

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.81</u>	SINC name: Coed Penallta and Railway Line, Ystrad Mynach
Grid reference: ST137949	Area (hectares): 24
Survey date: 6th July 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.118)	
Summary description	
<p>The western part of the SINC comprises a partially wooded south-facing slope with several prominent rock-outcrops (including 'Penallta Rock'). The woodland is former ancient woodland with canopy species including Oak, Birch and Larch with several open areas of acid grassland and Bracken. A disused railway line at the foot of the slope is lined by scrub and to the south of this the vegetation comprises a mix of wet scrub woodland and marshy grassland. Part of this area ('Penallta Marsh') supports abundant Devil's-bit scabious together with Saw-wort, Meadow thistle and Purple moor-grass. Marsh fritillary butterfly has been recorded at this location. The disused railway extends eastwards from Coed Penallta. It is now the route of a cycle-path and is lined along most of its length by a mix of scrub and rough grassland. Two new fishing lakes are included adjacent to the disused railway line.</p>	
Qualifying features	
Species-rich marshy grassland with at least 12 indicator species.	
Acid grassland with at least 7 indicator species.	
Wet woodland.	
Presence of Marsh Fritillary Butterfly.	
Continuous sections of disused railway line supporting semi-natural vegetation.	
Secondary features	
Broad-leaved woodland (former ancient woodland).	
Bracken.	
Rock outcrops.	
Ponds.	
Scrub.	
Semi-improved grassland.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
The site is likely to support a high diversity of invertebrates, potentially including Marsh Fritillary.	
The area is likely to provide good foraging and roosting habitat for bats, particularly, the disused railway, which is likely to be a well-used flight line and feeding area.	
The tussocky grassland, scattered Bracken and scrub margins are likely to support reptiles.	

Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)

Most of the wooded habitats in the west of the SINC appear to have little active management, although a new road has recently been cut through the east of the area (ST142949) and two fish ponds have recently been constructed near the western boundary. Bracken fires appear to be a problem in this area. 'Penallta Marsh' is managed as a local nature reserve, specifically to provide suitable habitat for Marsh fritillary butterflies. Recent management has included scrub clearance, and there are also plans to re-introduce grazing. The disused railway lines in the east of the SINC are maintained as a cycle path. The area beside the recently constructed road currently supports little vegetation but is expected to recover in time.

Access/ community use

Much of the large western area lies within Parc Penallta, a Country Park, which is managed for public amenity and biodiversity by the local authority. Footpaths run along the upper and lower parts of the slope. A well-used cycleway runs along the route of the disused railway line.

Additional information

Recently formed habitats elsewhere within Parc Penallta are developing well and are likely to meet SINC selection criteria in the future. The woodland to the northwest of 'Penallta Rock' (ST141949) is also classified as former ancient woodland, but it does not appear to have retained a very diverse or valuable ground flora. The disused railway line to the west of the site boundary provides a link to nearby SINC NH 3.59. These areas should be considered at future SINC review.

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 (western area): *Betula pubescens*, *Quercus robur*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Corylus avellana*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Salix cinerea*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Quercus petraea*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Rosa arvensis*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Larix sp.*, *Hedera helix*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Ulex europaeus*, *Ulex gallii*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Calluna vulgaris*.

Ground flora species (western area): ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Lamium galeobdolon*, *Viola riviniana*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Athyrium filix-femina*.

Acid grassland/ Bracken species (western area): *Galium saxatile*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Stellaria graminea*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Ceratocarpus claviculata*, *Hieracium sp.*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Jasione montana*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Umbilicalis rupestris*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Festuca rubra*, *Holcus mollis*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Aira praecox*, *Luzula campestris*, *Luzula multiflora*, *Luzula sylvatica*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytidadelphus squarrosus*, *Dicranoweissia cirrata*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*, *Polytrichum piliferum*, *Dicranum scoparium*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Cladonia sp.*. The lichen *Umbilicaria pustulata* is locally abundant on Penallta rock.

Pond species (ST132950): *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, *Typha latifolia*, *Apium nodiflorum*, *Glyceria fluitans*.

Marshy grassland and scrub ('Penallta Marsh'): *Succisa pratensis*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Galium palustre*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Stellaria alsine*, *Serratula tinctoria*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Oenanthe crocata*, *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, *Lycopus europaeus*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Cirsium dissectum*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Pimpinella saxifraga*, *Hieracium sp.*, *Solidago virgaurea*, *Stachys sylvatica*, *Lathyrus linifolius*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Holcus mollis*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*.

Tree and shrub species (disused railway): *Betula pubescens*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Salix caprea*, *Salix cinerea*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Quercus robur*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Ulex europaeus*, *Rubus idaeus*, *Viburnum opulus*, *Rosa arvensis*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Malus sp.*, *Corylus avellana*, *Hedera helix*.

Ground flora/ grassland species (disused railway): *Potentilla erecta*, *Solidago virgaurea*, *Urtica dioica*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Chamerion angustifolium*, *Linaria vulgaris*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Pilosella aurantiaca*, *Viola riviniana*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Verbascum thapsus*, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Lapsana communis*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Polystichum setiferum*.

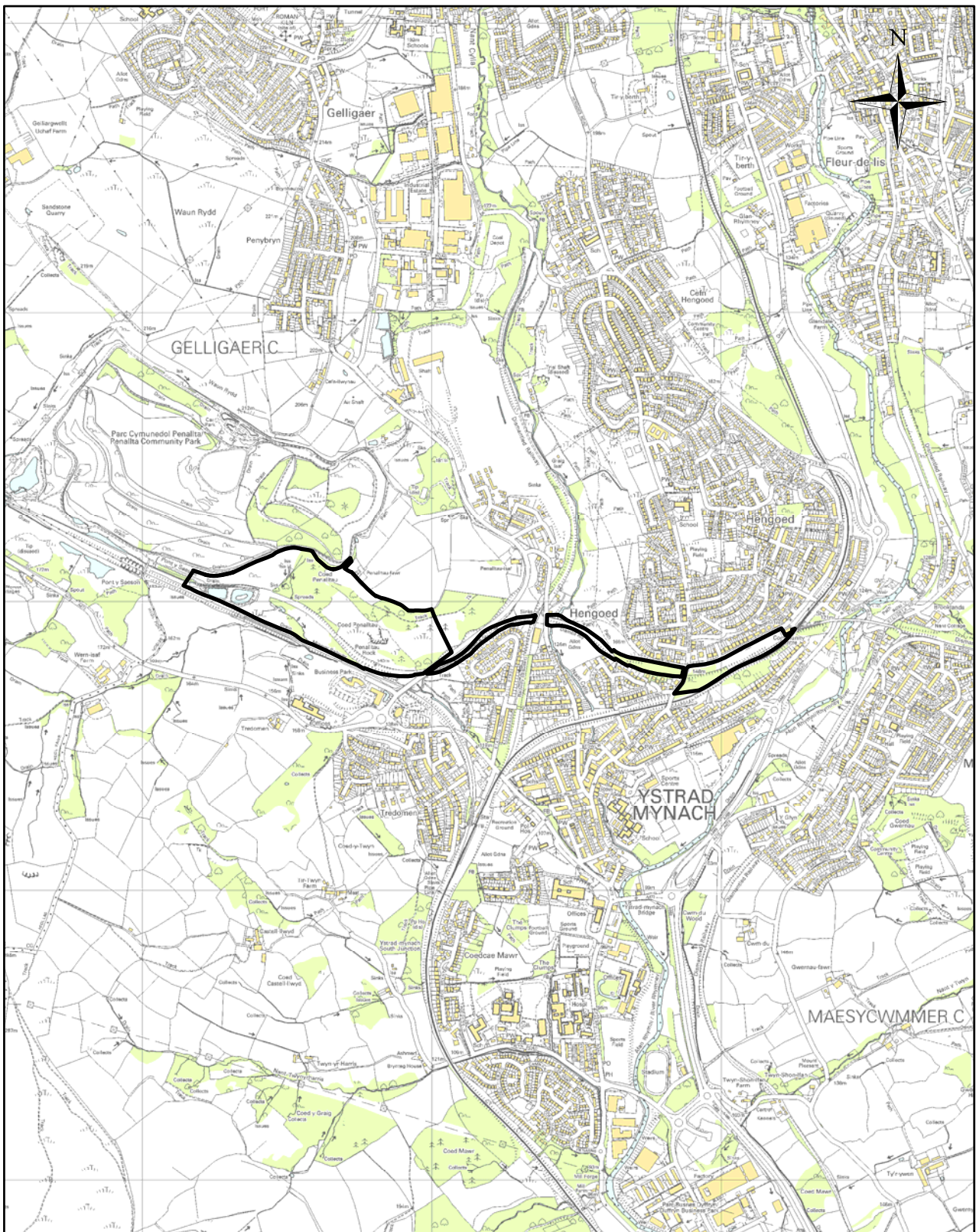
Fauna observations: *Mole*, *Hedgehog*, **Common Lizard**, **Song Thrush**, **Bullfinch**, **Green Woodpecker**, *Wren*, *Raven*, *Jay*, *Blackbird*, *Moorhen*, *Willow Warbler*, *Goldcrest*, *Long-tailed Tit*, *Blue Tit*, *Chiffchaff*, *Large White Butterfly*, *Speckled Wood Butterfly*, **Blue-tailed Damselfly**.

Additional species noted from desk study and consultation: **Badger**, **Slow Worm**, **Common Frog**, **Common Toad**, **Palmate Newt**, **Marsh Fritillary Butterfly**, **Common Darter Dragonfly**, *Fallopia japonica*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Erica tetralix*, *Plantago media*, *Stachys arvensis*, *Vicia cracca*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Ranunculus ficaria*, *Conopodium majus*, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, **Dactylorhiza maculata**, **Dactylorhiza praetermissa**, *Achillea ptarmica*, *Lathyrus pratensis*, *Briza media*, *Stellaria holostea*.

Otter (approx 200m from boundary), **Common Pipistrelle bat** (approx 30m from boundary), **Great Crested Newt** (approx 300m from boundary).

Caerphilly County Borough Council
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Coed Penallta and Railway Line, Ystrad Mynach 11 Ha

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