

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS/SHROPSHIRE

LLANYMYNECH & LLYNCLYS HILLS

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1953, 1963, 1986
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SJ 267227
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 126 1:10,000 Sheet number: SJ 22 SE
<u>Site Area:</u>	172.4 ha 65.4 ha in Powys

Description:

An isolated group of Carboniferous Limestone hills which have been extensively mined and quarried for stone and minerals. There are extensive grassland, scrub and woodland communities and also natural rock faces, screes, a series of abandoned quarries and areas affected by past lead and copper mining.

This site is particularly important for its limestones plants.

The extensive and varied grassland communities include: i) tall, coarse vegetation dominated by cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and wood false-brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*; ii) enclosed fields dominated by a range of grasses and supporting a flora which includes cowslip *Primula veris*, lady's-mantle *Alchemilla vestita* and green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*, and iii) open communities with a high proportion of rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium* and lichens (especially *Cladonia* spp.) which have developed on screes and in association with mine waste. The grasslands of Llanymynech and Llyncllys Hills differ from calcareous grasslands elsewhere in the Midlands owing to the scarcity of stemless thistle *Cirsium acaule*, upright brome *Bromus erectus*, tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* and meadow oat *Avenula pratense*.

Uncommon species occurring in grassland communities on this site include autumn lady's-tresses *Spiranthes spiralis*, frog orchid *Coeloglossum viride*, fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, cat's-foot *Antennaria dioica* and knotted hedge-parsley *Torilis nodosa*.

Much of Llyncllys Hill supports a type of heathland dominated by western gorse *Ulex gallii* on acid soils which have developed as a result of leaching. There are also patches of open grassland in which moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* and greater butterfly-orchid

Platanthera chlorantha occur. Scrub of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, silver birch *Betula pendula* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. is also extensive.

The wooded rocks and cliffs of the west-facing scarp contain many interesting species, despite extensive reforestation. The screes and shaded rocks at the base of the cliff are especially valuable for mosses and liverworts. The rare endemic whitebeam *Sorbus anglica* occurs on the cliffs.

This site has a rich butterfly fauna which includes grayling *Eumenis semele* and brown argus *Aricia agestis*.

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