

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

**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION**

**MONMOUTHSHIRE**

**DINHAM MEADOWS**

**Date of Notification:** 1987

**National Grid Reference:** ST 475915, ST 490914  
ST 461922, ST 473916  
ST 491918, ST 467919

**O.S. Maps:** 1:50,000 Sheet number: 172  
1:25,000 Sheet number: ST 49

**Site Area:** 14.9 ha

**Description:**

A series of five grassland areas which are part of the same management unit and have been traditionally managed as hay meadows and pasture since the 1930s. Together they constitute the largest area of unimproved grassland in the county. Four are managed for hay and the fifth, located in an area of very thin soils and rock exposures, supports only a sparse cover.

Soil types range from deep coarse loams with slight seasonal waterlogging through fine loams of intermediate depths with a moderate calcareous influence to bare rock of Carboniferous Limestone.

Whilst the main grassland community type can be referred to the *Centaurea nigra* – *Cynosurus cristatus* mesotrophic grassland type, the range of soils types is reflected in the presence of other communities. On the deeper loams there are examples of the *Arrhenatherum elatius* coarse grassland community, whilst the shallower base rich soils support a community with strong affinities to the *Koeleria macrantha* sub community of the *Festuca ovina* – *Carlina vulgaris* limestone grassland type.

There is a diverse range of both grass and herb species. Notable species of the hay meadows include adder's tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, cross wort *Cruciata laevipes*, grass vetchling *Lathyrus nissolia*, greater knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa* and rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, whilst the limestone grassland areas have abundant quaking grass *Briza media*, heath grass *Danthonia decumbens*, bee orchid *Ophrys apifera* and autumn lady's tresses *Spiranthes spiralis*.

These areas are also important for the diverse assemblage of invertebrates characteristic of grassland habitats. Species of *Diptera* and *Lepidoptera* are particularly well represented

including the rare and notable dingy skipper *Erynnis tages*, grizzled skipper *Pyrgus malvae* and forester moth *Adscita statices*.

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