

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

WHITE GRIT MEADOWS

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1989, 1999
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SO 315979 and SO316976
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 137 1:10,000 Sheet number: SO 39 NW
<u>Site Area:</u>	3.8 ha

Description:

White Grit Meadows is of special interest for its unimproved lowland dry grassland communities and associated areas of wet grassland and base-rich flush. The site is situated on the lower, north-eastern flank of Corndon Hill, 5 kilometres north-east of Church Stoke, and consists of seven gently sloping fields lying at an altitude of between 290 and 320 metres.

The underlying geology belongs to the Hope Shales of the lower Ordovician (lower Llanvirn). These consist of shales and mudstones, with occasional bands of fine-grained volcanic tuff, which at White Grit are overlain with alluvial gleys. The site may also be influenced by the nearby Corndon Hill, a dolerite intrusion with a calc-alkali composition.

Dry neutral grassland is the predominant vegetation community and here the sward is characterised by meadow grasses such as common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. Forbs include common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*. In places, the grassland is more acidic in nature, and here tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens* are a characteristic component of the sward. Where damper soil conditions prevail sedges are frequent and locally these include species indicative of base-enrichment such as flea sedge *Carex pulicaris* and glaucous sedge *C. flacca*.

Other habitats include rush pasture which is dominated by sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus* and characterised by the presence of plants such as common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*, lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* and marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*. Vegetation dominated by soft rush

Juncus effusus, tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* or purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* occurs more locally.

The fields support populations of dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria* and northern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella* and soft brome *Bromus racemosus* which are uncommon in Montgomeryshire.

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