

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.152</u>	SINC name: Ochryth Grasslands, Ochryth, Risca
Grid reference: ST246895	Area (hectares): 7
Survey date: 20th June 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.173)	
Summary description	
<p>Two areas of small, horse-grazed fields. The small western field supports short, semi-improved neutral grassland and includes several large Beech trees at its southwestern side. The eastern block of fields includes one field of short, heavily grazed semi-improved pasture, while the remainder have become colonised to varying degrees by Bracken and scrub, and only retain small areas of grassland. Hedges border all the fields and a double-hedged lane runs along the southwestern boundary. Waxcap fungi have been found in the western field and in one of the eastern fields, but are likely to occur throughout the grazed area.</p>	
Qualifying features	
Semi-improved neutral grassland with at least 8 indicator species.	
Secondary features	
Bracken.	
Scrub.	
Presence of waxcap fungi.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>The presence of <i>Hygrocybe intermedia</i> waxcaps in two fields so early in the year possibly indicates that the fields support a large population of these fungi. Further survey would be expected to confirm additional waxcap species.</p> <p>The site is likely to have high value for foraging bats, and some of the larger trees may support roost sites. The hedgerow network and scrub could also provide habitat connectivity for Dormice.</p> <p>The area has potential to support reptiles.</p>	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>Horses graze the area. Some of the eastern fields have become largely overgrown by Bracken, brambles and scrub, leading to a decline in plant diversity. Bracken and scrub control would encourage the horses to graze these areas again, to enhance the grassland flora. Tipping of refuse was noted beside the road at the south side of the eastern block.</p>	
Access/ community use	
A public footpath crosses the western field and a bridleway follows the southwestern boundary of the eastern fields.	

Additional information

The field to the northeast of the eastern fields also supports dense bracken and bramble scrub, with remnants of grassland and 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*)

Semi-improved neutral grassland species: *Lotus corniculatus*, *Ranunculus acris*, *Achillea millefolium*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Trifolium repens*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Stellaria graminea*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Pedicularis sylvatica*, *Hypochaeris radicata*, *Galium saxatile*, *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Viola riviniana*, *Pilosella officinalis*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Chamerion angustifolium*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Urtica dioica*, *Rumex obtusifolius*, *Hieracium sp.*, *Festuca rubra*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Poa pratensis*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Luzula campestris*, *Carex ovalis*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytiadelphus squarrosus*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*.

Hygrocybe intermedia was noted at ST237895, ST238895 and ST243887. *H.chlorophana* was noted at ST238895.

Hedge and scrub species: *Fagus sylvatica*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Quercus robur*, *Salix caprea*, *Corylus avellana*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Hedera helix*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Malus sp.*, *Sambucus nigra*.

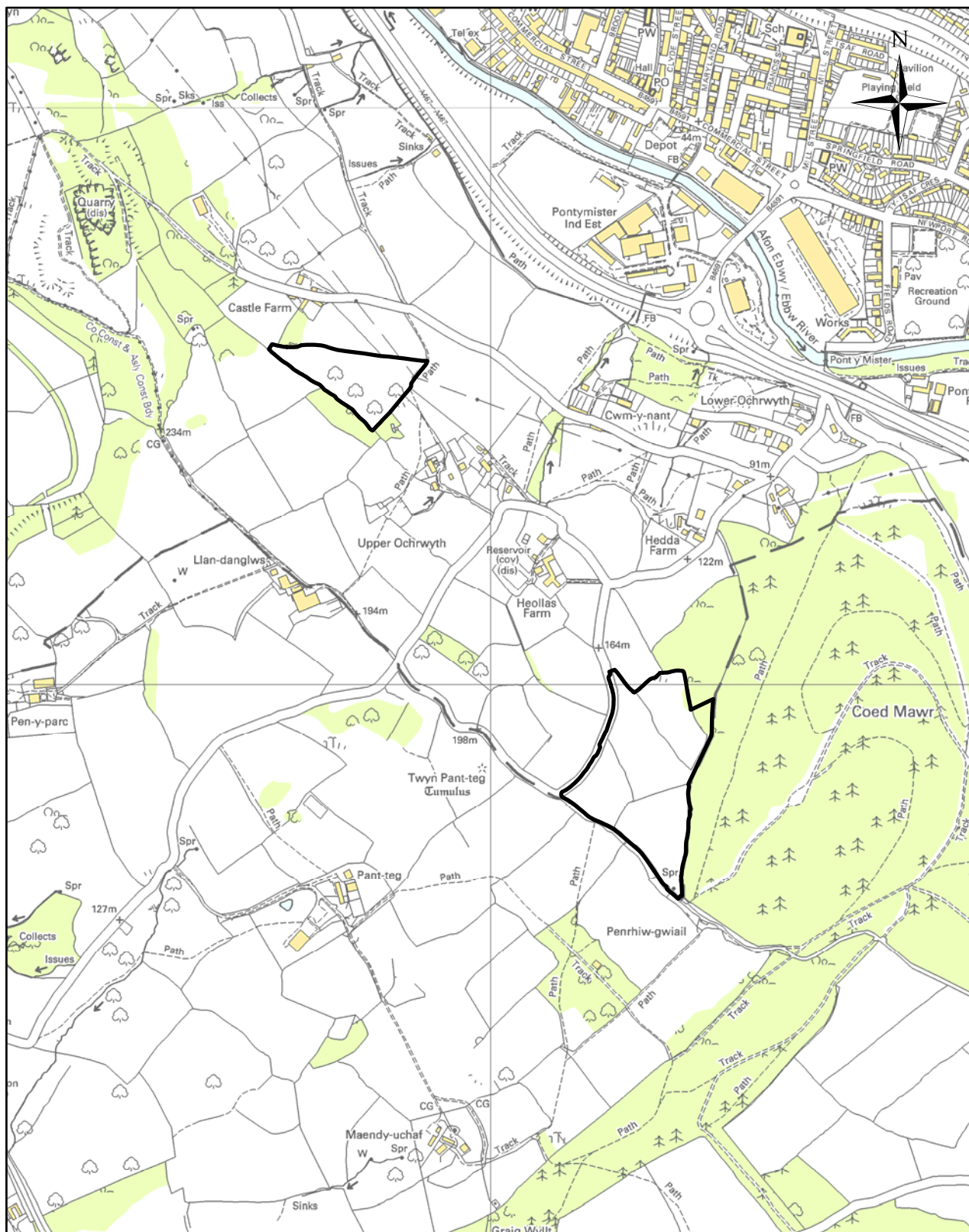
Hedge and scrub ground flora species: ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Viola riviniana*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Geum urbanum*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Carex remota*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Polystichum setiferum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Atrichum undulatum*, *Polytrichum formosum*.

Fauna observations: Grey Squirrel, Brown Rat, **Buzzard**, **Song Thrush**, Chiffchaff, Long-tailed Tit, Dunnock, Greenfinch.

Additional records from desk study: Several roadside bat records from just north of the eastern fields (**Pipistrelle bat** and **Noctule bat**).

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.152 (SINC 173)
Ochrwyth Grasslands, Ochrwyth 7 Ha

1:10,000



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