

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

GWEUNYDD DOLWEN

Date of Notification: 2000

National Grid Reference: SH 975071

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 125
1:10,000 Sheet number: SJ90NE

Site Area: 2.3 ha

Description:

Gweunydd Dolwen is of special interest for its acid and neutral dry grassland. The site is located in central Montgomeryshire, some 4 km south-west of Llangadfan in the Nant yr Eira valley. It consists of two flat to gently undulating enclosures, lying on either side of the Afon Gam, at an altitude of between 210-220 m.

This site occurs on a folded sequence of Silurian shales and sandstones ranging in age from youngest Llandovery (Telychian) to Wenlock (mid Sheinwoodian). The soils are mainly brown podzols which are stony and free draining.

The stands of dry acid grassland are dominated by sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* together with characteristic forbs such as betony *Stachys officinalis*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and bitter-vetch *Lathyrus linifolius*. In places heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and tormentil *Potentilla erecta* are frequent. In the more neutral grassland swards, plant species such as common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and red clover *Trifolium pratense* are more frequent. Ranker grassland areas occur and these are characterised by the dominance of coarse grass species, typically false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*.

Other plant species indicative of agriculturally unimproved grassland swards are present, including a population of the uncommon greater butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*.

Areas of dense scrub, gorse *Ulex europeus* and river shingle occur within the site boundary. These contribute to the ecological diversity of the site, providing complementary habitat for invertebrates and other animals.

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