



Glandŵr Cymru  
Canal & River Trust

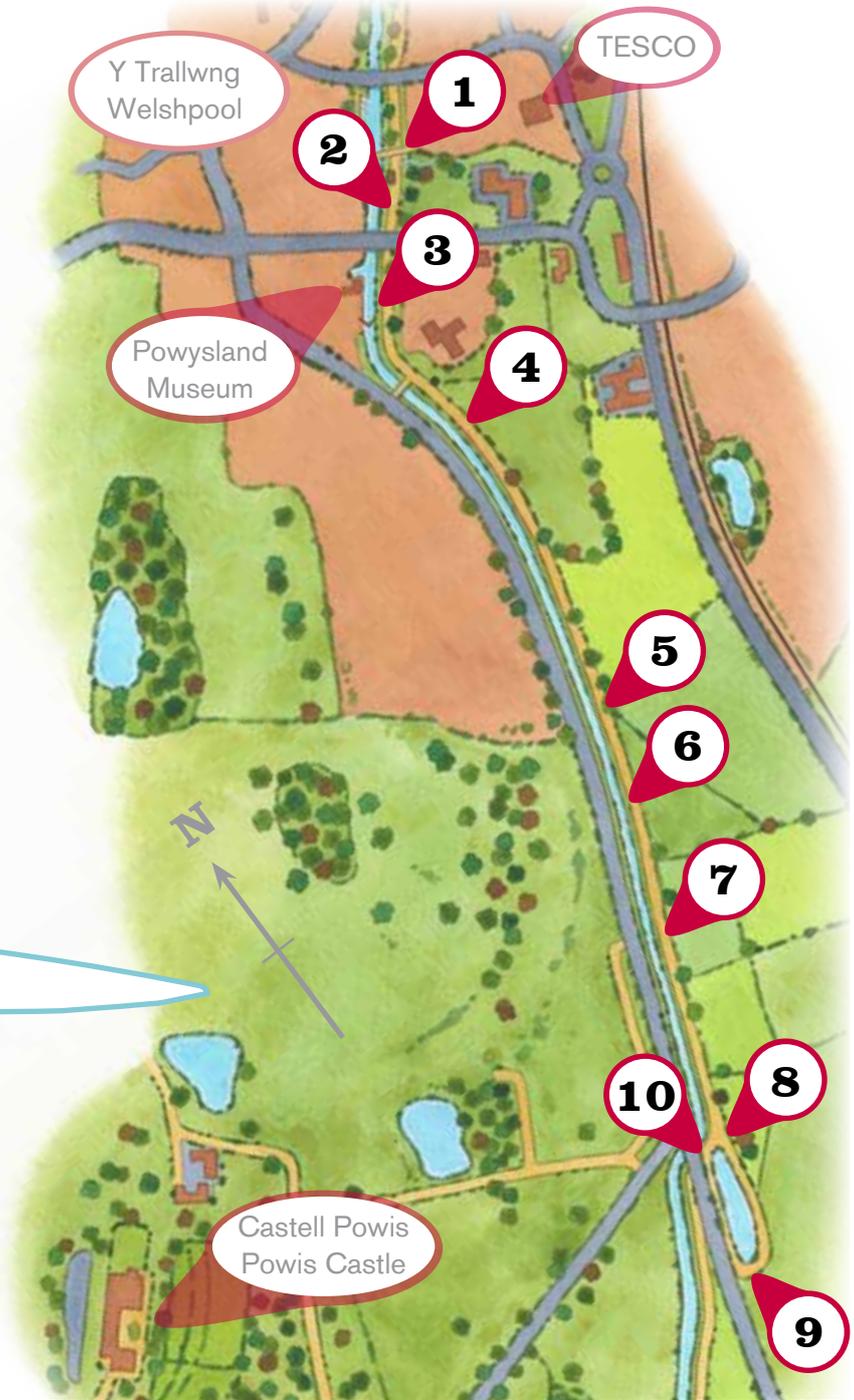
Cadw cysylltiad rhwng pobl, natur a hanes  
Keeping people, nature & history connected



# Montgomery Canal Trail.

## Wildlife comes to town!

Are you ready to go on a wildlife safari right through the centre of Welshpool? Look out for the cool kingfisher, the super-cute water vole or our most ferocious fish, the pike. You can also track down traces of otters...



### What you do

These activity sheets go with the 1.2m (2km) Montgomery Canal Trail. There are 10 stop points, each marked with a QR code that looks like this:



You need a free QR reader app to find out what the code contains. Search for 'QR

reader' on your smartphone AppStore/Market, or go to [www.i-nigma.com](http://www.i-nigma.com).

At each stop, scan the QR code, then do the activities. Remember to take a pencil with you.

### Water warning

Always remember to stay **SAFE** near water

– Stay **Away From the Edge**

For more information on water safety go to

[www.canalriverexplorers.org.uk](http://www.canalriverexplorers.org.uk)



## Activity 1

# Wildlife comes to town

**Our wildlife safari is about to begin. But before we start, here are some fun facts about the history of the canal.**

### Super-speedy boat

The canal was built as a transport route. Horse drawn boats delivered goods, like lorries and trains do today. For passengers, there was a high speed 'flyboat', pulled by trotting horses. Everyone else had to get out of its way!



### Check out the bridges

You'll pass four bridges, each with a number on its side.

If there's an accident, you can use the bridge number to tell the emergency services where to come to.



### What's going on?

What can you hear and see from here?

.....  
.....

## Activity 2

# Weird things on walls

**Go up to one of the old walls here. Can you see weird splodges like splattered paint, frogspawn or porridge? These are strange plants called lichens (pronounced 'lie-kens').**

Look closely at some lichens. What do the shapes remind you of anything?

.....

Run your fingers over the old stone and lichens. What do they feel like? .....

.....

### Make a noise!

There are probably some bats sleeping near you right now. Who can do the best imitation of a sleepy, snoring bat?



### What bridge?

Remember to fill in the number of the next bridge you pass.





### Activity 3

# Ducking and diving!

This is the best place on the trail to see swans and ducks. Swans look very elegant and peaceful – but they are protective and will chase other birds away.

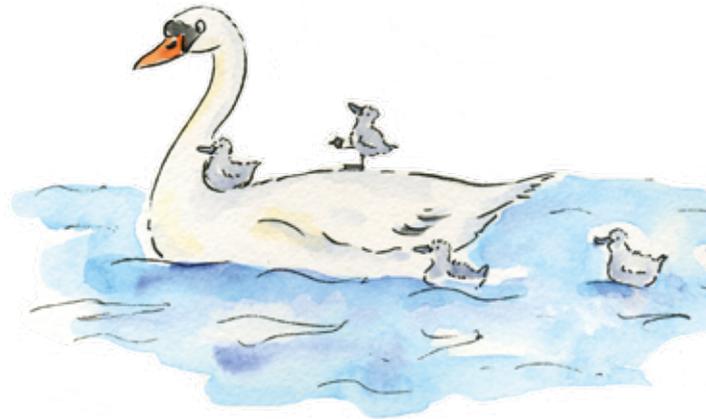
#### What can you see today?

##### Swans

- Swimming gracefully
- Cygnets – can be the same size as an adult but have grey feathers

##### Ducks

- Dabbling – gobbling food from the water’s surface
- Up ending – diving underwater with tails in the air



#### Did you know?

Female swans sometimes carry cygnets on their backs. Cute!

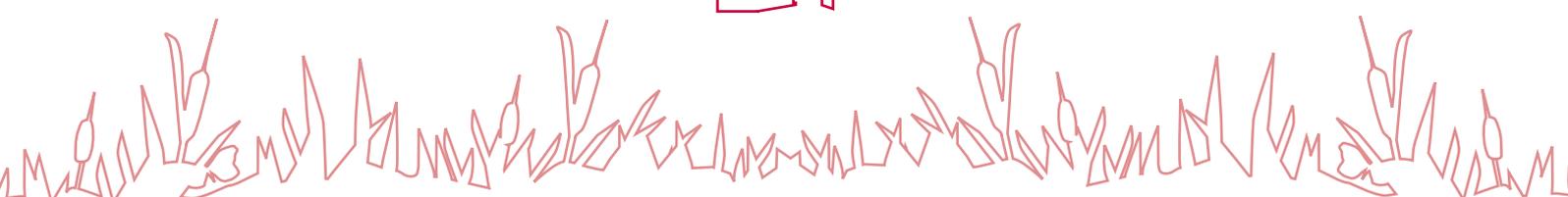
#### Make a noise!

Who can do the best imitation of a duck?  
(Not all ducks go Quack, Quack!)



#### What bridge?

Remember to fill in next bridge number as you pass.



### Activity 4

# Alien attack!

Our wildlife is being threatened by alien invaders. No, not from outer space, but from other countries. For example:

- American mink eat our water voles
- Japanese knotweed strangles our plants
- Abandoned pet terrapins are munching our fish and frogspawn

#### Can you make up your own nasty canal invader?

What is it called? .....

What does it eat? .....

Where does it lurk? .....

Now think of ways that our canal creatures could protect themselves from your invader?

.....  
.....





## Activity 5

# Noisy neighbours!

The canal was once like a busy road running through the town. It echoed with the sounds of boats, horses, workers and warehouses. Today most of the noise comes from the wildlife that lives here.

Be quiet and listen. Tick if you hear any of these sounds:

**Bird song or cries**

Can you see where the noise is coming from?

**A loud plop**

Could it be a water vole diving in, or a fish jumping?

**Buzzing**

Is it from bees, dragonflies or flies?

**Traffic**

Are there cars and lorries on the road – or planes in the air?



## Activity 6

# Underwater world

Stand at a safe distance from the water's edge and look down. Can you see all the plants?

It's like a mini rainforest. This is what a duck sees when it up ends.

What colours can you see?

.....

Is anything moving?

.....



### Leak alert!

Look at the black box on the path. It is there to make sure that the water doesn't leak out of the canal. If it did, it would be dangerous for people and wildlife.

### Look at all of the creatures on this page

- ✓ Put a tick beside all the ones that can survive for a long period out of water.
- ✗ Put a cross next to those that could not.



## Activity 7

# Amazing amphibians

The pond is a nursery for frogs, toads and newts (amphibians). Here they lay their eggs. When the tadpoles emerge, they are safe from the fish in the canal that would eat them.

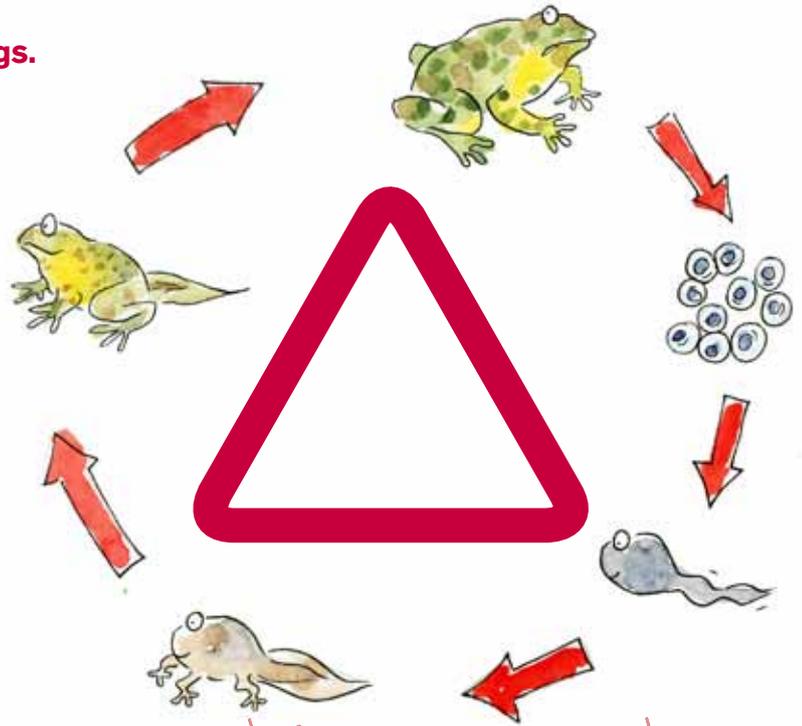
Stay on this side of the fence and look at the pond. The best time to see frogs and toads is early in the year when they are spawning (laying eggs). Look for frogspawn like jelly on the pond, tiny tadpoles, or mini frogs and toads hopping away.

### Make a noise!

Who can do the best imitation of a frog's croak?

### Design a sign

Sit on the bench. Imagine this is the time when tiny froglets are leaving the pond. Design a sign in the red warning triangle to warn people not to tread on them.



## Activity 8

# Who's eating who?

The bench to your right is in the shape of a pike, the most ferocious fish in the canal. Put your fingers in its mouth. What do you think is missing?

### Know your enemies

Imagine you are a tiny tadpole or a mini minnow. These are the water beasties you need to avoid:

#### The pike

Hides and waits to grab its prey with sharp teeth. It eats fish, frogs and even ducklings. Scary!

#### Dragonfly nymph

A terrifying creature that spears its prey with a sharp hook on its lip. Yikes!

#### Coot

This little water bird enjoys a tasty tadpole – or a full grown frog. Gulp!

### Do you know which is which?





## Activity 9

# The canal's bully bird

Watch for coots and moorhens on the nature reserve. Both are black, but the coot has a white stripe on its head, and the moorhen has a red one. Their personalities are very different.

Tick if you see them...

### Shy Moorhens

- Moorhens are shy and hide in the reeds.
- If they get scared, they 'run' across the water to find shelter.
- Moorhen chicks are really cute – like feathered balls of soot!

### Not-so-cute Coots

- They have noisy, splashing fights with other birds.
- They eat the eggs and chicks of moorhens – and other Coots!
- Coot chicks aren't very pretty – with bare blue and red heads

### Spot the difference

Look at the picture. Can you tell which are the moorhens and which the coots?



## Activity 10

# The proof is in the poo...!

At the dead of night, otters swim along this stretch of the canal looking for food. But if they are so secretive, how do we know they've been here? Well, the proof is in the poo...

Tick if you see any of these otter clues:

### Private toilet - otters only

Look under the bridge. Can you see some small, dark, slimy splodges? This is otter poo (called spraints). Surprisingly, it doesn't smell horrible – just a bit musky like old hay.

### Muddy footprints

You might see otter footprints in the mud. They have webbed feet with five short toes, and their tail leaves a drag mark.

### Poo puzzle

A male otter is about the same size as a Labrador dog and a female like a Cocker Spaniel. You wouldn't know it, looking at the spraint!



What bridge?

Fill in the last bridge number





# Montgomery Canal Trail.

## Wildlife comes to town!

**Congratulations, you've finished the Montgomery Canal wildlife safari.  
Did you enjoy it? We'd like to hear your thoughts:**

### Trail report

Name:

One word to describe the trail:

One 'wow' fact you learnt:

Your favourite activity:

Best wildlife spot:

Funniest thing:

One reason why you would come back:

Are you going to tell your friends about the trail:

**Use the space below to draw your most memorable part of the trail.**



Tell us about your safari at...