

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

CAEAU LLWYN-GWRGAN

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1987
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SN939536
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 147 1:25,000 Sheet number: SN95
<u>Site Area:</u>	5.9 ha

Description:

This site is an important area of unimproved herb-rich pasture, being one in a series of grassland sites demonstrating the range of variation which occurs in Brecknock and mid Wales generally. These damp north-facing pastures lie on the floor of the Nant Gwnfel valley. Grazed as a single dingle unit, they are separated into three parts by narrow strips of open alder, oak and birch woodland and bounded on their north and east sides by wooded streams.

The smallest and most westerly part supports on a drier central bank a herb-rich sward notable for its abundance of dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria* and the presence of greater butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha* and wood bitter-vetch *Vicia orobus*, all scarce species in Brecknock and mid Wales.

The middle part displays a noteworthy dry, acidic grassland flora on its three elevated banks. Commoner species here include betony *Stachys officinalis*, eyebright *Euphrasia sp.*, great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* and harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*. Between the drier banks wet flushes support a diverse sedge flora (seven species recorded), together with a range of large showy herbs such as marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, common valerian *Valerian officinalis*, whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum* and devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*.

These flushes reach their best development in the eastern-most part, where they clothe the southern and eastern edge of the field, supporting in addition to the other species bog asphodel *Narhecium ossifragum* and heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*. This orchid extends in some abundance into the purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* dominated grassland of the gently sloping central parts of the field. Here, on an acidic peaty soil, petty whin *Genista anglica* occurs in greater abundance than in any other site in Brecknock. With the presence of other woody species such as heather *Calluna vulgaris* and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* this grassland shows a transition towards heathland.

The animal life of these pastures has not yet been recorded in detail, but a large population of the marsh fritillary butterfly *Euphydryas aurinia* is present, a species now much decreased in extent in mid Wales due to the drainage and cultivation of its habitat, together with more common species such as ringlet *Aphantopus hyperanthus* and meadow brown *Maniola jurtina*.

*This document is **NOT** a definitive legal version and has been formatted, updated and partially edited for use on the CCW Web site. This document should not be used in any legal proceedings, public enquiry or any other hearing or appeal. If you require a full legal copy of the document please contact CCW in writing.*