequently throughout the south-west corner of the eastern field. The next largest population found in South Wales is at Markham, which has recently declined in numbers, making Ty'r Hen Forwyn an important stronghold for the plant.

Ty'r Hen Forwyn has a number of other habitats that add to the ecological diversity of the site. These include scrub, semi-improved grassland and mature, well-developed hedgerows.

Remarks:

Ty'r Hen Forwyn includes the following UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats: Lowland meadow and Lowland dry acid grassland.

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