

# MEDIAEVAL OR LATER DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN MID-WEST WALES

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*REPORT ON THE 1997-98 SURVEY*



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A R C H A E O L O G Y  
**CAMBRIA**  
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*ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY*

**MEDIAEVAL OR LATER  
DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENTS  
IN MID-WEST WALES**

**1997-8 SURVEY**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION.

This Cadw funded project is second year of a study of the archaeological evidence for mediaeval or later deserted rural settlement in the three counties of south-west Wales, namely Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, complementing similar projects elsewhere in Wales under the auspices of the Gwynedd and Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trusts (GAT and CPAT).

The project is being carried out by Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology (ACA) and began with a pilot study of the existing evidence in selected areas during 1996-7. The programme of fieldwork and desktop research has been extended to six new study areas during 1997-8 and this report presents the findings of this project.

### 1.1. THE PHYSICAL BACKGROUND.

The counties of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire occupy the broad peninsula which lies to the west of the Cambrian Mountain range (see Fig. 1). The Cambrian Mountains and some of their outlying fragments form the physical background to the ACA pilot study areas.

The uplands of the region are not contained in a single mass, but are divided into blocks by river valleys, and there are also several outlying blocks in mid and south Ceredigion. The Preseli Mountains, in northern Pembrokeshire, form an isolated upland block in the south west of the region. There exist considerable physical differences between some of these upland areas, particularly between the Black Mountain and Preseli Mountains, which are typified by rounded hills and open moorland, and the main Cambrian Mountain range in Ceredigion, which is much more craggy in nature and are also generally of higher altitude - Pumlumon, in the north of Ceredigion is the region's highest peak at 752m.

The upland climate is in general relatively mild and wet, and the fact that the solid geology of most of these mountains is overlain by glacial deposits means that conditions are conducive to waterlogging across large areas.

The physical character of these uplands has meant that for most of the historic period they have been valued as pasturelands for cattle and sheep, with very little attempt at large scale land improvement before the 19th century. This form of exploitation has meant that seasonal settlement of the hill pastures has occurred since time immemorial, and the archaeological traces of this activity are widely spread across the moors and valleys of the region.

However, shepherds have not been the sole occupants of the mountain pastures during historic times. Other activities have also left their mark - from mediaeval farmers seeking to enclose and plough mountain pastures, to more recent squatters, metal miners and lime-burners. The tenant farmers who occupied newly enclosed ground following the mid-19th century enclosure movement have also left their mark, with a subsequent retreat of settlement from many areas leaving numerous abandoned dwellings dotted over the regions mountain slopes. This long and complex history of upland activity has inevitably complicated the archaeological record and makes the study of deserted rural settlements a particularly challenging field of research.

### 1.2 PROJECT AIMS.

Deserted rural settlements have been a largely under-appreciated *genre* of archaeological monuments in the region, despite some very worthwhile localised

studies (e.g. Muckle & Williams in the Tregaron area of Ceredigion<sup>1</sup>; Dr Anthony Ward in the Black Mountain area of Carmarthenshire<sup>2</sup>). Therefore, the ACA pilot study marked the beginning of the first overall analysis and classification of DRSs in the region.

Only very a small number of DRS sites have been excavated in the region, and fewer than a dozen scheduled sites belonging to the *genre* in West Wales. This project is working towards rectifying some of the attendant problems which arise. Through the continued analysis of both archaeological and historical sources and a programme of fieldwork in selected areas, ACA is becoming better placed to assess the nature of the resource in terms of characteristic site types. It is intended that this process will lead to the creation of a firm characterisation of the main site types in the region, upon which it will, in future, be possible to base valid conservation and management strategies.

### 1.3 PROJECT METHODOLOGY.

This second year's study was carried out during the autumn and winter of 1997-8, staffed by a project manager and project assistant. Similar to the previous year's pilot study, it involved considerable desktop research and a series of rapid field visits to previously recorded sites within six select pilot study areas. As in 1996-7, the project was designed to follow an historical approach to the question of deserted rural settlement and concentrated on historical research of landscape areas which were known historic units of administration, such as townships or parishes.

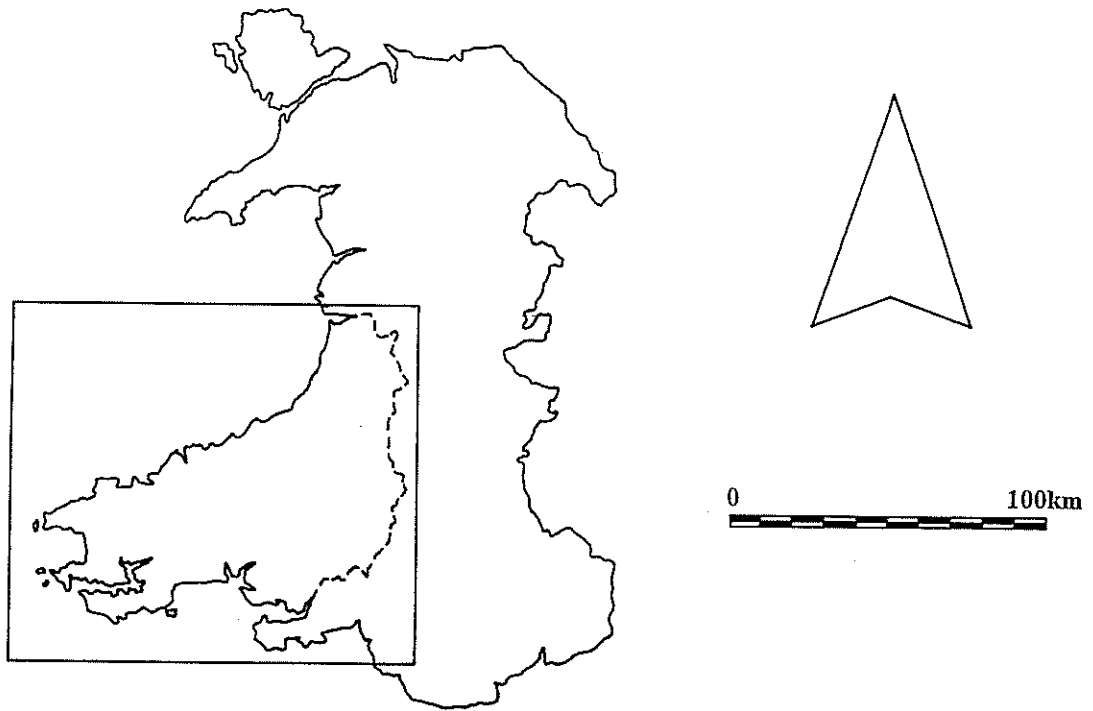
Unforeseen complications arose in relation with some of the areas intended for survey in Ceredigion due to 19th century parish boundary changes. This applied to the proposed Ysbyty Ystwyth and Gwnnws study areas, discovered on closer examination to have been largely part of the same historical unit until the early 19th century - Llanwnws or Gwnnws parish (which was split into three detached portions). It was decided therefore to treat the part of Ysbyty Ystwyth along the southern margin of Cwmystwyth as part of a larger Gwnnws study area and to create a new, sixth study area. The area chosen was a detached portion of nearby Llanbadarn y Creuddyn Uchaf along the Rheidol valley (itself now incorporated into Cwmrheidol parish) an area which has been the subject of detailed earlier field survey by ACA<sup>3</sup> and which offers a great deal of valuable evidence relevant to DRS studies. The six areas studied were therefore;

- **Pembrokeshire**     **1. Preseli Hills**  
*Including Carningli Common and the commons of the Maenclochog area.*
- **Carmarthenshire** **2. Mynydd Myddfai**  
*The commons of the lordship of and parish of Myddfai.*

<sup>1</sup> Williams, G & Muckle, I, 1992, *An Archaeological Survey of the Groes Fawr Valley, Caron-is-clawdd, Cardiganshire*. DAT, Carmarthen

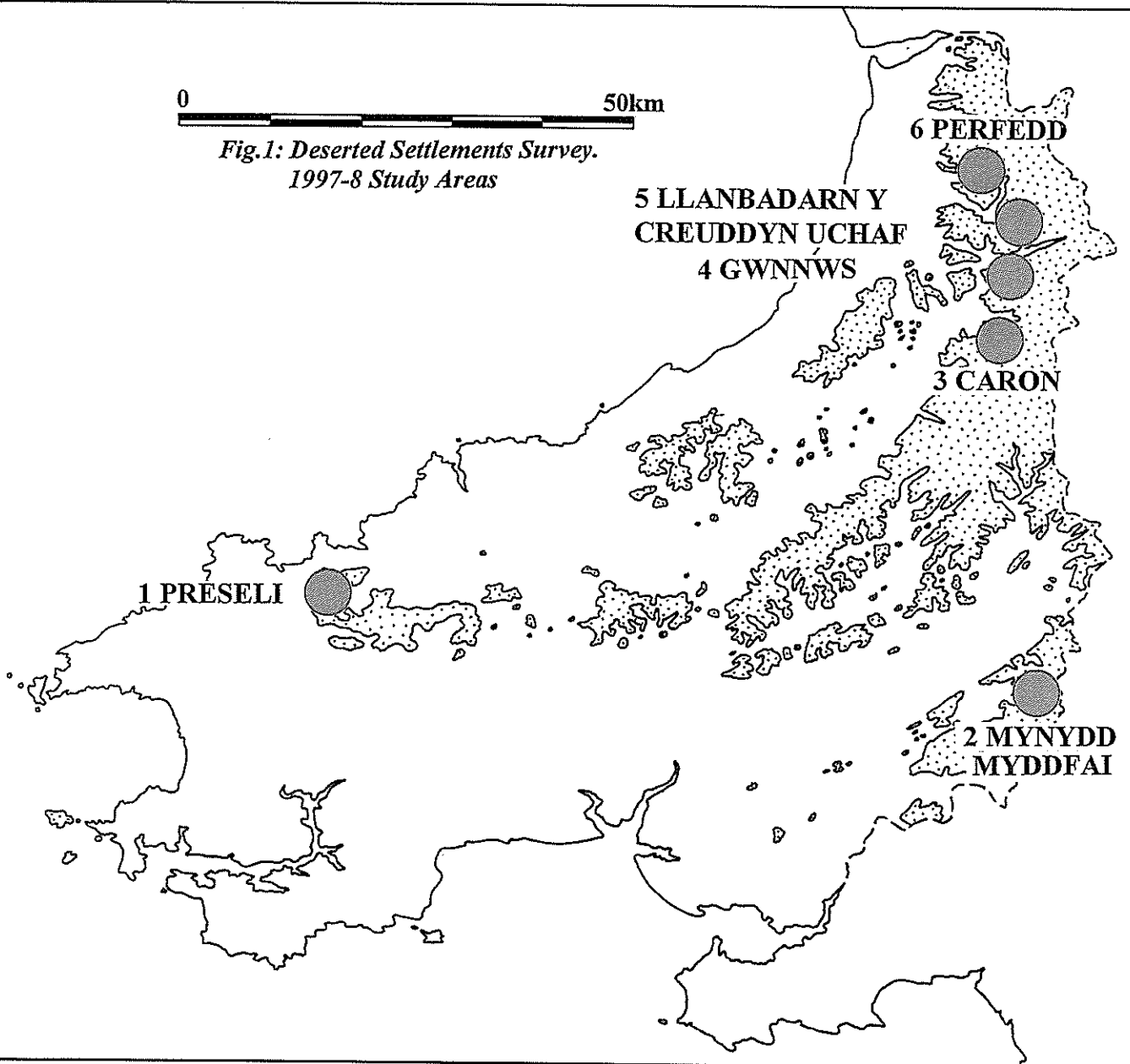
<sup>2</sup> Ward, AH, 1991, 'Transhumant or Permanent Settlement: Linear House Foundations along the Afon Clydach on the Black Mountain', in H. James ed., *Sir Gâr: Studies in Carmarthenshire History*, 1-22. Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society.

<sup>3</sup> Sambrook, P & Darke, I, 1997, *The Mynydd y Ffynnon Project: The Castell-Rheidol Upland Survey*. ACA, Llandeilo.



0 50km

*Fig.1: Deserted Settlements Survey.  
1997-8 Study Areas*



- **Ceredigion**

- 3. Caron Uwch Clawdd (Strata Florida)**

- Parish of Caron Uwch Clawdd (roughly co-terminous with the mediaeval monastic grange of Pennardd. home grange of Strata Florida Abbey).*

- 4. Gwnnws**

- The historical parish of Gwnnws (formerly three detached portions between Cwmystwyth and Strata Florida.*

- 5. Llanbadarn y Creuddyn Uchaf**

- A detached portion of the main parish, including lands along the Castell and Rheidol valleys north of Devil's Bridge.*

- 6. The Manor of Perfedd (Plynlimon)**

- The former commons of the Crown Manor of Perfedd - an examination of more of the lluestau described by Lewis Morris in 1744.*

Each of the six pilot study areas was selected on the basis that there exists some documented evidence for mediaeval or post-mediaeval settlement and that a record of DRS sites already existed in the regional Sites and Monuments Record, which is maintained by ACA.

A selection of sites which were recorded on the SMR and located within the six pilot study areas were chosen for rapid field visits and re-evaluation. Some 130 sites were analysed in 1996-7, and it was felt that a greater number should be analysed by this second year's study; to this end the amount of time spent in the field was extended to 6 weeks, to allow for a full week's fieldwork in each study area. Unfortunately, the intervention of a several periods of severe weather offset this to a certain extent.

In all 201 sites have been included in this report. Of these, 42 are derived from a synthesis of earlier fieldwork carried out in the Llanbadarn y Creuddyn Uchaf area.

Following the example of the pilot study, proforma record sheets were completed for sites visited in the field and this data was subsequently input into the SMR database, enhancing existing records and creating new site record entries.

## 2. DEFINING THE RESOURCE.

The question of how a DRS site should be defined is one which ACA believes requires a great deal of consideration both internally and in co-operation with Cadw and the other Welsh Archaeological Trusts. The definition of a DRS as a "deserted settlement site represented by earthwork or drystone structural remains, with or without a range of ancillary structures and other associated features, such as enclosures and cultivation ridges" was used in the pilot study and retained for this survey.

A loose definition that DRSs "should be chronologically defined as being post-Roman and pre-19th century in date" was questioned by the pilot study. It was noted that on the basis of surface remains, evidence from West Wales shows that a significant number of sites occupied or built after 1800 bear many of the characteristics of postulated earlier post-mediaeval or even mediaeval structures. It is evident that it is often impossible to differentiate between structures which are pre- or post-1800 purely on surface evidence.



It is also increasingly clear that some sites have been re-used and that there is a distinct possibility that 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century structures may stand on the site of a much earlier settlement. The absence of reliable archaeological data compounds the problem of determining any chronology of DRSs at present. It therefore remains the belief of ACA that no arbitrary cut off point should be drawn at 1800 when it seems that the study of those DRS sites which were in use during the 19th century may well offer an insight into the function of earlier sites.

### 2.1 Terminology.

The further difficulty caused by the use of inappropriate generic types to describe DRS sites recorded in the SMR over previous decades also remains. For this reason, a less selective manual check was carried out of the descriptions of those sites recorded in the SMR. Therefore, sites described as cottages, buildings and settlements were included in the study providing, of course, that they were abandoned.

A variety of terms descriptive of sites which fall within the DRS *genre* remain in use on the regional SMR, and it is not within the brief of this study to correct the generic types of previously recorded sites. Neither is it necessarily desirable that terms such as long-hut, hafod or platform house be wholly cast aside. Each has validity when used appropriately to describe DRS sites: problems only arise when inappropriate usage creeps in - such as the blanket use of the term 'hafod' to describe upland DRS sites.

The practice of using DRS as a generic type was initiated by the pilot study, but it does not necessarily displace all other generic types. The use of a second descriptive term, such as in the examples of 'DRS; Platform', 'DRS; Lluest' or 'DRS; Hafod' all carry the identification of sites as deserted settlements and, if necessary, provide a more detailed description of the character of the site.

It is also the case that where multiple features are found in association (as with a complex settlement or a nucleation) the DRS generic type has been applied to an overall Primary Reference Number (PRN) for the whole site entered into the SMR database. The constituent features of the DRS can then be allocated their own PRNs and given appropriate generic types, such as dwelling, field boundary, sheepfold etc.

It is important that continued discussion is carried out between the Welsh Trusts to develop this approach and encourage a move towards consistency, not only regionally, but on a national level also.

## 3. INTERIM RESULTS.

### 3.1 CHARACTERISTIC SITE TYPES.

A fundamental aspect of the approach of the ACA pilot project was the rejection of site typologies based on site form alone. It was felt that such typologies are based on surface remains which may be greatly misleading to the accurate interpretation of the true form and function of a deserted settlement. An important strand of evidence upon which this assertion was made was the analysis of the *lluestau* of the Perfedd study area (see 9. below), dateable DRS sites which displayed both a surprising range of site characteristics and a strong similarity with sites in almost all of the other study areas.



In place of a form-based typologies, the pilot study proposed a new method of site characterization, which took into account the spatial distribution, landscape context, relationship with other features and, indeed, form when evaluating DRS sites.

It was felt that the second year of study would attempt to refine and improve this model, but on the whole it worked as a satisfactory guide for the year's work and only one minor alteration was thought necessary, namely to keep the differentiation between the valley bottom dispersed complex DRS and the upper valley slope dispersed complex DRS (previously characteristic types 2 and 3), but more closely identified as sub-groups of the same category (now types 2a and 2b). Although both types of site can be described as complex dispersed sites, the differences in form and location observed during the pilot study were again seen in 1997-8. The categories used during 1997-8 were therefore;

### **1. Simple dispersed sites.**

*Represented by a single structure with no obvious ancillary or associated features. It may be that most sites in this class are ancillary to a settlement elsewhere; they may include small animal folds or temporary shepherding shelters.*

### **2a. Complex dispersed sites: lower valley slope/river terrace locations.**

*Sites found on the lower slopes or bottoms of river and tributary stream valleys.*

*Represented by a presumed dwelling and a range of ancillary or associated features i.e. other buildings, animal pens, enclosures, cultivation ridges, tracks.*

### **2b. Complex dispersed sites: upper valley slope/hilltop locations**

*Sites located away from the shelter of a valley, often in exposed and altitudinous positions without a nearby water supply. Represented by a presumed dwelling and a range of ancillary or associated features i.e. other buildings, animal pens, enclosures, cultivation ridges, trackways.*

### **3. Nucleations**

*Includes all sites where more than one presumed dwelling is located, with or without ancillary and associated features such as other buildings, animal pens, enclosures, cultivation ridges, trackways.*

The threefold division (1, 2 & 3) has been used to ascribe sites to their characteristic groups in each of the site descriptions found in the detailed study area reports in Part 2 of this report.

A large percentage of the sites encountered during 1997-8 fall into category 2 (particularly 2a). Few sites fell into either of the other categories. This is in many ways a remarkable result, because it emphasises the importance of considering DRSs as complex settlement sites rather than simply abandoned dwellings. It is taken to confirm the belief of ACA that DRSs cannot properly be ascribed a typology on the basis of the form of a ruinous structure often presumed to be a dwelling. The totality of all the features found at any given site must be incorporated into any characterization or typology of DRSs.

## 3.2 REGIONAL VARIATIONS & TRENDS

### 3.2.1 Site types in the Preselis.

The archaeological evidence for deserted settlement in the Preseli area is significantly different to that of other areas. Some of the sites recorded in Preseli this year have clearer parallels with sites elsewhere, but the sheer density and complexity of archaeological features on the Preseli commons will always present difficulties.

### 3.2.2 'Classic platforms'.

The pilot study noted that classic 'platform houses' were only encountered in the Mynydd Mallaen and Caron Is Clawdd areas. The experience of the 1997-8 study found evidence, however, to contradict this finding. With newly discovered classic platforms being recorded in Mynydd Myddfai, Caron Uwch Clawdd and Pumlumon areas (typically in exposed sites on the open moorland), it becomes apparent that although not currently numerous, such sites can be found in a number of districts spread across the region - although it may still prove to be true that south Ceredigion and north Carmarthenshire are areas where the densest concentration is to be found.

Another aspect of the distribution of classic house platforms is the number of sites which include both a platform and a ruined building. It is an interesting question as to whether these sites represent early platforms re-used to house a new structure or whether the tradition of creating suitable building platforms by making a negative cut into a slope and drawing quarried material downslope to create a level area continued into the 19th century and is not tied to any specific chronological period. Like so many questions relating to DRS studies, it may only be resolved by excavation.

### 3.2.3 Circular Structures.

A phenomenon noted during 1996-7 was the regular occurrence of sub-circular and rectilinear structures, which commonly have a diameter of between 3 - 5m, in close proximity at a significant number of DRS sites, most notably in the Carmarthenshire study areas of Quarter Bach and Mynydd Mallaen. Similar features have again been noted in Mynydd Myddfai, Caron Uwch Clawdd and Gwnnws (e.g. PRNs 14143-4 in Myddfai, PRN 9018 & 35659 in Caron, PRNs 35670 & 35672 in Gwnnws). Similar to other Black Mountain examples, the Myddfai sites have been previously entered in the regional SMR as possible bronze age hut circles.

It is the opinion of this author that the probability of these small sub-circular structures being contemporary with the occupation of the rectilinear structures (commonly ascribed Mediaeval or Post-mediaeval dates) is quite high - simply on the basis of the frequent repetition of this pattern in the field. The *llost* site of Fagwyr Lâs, Caron Uwch Clawdd (PRN9018) clearly demonstrates this phenomenon; it is an isolated site occupying a small sheltered terrace at the edge of a boggy area - a multi-phase rectilinear structure presumed to be the dwelling has at least two circular earthwork ancillary structures within 20m or so and three sub-circular cuts into nearby slopes (see Fig.8). Their size is comparable with similar drystone structures noted in the pilot study along the Nant Garw valley in Quarter Bach on the Black Mountain.

It must be suspected that these features are representative of ancillary pig or fowl pens (particularly goose pens, in view of the tradition that geese were formerly depastured across most of the regional uplands). The tradition of building circular

pigsties and fowl pens in West Wales is documented by Eurwyn Wiliam<sup>4</sup>, who refers to the occurrence of both drystone and mud and thatch sties in the region.

Another possible explanation for these circular features, although perhaps less likely, is that they may represent an earlier use of such sites as seasonal shepherding or cowherding stations, or even simple shepherds shelters, which later became the sites of more substantial and eventually permanent dwellings. The existence of temporary, circular dwellings is explored by Iorwerth Peate<sup>5</sup> who noted that mediaeval sources indicate a continuation of the building of circular structures into mediaeval times.

It is interesting to note that no circular ancillaries of this kind have been recorded north of Cwmystwyth. However, a number of post-mediaeval sites along the Rheidol-Castell valleys and in the Pumlumon area possess clusters of small rectilinear platforms or cuts (e.g. Neint -PRN9424). Whether these minor features represent a variation in construction techniques of ancillary pens built for the same purpose (or even another form of temporary dwelling) is unknown at present.

The possibility that some of the sub-circular or rectilinear features, drystone or earthwork, represent storage structures built to hold root vegetables over the winter months is also possible. The *cladd tatws* (potato clamps) of Ceredigion are commonly seen in association with ruined cottages and many of the older generation recall how to correctly prepare a clamp. Where they can be identified, they are excellent indicators of both post-mediaeval occupation and permanent settlement of a DRS site. One example of such a site is found in the Perfedd study area at Carreg y Marchfaen, (PRN35695) which appears to have both a lazy-bed garden plot and an adjacent potato clamp.

### 3.2.3 Sheepfolds & DRS sites.

One striking and hitherto unnoticed phenomenon is the tendency for rectilinear structures of varying characteristics to be found in close proximity to, or even appended to sheepfolds. They may represent temporary shelters built for use at times of gathering animals in from the commons, or even more permanent dwellings associated with seasonal occupation of upland grazing area.

With reference to all forms of minor DRS sites - particularly the simpler sites which appear to have no associated structures or features, it might be relevant to mention here the *caban* or shelter commonly built by shepherds before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An excellent description of such a structure appears in a story associated with the renowned 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist minister Christmas Evans, who began his working life as a shepherd in the Llandysul area of Carmarthenshire in the 1770s;

*“Yr oedd ganddo gaban wedi ei adeiladu yn erbyn y gwrych neu y clawdd, ac yr oedd y gwrych yn gwasanaethu fel mur wrth gefn y caban, ac yr oedd ef wedi plethu muriau ochrau y caban ag eithin a'i doi â brwyn a rhedyn, ac yr oedd wyneb y caban (shed) yn wynebu ar y caeau oedd ar y banc. Yr oedd y caban o wneuthuriad Christmas, at ei wasanaeth fel cysgod rhag y gwlaw a'r gwres tanbaid...”*

<sup>4</sup> Wiliam, E, 1982, *The Historical Farm Buildings of Wales*, p.26-30. J.Donald Publishers, Edinburgh.

<sup>5</sup> Peate, I, 1946, *The Welsh House*, p.40. Brythton Press, Liverpool.

*("He had a cabin built against a hedge or bank, with the hedge serving as the back wall of the cabin, and he had used gorse to wattle the side walls of the cabin and reeds and bracken to give it a roof, and the front of the cabin (shed) faced the fields which were on the hill. The cabin was of Christmas' own making and it served to shelter him from both the rain and the heat of the sun..."<sup>6</sup>).*

It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the requirement of this one shepherd was mirrored in all ages and all areas by the needs of others and that many such *cabanau* dot the landscape.

The structures encountered in proximity to sheepfolds range from bare platforms (e.g. PRN35650 Caron Uwch Clawdd and PRN35675, Gwnnws) to small rectangular earthwork structures (e.g. PRNs 35613 and 35617 in the Preselis). Several sites are listed in the section on the Preseli study area (see Table 2) and other examples are mentioned in the appropriate study area section.

### 3.3 HISTORICAL SOURCES.

As with the importance of the evidence of Lewis Morris' survey of the *lluestau* of Perfedd<sup>7</sup> to the pilot study, a positive contribution to the study of DRSs has again been derived from the pursuance of the integrated, historical approach to the subject during 1997-8, with a number of early 19<sup>th</sup> century sources yielding several particularly relevant descriptions of what can best be described as peasant dwellings (these are reproduced within the text of the relevant study area in the following section of this report).

The importance of such historical descriptions is that they clearly indicate the material poverty of a significant sector of early 19<sup>th</sup> century rural society and the simplicity of the settlements in which those on the margins of society lived; particularly those on marginal or upland lands. The descriptions of the Rev. John Evans<sup>8</sup> (see Preseli and Gwnnws study areas), for example, quite clearly open up the possibility that even sites which are outwardly 'ancient' in their appearance (as in being particularly ruinous or ephemeral) need not be more than 200 years old, and certainly not mediaeval. This should not detract from their immense historical and archaeological importance however, for the study and interpretation of such post-mediaeval sites undoubtedly has a great part to play in our understanding of the economic and agricultural development of rural Wales and the condition of the rural poor in past centuries. The processes which led to the abandonment of such sites during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and even 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is in itself also a topic which requires much consideration.

ACA certainly hold that a greater understanding of these more recent sites may well prove important to our future perspective on questions relating to earlier post-mediaeval or mediaeval settlement and the agricultural economy of the region.

<sup>6</sup> Davies, Y Parch. O, 1898, *Gweithiau y Parch. Christmas Evans*, Vol.I, p.cci. Caernarfon.

<sup>7</sup> Vaughan, E, 1966, 'Lluestau Blaenrheidol.' in *Ceredigion* 5, 246-63. Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society. Gomerian Press, Llandysul, Carmarthenshire.

<sup>8</sup> Evans, Rev. J, 1804, *Letters written during a tour through South Wales*. London.

### 3.4 CHRONOLOGY.

The pilot study very much put an emphasis on seeking and trying to understand evidence for post-mediaeval settlement in relation to the study of DRS sites, an approach which has been continued into the 1997-8 project. As mentioned above, documentary sources do give some credence to the belief that significant numbers of DRS sites were occupied in even relatively recent post-mediaeval times; the rate of abandonment of dwellings quoted for the parish of Myddfai during the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century gives some indication of just how many sites might be involved across the region (see 5 below).

As with the pilot study, this year's work has again found that a not insignificant number of sites show definite or potential evidence of more than one phase of activity. The possibility that even recent post-mediaeval sites have much earlier origins cannot be denied. Two sites in particular demonstrate this point - Hafod Frith, Caron Uwch Clawdd (PRN9317) and Carningli Lodge III, Preseli (PRN24435). In both cases drystone ruins of a dwelling sit upon good examples of cross-contour platforms. Whereas it is suspected that Hafod Frith may be named in 16<sup>th</sup> century estate papers, Carningli Lodge has no record before the parish tithe map of the 1840s. Historic sources and surface evidence cannot resolve the chronology of either site, nor of comparable sites.

The dwelling at another site, Fagwyr Lâs (PRN9018), Caron Uwch Clawdd, appears to have as many as four stages of development; a classic platform, a possible rectilinear earthwork, a two-compartmented drystone building and finally an irregular drystone sheep shelter built from the rubble of the dwelling. The origins of Fagwyr Lâs can only be guessed at, but it seems that the site was still in use - either as a shepherd's cottage or a sheepfold - during the 1840s when it was marked and named on the parish tithe map.

### 3.5 MANAGING THE RESOURCE.

Although it is not the purpose of this study to bring forward concrete recommendations for the scheduling of DRS sites, it was felt that it would be appropriate to provide some guideline as to the relative importance of the 200 sites and features included in Part 2 of the report, based on the professional judgement of those involved in the field survey. A simple letter value has therefore been given to each site in the site description tables of Part 2;

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>A - National Importance</b> | - <i>outstanding either in terms of preservation and/or due to the existence of firm documentary evidence pertaining to the site history combined with good physical remains and/or being representative of a rare site type</i> |
| <b>B - Regional Importance</b> | - <i>good in terms of preservation and/or existence of documentary evidence and/or belonging to a site type of significance to regional economic or settlement history.</i>  |
| <b>C - Local Importance</b>    | - <i>preservation variable, no significant documentary evidence, important to local economic or settlement history.</i>  |
| <b>D - Unknown</b>             | - <i>insufficient information available to assess site importance</i>  |

### 3.5.1 Threats to DRS sites.

A brief word is appropriate here regarding the type of threats to the survival of DRS sites encountered in the field. As was noted in the pilot study, the tendency for many DRS sites to be located on river or stream-side terraces means that some sites are threatened by water erosion and examples of this group may arguably require rescue excavation in the future. However, in some areas DRS sites are located within forest plantations. It is common for such sites to have escaped over-planting, but the possibility of unintentional damage occurring when the forest plantation is harvested may be significant unless the existence and nature of the sites is brought attention of the relevant forestry agency. The following threatened sites were encountered during fieldwork, and it is appropriate that they be listed here:

*Table 1. Threatened Sites.*

AREA	PRN	THREAT	RATING
Caron Uwch Clawdd	5584	Agricultural activity;	Moderate
Caron Uwch Clawdd	9285	Stream erosion	Serious
Caron Uwch Clawdd	9318	Stream erosion	Serious
Caron Uwch Clawdd	35625	Forestry	Moderate
Caron Uwch Clawdd	35627	Forestry	Serious
Caron Uwch Clawdd	35646	Trackway across site	Slight
Caron Uwch Clawdd	23187	Stream erosion	Serious
Caron Uwch Clawdd	14768	Stream erosion	Serious
Gwnnws	9160	Stream erosion	Moderate
Perfedd	35695	Agricultural activity;	Moderate
Perfedd	35686	Forestry	Moderate
Perfedd	35689	Water pipe?	Very serious

### 3.5.2 The excavation of DRS sites.

It is often noted within the text of this report that the dearth of excavation data seriously hampers our understanding and interpretation of deserted settlement sites. On the basis of the list of threatened sites included in the pilot study, one site threatened by stream erosion will be excavated during 1998-9 (a site in the Black Mountain area described by Anthony Ward as an 'incipient farmstead'<sup>9</sup>).

It is to be hoped that future opportunities for archaeological excavation will arise on the basis of the findings of this project. Such is the paucity of reliable archaeological evidence in relation to the DRS *genre* that this case cannot be overstated and any future excavation will be counted as a significant advance.

## 3.6 SUMMARY.

This second year's study of the historical and archaeological evidence for deserted rural settlements in south- and mid-West Wales has examined over 200 DRS sites throughout six study areas in mid and south-west Wales, building on the experience of the 1996-7 pilot study.

The project reassessed a combination of previously recorded and newly discovered sites through field visits and the consultation of historic documentary and cartographic sources. The information gathered is presented in this report and has also

<sup>9</sup> Ward, AH, 1995, 'An Incipient Upland Farmstead at Tro'r Derlwyn?' in *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, Vol XXXI, 17-33. Carmarthen.

been deposited in the regional Sites and Monuments Record, maintained by Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology.

This report includes a detailed description of the evidence for DRS sites in each study area. This information is presented in table form, with an indication provided of the characteristic site type and relative value of each site included. The characterization of sites is based on an interim threefold model developed by the project. It is felt significant that a large majority of sites are classed as being complexes, indicating that the term DRS implies much more than a dwelling site; account must be made of features associated with any settlement.

It was in general found that the majority of sites are not facing immediate or obvious threats, beyond their gradual deterioration due to exposure to the elements. However, a small number of sites (12) were highlighted as being threatened (or already damaged) by either stream erosion, agricultural activity or forestry work.

The experience of the 1997-8 survey was that a notable similarity of basic site types is emerging across the region as more sites are analysed. Issues raised about the absence of certain site types, such as the classic house platform, from certain areas within the district no longer appear wholly valid. It is however, still apparent that localized variations of site type do occur and that some forms of settlement are more common in particular districts. The examination of further sites in 1998-9 will hopefully shed further light on such issues.

In each study area, attention was drawn to those sites believed to be the most significant, for reasons of rarity, preservation or documentary record, based on the professional judgement of project staff. These include sites ranging from complexes which may be associated with mediaeval activity on the home grange of Strata Florida Abbey to excellent examples of *lluest* type sites in the Caron and Llanbadarn y Creuddyn areas.

Combined with the experience of the 1996-7 Pilot Study, the findings of this survey form a significant body of new evidence which will inform the 1998-9 project and lead to both a better understanding of DRS types and an opportunity to establish a more satisfactory approach to the recording and management of DRS sites.



**PART TWO:  
THE STUDY AREAS - SURVEY RESULTS.**

#### 4. PRESELI STUDY AREA.

It had been intended to concentrate this year's field visits on the area of Carningli Common, above the historic borough town of Newport, Pembrokeshire. However, as very few deserted sites of relevance to the study of mediaeval or post-mediaeval settlement, it was decided during fieldwork that attention should also be given to areas further east on the Preseli range not looked at during 1996-7, namely the commons of the Maenclochog/Rosebush area.

The history of the commons of the Barony of Cemaes was touched upon in the pilot study report, chiefly in association with the evidence provided by the works of George Owen, Henllys, the 16<sup>th</sup> century antiquarian and Lord of Cemaes. The history of Carningli Common in relation to the Norman borough town at Newport and its significance as a prominent portion of the wider commons of Cemaes requires some further consideration. Some of the historical sources for Carningli provide a great deal of food for thought in terms of deserted settlement study.

##### 4.1 The archaeological and historical evidence for deserted rural settlement in Preseli

There were few sites relevant to the DRS genre recorded in the area on the regional SMR before this study, and few have been added. As with the northern and eastern portions of the Preseli range studied in 1996-7, a major obstacle to a full appreciation of the deserted settlement question in this area is the complexity of the archaeological record and the lack of hard archaeological evidence on which to base any assessment of the date or function of field monuments.

There is certainly evidence for settlement and other human activity across Carningli Common and its adjacent areas. Much of this evidence exists in association with the large hillfort on Carningli top, but there are also a number of other recorded settlements across the common which are loosely interpreted as open settlements (i.e. undefended) of Iron Age date. These tend to include small nucleations of rectilinear and/or circular structures interpreted as dwellings and related structures; field enclosures are often present in association. The dating of such sites is inevitably vague as none have been excavated, but on the basis of the observations of this study, questions must be raised as to the validity of ascribing tentative prehistoric dates to such 'settlements' without hard evidence to substantiate such dates. This point requires some expansion.

There are no grounds to doubt the ascribing of Iron Age dates on the defensive site of Carningli hillfort. However, amongst the open settlements of the area it is evident that clusters of rectilinear structures and associated field systems occur at a number of locations (such as the example noted at Carn Alw, Eglwyswen in 1996-7<sup>1</sup>). There are no grounds for assuming or excluding any date for such sites to any period from the Neolithic to Post-mediaeval.

However, we know from historic sources that the Preselis generally have been used for the common pasture of cattle for many centuries. The first written confirmation of this dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the Norman Lord of Cemaes, Nicholas Martin confirmed an earlier grant (presumably of the early 12<sup>th</sup> century) which gave right of common to the descendants of the earlier Welsh prince Cuhelyn

<sup>1</sup> Sambrook, P, 1997, *Mediaeval or Later Deserted Rural Settlements Survey: 1996-7 Pilot Study*, p.12. ACA, Llandeilo

Fardd<sup>2</sup>. The Lords of Cemaes have guarded the common status of most of the Preseli range since that time, and indeed the Barony of Cemaes retains ownership of the commons to this day.

It does not follow, however, that evidence for settlement on the common is necessarily either pre-Mediaeval or associated with seasonal shepherding/cowherding. Late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century papers in the Bronwydd Collection at the National Library of Wales provide clear historical evidence for occasional encroachment onto the common. The Chief Rent Rolls of Kemes, for example, include references during the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to permission being granted to build on 'Newport Common' structures such as '*a stable built on the common*'; '*a cottage and cow house*' and '*a court and a stable*'. It is likely that these examples refer to the process of enclosing or settling the common fringes, rather than the higher, open mountain pastures, but such references remain important - mention of the construction of non-settlement buildings on the common is a reminder that not all 'long-huts' need be deserted settlements.

Early 19<sup>th</sup> century travellers furnish telling descriptions of the 'primitive' dwellings of the Preseli shepherds and further warn the modern researcher of the pitfalls of equating simplicity or the 'ancient' feel of ruined structures with great antiquity. One source, the Rev. John Evans, writing in 1803, is worth quoting in detail;

*"Percelly abounds with peat bogs, which furnish employment to numbers of poor people in digging and curing it for sale. This mountain was granted by one of the Lords of Kemes for this purpose: it abounds with springs, which support a variety of aquatic plants, and such as are peculiar to peat bogs and marshy places. At times it exhibits considerable verdure, and the different cwms furnish abundance of grass. Numerous flocks are here constantly attended by shepherds, who are not paid in money as in England, but are allowed to keep so many sheep of their own to run with the flock they tend, by the increase of which they receive an adequate recompense for their labour. They reside in adjacent vales in self-erected huts, built of loose stones, and covered with rushes; which also serve them as beds for their nightly repose: doors they have none, but when the keen blast and howling storm approach, a rush-clad hurdle set on end affords the wished for shelter."*<sup>3</sup>

The location of the 'adjacent vales' is however not clear; unlike the other study areas, Preseli is not generally a mountain block dissected by narrow, sheltered valleys. It is possible that Evans refers to the slopes of the upper Gwaun Valley, or to the occasional stream valley running off the mountain, but there is presently little recorded evidence for shepherding cottages of the type described. It may be that these earlier settlements became lost or were developed into more substantial cottages as enclosure and settlement extended onto the common fringes during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Some of the sites included in this report are almost certainly the products of this 19<sup>th</sup> century movement onto the commons. Three sites on the south side of Carningli, above and including Carningli Lodge (PRNs 13351, 24435, 35606) are all

<sup>2</sup> Miles, D, 1995, *The Ancient Borough of Newport in Pembrokeshire*. Dyfed County Council Cultural Services Department.

<sup>3</sup> Evans, Rev. J, 1804, *Letters written during a tour through South Wales in the year 1803*. London

absent from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century OS original surveyors drawing of the area, but appear as on the parish tithe map and later 19<sup>th</sup> century maps.

## 4.2 Characteristic site types.

### 4.2.1 Simple, dispersed sites.

With the possible exception of the small 'hut' built into the stone spread around Carn Ffoi (PRN 35609) it is not thought that any sites of this type were encountered. Its presence in such a rough environment is interesting and suggests that it could only have served as a temporary shelter, perhaps that of a shepherd or cowherd.

### 4.2.2 Complex dispersed sites.

Inasmuch as virtually all the sites encountered had clear or postulated relationships with other features, be they enclosures or ancillary structures, this category accounts for almost all of the sites listed below. It is in no way implied that the function or date of any site in this category are comparable of course, and a wide variety of characteristics appear in the site descriptions.

Possibly the chief differentiation should be drawn between those sites which are attested or believed or known to be 'homesteads' (such as PRNs 24435, 35608, 35610) and those which may have been more likely to have been used on only a temporary or seasonal basis. It seems possible that the smaller 'huts' which may be associated with the sheepfolds at Carn Afr (PRN35617-9) and Waun Maes (PRN35613-4) may have been only shelters brought into use when animals were collected together - similar to the usage suggested for the Carn Ffoi 'hut' site above.

The experience of two years field observation of deserted rural settlement sites has enabled ACA staff to discern a possibly significant pattern of commonalties of some sites in Preseli (and elsewhere) which may suggest that some at least may be of Mediaeval or Post-mediaeval date. This applies in particular to a significant group of sites in Preseli - simple, often very eroded rectilinear structures are found in proximity to sheep or cattle folds or sheep washing complexes. Similar relationships have been seen elsewhere (and will be discussed in relation to the appropriate study area) and it may be that a direct correlation exists between some 'long huts' and the corralling of sheep, cattle or other stock animals. Examples of sites in Preseli recorded both in 1996-7 and 1997-8 which come into this category are;

PRN	NGR	NAME
1039	SN14683398	Parcybotty
32878	SN094328	Ffos Drysienog
11359	SN13983375	Carnalw
11577	SN12343160	Talmynydd
35613	SN07523333	Waun Maes
35616	SN09323020	Carn Afr

A particularly interesting example of the larger dwelling sites is the 'homestead' (PRN24435) above Carningli Lodge which appears for the first time on the Newport parish tithe map but which displays characteristics comparable with classic house platforms of other districts and which are rarely, if ever, seen elsewhere

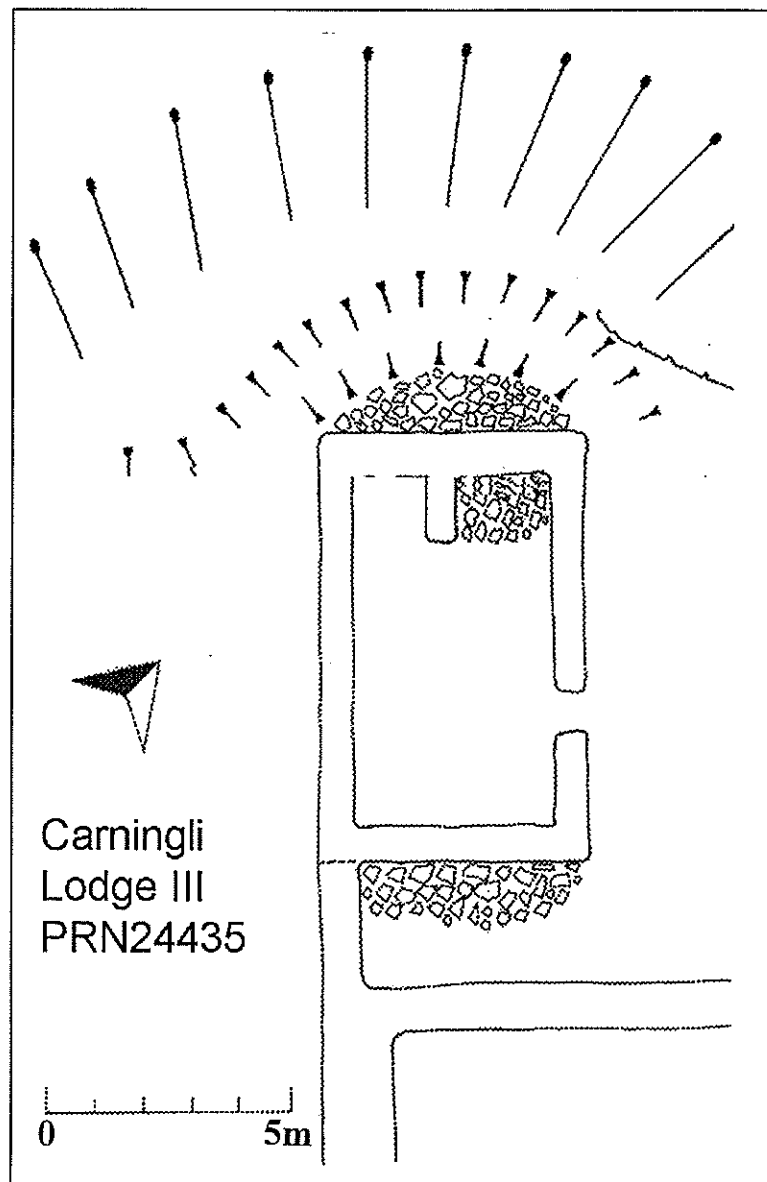
in Preseli. The drystone ruin stands on a large, levelled platform, with evidence of a drainage gully cut around the negative end of the platform. Whether or not the platform predates the 19<sup>th</sup> century 'homestead' is of course an archaeological question which cannot be answered on the basis of surface features.

Two other sites which are evidently of late date and associated with enclosure of the common are the unnamed deserted farmsteads near Carn Afr (PRN35615) and on the higher part of Carningli common between Carningli hillfort and Carn Ffoi to the north (PRN35607). In both instances the ruined traces of dwellings and outbuildings are seen, associated with fairly large and rectilinear field systems characteristic of 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. The Carn Afr site is particularly remarkable in the rectilinear nature of its field system. Neither example appears on pre-tithe survey maps.

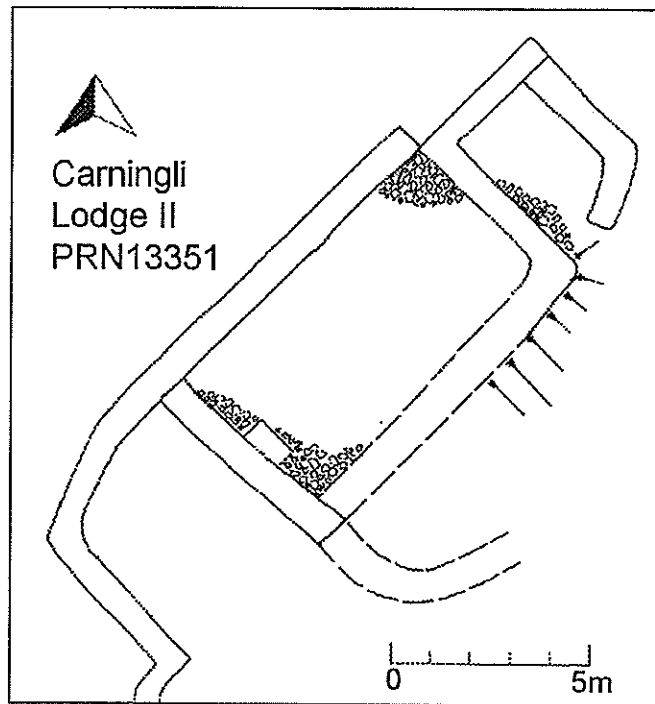
#### **4.2.3 Nucleations.**

This category is one very relevant to the main Preseli mountain range, but does not seem to be so in a mediaeval or post-mediaeval context for Carningli Common. No clusters of DRS type structures were noted.

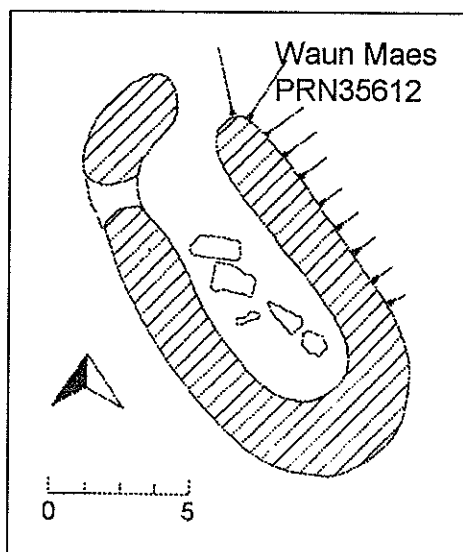
The interpretation of the features around the Carn Afr sheepfold as a loose nucleation is of course based only on the surface evidence of what may be chronologically unrelated structures. Nevertheless, at least three rectilinear features in relatively close proximity are evident around the fold and there are traces of boundary banks which are suggestive of more than a temporary presence. Interestingly, the Carn Afr 'settlement' around the fold PRN35616 is recorded as a possible Iron Age settlement in the regional SMR, but the grounds for this dating are unknown.



*Fig.2: Carningli Lodge III is located on the southern slopes of Carningli. The site is particularly interesting as the drystone dwelling sits on the only recorded example of a classic house platform in the area. The negative end of the platform apparently has a drainage channel cut around the end of the dwelling. From the southern end of the structure, a drystone wall runs into the top of a large drystone walled enclosure. Historically, the site is interesting as it does not appear on any map before the Newport parish tithe survey of the 1840s, when it is recorded as an occupied 'homestead'. Not shown in the plan, 10m to the west is a small sub-circular ancillary structure interpreted as an animal/fowl pen, measuring 3.5 x 3m, similar to ancillary features found close to DRS sites in other study areas.*



*Fig.3: Carningli Lodge II. Like PRN24435, this site first appears on the Newport parish tithe map. However, no clear indication is given as to whether it is a dwelling or not. The mere possibility that a site such as this was intended for housing animals rather than people is an aspect of DRS studies which should not be neglected.*



*Fig.4; Waun Maes. This small earth and stone structure lies in close proximity to a large circular sheepfold and possibly one further DRS site of similar character but in a poor state of preservation. The relationship between some 'long huts' and sheepfolds is an interesting one and has been observed in several study areas over the last two years.*



**TABLE 2: PRESELI STUDY AREA - SITES VISITED**

	PRN	NGR	Name	Description	Type	Characteristic	Value
1	6672	SN04423753	Pont Ceunant	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage or farmstead on edge of common.	Cottage	2	C
2	13351	SN06633688	Carningli Lodge II	A largely stone built, but ruinous 'DRS', 10m x 6m, with a small compartment - 3 x 5m added to NE end. Also associated with an extensive series of enclosures and field boundaries, largely obscured by gorse. Possibly not a DRS but rather an agricultural building associated with Carningli Lodge III	DRS?	2	C
3	24435	SN06363685	Carningli Lodge III	Ruined drystone dwelling built on a large platform cut cross-contour in moderate slope. 11 x 5.5m in size overall, but main structure 8.6 x 5.5. Drainage cut at upslope end of platform. Despite 'antique' features, this site was occupied as a 'homestead' on the parish tithe map.	DRS; Cottage	2	B
4	35606	SN06703695	Carningli Lodge	Ruined drystone cottage built on common since 1840s parish tithe map. Well constructed, stands to gable height. A collection of stone walled enclosures and smaller structures also survive in adjacent area.	Cottage	2	C
5	35607	SN05043781	Carningli Common	Earthwork and stone ruins of a 19 <sup>th</sup> century dwelling and range of ancillary buildings and enclosures built on common above Carn Ffoi. All wall bases now low and grassed over, but complete plan visible. Poor weather prohibited survey.	DRS; Farmstead	2	C
6	35608	SN04093723	Ffordd Bedd Morris	Ruinous building, 7 x 5m, decayed drystone and earth walling; walls up to 1.5m high at S. end. A small earth banked enclosure 12 x 8m appended to E. side of structure.	DRS	2	C
7	35609	SN04803791	Carn Ffoi	Small hut, irregular rectilinear, drystone walls 1m thick. Built in natural stone spread around Carn Ffoi.	DRS; Hut	1	C
8	35610	SN02613650	Mynydd Melyn	A drystone, single cell dwelling, flanked on both E. and W. sides by small enclosures, either of which could be extensions to the structure. Walls of large stone blocks, up to 1m high x 1m wide. Stands in parcel of ground carved out of common.	DRS	2	C

9	35611	SN01703805	Carn Gwiber	On the eastern side of the Carn Gwiber outcrop, is an unusual arrangement of a small hut measuring 4.5 x 3.0m, set within an enclosure appended to and sheltered by the outcrop 13 x 11m which also encloses a small man-made pond, dammed on its N. side by a revetted natural bank. Below this to the N. is another enclosure 7.5 x 6m; all these features being associated by a larger field which is defined by a ruined drystone wall enclosing the land on the sheltered N. side of Carn Gwiber.	DRS	2	C
10	35612	SN07443334	Waun Maes	Ruinous sheepfold c.40m in diameter with possibly associated structures (PRNs 35613- 35614). One or two small hut like compartments are built onto the perimeter of the fold, most notably at its NE portion.	Sheepfold; DRS?	2	B
11	35613	SN07523333	Waun Maes	Small earth and stone, rectilinear structure, 6.25 x 3.5m. Near stream bank. 50m to east of Waun Maes sheepfold.	DRS?	2?	B
12	35614	SN07463336	Waun Maes	A rectilinear structure, similar in size to above, but badly eroded with few recognisable features. 30m north of sheepfold.	DRS?	2?	B
13	35615	SN09583020	Carn Afr	Probably an 18 <sup>th</sup> /19 <sup>th</sup> century dwelling and associated rectilinear field system carved out of commons. Building is a ruinous drystone structure, 5m x 17m, x 1m high, which includes two cells with a third, detached cell at E. end.	DRS; Cottage	2	B
14	35616	SN09323013	Carn Afr	Ruinous sheepfold situated below the rocky outcrops of Carn Afr - two cells - with some ancillary buildings and traces of a possibly associated field/enclosure system.	Sheepfold; DRS?	2	B
15	35617	SN09343013	Carn Afr	10m to E. of Carn Afr sheepfold is a rectilinear feature, 5 x 4m. Its low, eroded earth and stone wall bases give it a sub-circular appearance, but the coursing of some stones belies its original rectangular shape. Entrance in E. side.	Hut?	2	B
16	35618	SN09293013	Carn Afr	10m W. of Carn Afr sheepfold is a similar feature, 4 x 4m, with a W. facing entrance.	Hut?	2	B?
17	35619	SN09273013	Carn Afr	30m W. of Carn Afr sheepfold is a slightly more substantial structure, 7 x 4m, possibly divided into 2 cells, again surviving as low earth and stone wall bases.	DRS	2	B?

## 5. MYDDFAI STUDY AREA.

This study area is co-terminous with the historic commons of the parish of Myddfai. Mynydd Myddfai or Mynydd Bach is an open mountain area of over 2000 acres in extent and reaches 440m at its highest point. It lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park and is essentially an extension of the Black Mountain of Carmarthenshire.

### 5.1 The archaeological and historical evidence for deserted rural settlement in Myddfai.

The regional SMR for much of the Black Mountain area has recently been enhanced by the Meithrin Mynydd survey carried out by ACA and CPAT staff for the Brecon Beacons National Park. Therefore a significant number of DRS sites were previously recorded on the Myddfai commons. However, it proved useful to reassess a number of these sites in the light of the experience gained through analysing DRS sites across the region. Fortunately, some brief periods of ideal light conditions during field work enabled the identification of a number of new sites of rather ephemeral nature which had not previously been identified.

There are few reliable historic sources dealing with the commons in Myddfai parish, although some relevant information is published in a modern parish history volume by D.B. James.<sup>1</sup> From this evidence it is apparent that the extent of the Myddfai commons has remained little altered since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with little or no enclosure.<sup>2</sup> Right of common was enjoyed by all landholders within the parish, although few apart from some of those farming adjacent to the common have used this right in recent times.<sup>3</sup> As manorial common, Mynydd Myddfai was traditionally managed through the manorial system of court leet and court baron. Although sheep are the commonest stock animal now allowed to graze the mountain pastures, record and tradition show that swine were once allowed pannage in some areas of the parish and that large numbers of cattle once grazed the hills - and consequently the quality of pasture available was much higher than that of modern times.<sup>4</sup>

There is no recorded tradition of settlement on the common and no cartographic evidence for the presence of dwellings there either. This may imply that any substantial structures located on the common were abandoned before the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, although the possibility that seasonal or temporary shepherding and cowherding stations were used on the common remains as is true here as in other areas.

James notes an interesting variation of the 'hafod' tradition<sup>5</sup>, which is explained in a Myddfai context as a system in which 'cows were hired out at so much per head in lieu of rent for land.' *Hafod* occurs as a placename in the parish. There is an 18<sup>th</sup> century reference to '*Tyr Hafod y Cadnoe*'<sup>6</sup> The location of the substantial farm holding of Hafod Fawr (SN81463124) at the edge of the common and the proximity

<sup>1</sup> James, DB, 1988, *Myddfai: Its Land and People*. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* p.211

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* p.11

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* p.105

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p.105

<sup>6</sup> NLW, DTL Jones IV, p.522 No.2898-9.

of Hafod Fawr to Cwm y Cadno (which lies 100m east of the farm) suggests that this may in fact be the *Hafod y Cadnoe* of earlier records.

James also provides some interesting information regarding the wider settlement history of the parish. For instance, he notes a level of poverty present in the parish in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century which echoes reports from other areas; there were 82 paupers registered in Myddfai in 1836 and contemporary reports talk of 'grim poverty' as being the lot of some of the population.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, James notes that depopulation (the result of the development of the South Wales coal and iron industries) caused the abandonment of 120 dwellings between 1840-1920, with evidence for many more desertions between 1800-1840.<sup>8</sup> Although late in date, this rate of abandonment in just one parish shows the enormity of the deserted settlement question right across the parish (and other parishes) in a post-mediaeval context.

It is probably true to say that Mynydd Myddfai offers a wider range of site types than any of the other study areas considered during 1997-8. Examples of classic hut platforms, multi-compartmented long houses and simple long huts all appear, generally in association with some form of ancillary structure. There also occurs a rare example of an excavated deserted settlement site (PRN7464). PRN35620 would also appear to conform with the pattern of rectilinear structures found in proximity to sheepfolds and sheep washes.

## 5.2 Characteristic site types.

### 5.2.1 Simple, dispersed sites.

Several DRS sites within the study area are found in apparent isolation, with no obvious related feature in their immediate vicinity (PRNs 14148, 14153, 14154, 14156, 14157, 14158, 14162 & 35623). However, this fact aside, there are differences of characteristics which require attention.

Four of these sites are simple, small structures (PRNs 14148, 14153, 14157 & 35623). The first of these is recorded as a possible prehistoric hut circle. It occupies a prominent knoll overlooking the deep and narrow Cwm Clydach. It was the impression of this survey that the structure may well have originally been rectilinear and has eroded to a sub-circular form. It certainly bore resemblance to other features in the valley which may be ascribed Mediaeval or Post-mediaeval dates by virtue of their proximity to 'long hut' type sites. PRN35623 is a small platform sheltered high up in Cwm Nantybeudy and is perhaps more typical of the site type which might be equated with the *caban* or shepherds shelter as described in part one of this report (3.2.3).

However, the other sites are markedly different and include one classic hut platform (PRN14154), two further platforms which bear evidence of structural remains (although PRN14158 is a tentative identification) and a multi-celled DRS (PRN14156). Their very nature suggests the possibility that some ancillary features might be present but are obscured or not in the immediate vicinity of the main building.

### 5.2.2 Complex dispersed sites.

The majority of the sites recorded fall into this category, but again display an interesting range of detailed characteristics. Perhaps the most significant group of features occurs at Blaenclydach - 'the head of the Clydach', in close proximity to the

<sup>7</sup> James, D.B., 1988, *Myddfai: Its Land and People*. p.61. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.* p. 60

source of this mountain stream. A postulated but poorly preserved dwelling (PRN32369) is surrounded by a number of smaller structures (PRNs 14142-7 & 35624) which are mostly small hut or pen-like structures which may be ancillary to the dwelling. None of these features are well preserved on the surface and it is feasible that PRN14145 is itself a DRS site with its own ancillaries - PRNs 14143-4. Each of these three features are recorded in the SMR as prehistoric hut-circles, but with the benefit of an excellent low winter sun, this field survey was able to identify PRN14145 as a rectilinear structure on a slight platform. Under the same conditions the platform PRN35624 was also visible nearby. The relationship of this group of features is of course difficult to determine on the basis of surface evidence alone, but the pattern of dwelling + ancillary features (be they sub-circular or rectilinear) is of course a frequently recurring one throughout the region.

Elsewhere, attention should be drawn to PRN7464, notable as being one of very few excavated DRS sites in the region, although regrettably it does not appear that a site plan or detailed description of the excavation is available. A note kept in the SMR relates some details of the findings of a partial excavation of the site in 1976; *"Slight earthworks on sloping ground reported and investigated by the Rev. H. Roberts, Myddfai. The Rev. Roberts is conducting an excavation on this site and has traced 3 sides of a stone built enclosure with internal paving, presumably representing a building. The field is apparently known locally as "Cwrt".*<sup>9</sup>

A substantial 'longhouse' type DRS is found in the shelter of the narrow Cwm Clydach at the confluence of the Clydach with a minor tributary running off the mountain. The break in the steep valley sides caused by the confluence provides room for the dwelling and a possible second feature further upslope (PRN14152). The situation of this DRS is typical of many others in upland valleys elsewhere in the region. It also suggests that a determined attempt to settle this part of the mountain fringe occurred at some time; drystone boundaries and a large drystone sheepfold a short distance down the valley are further indicators of activity in the area.

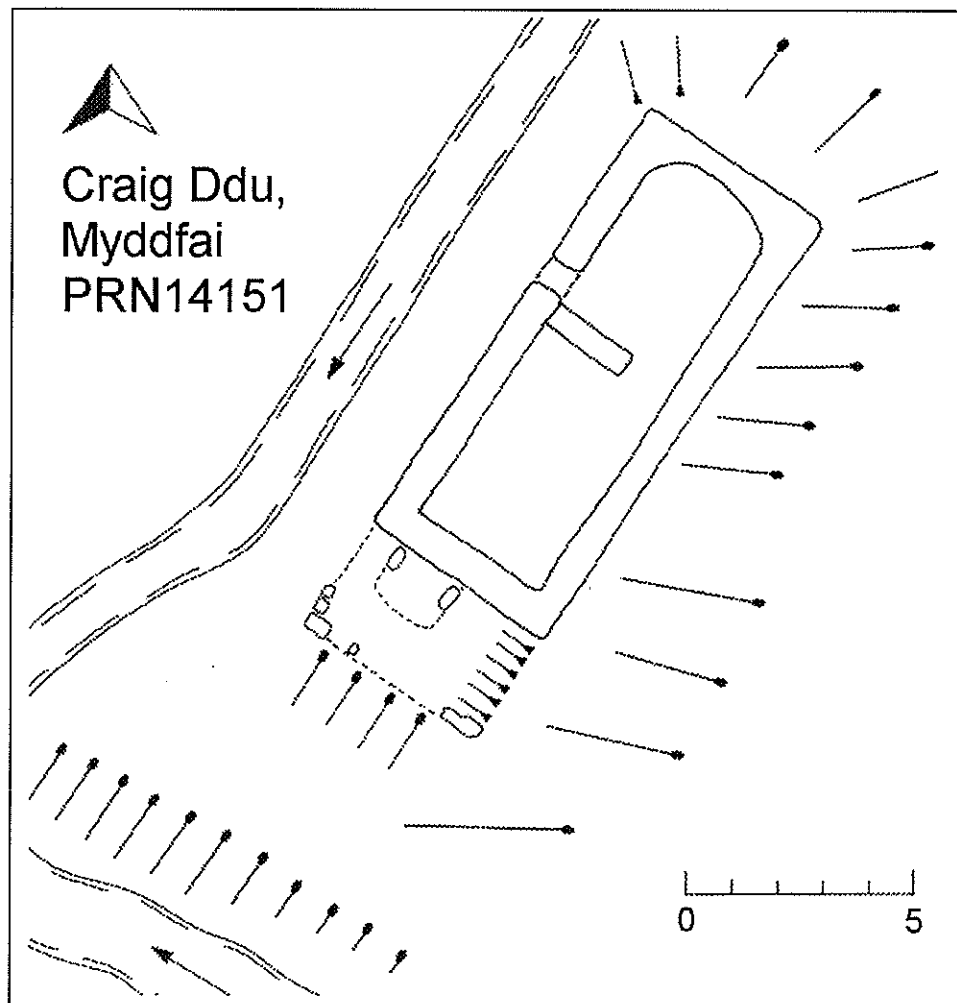
Two sites of interest recorded by the survey, and again only noted due to very favourable light conditions, are the bare platforms located on the exposed north-west facing slopes above Cwm Clyd (PRNs 35621-2). The 1996-7 ACA Pilot Study noted that there was an noticeable tendency for the classic platforms to be located on higher valley slope, above the valley floor and not necessarily convenient for either water or shelter. These examples, and the previously mentioned site PRN14154 confirm this pattern locally.

### 5.2.3 Nucleations.

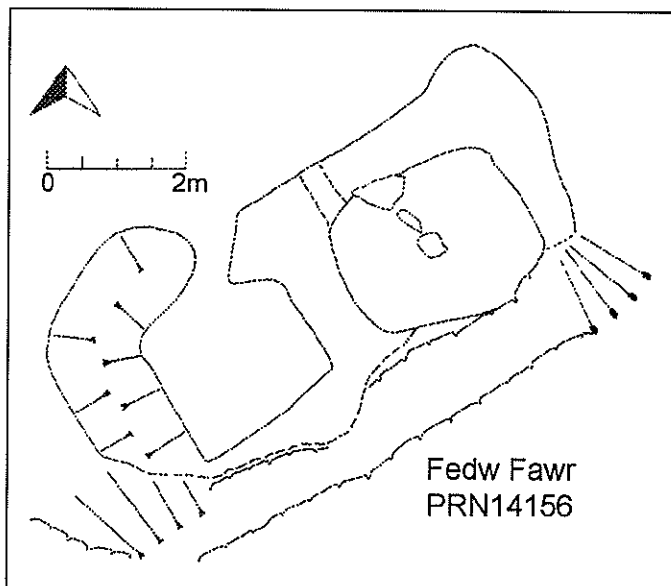
Although there are no obvious examples of nucleated settlement on the Myddfai commons, it must be said that the cluster of features at Blaenclydach could be open to interpretation as a possible nucleation. However it does appear most likely that there is only a single potential dwelling site here (PRN32369) and that the other features are ancillary or unrelated to this structure.

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted from a note by Don Benson kept in the regional SMR's entry for the site.



*Fig.5; Craig Ddu is a large DRS (the most substantial encountered on the Myddfai parish commons) which occupies a well sheltered terrace at the confluence of two streams. A platform has been partially carved out of the foot of slope to make room for the structure. The wall bases generally have a high stone content, apart from a possible cell appended to the southern end of the building, which barely survives as an earthwork shadow. It should be noted that such 'extra' cells are not uncommon, but whether they represent a simple extension to a building or the remains of an earlier structure is not known (another good example of such a feature is provided by Magwyr Lâs Egnant, Caron Uwch Clawdd (PRN9316)).*



*Fig.6; In the shelter of a small outcrop at the head of the minor tributary valley which runs westwards past Craig Ddu (see Fig.5), this unusual DRS is found. The site is well eroded and its wall bases therefore low and broad. Internally it is a small structure and it must be suspected that it may not have been used for human habitation (not beyond the level of a temporary shelter perhaps). Any relationship with the Craig Ddu dwelling is speculative.*



**TABLE 3: MYDDFAI STUDY AREA - SITES VISITED**

	PRN	NGR	Name	Description	Type	Characteristic	Value
1	7464	SN80152982	Cwm Clyd	Site 'partially' excavated in 1976; no obvious trace of a dwelling survives. Located near juncture of common and enclosed farmland in sheltered Cwm Clyd valley.	DRS	2	D
2	14142	SN80422682	Blaenclydach	Rectilinear structure 4 x 3.25m; probably ancillary to the larger dwelling 32369.	Hut?	2	C
3	14143	SN80432686	Blaenclydach	Described in SMR as a hut circle, but arguably ancillary to 14145.	Hut?	2	C
4	14144	SN80432686	Blaenclydach	Described in SMR as a hut circle, but arguably ancillary to 14145.	Hut?	2	C
5	14145	SN80432686	Blaenclydach	Described in SMR as a hut circle, but in good light is unmistakably a rectilinear structure 5 x 4m, slightly cut into gentle slope at N. end. S. end seems to be open. 14143-4 appear associated, possibly small pens.	DRS? Hut?	2	C
6	14147	SN80422682	Blaenclydach	Single cell structure, 6 x 4m maximum, slightly cut into slope at SW end, NE end open. Some drystone walling evident but very eroded site.	DRS?	2	C
7	14148	SN80152704	Cwm Clydach	Described in SMR as a hut circle. Located on prominent knoll overlooking Afon Clydach, 5m diameter. Possibly a rectilinear structure which has become sub-circular through erosion.	Hut?	1	C
8	14151	SN79862748	Craig Ddu	Fairly well preserved remains of a relatively substantial building, max. 13.5 x 4.6. Located on terrace above confluence of Clydach and minor tributary. Two cells defined by drystone wall bases, with a small possible third cell or earthwork extension at SW end. On platform cut into base of slope. Detail obscured by bracken.	DRS	2	B
9	14152	SN79872751	Craig Ddu	Recorded in SMR as a platform but thought to be a natural depression.	Natural	2?	D
10	14153	SN79892760	Craig Ddu	Situated in a sheltered tributary valley of the Clydach, a possible platform, 6 x 3m, indicated mainly by some rough coursing in a revetment at its positive (W.) end.	DRS? Platform	1?	C

11	14154	SN80232722	Fedw Fawr	Classic bare platform. 12 x 8m, cut into steep slope to a depth of 2m at NNE (positive) end.	DRS	1	B?
12	14156	SN80072772	Fedw Fawr	DRS with 2 or possibly 3 cells, at the head of a narrow tributary valley of the Clydach, well sheltered by an ORS outcrop. 10 x 3m overall, very eroded.	DRS	2	C
13	14157	SN79842805	Pentregronw	Ruined drystone building, measures 8.5 x 6m. Located on an exposed N. facing slope	DRS	1?	C
14	14158	SN79662814	Pentregronw	Possible rectilinear platform, 13.2 x 7.7m, identification tentative. On steep SW facing slope.	DRS Platform?	1?	C
15	14162	SN79732847	Pentregronw	Rectilinear platform, 12 x 6.5m with evidence of wall bases surviving on S. & W. sides.	DRS? Platform	1?	C
16	32311	SN79872758	Craig Ddu	Recorded as a platform in SMR, but in a very wet location and probably a natural feature.	Natural	2?	D
17	32369	SN80482683	Blaenclydach	A poorly preserved DRS, maximum size 8 x 5.5m. Stones protruding through surface suggest some possible internal division, but plan not clear. This may be a dwelling associated with a cluster of smaller structures (PRNs14142-7) and therefore potentially part of a significant group.	DRS	2	B
18	35620	SN80522803	Afon Sgio	Poorly preserved rectilinear structure, represented only by a number of edge set slabs protruding through surface giving some indication of size and form. Probably c.5.6 x 4m. Alongside an irregular, 2 cell sheepfold or sheep washing pen beside Afon Sgio.	DRS?	2	B
19	35621	SN80452992	Cwm Clyd	Classic hut platform on exposed, moderately sloping NW facing slope. Measures 8.5 x 7m overall. No trace of structure on platform.	DRS	2	C
20	35622	SN80462993	Cwm Clyd	10m E. of above, a smaller platform, 7 x 5m, with its axis parallel to contour.	DRS? Platform	2	C
21	35623	SN80603005	Cwm Nantybudy	Small platform, 6 x 3m in narrow, sheltered valley. No trace of structure.	DRS?	2	C
22	35624	SN80452683	Cwm Clydach	Small platform, 6 x 3m, cut into gentle slope. In close proximity to PRNs 14143-6 and possibly associated - noted under favourable light conditions.	Platform	2	C

## 6. CARON UWCH CLAWDD STUDY AREA.

Caron Uwch Clawdd is a large parish in south-east Ceredigion, which has an extensive upland component. The parish uplands are dissected by frequent river valleys, the most significant of which have long been used as communications routes between Ceredigion and the south and east, most notably through the Abergwesyn Pass into Powys and the Tywi valley into Carmarthenshire, both important droving routes since mediaeval times.

Severe weather conditions during January 1998 forced some alterations to the project programme. This led to a number of sites in the neighbouring parish of Caron Is Clawdd being incorporated into the fieldwork programme as poor weather affecting high ground prevented access to the adjacent part of Caron Uwch Clawdd.

Unfortunately, the area in question was the valley of Nant y Moelau, named on the parish tithe map as *Nant Cefn Magwyr y Tai Hirion* - The Valley of the Ridge of the Ruined Long Houses. Thick fog prevented access into this upland valley, but a significant concentration of DRS sites at the mouth of the valley, focused around the confluence of the stream with the Afon Camddwr, but just over the parish boundary were investigated. It is, however, possible that these sites actually gave rise to the evocative name of the Valley of the Ruined Long Houses.

### 6.1 The archaeological and historical evidence for deserted rural settlement in Caron Uwch Clawdd.

In historical terms, the most notable factor is that Caron Uwch Clawdd is roughly co-terminous with the home grange (Pennardd Grange) of the mediaeval Cistercian abbey of Strata Florida, the ruins of which stand within the parish boundaries. The documented history of the abbey shows that cattle and sheep rearing was of great economic importance to its success and there is no doubt that the hill pastures of Caron Uwch Clawdd figured prominently in the management of the abbey's herds and flocks.

A significant number of deserted settlement sites are recorded within the parish on the regional SMR. They range from fairly recent stone built cottages, through farmsteads to a variety of 'long hut' type sites. The large number of sites visited by the survey within the parish fairly represents this variation of site type.

John Leland provides an interesting description of the area in the late 1530's;

*"At the Montaine ground bytwixt Alen (Elan) and Strateflure longeth to Strateflure, and is almoste for wilde Pasture and Breeding Grounde, in so much that everi Man there about puttith in Bestes as many as they wylle without paiying Mony."*<sup>1</sup>

This passage neatly describes both the rights enjoyed by the abbey and also those of the rest of the population. It can be imagined that the commons of Caron in Mediaeval and early Post-mediaeval times were relatively busy and given the predilection of the day towards putting cowherds and shepherds on the commons with the animals, it is to be expected that much evidence of their seasonal or temporary

<sup>1</sup> Williams, SW, 1889, *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*: Appendix, p. iii. London.

dwelling should survive. But associating any specific deserted rural settlement site with such activity is not easily done.

Some placenames within the parish are suggestive of a transhumant past; Hafdre (SN802535) (Summer Farm) may well relate to a *hafod* site or mediaeval shepherding station. The location of Hafdre in the Tywi valley may suggest that mediaeval *hafotai*, as they existed on the lands of Strata Florida, were focused on farmsteads on the mountain fringe rather than on 'long huts' out on the open moorland. It may be speculated that some at least of the DRS sites found on the hills are temporarily or seasonally occupied settlements used by shepherds or cowherds.

However, two *hafod* placename sites in the parish provide archaeological evidence which may derive from their use as mediaeval *hafodydd* within the framework of the monastic economy. These are Hafod Frith (PRN9317) in Cwm Egnant and Hafod Eidos (PRN35646) in Cwm Mwyro. Both valleys lie immediately east of the abbey site and both sites occupy natural terraces on the valley sides and include evidence for settlement as well as the remains of large earthwork folds of a kind rarely encountered in the region but which may well represent complexes associated with the monastic grange. Both of these 'hafod' sites have similarities with a scheduled deserted settlement site at Troedyrhiw (PRN8611; Cd154 - not visited) which is located above the northern side of the mouth of the Egnant Valley where a large rectangular structure (32 x 9.5m) is interpreted as a grange building and is found in conjunction with two large earthwork enclosures.

Within the past 200 years, cartographic and documentary sources have increased, but reveal a fairly consistent picture of farms and cottages concentrated mostly in the more sheltered and accessible valleys of the parish, with the extensive mountain ground divided into sheepwalks, often managed by lowland holdings detached from the hills. To some extent this practice continues; an example noted during fieldwork was that of Old Abbey Farm, Strata Florida, which has a detached sheepwalk on Esgair Saeson, on the Ceredigion/Powys border, some 9km from the farmhouse - an arrangement which has existed for many generations. Although not visited, it is known that *Magwyr Esgair Saeson* represent the ruins of a former dwelling there, possibly abandoned by the time of the parish tithe map.

The old shepherding cottages or *lluestau* associated with these sheepwalks form a significant part of the DRS sites of the more remote hills and valleys; and like examples in other areas, most of these sites include dwellings and a range of ancillary features which indicate that they had become upland settlements occupied for extended periods, quite possibly permanently in many cases. Fagwyr Las, Nantymaen (PRN9018) is perhaps the best example of this type of site in the parish. The use of the term 'Magwyr' (literally 'ruins') to denote these settlements is common in the parish and it is of course interesting to note that the term is applied to several sites on early cartographic sources such as the parish tithe map - suggesting their probable abandonment well before the 1840s.

Throughout most of this period therefore a presence on the mountain pastures can be discerned. From the 18th century there was also some expansion of settlement onto the parish commons and hills, particularly along the more accessible north-western side of the parish, as a result of population increase and economic necessity. This pattern remains to some extent, but depopulation and afforestation during the 20th century have brought significant changes to the settlement pattern and agricultural landscape of the area; many of the cottages built to house agricultural labourers and metal miners during the 19th century have long fallen into disuse.

An important example of this process is provided by a group of a dozen or so loosely grouped miners cottages built on the banks of the Afon Fflur at SN734634 and on the edge of the open mountain pasture of Bryngwyn Bach. Local informants testify to these dwellings having been still in occupation around the turn of the century, being deserted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (these sites were not included in the survey and not visited).

## 6.2 Characteristic site types.

### 6.2.1 Simple, dispersed sites.

Sites with no apparent ancillary or related feature are again quite rare. Of the few recorded the most interesting is a simple platform cut into the lower valley slope on the banks of the Camddwr north of Llyn Brienne (PRN35626). It always remains a suspicion that many of these solitary sites are connected in some way to other sites in their general vicinity, and the small platform on Banc Hafod Eidos may well be the site of a simple fowl pen associated with the nearby Hafod Eidos farm or cottage (PRN35645).

### 6.2.2 Complex dispersed sites.

The overwhelming majority of sites encountered in the parish fall into this category. The *llost* type site figures commonly in the record for Caron Uwch Clawdd, with examples recorded in all parts of the parish. The easiest to comprehend are certainly those such as the well preserved complex of features at Fagwyr Lâs, Nantymaen (PRN9018), by virtue of the fact that they are found in remote locations with no neighbouring sites to complicate their interpretation (see Fig.8).

A cluster of presumably related features on the lower slopes of Banc Blaenegnant were identified for the first time by the survey (PRNs 35635-7) and considered to be of significance. This group includes two bare platforms, a possible pillow mound and some minor, ruined drystone structures. Whether or not it is comparable in function with the *llostau* of the region is unknown, but despite sharing some *llost* characteristics in terms of location in a sheltered valley, features such as a bare cross-contour platform and a possible pillow mound suggest a different purpose.

One of the two 'hafod' place name sites mentioned above, Hafod Eidos, includes a range of ruinous smallholding or farmstead buildings (PRN35645), close to which is a large rectilinear earthwork (PRN35646) measuring 56 x 9m, which appears to have been superseded by a large drystone fold built over its northern end. At its southern end earthwork fold is overlain by an old, decayed drystone boundary wall, giving some idea of its potential antiquity. At the southern end, it is also evident that a platform has been cut into the foot of the hillslope and that the fold sits on this platform. There is some suggestion that a drainage cut was made here to allow ground water to run clear of the fold (see Plate 1).

In relation to more recent settlement, a number of sites which were evidently in occupation until at least the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and which now survive as ruined stone cottages or stone & earthwork sites are worth drawing attention to here. Hen Dinas (PRN9315) (recorded as a 'Cottage?; Hafod?' in the SMR) is a particularly well preserved complex with a dwelling and outbuilding surviving as stone & earth wall bases on building platforms, but importantly recorded as being occupied on early 19<sup>th</sup> century OS surveys.

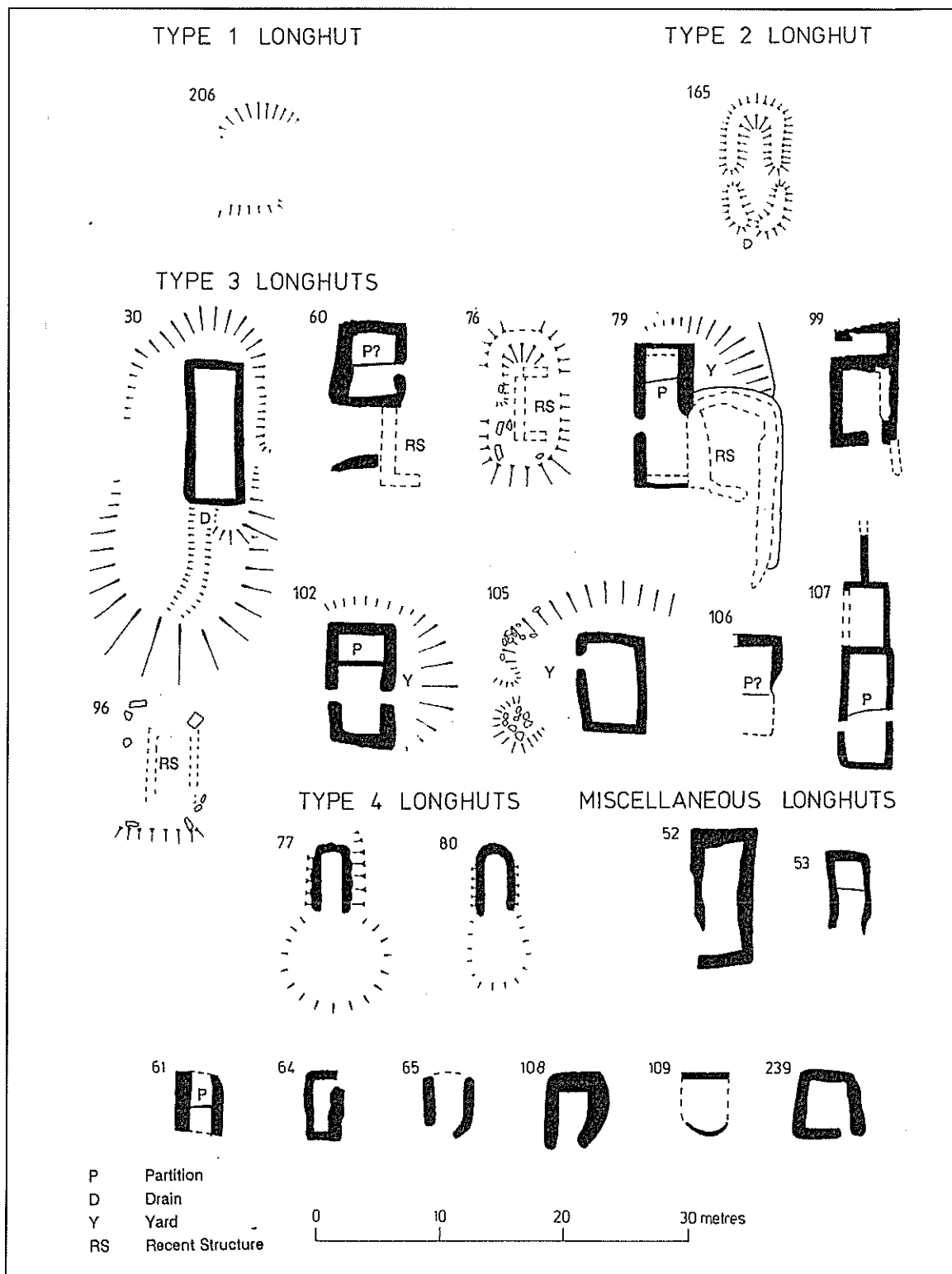
The ruined remains of settlements such as Aber Hirnant (PRN35625), Hafod Eidos (PRN35645), Gelli Clwydau (PRN35644), and Magwyr Lâs Egnant (PRN9316) are reminders of the desertion of what must have been fairly large holdings within the past 150 years due to changing agricultural practices and depopulation.

### 6.2.3 Nucleations.

Of the two 'hafod' placename sites named above, Hafod Frith is the more complicated and possesses such a remarkable range of features that it ranks as one of the most potentially important DRS sites in the region and may include a loose nucleation of DRS sites. It is possibly named in a late 16th century source associated with Hendrefelen, Ysbyty Ystwyth as '*hafod vrythe*'<sup>2</sup> (that site is described in this source as being in 'Llanwnws' parish, but it remains possible that this is the same site as it presently lies close to the Caron/Gwnnws boundary and it is evident that many changes have occurred in the parishes of this part of Ceredigion during post-mediaeval times). Here there are two large enclosures (PRNs 35632-3), the former being the largest, measuring 56 x 19m, in association with a classic house platform on which stands a ruined drystone structure (PRN9317). These features share the hillside terrace with several smaller 'long hut' type structures of unknown purpose and relationship (PRNs 35628-31).

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<sup>2</sup> NLW, Cwrt Mawr index, p.17, No. 902.



**Fig.7; a selection of long huts recorded by Williams & Muckle in 1989<sup>3</sup> in Caron Is Clawdd parish (demonstrating their four-fold typology of 'long-huts'). Several are included in the previous table i.e.;**

**76 - PRN14776**

**79 - PRN23186**

**102 - PRN9370**

**105 - PRN14805**

**106 - PRN23187**

**107 - PRN14768**

<sup>3</sup> Williams, G & Muckle, I, 1992, *An Archaeological Survey of the Groes Fawr Valley, Caron-is-clawdd, Cardiganshire*, Fig.17. DAT, Carmarthen



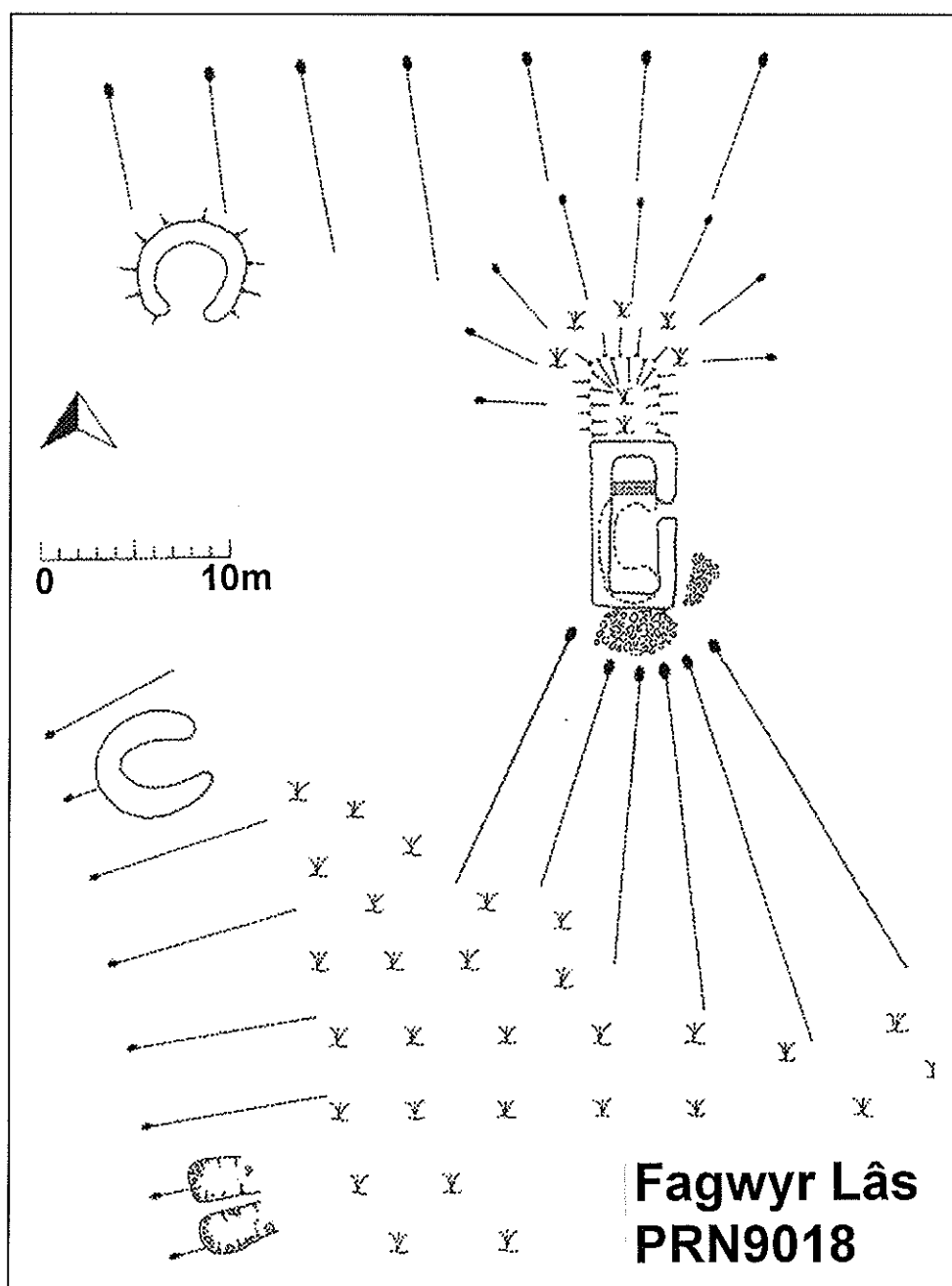


Fig.8; Fagwyr Lâs is one of the most interesting complexes recorded during the survey. Evidence appears to be present for more than one phase of building at the site of the dwelling. The proximity of two circular structures which may have been animal/fowl pens is highly reminiscent of the types of ancillary structures encountered by the pilot study on the Black Mountain and also apparently occurring in association with sites in several of this year's study areas. The smaller cuts in the slope to the south-west may also have been pens of some kind or even root vegetable clamps. A third small cut of similar kind was also noted some 40m to the south east (not shown on plan).

(Overleaf). Plate 1, Hafod Eidos earthwork (PRN35646) and fold. Although the none of the features shown in the photograph are believed to be DRSs themselves, the 'hafod' placename of the site, which is shared with a nearby deserted upland farmstead, brings it into the sphere of interest of this study - this is especially true when it is considered in association with the neighbouring sites of Troedyrhiw (Cd154; PRN8611 - a scheduled site not included in the survey) and Hafod Frith (PRN9317). It is possible that all three are related to the monastic economy of nearby Strata Florida Abbey and therefore potentially mediaeval in origin.



**TABLE 4: CARON UWCH CLAWDD STUDY AREA - SITES VISITED**

	PRN	NGR	Name	Description	Type	Characteristic	Value
1	5584	SN77906490	Afon Mwyro	A settlement site which includes the damaged remains of two buildings. The largest, probably the dwelling, is 25 x 7.25m in size and has three compartments., the central cell being the narrowest at only 4m wide. Walls stand to c.1m high. It appears to stand on made up ground at the edge of a natural terrace beside the Afon Mwyro. The second building measures 8.5m x 6m but is more ruinous and its character is difficult to assess, other than that it was built of coursed drystone. Fragments of stone walling around the terrace seem to indicate that a complex of features once existed here, but modern agricultural activity has lead to the removal of some details - the area is now used as the site for sheep feeders.	Settlement; Building	2	C
2	8556	SN78256479	Cwm Mwyro	Low grassy banks, about 0.5m high represent the remains of a three compartment structure of unknown nature, 15m x 5m overall. It appears that the eastern gable wall survives in part, having been incorporated into a later drystone field boundary. It is possible that the shadow of a small enclosure appended to the structure survives on its S. side. Two ruinous, but upstanding structures to the N. are of unknown relationship - the details of both have been obscured by dumped rubble.	Settlement	2	C
3	9018	SN75305978	Fagwyr Lâs	Interesting complex of features including a ruined dwelling, approx. 15 x 5m overall, which displays evidence of two if not three phases of use; an earthwork structure overbuilt by a drystone structure, which has in turn been modified to create a rough sheep shelter. The dwelling stands on a man-made, cross-contour platform, which has a drainage channel cut at its negative end. At least 4 associated earthwork features in close proximity appear to be animal or fowl pens; two of these are circular structures, two are small rectilinear cuts into the slope (see Fig.8).	Dwelling; Hafod; Long Hut	2	B

4	9285	SN76415945	Nant y Maen	Single structure on a platform or natural terrace at stream-side. N. wall beginning to be eroded by stream. Single compartment, measures 9 x 4.75m overall, walls 0.8m wide and up to 1m high. Entrance in S. side.	Hafod?	2	C
5	9314	SN77706548	Craigen Ddu	Not identified	Cottage; Hafod?	-	D
6	9315	SN77386505	Hen Dinas	Two ruinous buildings are found here. The most complex has three compartments and measures 11.75 x 6m; the central compartment is the largest. This structure is stepped up the hillslope and not on a platform. It is connected by a stone walled pathway to the second structure, 20m to W, which measures 12 x 6.25m with an entrance in its E. wall, but with no obvious internal division. This structure stands on a levelled platform cut 2m into the slope at its N. end. Occupied in late 19 <sup>th</sup> century. An interesting complex of drystone walls and pathways surrounds these structures.	Cottage; Hafod?	2	C
7	9316	SN78096599	Magwyr Lâs Egnant	Interesting site with possibly 3 phases of activity represented. Two buildings present, both well built of large drystone slabs. The presumed dwelling in on a sloping platform cut into slope, along a N-S axis, 16m x 6m overall divided into two unequal compartments. A third compartment, surviving as earthwork banks, is appended to the S. end of the building. The second building runs W. at right angles from the S. end of the first. It appears to have originally measured 6.6 x 5.5m, but a second compartment has been added to its W. end, adding a further 5m to its length. Inside the first of these compartments is an unusual curved stone feature which may be an animal pen or even associated with a smithy.	Cottage; DRS	2	C
8	9317	SN78256642	Hafod Frith; Hafod Ffrith Hafodyraeth	A drystone, 2-compartmented structure built on a classic cross-contour platform. Building measures 11.6 x 6m with walls 0.75m wide x 1.75m high. The platform measures 14 x 9m. Considered important by virtue of its Hafod placename and its proximity to the larger enclosures and other structures nearby, indeed the platform was almost certainly present at the time of	Hafod? DRS	2	A

				the construction of enclosure PRN35632 as the enclosure is essentially rectangular apart from the obvious truncation of its W. corner which curves in order to avoid the platform, which is only a few metres away.			
9	9318	SN78986621	Nant Egnant	Rectilinear drystone structure, 20m x 6m overall, walls 0.8m thick x over 1m high on average. E. corner now in stream and there is a serious threat of future erosion. Probably used as a sheepfold, but some possible ancillary structures suggests occupation at some stage. One small ancillary (PRN35649) lies 20m downstream and field and enclosure boundaries focused on the building tend to show this to be more than a sheep fold. A once dammed sheep wash survives 40m downstream.	DRS; Sheepfold	2	C
10	19968	SN80355360	Hafdre	Name suggestive of connection with seasonal pasturing of cattle in the area. Complex of two buildings now ruinous and difficult to interpret as the easternmost has been modified and re-roofed as a storage shed. The westernmost of the two buildings here is very ruinous - there is no indication of which was the dwelling.	Farmstead? Cottage? DRS	2	C
11	29834	SN76445907	Nant y Maen	Structure on broad river terrace; 3 compartments, overall size 10.5 x 6m. Full detail unclear as both gable end are only defined by a few edge set slabs showing through the turf. Central portion has been rebuilt, probably by robbing the stone from an earlier structure. Smaller structures, probably ancillary, are found on terraces on opposite side of stream	DRS	2	C
12	35625	SN80635808	Aber Hirnant	Large, ruined dwelling. On terrace alongside Afon Tywi. Multi-celled, with 3 possibly 4 compartments. Overall measurements 19 x 7m, defined by broad earth and stone banks, 2m wide x 1m high. At edge of forest, not over-planted itself but an associated field system is obscured by the plantation. Harvesting may prove a threat to the dwelling and field boundaries.	DRS	2	C
13	35626	SN78995302	Camddwr Sluice	A platform cut cross-contour into the foot of slope at the edge of a river terrace alongside the Tywi. Measures 8 x 5m. A typical 'long-hut'.	DRS?	1	C
14	32627	SN79305235	Cnwch Rhiwhalog	House site not evident - obscured or destroyed by forestry activity. Some garden like enclosures and a trackway survive,	Cottage?	2	D

				but the easternmost part of the area has been overbuilt by a forestry road. Some plantation has also occurred but the exact location of the dwelling is unclear.			
15	35628	SN78226635	Hafod Frith II	Unusual 'hut' site, composed of a cut measuring 7.25 x 3m, sunk into slope to a depth of 1m, within which is a sub-rectangular compartment measuring 5x 3m, exited via a 'passage' revetted with large drystone slabs. Possibly associated with the Hafod Frith complex.	DRS? Pen?	3?	A
16	35629	SN78256642	Hafod Frith III	Small pennanular drystone structure measuring 6 x 3m. On natural terrace, some edge set slabs protrude through turf.	Animal/Fowl Pen?	3?	A
17	35630	SN78256640	Hafod Frith IV	Rectangular drystone pen, 7 x 4m. Large slabs used in construction.	DRS?	3?	A
18	35631	SN78256638	Hafod Frith V	Bare platform 5 x 3.25m.	DRS?	3?	A
19	35632	SN78276643	Hafod Frith Enclosure I	Large enclosure defined by broad earth bank up to 1m high x 2m wide. Overall measurement 56m x 19m. Occupies much of the broad terrace on which the Hafod Frith DRS stands.	Fold	3	A
20	35633	SN78256638	Hafod Frith Enclosure II	Similar to PRN35632, measuring 26m x 18m. On sloping ground.	Fold	3	A
21	35634	SN77466581	Cwm Egnant	Bare platform measuring c.7 x 4m. No associated features noted	DRS?	1	C
22	35635	SN78466629	Banc Blaenegnant	Classic hut platform, no evidence of structure on platform, which measures 12m x 7m and overlooks the Nant Egnant to N. Apart from PRNs 35636-7, a feature which may be interpreted as a possible pillow mound measuring 14 x 7m, but with a 3 x 3m ruined stone structure at its S. end lies a few metres downslope from this platform.	DRS	2	B
23	35636	SN78466628	Banc Blaenegnant	10m downslope of PRN35635, this is an unusual drystone structure on a negative platform, measuring 8m x 8m. The spoil resulting from the creation of the platform has been pushed to either side, rather than being used to create a positive platform.	DRS? Animal pen?	2	B
24	35637	SN78476629	Banc Blaenegnant	10m east of PRN 35635, this is another cross-contour platform, 10m x 6m with hints of a possible buried stone structure.	DRS?	2	B
25	35638	SN78476605	Pwll Cou I	Rectilinear drystone structure which has certainly been used as a sheepfold but which has ancillary features indicative of earlier	DRS	2	B

				settlement. The present structure has one compartment measuring 9.6 x 7m, standing on a cross-contour platform. An earth banked enclosure appended to the W. side measures 12 x 11m. Standing on the S. (negative) end of the platform is a small stone structure, U-shaped, with its N. end open, measuring 4 x 3m. A reed filled depression of similar size and shape is also seen on the platform immediately alongside the W. side of this feature,. The platform is large enough to hold these features and also extends several metres to the N. at its positive end, perhaps an earlier feature which has been reused.			
26	35639	SN78496606	Pwll Cou II	30m to the NE of PRN35638 is a 1m deep cut in the slope, 9m long x 3m wide. Its purpose is unclear but it may well be ancillary to the settlement.	Clamp? Animal Pen?	2?	
27	35640	SN78456596	Pwll Cou III	Rectilinear structure measuring 7 x 5m, on slight platform with drainage hood. May be ancillary to PRN35638.	DRS	2?	B
28	35641	SN78466595	Pwll Cou IV	Rectilinear structure close to PRN35640. Measures 5.25 x 3.5m. May be ancillary to PRN35638.	Animal pen?	2?	B
29	35642	SN77896594	Cwm Egnant	A rough drystone structure, built against a natural outcrop at its S. end, with its N. end left open. Large slabs used to build walls (now very ruinous) . The area is very rough and stony but enclosed by much decayed stone enclosure boundaries with which this structure may be associated.	DRS/ Shelter?	2?	C
30	35643	SN77396522	Creigen Ddu	Ruined cottage, still standing to wall-plate height.	Cottage	2	C
31	35644	SN77126472	Gelli Clwydau	Ruined stone cottage and outbuildings. Occupied into late 19 <sup>th</sup> century. Built on a large cross-contour levelled platform.	Cottage; DRS	2	C
32	35645	SN77486466	Hafod Eidos	Ruined stone cottage in state of partial collapse, with a range of drystone outbuildings on the point of imminent collapse. Details such as pig-sty compartments survive at present. Included as hafod placename site by virtue of proximity of large earthwork enclosure nearby. Occupied in late 19 <sup>th</sup> century.	Farmstead; DRS	2	B
33	35646	SN77346462	Hafod Eidos Earthwork	Large rectangular earthwork, 56m long x 9m wide overall, thick earth and stone banks stand up to 1m high. Overbuilt by drystone fold at northern end, but southern end is cut into foot of moderate slope, with an apparent drainage channel cut around	Enclosure; Fold?	2	A

				the end of the enclosure to facilitate free drainage. The S. end is also overlain by an old dry-stone boundary wall, long disused and ruinous.			
34	35647	SN77346462	Hafod Eidos Fold	This drystone fold is built inside the larger Hafod Eidos Earthwork. It measures 22m long x 7m wide and still stands over 1m high. The fold has two cells, the smallest only taking up the northern 3m of the length of the structure.	Fold	2	B
35	35648	SN77546451	Banc Hafod Eidos	Small cross-contour platform, 6 x 3m , at stream-side.	Fowl pen?	1	C
36	35649	SN78786622	Nant Egnant	Platform which may possibly be ancillary to the DRS PRN9318 and a nearby sheep washing pool in Egnant stream.	Platform	2?	C
37	35650	SN79356414	Blaen Mwyro	A bare platform, now reed covered, measuring 10 x 4m cut into foot of slope, sheltered from prevailing winds by hillock. 10m to S. is a large 2 celled drystone sheepfold. Association unknown.	DRS	2?	C
38	35651	SN79146312	Glan Llyn Gorast	Sub-rectangular structure, 5 x 3m cut into gentle slope facing lake to E. Some stone revetment of sides. Probably an ancillary of PRN35652.	Animal pen?	2	C
39	35652	SN79096319	Cors Mwyro	Ruinous dwelling. Rectilinear, drystone structure 12 x 6.5m, on a slight platform on a natural terrace at the edge of a large and hazardous bog. Evidence of possible internal partition. PRNs 35651 & 35653 are probably ancillaries to this structure.	DRS	2	C
40	35653	SN79066316	Cors Mwyro	Structure located 20m SW of PRN35652 and similar to PRN35651 in its characteristics.	Animal pen?	2	C
41	35654	SN78936352	Cors Mwyro II	Rectilinear drystone structure, measuring 10 x 6m. Stands on a slight platform overlooking the Mwyro valley. Now ruinous but some walls show good facing and quoin stones indicating a well built structure. The S. wall has been repaired at some stage and refaced on the inside. Entrance in N. wall. Walls up to 0.75m high x 1m wide.	DRS?	1	C
42	35655	SN78976374	Cors Mwyro	A rectilinear earthwork, measuring 10 x 7m overall. Comprises a cross-contour platform, which measures only 6 x 3m, cut into slope, with vestiges of a drainage hood around its upper, positive half. No evidence of stonework or any structure on the platform.	DRS?	1	C



43	35656	SN78806404	Blaen Mwyro	Platform cut into gentle slope, measuring 8m x 5.7m, with spoil cast downslope. On a natural terrace at median altitude on southern side of Mwyro valley. May be ancillary to PRN35658.	Platform	2	C
44	35657	SN78776405	Mwyro Uchaf II	Unusual cut into slope which includes a drystone revetment/structure and may be ancillary to PRN35658. The cut measures 10 x 3m and is up to 1.5m deep, opening out at downslope end. There is a perceptible widening of the cut at its S., upslope end. Inside the cut is the ruined base of a drystone structure or revetment wall which displays rough coursing. 5m to SW is a small platform, 5 x 4m with a large boulder at S. end.	Unknown	2	C
45	35658	SN78756408	Mwyro Uchaf I	Occupying the same terrace as PRNs 35656-7, but 40m W. of the latter is a ruinous, drystone rectilinear structure. A 12m <sup>2</sup> earth-banked enclosure is appended to the structure. A small sub-circular structure measuring 4.5 x 3m is also appended to the SW corner of the enclosure. The make-up of the building is interesting, in that its overall measurement of 21.75 x 6m includes a drystone structure measuring 16.75 x 6m, with a 5m long earthwork compartment attached to its S. or upslope end. Traces of stone walling outside the E. side of the structure may represent obscured associated features or even the wall line of an earlier building. The building stands on a slight cross-contour platform.	DRS	2	B
46	35659	SN78646414	Mwyro Uchaf III	Small, elliptical stone and earth structure alongside a minor stream. Measures 5 x 3.75m and has a earth and stone bank running off it towards the stream bank. A deep pool in the stream is seen nearby. Unusually, there is no obvious entrance into the structure. May also be ancillary to PRN35658	Animal pen?	2	C

**TABLE 4B: CARON IS CLAWDD - ADDITIONAL SITES VISITED**

	PRN	NGR	Name	Description	Type	Characteristic	Value
1	9366	SN73925963	Moelau	Drystone, rectilinear structure measuring 5m x 4.5m with walls standing up to 1m high. Apparently a sheepfold, but 10m to W. is a small drystone structure on a platform, measuring 4.5m x 2.25m which may be ancillary and may indicate some settlement here.	Sheepfold; DRS?	2	C
2	23185	SN73905944	Moelau	A poorly preserved drystone structure which measures 7 x 5-6m, with a possible 1.5m extension at its E., upslope end. This upper portion is apparently paved, but it may have external to the structure. A few metres to the N. is a curious drainage ditch, which seems to define 3 sides of a possible garden plot measuring 7 x 6m.	DRS	2	C
3	23192	SN73615948	Llethr Llwyd	DRS which has two compartments, the floor of the S. compartment being 1m lower than that of the N. The S. compartment has also apparently been robbed of its stone in order to build an L-shaped sheep-shelter along its E. side. The N. compartment retains it now tumbled drystone walling. Overall size 12.25m x 5.5m. Three other structures in the vicinity may be ancillary to this building; a U-shaped drystone pen measuring 4x 3.5m 20m to S; a rectangular drystone structure 6 x 4m 40m to E; a rectangular drystone structure 3 x 2.25 15m to NE.	DRS	2	C
4	9368	SN73395932	Groes Fawr	Two-cell ruinous drystone structure, 8 x 4m overall, situated on a terrace on the S. side of the Groes Fawr pass. A second structure (PRN9369) is recorded some 50m to SE but is now in afforested area and was not viewed.	DRS	2?	C
5	14776	SN73695962	Llethr Llwyd	A 3-sided sheep shelter, the E. side being left open. Structure measures 7m x 2.5m and stands up to 1.5m high. It occupies a platform which may be the site of an earlier structure, and measures 12.5 x 5.5m. There are indications that this earlier structure may have possessed a drainage hood at its positive end, whilst there are traces of stone footings on the platform.		2	C

6	14774	SN73695960	Llethr Llwyd	Small platform, 4.5 x 3.5m overall. Possibly ancillary to PRN14776.	Platform	2?	C
7	23186	SN73775972	Llethr Llwyd	Probable DRS, comprising a rectilinear drystone structure measuring 12 x 4.25m. No internal partition visible. Structure stands on a platform which appears to possess a drainage hood above its negative end. Appended to E. side of dwelling is a small fold, 8.5 x 5m, with an entrance in S. wall from which a 7m long spur wall runs to S. - intended to make it easier to drive sheep into fold?	DRS; Fold	2	C
8	14780	SN73795975	Llethr Llwyd	Long, narrow rectangular structure cut into slope, with spoil pushed downslope to form a mound or positive platform in front of the entrance. Within the negative platform is a structure measuring 6 x 3.5m, which includes a number of fairly large orthostats. The positive platform adds 4m to the length of the site, making a total of 10m. This may be a DRS or an ancillary structure to nearby PRN23186.	DRS?	2?	C
9	14805	SN74005945	Nant y Moelau	Single cell structure, measuring 7.5 x 5.1m. Wall bases very low, best preserved on S. side. Occupies a sheltered terrace, probably enhanced to make a levelled yard area to W. of building - entrance opens onto this area. Traces of a stone wall survive at W. side of yard area. Possible midden 2m to E. of building.	DRS?	2	C
10	9370	SN73965940	Nant Groes Fawr	Ruined drystone structure on a slight cross-contour platform. Rectilinear, measuring 11 x 5.75m overall and divided into 2 or possibly 3 cells. Tumbled stone obscures internal detail, but opposed entrances are visible to the S. end of the building. Markedly rounded external corners.	DRS	2	C
11	23187	SN74065942	Nant y Moelau	DRS represented by rectangular stone foundations of two compartments, both approx. 3m long. However, the W. side of the structure has been lost due to the erosion of the stream bank making interpretation difficult.	2?	C	
12	14768	SN74075940	Nant y Moelau	DRS with three compartments, measuring 14m x 5m overall, with the northernmost cell measuring 5 x 4m and probably an additional enclosure added to the original structure. There	2?	B	

				appear to be opposed entrances in the southernmost cell. The main part of the structure has rounded corners. It is located between a trackway and the edge of the stream bank. The erosion of this bank is beginning to cause damage to the W. side of the N. cell. A 12m length of stone walling runs N. from the structure.			
13	35700	SN73995936	Nant Groes Fawr	Unusual rectangular structure on valley floor, close to stream edge. Two parallel lines of stones forming a structure 7 x 2m, divided into two by a cross-wall in centre. Probably ancillary to one of the nearby settlements.	2?	C	

## 7. GWNNWS STUDY AREA.

Gwnnws or Llanwnnws parish lies immediately north of Caron Uwch Clawdd. It contains some of the most dramatic scenery in Ceredigion, including the rocky hills around Llynnoedd Teifi at its southern boundary. The parish has undergone significant boundary changes since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was actually composed of three detached portions; firstly, a parcel extending from low lying Pontrhydfendigaid village in the Teifi valley up to the hills around Llynnoedd Teifi; secondly, a parcel which included the hills along the southern side of Cwmystwyth Valley (now incorporated into Ysbyty Ystwyth parish); thirdly, a parcel further east on the Ceredigion/Powys border. A sample of sites within the first two of these portions was analysed by this survey.

### 7.1 The archaeological and historical evidence for deserted rural settlement in Gwnnws.

The Gwnnws area displays a wide range of settlement types, some attributable to historically recent encroachment onto the hills as a result of the growth of metal mining as a source of employment in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, others certainly associated with the exploitation of the parish commons as seasonal pasture.

The area includes the hills described by early travellers as Craignauillin (Craig Naw Llyn (SN7969). The Rev. John Evans passed through in 1804 and made the following note;

*"Craignauillin... here are numerous turbaries, by which many of the poor inhabitants procure a livelihood in digging peat for sale. The surrounding hills afford, up their sides, fine pasturage for cattle; and during the summer months numerous havotys are ranged amidst the mountains,... They have scarcely any idea of demarcation, ranging with their cattle for grazing where situation may induce, or inclination lead".<sup>1</sup>*

The use of the term *havotys* here almost certainly does not refer to the existence of the traditional dairying *hafodydd* of the Mediaeval and early Post-mediaeval model, but rather to the tradition of 'keeping a hafod' (*cadw hafod*). This is a term still used in some areas, referring to the practice of turning cattle or sheep onto the hill pasture for the summer months. The one-time necessity of sending shepherds to stay on the hills with the animals led to the provision of seasonal or temporary dwellings on the hills for their use - the *havotys* Evans refers to. It is however interesting to compare and contrast his reference below to the 'poor huts' of the landless poor, dotted on the hills. Evans certainly seems to be telling us that there is a clear distinction between the '*havotys*' and other peasant dwellings, but how deep his comprehension was of such issues we cannot be sure.

With reference to 'true' *hafodydd*, it is interesting to note that during the late 1530's, John Leland had passed through the same area and whilst crossing the Afon Claerddu looked northwards and observed "*ii very poore Cotagis for Somer Dayres for Catel*"<sup>2</sup>

Both references compliment each other, for they show clearly that the hills of this district were used for seasonal pasture throughout most of the Post-mediaeval

<sup>1</sup> Evans, Rev.J, 1804, *Letters written during a tour through South Wales in the year 1803*, p.346. London.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, SW, 1889, *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*, Appendix, p.iii. London.

period. Leland's specific reference to cattle rearing and dairying is particularly important given that the grange economy of nearby Strata Florida (which enjoyed rights of pasture across the whole of upland Ceredigion until the Dissolution of the Monastery about the time of Leland's visit) is more commonly associated with sheep rearing. That summer dairies (which could indeed be called the true *hafodydd*) were still in use in the area in the late 1530s is particularly interesting, for it is generally thought that the hafod /hendre system was breaking down by this time.

The Rev. John Evans is also the source of one of the most remarkable descriptions of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century peasant cottage available, which he encountered in this area in 1803, whilst travelling between Cwmystwyth and Strata Florida;

*"It was one of those poor huts that are thinly sprinkled by the sides of the hills, inhabited by peaters and shepherds... It was partly formed by an excavation in the slate rock, and partly by walls of mud mixed with chopped rushes, covered with segs, and having a wattled or basket work chimney. The entrance was in the gable end, facing the south east, which was defended during the night, or in very cold weather, by a wattled hurdle, clothed with rushes. A wall of turfs for fuel served as a partition for the bed-room, furnished with a bed of heath and dried rushes in one corner. The furniture was such as necessity dictated: some loose stones formed the grate; two large ones, with a plank across, supplied the place of chairs; a kettle, with a back stone for baking oaten cakes, answered every culinary purpose; and two coarse earthen pitchers stood by for the preserving or carrying of water and dodgriafel, the usual beverage of the family... Now, my friend, collect what they had to maintain a family of seven, a man, his wife and five children!! The mother looked in health, and the children, though thinly clad, ruddy and smiling... Indeed, there did not appear any thing like the misery and filth observable in the dwellings of the English poor, whose weekly income is four or six times as great. Though the floor was formed of the native rock, it was regularly swept with a besom made of segs, bound with a band of the same, and the fuel was as regularly piled as bread on a baker's shelves."*<sup>3</sup>

This description provides a great deal of food for thought for those involved in the study of deserted rural settlements. Firstly for its reference to the dwelling being typical of the '*poor huts sprinkled by the sides of the hills*'. Secondly, for an insight into the material poverty of the peat cutter's family which occupied this dwelling, which does not need expanding here, but suffice to say that the excavation of such a dwelling would be unlikely to find substantial artefactual evidence. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the decayed remains of such a structure, especially one found in an upland context, would almost certainly be considered to be an ancient (i.e. mediaeval) 'long hut' or 'hafod' by many field workers. It may also be pointed out that the use of cut peat to partition the interior of the building implies that surface evidence of the former partition of DRS structures may well no longer exist and could indeed be difficult to identify even by excavation. Evans' description provides a remarkable lesson in the importance of avoiding making assumptions of antiquity purely on the basis of the simplicity of a DRS site.

In archaeological terms, a good number of DRS sites were previously known in the parish and recorded in the SMR, but there remains, a great deal of scope for further field work and desktop research. Modern aerial photographs of the district were of

<sup>3</sup> Evans, Rev.J, 1804, *Letters written during a tour through South Wales in the year 1803*. London

great use in identifying new sites, a selection of which were visited during fieldwork. The archaeological record and AP evidence demonstrate that some form of settlement has at some time been present across the whole of the uplands in this district.

## 7.2 Characteristic site types.

### 7.2.1 Simple, dispersed sites.

Relatively few sites in this category were encountered, but they include a rough platform overlooking Llyn Teifi (PRN35662) and two drystone structures near the head of Nant Milwyn (PRNs 35673-4) which are possibly associated but lie 100m apart. Similarly, a number of small structures (PRN35665-6) found on the slopes below the dam at Llyn Teifi may or may not be associated with each other or with a more substantial DRS in the vicinity (PRN35665).

### 7.2.2 Complex dispersed sites.

Of the large number of sites which fall into this category, attention is drawn to a number of sites of particular interest.

Two sites which compare with the sheepfold/DRS combination seen in the other study areas are found on the upper slopes on the north side of Cwm Teifi (PRNs 9047-8), of which the latter was visited. The arrangement of a sub-circular fold with a rectilinear drystone structure appended is repeated at both sites; the question as to whether these appended structures are deserted settlements cannot easily be answered. However, a third site in this area, a sheepfold at Troed-rhiw Bryn Dafydd (PRN9159 - recorded previously as a 'hafod?') is accompanied by a bare platform (PRN35675) measuring 6 x 3m, more directly comparable with sites of this kind previously mentioned in other areas.

More typical of this category is the classic *lluest* site located on the valley floor alongside Nant Gwyddyl east of Ffair Rhos. This earthwork site, with its rectilinear wall bases and appended rectangular enclosure may be an relatively early settlement site standing in a valley which otherwise bears all the signs of 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century expansion of settlement up onto its higher slopes (associated with nearby lead mines), followed by desertion from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The house platform site of Blaen Tir (PRN9106) is an unusual example of one of these late dwellings, not shown on early 19<sup>th</sup> century maps but shown as occupied and named by late 19<sup>th</sup> century OS surveys. Otherwise typically 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages dot the slopes of the valley.

A similar picture is seen in the northern portion of the old parish along the Milwyn valley. Either side of the stream, at a median altitude along the valley slopes are seen a number of deserted, ruinous drystone cottages and farmsteads. However, in the upper reaches of the valley such structures peter out and smaller 'long hut' or *lluest* type DRSs are found, such as the DRS on the banks of the aptly named Nant y Fagwyr (PRN9402), near which is a small structure interpreted as a possible animal or fowl pen (PRN35672).

Both of these valleys are interesting due to the remains of a significant number of abandoned cottages which much have housed comparatively large communities within the last 200 years, quite probably associated to a large degree with the growth of neighbouring lead mines. Exactly where the more ephemeral *lluest* or 'long hut' type sites fit in the settlement pattern of these valleys is unknown, but they may well represent a poorer way of living predating (but possibly overlapping) the advent of the large stone cottages.

represent a poorer way of living predating (but possibly overlapping) the advent of the large stone cottages.

A third valley visited was that of Nant Gau, Cwmystwyth. Here there was no evidence of the kind of late, stone cottages found in the Milwyn and Gwyddyl valleys, but rather the ruinous remains of far less substantial DRS sites. Even here there are two distinct groups of sites; one on the lower slopes of Bryn Dafydd including a combination of relatively small platforms and drystone structures (PRN35676-7), the other on the valley floor of Rhos Nant Gau including more substantial 'longhouse' type structures and a possible ancillary building (PRN35678-9). It is again pure speculation as to whether either of these groups, or indeed the features within them are in any way associated.

Of the more substantial deserted cottages, one is deserving of further description, namely that of Blaen Milwyn Uchaf (PRN9401), which can be interpreted as a farmstead but which includes some unusual features which are suggestive of it being a possible focus of activity in the upper Milwyn valley. The most striking features of the complex are the presence of some substantial earth banked enclosures and a range of now ruined buildings which are arranged around a yard or paddock well defined by high stone and earth banks. It may be that the holding served as a gathering point for animals coming off the common; some of the internal features in a range taken to be the outbuildings of the farmstead are unusual and may represent the remains of a ruined smithy.

### 7.2.3 Nucleations.

No sites considered to belong to this category were recorded in Gwnnws.

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*(Overleaf). Plate 2, Hafod Frith viewed from the west. The rectilinear drystone structure in the foreground is presumed to be the main dwelling site at Hafod Frith, it stands on a classic cross-contour building platform. In the background to the left is the largest of the two large enclosures associated with the site; this example has its corner nearest to the platform seemingly rounded off in order to avoid the platform. Although now in Caron Uwch Clawdd, this may well be the 'hafod vrythe' described as being in 'Llanwnws' parish in a 16<sup>th</sup> century source.*





**TABLE 5: GWNNWS STUDY AREA - SITES VISITED**

	PRN	NGR	Name	Description	Type	Characteristic	Value
1	7150	SN74886938	Cilfach y rhew.	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage?	Cottage	2	C
2	7156	SN75166918	Pantygwaith	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage	Cottage	2	C
3	9046	SN77536722	Cwm Teifi	Rough drystone structure set on slight negative platform, 11 x 3m, two cells. Relationship with PRNs 9048-9 possible.	DRS?	2?	C
4	9048	SN77196732	Cwm Teifi	Sub-circular, ruined drystone enclosure, 36 x 21m with a ruined, rectilinear drystone structure measuring 11.5 x 7m appended to its E. side.	Fold; DRS	2	C
5	9049	SN77106716	Cwm Teifi	a) Ruined structure of drystone slabs, 10 x 3m incorporating a large flat sided natural outcrop on N. side, and sunk into ground.	DRS?	2	C
6	9049			b) Rectilinear earthwork, 7 x 4m, one cell. Entrance in S. side with a large flat sided outcrop forming N. wall. Set on natural terrace with traces of boundary banks visible on terrace.	DRS?	2	C
7	9056	SN75896790	Esgair y garn	Small, rectangular drystone structure.	DRS?	1	C
8	9102	SN75526882	Banc Esgairmwyn	Probably the site of a small mines shed - shown on OS 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition 1:10560 OS map.	Unknown	-	C
9	9103	SN75746884	Pant Gwyn	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage, walls below wallplate height but mostly above 1m high.	Cottage	2	C
10	9104	SN75586873	Nant Gwyddyl	Rectangular, ruined drystone structure (walls generally less than 1m high), appended to a rectangular enclosure defined by an earth and stone bank. On fairly level ground alongside stream - possibly a lluest site	DRS; Lluest?	2	B
11	9106	SN75626845	Blaen Tir	Ruined building, 8 x 5m, walls standing up to 1m high. Stands on a square platform cut into a steep slope.	Cottage?	2	C
12	35660	SN75126865	Cwm Gwyddyl	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage, rebuilt in part as a small stone shed	Cottage	2	C
13	35661	SN74856830	Tanybryn	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage - surviving to wallplate height with door and window openings still complete.	Cottage	2	C
14	35662	SN78166780	Llyn Teifi	Single platform, fairly rough example, 7 x 4m. Scattered stones on platform may be indicative of former structure.	DRS?	1	C
15	35663	SN77826810	Llynnoedd Teifi	Ruinous drystone structure on slight platform, 8.6 x 4.3m, cut	DRS?	2?	C

				into slope beneath overhanging outcrop. Built of large slabs, rough coursing evident. One cell.			
16	35664	SN77786802	Llynnoedd Teifi	Ruinous drystone structure, rectilinear, 9.5m x 5m, one cell. Remains include rough, tumbled stone, possible entrance in S. wall. May be associated with PRN35663.	DRS?	2?	C
17	35665	SN77956696	Argae Llyn Teifi	Ruinous drystone structure, rectilinear, 10.6 x 5m, probably two cells. Built on slight platform.	DRS?	2?	C
18	35666	SN77946727	Argae Llyn Teifi	Small drystone structure, sub-rectangular 5 x 4m. May be associated with PRN35665.	Animal pen?	2?	C
19	35667	SN77956731	Argae Llyn Teifi	As PRN35666.	Animal pen?	2?	C
20	35668	SN78066880	Nant y Lluest I	A square drystone structure, 5 x 5m, standing up to 1m high survives here, but a line of large slabs extends 10m southwards - this may be the jumbled remains of an earlier or larger structure of undetermined form.	Fold? Lluest? DRS?	2	C
21	35669	SN78046880	Nant y Lluest II	Small rectilinear feature comprising a stone edged cut 6 x 2m set into slope at foot of crag. Probably ancillary to PRN 35668.	Animal pen?	2?	C

#### SITES IN NORTHERN PORTION OF GWNNWS.

22	9159	SN78517151	Troed-rhiw Bryn Dafydd	Drystone sheepfold. Described as a 'Hafod?' in SMR.	Sheepfold	2?	C
23	9160	SN78587120	Nant Gau	Ruinous drystone rectilinear structure, much of detail obscured by stone spread and grass cover. Located at stream edge but not currently eroding. Overall measurement 9.5 x 5.5m. Traces of a very eroded boundary bank along valley which may be associated with this settlement, apparently cut through by stream due to changes of course. Described as Hafod? in SMR.	DRS	2	C
24	9399	SN79577291	Milwyn Cottage	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage.	Cottage	2	C
25	9400	SN79737271	Blaen Milwyn	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage. Demolished.	Cottage	2	C
26	9401	SN79847260	Blaen Milwyn	Ruined farmstead which includes a complex of buildings and	Farmstead?	2	B

			Uchaf	walled and earth banked enclosures suggestive of a former collecting or penning area for animals. Known to have been occupied until late 19 <sup>th</sup> century.			
27	9402	SN79827237	Nant y Fagwr	A rectilinear drystone structure. There are three compartments, the northernmost being very narrow. Located on what is presently a very wet slope (visited during a very wet period). The proximity of a small animal pen type structure (PRN35670) may indicate that a settlement has occupied the site at some time.	Sheepfold; DRS?	2	C
28	9396	SN79307285	Castell	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage.	Cottage	2	C
29	9397	SN79247288	Fuches	Ruined 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottage. Note that Fuches originally meant an area of grazing for dairy cattle.	Cottage	2	C
30	35670	SN79947270	Milwyn	Small and ruinous drystone structure. Rectilinear, measuring 4 x 3.5m. Possibly ancillary to PRN9401.	Animal pen?	2	C
31	35671	SN79957227	Banc Du	Probable sheepfold. Drystone, rectilinear, with walls up to 1m high. Has 2 compartments and measures 18 x 6m overall.	Sheepfold	-	C
32	35672	SN79777231	Nant y Fagwr	Small sub-rectilinear structure, built of earth and stone and measuring 3.5 x 3m. Close to stream bank. Proximity to PRN 9402 may suggest a link.	Animal pen?	2	C
33	35673	SN80067236	Nant y Domen	Two cell drystone rectilinear structure, very ruinous, measures 9 x 4m with walls up to 0.75m high. N. end is left open. Stands on slight platform cut into slope. Sheltered by hill slope.	DRS	1?	C
34	35674	SN80187246	Cerrig y Twrci	Very rough structure measuring 7 x 4m, built of large stones and incorporating large slabs of rock at either end. Parallel to stream course, facing downstream.	DRS?	1?	C
35	35675	SN78557151	Troed-rhiw Bryn Dafydd	A bare platform, measuring 6 x 3m, is cut into the foot of the slope a few metres to the W. side of sheepfold PRN9159.	DRS?	2	C
36	35676	SN78937135	Bryn Dafydd	Ruinous drystone structure, 7 v 6.5m on slight platform on lower slopes of Bryn Dafydd. On its S. side is a small cut into slope, 6 x 3m which may be a quarry cut or a hut platform.	Platform	2	B
37	35677	SN78937134	Bryn Dafydd	A short distance S. of PRN35676 is a bare platform, measuring 10 x 6.5m. It may well have once been the site of a structure, which had incorporated an outcropping rock on the platform.	DRS?	2	B

				10 x 6.5m. It may well have once been the site of a structure, which had incorporated an outcropping rock on the platform.			
38	35678	SN79107117	Rhos Nant Gau	3 cell drystone structure, ruined to foundations. Overall measurements are 14 x 7.5m long, although the smallest cell at the W. end is only 5.5m wide. Central compartment is largest. Stands on natural stream-side terrace. There is evidence of a stone revetted bank running parallel to the stream to the E. of the structure.	DRS	2	B
39	35679	SN79107115	Rhos Nant Gau	20m to S. of PRN35678 and on opposite side of stream is a rectilinear drystone structure on a platform cut into the slope. Measures 10 x 4m with walls up to 1.5m high.	DRS? Building	2?	B

## 8. LLANBADARN Y CREUDDYN UCHAF STUDY AREA.

This area is based on a portion of the present parish of Cwmrheidol which was until the later 19<sup>th</sup> century a detached portion of Llanbadarn y Creuddyn Uchaf, the main portion of which lays several kilometres to the south-west. ACA was engaged in a detailed field and desktop survey of this and adjacent areas under the RCAHM(W) funded Mynydd y Ffynnon Project during 1997.<sup>1</sup> Much of the evidence collated at that time, whether it previously existed in the regional SMR or not, is of great relevance to the study of DRSs in the region and a synthesis of this evidence is therefore included.

### 8.1 The archaeological and historical evidence for deserted rural settlement in Llanbadarn y Creuddyn Uchaf.

The DRS sites of the survey area include sites of varying characteristics, for which it is not possible to provide more than the sketchiest of outlines as to their purpose, origins and period of occupation. In some cases it is possible to be more certain of their later history and approximate date of abandonment, drawing on sources such as 19<sup>th</sup> century OS and estate maps, census returns and local information.

Many of the farmsteads presently occupied in the survey area have been in existence since the compilation of the earliest available estate maps of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (NLW Nanteos Collection), several retaining similar boundaries over the past 200 years - both in terms of their control of the enclosed lands along the lower slopes of the Castell and Rheidol valleys and in terms of the areas of mountain pasture which they now own (and upon which they formerly enjoyed rights of common pasture). The origins of these holdings is unresearched, but may well extend back to the early Post-mediaeval period. As these sites are mostly still occupied they are not in general relevant to this survey.

The simpler dwellings located on the mountain pastures, namely the shepherding and peat cutters cottages or *lluestau* (the term seems very appropriate here due to the proximity of Perfedd and the similarities of form shared with sites in each area), mostly share the common denominators of the *lluest* type site in terms of their form and location. They are located in the mid- or upper reaches of tributary streams of either the Castell or Rheidol rivers and thereby in well sheltered valley locations, close to running water; being outside the limit of pre-19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure and thus on the historic commons of the parish of Llanbadarn y Creuddyn Uchaf.

None of the sites which appear to belong to the *lluest* tradition are named in the 1841 or subsequent census returns, and where estate maps are available, they are generally not shown. The evidence of the census returns for the area is particularly significant. By the time of the 1841 census it is clear that many of the DRSs on the mountain pastures had already been abandoned - *lluestau* such as Neint (PRN9424), Lluest yr Ochr (PRN9422) and Nant yr Helygen (PRN9423) are not listed. If Lewis Morris's evidence from neighbouring Pumlumon is any sort of guide, it seems that such dwellings were being abandoned by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Whether or not Neint or any other *lluest* was occupied at a later date we cannot presently tell; a detailed survey of parish and estate records would be required to throw light on their latest periods of occupation.

<sup>1</sup> Sambrook, & Darke, I, 1997, *The Mynydd y Ffynnon Project: Castell-Rheidol Upland Survey*. ACA, Llandeilo.



A large number of other cottages and smallholdings were also present in the study area, but these can be differentiated from the *lluestau* by virtue of their location on farmland or land away from the mountain pasture. It is significant that many of the deserted cottages of the survey area appear as occupied dwellings on the census returns and on 19th century OS and estate maps, often occupied by shepherds, lead miners or both. Clearly they either post-date the period in which the *lluestau* of the mountain ground were in occupation, or perhaps equally likely in many cases, simply survived longer due to their more accessible locations and the requirement to house the families of the miners who came in significant numbers to the valley during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Accessibility was certainly an important factor in the process of abandonment of the *lluestau* and *cottages* of neighbouring Pumlumon (see Study Area 6).

One late 18<sup>th</sup> century traveller, E.D. Clarke<sup>2</sup>, has left a lasting impression in his description of a dwelling he observed within, or close to, the village of Devil's Bridge. It is a reminder that the often roughly built dwellings of the poor who lived on marginal or upland areas were paralleled within the villages of the area. It also gives an excellent insight into the way that a 'dwelling' might serve as shelter to man and beast alike;

*"The next morning we hired a chaise to take us through the Vale of Ryddol, to the Devil's Bridge, near the great fall of the Monach, the greatest curiosity in all Wales. The guide, who conducts strangers to the spot, is a female, and lives in a mean little hut, built entirely of dirt and weeds. It is easily known from other cottages, by its distinction, in having a tree upon the top of it... It consists of having two apartments, in one of which I found a horse and a cow, and the other the whole family of pigs, ducks, dogs, cats, men, women and children. The hole by which we entered served both as window and door, and a small opening at the top, suffered the smoke to pass out... She accosted us in broken English, begged we would be seated upon the bed, which served both as a table and a chair to the whole family, and promised to attend us as soon as she had finished peeling her turnips."*

## 8.2 Characteristic site types.

### 8.2.1 Simple, dispersed sites.

Few sites fall into this category, but two sites recorded on the same holding merit some discussion. Firstly, a solitary 'long-hut' type structure (PRN34859) recorded on Mynydd yr Ychen is a very good example of its kind. However, whether or not it is truly solitary was not easily discovered due to the presence of a thick carpet of bracken over the adjacent slopes at the time of recording.

Also on Mynydd yr Ychen, an unusual drystone structure (PRN34860), still complete apart from the loss of its roof, stood approximately 500m from the nearest farm (Tymawr). Its overall measurements, 6 x 4m, are comparable with those of a number of 'ancillary' structures recorded near many DRS sites in the region. However, this site is unique in that a credible explanation was given by the landowner for its purpose; within living memory, the inhabitants of the farm used this structure as a goose pen - apparently one of the last chores of the day was to walk up to put the geese in for the night. This explanation might be relevant to the function of many of

<sup>2</sup> Clarke, E.D., 1793, *A tour through the South of England and Wales and a part of Ireland: Made during the summer of 1791*, p.260. London

the small isolated structures found in other districts. It also gives an indication of how far from the dwelling ancillary features might be located and points out the problems involved when attempting to identify the component elements of any single DRS site.

### 8.2.2 Complex dispersed sites.

Within the study area are found some of the best examples encountered by the survey of *lluest* type complexes. The *lluestau* typically comprise the remains of a simple rectangular earth/stone structure, a small enclosed field, and often evidence of small scale lazy-bed cultivation. However, it is also apparent that smaller ancillary features such as small platforms and earthwork features of unknown purpose are present, which may well represent root vegetable clamps, building platforms for animal or fowl pens or even earlier house platforms (again the lack of excavation evidence makes interpretation of such features impossible at present).

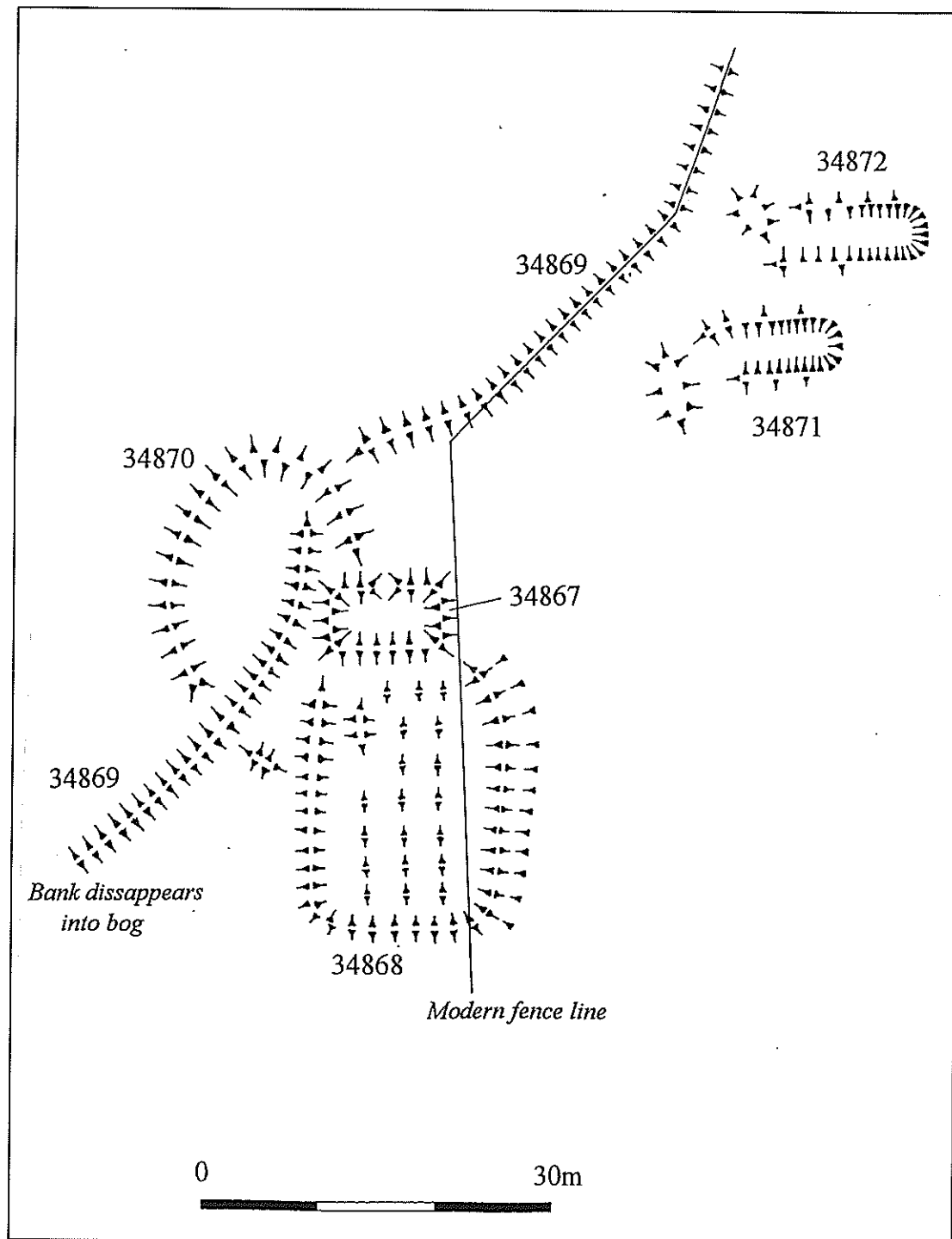
PRNs 9422-4 & 34866 are amongst the best preserved sites of their type in the region, but Neint (9424) is worthy of special mention as it is shown on a Nanteos estate map of 1764 (NLW Nanteos No.332) and described as an abandoned shepherd's cottage. In close proximity to the decayed *lluest* of Neint (which actually survives as a drystone *ffald* or sheepfold) are eight earthwork platforms of varying shape and size (PRNs 34912-19), though generally small - the largest (PRN34913) being a cut measuring 8 x 5m. PRN34919 appears the most interesting of these as its west side has been damaged by the construction of the earthwork bank of the enclosure PRN34911 which is associated with the dwelling. This appears to be clear evidence of more than one phase of activity at the site - evidence rarely found elsewhere.

The most important question arising out of the features at Neint is the veracity of the assumption that minor features in the vicinity of a DRS are actually ancillary to the dwelling. There may be no connection between the shepherd's cottage of Neint and the platforms around it beyond the reuse of an earlier, abandoned settlement (perhaps a hafod?) by Post-mediaeval shepherds. But a second and equally important question arises. Is the large rectilinear structure assumed to be the dwelling component of Neint actually a dwelling? Is it possible that the platforms represent a series of temporary hut sites around an enclosure and pen used to gather animals in off the mountain pastures. Excavation alone might offer answers to such questions.

### 8.2.3 Nucleations.

Although no nucleations of settlement were considered to be amongst the sites included in the survey, the question posed above relating to the true nature of clusters of platform like features such as those recorded around Neint leaves open the possibility that some such sites do indeed represent nucleations of dwelling structures, but this cannot be ascertained at present.





*Fig.9; Banc Erw Barfe, near Devil's Bridge is another good example of a dispersed complex. The features included are typical of the lliest types settlements of the Cambrian Mountains, including a dwelling, enclosures and lazy bed cultivation. The relationship with the two linear cuts in the slope above the settlement is unknown.*

**TABLE 6: LLANBADARN Y CREUDDYN UCHAF STUDY AREA - SITES VISITED**

	PRN	NGR	Name	Description	Type	Characteristic	Value
1	9422.	SN78538166	Lluest yr Ochr	Deserted settlement which is associated with several ancillary features (PRNs 34893-9).	DRS; Lluest	2	B
2	9423	SN78108045	Nant Helygen	Deserted settlement which is associated with several ancillary features (PRNs 34905-7).	DRS; Lluest	2	B
3	9424	SN77498022	Neint	Deserted settlement which is associated with several ancillary features (PRNs 34911-19).	DRS;Lluest	2	A
4	34856	SN760790	Nant Gwynion I	Faint earthwork traces of a rectilinear structure, 13m x 4m, within a small enclosure.	DRS?	2	C
5	34857	SN761790	Nant Gwynion II	Hut platform scooped into foot of slope. Ridge and furrow cultivation ridges across adjacent terrace.	DRS;Hut platform	2	C
6	34859	SN766793	Mynydd yr Ychen	Well preserved earth & stone built rectilinear dwelling, 13m x 6m, no associated features recorded. In well sheltered position.	DRS; Long Hut	1	B
7	34864	SN76277930	Mynydd yr Ychen	Small stone built pen, 6m x 4m; walls complete, but roofless.	Goose Pen	1	B
8	34866	SN75637811	Banc Erw Barfe	Classic <i>lluest</i> site. Rectilinear earth built dwelling (PRN34867) appended to a small enclosure with evidence of lazy bed cultivation. Two fairly large scoops in hillside nearby appear to be either the foundations of ancillary structures or root vegetable storage clamps. Classic <i>lluest</i> site. Rectilinear earth built dwelling appended to a small enclosure with evidence of lazy bed cultivation. Two fairly large scoops in hillside nearby appear to be either the foundations of ancillary structures or root vegetable clamps. (See Fig.9)	DRS; Lluest	2	A
9	34874	SN75357879	Danyllan; Lan Fawr	Danyllan house site. This is a deserted farmstead or smallholding (PRN33194) which was integrated into Erw Barfe farm by 1764 (NLW Nanteos 339) but remained occupied until late 19th century. Now an earthwork site. Rectilinear earthwork, on terrace quarried into a rocky knoll. A complex of paddocks and folds is associated with the dwelling (PRNs 34875-6).	Dwelling	2	C

10	34877	SN75357879	Danyllan; Lan Fawr	Rectangular earthwork feature appended to sheepfold PRN34876; possibly an earlier dwelling or an ancillary building of Danyllan farm complex.	Building?	2	C
11	34880	SN74837780	Ty Coch	Abandoned dwelling and garden enclosure - almost no trace of house above ground. Occupied in late 19 <sup>th</sup> century.	Cottage	2	C
12	34882	SN75167810	Nant Ty'n Llwyn	Small rectilinear dwelling set on a artificially levelled platform above a terrace at the foot of a steep hill. Sheltered site with a earth bank (PRN34881) defining one side of the terrace. A small area of cultivation ridges some 40m to east PRN34882 may be associated with this settlement.	DRS; Lluest	2	B
13	34884	SN75737750	Bryn Ty'n Llwyn	Group of platforms and scoops on exposed hillside on upper portion of Ty'n Llwyn farm. Includes 3 long huts (PRNs 34886-8) and a possible associated boundary bank (PRN34885). Platforms all face south and are simple scoops into slope.	DRS? Hafod? Lluest?	2	B
14	34886	SN75737750	Bryn Ty'n Llwyn	Hut platform? 9m x 3.5m. Cuts across contour.	Platform	2	B
15	34887	SN75737750	Bryn Ty'n Llwyn	Hut platform? 6m x 3.5m. Cross contour.	Platform	2	B
16	34888	SN75737750	Bryn Ty'n Llwyn	Hut platform? 12m x 6m. Parallel to contour.	Hut platform?	2	B
17	34890	SN75737750	Bryn Ty'n Llwyn	Small scoop 4m x 2m.	Platform	2	B
18	34891	SN78778159	Nant Rhys	Small platform measuring 6m x 3m, near DRS PRN34900.	Platform	2	B
19	34893	SN78568168	Lluest yr Ochr	Narrow scoop in slope, 7m x 3m. Part of PRN9422, DRS at Lluest yr Ochr.	Platform?	2	B
20	34895	SN78568167	Lluest yr Ochr	Small platform 6m x 3m, some 30m SE of dwelling PRN9422.	Platform	2	B
21	34896	SN78557166	Lluest yr Ochr	Platform measures 5m+ x 3.5m and is located 30m S. of dwelling PRN9422.	Platform	2	B
22	34897	SN78588167	Lluest yr Ochr	Platform measures 6m x 3m and is c.80m E. of dwelling PRN9422.	Platform	2	B
23	34899	SN78608167	Lluest yr Ochr	c.50m E. of PRN34897 is another small platform measuring 6m x 3m.	Platform	2	B
24	34900	SN78758159	Nant Rhys	Earthwork remains of a two cell DRS measuring c.7.5m x 3.5m. On terrace above stream. A small platform PRN34891	DRS; Dwelling	2	C

25	34901	SN77808122	Nant Meirch	Ruined stone cottage built on cross-contour platform and associated with a small garden and an unusual feature which appears to be a cart loading bay.	Cottage	2	C
26	34903	SN78248043	Nant yr Helygen	Group of platforms (PRNs 34907-9).	DRS?	3?	B
27	34904	SN78058050	Nant yr Helygen	Small platform, 6m x 3m, probably associated with DRS PRN9423.	Platform	2	B
28	34905	SN78118052	Nant yr Helygen	Small platform, 6m x 4m, probably associated with DRS PRN9423.	Platform	2	C
29	34907	SN78208043	Nant yr Helygen	Shallow wide platform, 7m x 5m defined on W. side by an wide earth bank.	Platform	3?	B
30	34908	SN78228043	Nant yr Helygen	Narrow platform between two earth banks, 10m x 8.5m overall, but banks are 3.5m wide, leaving a 1.5m wide platform.	Platform	3?	B
31	34909	SN78248043	Nant yr Helygen	Sub-circular cut into slope, defined by slight earth banks either side with entrance facing downslope. 8m x 7m.	Platform	3?	B
32	34910	SN77148076	Nant Fucheswen	Rectilinear platform 6m x 5m, alongside a larger sheepfold (PRN34923). Possibly a small dwelling.	Platform	2	C
33	34912	SN77518018	Neint	Small platform measuring 5m x 4m.	Platform	2	A
34	34913	SN77538016	Neint	Long narrow cut, measuring 8m x 5m, abuts S. side of PRN34914.	Platform	2	A
35	34914	SN77648015	Neint	Sub-circular platform, 6m x 5m.	Platform	2	A
36	34915	SN77618008	Neint	Sub-circular platform, 6m diameter.	Platform	2	A
37	34916	SN77598012	Neint	Rectilinear platform at stream edge, 10m x 4m overall.	Platform	2	A
38	34917	SN77688011	Neint	Sub-circular platform, 5m x 4m.	Platform	2	A
39	34918	SN77698010	Neint	Rectangular platform, 7m x 6m.	Platform	2	A
40	34919	SN77608015	Neint	Apparent platform, 7m in length, but W. side destroyed by bank of enclosure PRN34911.	Platform	2	A
41	34921	SN77408084	Fucheswen	Possible hut platform; 5m x 4m.	Hut Platform	1	C
42	34922	SN76357987	Llain Las	Earthwork remains of a two cell rectilinear structure, 11m x 7m. Alongside ruined stone cottage Llain Las - PRN34933) which was occupied until 20th century	DRS?	2	C

## 8. PERFEDD STUDY AREA.

The Perfedd Pilot Study Area focuses on the area of the former commons of the Crown Manor of Perfedd in northern Cardiganshire, an area which includes Pumlumon, the highest peak in the region, and its foothills. The area is characterised by high, open moor and mountain pasture with many craggy outcrops, with rather more favourable, often improved pasture along the lower slopes and terraces of the Rheidol and its tributary valleys.

This area was selected for analysis during the 1996-7 pilot study on the basis of the availability of valuable historical data derived from a survey carried out in 1744 of the *lluestau* or shepherding cottages on the commons of the Manor of Perfedd by Lewis Morris, then Deputy Steward of the Manor, who described, named and mapped some 48 *lluestau* and other cottages in Perfedd. A number of these have either been lost under the waters of Nantymoch Reservoir, or obscured by forestry plantations. Some have also been replaced by 19th century farmsteads and remain in occupation.

Lewis Morris' information is undoubtedly important to our understanding of DRS sites in the region as a whole. In view of the value attached to the evidence recorded by visiting a dozen or so of the *lluestau* during 1996-7, it was intended that further survey work should be undertaken within the district during 1997-8 to examine as many as possible of the sites named by Morris. (A fuller appreciation of Morris' account of the Perfedd sites is found in the report of the ACA Pilot Study<sup>1</sup>).

The pilot study identified some 22 sites which are now deserted and apparently accessible, 7 of which were visited and recorded during 1996-7, along with a number of new sites. A further 13 were visited during 1997-8, and a number of new sites again recorded. Whereas during 1996-7 the survey focused on sites around Nantymoch reservoir and the Castell valley to the south, this year's work extended further north-west as far as Bwlchystyllen and further north-east to the isolated site of Gelligogau.

### 8.1 The archaeological and historical evidence for deserted rural settlement in Perfedd.

One of the most important historical lessons to be drawn from the Pumlumon area and Lewis Morris' work is the realisation that within relatively recent times even the remotest uplands of the region were populated to some extent; that 50 or so shepherds and shepherding families inhabited the northern and western foothills of Pumlumon in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century now seems difficult to believe when viewing the vast, empty moorlands of the present day. The concept of putting the people back into the landscape seems a particularly important one in relation to DRS studies.

Lewis Morris was not alone, of course, in writing about the area and a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century travellers have left interesting and relevant accounts of their experiences here. Almost a century after Morris, in 1823, the Rev. GJ Freeman visited Pumlumon;

*"We came to a few houses called Steddva gerig, about 10 o'clock: from this spot we had determined on visiting Plynlimmon, as being the nearest of any place on the road to that mountain. We therefore came to a halt, and went into the nearest house, but no other two legged animal was within ... The human voice was, however, very*

<sup>1</sup> Sambrook, P, 1997, *Mediaeval or Later Deserted Rural Settlement Survey: 1996-7 Pilot Study*. ACA, Llandeilo.

*distinguishable without, were we heard the shepherds shouting far and wide upon the hills to their dogs and flocks; and presently we saw their diligent helpmates washing linen in the brook.*<sup>2</sup>

Another traveller, who came to the area a generation prior to Freeman, was the anonymous author of *The Cambrian Directory*. It appears that his visit to a cottage near the foot of Pumlumon was not a positive experience for either himself or his hosts; (from his description he would appear to have called at one of the *lluestau* on the lower slopes of the mountain);

*"According to our directions, we enquired at the foot of Plinlimmon for Rhees Morgan, as a proper man to be our conductor over the heights of the 'fruitful father of rivers'. This man being absent, the whole family appeared thunderstruck by our appearance, and ran with all haste imaginable into their miserable cot, or which might rather be dignified with the appellation of a pig-stye; as that filthy animal seemed to claim, with the wretched family, an equal right to a share of the hovel. One apartment served for the inhabitants of every description, with only one small hole to admit the light; the entrance unprotected by a door, but with a blanket as a substitute, was exposed to the pitiless blast of the winter's storm."*<sup>3</sup>

It was shown in 1996-7 that the archaeological evidence for deserted rural settlement in the Perfedd area is not confined to Lewis Morris' *lluestau*; a number of DRS sites not named in Morris' evidence are recorded and were thought possibly to represent evidence of earlier pastoral activity focused on the valley floor of the upper reaches of the Rheidol. This is true of the areas investigated during this survey also. Several earthwork and platform sites unconnected with the 18<sup>th</sup> century *lluestau* came to light (e.g. PRNs 35693, 35695 & 35697-9) and it is evident that a great number of DRS sites are present in the district, however, most remain unrecorded and a great deal of scope exists for further fieldwork.

## 8.2 Characteristic site types.

### 8.2.1 Simple dispersed sites.

No sites in this category were recorded.

### 8.2.2 Complex dispersed sites.

All of the sites recorded this year fall into this category. Of the *lluestau* and cottages named by Morris and visited by the survey this year, some were again typically drystone, rectilinear structures with ancillary structures. However, one *lluest* was not located (PRN35691), two were found to be damaged beyond recognition (PRNs 35681 & 35689) and six had developed into more substantial cottages or upland farmsteads (PRNs 25238, 35682-3, 35686, 35696 & Bwlchstyllen Farm). The range of ancillary features associated with each of the 'undeveloped' *lluest* settlements included typical features such as lazy bed cultivation plots and small ancillary platforms or structures.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, Rev. GJ, 1826, *Sketches in Wales or a Diary of three Walking Excursions in that Principality in the years 1823, 1824, 1825*. London

<sup>3</sup> Anon, 1800, *The Cambrian Directory*, p.78. Salisbury.

Most of these undisturbed *lluestau* must be considered as being of historic significance if only for the fact that they are mentioned by a reliable historic source. However, they also present features suggestive of a high archaeological potential also. Llest Gelligogau (PRN35684), one of the remotest sites in the region, was rather surprisingly found to be a well preserved drystone cottage, standing to wallplate and gable height, although much smaller than the usual 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages encountered in more accessible areas. Located in a sheltered valley on a small terrace, the dwelling had alongside it the wall bases of a smaller rectilinear feature which may have been either an ancillary building or traces of an earlier structure. No evidence was seen of the earthworks disappearing into nearby bogs reported by Cledwyn Vaughan in 1966<sup>4</sup> and suggested as being representative of earlier settlement. A small sheepfold was noted on the opposite bank of the Gelligogau stream.

Llest y Graig (PRN35680), almost equally remote, and sheltered in a spectacular valley on the northern side of Pumlumon, presented a very different picture. A much cruder, almost elliptical structure is presumably the dwelling, appended to a larger drystone fold. No other features were noted.

Llest y Trafle included what appear to be two adjacent buildings (built end to end) and had both a small drystone structure reminiscent of a fowl pen and an earth bank enclosed 'garden plot' typical of a *lluest*.

Undoubtedly the most interesting of the *lluestau* named by Lewis Morris was Llest Pencraig Ddu. The dwelling is the simplest of rectilinear drystone structures, and nearby are seen an area of lazy bed cultivation and a series of enclosures, defined by earth banks and incorporating natural outcrops of rock. Pencraig Ddu has one characteristic which sets it apart from the rest of Morris' *lluestau* - it is not located in a sheltered stream valley, nor does not appear to have a convenient water source. Rather it is set on the level top of a fairly rocky and prominent ridge at the head of the Nant Silo valley. The banks built between parallel lines of outcropping bedrock to create a series of field enclosures along the ridge have interrupted the natural drainage pattern and caused drainage problems which have left much of the land around the *lluest* wet and boggy, with standing water building up behind the banks.

Of the sites not recorded by Lewis Morris one, Carreg y Marchfaen (PRN35695) certainly has characteristics which are comparable with some of the *lluestau* of the area - a ruined, earth and drystone rectilinear building, set on a cross-contour platform, a small enclosure appended to the dwelling, a patch of cultivation ridges and a probable potato clamp alongside. Whether this site was occupied prior to, or after Morris made his record is unknown, but the site is not shown on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps and may well have been deserted pre-1744.

Three further sites are worthy of mention and may indeed be of some significance. These are the platforms recorded on the southern slopes of Disgwylfa Fach to the east of Nantymoch Reservoir (PRNs 35697-9). Their character is very different from those of the *lluest* type sites and much more reminiscent of classic platforms found in other areas. Shelter and water supply are rarely factors in the siting of such platforms and this is true in this case, far from being sheltered they seem to have been sited to gain the best possible view over the wide valley to the south.. It is

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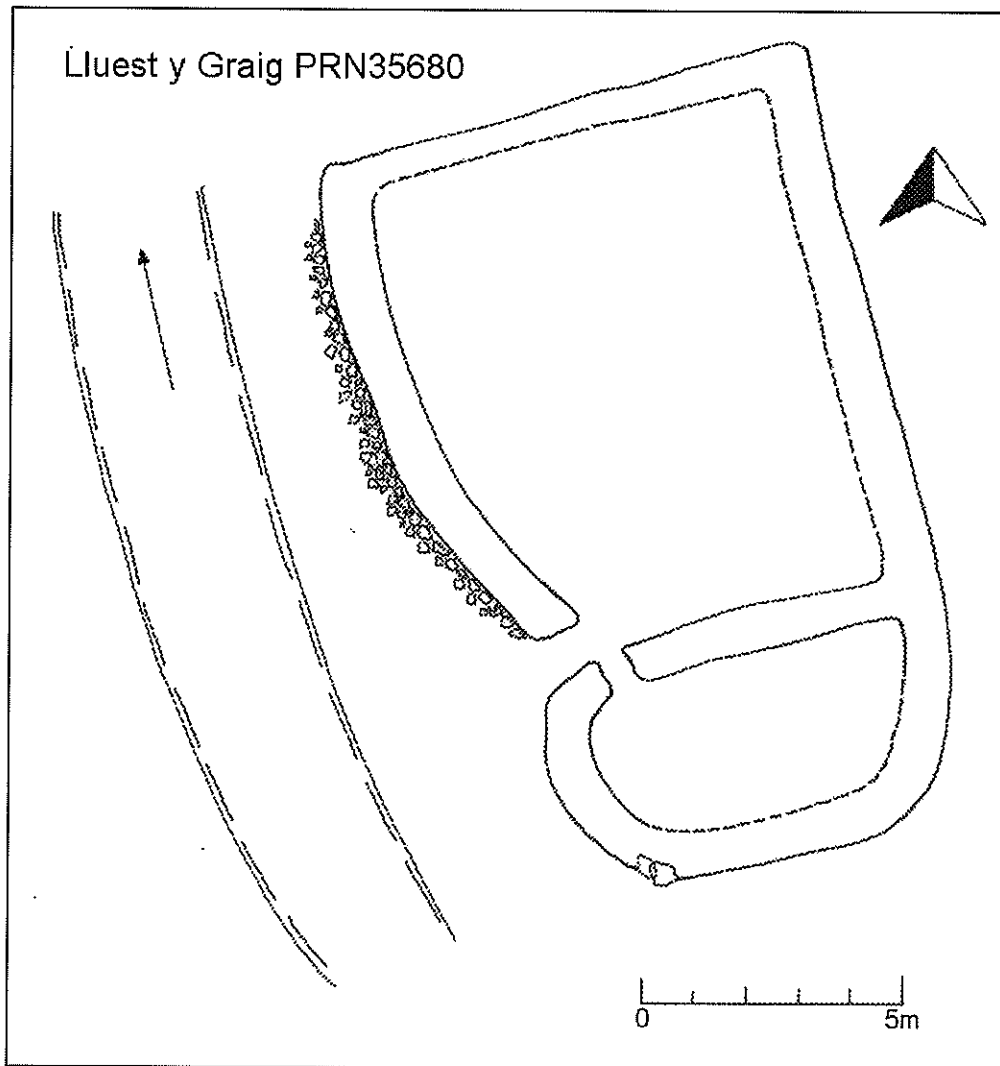
<sup>4</sup> Vaughan, E, 1966, 'Llestau Blaenrheidol.' in *Ceredigion* 5, 246-63. Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society. Gomerian Press, Llandysul, Carmarthenshire.

possible that they represent settlement sites much earlier than the *lluestau*, indeed that they might be of mediaeval date and belong to the hafod *genre*.

### **8.2.3 Nucleations.**

No sites in this category were recorded.





*Fig.10; Lluest y Graig is one of the more remote of Lewis Morris' lluestau, situated in a dramatic location high up in Cwm Gwerin, to the north-east of Pumlumon. It is a one of the more simple of the Perfedd lluestau with a rather irregular dwelling component appended to a drystone fold; the whole complex appears to be of one build.*

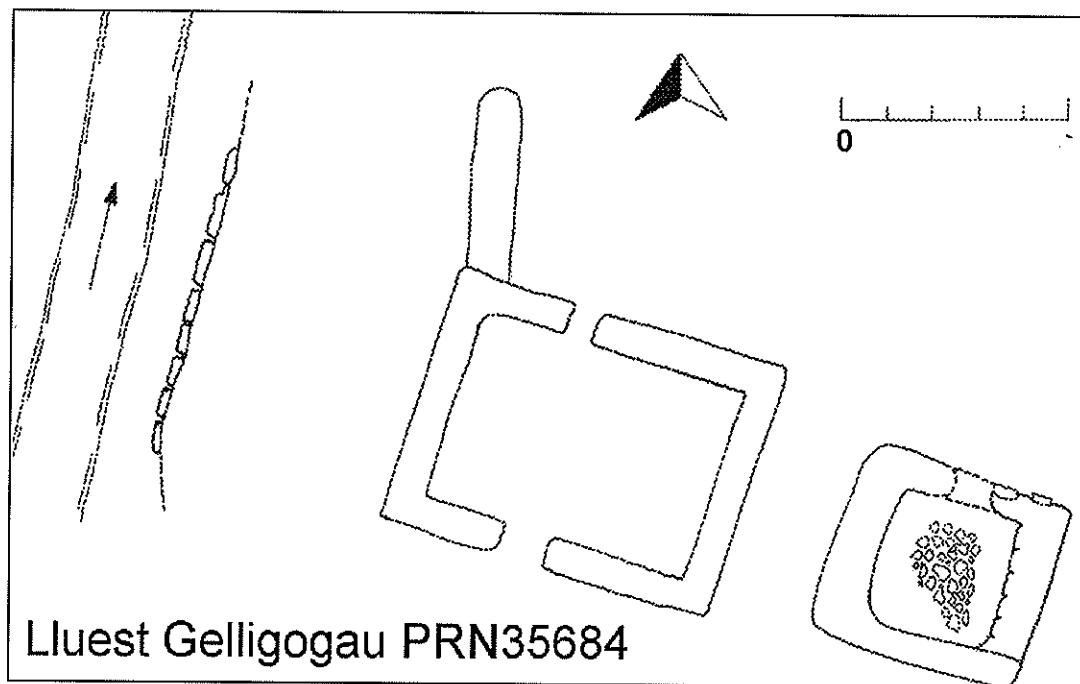


Fig.11; Llest Gelligogau ranks the most remote of the *Perfedd lluestau*, situated high in the Hengwm valley about 4km from the nearest road at Nantymoch. Its remoteness may explain why the main building survives to wall plate height and in relatively good condition; clearly there would be little need for anyone to rob the site of its stone. A second structure to the east of the dwelling is taken to be a small ancillary. Not shown on the plan is a small sheepfold on the west side of the Gelligogau stream, some 40m downstream.

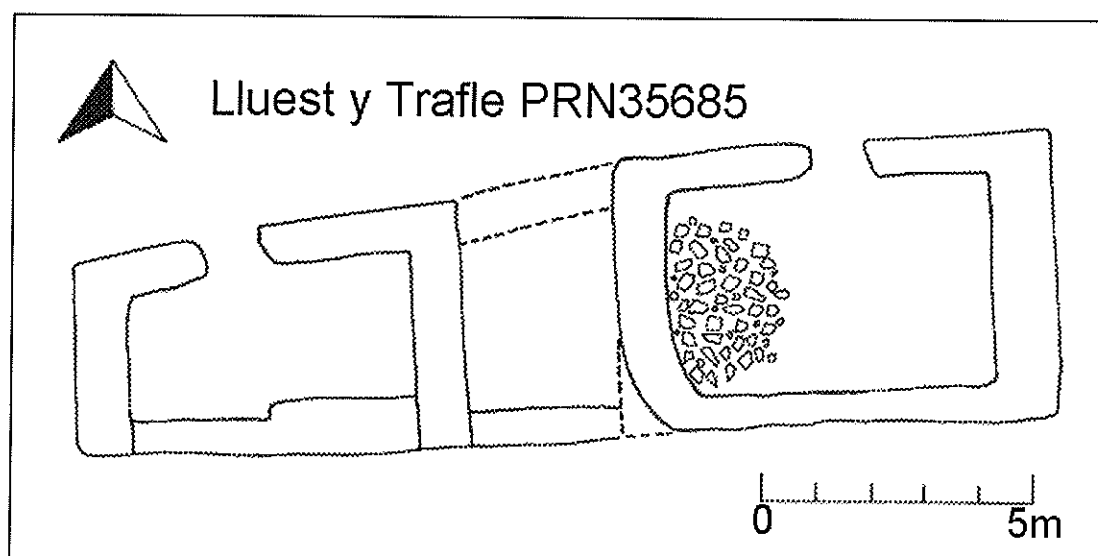
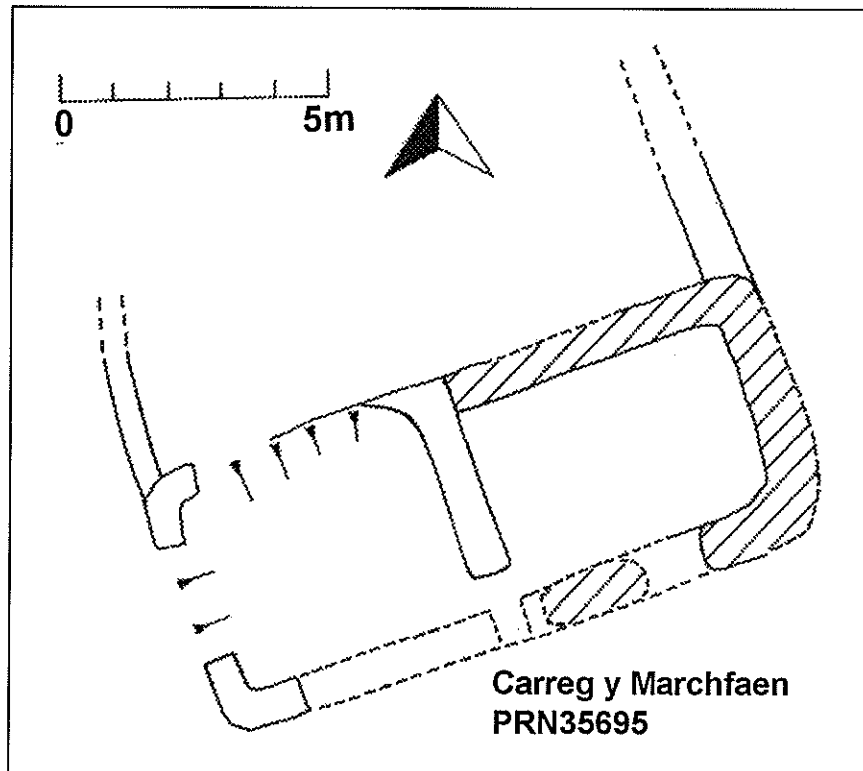


Fig.12; Llest y Trafle survives in an area of well improved pasture. The building range is shown here, whether the central section between the two compartments ever had any form of enclosing wall on its souther side is indeterminable from surface evidence. Not shown here are the rectilinear enclosure or garden plot immediately to the south, nor a small pen a few metres to the south-east, taken to be a fowl-pen.



*Fig.13; This structure is not one of the lluestau listed by Lewis Morris, but it certainly bears all the characteristics of being a lluest type site. Whether it pre-dates or post-dates Morris' work in 1744 is not known - either are possible. The dwelling survives in improved pasture and sits on a slight platform, most noticeable at its western, negative end. The western part of the structure includes a drystone component, but the eastern survives only as an earthwork. A rectilinear enclosure defined by an earth and stone bank is appended to the northern side of the dwelling. Not shown are a patch of cultivation ridges and a possible 'potato clamp' a short distance to the south-west.*

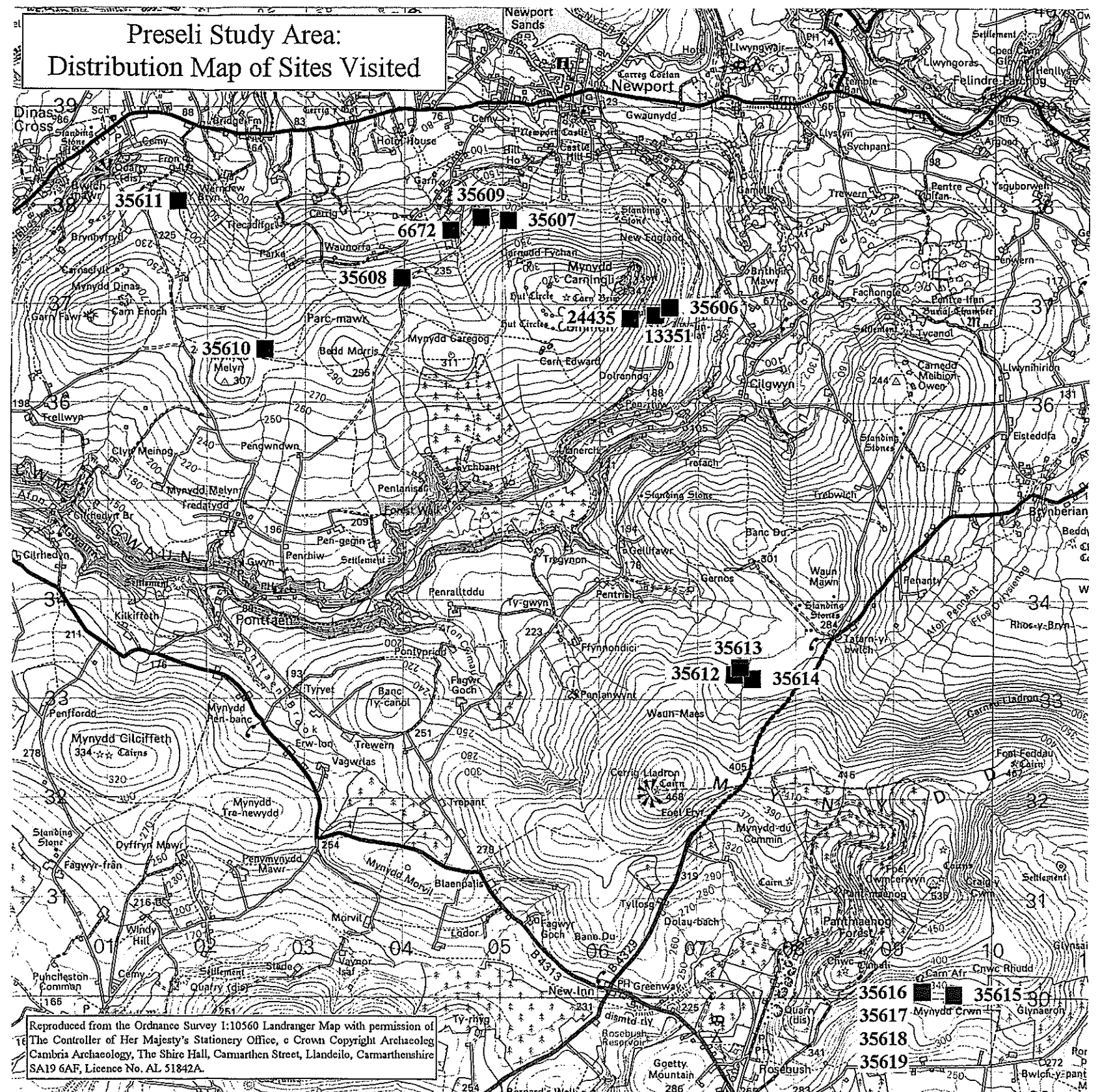
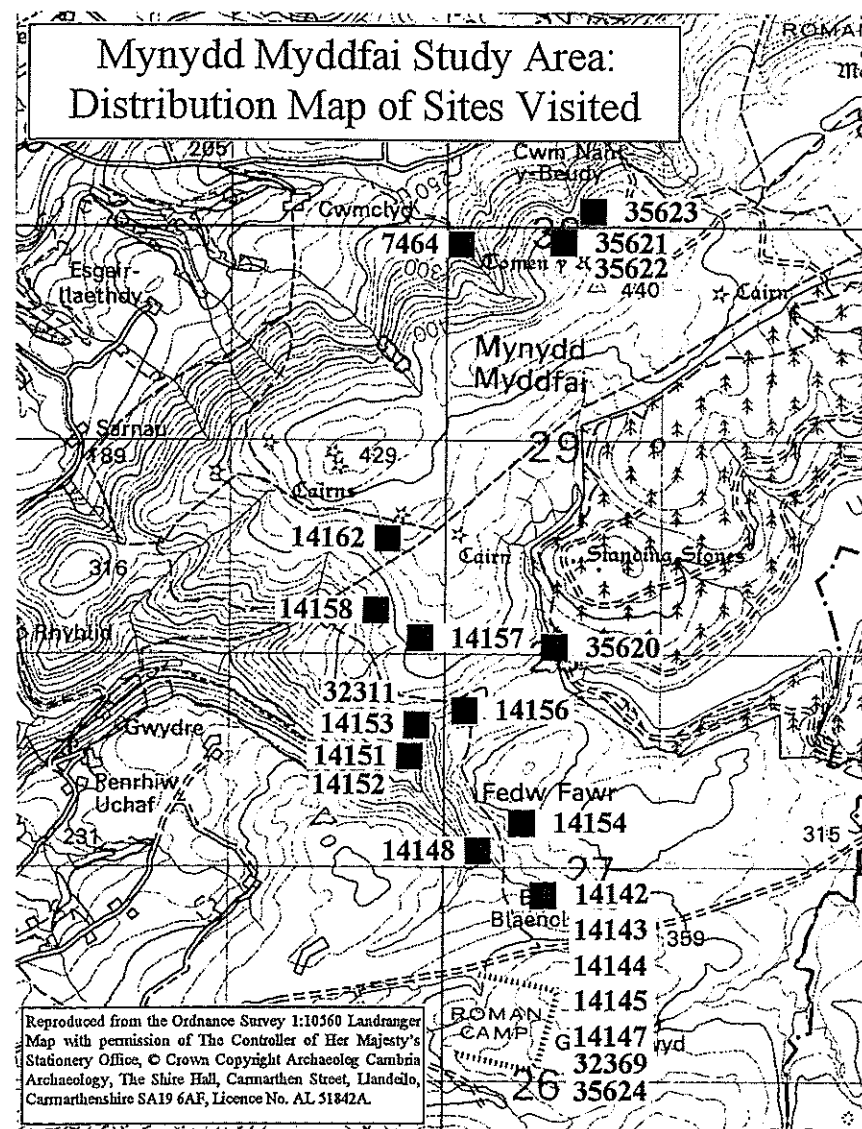
**TABLE 7: PERFEDD STUDY AREA - SITES VISITED**

	PRN	NGR	Name	Description	Type	Characteristic	Value
1	25238	SN79588917	Lluest Fawr Hengwm	Now represented by a very ruinous farmhouse and outbuilding complex of probable 19 <sup>th</sup> century date.	Farmstead; DRS	2	B
2	35680	SN80688905	Lluest y Graig	Sub-rectilinear drystone structure, (with curved ends) measuring 8 x 4.75, appended to which is a drystone enclosure measuring approximately 10m x 10m. The complex occupies a small terrace next to the confluence of the Nant Gwerin and a minor tributary. One of the highest of the Pumlumon <i>lluestau</i> .	Lluest; DRS	2	B
3	35681	SN79758931	Lluest Fach Hengwm	No trace of the dwelling shown on Lewis Morris's map and the parish tithe map was found. The site now appears to be occupied by a large multi-compartmented drystone sheepfold which may overlie or incorporate elements of the dwelling.	Sheepfold	2	B
4	35682	SN78308906	Nant y Llyn	Ruined smallholding/ farmstead complex. Attested to have been occupied into early 20 <sup>th</sup> century.	Farmstead; DRS	2	B
5	35683	SN77468808	Lluest Maesnant	Developed into an upland farmstead, now an Outdoor Pursuits Centre.	Farmstead	2	C
6	35684	SN80809033	Lluest Gelligogau	Relatively well preserved drystone cottage. Overall size 7.4 x 5.8m. Solidly built; gable ends stand up to 2.2m high, other walls to 1.5m. Probably the most remote of the <i>lluestau</i> named by Lewis Morris. Stands in a very sheltered valley site close to the stream edge. A small ancillary structure lies a few metres to E. and measures 4.8 x 4m whilst approx. 30m to N, on opposite stream bank is a small, irregular fold or pen, presumably also ancillary. A 4m section of drystone wall which springs out of the NW corner of the cottage may be a later addition intended to help shepherds drive sheep into structure, which has probably been used as a sheepfold since abandonment.	Lluest; DRS	2	B
7	35685	SN69808472	Lluest y Trafle	Ruinous complex of drystone, rectilinear buildings and ancillary features which includes two main buildings (which are linked by a section of walling which suggest that they may once have formed a continuous range of buildings including a dwelling and	Lluest; DRS	2	B

				outhouses. The largest building measures 8 x 5m, 3m to its E. gable is the second smaller building, measuring approx. 7 x 4m. The second building is less regular in shape and is 1m narrower at its E. end. 10m S. of this structure a small pen with some drystone revetment is cut into the slope - a possible animal or fowl pen, and a few metres south of the largest building is a rectangular enclosure. Probably a garden plot, which measures c.12 x 10m.			
8	35686	SN71838384	Lluest Thomas John Griffith; Lluest fach	Shown as Lluest Fach on 1790 estate map of Blaenmelindwr (E. Davies, 1980, 14). Now a very ruinous (unsafe) cottage, measuring 10 x 5m with two rooms, set in a forest plantation. A stone walled trackway runs past the building. Some enclosure boundaries are apparent but were not examined in detail.	Lluest; DRS	2	C
9	35687	SN71778343	Lluest Thomas John Griffith; Lluest fach	Earth and stone rectilinear structure c. 4.5 x 3m. Possibly an ancillary building to above.	Building; DRS?	2	C
10	35688	SN71258283	Lluest Pencraig Ddu	One of the most interesting of the Pumlumon <i>lluestau</i> . Pencraig Ddu is a hilltop site, sheltered only by linear rocky outcrops which run along the ridge which forms the top of the Nant Silo valley. The dwelling itself is very ruinous. It appears as a single celled structure measuring 11 x 6m. To the SE is an area of enclosed lazy bed cultivation. The lluest occupiers took advantage of both the shelter offered by the rock outcrops and the way in which they divide up the flattish top to the ridge. Earth banks have been built to further parcel the land between the outcrops.	Lluest; DRS	2	A
11	35689	SN72998350	Lluest Glanydwr	This site seems to have been badly damaged by either road works or associated water works - a manhole on the site suggests considerable disturbance has occurred. No trace of a building dwelling survives on the surface at this point, but an enclosure measuring 18m x 12 is present, including possible cultivation ridges. 60m N. of the supposed dwelling site, on boggy ground close to the stream, is a ruinous drystone structure, 5.5 x 5m, with two narrow compartments, open ended to the N. This is probably an animal or fowl pen.	Lluest; DRS		

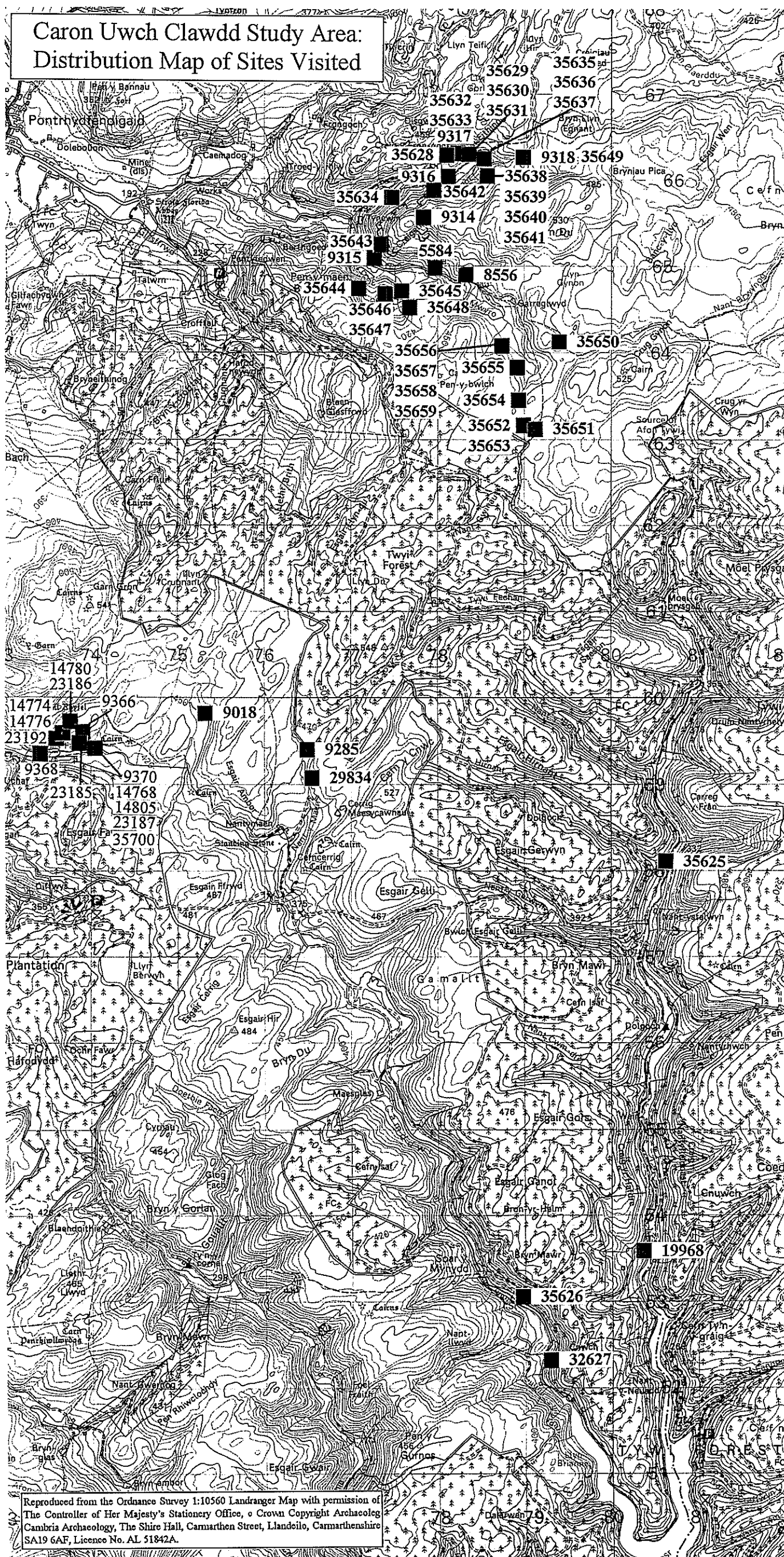
12	35690	SN72988349	Glanydwr	10m SW of above site, on opposite side of road, is a platform, 7m <sup>2</sup> which might have been truncated by the road. No structure on platform, although some scattered stone is present. Any relationship with Lluest Glanydwr is unknown, but proximity suggests a possible link.	DRS? Platform	2	C
13	35691	SN72658610	Lluest Gwarydraig	No evidence found of <i>lluest</i> .	Lluest; DRS	2?	D
14	35692	SN73998329	Nant Dinas I	Well preserved drystone complex which includes a possible deserted settlement in the form of an 11 x 5m structure, with two compartments, appended to the E. side of which is a rectangular fold measuring c. 11m x 8m - the whole complex appears to be of one build. Access gained into either of the smaller compartments from the main yard, but there is no connecting access way between them - this may indicate that they are actually fold compartments rather than an abandoned dwelling. However, within 30m to the NE there is another, more irregular earth & stone banked fold, 12m <sup>2</sup> , and a 4 x 2.5m cut which may represent a potato clamp. This latter feature may be indicative of some settlement nearby.	Sheepfold; DRS?	2	C
15	35693	SN74038349	Nant Dinas II	200m upstream, N., of above site is the poorly preserved remains of a possible DRS site. Represented only by a slight earth bank which hint at a rectangular structure measuring c. 8 x 4m, and an appended enclosure measuring c. 7.5 x 8m. On very sheltered terrace alongside stream.	DRS?	2	C
16	35694	SN73138610	Bwlchystyllen II	Purpose of this structure unclear. It is a drystone ruin built on a man-made terrace cut below, and parallel to, the road to nearby Bwlchystyllen Farm. It has two cells, overall measurement 12m x 10 maximum. The SE cell is only 2m wide internally. A further compartment lies at the SE end, although this appears to be external and no entrance into appears to have existed from the other cells. Possibly an old cottage site or a simple fold.	Cottage? DRS? Sheepfold?	2	C
17	35695	SN72338435	Carreg y Marchfaen	Traces of a two-compartmented structure, presumed to be a settlement site, remain on a cross contour platform. 12 x 5m overall. Wall bases are of stone and earth, with some drystone	DRS	2	B

				walling evident. The S. side of the structure has been damaged, probably by agricultural activity. However, some ephemeral features survive a few metres upslope to the W. in the form of a patch of eroded lazy bed cultivation ridges and a 3 x 1.5m depression which may be a single potato clamp. An earth-banked enclosure measuring 12 x 8m is appended to the N. side of the dwelling. This site has all the components of a typical llost site.			
18	35696	SN72678445	Syfrdrin	Ruined farmstead complex.	Farmstead; DRS	2	C
19	35697	SN73438339	Disgwylfa Fach I	Bare platform 12 x 5m, on natural terrace. Shelter offered by outcropping rocks on W. and N. side, but open to the S. and E.	Platform; DRS?	2	B
20	35698	SN73528330	Disgwylfa Fach II	Bare platform 12 x 7m, on exposed S. facing slope.	Platform; DRS?	2	B
21	35699	SN73548328	Disgwylfa Fach III	Bare platform 9 x 4m, on exposed S. facing slope.	Platform; DRS?	2	B





# Caron Uwch Clawdd Study Area: Distribution Map of Sites Visited



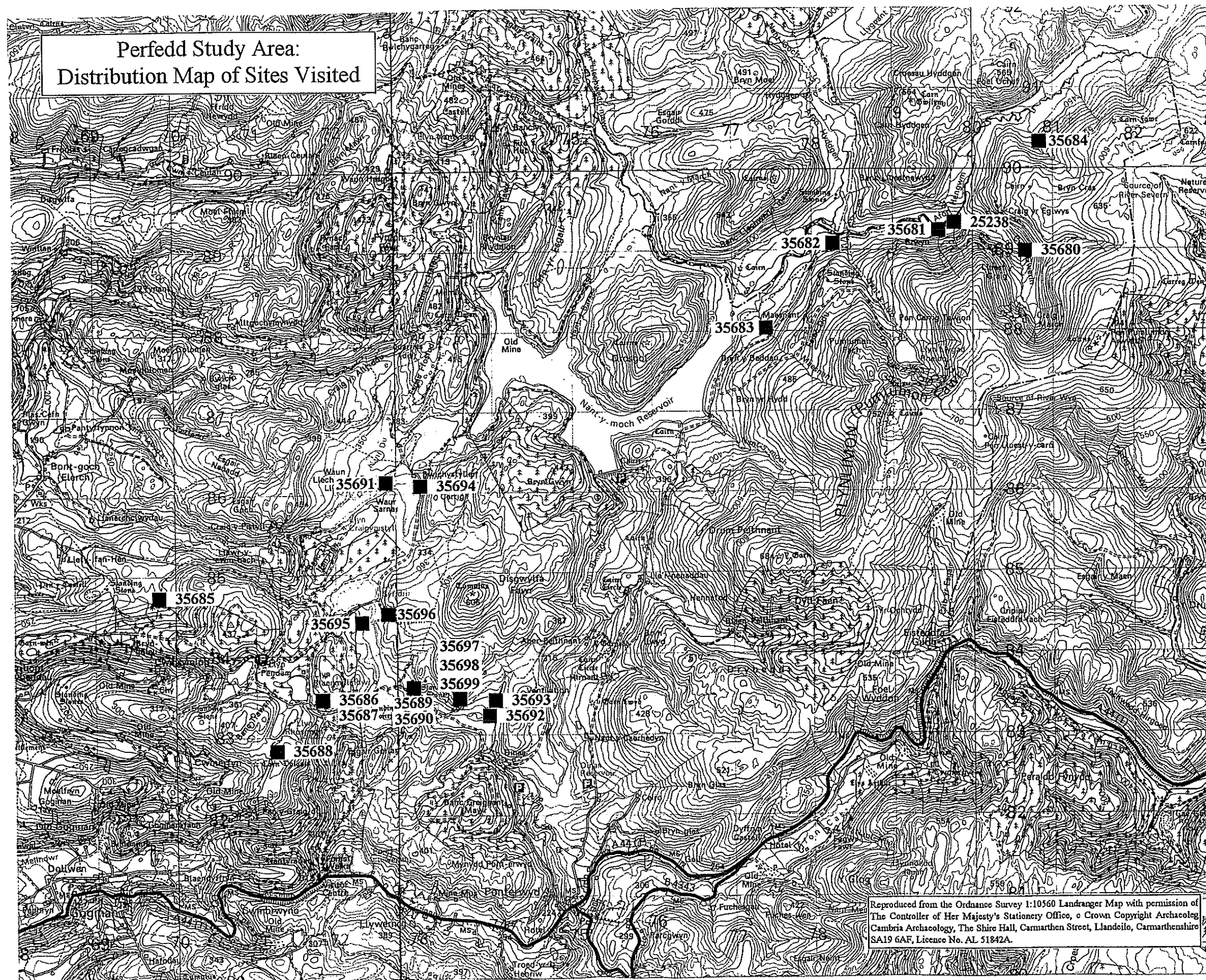
**Gwnnws Study Area:  
Distribution Map of Sites Visited**

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A detailed topographic map of the Llanbadarn y Creuddyn Uchaf study area. The map features contour lines indicating elevation, with peaks reaching over 600 feet. A network of roads is shown, including the A44 and B4343. Numerous locations are labeled, such as Bryn Glas, Dyffryn Castell, Hotel, Glog, Fuches Wen, Ysturtuwr, and Devils Bridge. Black squares mark specific sites visited, each accompanied by a number (e.g., 34893, 34895, 34897, 34899, 34900, 34891, 34901, 34921, 34910, 34905, 34904, 9423, 34903, 9424, 34912, 34919, 34922, 34864, 34859, 34856, 34857, 34877, 34874, 34882, 34880, 34884, 34886, 34887, 34888, 34890). Some sites are also marked with letters like 'MS' or 'F'. The map includes a title box at the top left and a reproduction notice at the bottom right.



Perfedd Study Area:  
Distribution Map of Sites Visited



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