

FILE NOTE

Cwm Glo a Glyndyrys SSSI, Merthyr Tydfyl, Field surveillance visit
18 June 2015.

Present: Scott Hand, Nick Sharp, Sue Westwood, Julian Woodman. NRW.

A full monitor of the whole large SSSI was not done, as time was limited due to access permission arrangements. The majority of the site was walked over, see target notes for the site, scanned in (a second visit was also made, by SH, NS and JW, the same week?).

Cwm-pant-bach section, including Annexe (Phase 2 Lowland
Grassland Survey sites, SO 00/1, 1994 and SO 00/1a 2002)

This relatively small section of the SSSI was looked at in more detail, as there has been some different management activity here and it holds most of the M24, *Molinia caerulea*-*Cirsium dissectum* fen-meadow in the SSSI (1.7ha at the time of original survey in 1994) as well as 0.7ha of MG5c, *Cynosurus cristatus*-*Centaurea nigra* grassland. These are both rare and declining grassland communities. The M24 is an Annex 1 habitat type (Habitats Directive) and although this is not a SAC site, its condition is relevant when reporting on the status of *Molinia* meadows in Welsh SAC.

Summary

The section retains important areas of M24 fen-meadow and MGS species-rich neutral grassland and marsh fritillary habitat (structure and larval food plant). But it is scrubbing over and becoming rushier and rank. Extent of both types of grassland is falling because it is not getting enough cattle (or other heavy livestock) grazing. There are still some good well-characterised and species-rich stands, however intermingled areas have started to lose their characteristic species. The section's condition is eminently restorable with the right management.

Notes

The following notes relate to the Phase 2 map below (Julian Woodman, 1994)

Area 1, The south-west area of MG5c, *Danthonia decumbens* sub-community, is much reduced in extent and some is now MG5a, *Lathyrus pratensis* sub-community. Its



Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales

Cwm-pant-bach, part of Cwm Glo a G/yndyrys SSSI
Field numbering 1-11, 2015



Legend

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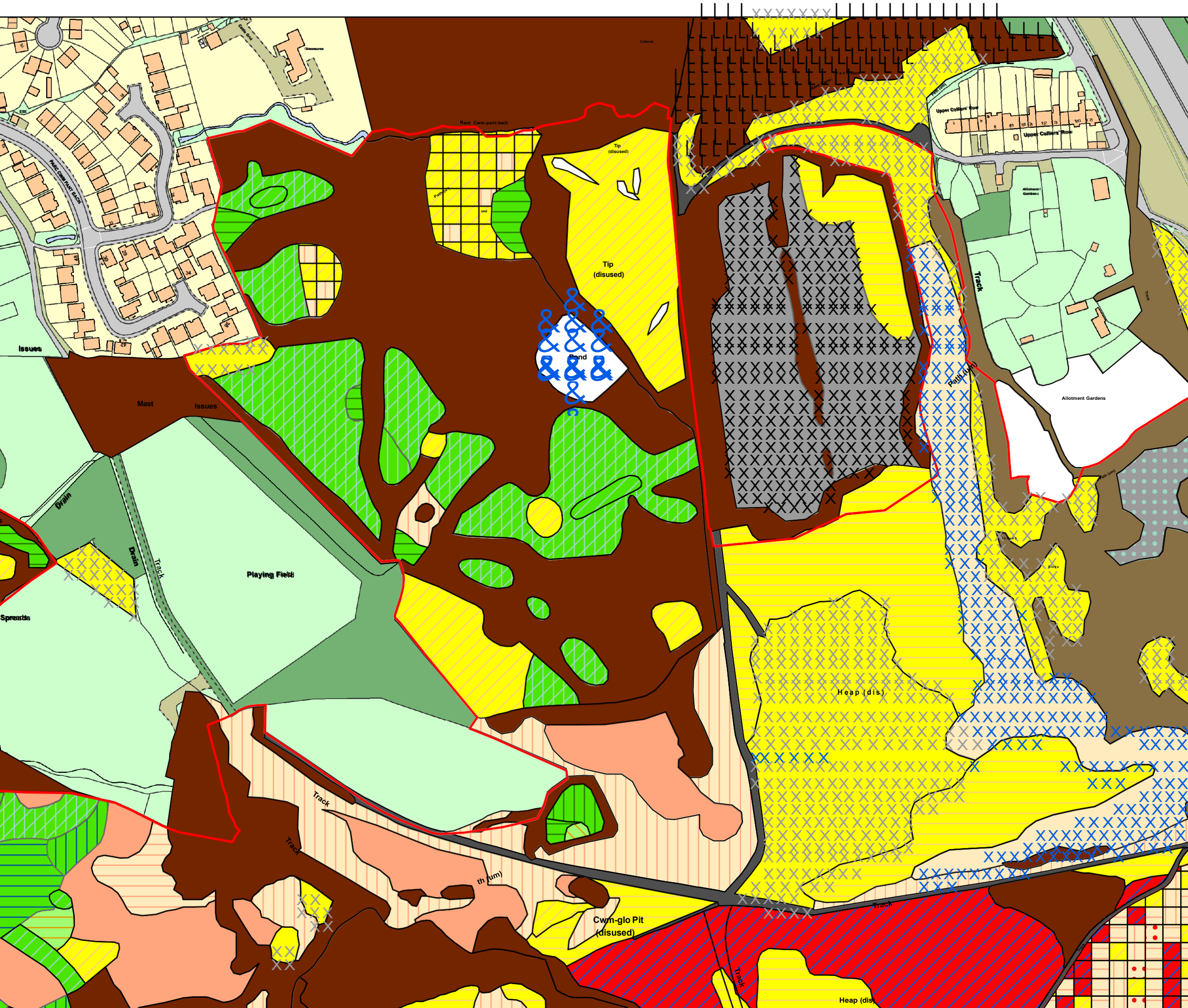
Kilometers

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Field numbering to go with 2015 survey. S. Westwood



PH2 Lowland Grassland Veg

Vegetation_type

- Amenity grassland/garden
- Damp semi-improved grassland
- Dense bracken
- Dense scrub
- H12c
- Improved grassland
- M23a
- M23b
- M24b
- M24b/c
- M24c
- M25a
- M25b
- M6a
- M6d
- MG5a
- MG5c
- Mosaic
- OV24
- Open water
- Other acid grassland
- Plantation woodland
- Secondary dry grassland
- Semi-improved grassland
- Track
- U4a

U4b

Woodla

nd

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herb cover passes standard monitoring limits (>30%). It fails in places on positive indicators, *Centaurea nigra* is frequent but *Lotus comiculatus* infrequent. *Succisa* is occasional. The MG5 is tall and in need of some light to moderate grazing.

Area 2, This was mostly M24 in the original survey (Q1&2). Extent has decreased. Bramble is encroaching at the edges and in the stands. Locally *Molinia* cover is over 60% and dominant. There are too few positives in some areas. Areas in better condition have a good range of positive indicators, including *Cirsium dissectum*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Carum verticillatum* and *Serratula tinctoria*. *Succisa* is generally frequent. The sward is over 50cm tall on average and there is a continuous dead plant litter affecting of the area. There is evidence of stock passing through the area but insufficient grazing. One small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly was seen here. At the time of visit, no scrub removal had been done. The very small patch MG5c appears to be absent and may have become *Molinia* grassland in the absence of sufficient grazing. *Sanguisorba officinalis* and *Stachys betonica* were noted on a small raised heap. About 10 % of the area is tongues of M23a, rush pasture and the area of M24c, *Juncus acutiflorus* - *Erica tetralix* sub-community near Quadrat 1 has increased.

Area 3, This is the Cwm Pant Bach Annex, an additional survey done in 2002, by SW and JW of some abutting land, with MG5, developed on very old coal spoil. The MG5 is still present, although some areas are now U4, acid grassland. Both with some typical dry spoil species such as *Aira caryophyllea*, *Pilosella officinalis* and *Rumex acetosella*. Frequent *Festuca ovina* in association with MG5 species indicates a lowland form of U4 (considered as rare as MG5). *Lotus comiculatus* is frequent, *Centaurea nigra* abundant and *Succisa* and *Danthonia* locally frequent. Other positive associates include *Leucanthemum vulgare*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Achillea millefolium* and *Euphrasia* sp. *Galium saxatile* is locally frequent, generally associated with anthills. The negative indicator *Trifolium repens* is present, but only occasional to very locally frequent and not considered a problem. The area appears to be lightly pony grazed and the sward is 5 to 10 cm tall. Burnet Companion moths seen here.

Area 4, This is the MG5c and M1J4 (original 1994 Q5). The M1J4 is mostly on ant hills. Herb cover passes 30% target; positive indicators are present in good numbers: *Succisa* is abundant, *Centaurea nigra* and *Potentilla erecta* frequent (although *Lotus comiculatus* is scarce). Common blue butterflies and *Carex pallascens* seen here.

The area of M23 rush pasture has reduced. The area is ungrazed, although open to Area 3, see above. The vegetation is good, but there have been a few fires and there is a scattering of young scrub as well as a big bramble edge.

Area 5, This was a triangle of M24 fen-meadow (original 1994 O's 6&8), which now includes areas of M23a rush pasture with patches of M24. It may have suffered from overgrazing in the past. *Ranunculus repens* is frequent and *Galium aparine* very locally abundant, showing disturbance or localised nutrient enrichment. Scrub has increased and other negatives include occasional *Heracleum sphondylium* and a dense dead plant litter layer. The M24 varies in quality, it has frequent *Succisa*, and good quality stands include carices, *Briza media*, *Carum* and *Sanguisorba officinalis*. In some areas rushes have increased. It is 15-35cm tall. Burnet Companion moths seen here.

Area 6, (Original 1994 04). The area of M24 has reduced, with much scrub encroachment, although a core of M24b/c and M24b remains, with rare *Valeriana dioica*, *Cirsium dissectum* and *Galium u/iginosum*. Much is now rank species-poor *Molinia*, with M23a at the north and the south ends.

Area 7, This small area amongst scrub is no longer M24, and is dominated by *Juncus acutiflorus* and *Glyceria maxima*.

Area 8, Another very small patch of grassland, now smaller due to scrub invasion and no longer M24, rather M25/M23, with *Senecio aquaticus* and *Glyceria maxima*.

Area 9, This small blob of MG5c (03, 1994) is still present and a good example, including *Briza media*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*, *Carex pallascens* and *Stachys officinalis*. However, there are problems with bramble encroachment.

Area 10, (original 1994 07). There is now lots of scrub, particularly bramble. The area of M24 here has reduced, but there is still a blob of M24c and some M25. The M23 mapped is still there.

Area 11, (original 1994 09). The M24 is still present here, but has become rushier (*J. acutiflorus*). The mosaic of MG5c and U4, is now all MG5c. Scrub encroachment is a big problem, as elsewhere nearby.

Author, Sue Westwood. Surveillance by SW and Julian Woodman. Both NRW, Conservation and Technical Fisheries Team South East Operations. October 2017.

Original Lowland Grassland Phase 2 surveys (National Vegetation Community):

Mockridge, C., Woodman, J., Jones, R., Peterken, A. (1994). Lowland Grassland Survey site pack, Cwm-pant-bach SO 00/1. Countryside Council for Wales, Bangor.

Westwood, S., Woodman, J. (2002). Lowland Grassland Survey site pack, Cwm-pant-bach Annexe SO 00/1a or 14. Countryside Council for Wales, Bangor.

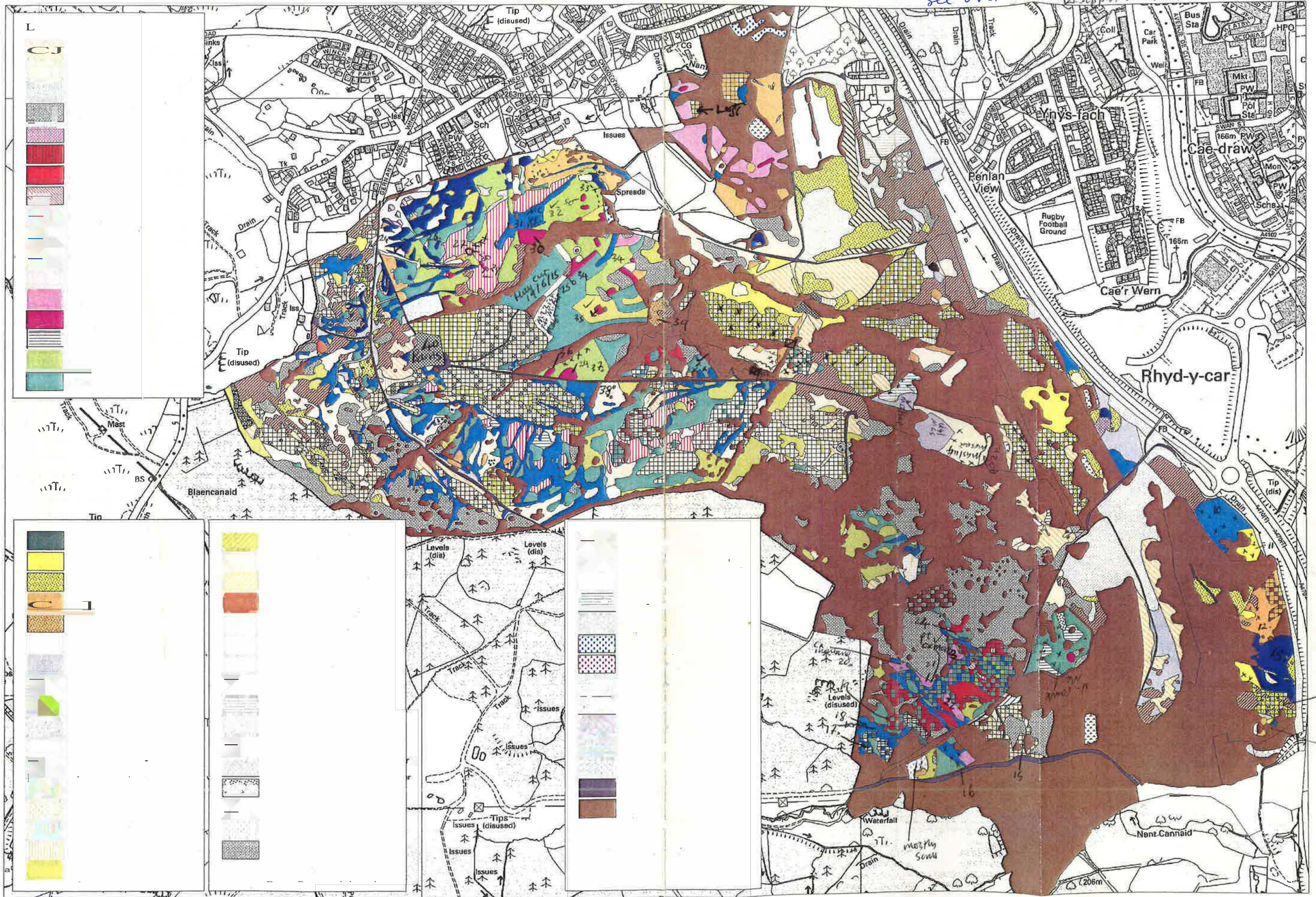
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18+ 19/6/15

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