CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

NEWPORT/CARDIFF **GWENT LEVELS – RUMNEY AND PETERSTONE**

Date of Notification: 1993

National Grid Reference: ST 250800

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 171
1:25,000 Sheet number: ST 27/ST 28

Site Area: 969.3 ha

Description:

The Gwent Levels constitute the lowlands between Cardiff and Chepstow and are drained by an ordered network of drainage ditches. They are an example of one of the most extensive areas of reclaimed wet pasture in Great Britain which includes the Somerset Levels, Romney Marsh and the Pevensey Levels, and is the largest area of its kind in Wales. Together these Levels systems constitute a national series of sites, each with its own special features.

The Gwent Levels reens are rich in plant species and communities, many of which are rare or absent in other Levels systems. This is due to the variety of reen types and their management regimes and the timing of the management which results in a staggered programme across the Levels. The regular maintenance of some reens provides conditions for submerged plant species such as hairlike pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides* and openwater emergents such as arrowhead *Sagittaria sagittifolia* an opportunity to flourish. Others are less intensively managed and some have become completely overgrown by weeds and hedges.

The aquatic invertebrate fauna is very diverse and the Gwent Levels compares well with similar areas in Britain. Many nationally rare or notable species are present such as *Haliplus mucronatus* and *Hydrophilus piceus*. The area is important in the Welsh context for its snails and dragonflies and includes the species *Physa heterostropha* and *Brachytron pratense* respectively. The larger number of hedgerows add to the diversity of the area and, together with the main reen banks, provide a habitat for nationally important assemblages of terrestrial invertebrates such as *Pipunculus fonsecai* and *Tomosvaryella minima*.

The Rumney and Peterstone area supports a number of important plant species including the nationally rare brackish water-crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii* and several regional rarities including the pondweeds *Potamogeton obtusifolius* and *Potamogeton berchtoldii*. The northern section of this SSSI is a stronghold on the Gwent Levels for the flowering rush *Butomus umbellatus*.

The area also supports a rich and important invertebrate fauna with a number of nationally notable species largely confined to this sub-unit including the marsh-flies *Pherbellia brunnipes* and *Lamprochromus elegans*, the water-beetle *Plateumaris braccata* and the variable damselfly *Coenagrion pulchellum*.

Remarks

The Gwent Levels – Rumney and Peterstone SSSI is one of a series of SSSIs within the area between Chepstow and Cardiff known as the Gwent Levels.

The Severn Estuary SSSI is contiguous with the southern boundary of this area.

*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.*