

| <b>Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <b><u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.138</u></b>  | <b>SINC name: Twmbalrwm, north of Risca</b> |
| <b>Grid reference: ST242924</b>   | <b>Area (hectares): 58</b>                  |
| <b>Survey dates: 7th, 18th &amp; 19th April 2007</b>  |   |
| <b>Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)</b>   |   |
| <b>(UDP policy reference: C11.145)</b>  |   |
| <b>Summary description</b>  |   |
| A large unenclosed upland site supporting a mix of acid grassland and heath vegetation on the upper parts, with Bracken and coniferous plantation on the valley sides. The lower slopes on the western side support several small sheep-grazed fields of semi-improved acid grassland with anthills and scattered Bracken (known as the ' <i>Darren Fields</i> '), and a disused farm building.   |   |
| <b>Qualifying features</b>  |   |
| Heathland / acid grassland containing at least 7 indicator species.   |   |
| Grassland with anthills.  |   |
| <b>Secondary features</b>   |   |
| Conifer plantation.   |   |
| Bracken.  |   |
| Scrub.  |   |
| <b>Potential value/ unconfirmed features</b>  |   |
| Dormouse has been confirmed in woodland at the eastern boundary and may extend into the site.   |   |
| The site is likely to support good numbers of reptiles, particularly Common lizard.   |   |
| The ' <i>Darren Fields</i> ' area is likely to support waxcap fungi.  |   |
| Areas of felled conifer plantation may become re-colonised by acid grassland and heath.   |   |
| <b>Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)</b>   |   |
| Sheep graze the upland area. Sheep and horses heavily graze the ' <i>Darren Fields</i> ' area at the west of the site. Much of the area appears to be becoming overgrown by Bracken. Conifers have been planted on the valley sides and have locally shaded out the acid grassland and heath ground flora. In some areas, plantations have been felled and these have potential to return to their former, more diverse acid grassland/heath condition. Removal of conifers (at least the self sown ones) and restoration of grazing would enhance biodiversity. Motorcycling activity was noted in the east of the upland area, in some parts this appears to be resulting in serious problems of erosion and loss of diversity. |   |
| <b>Access/ community use</b>  |   |
| The majority of the site is open access land. The site is popular with walkers, particularly for the view from the old castle mound.  |   |

### Additional information

There may be a need to adjust the boundaries depending on future forestry management. Some areas of young trees are likely to lose their heath and grassland ground flora as the canopy closes, while felling of conifers could increase the area of acid grassland and heathland habitat. The old hill fort and castle mound are likely to be of archaeological importance. These areas should be considered at future SINC review. Dormouse is present in at least some of the adjacent woodland areas and may use Bracken and scrub within the SINC, which should be investigated.

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

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

Heath and acid grassland species: *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Festuca ovina*, *Nardus stricta*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Juncus squarrosus*, *Luzula campestris*, *Luzula multiflora*, *Carex binervis*, *Carex pilulifera*, *Galium saxatile*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Ulex gallii*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*. (*Sphagnum subnitens*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Juncus articulatus* and *Carex echinata* very localised in east side of upland area).

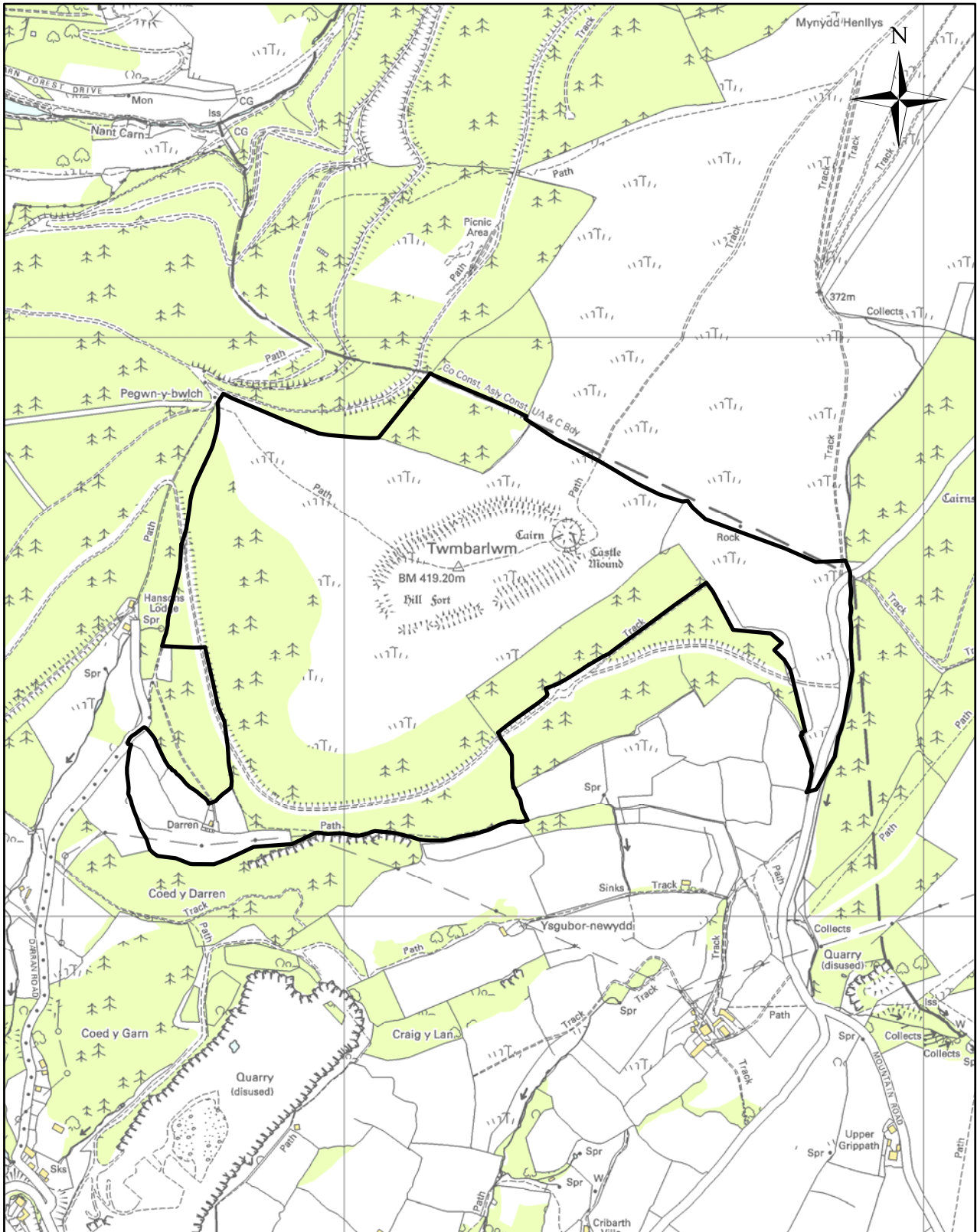
Tree species: *Fagus sylvatica*, *Larix sp.*, *Picea sitchensis*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Quercus petraea*, *Betula pendula*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*.

Fauna observations: **Common Lizard**, **Buzzard**, **Song Thrush**, **Green Woodpecker**, *Tree Pipit*, *Raven*, *Willow Warbler*, *Great Tit*, *Coal Tit*, *Blackbird*, *Robin*, *Grey Squirrel*, *Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly*, *Peacock Butterfly*, *Speckled Wood Butterfly*.

Additional species noted from desk study: **Dormouse** (2004 record from nest box). *Green Hairstreak Butterfly*. *Eriophorum angustifolium* has been recorded from the main upland area. A number of common grassland plants have been recorded from the 'Darren Fields', including *Thymus praecox*, *Trifolium pratense* and *Lotus corniculatus*.

Caerphilly County Borough Council  
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation  
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.138 (SINC 145)  
Twmbarlwm, North of Risca 58 Ha

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