

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

CRAIG Y RHIWARTH

<u>Date of notification:</u>	1970, 1988
<u>National grid reference:</u>	SN 846158
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 160 1:25,000 Sheet number: SN 81
<u>Site area:</u>	18.3 ha

Description

The west-facing limestone escarpment of Craig y Rhiwarth on the east bank of the Afon Tawe, above Craig-y-nos, supports some of the finest limestone plant communities in Brecknock. The limestone is covered in places by acidic boulder clay, where communities of plants demanding more acidic conditions are confined and contrast with the calcicolous communities elsewhere.

Ash woodland covers some of the screes, cliffs, steeper slopes and the sink hole to the south-west of Pwll-coediog. The best example of this habitat in Brecknock and one of the best in Britain, its notable ground flora includes lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis*, wood spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides*, wood fescue *Festuca altissima*, and the moss, *Hylocomium brevirostre*. Decaying logs support other notable mosses and liverworts such as *Dicranodontium denudatum* and *Tritomaria exsectiformis*, whilst the shrub layer includes such locally scarce shrubs as buckthorn *Rhamnus cartharticus*.

Ledges on the limestone cliff provide a refuge for nationally rare species of plants, for example the whitebeams, *Sorbus leptophylla* and the more widespread *S. porrigentiformis*, and locally scarce species such as southern polypody *Polypodium australe* and the mosses, *Seligeria acutifolia* and *Tortella nitida*.

Limestone grassland is well developed in openings of the canopy, with a large population of the rare soft-leaved sedge *Carex montana* and characteristic limestone plants such as small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, and limestone bedstraw *Galium sternerii*.

Areas of acidic glacial drift support contrasting oak and birch woodland and contribute to the great species diversity of the site, with over 170 species of higher plants and a similar number of lower plants known to grow here.

Remarks:

The site is within the Brecon Beacons National Park.

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