

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CARMARTHENSHIRE

CORS GÔCH, LLANLLWCH

Date of Notification: 1973, 1979 and 1983

National Grid Reference: SN 365288

O.S. Maps: 1: 50,000 Sheet number: 159
1: 25,000 Sheet number: SN 31

Site Area: 45 ha

Description:

Cors Gôch is one of the most south-westerly raised bogs in Britain and one of only six large raised bogs in Wales. In a raised bog, the vegetation and peat have grown upward in a convex dome to become isolated from and independent of ground water influences. Despite being bisected by a railway line, the site has retained its central dome.

The centre has steep-sided pools with bog mosses *Sphagna* set in a peat surface dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*. The latter becomes dominant on tile edges of the site, and bog myrtle *Myrica gale* is often abundant. Peripheral habitats on the south side include small areas of alder *Alnus glutinosa* carr and a small fen of common reed *Phragmites australis*. The peat is up to 5 metres (16 feet) deep and it contains an uninterrupted environmental record over the 8,000 years or so that it has taken to accumulate. Work on the plant remains and pollen preserved in the peat has shown that the peat bog originated as a lake amongst clays, sands and gravels deposited by the ice along the likely pre-glacial course of the Tywi. The pollen remains in the peat have also been studied to trace the spread of plant cover over the adjacent district of Carmarthen in the wake of the retreating ice sheets and to record the clearance of the forests by man. Because the rate of deposition of the peat has been unusually rapid, this aspect of the history of Wales can be studied in great detail.

The pools of the central dome support typical bog plants, including the insect-eating oblong-leaved sundew *Drosera intermedia*, round-leaved sundew *D. rotundifolia* and lesser bladderwort *Utricularia minor*. Other interesting plants of the pools are white water-lily *Nymphaea alba* and white beak-sedge *Rhynchospora alba*. Nine different bog mosses have been recorded, but the most notable plant is bog rosemary *Andromeda polifolia*, a northern plant near its southern limits in Britain.

The bog is the only known site in Carmarthen for the bog bush-cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera* and for the black sympetrum dragonfly *Sympetrum scoticum*. The scarce marsh fritillary butterfly *Euphydryas aurinia* also occurs, as does the attractive scarlet tiger moth *Callimorpha dominula*.

Remarks:

A small part is a nature reserve managed by the West Wales Naturalists' Trust.

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