

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

CAEAU PENGLANEINON

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1992
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SN912628
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 147 1:25,000 Sheet number: SN86 and SN96
<u>Site Area:</u>	5.6 ha

Description:

The site comprises a series of small fields situated at an altitude of 340m on an east-facing hillside above Caban-coch Reservoir. It supports extensive areas of herb-rich grassland of a type that is characteristic of the upland fringe in this part of Wales. The plant communities present have affinities with those found in Pennine Dales meadows. This particular type of meadow is, however, virtually confined to the Elan and Claerwen valleys as a result of agricultural intensification elsewhere, with Penglaneinon being a notable example.

The vegetation is influenced by the underlying rocks, namely acidic Silurian shales of the Llandovery Series, which outcrop in places. Elsewhere the shales are overlain by brown podzolic soils of variable depth with, in the wetter areas, stagnogleys. The upper three fields have been traditionally managed as hay meadows. The sward here is characterised by abundant common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*, along with frequent sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, cat's-ear *Hypochoeris radicata*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* and red clover *Trifolium pratense*. Also present are species such as harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, eyebright *Euphrasia officinalis*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, heath milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and the nationally scarce wood bitter-vetch *Vicia orobus*. Unmown banks within these fields support a similar community, but species such as heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens*, harebell, pignut *Conopodium majus*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon Hispidus*, burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, tormentil, bracken *Pteridium Aquilinum*, betony *Stachys Officinalis*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa Pratensis* and wood bitter-vetch are also frequent here.

The lower fields are steeper. They contain rock outcrops and associated areas of shallow soil supporting a type of grassland intermediate between the mesotrophic swards described previously and the acidic grasslands of the open hill. Common bent and red fescue remain abundant, along with frequent sweet vernal-grass, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus Lanatus*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, harebell, pignut, cat's-ear, ribwort plantain, tormentil, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*,

common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, betony and devil's-bit scabious. Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and mountain pansy *Viola lutea* are locally prominent within this sward. Areas of deeper soil nearby are dominated by bracken with scattered hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*. There are also several patches of sessile oak *Quercus petraea* woodland.

A spring-fed flush in one of the hayfields provides additional interest, supporting species such as sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, bulbous rush *Juncus bulbosus*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, common yellow-sedge *Carex demissa*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and marsh violet *Viola Palustris*.

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