

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.173</u>	SINC name: Graid-y-rhacca grasslands
Grid reference: ST198889	Area (hectares): 3
Survey date: 19th June 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.172)	
Summary description	
<p>A south-facing slope mainly covered by dense Bracken. Some parts of the Bracken support a ground flora including Bluebell and Violet, and some of the path-sides and areas near to trees support small remnants of acid grassland. A few trees of Oak, Beech and Hawthorn are scattered through the area. A scrubby hedge, mainly of Hawthorn and Bramble runs along the top of the slope, while the lower edge supports a fringe of Oak and Birch scrub beside the cycle-path. This is continuous with a disused quarry at the southern boundary. The quarry has steep sides, shaded by secondary woodland, and with water seeping over them. The rock faces support abundant growth of ferns and bryophytes.</p>	
Qualifying features	
Bracken with a species-rich ground flora.	
Secondary features	
Acid grassland	
Scrub/ scrub woodland.	
Rock exposure.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
The Violet-rich south-facing fringes may have potential to support Violet-feeding fritillary butterflies.	
The disused quarry has potential to support uncommon species of bryophytes or invertebrates.	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
Cattle currently lightly graze the main Bracken-covered slope. The Bracken has been burned in the past and still represents a fire risk. There is potential for Bracken to become even more dominant and some form of Bracken control would be helpful to retain the remaining grassland and allow acid grassland species to re-establish over a wider area. Possibly, people searching for reptiles have repeatedly turned over several stones at the Bracken fringes.	
Access/ community use	
There is no formal public access to the site, but a public cycleway runs past the south side of the quarry/ woodland. Informal paths cross the main site and enter the quarry.	
Additional information	
The Bracken and scrub to the west is very dense and has minimal ground flora diversity, it also appears to be regularly burned and has litter problems from the estate road. However, it may still support reptiles and does include some mature trees and scrub that could potentially be used by birds and bats. The woodland fringes associated with the disused railway line/cycle-path are likely to be valuable flight lines for bats and provide good linear habitat for other wildlife including birds,	

reptiles and invertebrates. A small proportion of the former UDP SINC has been retained at this review and appropriate management would enhance the biodiversity of the surrounding grasslands.

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

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

Bracken/ acid grassland species: *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Chamerion angustifolium*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Luzula campestris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Festuca ovina*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Aira praecox*, *Carex pilulifera*, *Veronica officinalis*, *Polygala sp.*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Viola riviniana*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Galium saxatile*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Conopodium majus*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*, *Polytrichum piliferum*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*.

Woody species of the quarry, hedge and scattered scrub: *Quercus robur*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Corylus avellana*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Betula pendula*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Hedera helix*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Salix caprea*, *Ulex gallii*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Cytisus scoparius*.

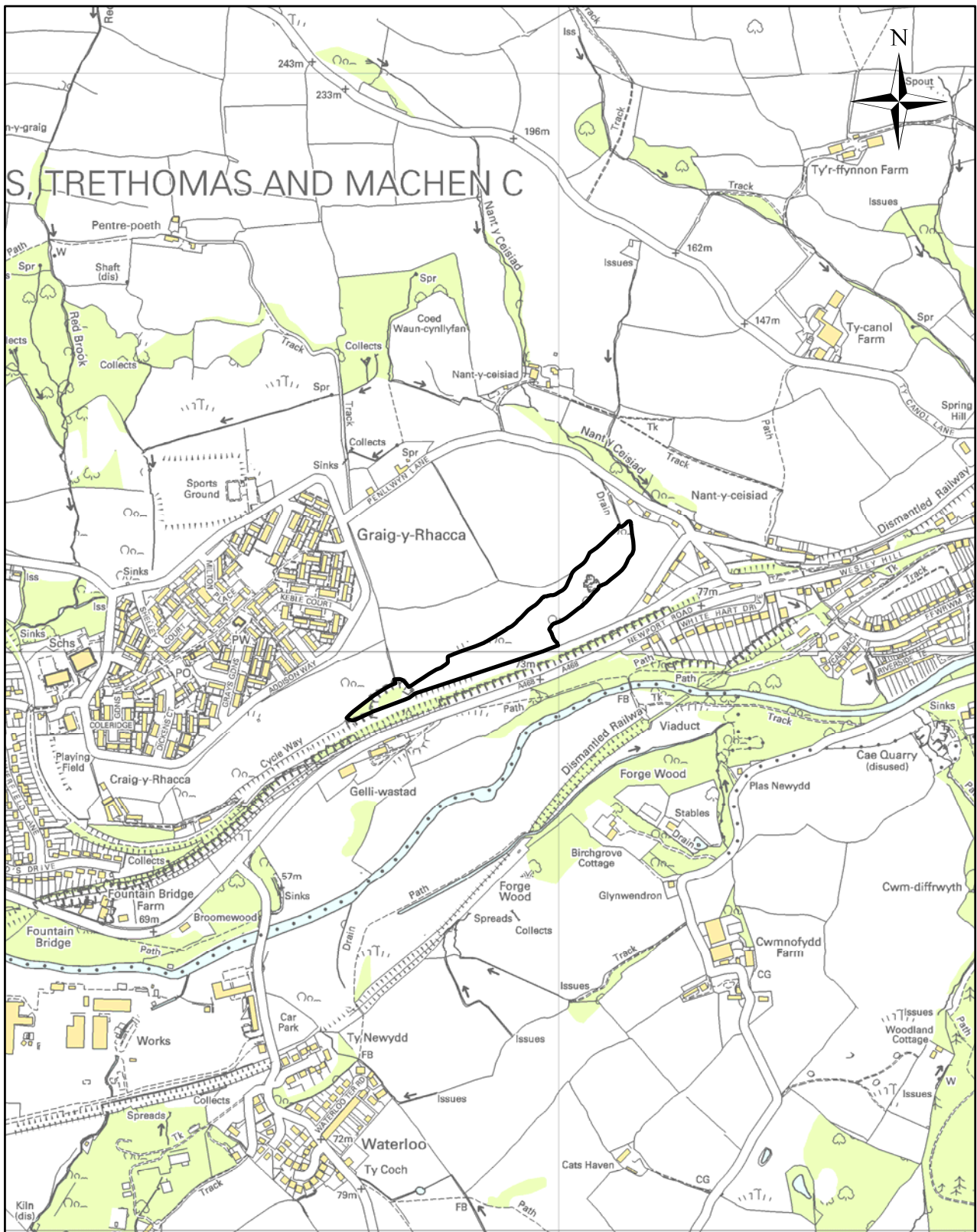
Quarry / woodland ground flora species: *Circaea lutetiana*, *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, *Teucrium scorodonia*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Viola riviniana*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Carex remota*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Mnium hornum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*. The quarry rock faces also support *Rhynchostegium riparioides*, *Thamnobryum alopecurum* and *Isothecium myosuroides*, *Cratoneuron filicinum*, *Plagiomnium undulatum*, *Isothecium myosuroides* and *Pellia cf epiphylla*.

Fauna observations: ***Badger***, *Rabbit*, ***Slow Worm***, ***Common Lizard***, ***House Sparrow***, *White throat*, ***Grey Wagtail***, *Chiffchaff*, *Wren*, *Blackbird*, *Dunnock*, *Speckled Wood Butterfly*, *Meadow Brown Butterfly*, ***Golden-ringed Dragonfly***.

Additional records from desk study: **Bat** records from nearby urban areas, **Adder** (approx 215m away and on opposite side of river).

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.173 (SINC 172)
Graig-y-Rhacca Grasslands, Graig-y-Rhacca 3 Ha

1:10,000



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