

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.170</u>	SINC name: Caerphilly/ Machen Disused Railway, Trethomas
Grid reference: ST176878	Area (hectares): 48
Survey date: 16th May 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.167)	
Summary description	
<p>This SINC comprises a series of disused railway lines that support a mix of scrub and rough grassland habitats. It also includes several areas of adjacent woodland, damp grassland, ponds and riverbank habitat. The woodland habitat includes remnants of semi-natural ancient woodland at ST194885 and ST202887. The older woodland within the SINC is mostly damp, broadleaved woodland with a canopy of Oak, Ash and Alder, with Bramble and a ground flora including Bluebell, Wood anemone, Dog's mercury, Wood sorrel, Lesser celandine and Ramsons. Several ponds at ST176879 support a breeding population of Great Crested Newt. Marshy grassland habitat at Mornington Meadows (ST172878) is dominated by rushes and includes a range of wetland plants including Water-cress, Wild angelica, Bog stitchwort, Meadowsweet, Gypsywort and Ragged robin. Neutral grassland and tall herb vegetation beside the river Rhymney south of Trethomas (ST186885) supports a moderately diverse sward including Meadow vetchling, Common knapweed, Pignut, Meadowsweet and Great burnet. Grass snake and Otter have been recorded from beside the river.</p>	
Qualifying features	
<p>Continuous sections of disused railway line supporting semi-natural vegetation.</p> <p>Broadleaved woodland (with wet woodland and ancient woodland) with semi-natural indicators</p> <p>Species-rich marshy grassland with at least 12 indicator species.</p> <p>Presence of Great Crested Newt.</p>	
Secondary features	
<p>Scrub.</p> <p>Bracken.</p> <p>Ponds.</p> <p>Scrub.</p> <p>Semi-improved neutral grassland.</p>	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>The disused railway is likely to provide valuable feeding habitat and flight lines for bats. The adjoining woodland is also likely to include feeding and roosting habitat for bats.</p> <p>Dormice are likely to occur in some woodland, as they are known to occur on adjacent land.</p> <p>The riverside woodland could potentially support resting or breeding sites for Otters.</p> <p>The disused railway is likely to support reptiles, breeding birds and a high diversity of invertebrates.</p>	

Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)

The SINC appears to have little active management. The woodland and disused railways are left largely undisturbed, although part of the former railway now supports a cycle path. Horses and possibly cattle apparently graze the marshy grassland areas at Mornington Meadows. The semi-improved neutral grassland south of Trethomas (ST184885) appeared ungrazed at the time of the survey, but would probably benefit from appropriate grazing to prevent the sward from becoming too dense, and to keep scrub development in check. Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and New Zealand pigmyweed are present in several parts of the SINC (particularly near the riverbank south of Trethomas), and control of these species would be beneficial for biodiversity.

Access/ community use

There is no formal public access to most of the SINC, although footpaths and roads cross it in several places. A well used, recently constructed cycleway/footpath runs along the eastern part of the disused railway line. There also appears to be limited informal access along the western section. The grassland south of Trethomas appears to be managed as public open space.

Additional information

Some parts of this SINC are of limited habitat or species diversity, but have value by providing habitat links between areas of greater biodiversity. The River Rhymney is a separate SINC (NH3.1).

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 (Forge Wood area ST200886): *Quercus robur*, *Betula pubescens*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Corylus avellana*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Rosa arvensis*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Hedera helix*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Salix caprea*, *Ulmus glabra*, *Ribes uva-crispa*.

Ground flora species (Forge Wood area ST200886): ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Allium ursinum*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Lamium galeobdolon*, *Viola riviniana*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Ranunculus ficaria*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Scrophularia nodosa*, *Urtica dioica*, *Impatiens glandulifera*, *Fallopia japonica*, *Caltha palustris*, *Iris pseudacorus*, *Oenanthe crocata*, *Alliaria petiolata*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Tamus communis*, *Veronica hederifolia*, *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Festuca gigantea*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Melica uniflora*, *Bromopsis ramosa*, *Carex sylvatica*, *Carex remota*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Equisetum sylvatica*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Mnium hornum*.

Tree and shrub species (disused railway): *Salix caprea*, *Salix cinerea*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Quercus robur*, *Betula pubescens*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Ulex europaeus*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Malus sp.*, *Corylus avellana*, *Hedera helix*, *Lonicera nitida*, *Cytisus scoparius*, *Sambucus nigra*, *Ligustrum ovalifolium*, *Ilex aquifolium*.

Ground flora/ grassland species (disused railway): *Urtica dioica*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Chamerion angustifolium*, *Linaria vulgaris*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Viola riviniana*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Lapsana communis*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Teucrium scorodonia*, *Vicia sativa*, *Silene dioica*, *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Vicia hirsuta*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Trifolium dubium*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Leontodon hispidus*, *Stachys officinalis*, *Potentilla anserina*, *Rumex sanguineus*, *Ononis repens*, *Lathyrus pratensis*, *Fallopia japonica*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Festuca rubra*, *Bromus hordeaceus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Athyrium filix-femina*.

Pond species (ST176879): *Salix alba*, *Salix cinerea*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Salix caprea*, *Urtica dioica*, *Oenanthe crocata*, *Iris pseudacorus*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Poa trivialis*, *Glyceria fluitans*.

Marshy grassland and scrub (Mornington Meadows ST172878): *Galium palustre*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Stellaria alsine*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Oenanthe crocata*, *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Lycopus europaeus*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Galeopsis tetrahit*, *Scutellaria galericulata*, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, *Apium nodiflorum*, *Persicaria hydropiper*, *Veronica beccabunga*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Valeriana officinalis*, *Typha latifolia*, *Callitriche* sp., *Sparganium erectum*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Glyceria maxima*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Alopecurus pratensis*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Glyceria fluitans*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Carex hirta*, *Carex ovalis*, *Carex remota*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Juncus inflexus*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Equisetum sylvaticum*, *Equisetum fluviatile*.

Damp neutral grassland/ tall herb vegetation near river Rhymney (ST186885): *Sanguisorba officinalis*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Impatiens glandulifera*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Cirsium arvense*, *Lathyrus pratensis*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Galium palustre*, *Lysimachia vulgaris*, *Lathyrus linifolius*, *Conopodium majus*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Stellaria graminea*, *Crassula helmsii*, *Fallopia japonica*, *Vicia cracca*, *Alopecurus pratensis*, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Holcus mollis*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Agrostis canina*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Festuca rubra*, *Poa pratensis*, *Poa trivialis*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Carex hirta*, *Luzula campestris*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Equisetum arvense*, *Kindbergia praelonga*.

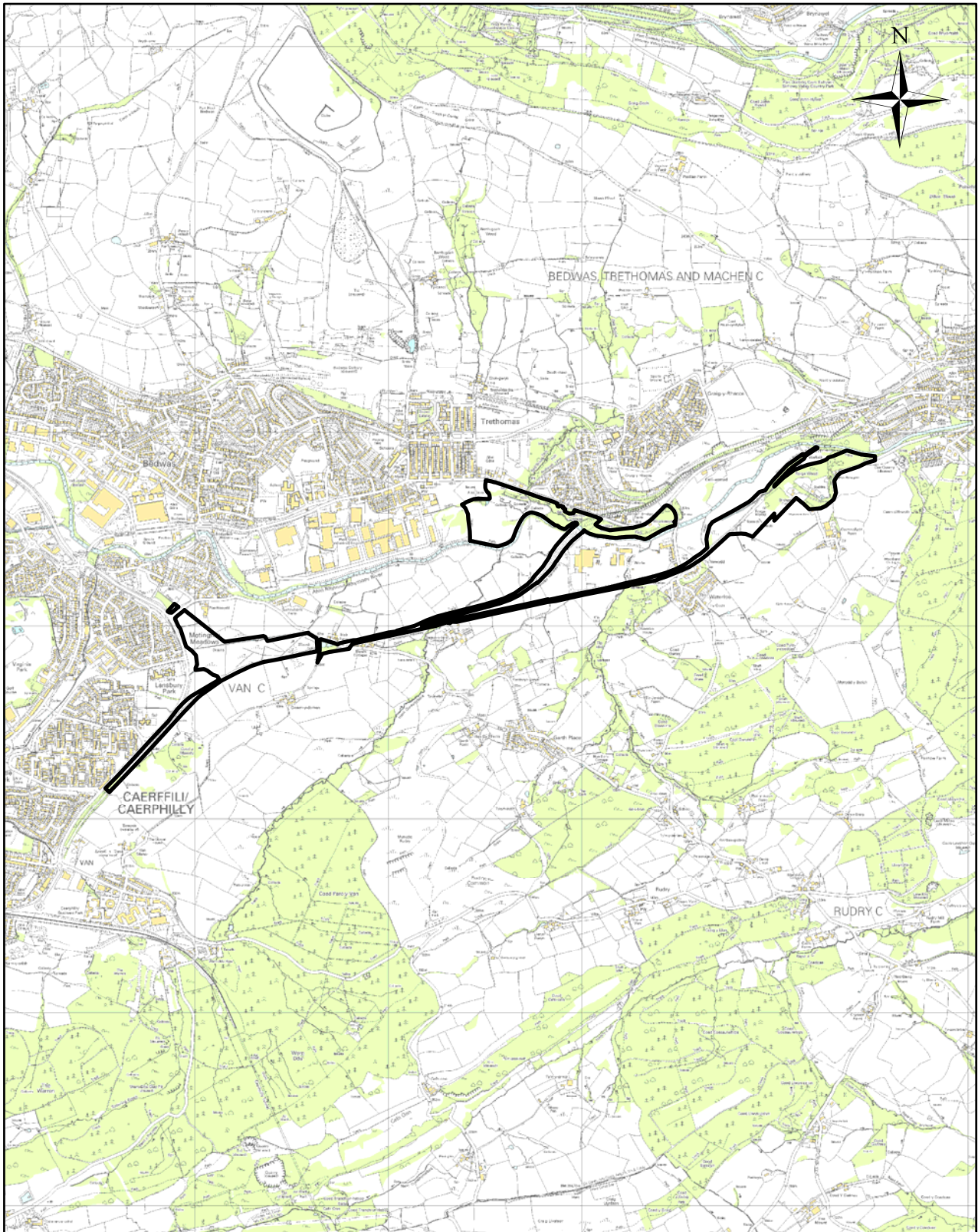
Fauna observations: *Rabbit*, **Common Lizard**, *Great Spotted Woodpecker*, *Wren*, *Blackbird*, *Willow Warbler*, *Blue Tit*, *Chiffchaff*, *Mistle Thrush*, *Chaffinch*, *Robin*, *Blackcap*, *Speckled Wood Butterfly*.

Additional species noted from desk study and consultation: **Common Pipistrelle Bat**, *Hedgehog*, **Adder**, **Slow Worm**, **Great Crested Newt**, **Palmate Newt**, **Smooth Newt**, **Reed Bunting**, **Green Woodpecker**, **House Sparrow**, **Common Eel**, **Bullhead**, **Stone Loach**, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, *Adoxa moschatellina*, *Prunus padus*, *Ajuga reptans*, *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, *Carex echinata*, *Carex nigra*, *Carex panicea*, *Ceratocarpus claviculata*, *Cirsium dissectum*, *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, *Ranunculus aquatilis*, *Pedicularis sylvatica*, *Rumex hydrolapathum*, *Viola palustris*.

Dormouse and **Badger** on adjoining land (ST192881). **Otter**, **Salmon**, **Bullhead**, **Common Eel** and **Sea Trout** in nearby River Rhymney.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.187 (SINC 167)
Caerphilly/ Machen Disused Railway, East of Trethomas 47 Ha

1:30,000



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Caerphilly County Borough Council, 100025372, 2008.

Atgynhychwyd o fapiad yr Arolwg Ordnans gyda chaniatad rheolwr Llyfrfa ei Mawrhydi hawlfraint y Goron. Mae atgynhychu heb awdurdod yn torri hawlfraint y Goron.
Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, 100025372, 2008.