

12. Blaenant y Gwyddyl

Glyneath, Neath, Port Talbot

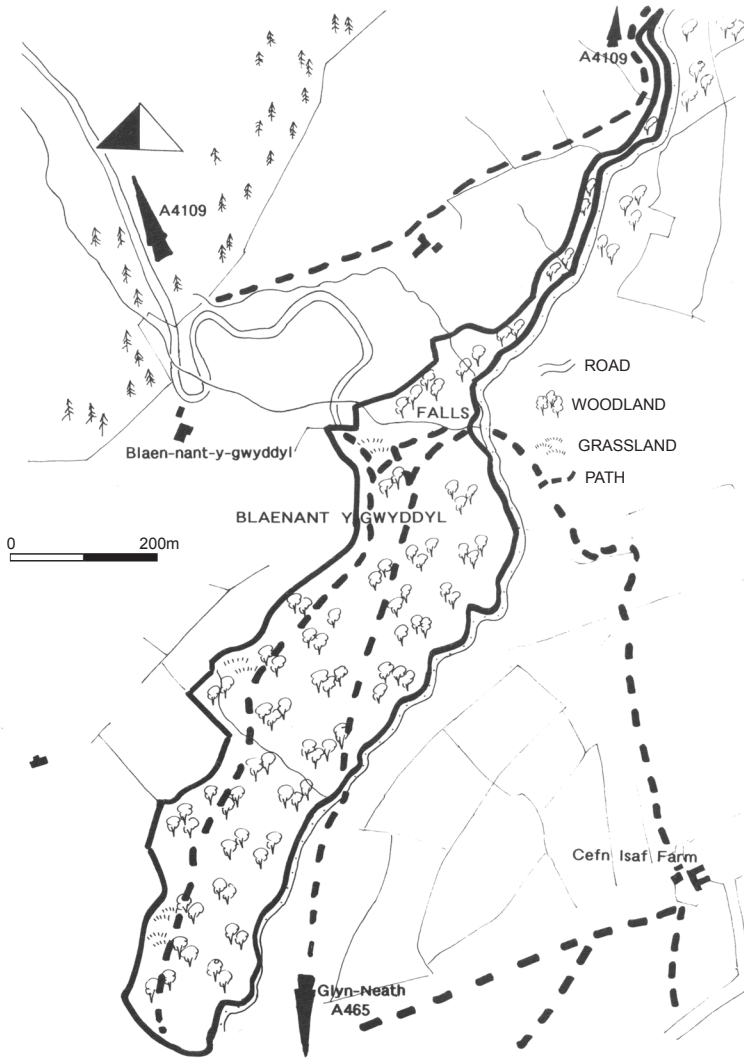
Grid References	O.S. Explorer map 166 Rhondda and Merthyr Tydfil. Main entrance: SN883070, Site centre: SN885076
Status	
Tenure	Acquired in 1988 with a 999 year lease, with support from British Coal under a Government initiative, administered by WWF. The freehold was subsequently purchased in 1991.
Size	10.1 ha (24.9 acres).
Location and Access Notes	0.5 km north of Glyneath. Turn off the A465 at Glyneath and follow the A4109 north, first left and first right, parking in Lony-Nant. Go over the stile at the top of the road, cross a brook and keep the stock fence to your right. At the top, turn left and bear right round the wooded spoil heap to meet a well used path to the left. Follow this to another path to the right, through the nature reserve. The reserve fence and stile are in view a few metres beyond. Not accessible to wheelchairs.
Public transport	Bus numbers X75 and X55 from Swansea Quadrant Bus Station to Glyneath.

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

Blaenant y Gwyddyl is an area of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland on thin Coal Measures' soils, on the north side of the steeply sloping valley of the Nant Gwyddyl. There are several non-woodland habitats including the rocky Blaenant y Gwyddyl river bed fed by streams flowing down the valley side, several large glades, and bare rock exposures near the two attractive waterfalls.

The reserve is made up of upland Birch-Sessile Oak woodland, with areas containing Ash, Alder, Small-leaved Lime, Sycamore, and Wych Elm. The understorey is not well developed, because of past sheep grazing, giving the reserve an open character, and is chiefly Hazel with some Field Maple, Hawthorn, Holly, and Blackthorn. The ground flora is grass dominated largely by Common Bent and Tufted Hair Grass with some Tutsan (6-8). A richer flora can be found in the wet flushes throughout the wood. To date, a botanical survey has recorded 74 vascular plant species, and no doubt a fuller survey, spread over the full four seasons, will double that number. There are several areas dominated by large stands of Bracken.

The breeding birds, typical of this habitat, include Great Spotted Woodpecker, Wren and Robin, together with migrants such as Pied Flycatcher, Redstart, and Wood Warbler.



Management Objectives: To protect the woodland from grazing by maintaining fenced boundaries, to enhance the woodland structure through glade management and to encourage and enhance public access.

Good times to visit	
Apr - Jun	Woodland flowers
May - Jul	Breeding birds
Nov - Mar	Waterfalls