

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

NEATH PORT TALBOT/POWYS

GORS LLWYN, ONLLWYN

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1979, 1980, 1982
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SN 854108
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet Number: 160 1:25,000 Sheet Number: SN 81
<u>Site Area:</u>	39.9 ha

Description:

This site contains a range of peat-depositing vegetation communities which has developed on a col between the Pyrddin and Dulais valleys. These peatlands are surrounded by an area of acidic grassland. Peat deposition has been sufficiently great in part of the Neath Port Talbot portion of the site to form a dome shaped mass of peat above the general water table of the site. Such a feature is known as a raised mire. There are very few other examples of this formation known in mid and south Wales. Unfortunately, regular burning and grazing of the site has grossly modified its surface vegetation.

Much of this mire drains north into an area dominated by common reed *Phragmites australis*. The spectacular development of clumps of greater tussock-sedge *Carex paniculata*, in many cases over one metre high, amongst the common reed, affords drier sites for the establishment of willow species *Salix spp.*, and willow carr now covers most of the area bordering the main east-flowing drainage stream. A range of woodland species including royal fern *Osmunda regalis* occurs beneath the tree canopy.

Peat has not completely infilled the area. In some parts, the vegetation has grown as floating lawns over water. The more nutrient-rich sites support an extremely diverse flora with up to 28 species recorded in an area of 4 square metres.

North-east of the complex of mires an area of acidic pasture is included in the site. Drier ridges divide up a series of wet flushes which support a range of wetland species not encountered elsewhere in the site, e.g. whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*, meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum* and sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*. These plants form a clearly defined community of extremely limited distribution in Europe, occurring only along the southern Atlantic seaboard.

At the north-west corner of the site, several hay meadows are included on account of their diverse flora. Species now of limited occurrence in mid Wales due to the ploughing and reseeded of grasslands, such as globe flower *Trollius europaeus* and meadow fescue *Festuca pratensis*, are recorded here.