

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

WAUN CWM CALCH

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1993
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SN 905975
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 136 1:25,000 Sheet number: SN 99
<u>Site Area:</u>	23.9 ha

Description:

This upland site is part of Trannon Moors, lying some 3 miles west of the village of Carno. The site, much of which comprises blanket bog, is noteworthy for its variety of mire and swamp vegetation types (at least ten nationally recognised types present) and in particular for its small sedge-dominated flushes, which are better developed here than anywhere else known in Montgomeryshire. At the northern edge of the site a tributary of Afon Cwm Calch has cut a steep-sided ravine supporting uncommon plants.

The larger part of the site consists of a saddle-shaped plateau rising to 460 metres, draining in both north-westerly and south-easterly directions. Springs and wet flushes in the south-eastern section form the source of the River Trannon. Soils are referable over most of the site to the Hafren and Crowdy associations. The former are found on the gently sloping ground and consist of a wet, peaty surface horizon over bleached clays, whilst the latter association, on level ground, consists of shallow to deep blanket bog peat. Some of this peat has been cut in the past, creating water-filled hollows. This range of topography and varied hydrology is responsible for the main variety of mire and swamp vegetation types recorded.

Deep peat covers the level plateau surface, in places forming a well-developed blanket mire. Ericaceous communities are well-developed, with heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* dominant, together with cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos* and bog rosemary *Andromeda polifolia*. The latter species is uncommon in Montgomeryshire. Patches of acidic grassland dominated by mat-grass *Nardus stricta*, heath rush *Juncus squarrosus* and wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* occur on the more steeply sloping ground and around acidic shale rock outcrops along the plateau edge.

The ground-water fed (soligenous) flushes which are a special feature of the site are dominated by small sedge species. The abundance of the uncommon bog-sedge *Carex*

limosa is particularly notable. The soakaways support species such as bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* and bog pondweed *Potamogeton polygonifolius*. Sedges dominate two further communities. Water-filled hollows have floating lawns of bottle sedge *Carex rostrata*, whilst adjacent to the source of the Trannon and associated with a series of wet flushes, greater tussock-sedge *Carex paniculata* forms a dense stand. The sides of the tall tussocks of this sedge support a range of other plant species, including narrow buckler-fern *Dryopteris carthusiana* and marsh violet *Viola palustris*.

The ravine in the north of the site has extensive rock outcrops. Here both acidic and base-rich formations support a rich flora, including Wilson's filmy-fern *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* and the mosses *Blindia acuta* and *Tortella tortuosa*, all uncommon plants in Montgomeryshire.

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