

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.183</u>	SINC name: Cefn Onn Ridge, south of Wern Ddu, Caerphilly
Grid reference: ST182855	Area (hectares): 78
Survey date: 30th April 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.164)	
Summary description	
<p>A linear SINC encompassing approximately 3km of woodland, scrub and grassland along the Cefn Onn limestone ridge. Some of the woodland is classified as ancient and the main canopy species are Oak and Beech, with Ash, Hazel and Hawthorn. Most woodland areas support semi-natural indicator species in their ground flora, particularly large carpets of Bluebells. Other frequent species include Wood anemone, Ramsons, Primrose and Wood sedge. Dormice are known to occur in the woodland habitat. The open areas within the SINC support a mix of improved grassland and calcareous grassland, locally becoming colonised by scrub. The most diverse calcareous grassland occurs in the disused quarries at ST174851, which includes Carline thistle, Hairy violet, Fairy flax, Dwarf thistle, Early purple orchid, Wild thyme and several calcicole mosses.</p>	
Qualifying features	
<p>Partially ancient, broad-leaved woodland, with an assemblage of semi-natural indicator species.</p> <p>Calcareous grassland with more than 8 indicator species.</p> <p>Presence of Dormice.</p>	
Secondary features	
<p>Scrub.</p> <p>Rock exposures.</p> <p>Improved grassland.</p> <p>Semi-improved grassland.</p> <p>Streams.</p> <p>Bracken.</p>	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>The area supports a high diversity of plants and a comprehensive survey would undoubtedly confirm additional species, particularly of bryophytes.</p> <p>The site is likely to have high value for foraging and foraging bats. There is potential for old earth-workings/ mines to contain important hibernation roost sites.</p> <p>The area has potential to support important populations of invertebrates.</p> <p>The unimproved short-grazed grassland areas are likely to support populations of grassland fungi.</p> <p>The calcareous, semi-improved grasslands and woodland margins are very likely to support reptiles, including Adder.</p>	

Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)

Much of the grassland is grazed by sheep and cattle, and locally by horses (and rabbits). Large areas within the SINC have been ploughed, re-seeded and treated with fertilizers, which has removed much of the valuable flora and fauna (improved grassland areas). The grazing intensity in the remaining patches of calcareous grassland appears to be sufficiently low to sustain the valuable flora and fauna. However, scrub control would be beneficial in some areas. The woodland generally appears to be left undisturbed, with few signs of active woodland management. Livestock has access to graze in some areas, while others have developed a tangled understorey; overall, this has resulted in a healthy diversity in woodland structure.

Access/ community use

There is no public access to most of the site, although the Rhymney Valley Ridgeway Footpath and several other public footpaths pass through the area. There also appear to be several informal paths through the wooded area.

Additional information

The SINC boundary is complicated as there are so many interfaces between areas of improved grassland which do not meet SINC criteria and small pockets / narrow strips of woodland and calcareous grassland that do. The SINC boundary has therefore necessarily included some areas of species-poor grassland and omitted small areas of valuable woodland in order to achieve a reasonable fit for mapping purposes. There are undoubtedly other areas of woodland and calcareous grassland in the wider area that could potentially meet the SINC selection criteria. In particular, the woodland and grassland visible by aerial photography at ST192855 appears worthy of further ecological survey. Coed Coesau Whips should also qualify as a SINC as it is known to support Dormice. 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*)

Woodland canopy, hedge and scrub species (combined list): *Quercus robur*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Corylus avellana*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Salix caprea*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Hedera helix*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Rosa canina*, *Rosa arvensis*, *Taxus baccata*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Acer campestre*, *Prunus avium*, *Ulmus glabra*, *Clematis vitalba*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Buddleja davidii*, *Ulex gallii*.

Woodland and scrub ground flora species (combined list): ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Allium ursinum*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Viola riviniana*, *Lamium galeobdolon*, *Veronica montana*, *Geum urbanum*, *Conopodium majus*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Primula vulgaris*, *Rumex sanguineus*, *Ranunculus ficaria*, *Tamus communis*, ***Orchis mascula***, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Arum maculatum*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Carex remota*, *Carex sylvatica*, *Luzula pilosa*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Polystichum setiferum*, *Polystichum aculeatum*, *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Mnium hornum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Thuidium tamariscinum*, *Isoetes macrospora*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Thamnobryum alopecurum*, *Atrichum undulatum*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Leucobryum juniperoideum* (on Oak stump at ST175849), *Homalia trichomanoides*, *Cirriphyllum crassinervium*, *Homalothecium sericeum*, *Rhynchostegium riparioides*.

Calcareous grassland species (combined for whole site, including quarries): *Lotus corniculatus*, *Linum catharticum*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Carlina vulgaris*, *Thymus polytrichus*, *Cirsium acaule*, *Leontodon hispidus*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Potentilla sterilis*, *Centaurea erythraea*, ***Dactylorhiza fuchsii***, ***Orchis mascula***, *Viola riviniana*, *Viola hirta*, *Hieracium* sp., *Polygala vulgaris*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Rubus* cf *caesius*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Alchemilla* sp., *Hypericum pulchrum*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Festuca rubra*, *Festuca ovina*,

Danthonia decumbens, *Carex flacca*, *Luzula campestris*, *Asplenium trichomanes*, *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Ditrichum cf gracile*, *Tortella tortuosa*, *Trichostomum brachydontium*, *Trichostomum crispulum*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*, *Homalothecium lutescens*, *Hypnum lacunosum*, *Fissidens sp.*, *Anomodon viticulosus*.

Semi-improved acid/ neutral grassland species occur patchily, mainly in the south of the SINC, and these typically include: Potentilla erecta, Rumex acetosa, Rumex acetosella, Anthoxanthum odoratum, Festuca rubra, Luzula campestris, Pteridium aquilinum.

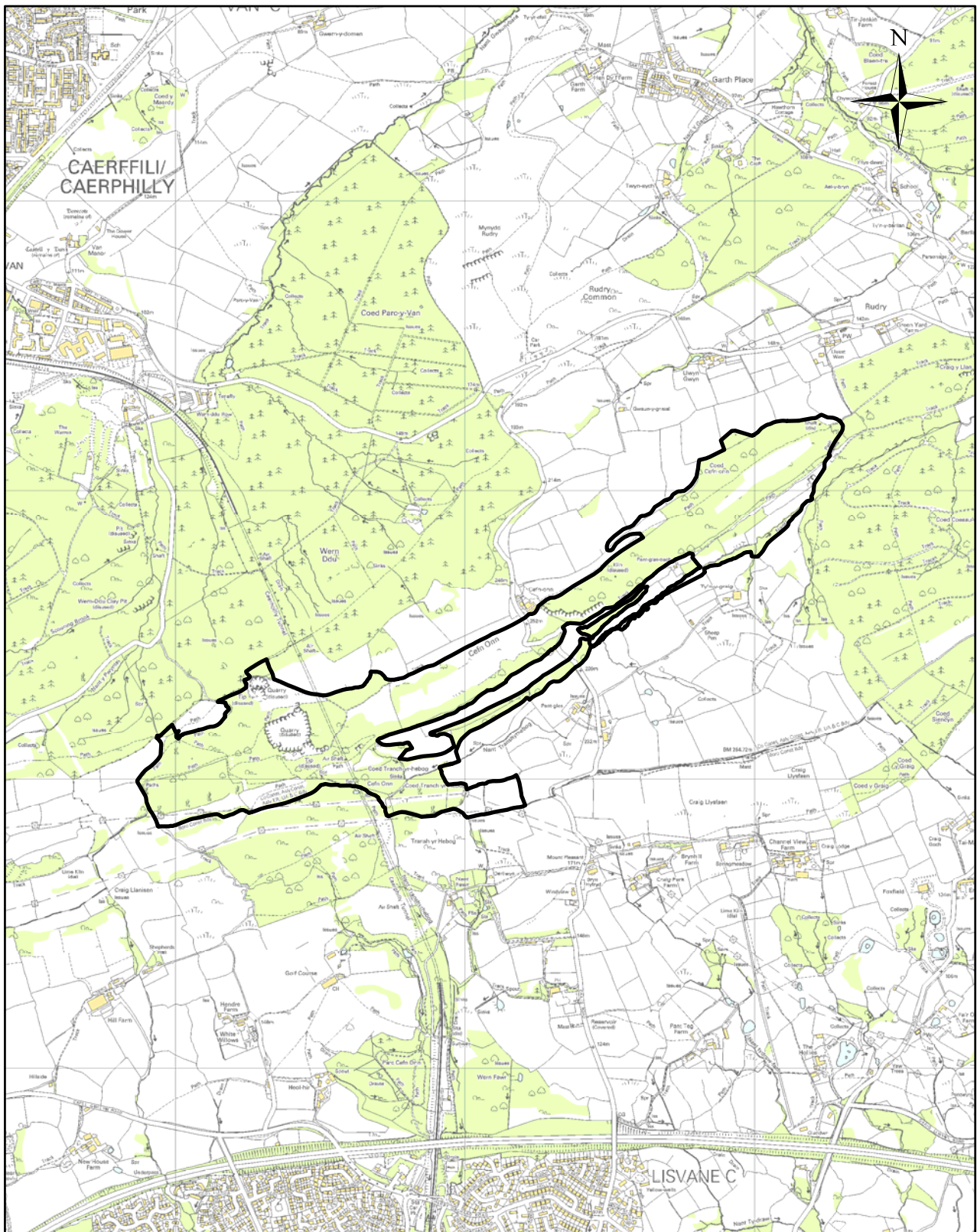
Fauna observations: **Badger**, Grey Squirrel, Rabbit, **Song Thrush**, **Buzzard**, Nuthatch, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Wren, Goldfinch, Blackcap, Red Admiral Butterfly, Brimstone Butterfly, Orange-tip Butterfly, Large White Butterfly.

Additional records from desk study: **Dormouse**, **Green Woodpecker**, Tawny Owl, **Primula veris**, **Ophrys apifera**, *Aquilegia vulgaris*, *Brachypodium pinnatum*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Briza media*, *Carex caryophylla*, *Centaurea scabiosa*, *Cirsium dissectum*, *Cornus sanguinea*, *Crepis paludosa*, *Gentianella amarella*, *Helianthemum nummularium*, *Melica nutans*, *Moerhingia trinervia*, *Trisetum flavescens*, *Teucrium scorodonia*, *Viola reichenbachiana*, *Sanicula europaea*, *Tilia cordata*, *Prunus padus*, *Pimpinella saxifraga*, *Leontodon autumnalis*, **Microglossum olivaceum**, *Hygrocybe chlorophana*, *Hygrocybe conica*, *Hygrocybe psittacina*, *Hygrocybe virginea*.

Species recorded within same 1km grid squares include: Hedgehog, **Adder**, **Grass Snake**, **Bullfinch**, **Yellowhammer**, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly, Grayling Butterfly.

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Cefn Onn Ridge, South of Wern Ddu 78 Ha

1:20,000



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