

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY
OF
CWMLLWYD SHEEPFOLD
GWYNFE, LLANGADOG
CARMARTHENSHIRE
Record no. 35465**

November 1997-June 1998

Commissioned by: Brecon Beacon National Park as part
the Meithrin Mynydd Project

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A R C H A E O L O G Y

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SUMMARY

A search through various documentary and cartographic sources failed to throw little light on the history of Cwmllwyd sheepfold. The Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1:2500 map was found to be the most useful historical references. Oral testimony aided in the interpretation of the fold in the latter years of its use. Evidence from historical sources, oral testimony and the survey of the fold indicate that the fold has undergone many changes in its life, but that it has achieved its approximate maximum extent by 1885. Its history prior to this date is unknown. Prior to World War 2 the fold was used communally by several local farms and small-holdings. It had become disused by 1950.

INTRODUCTION

The Black Mountain Graziers Association wish to repair and reuse the ruins of Cwmllwyd sheepfold, on the northern fringes of the Black Mountain, Llangadog, Carmarthenshire. This work was to be undertaken through the agency of the Meithrin Mynydd project. Following the submission of a planning application to Brecon Beacon National Park, a brief for the archaeological recording of the fold was prepared by the Curatorial Section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust in consultation with the Brecon Beacon National Park Authority's archaeologist. This report is the result of Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology being commissioned to undertake the recording of the fold in accordance with the brief.

SITE DESCRIPTION

General setting

Cwmllwyd sheepfold is situated at the extreme northern edge of the Black Mountain at 238m OD (NGR SN 7061 2005) on a narrow tongue of land that has been heavily dissected by several small north-flowing streams. (See survey maps enclosed with this report for the location of the fold and the details of individual elements mentioned in the text. The numbers quoted are reference nos. on the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record). These streams lie in deeply incised gullies which inhibit east to west communication in the immediate vicinity of the fold. To the south of the fold and incised gullies the land rises steeply onto the higher slopes of the Black Mountain. Here the south-flowing streams are less incised; the land use is rough pasture, some pockets of peat are present. The fold is located on common land. To the west, south and east are enclosed fields of improved pasture. The modern settlement pattern consists of Gelli-Bevan Farm some 250m to the east of the fold, Cwm Llwyd Farm 150m to the north-west and Llwyn-y-Fedwen cottage (35469) 100m to the south. Up to the quite recent past there was a further cottage adjacent to Llwyn-y-Fedwen, Llwyn-y-Yn (35468), a cottage immediately to the north of the fold, Ty'r Lliidiart (35466), and a possible cottage/settlement (35467) 50m to the east of the fold.

The Approach Tracks and Roads

The modern road down from the Black Mountain and past the sheepfold is assumed to follow the line of a turnpike road. This road was superseded as the main route across the Mountain when the present main road from Brynamman was constructed in the early 19th-century. However, close to the sheepfold the original course of the turnpike may not have followed the present tarmac road, but swung away further to east. On the general location survey drawing a causeway track (long disused) continues the line of the tarmac road to the north-west. Though severely eroded in sections, this causeway can be traced on the ground and on aerial photographs. It runs towards Gelli Bevan Farm before swinging back towards the west where a currently-used track (35477) follows its line to the north of the sheepfold. The causeway recorded on the survey drawing (35475) has now been breached by several fast, north-flowing streams. Originally the causeway would have functioned as a dam, diverting these streams away from the sheepfold and down to the north-east, towards Gelli-Bevan Farm. The purpose of this is unclear, but it may have been to provide a water supply to power machinery on Gelli-Bevan Farm.

The tarmac road clearly post-dates other tracks. Track 35474 is a clear hollow-way and presumably represents the original route down to the fold - it is shown on the 1885 OS 1:2500 1st edition map, but it is uncertain if it was then still in use. The tarmac road follows a more gentle course down the steep north-facing slope. Running from east to west, track 35476 cuts across the line of the causeway track 35475, clearly post-dating it, and runs up to the tarmac road. To the west of the tarmac road the line of this track is continued by 35472 (the current access track to Llwyn-y-Fedwen); this cuts and seems to post date track 35473. A further earthwork approach track runs down the Mountain from the south-west (35473). This becomes lost amongst a mass of old stream beds as it approaches the fold.

From the above short descriptions it is clear that the fold's access and approach tracks have undergone many changes. The tracks' chronological sequence is not entirely clear, but it would seem that perhaps the original approach to the fold was via track 35473 from the south-west and track 35474 from the south, with the causeway track/turnpike funneling traffic into the fold from the east.

The sheepfold

The sheepfold is situated on a narrow tongue of north-facing land between two streams which run in deep gullies. A public road runs immediately to the west and a track to the north. The north-facing slope has been partially terraced to accommodate the fold, but even so there is a fall of c.6m across the structure. The fold measures 36m north to south and 23m east to west. The overall structure is now in very poor condition; at no point do the walls stand to their full height. Generally the walls on the eastern side of the fold are in better condition than those on the west. The fold has been a useful source of building stone in recent years; the proximity of the public road to the west side of the fold has been a contributory factor to the poor condition of the walls here.

The walls of the fold are built of local stone which has been roughly squared and laid in random courses with a lime-based pink or pinky white mortar as a bonding agent. Only to the south and east sides of compartment F (see reconstruction plan) and to the west of K is no mortar present in the walls. In F the un-mortared walls are of slightly better quality than those in the rest of the fold, with slightly larger and better squared stones.

At the junction of several of the compartments the walls are not bonded to one another but butt jointed. These butt joints are shown on the survey plan of the sheepfold. It is unclear whether these joints represent different phases of construction, give an indication of the building techniques employed or of periods of rebuilding following collapse. Given these caveats, it would seem that the butt joints suggest that the earliest part of the fold is that on the southern side, becoming progressively later towards the north. The clearest evidence for an earlier phase of construction is provided by an wall line underlying the external wall face of compartment E, on the east side of the fold. The compartments of the fold approximate to a rectangle, but generally they are slightly more irregular in size and shape on the south and eastern sides than the south. this again may be a chronological indicator. Certain functional features of the fold are still visible. The main entrance into the fold was from the south. This lead into a main central area from which every compartment or fold would have been accessible. Two blocked scrapes are visible leading into compartments D and E, with a similar feature leading outside the fold from compartment F. A scrape is also visible leading into compartment A. However the access point into most of the compartments has not survived wall collapse. On the east side of K a low mound may have provided a viewing point for the fold.

Cartographic evidence

The Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st edition map indicates that by 1885 all 15 compartments (A-O) shown on the reconstruction plan were in existence. Aerial photographs taken in 1948 show that compartments D and E had been merged into one, as had compartments F and G. There had been no other major changes in the intervening 63 years. Since 1948 the fold has gone into gradual decline. The cartographic and structural evidence suggests that the fold was not designed and built as a single unit, but came into being over a period of time, achieving its maximum extent by 1885. The different periods of building are not easy to disentangle in the surviving structural remains, but it would seem that earliest phases are compartments F and G, with the compartments on the east side added later. The regular compartments on the west side of the fold were probably the last to be built.

Watching brief

An intermittent watching brief was undertaken during rebuilding work on the sheepfold. Most of the walls were machine demolished during rebuilding and the pens cleared of rubble. Very little new information was revealed during this work. Mr S Fry, the contractor responsible for rebuilding the fold, made several useful observations during his work. The first being that the strongly mortared walls on the west side of compartments E and D may originally have formed part of a building, perhaps a shepherd's shelter, and second, the recessed nature of the east wall to compartment D may indicate that this was originally an entrance. The demolition of the fold and its rebuilding was recorded photographically.

ORAL TESTIMONY

Notes taken during discussion with Mr William Griffiths, Cwm Meilwch farm, 27th November, 1997 at Cwm Llwyd Sheepfold.

Mr Griffiths is 82 years old and has a memory of the Cwmllwyd fold in operation stretching back over 70 years i.e. to the late 1920s. He had no knowledge of the origin of the fold but provided useful details of its usage during the final four decades of its history. He believes the fold to have become disused after c.1950.

Mr Griffiths pointed out that the Cwmllwyd fold is not the only example of its kind on this side of the Mynydd Du. There are also *ffaldau* at Nant Fforchog, Nant Rhiddil and Llwynrhosser which have performed similar functions to the Cwmllwyd fold within his lifetime. Smaller folds which were used by single farms also exist, a nearby example being that of Ffald Gelli Befan.

The fold was used when flocks were brought off the hill pasture and required sorting. The traditional grazing season on the mountain here began about the 15th of April when yearlings were turned out onto the hill. Ewes and lambs were turned out in mid-May. Flocks were brought down for shearing in late June and for return to lowland pastures during mid-October.

One of the most important functions of the Cwmllwyd fold was its use when compulsory dipping of sheep was carried out in late August each year. This was a legal requirement and was carried out during a single day, under the scrutiny of a police constable. Mr Griffiths estimated that the maximum number of sheep dipped here was c.1200, including the flocks of between 15-20 farms or smallholdings.

The remains of the sheep-dip can still be seen to the north of the fold and has been present as far back as Mr Griffiths can remember. Water was obtained for the dip from the stream which flows along the eastern side of the fold. This was done via a small leat which tapped into the stream a short distance upslope and channelled the water along the edge of the mountain road, on the western side of the dip. A simple sluice system was used to divert the water course into the leat when required. No obvious physical trace of this leat survives. During dry summers, water had to be bucketed into the dip, obtained from the larger stream to the west of the fold. Furthermore, Mr Griffiths pointed out that it was important that no water escaped from the dip into the nearby stream due to the chemical dip that was used. Therefore, when dipping was finished, the dirty water held in the dip was cleaned out and tipped into small pools cut into the hill a few metres upslope of the dip. Two depressions are still visible marking the location of these 'settling tanks'.

During Mr Griffiths' lifetime, he has seen an increase in the size of flocks on local farms. During the period the fold remained in use, the average flock size of local farms was c.120-130. Pre-2nd World War, a flock of about 180 sheep would be considered to be above average; he named Bryn Meilwch as being an example of a holding with such a flock. Interestingly, he remembers a number of smaller, part-time farmers with flocks as small as 12-15 in number. These men were also employed in the limestone quarries on the Mynydd Du. In his experience, the smaller pens on the western side of the fold were used to hold these smaller flocks. He recalled properties such as Pencrug and Felin Newydd using these pens. He also noted the loss of many of the farms and

smallholdings during the last quarter of the 20th century, many of them having gone out of agriculture altogether.

Mr Griffiths was specific about which part of the fold was used by Cwm Meilwch, namely two small pens at the south-western corner of the fold complex. The Cwm Meilwch flock, which usually numbered between 100-120 would fit into these pens. He pointed out that that sheep were somewhat smaller during pre-war years than at present.

Mr Griffiths also named, as best he could remember, the farms which used the remaining pens. Importantly, the very ruinous north-western corner of the fold complex has always been in this condition within his memory and was obviously out of use before the mid-1920s. Moving clockwise from the large, northernmost pen in the complex, he recalls the following farms using the pens;

1. Penbwlch
2. Bryn Meilwch
3. Glyn Clawdd
4. Blaenllymant
5. Gelli Befan
6. Cwm Meilwch
7. Cwm Meilwch
8. Smallholdings
9. Smallholdings
10. Smallholdings

REFERENCES

Ordnance Survey 1888, *1:2500 1st Edition*, Carmarthenshire IXL.3

RAF vertical aerial photograph CPE/UK/2487/4224-25. Photos. in Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record

INDEX TO THE ARCHIVE

The archive has been deposited with the National Monuments Record, RCAHMW, Aberystwyth and contains the following material:

- A. Final report
- A.4. Report and drawings on disk

- D.1. Catalogues of photographs
- D.2. Colour slides
- D.3. Black and white negatives and contact prints
- D.7. Colour print negatives

G.2 *Correspondence*

Index to Black and White Photographs

(negatives and contact prints only)

The location of the shots of the walls is shown on the accompanying drawing

Film 1

Frame No

1	Track 35474 looking south
2	Track 35474 looking south
3	Track 35475 looking south-west
4	Track 35474 looking south-west
5	Track 35476 looking north-west
6	General view of fold looking north-west
7	Wall - see index plan
8	Wall - see index plan
9	Wall - see index plan
10	Wall - see index plan
11	Wall - see index plan
12	Wall - see index plan
13	Wall - see index plan
14	Wall - see index plan
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26	Wall - see index plan
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28	Wall - see index plan
29	Wall - see index plan
30	Wall - see index plan
31	Wall - see index plan
32	General view looking north-west
33	General view looking north-west
34	General view looking north-east
35	General view looking north-east
36	Track 35474 looking north

Film 2

Frame No.

4 - 8	Demolition of fold
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Index to Colour Slides

The location of the shots of the walls is shown on the accompanying drawing

Slide No

1	Track 35474 looking north
2	Track 35475 looking south-west
3	Track 35475 looking south-west
4	Track 35476 looking north-west
5	General view looking north-west
6	General view looking north-west
7	Wall - see index plan
8	Wall - see index plan
9	Wall - see index plan
10	Wall - see index plan
11	Wall - see index plan
12	Wall - see index plan
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29	Wall - see index plan
30	Wall - see index plan
31	Wall - see index plan
32	Wall - see index plan
33	Wall - see index plan
34	General view looking north-west
35	General view looking north-west
36	General view looking north-west
37	General view looking north-east
38	Track 35474 looking south
39	Track 35474 looking south
40	General view looking north
41 - 46	Demolition of fold

Index to Colour Prints

The location of the shots of the walls is shown on the accompanying drawing

Film 1

Negative No

1	Track 35475 looking south-west
2	Track 35475 looking south-west
3	Track 35476 looking north-east
4	General view looking north-west
5	General view looking north-west
6	Wall - see index plan
7	Wall - see index plan
8	Wall - see index plan
9	Wall - see index plan
10	Wall - see index plan
11	Wall - see index plan
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28	Wall - see index plan
29	Wall - see index plan
30	Wall - see index plan
31	Wall - see index plan
32	General view looking north-west
33	General view looking north-west
34	General view looking north-east
35	General view looking north-east
36	Track 35474 looking north
37	Track 35474 looking north

Film 2

Negative No.

2 - 13	General shots of rebuilt fold
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COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD

COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

**SEE INDEX AND INDEX PLAN FOR DESCRIPTION/LOCATION
NUMBERS REFER TO NEGATIVE NUMBERS**



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD

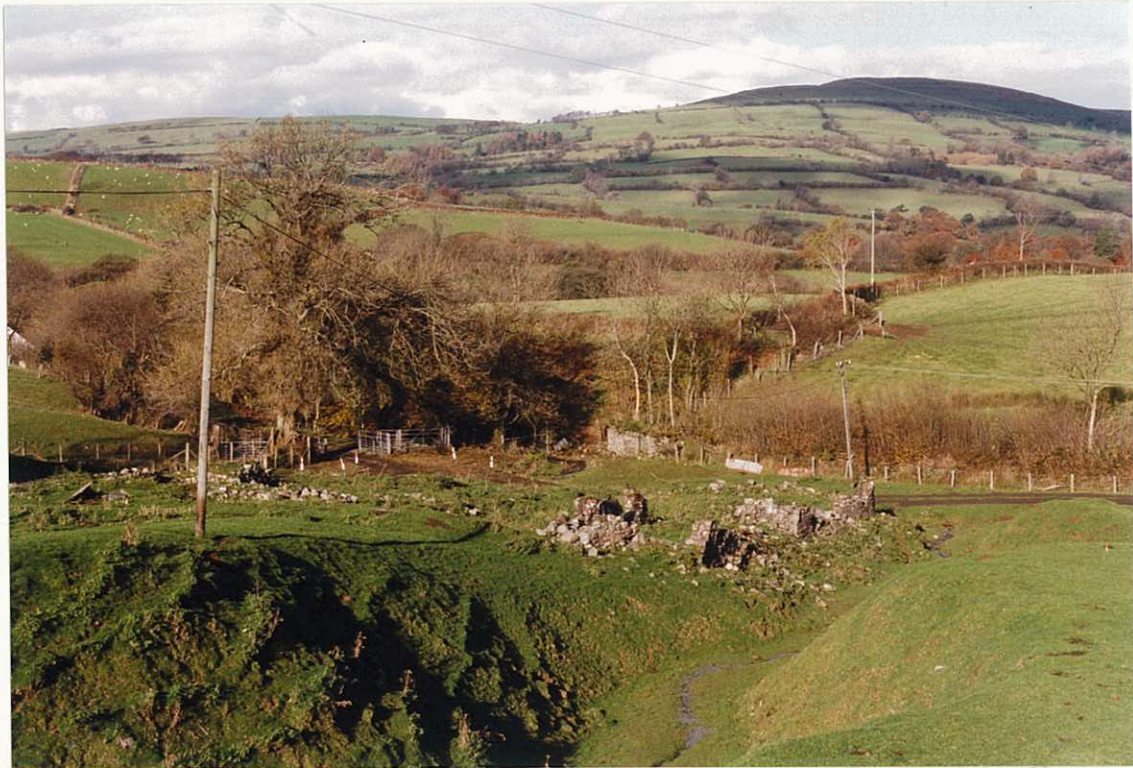


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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



Film 2, 2



3.

CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



12.



13.

CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD

COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

SEE INDEX AND INDEX PLAN FOR DESCRIPTION/LOCATION

NUMBERS REFER TO NEGATIVE NUMBERS



1



2

CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD

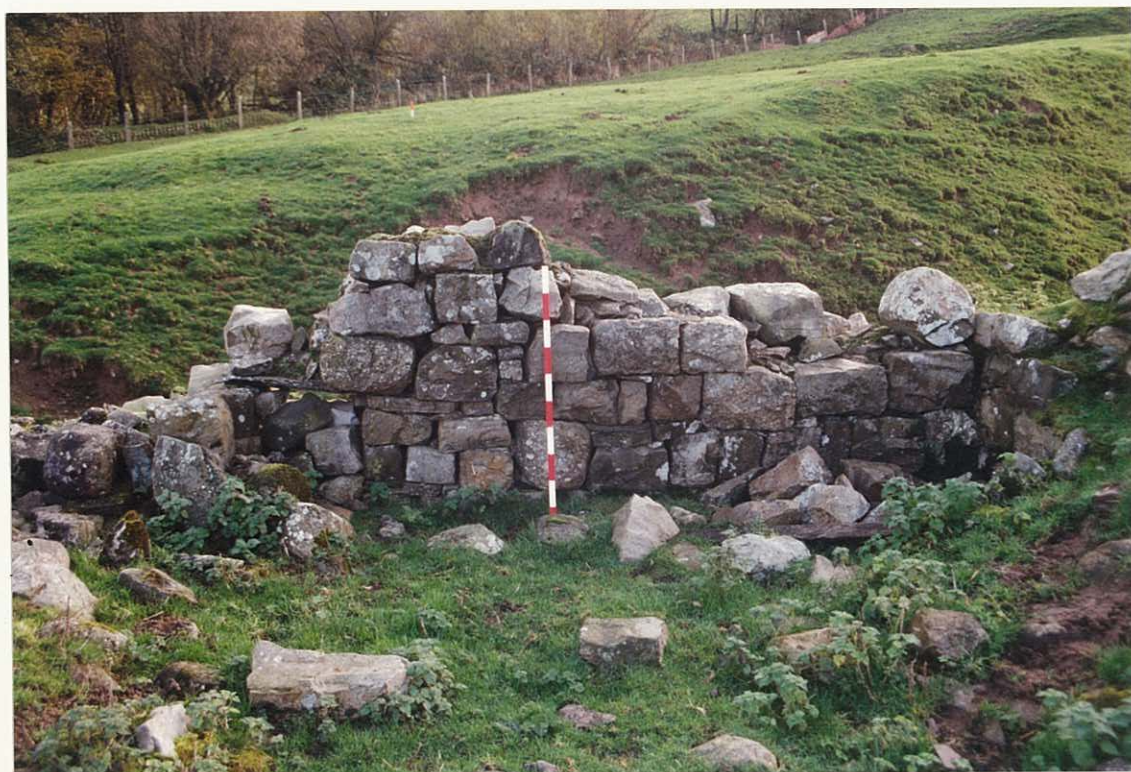


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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



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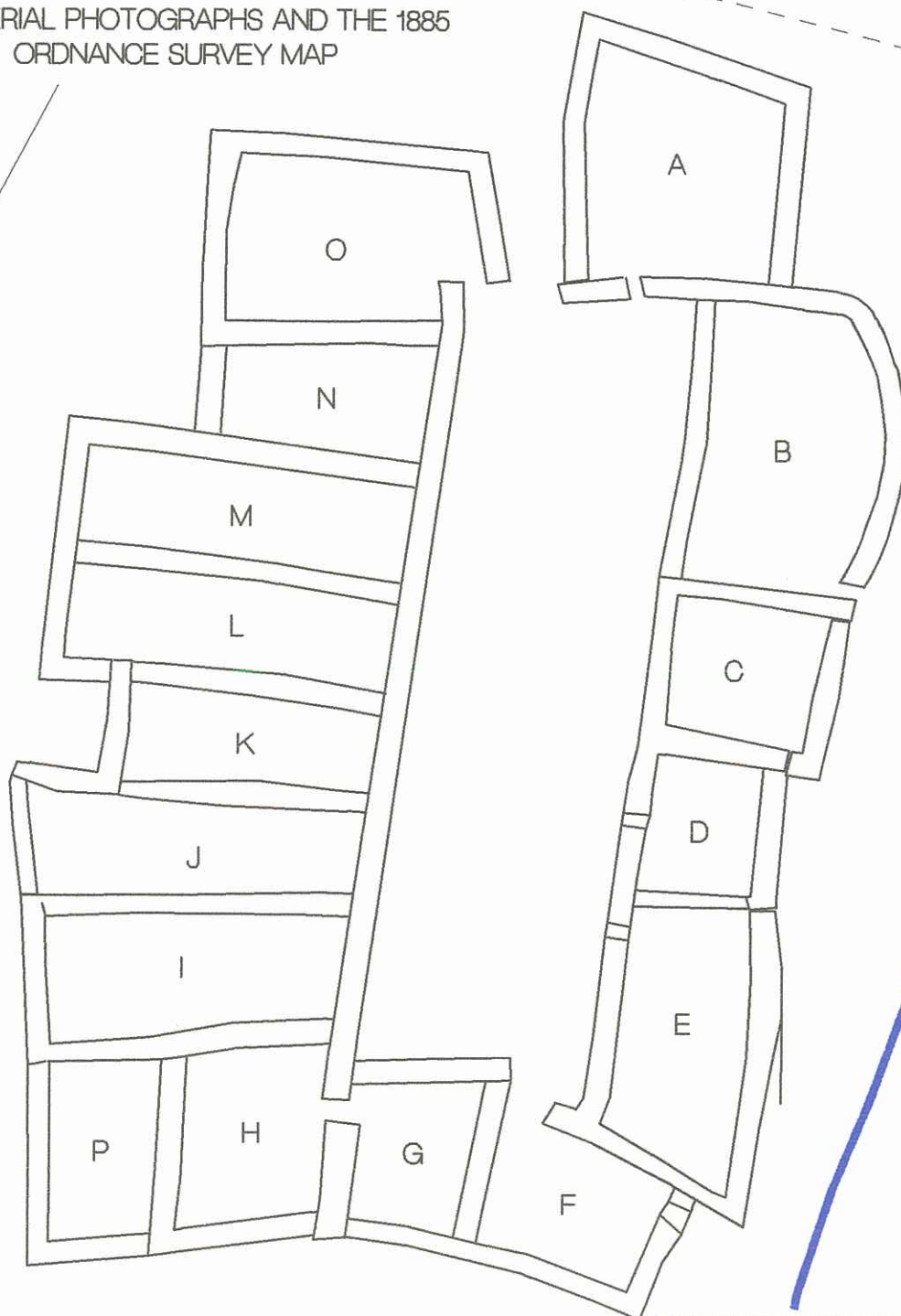


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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD



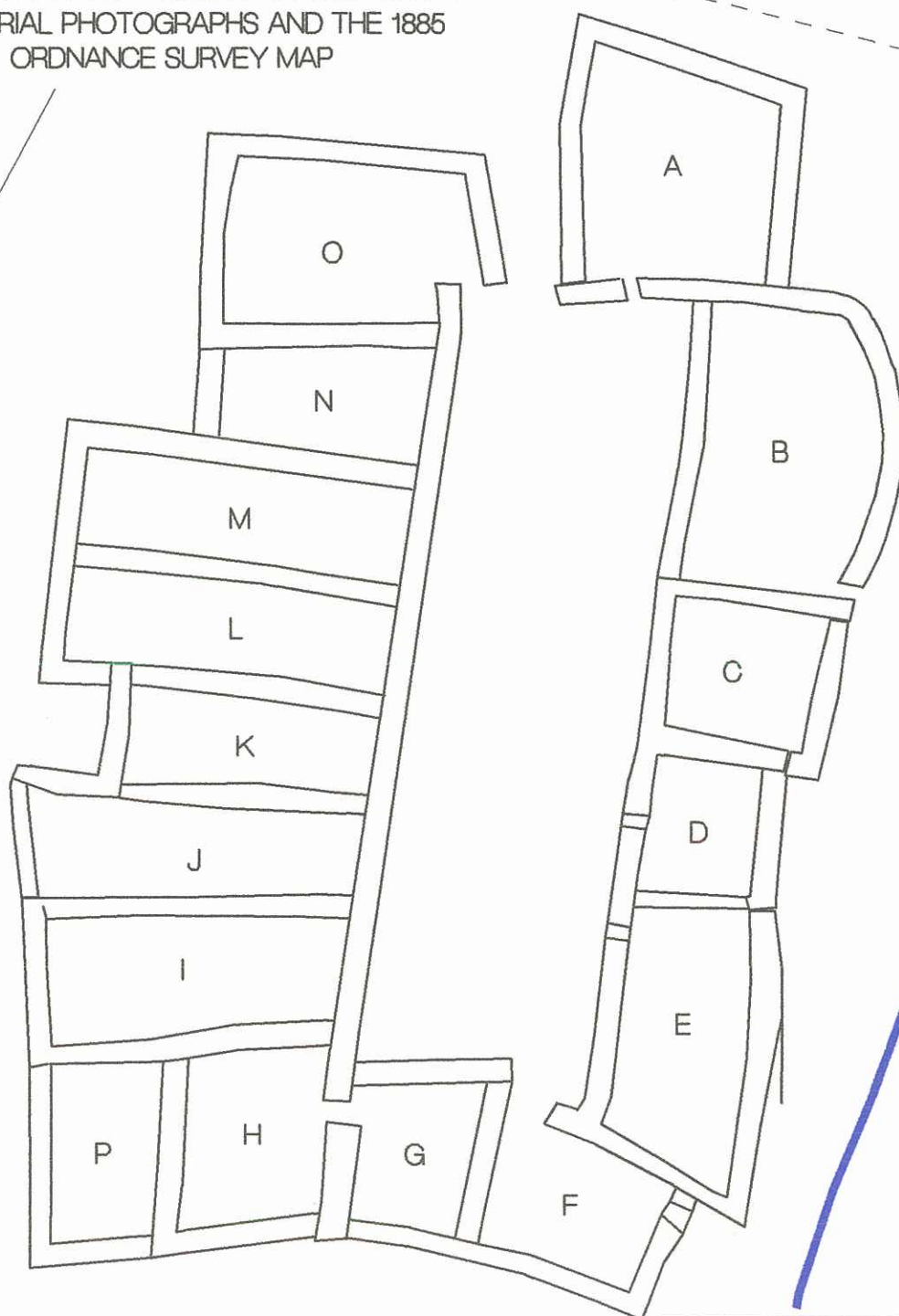
RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PLAN
OF THE SHEEPFOLD BASED ON THE SURVEY
1948 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS AND THE 1885
ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP



CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD
Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology
for: Melthrin Mynydd
Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record No 34652
Scale 1:200 Survey by: K Murphy & S Scott
Wall face



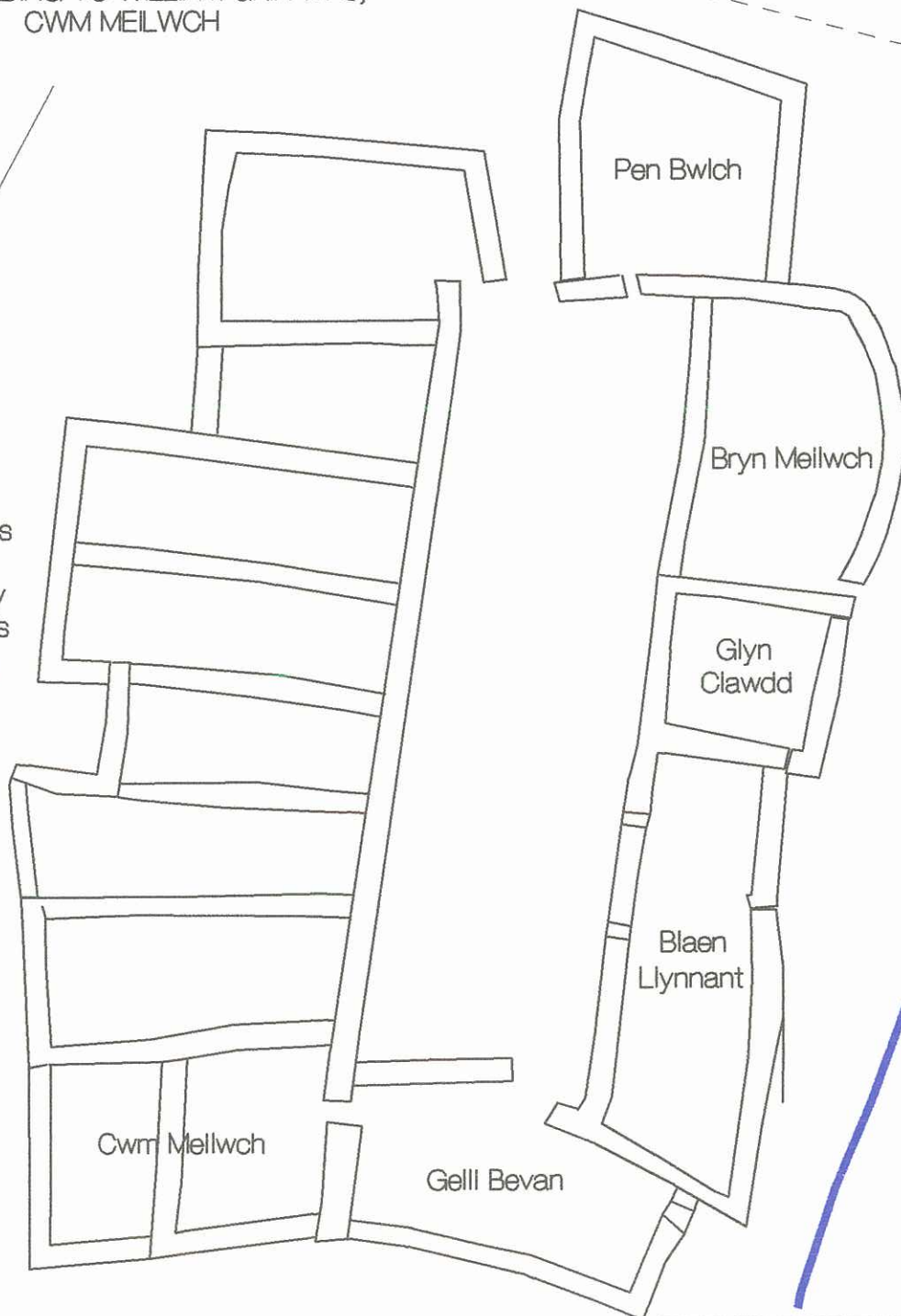
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CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD	
Archaeolog CAMBRIA Archaeology	
for: Melthrlin Mynydd	
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Scale 1:200	Survey by: K Murphy & S Scott
Wall face	N

FARMS WHO HAD USE OF PENS
ACCORDING TO WILLIAM GRIFFITHS,
CWM MEILWCH

smaller pens
on west
side used by
smaller flocks
i.e. Pencrug
and Felin
Newydd



CWM LLWYD SHEEPFOLD
Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology
for: Melfryn Mynydd
Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record No 34652
Scale 1:200 Survey by: K Murphy & S Scott
Wall face
N