

HISTORIC FARMSTEAD RECORDING

CONDITION SURVEY 2023



Prepared by
Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Cadw



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archaeological trust

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

REPORT NO. 2023-13
EVENT RECORD NO. 129735

Cadw record no. DAT 145

March 2023

HISTORIC FARMSTEAD RECORDING CONDITION SURVEY 2023

By
Helen Gant and Alex Powell

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**HISTORIC FARMSTEAD RECORDING:
Condition Survey 2023**

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HISTORIC FARMSTEAD RECORDING CONDITION SURVEY 2023

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HISTORIC FARMSTEAD RECORDING:

Condition Survey 2023

CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

Mae hwn yn brosiect cadw-cymorth-grant. Mae'n rhan o brosiect ar draws Cymru-eang i gofnodi ffermydd. Roedd yr elfen hon yn cynnwys ymweliadau maes cyflym â detholiad o ffermydd hanesyddol ar draws de-orllewin Cymru i asesu goroesiad a chyflwr adeiladau fferm traddodiadol.

Nid yw adeiladau allanol traddodiadol yn cael ei ddefnyddio am ei pwrpas gwreiddiol, ble maent yn goroesi ar ffermiau gweithio, unrhyw mwy. Ar rai ffermydd maent yn cael ei cynnal yn dda ac yn cael ei ddefnyddio am pwrpysau storio neu pwrpas tebyg, ond mae mwyafrif yn dirywio gyda llechi ar goll, cerrig adfeiliedig ac weithiau bydd difrod storm neu coed heb cael ei hatgyweirio. Ni does gymhellant i'r berchnogion gadw'r rhain I cynnal yr adeiladau economaidd ddiangen ac byddant yn diflannu yn raddol o'r gwledig.

Fodd bynnag, lle nad yw ffermydd bellach yn rhan o fferm weithiol, neu lle bu arallgyfeirio ar ffermydd, mae adeiladau allanol fferm hanesyddol efallai wedi cael ei troi I defnyddiau gwahanol yn cael ei cynnal yn dda.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a Cadw-grant-aided project. It forms an element of a Wales-wide project to record farmsteads. This element comprised rapid field visits to a selection of historic farmsteads across south-west Wales to assess the survival and condition of traditional farm outbuildings.

Traditional farm outbuildings, where they survive on working farms, are no longer used for their original purpose. On some farms they are well maintained and used for storage or similar purposes, but most are deteriorating, with missing slates, dilapidating stonework, and sometimes storm or tree damage that has not been repaired—there is no incentive on owners to maintain these economically redundant building and they will gradually disappear from the rural landscape.

However, where farmsteads are no longer part of working farm, or where farm diversification has taken place, historic farm outbuildings may have been converted to other uses are very well maintained.

INTRODUCTION

This was a project to undertake rapid visits to selected historic farmsteads across south-west Wales that had already been recorded on Dyfed Historic Environment Record (HER). It was grant-aided by Cadw and undertaken by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

The principal aim of the historic farmsteads project is to create a consistent landscape-level understanding of farmstead character and survival across Wales to inform policy and interpretation. This has been achieved using methodology formulated by English Heritage. Basic HER records have been made of all historic farmsteads in south-west Wales using remote sensing sources. This short element of the project involves rapid visits to five selected areas to ground-truth the HER records, in particular to review the survival and condition of farmsteads and their historic farm buildings—this is not easy to detect from remote sensing sources.

Historic farmsteads are heritage assets which make a significant contribution to the rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness, but only a very small proportion of the total building stock of historic farmsteads has statutory designation.

Project description

The principal aim of the historic farmstead project is to create a consistent landscape-level understanding of farmstead character and survival in order to inform policy and interpretation.

The objectives are:

- To create a record of all historic farmsteads and out-farms in southwest Wales on the regional HER
- To inform land-use and planning policy, including agri-environment schemes
- To provide a starting point for more detailed analysis
- To produce a short report synthesising the results of the created records

Field visits to farmsteads in five differing areas enabled ground-truthing of HER records made from remote sensing sources. Assessing the survival and condition of farmsteads from remote sensing sources is problematic; this work will determine the suitable methodology for assessing condition and survival, possibly resulting in further future work.

Research objectives

The Southwest Wales Research Framework identified our lack of knowledge on farm buildings as an impediment to research: 'If there is any single major weakness in settlement studies for this period, it lies in the poor comprehension of surviving vernacular farms'. The Pan-Wales Research Framework identified research on these buildings as a priority. 'Study of the many new farmyards and agricultural buildings of this period must be a high priority'. This project will begin to address these issues.

METHODOLOGY

Following on from the creation of HER records of historic farmsteads between 2017–2021, a sample of historic farmstead records was selected for ground-truthing.

Five 5 km × 5 km areas in variety of locations within southwest Wales were selected. The areas were chosen to take in of coastal, inland, rural, urban-fringe and high/low population variations (Fig.1).

At least twenty farmsteads from each area were visited, and the data recorded on Appendix 1. The selected farmsteads were visible from public roads; detailed recording was not undertaken. Photographs were taken where possible. Supplementary data was added using Google Street View.

Information collected was checked against the current HER records, and if necessary additional descriptions added, plus the date of the ground-truthing. Photographs were loaded to appropriate HER record.

The project was undertaken over five days in February/March 2023.

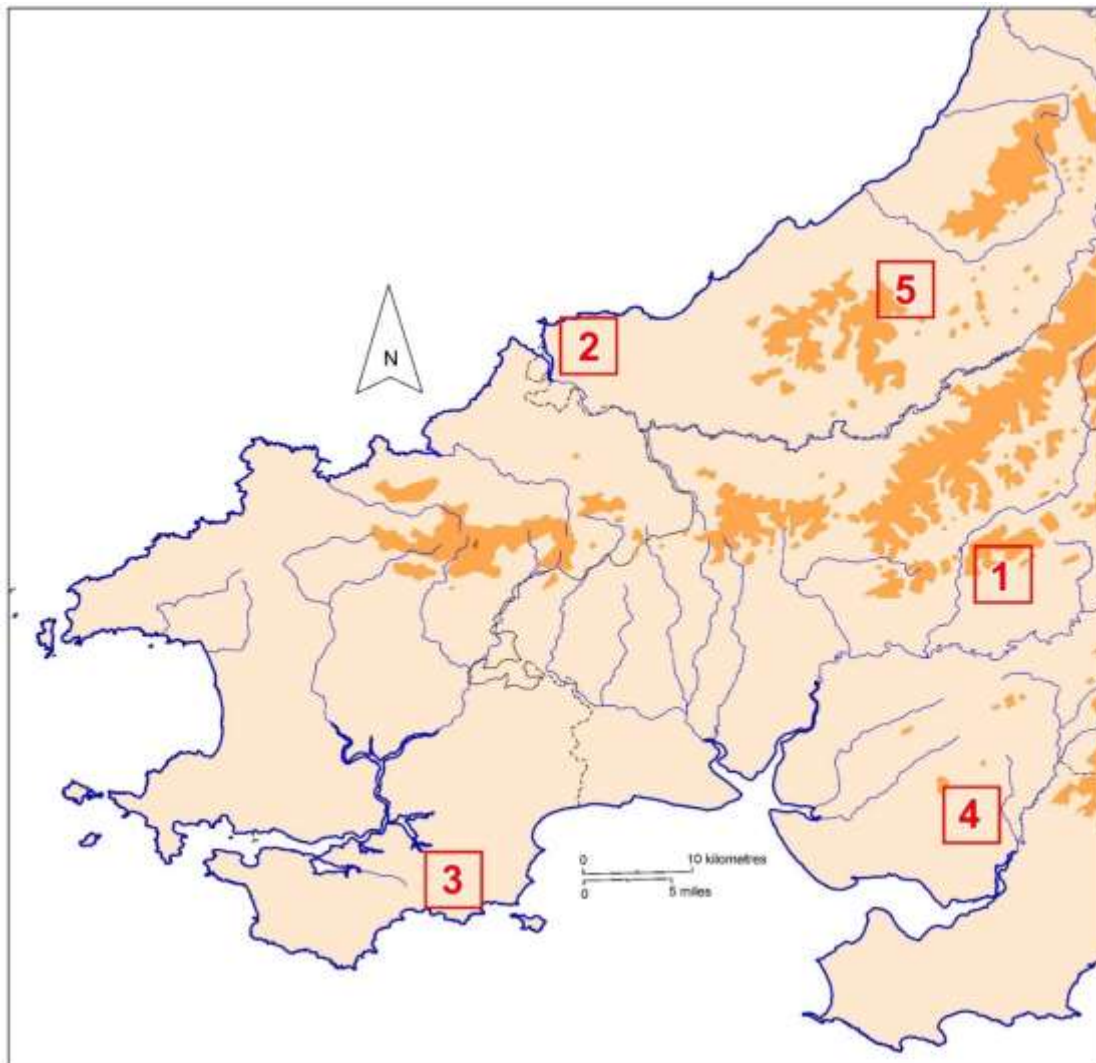


Figure 1: Map showing grids selected.



Photograph 1: Farmstead in Ceredigion (area 5), with various 20th century outbuildings, all in use. There is also a standing stone in the entrance to the yard.



Photograph 2: Cwm Howell Farm (PRN 116140) in area 4, showing a range of modern and traditional outbuildings on a very large working farm.

RESULTS

The results on the Condition Recording Sheets were numerically summarised, and a short summary report written for each of the five areas.

Historic Farmsteads Area 1

Location: a 5km-by-5km area to the northwest of Llandeilo, centred around Capel Isaac and Llanfynydd, Carmarthenshire. It is undulating landscape, predominantly agricultural—mixed pastoral and arable—with some very large dairy farms. Approximately 80 historic farmsteads are recorded on the HER.

Building materials: Most pre-1914 buildings are of stone with slate roofs. Most of the traditional dwellings survive, but modernised. Three of the farms (15%) had new build farmhouses. Mid-20th century outbuildings are small/medium sized, with a variety of building materials – metal sheet, concrete, asbestos, and brick. All the working farms have large ranges of steel-frame, asbestos, or metal sheet clad, outbuildings.

Only 60% of the historic farms are working farms, the remainder used as domestic properties.

Farm type and date: 19th and early 20th century farms were relatively small, consisting of a dwelling and one, two or three ranges of outbuilding, with, in larger examples, the outbuildings arranged formally around a courtyard. Most of the stone-built dwellings and outbuildings date to the mid- to late-19th century. It was not until the 1960s–70s that very substantial steel-frame outbuildings began to appear in the landscape.

Results: Fieldwork was carried out during late February to early March 2023. Twenty historic farmsteads were recorded. Of the c. twenty recorded historic farms, twelve are working farms. Most working farms are large, with extensive ranges of modern farm buildings. The non-working farms appear to just be for domestic use, but all well maintained.

Most of the surviving farmsteads have the original outbuildings in varying condition, with cement/lime render bare stone and slate roofs. The farms tend to be large and have extensive ranges of modern sheds and barns as well as the original buildings.



Photograph 3: Area 1. Ceunant Farm. A large range of modern outbuildings with newbuild farmhouse on the right of the picture (PRN 115898). Typical of the large farms in this area.

FEATURE	NUMBER/20	PERCENTAGE
Still in existence	20	100%
Working	12	60%
Change of use (inc. partial)	3	15%
Traditional farmhouse	16	80%
Modern farmhouse	3	15%
Traditional outbuildings	12	60%
20 th Century outbuildings	11	55%
Modern outbuildings	14	70%

Table 1: Summary of results for area 1.

Historic Farmsteads Area 2

Location: a 5km-by-5km area to the north, east and northeast of Cardigan. It is undulating landscape, lying between c.30m and 150m, predominantly agricultural—mixed pastoral and arable—with some tourist facilities, particularly close to the coast, and two villages, Y Ferwig and Penparc. It includes the northern fringes of Cardigan town. Approximately 90 historic farmsteads are recorded on the HER.

Building materials: Most pre-1914 buildings are of stone with slate roofs. Dwellings are generally cement/lime rendered. Most of the traditional dwellings survive, but modernised. A few pre- and post-1914 red brick outbuildings are present, presumably using brick from the nearby (now gone) Cardigan brickworks. Mid-20th century outbuildings are small/medium sized, with a variety of building materials—metal sheet, concrete, asbestos, and brick. All the working farms have large ranges of steel-frame, asbestos, or metal sheet clad, outbuildings.

Farm type and date: 19th and early 20th century farms were relatively small, consisting of a dwelling and one, two or three ranges of outbuilding, with, in larger examples, the outbuildings arranged formally around a courtyard. Most of the stone-built dwellings and outbuildings date to the mid- to late-19th century. It was not until the 1960s–70s that very substantial steel-frame outbuildings began to appear in the landscape.

Results: Fieldwork was carried out on 18 February 2023. 25 historic farmsteads were recorded. Of the c. 25 recorded historic farms, twelve are working farms. Most working farms are large, with extensive ranges of modern farm buildings.

None of the surviving pre-1914 outbuildings are used for their original purpose. If on a working farm, buildings are used for storage/workshops or left empty. If on an historic farm no longer in agricultural use, buildings, if not converted to other uses, are used for storage, or left empty.

The condition of pre-1914 outbuildings on working farms is variable. At one farm they are in very poor condition and likely to collapse or be demolished in the near future. Generally, at other farms one or two ranges (occasionally all buildings) of pre-1914 are well maintained, but other ranges/individual buildings less so, with slates missing of roofs, windows missing and stonework in poor condition.

All the buildings, including the house, of one historic farm have been demolished and replaced by a modern dwelling. At two others the pre-1914 outbuildings have been demolished.

At six historic farms some or all the pre-1914 outbuildings have been converted to other uses, most residential for holiday accommodation.

At least five farms the house and pre-1914 outbuildings are held separately from the large modern outbuildings, which are still in agricultural use. At two farms the pre-1914 buildings have been converted to residential use; the pre-1914 outbuildings at the others are unused but in good condition.



Photograph 4: A large working farm in the Cardigan area (area 2), showing traditional and modern buildings in good condition.



Photograph 5: A range of historic outbuildings in poor condition (area 2).

FEATURE	NUMBER/22	PERCENTAGE
Still in existence	24	96%
Working	12	48%
Change of use (inc. partial)	12*	48%
Traditional farmhouse	23	92%
Modern farmhouse	3	12%
Traditional outbuildings	22	88%
20 th Century outbuildings	14	56%
Modern outbuildings	13	52%

Table 2: Summary of results for area 2.

*Where buildings were converted for domestic use on working farms, this was counted as part conversion. There were two farms in this category.

Historic Farmsteads Area 3

Location: a 5km by 5km area from Lydstep (coastal) north and west as far as Cheriton in the northwest. It is mostly a coastal landscape, with many tourist facilities. Approximately 67 historic farmsteads are recorded on the HER.

Building materials: Only 10% of the original farmsteads have survived as working farms. Most of the original farmhouses have been extensively renovated and extended, whatever their current use. 85% have changed use to either domestic or tourist related uses. Of those surviving as working farms, most have extensive renovations and expansions, with a mix of traditional and modern farm outbuildings. Most pre-1914 buildings are of stone with slate roofs. The renovated or modern farmhouses are mostly rendered. Some were fitted with solar panels.

Mid-20th century outbuildings are constructed from a variety of building materials—metal sheet, concrete, asbestos and brick.

Farm type and date: 19th and early 20th century farms were relatively small, consisting of a dwelling and one, two or three ranges of outbuilding, with, in larger examples, the outbuildings arranged formally around a courtyard. Most of the stone-built dwellings and outbuildings date to the mid- to late-19th century. It was not until the 1960s-70s that very substantial steel-frame outbuildings began to appear in the landscape.

Results: Fieldwork was carried out during late March 2023. Twenty historic farmsteads were recorded. Of the twenty recorded historic farms, only two are working farms (10%). Being a coastal and tourism area, many of the properties were converted to domestic or tourism uses (holiday lets, camping and one inn). This was the lowest percentage of surviving farmsteads out of the 5 areas surveyed.

The two remaining working farms were both using the traditional farmstead buildings, together with additional modern outbuildings.



Photograph 6: Celtic Haven Self-Catering Holiday Cottages. Historic farm now converted. (PRN 121062, area 3).



Photograph 7: Glebe Farm (area 3, PRN 119165), converted to Parsonage Inn.

FEATURE	NUMBER/20	PERCENTAGE
Still in existence	19	95%
Working	2	10%
Change of use (inc. partial)	17	85%
Traditional farmhouse*	13	65%
Modern farmhouse*	8	40%
Traditional outbuildings	13	65%
20 th Century outbuildings	5	25%
Modern outbuildings	12	60%

Table 3: Summary of results for area 3.

*The total of traditional plus modern farmhouse numbers does not equal twenty, since some farmhouses had the original building restored, but very extensive modern additions, so were counted in both categories.

HISTORIC FARMSTEADS AREA 4

Location: a 5km by 5km area to the south of Llannon, northeast of Swiss Valley, Carmarthenshire. It is undulating landscape, predominantly agricultural– mixed pastoral and arable – with some tourist facilities. Approximately 58 historic farmsteads are recorded on the HER.

Building materials: Most pre-1914 buildings are of stone with slate roofs. Dwellings are generally cement/lime rendered. 59% of the original farmsteads have survived as working farms. 14% have changed use to tourist/letting businesses. Of those surviving as working farms, most have extensive renovations and expansions, with a mix of traditional and modern farm outbuildings.

Mid-20th century-outbuildings are small/medium sized, with a variety of building materials –metal sheet, concrete, asbestos and brick. Most of the working farms have large ranges of steel-frame, asbestos or metal sheet clad, outbuildings. Farmhouses on these working farms are either renovated, or in a few instances rebuilt in a different position.

14% of the original farmsteads are destroyed or derelict.

Farm type and date: 19th and early 20th century farms were relatively small, consisting of a dwelling and one, two or three ranges of outbuilding, with, in larger examples, the outbuildings arranged formally around a courtyard. Most of the stone-built dwellings and outbuildings date to the mid- to late-19th century. It was not until the 1960s-70s that very substantial steel-frame outbuildings began to appear in the landscape.

Results: Fieldwork was carried out on 27 February 2023. 22 historic farmsteads were recorded. Of the 22 recorded historic farms, only thirteen are working farms (59%). Most working farms are large dairy farms, with extensive ranges of modern farm buildings.

The ten farms with traditional outbuildings were mostly very well maintained and in agricultural use.

One extensive farm has been completely renovated on the original footprint.

45% of the 22 farms had the traditional farmhouse still in use, albeit generally renovated. 18% had modern farmhouses, only one out of three being on the original footprint.

One farmstead had additional purposes, those being letting, massage therapy and shop. It was unclear whether the extensive range of other buildings were still being used for agricultural purposes.

One of the farmsteads has been split into three properties, two farms and one residential dwelling, with the land being used for allotment purposes for the community.



Photograph 8: PRN 53261, derelict (area 4).



Photograph 9: PRN 53261, derelict (area 4).

FEATURE	NUMBER/22	PERCENTAGE
Still in existence	15	68%
Working	13	59%
Change of use (inc. partial)	3	14%
Traditional farmhouse	10	45%
Modern farmhouse	4	18%
Traditional outbuildings	10	45%
20 th Century outbuildings	7	32%
Modern outbuildings	12	55%

Table 4: summary of results for area 4.
Where results were unknown or inconclusive, a negative result was recorded.

Historic Farmsteads Area 5

Location: a 5km-by-5km area to the north and west of Cribyn, Ceredigion. It is undulating landscape, predominantly agricultural – mixed pastoral and arable. Approximately 72 historic farmsteads are recorded on the HER.

Building materials: A mix of traditional and historic buildings, farms, domestic and tourist properties, with some traditional buildings, many 20th century buildings (eg. dutch barns) and many large modern steel-clad barns on the working farms. Most pre-1914 buildings are of stone with slate roofs.

Farm type and date: 19th and early 20th century farms were relatively small, consisting of a dwelling and one, two or three ranges of outbuilding, with, in larger examples, the outbuildings arranged formally around a courtyard. Most of the stone-built dwellings and outbuildings date to the mid to late 19th century. It was not until the 1960s-70s that very substantial steel-frame outbuildings began to appear in the landscape.

Results: Fieldwork was carried out on 17th March 2023. 22 historic farmsteads were recorded. Of the c. 22 recorded historic farms, fifteen are working farms. There were only a couple of large farms and evidence that one farm may have been split into several smaller farming operations. Most of the surviving farmsteads have some original outbuildings but the focus is on modern steel frame outbuildings which are easier to maintain.

36% of the historic farmsteads had changed, or partly changed their use. These new uses included holiday lets, domestic dwellings, cake classes, motorcycle sales, camping. Some of the farms were diversifying into these other activities along with the farming. One property was very well maintained, a working organic farm, holiday let and wedding venue business. The farmsteads that had diversified or changed use seemed to have traditional buildings in much better condition than those on working farms. Damage to traditional buildings on operating farmsteads seems often to be left unrepaired, with slates missing or tree damage evident.



Photograph 10: A working farm from area 5.



Photograph 11: Treberfedd farm (PRN 119255). Now a small working organic farm, holiday let business, and wedding venue. Photo courtesy of Treberfedd farm website.

FEATURE	NUMBER/22	PERCENTAGE
Still in existence	19	86%
Working	15	68%
Change of use (inc. partial)	8	36%
Traditional farmhouse	13	59%
Modern farmhouse	3	14%
Traditional outbuildings	11	50%
20 th Century outbuildings	6	27%
Modern outbuildings	12	55%

Table 5: Summary of results for area 5.

Summary of Ground-truthing results

Cartographic and aerial photographic sources may show traditional farm buildings extant and in good condition. However, the ground-truthing undertaken as part of this project demonstrated that this was not always the case. Traditional farm buildings were often found to be in poor condition and in some instances a modern building has replaced a traditional one, on the same footprint.

The majority of working farms in south-west Wales have large, modern, low-maintenance steel-framed buildings. Traditional farm buildings, where they survive on working farms, are often no longer used for their original purpose. On some farms they are well maintained and used for storage or similar purposes, but most are deteriorating, with missing slates, dilapidated stonework, and sometimes storm or tree damage that has not been repaired—there is no incentive for owners to maintain these economically redundant buildings and they will gradually disappear from the rural landscape.

Where farmsteads are no longer part of working farm, or where farm diversification has taken place, historic farm buildings may have been converted to other uses—residential, holiday-lets or other business premises—and are very well maintained.

The ground truthing demonstrated the value of site visits, as it is not normally possible to detect from remote sensing sources whether diversification has taken place and if traditional farm buildings have been converted to other uses.



Photograph 12: Prn 51478. Converted to a domestic dwelling? Photograph courtesy of Google Streetview

The statistics and research on Welsh Farming demonstrates how farming revenues are dropping, and diversification can be seen as a method of retaining our historic farmstead buildings. [Forecasts of farm incomes in Wales, 2018-19 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/forecasts-of-farm-incomes-in-wales-2018-19)

The intention was to undertake an overall summary of the results for all 5 areas, however it became apparent that there were significant differences between the areas and averaging the results out into an overall summary would serve to mask these individual area features.

Therefore, a comparison of some features between the areas is presented below.

FEATURE	AREA 1	AREA 2	AREA 3	AREA 4	AREA 5
	CARMARTHEN	CARDIGAN	S.PEMBS	LLANELLI	CEREDIGION
Still in existence	100%	96%	95%	68%	86%
Working	60%	48%	10%	59%	68%
Change of use (inc. partial)	15%	48%	85%	14%	36%
Traditional farmhouse	80%	92%	65%	45%	59%
Modern farmhouse	15%	12%	40%	18%	14%
Traditional outbuildings	60%	88%	65%	45%	50%
20 th Century outbuildings	55%	56%	25%	32%	27%
Modern outbuildings	70%	52%	60%	55%	55%

Table 6: Comparisons between the five areas.

It is evident from these comparisons that both South Pembrokeshire and Cardigan have the lowest numbers of working farms, and the highest numbers of changes to use. These are two coastal areas and holiday lets and other tourism activities feature highly. South Pembrokeshire had the lowest number of working farms (10%).

Cardigan has the highest number of traditional farmhouses and traditional outbuildings. Since 48% of the historic farmsteads in this area have changed use, it suggests that activities other than farming are supporting the renovation and upkeep of the traditional buildings.

Llanelli area had the lowest number of historic farms still in existence, and evidence was seen to suggest a lack of funding for the upkeep of the buildings in this area. Unless something is done many more of these farm buildings will fall into disrepair and eventually disappear from the landscape altogether (see photographs 8 and 9).

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

The main problem encountered during this survey was trying to identify farm boundaries from the road, and particularly whether historic farmsteads had been split into smaller units. In one instance it was possible to speak to the original landowner, who gave an account of how and when parcels of land were sold off for other uses. Examples were also seen of larger farms potentially being split into smaller farming or smallholding units. It was difficult to verify that this was the case.

In the future it may be useful to take a smaller section and involve willing landowners to participate in recording the history of the farmsteads.

SOURCES

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Jones, E. and Murphy, K., 2020. Historic Farmstead Recording: Pembrokeshire, DAT Report No 2020/21

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Lake, J. and Edwards, B., 2008. Historic Farmsteads: A Manual for Mapping, Historic England.

APPENDIX 1

Historic Farmsteads: Condition Recording Sheet

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST
HISTORIC FARMSTEADS: CONDITION RECORDING SHEET

PRN

Name (if known)

Is the farm still in existence? YES NO DON'T KNOW

Is it a working farm? YES NO DON'T KNOW

Farmhouse

Is the tradition farmhouse extant? YES NO DON'T KNOW

Is the tradition farmhouse derelict? YES NO DON'T KNOW

Is the tradition farmhouse lived in? YES NO DON'T KNOW

Is there a modern farmhouse/house? YES NO DON'T KNOW

Traditional outbuildings

Are the outbuildings extant? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Are the outbuilding in good condition? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Are the outbuildings derelict? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Are the outbuildings in agricultural use? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Have the outbuildings been converted to other uses? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

20th century outbuildings

Are there 20th century outbuildings buildings? YES NO DON'T KNOW

Are the outbuildings derelict? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Are the outbuildings in agricultural use? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Have the outbuildings been converted to other uses? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Modern outbuildings

Are there modern outbuildings buildings? YES NO DON'T KNOW

Are the outbuildings derelict? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Are the outbuildings in agricultural use? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Have the outbuildings been converted to other uses? YES SOME NO DON'T KNOW

Traditional = pre-1912

20th century = 1912-1960

Modern = post-1960

Photograph Nos:

Survey by:

Date:

Notes (continue over):

