CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS CEUNANT TWYMYN

Date of Notification: 1999

National Grid Reference: SN869955, SN 873946

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 136

1:25,000 Sheet number: SN 89 SE, SN89 NE

Site Area: 106.2 ha

Description:

Ceunant Twymyn comprises a 2 km long section of the Twymyn Valley which is located approximately 9km south of Llanbrynmair and 14 km east-south-east of Machynlleth. The site is of exceptional geomorphological interest since it provides a classic example of the process known as "river capture", in which a former eastwards flowing tributary of the Afon Clywedog was diverted northwards to follow the course of the modern Afon Twymyn.

In the southern part of the site, the Afon Twymyn flows into the valley via the spectacular 50m high Ffrwd Fawr waterfall before entering a deeply incised V-shaped gorge with scree-covered flanks which rise steeply on each side to an altitude of 350 m. South of the gorge, is an elevated, east-west-trending dry valley which is filled with boulder clay. Approaching Pennant-uchaf in the northern part of the site, the river enters a U-shaped valley, floored by a 350 m wide floodplain which is overlooked in the west by a semi-circular valley head, occupied by the Nant Ddeiliog tributary.

The Afon Twymyn at Ffrwd Fawr provides an excellent example of river capture in its headward reaches. Three kilometres from its source, the river falls 50m at Ffrwd Fawr and then enters a rejuvented gorge section over a series of cascades and smaller waterfalls. The original course of the river lay eastwards to the Clywedog catchment but it was captured through headwater retreat of the Afon Twymyn, aided by structural and possibly glacial factors, leaving a dry gap as evidence of the diversion. Tributaries which enter the Twymyn in the gorge section have also been rejuvenated and there is acitve sediment supply to the river from adjacent slopes during extreme rainfall events.

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