

| Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council | |
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| <u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.21</u> | SINC name: Pont Caradog and Nant Llan Woodlands, Deri |
| Grid Reference SO143007 | Area (hectares): 51 |
| Survey date: 22nd August 2007 Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd) | |
| (UDP policy reference: C11.16) | |
| Summary description | |
| <p>The SINC follows the wooded valleys of the Nant-Llan (flowing north to south) and the Nant Bargod Rhymni (SINC NH 3.4; flowing west to east). The surrounding woodlands include areas of ancient woodland, with some areas of younger woodland and some coniferous plantation. The oldest woodlands have Oak and Beech as their main canopy species, together with of Rowan, Holly and Downy birch. The ground flora is variable, with Brambles being locally abundant in some parts and other areas with a mix of Wavy hair-grass, Bilberry and Bracken. Semi-natural indicator species include Bluebell, Violet, Wood sorrel, Cow wheat and Wood sedge. The streams are small and with little aquatic vegetation, but provide a continuous strip of wooded cover within the SINC. The conifer plantations are generally species poor and of little value nature conservation. Habitats adjacent to the woodland include slopes Bracken with heath and acid grassland and disused colliery tips. The field at SO140002 supports semi-improved acid grassland with Heather, Harebells and several waxcap fungi. One small patch of acid grassland at SO140015 supports a high density of anthills.</p> | |
| Qualifying features | |
| <p>Broadleaved woodland with an assemblage of semi-natural indicator species (includes areas of ancient woodland).</p> <p>Acid grassland / heath and semi-improved acid grassland with at least 7 indicator species.</p> | |
| Secondary features | |
| <p>Streams</p> <p>Bracken</p> <p>Rock outcrops</p> <p>Disused railway</p> <p>Disused colliery tip</p> <p>Scrub</p> <p>Acid grassland with a high density of anthills</p> | |
| Potential value/ unconfirmed features | |
| <p>The woodland areas are likely to offer roosting and feeding habitat for bats.</p> <p>The woodland has potential to support Dormouse.</p> <p>The bracken and acid grassland areas are likely to support reptiles.</p> <p>The semi-improved acid grassland areas have potential to support waxcap fungi.</p> | |

Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)

The woodland areas are generally ungrazed, although sheep have access to the northern woodland areas and cattle access the small woodland at SO143013. Horses graze the field at SO140002. Some parts of the ancient broadleaved woodland in the south of the SINC have been replanted and/ or underplanted by conifers (Western hemlock and Larch). The trees are still young and removing the conifers to leave the remaining broad-leaved trees would be beneficial for biodiversity. Bracken appears to be increasing its dominance over much of the acid grassland and heath on the upper valley sides, particularly to the south of the Nant Bargod Rhymni. There is also evidence of regular fires in this area. Japanese knotweed is present in some areas, particularly beside the Nant Bargod Rhymni (SINC NH 3.4).

Access/ community use

Several well-used footpaths cross the southern part of the area and much of the southern woodland is classified as open-access land. The Rhymney Valley Ridgeway Footpath crosses the northern part of the SINC.

Additional information

The southern woodland includes small blocks of conifers that have relatively low value for biodiversity. These have been retained within the SINC to simplify mapping and because they still have potential to be restored to better quality habitat for wildlife. However, it may be appropriate to exclude some parts at future review as the conifers shade out a higher proportion of the native trees. Several of the adjacent valley sides support Bracken with areas of scrub, acid grassland and heath, and they undoubtedly have value for biodiversity. Future SINC reviews should consider including additional areas of valley-sides to link with nearby SINC.

Species list (Dominant species, SINC Criteria, RDB or other notable indicator species)

(LBAP species shown in **bold**, species confirmed by 2007 survey in *italics*)

Tree and shrub species (all areas combined): *Quercus petraea*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Betula pubescens*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Corylus avellana*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Tsuga heterophylla*, *Larix sp.*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Rubus idaeus*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Salix caprea*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Betula pendula*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Sambucus nigra*.

Woodland ground flora species (all areas combined): ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Viola riviniana*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Geum urbanum*, *Melampyrum pratense*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Potentilla anglica*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Veronica montana*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Holcus mollis*, *Glyceria fluitans*, *Carex remota*, *Carex sylvatica*, *Luzula pilosa*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, *Mnium hornum*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Dicranum scoparium*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Fissidens taxifolius*, *Kindbergia praelonga*. *Leucobryum juniperoideum* was present on an Oak stump at SO140006.

Acid grassland, heath and Bracken areas (combined list): *Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Ulex gallii*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Galium saxatile*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Viola riviniana*, *Leontodon hispidus*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Festuca ovina*, *Nardus stricta*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Aira praecox*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Luzula cf campestris*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*.

Disused tip at SO142012: *Potentilla erecta*, *Carlina vulgaris*, *Lathyrus pratensis*, *Hypochaeris radicata*, *Linum catharticum*, *Hieracium sp.*, *Trifolium campestre*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Lythrum portula*, *Centaureum erythraea*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Urtica dioica*, *Festuca rubra*, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Festuca ovina*, *Agrostis stolonifera*,

Carex viridula, *Racomitrium ericoides*. *Ceratocarpus claviculata* is abundant in the Bracken down slope from the tip.

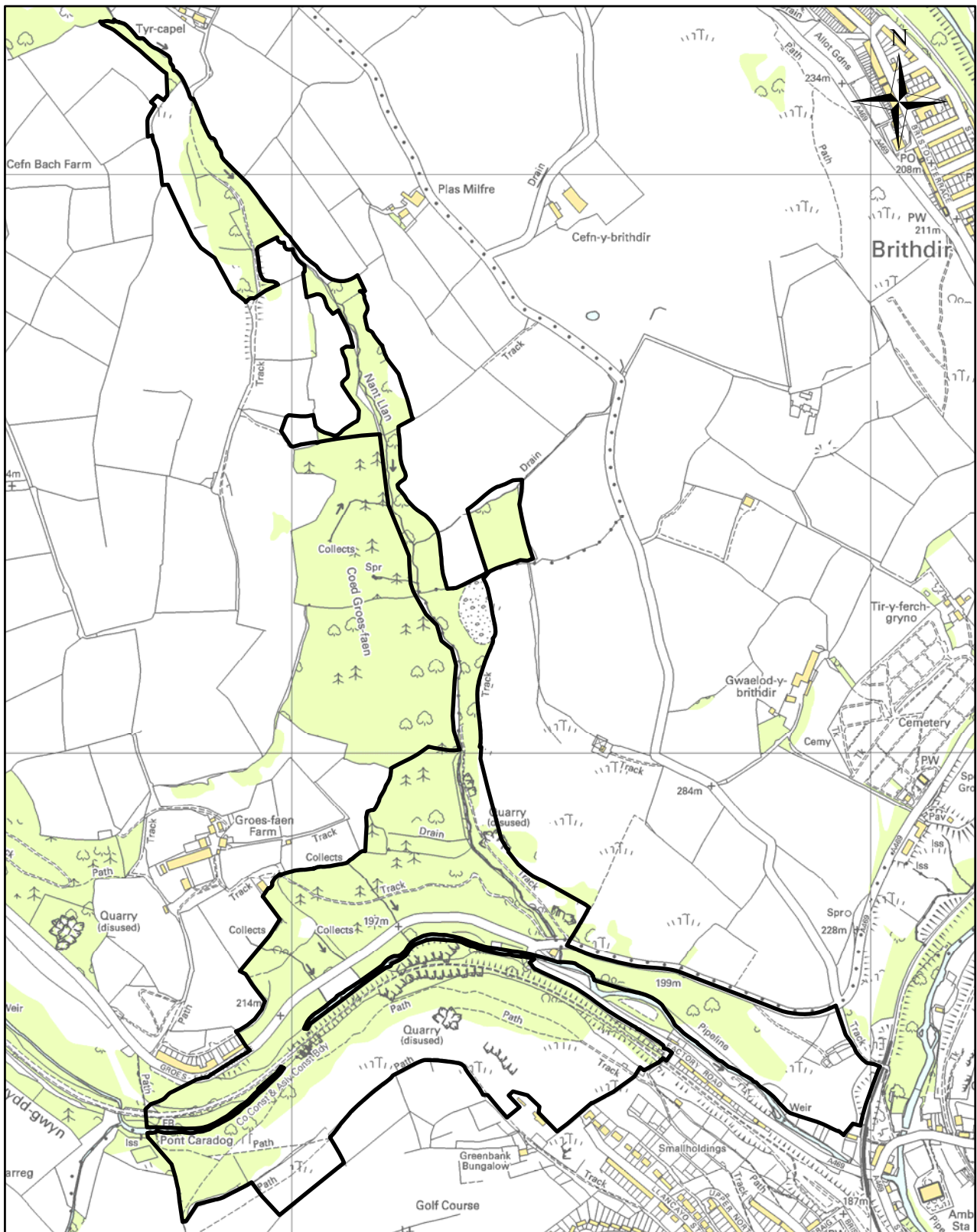
Semi-improved acid grassland at SO140002: *Lotus corniculatus*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Galium saxatile*, *Leontodon hispidus*, *Leontodon autumnalis*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Bellis perennis*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Luzula campestris*, *Pteridium aquilinum*. The waxcap fungi *Hygrocybe flavipes* and *H. conica* were also noted.

Fauna observations: **Badger**, **Slow Worm**, **Buzzard**, **Green Woodpecker**, **Raven**, **Meadow Pipit**, **Blackbird**, **Wren**, **Jay**, **Gatekeeper Butterfly**, **Meadow brown Butterfly**, **Speckled Wood Butterfly**.

Additional records from desk study: **Whiskered Bat**, **Otter**, **Grey Wagtail**, Woodcock, **Eel**, **Stone Loach**, **Salmon**, **Sea Trout**, **Common Hawker Dragonfly**, **Common Darter Dragonfly**, Six-spot Burnet Moth, Narrow Bordered 5 spot Burnet Moth, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Lycopus europaeus*, *Jasione montana*, *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, *Luzula sylvatica*, *Potentilla sterilis*.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
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Pont Caradog and Nant Llan Woodlands, East of Deri 49 Ha

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Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, 100025372, 2008.