

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

POWYS

COED NANT MENASCIN

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1991
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	SO 059233
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 160 1:25,000 Sheet number: SO 02
<u>Site Area:</u>	49.6 ha

Description:

This site comprises an extensive area of semi-natural woodland situated in the steep-sided Menascin valley to the south-west of Llanfrynach. A variety of wet and dry woodland types are present, and together they support a rich assemblage of higher and lower plants.

The drier, base-rich soils, particularly towards the head of the valley, support a canopy of sessile oak *Quercus petraea* with occasional downy birch *Betula pubescens*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*. The ground flora is dominated by mixtures of common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* and creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis*, with frequent wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and mosses such as *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, *Peudoscleropodium purum* and *Thuidium tamariscinum*. Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, common cow-wheat *Melanpyrum pratense* and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* are all locally abundant within this community. The more base-rich dry slopes support a canopy of ash *Fraxinus excelsior* over an understorey of hazel and some rowan. Species present in the field layer include lady-fern *Athyrium filix-femina*, enchanter's-nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*, tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, wood-sorrel, rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, barren strawberry *Potentilla sterilis*, lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*, bramble and common dog-violet *Viola riviniana*. The stream-banks at the lower end of the valley also support ash woodland, but field maple *Acer campestre* and wych elm *Ulmus glabra* are present in the understorey. The field layer is extremely rich and supports species such as wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, lady-fern, false brome *Brachypodium sylvatica*, bluebell, yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, yellow pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*, dog's mercury, harts-tongue *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, lesser celandine and wood speedwell *Veronica montana*.

There are numerous wet flushes on the valley sides and in boggy hollows next to the stream. These support a canopy of alder *Alnus glutinosa* and ash, with frequent hazel and occasional downy birch, bird cherry *Prunus padus* and guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus*. The ground flora is rich and extremely variable. Local dominants include opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, remote sedge *Carex remota* and tufted hair-grass, with meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, yellow pimpernel and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* frequent throughout. Other associated species include marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*, smooth-stalked sedge *Carex laevigata*, alternate-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium alternifolium*, great horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*, common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea* and common valerian *Valeriana officinalis*. Towards the head of the valley the flushes become more base-poor, and are characterised by abundant purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, bog-mosses *Sphagnum spp.* and species such as lemon-scented fern *Oreopteris limbosperma*.

Remarks:

The site lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park. Part is owned by the National Trust and part is managed as a nature reserve by the Brecknock Wildlife Trust.

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