

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

**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION**

**POWYS**

**BANC HIRLLWYN**

**Date of Notification:** 2000

**National Grid Reference:** SO 104554

**O.S. Maps:** 1:50,000 Sheet number: 148  
1:10,000 Sheet number: SO 15 NW

**Site Area:** 12.8 ha

**Description:**

Banc Hirllwyn is of special interest for its areas of acid grassland vegetation and the nationally scarce maiden pink *Dianthus deltoides*. The site is situated 1km to the north-west of the village of Hundred House at an altitude of 300 m. It occupies a prominent ridge of volcanic rocks which forms part of the Llandrindod Wells Ordovician inlier.

Shallow soils over rock outcrops support stands of acid grassland along the south and south-east facing slopes of the bank. The grassland is prone to drought during the summer months, and has a high proportion of annual plants adapted to survive such conditions. The main grasses in the short, open sward are sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, early hair-grass *Aira praecox* and squirrel-tail fescue *Vulpia bromoides*. Common associates include sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, common mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, parsley piert *Aphanes arvensis*, wall speedwell *Veronica arvensis*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, spring sedge *Carex caryophylla*, the uncommon upright chickweed *Moenchia erecta*, wild thyme *Thymus polytrichus*, the mosses *Dicranum scoparium*, *Brachythecium albicans* and *Hypnum cupressiforme* and the lichens *Peltigera rufescens* and *Cladonia spp.*. Other locally frequent components of the vegetation include dove's-foot cranesbill *Geranium molle*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, carline thistle *Carlina vulgaris* and the nationally scarce maiden pink and lichen *Peltigera canina*. The locally scarce annual knawel *Scleranthus annuus* has also been recorded at the site.

Small rock outcrops within the site support mosses, such as *Hedwigia sp.* and a variety of lichens, including *Rhizocarpon viridiatrum*, *Porpidia cinereoatra* and the locally uncommon *Caloplaca arenaria*, *Caloplaca ceracea* and *Porpidia platycarpoides*. The lower flanks of the bank support open oak *Quercus spp.* woodland, which provides additional interest. The acid grassland extends under the tree canopy in places and intergrades with species-poor neutral grassland on the deeper soils of the plateau top. This area has been subject to past agricultural improvement but is now reverting to a more natural state.

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