

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.163</u>	SINC name: Gypsy Lane Wetland, south of Groeswen
Grid reference: ST134870	Area (hectares): 42
Survey date: 28th June 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C10.164, C11.158)	
Summary description	
<p>A series of damp fields, divided by a network of mature hedges and tree lines, mainly dominated by Oak, Beech and willows. The area also supports several small blocks of woodland and a number of small streams. The fields are mostly dominated by Purple moor-grass and rushes, and locally by Bracken and developing scrub. The vegetation supports a diverse mix of grassland plants, including many marshy grassland indicator species. A few smaller areas include acid grassland and neutral grassland vegetation.</p>	
Qualifying features	
<p>Marshy grassland with at least 12 indicator species.</p> <p>Acid grassland with at least 7 indicator species.</p> <p>Presence of Water Vole.</p>	
Secondary features	
<p>Close network of mature hedgerows.</p> <p>Streams.</p> <p>Neutral grassland.</p> <p>Presence of Small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly.</p>	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>Further botanical survey would undoubtedly confirm the presence of additional species. In particular, the site has potential to support uncommon wetland plants and bryophytes.</p> <p>The site is likely to support a high diversity of invertebrates and could potentially include the Marsh fritillary butterfly.</p> <p>The range of habitats is likely to support a high diversity of breeding and wintering birds, and moths, potentially meeting SINC selection criteria for these groups.</p> <p>The area is likely to support good numbers of reptiles, particularly Grass snake.</p> <p>The site is likely to provide good foraging and roosting habitat for bats.</p> <p>The well-connected woodlands and hedges have the potential to support Dormice.</p>	

Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)

Horses, cattle and sheep lightly graze much of the area. However, a high proportion of the eastern side appears not to have been grazed for several years and has become heavily encroached upon by Bracken and scrub. The eastern side of the site would generally benefit from light grazing by horses or cattle, possibly following initial scrub and Bracken control. Several areas have been subject to minor vandalism, fires and use by off-road cycles. However, these activities do not appear to have affected the nature conservation value. There are currently no ponds on the site, although its damp nature would probably lend itself to pond creation to enhance the area for biodiversity, including amphibians and dragonflies.

Access/ community use

There is no formal public access to the majority of the site. However, public footpaths cross some parts and there are also a number of informal paths.

Additional information

Several fields adjoining the SINC support damp grassland. These are not currently sufficiently diverse to meet SINC criteria, but still have some value for nature conservation. The connecting hedgerows and streams adjoining the SINC also have value as linking habitats and could also potentially support protected species. These areas should be considered for inclusion 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*)

Woodland, hedge and scrub tree and shrub species: *Quercus petraea*, *Quercus robur*, *Corylus avellana*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Salix cinerea*, *Salix caprea*, *Salix aurita*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Betula pubescens*, *Betula pendula*, *Hedera helix*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Rosa arvensis*, *Malus sylvestris*, *Frangula alnus*, *Sambucus nigra*, *Ulex europaeus*, *Ulex gallii*, *Cytisus scoparius*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Calluna vulgaris*.

Woodland and hedge ground flora: *Viola palustris*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Valeriana officinalis*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Lamium galeobdolon*, *Cardamine hirsuta*, *Viola riviniana*, *Hypericum pulchrum*, *Melampyrum pratense*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Holcus mollis*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Carex remota*, *Carex sylvatica*, *Juncus effusus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Mnium hornum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans*, *Diplophyllum albicans*, *Atrichum undulatum*, *Plagiomnium undulatum*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Scleropodium purum*.

Marshy grassland species: *Ranunculus flammula*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Stellaria alsine*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Cirsium dissectum*, *Potentilla anserina*, ***Dactylorhiza maculata***, ***Dactylorhiza praetermissa*** (and hybrids), ***Dactylorhiza fuchsii***, *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, *Myosotis secunda*, *Myosotis scorpioides*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Veronica scutellata*, *Ajuga reptans*, *Epilobium palustre*, *Valeriana officinalis*, *Wahlenbergia hederacea*, *Mentha aquatica*, *Menyanthes trifoliata*, *Caltha palustris*, *Anagallis tenella*, *Oenanthe crocata*, *Odontites vernus*, *Stachys officinalis*, *Hypericum maculatum*, *Narthecium ossifragum*, *Lycopus europaeus*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Serratula tinctoria*, *Pulicaria dysenterica*, *Myosotis discolor*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Agrostis canina*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Briza media*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Glyceria fluitans*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Eriophorum angustifolium*, *Carex viridula*, *Carex panicea*, *Carex ovalis*, *Carex echinata*, *Carex hostiana*, *Carex binervis*, *Carex cf laevigata*, *Isolepis setacea*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus bulbosus*, *Luzula multiflora*,

Athyrium filix-femina, *Dryopteris carthusiana*, *Aulacomnium palustre*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Thuidium tamariscinum*, *Sphagnum palustre*, *Sphagnum subnitens*, *Sphagnum fallax*, *Sphagnum cf inundatum*, *Sphagnum tenellum*, *Sphagnum compactum* (in recently disturbed area), *Calliergonella cuspidata*, *Aulacomnium palustre*.

Acid grassland / semi-improved acid grassland: *Trifolium repens*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Galium saxatile*, *Stachys officinalis*, *Veronica officinalis*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Stellaria graminea*, *Melampyrum pratense*, *Pedicularis sylvatica*, *Achillea millefolium*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Hypochaeris radicata*, *Festuca rubra*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Agrostis canina*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Festuca ovina*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Luzula campestris*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*.

Fauna observations: Fox, Grey Squirrel, Mole, Rabbit, **Buzzard**, **Song Thrush**, **Bullfinch**, **Green Woodpecker**, **Kestrel**, Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Robin, Dunnock, Wren, Blue Tit, Pied Wagtail, Jay, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly, Meadow Brown Butterfly, Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly, Large Skipper Butterfly, Ringlet Butterfly, Burnet Moths, **Golden-ringed Dragonfly**, **Emperor Dragonfly**

Additional species noted from desk study: **Water Vole (record from 2000)**, **Pipistrelle (records from 2005)**, **Great Crested Newt** (approx 400m from south-east boundary, other side of A468), **Bullhead**, **Brown Trout**, **House Sparrow**, *Erica tetralix*, *Sphagnum papillosum*, *Trichophorum cespitosum*, *Carex laevigata*, *Pimpinella saxifraga*, *Hypericum hirsutum*