

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CARMARTHENSHIRE

CAEAU CAPEL HENDRE

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1988
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SN 591117
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1: 50,000 Sheet number: 159 1: 25,000 Sheet number: SN 51
<u>Site Area:</u>	1.7 ha

Description:

In Britain unimproved grasslands containing an abundance of the white umbelliferous plant, whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*, appear to be most frequent in the Carmarthen Coalfield and its environs, with lesser concentrations in south-western Scotland, the Lake District and south-western England. The Carmarthen Coalfield grasslands show a continuum of vegetational variation, ranging from heathy swards with a somewhat restricted flora to more species-rich types on less acidic soils. The heathy variants are often characterised by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and the species-rich by Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, but a good deal of floristic intergradation occurs between these two basic groups.

Caeau Capel Hendre is a notable example of the more species-rich type of caraway grassland, situated on moderately acidic soils. Some of the fields have been used for haymaking in recent years. The principal grasses in the sward are creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* or common bent *A. capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and quaking-grass *Briza media*. The sedges include carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, glaucous sedge *C. flacca*, common sedge *C. nigra*, flea sedge *C. pulicaris*, pill sedge *C. pilulifera* and oval sedge *C. ovalis*. Other characteristic plants in the sward are devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, marsh ragwort *Senecio aquaticus*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and tufted vetch *Vicia cracca*. Less widespread are other notable plants such as meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and ragged-robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*.

The site supports a colony of the marbled white butterfly *Melangaria galathea*, which, in south-west Wales, has populations separated from its main British range.

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