

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.153</u>	SINC name: Nant Owen Field, north of Llanbradach
Grid Reference ST140912	Area (hectares): 11
Survey date: 13 th September 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.122)	
Summary description	
<p>This SINC includes a mix of habitats, including woodland, semi-improved neutral grassland, colliery spoil with sparse acid grassland and wetland vegetation around the base of the spoil heaps. The woodland is a narrow strip of broadleaved trees following the Nant Owen stream. It has a canopy of Sessile oak and Beech, with semi-natural indicators including Bluebell, Wood sorrel, Wood melick and Yellow archangel. The wetland habitat includes several small ponds and marshy grassland with a high proportion of rushes and <i>Sphagnum</i> mosses. Bulrush and Common reed occur locally. The tips support a very sparse flora dominated by grasses, particularly Wavy hair-grass, Sheep's fescue and Common bent with occasional herbs and lichens. The semi-improved grassland field at the southeast of the SINC supports a short sward dominated by Rye-grass and Crested dog's-tail, with several neutral grassland indicator species including Harebell, Spring sedge and Bird's-foot trefoil.</p>	
Qualifying features	
Acid grassland with at least 7 indicator species.	
Marshy grassland with at least 14 indicator species.	
Broad-leaved woodland with an assemblage of semi-natural indicator species.	
Secondary features	
Semi-improved neutral grassland.	
Stream.	
Pond.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
The tussocky habitat at the foot of the spoil heaps is likely to support reptiles.	
The broadleaved woodland is likely to have value for bats (foraging and roosting).	
The semi-improved grassland is likely to support waxcap fungi.	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>Sheep and cattle graze the area around the tips. The field is heavily grazed by cattle and appears to have been subject to agricultural improvement. Motorcyclists access the area around the old tips, although this does not appear to be at levels that are damaging to biodiversity. The woodland appears unmanaged, although thinning has recently been carried out in the adjacent conifer plantation. Appropriate management of the habitats within the site would enhance its biodiversity.</p>	
Access/ community use	
There is no formal public access to the site, but members of the public use it informally. There is vehicle access to the adjacent firing range.	

Additional information

The woodland areas adjoining the Nant Owen stream in the lower slopes of the valley appear to be semi-natural woodland and Bracken, potentially meeting SINC criteria. It should be considered at future review, as the SINC could possibly be extended to form connections with SINC NH 3.117 and NH 3.155. The larger coal spoil heaps are only sparsely vegetated at present, but likely to develop acid grassland over time. They may then qualify for inclusion within the SINC and should be considered at future 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 associated with woodland by the Nant Owen stream: *Quercus petraea*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Corylus avellana*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Betula pubescens*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Larix sp.*, *Rubus fruticosus*.

Woodland ground flora species: ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Lamium galeobdolon*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Melica uniflora*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Luzula pilosa*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris affinis*, *Mnium hornum*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Polytrichum formosum*.

Acid grassland species on coal spoil and adjoining grassland: *Potentilla erecta*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Galium saxatile*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Carlina vulgaris*, *Hypochaeris radicata*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Festuca ovina*, *Nardus stricta*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Aira praecox*, *Carex pilulifera*, *Juncus squarrosus*, *Juncus effusus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytidadelphus squarrosus*, *Dicranum scoparium*, *Campylopus introflexus*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*, *Polytrichum piliferum*, *Cladonia sp.*, *Peltigera sp.*

The waxcap species Hygrocybe pratensis was noted at ST140913.

Marshy grassland/ wetland vegetation around spoil heaps: *Salix cinerea*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Cirsium arvense*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Galium palustre*, *Lemna minor*, *Myosotis sp.*, *Potamogeton polygonifolius*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Typha latifolia*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Callitriche sp.*, *Veronica beccabunga*, *Lycopus europaeus*, *Sparganium erectum*, *Ranunculus omiophyllus*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Agrostis stolonifera*, *Glyceria fluitans*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Phragmites australis*, *Carex paniculata*, *Carex nigra*, *Eriophorum angustifolium*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus articulatus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*, *Cratoneuron filicinum*, *Sphagnum fimbriatum*, *Sphagnum squarrosum*, *Sphagnum subnitens*, *Sphagnum fallax*, *Sphagnum denticulatum*, *Aulacomnium palustre*, *Polytrichum commune*.

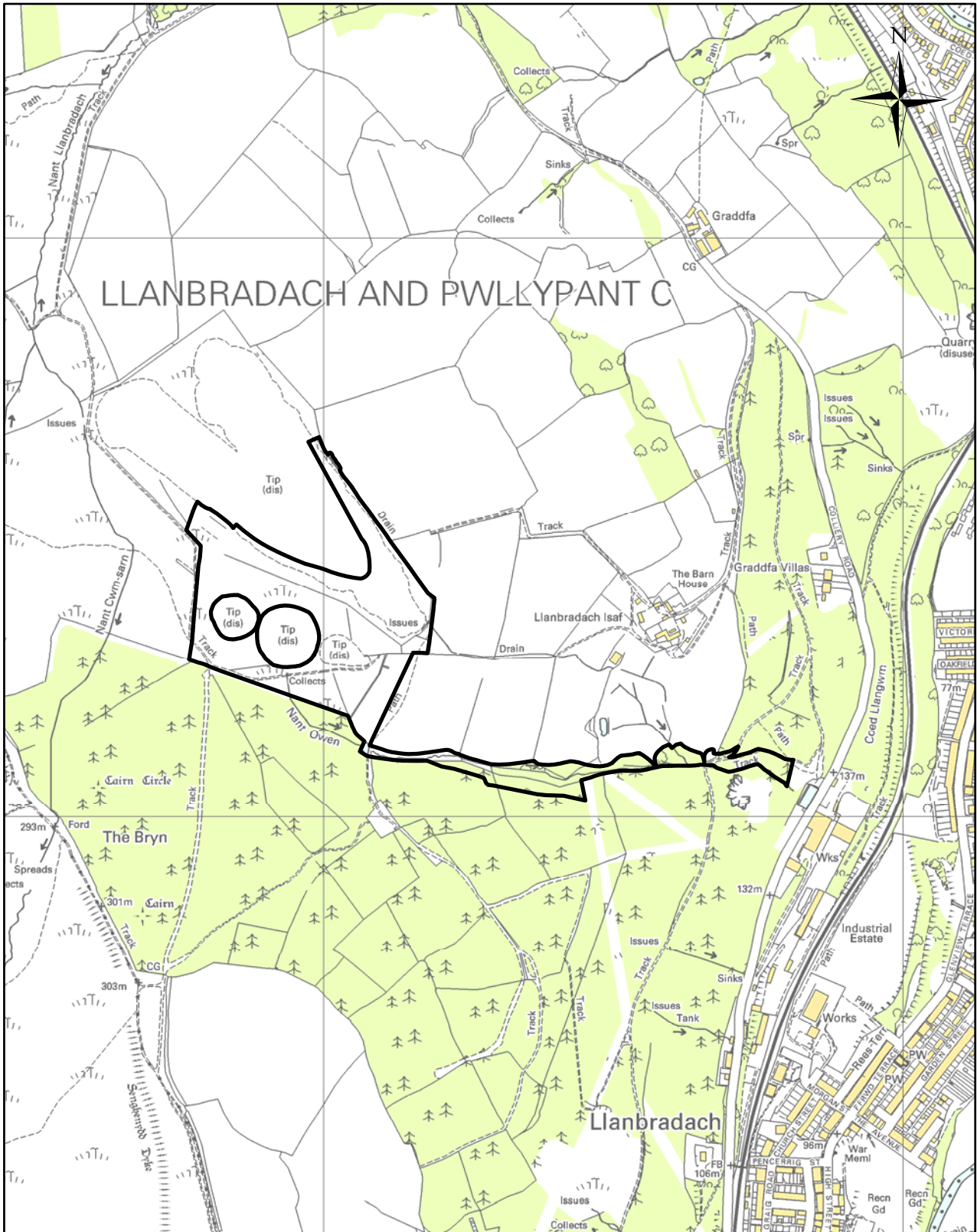
Semi-improved neutral grassland in cattle field (incomplete list due to bull in field): *Trifolium pratense*, *Trifolium repens*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Hypochaeris radicata*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Lolium perenne*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Festuca rubra*, *Carex caryophylla*, *Luzula campestris*.

Fauna observations: **Buzzard**, Raven, Meadow Pipit, Stonechat, **Golden-ringed Dragonfly**, **Common Darter Dragonfly**.

Additional records from desk study: **Green Woodpecker**. *Leontodon autumnalis*, *Achillea millefolium* and *Galium saxatile* in field.

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Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
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Nant Owen Field, North of Llanbradach 11 Ha

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