

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.144</u>	SINC name: Risca Quarry, Fernlea.
Grid reference: ST238917	Area (hectares): 16
Survey date: 19th April 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.147)	
Summary description	
<p>A disused quarry fringed by steep rock faces and developing scrub woodland. Areas of short vegetation and scrub include some plants typical of a calcareous grassland flora. Scrub and plantations fringe most of the quarry margins and these include a number of semi-natural woodland indicator species. To the east of the site is a steep, south-facing slope dominated by Hazel, Hawthorn and Bracken with a largely semi-natural ground flora, including abundant Bluebells. To the northeast is a short belt of acid grassland and scrub, with anthills, over an area of disused workings.</p>	
Qualifying features	
Semi-natural woodland with an assemblage of indicator species.	
Calcareous grassland with at least 8 indicator species.	
Inland cliff with substantive nature conservation interest.	
Secondary features	
Acid grassland.	
Scrub.	
Grassland with anthills.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
The woodland areas and quarry are likely feeding and roosting habitats for bats.	
The quarry faces are a potential habitat for ledge-nesting birds, such as Peregrine falcon (a Peregrine was seen flying overhead during the survey).	
The site has potential for foraging badger.	
The area has potential to support large numbers of reptiles.	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>The quarry is largely derelict, although the part near the road appeared to be in use at the time of the survey (apparently as a storage area). The open grassland areas are only maintained by Rabbit-grazing. Scrub is encroaching over much of the calcareous grassland and some form of scrub clearance would be help to slow this process. There are signs of vandalism, motorcycling and shooting in the area, but these do not appear to be at levels that threaten the site's value for nature conservation.</p>	

Access/ community use

Public footpaths and informal paths cross some parts of the site, but there are warning notices at the quarry perimeter.

Additional information

A survey later in the season would probably reveal many additional plant species. The woodland to the west is classified as replanted ancient woodland with a canopy of conifers, but also includes Beech and Oak and several semi-natural indicator species. It should therefore be re-assessed at a 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*)

Calcareous grassland species: *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Festuca rubra*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Carex flacca*, *Carex caryophyllea*, *Carlina vulgaris*, *Sanguisorba minor*, *Thymus polytrichus*, *Luzula campestris*, *Leontodon hispidus*, *Blackstonia perfoliata*, *Linum catharticum*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Primula vulgaris*, *Origanum vulgare*, *Potentilla sterilis*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Centaureum erythraea*, *Aphanes* sp., *Inula conyzae*, *Viola riviniana*, *Hieracium* sp., *Trifolium dubium*, *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Festuca ovina*, cf *Asperula cynanchica*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Homalothecium lutescens*, *Rhynchospora squarrosus*, *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Scleropodium purum*.

Acid grassland species (with scrub in north-east): *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Luzula campestris*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Festuca rubra*, *Festuca ovina*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Conopodium majus*, *Rumex acetosella*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Viola riviniana*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Arum maculatum*, *Ranunculus ficaria*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Crataegus monogyna*.

Woodland / scrub canopy and shrub species: *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Alnus incana*, *Buddleja davidii*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Quercus robur*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Acer campestre*, *Euonymus europaeus*, *Viburnum lanatana*, *Cornus sanguinea*, *Corylus avellana*, *Betula pendula*, *Quercus petraea*, *Salix caprea*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Rosa canina*, *Sambucus nigra*, *Prunus avium*, *Cotoneaster* sp., *Clematis vitalba*, x *Cupressocyparis leylandii*, *Larix* sp., *Pinus sylvestris*.

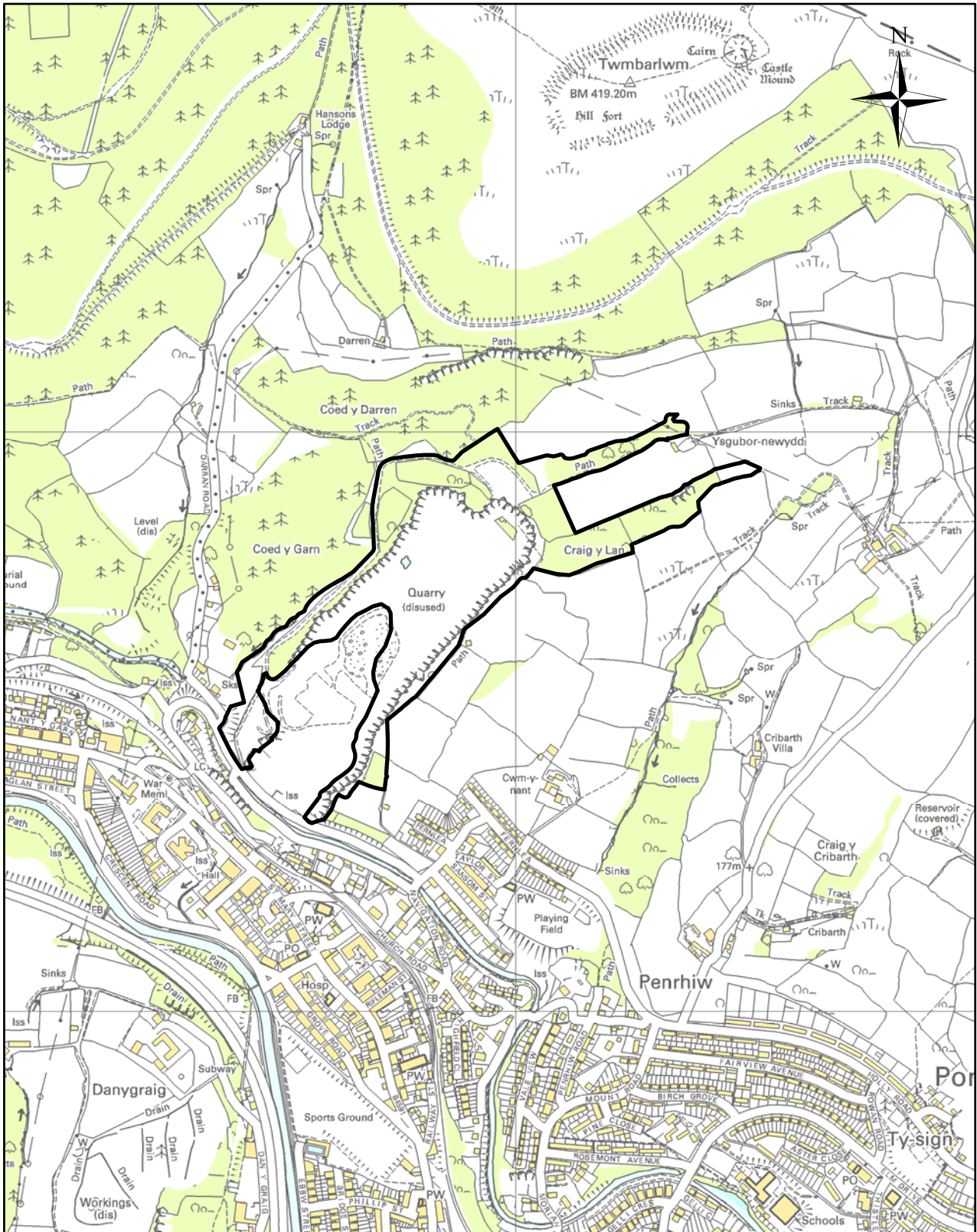
Woodland and scrub ground flora species (locally merging with grassland species): ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Allium ursinum*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Ranunculus ficaria*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Primula vulgaris*, *Arum maculatum*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Urtica dioica*, *Viola riviniana*, *Geum urbanum*, *Cardamine hirsuta*, *Conopodium majus*, *Tamus communis*, *Glechoma hederacea*, *Valeriana dioica*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Carex sylvatica*, *Carex remota*, *Luzula pilosa*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Polystichum setiferum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Mnium hornum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Thuidium tamariscinum*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Pellia* sp., *Conocephalum* sp..

Fauna observations: **Badger**, **Slow Worm**, Grey Squirrel, Fox, **Buzzard**, **Peregrine** (flying overhead), **Bullfinch**, Raven, Wood Warbler (in woodland to north of site), Great Spotted Woodpecker, Sparrowhawk, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Jackdaw, Jay, Long-tailed Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Wren, Chaffinch, Blackbird.

Additional species noted from desk study: **Adder** (2005 record), *Melica uniflora*, *Carex nigra*

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Risca Quarry, Fernlea 16 Ha

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Mae atgynhychu heb awddurdod yn torri hawlfraint y Goron.
Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, 100025372, 2008.