

25. Melincwrt Waterfalls

Resolven, Neath, Port Talbot

Grid References	O.S. Explorer map 166 Rhondda and Merthyr Tydfil. Main entrance: SN822020, Site centre: SN825017
Status	
Tenure	The site was purchased in September 1986 with grant aid from the Countryside Commission, and WWF, and financial assistance from the RSNC Land Fund.
Size	5.2 ha (12.8 acres).
Location and Access Notes	0.5 km south west of Resolven, 8 km north east of Neath, on the Resolven to Tonna road, B4434. Melincwrt Waterfalls is signposted from the A465 (T). The County Council provide a car park on the west side of the road, opposite the reserve entrance. Public footpaths within the reserve follow the south bank of the river, to the base of the waterfalls.
Public transport	Bus numbers X5 and X6 from Swansea Quadrant Bus Station or Neath Train Station.

Description: Ancient upland Oak woodland, stream, and waterfalls.

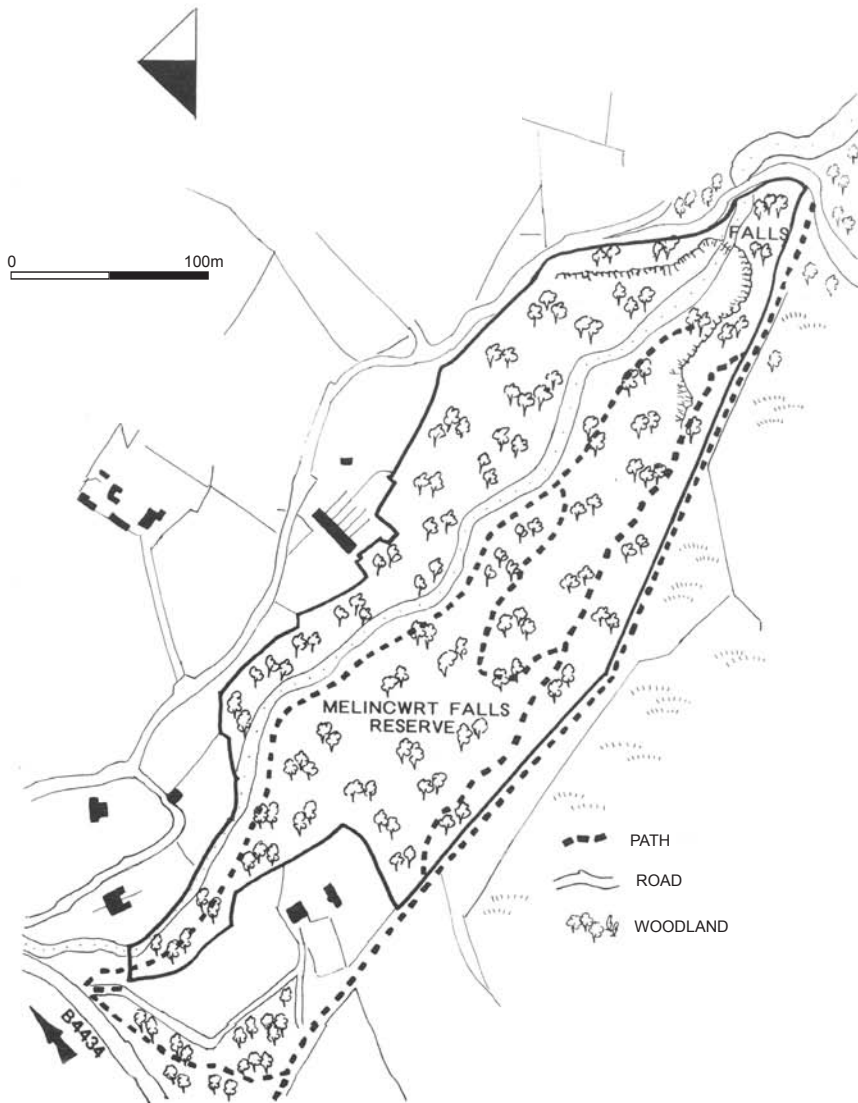
Melincwrt Waterfalls is mature upland Oak woodland which ascends steeply from the narrow gorge of the Melincourt Brook. Sessile Oak is interspersed with gnarled Silver Birch, Small-leaved Lime, Wild Cherry, Rowan and Crab Apple, whilst Alder dominates the stream bank. The woodland floor is carpeted with Bluebell (4-6), with Enchanter's Nightshade (6-8) taking over later in the year. Alternate-leaved Golden Saxifrage (4-5) and Tutsan (6-8) are confined to the wet flushes.

The spectacular eighty feet high waterfall on a tributary of the Neath River was sketched by Turner in 1794.

Due to the local humid atmosphere in this narrow valley, twenty species of ferns have been recorded from the reserve including Green Spleenwort (8-11), Brittle Bladder-fern (6-9), Hay-scented Buckler-fern (8-10), and Wilson's Filmy Fern (6-7), and bryophytes are well represented.

The breeding bird assemblage, typical of this habitat, includes Redstart, Wood Warbler, and Pied Flycatcher, with Dipper and Grey Wagtail regularly seen along the stream at all times of the year.

On the northern boundary of the reserve the remains of a blast-furnace and iron works can be found. These were built in the seventeenth century and the works were opened in 1708 for a century of iron production. The great overshot water wheel was powered by leat leading water from above the Melincwrt Waterfalls.



Management Objectives: To manage the site as semi-natural woodland, by allowing natural regeneration of native trees, and avoiding grazing by maintaining boundary fencing.

Good times to visit

- Mar - Aug Woodland flowers

- May - Jul Breeding birds

- Jun - Oct Ferns

- Sept - Nov Fungi

- Jun - Oct Waterfalls (particularly after rain)