

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.169</u>	SINC name: Thornhill Quarries, Thornhill
Grid reference: ST155844 & 164846	Area (hectares): 15
Survey date: 4th April 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.184)	
Summary description	
Former quarries, now largely vegetated by mature broadleaved woodland and scrub. The main canopy trees include Ash, Oak and Hazel, with Sycamore, Hawthorn and Blackthorn also locally common. The ground flora includes a good mix of semi-natural woodland indicators. The woodland forms part of an almost unbroken strip of woodland extending for several kilometres along Cwm Nofydd and the Ridgeway. Calcareous grassland occurs around the upper margin of the large eastern quarry.	
Qualifying features	
Semi-natural woodland with an assemblage of indicator species.	
Calcareous grassland.	
Grassland with anthills.	
Presence of Dormice.	
Secondary features	
Rock exposures.	
Stream.	
Neutral grassland.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
Likely to provide good foraging and roosting opportunities for bats.	
There is a past record of freshwater White-clawed crayfish from within 1km of the site.	
The area around the quarry is likely to support Adder, Slow worm and Common lizard.	
The grassland habitats have potential to support a diverse assemblage of fungi.	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
Little evidence of current woodland management. Footpaths are kept clear. The grassland is restricted to a narrow fringe and therefore vulnerable to encroachment by scrub. Japanese knotweed is present at the edge of the Golf Course, beside the eastern part of the SINC. Litter is present near to the road. Fly honeysuckle and Tree cotoneaster have become established locally as garden escapes, which should be controlled to avoid further spread into the SINC.	

Access/ community use

Public footpaths extend along the length of the SINC, including the Rhymney Valley Ridgeway Walk footpath. There is evidence of informal paths throughout much of the area.

Additional information

The wooded valley continues westwards of the surveyed area up to the county boundary and this is also likely to qualify under the SINC criteria (particularly as continuous habitat for Dormice). This 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 canopy and shrub species: *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Corylus avellana*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Quercus robur*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Acer campestre*, *Euonymus europaeus*, *Betula pendula*, *Salix caprea*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Rosa canina*, *Rubus idaeus*, *Prunus avium*, *Sambucus nigra*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Taxus baccata*.

Ground flora species: ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Allium ursinum*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Primula vulgaris*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Ranunculus ficaria*, *Arum maculatum*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Lathraea squamaria*, *Viola riviniana*, *Lamium galeobdolon*, *Sanicula europaea*, *Adoxa moschatellina*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Ajuga reptans*, *Rumex sanguineus*, ***Orchis mascula***, *Geum urbanum*, *Cardamine hirsuta*, *Conopodium majus*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Carex sylvatica*, *Carex remota*, *Carex pendula*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Polystichum aculeatum*, *Polystichum setiferum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Mnium hornum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Thuidium tamariscinum*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Pellia sp.*, *Conocephalum sp.*

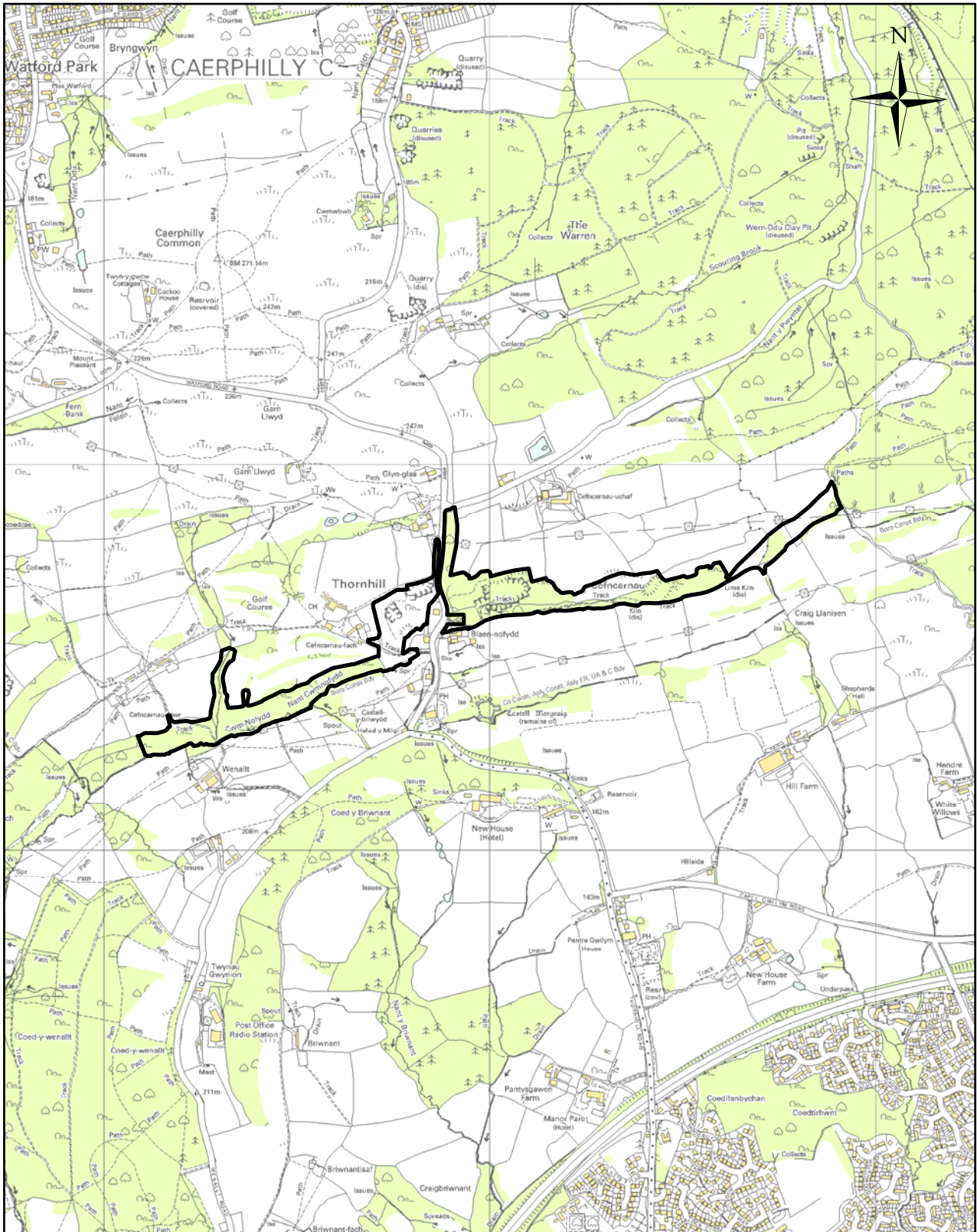
Grassland species: *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Festuca rubra*, *Carex flacca*, *Sanguisorba minor*, *Thymus polytrichus*, *Luzula campestris*, *Carex caryophyllea*, *Leontodon hispidus*, *Agrimonia sp.*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Primula vulgaris*, *Ononis repens*, *Potentilla sterilis*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Conopodium majus*, *Rhynchospora squarrosus*, *Scleropodium purum*.

Fauna observations: **Badger**, *Grey Squirrel*, *Fox*, **Buzzard**, *Raven*, **Green Woodpecker**, *Great Spotted Woodpecker*, *Nuthatch*, *Chiffchaff*, *Wood Pigeon*, *Great Tit*, *Coal Tit*, *Wren*, *Chaffinch*, *Blackbird*.

Additional species noted from desk study: **Dormouse**, **White-clawed Crayfish** (within 1km).

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.169 (SINC 184)
Thornhill Quarries, Thornhill 15 Ha

1:15,000



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