

DAMAGE AND EROSION REPAIRS AT BEDD ARTHUR SAM Pe 464 and FOEL DRYGARN CAMP SAM Pe 010 PEMBROKESHIRE

Report No 2011/9



Bedd Arthur



Foel Drygarn

Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For Cadw



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**DAMAGE AND EROSION REPAIRS AT
BEDD ARTHUR SAM Pe 464
and
FOEL DRYGARN CAMP SAM Pe 010
PEMBROKESHIRE**

Gan / By

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SUMMARY

Repair works were undertaken on two sites on the Preseli Hills: Bedd Arthur, a prehistoric sub-rectangular enclosure of small standing stones, and on two of the three cairns within the hillfort at Foel Drygarn. Although the limited repairs were undertaken successfully, there are likely to be long term problems with both of these sites

INTRODUCTION

Bedd Arthur (PE 464)(PRN 100551)

Bedd Arthur (SAM PE 464) is located on a natural terrace c.125m SE of the summit of Carn Bica (Figure 1), NGR 130325. The site consists of a series of upright and fallen stones set within a sub-rectangular enclosure measuring c. 20m long and 10m wide at its maximum. The earthworks are most prominent on the long sides, standing up to 0.5m high and 1.5m wide. There are gaps and the banks are very slight on the short sides. The north side has a curving line of six upright stones, the largest of which stands c.0.7m high, with several leaning inwards. The south side has six upright stones, one fallen upright stone and one boulder just projecting through the turf. The two short sides each have two boulders that link the two side lines of stones. There is a slight sunken hollow near the centre of the enclosure which might be the site of an upright stone (Cadw Ancient Monument Record Form) (Photo 1). This site had recently suffered from sheep scrape erosion. The site was inspected on 26 January 2010 to review the works required, when it was noted that there were not only the sheep scrapes on the inside of the north line of stones (Photos 2-4) but now also a very recently fallen upright stone (Photo 5).

Foel Drygarn (PE 010)(PRN 100552)

Foel Drygarn Fort (SAM PE 010) is located on a prominent hill 2.5km west of Crymych (Figure 1) NGR SN 157 336. Within the hillfort there are three massive cairns up to 3m in height. These are probably Bronze Age burial monuments and are very prominent on the summit. The hillfort is quite extensive, covering almost three hectares, and is made up of three defended enclosures. There are some gaps though the defences, some of which are likely to be the locations of the original gateways. Significantly there are c.77 hut platforms currently visible, although in 1899 a total of 220 were apparent when some of these buildings were excavated. Iron Age and Roman spindle whorls, pottery and stone vessels, glass beads and jet rings were found and it appears that this site had a long and active existence. The three cairns have suffered damage in the past, possibly hollows created as shelters. [These cairns were last repaired in 2002 (L Mees 2006 Cadw SAM descriptive text): but further similar damage has taken place on the two outer cairns since then. A pre-repair visit was made on 28 September 2010.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Bedd Arthur (PE 464)(PRN 100551)

Permissions for the works were gained from the landowner, Countryside Council for Wales for SSSI consent and Cadw for SMC. The repair work was undertaken by a Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority ranger and the Park archaeologist, who undertook this as part of the Cadw SAM enhancement work. By the time that SMC was obtained the Ranger was otherwise committed and therefore the work did not commence until 12 May 2010, by which time somebody had poorly re-erected the fallen stone (Photo 6) and disturbed the packing stones. The stone was re-erected again and is now more secure (Photo 7). The sheep scrapes were also filled in (Photos 8-10) with soil and turf from nearby with SSSI consent from CCW, but not from the immediately adjacent area. Polly Groom, the Assistant Inspector from Cadw, was there to inspect the latter part of the consolidation.

The site was to be re-visited after six months (November 2010), but with prior agreement from Cadw this was moved forwards to 28 September to coincide with another visit on the Preseli Hills. The re-erected stone had firmed in nicely (Photo 11), but the sheep scrapes were starting to appear again (Photos 12-14). It was noted in this September visit that a further stone, three stones further south west than the one put back in May, appeared to have been quite poorly re-erected since then.

Foel Drygarn (PE 010)(PRN 100552)

No damage had occurred to the central cairn, on which stands the Ordnance Survey trig point. The north eastern cairn had suffered the most damage, particularly where one substantial hollow had been created on the northwest side and stone walls formed around it (Photos 16-18). There were also other hollows on the mound, some covering quite a large area but none as deep as that on the northwest. On the southwestern cairn there was one large hollow in the centre (Photo 19) and also two small hollows to the northwest.

Again permissions were gained from the landowner, CCW for SSSI consent and Cadw for SMC before commencement of the repair work on 22 November 2010. The repairs were overseen by the PCNPA archaeologist as part of their Cadw SAM enhancement work. It was supervised by a Ranger for PCNPA who had organised a volunteer workforce of fourteen Army Preparation Course students from Pembrokeshire College (Photo 20). The hollows were rapidly filled in, trying to place the former surface stones with their weathered and lichen-covered sides on top (Photos 21-2). However, with such a large and enthusiastic team spread over two cairns, it was somewhat difficult to maintain fine "quality control"; it was therefore decided to halt repairs after the majority of the work had been done, rather than risk any damage to undisturbed parts of the cairns.

At the beginning of February 2011 the PCNPA Ranger reported that the police had caught dirt-bike riders on the Preseli's who had been on to the site. This report was checked out on 8 February and fortunately the damage to the site was very slight, mostly just a few tyre marks. The only real noticeable damage was to the southern entrance (Photo 24), but this was only turf deep and should naturally grow over very quickly.

DISCUSSION

Bedd Arthur

As can be seen from the fallen stone (Photo 5) very little of the stone lay below ground level. The lack of footings for these stones is also indicated by those that are leaning over and evident from the un-officially re-erected stone seen on the 28 September 2010. It is probable that the depth of topsoil may have decreased since pre-historic times and now animals rubbing against these stones and public vandalism is likely to result in further stones being pushed over. It may be necessary to fix these stones more firmly, possibly with more packing stones or some other material (concrete and stones or possibly limecrete and stones?). The sheep scrapes are also liable to be an ongoing problem and it may be necessary to infill with a harder deposit than the local peaty soil. However, this would need to be discussed with CCW in respect of the SSSI designation of this area.

As well as the visual impact of the damage and erosion, of particular concern is the on-going erosion of archaeologically significant deposits. Other options for addressing the on-going erosion of the site and instability of the stones should also be considered and discussed with Cadw and CCW. Factors such as the grazing regime, sacrificial surfaces, raising ground level around the stones, etc. should all be considered.

Foel Drygarn

This is the second time that hollows have been refilled since 2002. It appears that once one hollow has appeared it encourages some other visitors to extend or make others. Therefore, it would appear wise to infill a hollow as soon as possible, but the need to organise consents and then a workforce make swift action difficult. So far it would appear that there has been no significant, if any, damage to ground surface below the stone cairns. However, there could be features or structural sequences to the cairns that are being lost. It would seem likely that quite a significant part of the northeast and southwest cairns have now been disturbed and then backfilled, and are thereby providing a buffer zone to the core of the cairns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is now evident that damage to both of these sites is likely to occur again.

Therefore it is recommended that the over the next few years Bedd Arthur is visited twice per year, probably in early spring and autumn to monitor the site, possibly followed by a meeting with Cadw and CCW to decide on any mitigation.

At Foel Drygarn it is recommended that there is a monitoring visit at least once per year, and if there is further damage to the cairns have them repaired as soon as possible. If this becomes a frequent occurrence then it would be advantageous to obtain a standing consent to repair these.

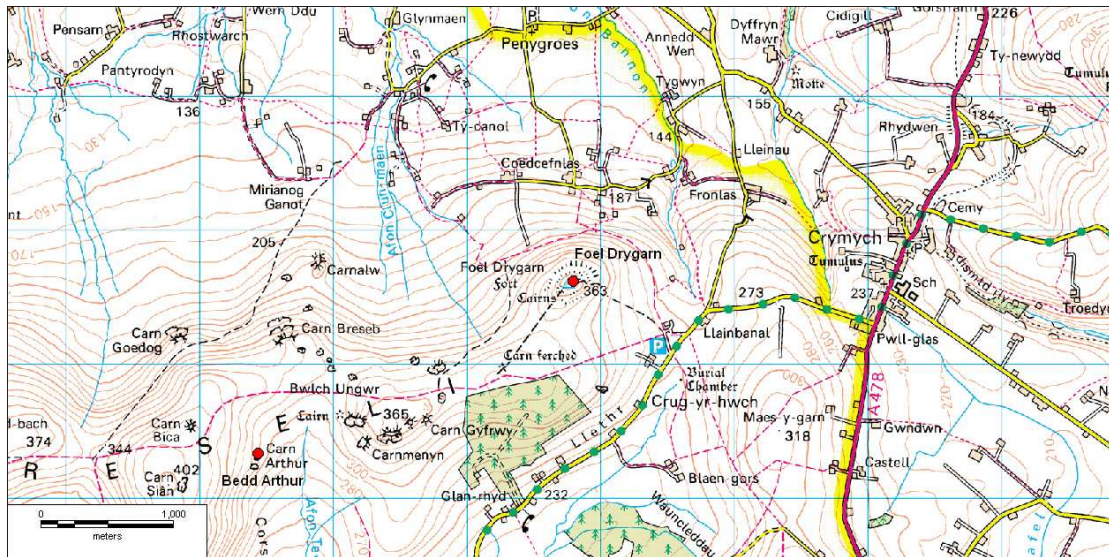


Figure 1: location of Bedd Arthur and Foel Drygarn



Photo 1: Bedd Arthur, general view with fallen stone to left. View SW
26 January 2010



Photo 2: Bedd Arthur. Sheep scrape north line of stones north east end. View W
26 January 2010



Photo 3: Bedd
Arthur. Sheep
scrape north line
of stones, second
from NE end.
View W
26 January 2010



Photo 4: Bedd
Arthur. Sheep
scrape north line
of stones, third
from NE end.
View W
26 January 2010



Photo 5: Bedd Arthur. Recently fallen stone, south line of stones second from NE end. View S
26 January 2010



Photo 6: Bedd Arthur. Re-erected stone as seen on arrival. View S
12 May 2010



Photo 7: Bedd
Arthur. Re-re-
erected stone.
View S
12 May 2010



Photo 8: Bedd
Arthur. Sheep
scrapes filled,
north line of
stones northeast
end.
View N
12 May 2010



Photo 9: Bedd Arthur. Sheep scrapes filled, north line of stones north second and third from east end. View S
12 May 2010



Photo 10: Bedd Arthur. Sheep scrapes filled. View N
12 May 2010



Photo 11: Bedd
Arthur. Re-
erected stone.
View N
28 September
2010



Photo 12: Bedd
Arthur. Sheep
scrapes filled.
North line NE end
View W
28 September
2010



Photo 13: Bedd
Arthur. Sheep
scrapes filled.
North line second
from NE end
View W
28 September
2010



Photo 14: Bedd
Arthur. Sheep
scrapes filled.
North line third
from NE end
View W
28 September
2010



Photo 15: Bedd Arthur. Un-official re-erected stone. South line fourth from NE end View W
28 September 2010



Photo 16: Foel Drygarn. Shelter dug in NW site of NE cairn View N
28 September 2010



Photo 17: Foel
Drygarn. Shelter
dug in NW site of
NE cairn
View NW
28 September
2010



Photo 18: Foel
Drygarn. Shelter
dug in NW site of
NE cairn
View NE
28 September
2010



Photo 19: Foel
Drygarn. Shelter
dug in NW site of
SW cairn
View SW
28 September
2010



Photo 20: Foel
Drygarn. Army
Cadet team in
front of NE cairn.
View N
28 September
2010



Photo 21: Foel
Drygarn. NE cairn.
Main hollow in-
filled.
View NE
28 September
2010



Photo 22: Foel
Drygarn. SW
cairn. Central
hollow in-filled.
View SW
28 September
2010



Photo 23: Foel
Drygarn. S
entrance. Dirt
bike damage.
View N
8 February 2011

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**Mawrth 2011
March 2011**

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan /
This report has been prepared by : **Pete Crane**

Swydd / Position: **PCNPA Archaeologist**

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith /
This report has been checked and approved by: **Louise Austin**

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf. /
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: **Head of Heritage Management**

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

*Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn*

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