

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CARMARTHENSHIRE

GWEUNYDD GLAN-Y-GLASNANT

Date of Notification: 1993

National Grid Reference: SN 555116

O.S. Maps: 1: 50,000 Sheet number: 159
1: 25,000 Sheet number: SN 51

Site Area: 12.5 ha

Description:

Parts of the South Wales Coalfield are noteworthy for the continuing survival of agriculturally unimproved pastures which display a range of increasingly uncommon plant communities, ranging from those that are more typical of acidic, often rather waterlogged, conditions to types which thrive on more neutral soils. Such pastures are often characterized by the presence of the nationally uncommon small umbellifer, whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*, whose British stronghold lies in these grasslands at the western end of the South Wales Coalfield. Many such pastures have been lost to agricultural improvement or open-cast coal extraction. Glan-y-Glasnant provides notable examples of such grasslands where traditional management is reflected by the wide and diverse range of species that is present.

Glan-y-Glasnant is situated at an altitude of about 175 metres (575 feet) in the upper valley of Nant Glas, a minor tributary of the River Gwili, immediately southwest of the village of Cross Hands. The cattle-grazed pastures and hay meadows lie on an outcrop of Coal Measure sandstones and shaley sandstones, with varying overlying thicknesses of glacial till material. The soil conditions are varied, and there is a range of grassland types, including mesotrophic (neutral) meadows and damper acidic grassland. The site is particularly noteworthy for such an extensive area of species-rich neutral grassland.

The neutral grassland is characterised by various grasses such as common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, with clovers *Trifolium* spp. and frequent common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*. In one sub-community, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* is widely represented, but devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, whorled caraway and heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens* are less frequent. In the other sub-community that is found in this neutral grassland, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and self-heal *Prunella vulgaris* are all occasional to frequent, whilst the pale pink spikes of the common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* are common in some parts. The uncommon and diminutive fern, adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, is known from one area.

Elsewhere in the site, there is a large stand of purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* - meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum* fen-meadow, a plant community that has declined in recent decades due to agricultural improvement. The sward is varied, and the meadow thistle is only locally

abundant, mostly in the eastern part of the field. Moderate base-richness is suggested by the presence of the two sedges - tawny *Carex hostiana* and glaucous *C. flacca*.

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