

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.105</u>	SINC name: Pontbren, North of Crumlin.
Grid reference: ST226993	Area (hectares): 7
Survey date: 17th May 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.108)	
Summary description	
<p>A Beech and Oak woodland on a steep-south-east facing slope with Bracken and acid grassland communities to the northeastern and southwestern sides. Sheep graze the woodland and there is little understorey and a relatively sparse ground flora. There is evidence of former quarry working near to the top of the slope. The open area to the southwest contains several large stumps and may once have also been woodland. It is dominated by Bracken with locally abundant Bluebells. The Bracken is interspersed with pockets of acid grassland and heath, particularly on the higher ground. Anthills are locally prominent in the grassland at the top of the slope. Scattered scrub on the slope includes Gorse with young Birch and Oak saplings. The open habitats to the northeast are also dominated by Bracken and acid grassland, but there is also a small, heavily poached pond and small flush/ stream downstream from it.</p>	
Qualifying features	
Semi-natural Beech/ Oak woodland.	
Acid grassland / heath with at least 7 indicator species.	
Secondary features	
Bracken.	
Scrub.	
Rock exposure.	
Pond/ flush.	
Grassland with anthills.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
Likely to provide good foraging and roosting opportunities for bats.	
The open habitats are likely to provide good habitat for reptiles.	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>Sheep graze the area. There is no evidence of any recent woodland management. The re-introduction of appropriate woodland management and exclusion of sheep from the woodland would enhance biodiversity by allowing the under storey and ground flora to develop. Evidence of fire was noted in some of the Bracken areas.</p>	
Access/ community use	
A public footpath crosses the southwestern Bracken slope. There is also an informal path along the upper part of the slope.	

Additional information

There appear to be a similar range of Beech woodland, Bracken and scrub communities on the opposite side of the valley to the north of Hafodyrynys.

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

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

Woodland canopy and shrub species: *Fagus sylvatica*, *Quercus petraea*, *Corylus avellana*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Betula pubescens*, *Betula pendula*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Salix caprea*.

Woodland ground flora species: ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Holcus mollis*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Mnium hornum*, *Polytrichum formosum*.

Acid grassland and heath species: *Calluna vulgaris*, *Ulex gallii*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Festuca ovina*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Luzula campestris*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Festuca rubra*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Aira praecox*, *Holcus mollis*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Galium saxatile*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Polygala cf serpyllifolia*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Carex pilulifera*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Hypnum lacunosum*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*, *Polytrichum piliferum*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Cladonia sp.*

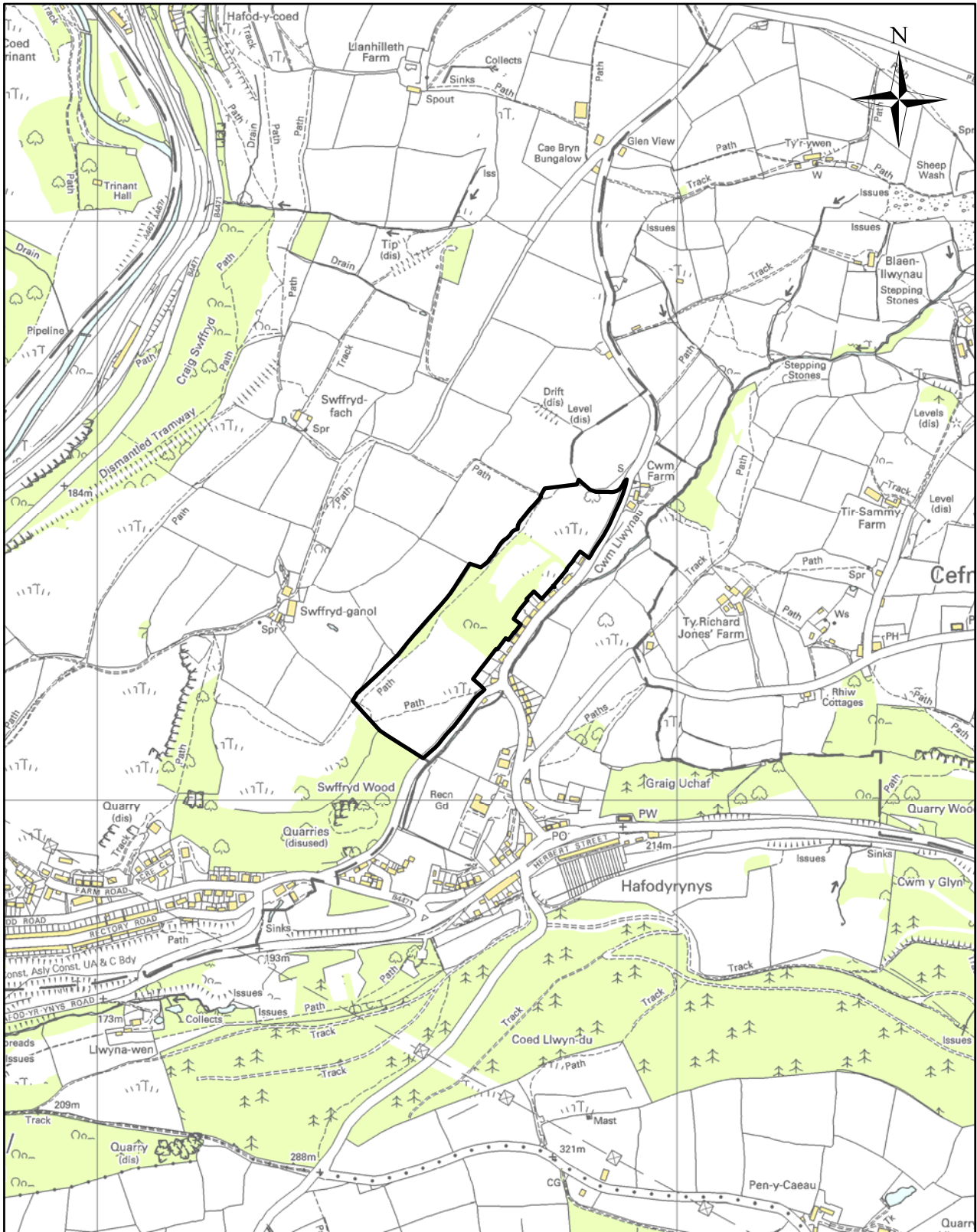
Wetland species associated with pond and flush: *Glyceria fluitans*, *Callitriche sp.*, *Juncus effusus*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Aneura pinguis*, *Pellia sp.*

Fauna observations: *Grey Squirrel*, ***Green Woodpecker***, *Redstart*, *Willow Warbler*, *Greater Spotted Woodpecker*, *Mistle Thrush*, *Wren*, *Robin*, *Chaffinch*, *Great Tit*, *Chiffchaff*, *Orange-tip Butterfly*, *Field Vole*.

Additional records from desk study: **Pipistrelle** and **Noctule** records (outside the site but within approx. 150m of southern boundary), **Slow Worm** (outside the site but within approx. 150m of southern boundary), **Buzzard**.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.105 (SINC 108)
Pontbren, North of Crumlin 7 Ha

1:10,000



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