

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

MOEL Y GOLFA

Date of notification: 1953, 1987, 1994

National grid reference: SJ 290122

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 126
1:25,000 Sheet number: SJ 21

Site area: 70.8 ha

Description:

This is the largest remaining area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland in Montgomeryshire, with many mature trees and a well developed shrub and ground layer in parts. The wood lies on the steep slopes and summit ridge of part of the Breidden Hills Ordovician inlier, the complex geology and differing aspects of which have resulted in a varied flora. The site is particularly notable for its breeding birds. In all, 48 species have been recorded as having bred, an unusually high number for a single woodland. Noteworthy species include peregrine, raven, pied flycatcher and all three species of British woodpecker.

The composition of the canopy is complex and has been modified by planting. In all, 23 species have been recorded. The wood consists mainly of oak *Quercus spp.*, but with abundant ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, with an understorey of hazel *Corylus avellana* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. Beech *Fagus sylvatica* occurs frequently, and has evidently been planted along with scattered Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* and larch *Larix spp.*

The ground flora of the site is variable and includes common species such as false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*. Wetter flushed areas support dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and ground-ivy *Glechoma hedereacea*, whilst drier grassy glades support remnants of heathy vegetation which includes heather *Calluna vulgaris* and bell heather *Erica cinerea*.

In places, basic igneous intrusions support notable calcicolous plants such as common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, rock stonecrop *Sedum forsterianum*, slender false-brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum* and marjoram *Origanum vulgare*. Many of these species are best developed in the more open areas associated with rock outcrops and

scree. In contrast, more acid soils support such characteristic species as wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and wood sage.

There is an abundance of standing and felled timber which, together with pockets of deep litter, provide habitats for a wide range of fungi, which include *Amanita* and *Russula* species. The scarce liverwort *Ptilidium pulcherrinum*, has also been recorded.

Fallow deer frequent the wood, which is under active forestry management.

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