

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.136</u>	SINC name: Crumlin Arm of the Monmouth – Brecon Canal
Grid references: ST218926 (south) to ST254900 (north)	Area (hectares): 29
Survey date: 31st July 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: N/A – SINC 196)	
Summary description	
<p>The whole of the canal has been included within this SINC as it forms an important linear corridor for a variety of species. The canal is approximately 5m wide, and approximately 1 to 1.5m deep throughout most of its length. It is no longer continuous; being divided by several roads and short dry sections, but still represents a significant length of wetland habitat. Wooded embankments fringe the canal and the towpath is maintained as a footpath through the whole length of the SINC. The most abundant canal vegetation comprises fringing stands of Reed sweet-grass, Hemlock water dropwort, Greater willowherb and young Alders, but a wide range of other wetland plants occurs along its length. Aquatic plants occur in a few places, including water lilies, duckweeds, Water soldier and Curled pondweed. The wooded embankments have a mature canopy of Beech, Sycamore, Oak and Alder. Most also have a tangled understorey of Hazel, Holly and Bramble, and a moderate number of semi-natural indicator species. The woodland adjacent to the most southerly section includes several disused quarries, while the northern part of the SINC includes derelict railway line with a mix of scrub and neutral grassland species.</p>	
Qualifying features	
<p>Wetland habitat with good bank-side plant communities.</p> <p>Broadleaved woodland with an assemblage of semi-natural indicator species.</p>	
Secondary features	
<p>Post-industrial land (disused railway).</p> <p>Scrub.</p>	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>The site is likely to be of high value for foraging and commuting bats, and the woodlands and bridges may provide roosting opportunities for some species.</p> <p>The woodland in the south of the SINC has potential to support Dormouse.</p> <p>Otters are likely to use the canal, especially where it is close to the River Ebbw.</p> <p>The disused railway is likely to be used by reptiles.</p> <p>The site is likely to support good populations of dragonflies.</p>	

Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)

Caerphilly County Borough Council maintains the canal for its amenity and wildlife value. There are long term plans to restore more of the canal and potentially to make more of it navigable once again. Potential threats include Japanese knotweed (which occurs locally) and invasive water plants, including Parrot's feather. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement could include more de-silting to improve the water quality and allowing banks of fringing vegetation to develop in some areas.

Access/ community use

The towpath is a well-used public right of way and fishermen use the canal (especially the central section).

Additional information

The surveys were initially limited to a few sections of the canal, but other sections were likely to be of value for biodiversity. The whole canal has been included on account of its habitat continuity, which is particularly important for mobile species such as bats and birds, and based on information from previous ecological surveys that have been undertaken on behalf of Caerphilly CBC.

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 (all areas combined): *Alnus glutinosa*, *Corylus avellana*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Quercus robur*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Hedera helix*, *Quercus petraea*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Salix cinerea*, *Salix caprea*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Betula pubescens*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Rosa canina*, *Rosa arvensis*, *Ulmus glabra*, *Buddleja davidii*, *Acer campestre*, *Cotoneaster sp.*, *Cytisus scoparius*, *Rubus idaeus*, *Clematis vitalba*, *Larix sp.*

Woodland ground flora species (all areas combined): *Urtica dioica*, *Geum urbanum*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Arum maculatum*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Moerhingia trinervia*, *Stachys sylvatica*, *Chamerion angustifolium*, *Scrophularia nodosa*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Viola riviniana*, *Lamium galeobdolon*, *Veronica montana*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Tamus communis*, *Primula vulgaris*, *Epipactis helleborine*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Bromopsis ramosa*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Holcus mollis*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Dryopteris affinis*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Brachythecium rutabulum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Mnium hornum*, *Fissidens bryoides*, *Atrichum undulatum*.

Wetland vegetation (all areas combined): *Submerged and floating aquatic species:* *Lemna minor*, *Spirodela polyrhiza*, *Potamogeton crispus*, *Elodea sp.*, *Sparganium erectum*, *Ceratophyllum demersum*, *Stratiotes aloides*, *Nymphaea alba*, *Nuphar lutea*, *Zannichellia palustris*, *Iris pseudacorus*, *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, *Typha latifolia*, *Glyceria maxima*, *Glyceria fluitans*.

Emergent and bank side species: *Oenanthe crocata*, *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Scutellaria galericulata*, *Lycopus europaeus*, *Myosotis laxa*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Galium palustre*, *Stachys palustris*, *Veronica beccabunga*, *Solanum dulcamara*, *Fallopia japonica*, *Urtica dioica*, *Apium nodiflorum*, *Caltha palustris*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Carex remota*, *Carex otrubae*, *Juncus inflexus*, *Juncus effusus*.

Disused railway in northern section (ST219928): *Lotus corniculatus*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Potentilla reptans*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Trifolium repens*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Ornithopus perpusillus*, *Scutellaria galericulata*, *Sagina nodosa*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Oenothera sp.*, *Vicia sepium*, *Vicia*

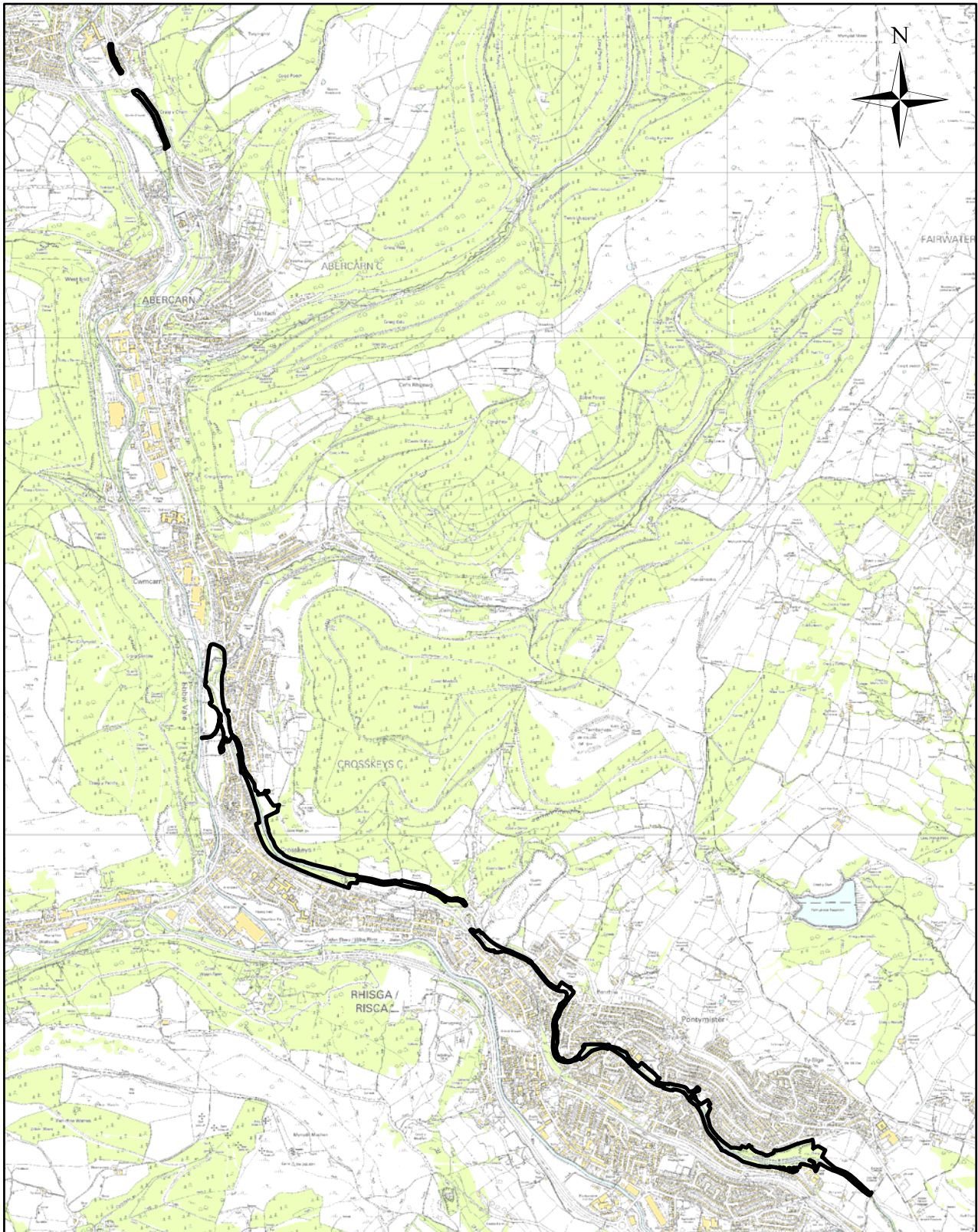
sativa, *Potentilla anserina*, *Geranium dissectum*, *Linum catharticum*, *Trifolium repens*, *Ranunculus acris*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Tripleurospermum inodorum*, *Lathyrus pratensis*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Hieracium* sp., *Linaria vulgaris*, *Senecio jacobaea*, *Medicago lupulina*, *Torilis japonica*, *Teucrium scorodonia*, *Hypericum pulchrum*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Festuca rubra*, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Lolium perenne*, *Festuca ovina*, *Nardus stricta*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Rhytidadelphus squarrosus*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*, *Brachythecium rutabulum*.

Fauna observations: *Grey Squirrel*, *Rabbit*, ***Bullfinch***, ***Buzzard***, ***Song Thrush***, ***Green Woodpecker***, ***Kingfisher***, *Mallard*, *Moorhen*, *Blackbird*, *Chaffinch*, *Blue Tit*, *Wren*, *Jay*, *Meadow Brown Butterfly*, *Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly*, *Speckled Wood Butterfly*, *Large White Butterfly*, *Green-veined White Butterfly*, *Holly Blue Butterfly*, *Small White Butterfly*, *Peacock Butterfly*, *Small Skipper Butterfly*, *Gatekeeper butterfly*, *Red Admiral Butterfly*, *Burnet Moth*, ***Golden-ringed Dragonfly***, ***Southern Hawker Dragonfly***, ***Banded Demoiselle***, ***Blue-tailed Damselfly***.

Additional species noted from desk study and consultation: ***Common Frog***. *Alisma plantago-aquatica*. Various **bat** records from nearby urban areas (including ***Brown Long-eared***, ***Common Pipistrelle***, ***Soprano Pipistrelle*** and ***Noctule***). ***Common Toad*** (from Ty Sign Primary School). ***Grass Snake*** (1958 record from Pontymister). Fish records from nearby River Ebbw SINC, including *Eel*, *Bullhead* and *Stone Loach*. Water rail record from Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
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Crumlin Arm of the Monmouth – Brecon Canal 28 Ha

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