

CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

BRIDGEND

BRYN-BACH, CEFN CRIBWR

Date of Notification: 2000

National Grid Reference: SS 870830

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 170
1:10,000 Sheet number: SS 88 SE

Site Area: 40.3 ha

Description:

Bryn-bach, Cefn Cribwr is of special interest for its marshy grassland and species-rich neutral grassland and for the association of these vegetation types with others including wet heath, acid grassland, woodland and scrub. It is also of special interest for a population of a locally rare plant species.

The site lies on the edge of the South Wales coalfield on Lower Coal Measures, immediately to the north of the village of Cefn Cribwr and 4 km west of Bridgend. It comprises a series of pastures, many of which are sheltered by tall hedges and scrub and by adjacent woodland. The pastures lie in a shallow valley. Most of the land slopes gently with a predominantly northerly aspect, at an altitude of between 70 and 100 m. More steeply sloping ground at the southern margin of the site rises to around 115 m. Soils are mainly cambic stagnohumic gleys of the Wilcocks Series.

The greater part of the site supports marshy grassland dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, with frequent tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*. Grasses such as mat grass *Nardus stricta* and velvet bent *Agrostis canina* are also common. Much of this grassland has base-demanding species such as meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum* and, more locally, tawny sedge *Carex hostiana* and flea sedge *Carex pulicaris*. These occur alongside carnation sedge *Carex panicea* and devils-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*. Some of the most species-rich of these swards are slightly heathy, including frequent cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and heather *Calluna vulgaris*, together with sheeps fescue *Festuca ovina*. More acidic moor-grass pasture, which lacks basiphilous species but otherwise has a similar floristic composition is also common on the site, while localised patches of wetter, more mesotrophic purple moor-grass sward include frequent wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris* and occasional greater birds-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*. Smaller areas of marshy grassland are dominated by sharp-flowered rush or soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, accompanied by greater birds-foot-trefoil and common marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*.

Dry grassland is represented by small areas of neutral grassland which are concentrated in the more free-draining fields in the south of the site. The swards are characterised by common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens* and occasional

crested dogs-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, together with broad-leaved herbs such as common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, common birds-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, devils-bit scabious and tormentil.

Small patches of acidic dry grassland and a little wet heath occur in association with the marshy grassland. The site also includes areas of woodland. Patches of scrub are common, particularly around the field boundaries, and dense bracken covers some of the drier ground in the east of the site. These habitats add to the ecological and structural diversity of the site.

The presence of bog-myrtle *Myrica gale* is of special interest. This shrub, which is frequent to abundant in the marshy grassland in the east of the site, is locally rare. Also of note are petty whin *Genista anglica*, which is occasional in some of the more heathy purple moor-grass grassland, and *Genista tinctoria* which occurs in acid grassland in the east of the site.

The site provides suitable habitat for the marsh fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia* and contributes to the area used by a metapopulation of this butterfly.

Remarks:

The site supports vegetation assignable to the *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils *Molinion caeruleae*. This is a habitat type listed on Annex I of the European Community's Habitats and Species Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna).

The marsh fritillary is included on Annex IIa of the Habitats and Species Directive and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and is a Biodiversity Action Plan species.

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