

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

CAEAU WERN

Date of Notification: 1989

National Grid Reference: SO 010694

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 147
1:25,000 Sheet number: SO 06

Site Area: 7.2 ha

Description:

This is an usually extensive area of herb-rich, traditionally managed hay meadow. Although much of the site has been subject to varying degrees of disturbance in the past, it displays good examples of neutral grassland which has not undergone modern improvement. The site comprises five hay meadows on level or gently sloping ground and all are well drained. The most southerly field has apparently no history of previous attempts at agricultural improvement and is the most species-rich. This field shows perhaps the closest affinity with the western field, which has been ploughed and reseeded with dustings in the past. The botanical composition of the three central fields is very similar, although only one of these has not been ploughed during the last forty years.

All meadows are variants of the nationally recognised vegetation community characterised by crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, and overwhelmingly of the meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* sub-community. However, the most southerly field has areas where the vegetation tends towards the lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* sub-community. All fields are particularly notable for the abundance of great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* within open grassland dominated by sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and crested dog's-tail. Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* is locally well represented and red fescue *Festuca rubra* is abundant. Different degrees of soil moisture and past interference have probably influenced the varied occurrence of herb species, the most prominent being cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, autumn hawkbit *L. autumnalis*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, bulbous buttercup *R. bulbosus*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, common knapweed and meadow vetchling. Less frequent species include bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, smooth lady's mantle *Alchemilla glabra* and the locally uncommon adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. Wood bitter-vetch *Vicia orobus* has been recorded from the edge of one field.

The mixed-species hedgerows provide dense cover for a number of small passerines. Casual observations have recorded redpoll, lesser whitethroat, redstart and various warblers.

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