

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

HOLLYBUSH PASTURES

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1993
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SO 153956
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 136 1:25,000 Sheet number: SO 19
<u>Site Area:</u>	1.5 ha

Description:

The site is a fine example of an unimproved dry pasture supporting species-rich grassland communities characteristic of base-rich and more mesotrophic soils. Such pastures are now rare in Montgomeryshire, and scarce in mid Wales generally.

Hollybush Pastures, situated about 2 miles south-east of the village of Bettws Cedewain, comprises three small enclosures on an east-facing slope above the Severn Valley, at an altitude of about 185 metres. Two of the enclosures are on steeply sloping ground and the third on more level ground. The smallest of the enclosures is an orchard with a ground flora similar to the other two areas. Soils are free-draining brown earths overlaying Silurian rock.

A total of sixty species of flowering plants has been recorded to date. Plant species which occur commonly throughout the site are bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, field wood-rush *Luzula campestris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. Other plants recorded include oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*, rough hawkbit *L. hispidus*, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, bugle *Ajuga reptans*, harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*. Imperforate St. John's-wort *Hypericum maculatum*, quaking-grass *Briza media* and yellow-oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens* occur infrequently in the sward, but the most notable species throughout the site is cowslip *Primula veris*, an uncommon plant in Powys and mid Wales, and confined, in the main, to the east of the county. In the northern enclosure species diversity is increased in places by the presence of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and gorse *Ulex europaeus*, which give rise to a more type acidic humus.

Anthills of the yellow meadow ant *Lasius flavus* are present throughout the site, except in the small orchard.

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