

# **BRECHFA FARM**

## **W/13/2271**

### **Tir Gofal Farm Visit Report**



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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Tir Gofal Farm Visit Report

By

Cambria Archaeology

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This report is intended to provide a statement on the condition and recommended management of all known archaeological and historical sites and features on this farm at the time it was visited by Cambria Archaeology. This information will be used to inform the Tir Gofal Management Agreement for the farm.

### **Method Statement**

The farm visit consisted of two phases:

Phase 1 was a rapid search of all readily available documentary, cartographic and published sources to try to understand the historical development of the farm and the wider landscape and to identify new sites of archaeological interest. The searches undertaken include information held in the regional Sites and Monuments Record, the relevant County Records Office and the National Library of Wales. New sites, or areas of interest were plotted onto a Geographical Information Systems based map for use during the field survey and for the final report.

Phase 2 was a farm visit to assess the extent, character and current condition of the archaeological and historical sites identified during the research phase. Due to constraints recording is rapid and consists of photographs and sites notes. Some of the sites may not have been visited. The information gained during the visit has been used to determine their management recommendations.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FARM

Brechfa Farm consists of two holdings. The larger of the holdings is centred on Brechfa Farm itself with a detached holding c.0.5km to the north. Both holdings lie within a landscape of irregular fields interspersed with tracks, roads, rivers and in the case of the Brechfa Farm holding, the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Maenclochog Railway (PRN 44879). The detached holding was formerly part of Llandre Fawr Farm.

Brechfa Farm was shown on a 1773 estate map (NLW ref: Picton Castle Volume 1, pg. 31) as Vrechfa Uchaf. The map also showed that the southeast portion of the main holding belonged to Vrechfa Issa, a smaller farm, which was abandoned sometime during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and now only traces of the buildings and enclosures survive (PRN 23242). It is clear from the 1773 map that the pattern of fields and boundaries that makes up the present landscape was already established by the later 18<sup>th</sup> century. The boundaries across the farm's two holdings are earth banks, which were formerly topped with hedges, although in many cases these have grown out to become mature trees. Some of the boundaries have been flattened, but their lines are traceable as a line of a few trees across a field. The original boundaries are no longer stock proof, but most now have wire fences alongside.

The western edges of both holdings extend down to the Afon Rhyd-afallen, which occupies a narrow stream valley that was utilised by small settlements (PRNs 444875, 444876), consisting of cottages and small garden enclosures, some of which date from at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The cottages were probably for employees of the Picton Castle Estate and possibly for workers employed on the Brechfa Farm.

The detached holding is similar in character to the main holding, but it is divided by Llandre Lane (PRN 44881), which may have medieval origins, although it is more likely to be a post-medieval track associated with Llandre farm.

Only two traditional farm buildings survive at Brechfa, a former cowshed with loft over and a row of loose boxes, now incorporated into a recent sectional steel shed, and both have been heavily altered. The former cowshed has had major alterations, including a new roof, which had been raised by c.0.5m and the interior has been plastered throughout obscuring any fixtures or fittings that may have survived. The openings had red brick arches and the doors in the front wall had been blocked. A former door to the loft in the north gable wall had been replaced by a window. A building was shown in this location on the 1773 estate map, but it is difficult to trace any of the original fabric with all the later changes. A large rectangular sectional steel-framed and concrete building, constructed sometime post-1908, was built as an indoor riding school.

## MAIN MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list of recommendations outlines the main requirements necessary to protect and enhance the historic character and landscape of the farm and the individual features it contains.

The traditional buildings at the Brechfa farmyard along with the sectional concrete former riding school building should be maintained their present condition.

The present layout of boundaries dates largely from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and, where possible, the boundaries should be retained. The two cottage sites PRN 44875 and 44876 are close to the line of a footpath, now virtually impassable, shown on recent Ordnance Survey maps and they should be cleared and made visible as they are interesting examples of the changing patterns of rural settlement.

PRNs 14333 and 14334

The area of the cropmarks should be excluded from ploughing or other ground breaking operations.

PRN 23242

The site of the buildings should be cleared of brambles and regenerating vegetation. Cattle should be excluded from the site of the buildings. No material should be dumped on or removed from the site of the buildings.

PRN 44875

The remains of the cottage should be maintained in their present condition. Vegetation could be cleared and regular monitoring should be carried out to ensure that no trees become established on the surviving structure. The outbuilding/possible pigsty should be retained in its current condition. No stones should be removed from either structure. These features along with PRN 44876 make interesting features along the line of a footpath, which is shown on recent Ordnance Survey maps.

PRN 44876

The surviving building should be cleared of vegetation, although major trees could be left, to expose the remains of the building. The associated enclosure banks could also be partially cleared. The vegetation should be cut and allowed to die back before it is removed, in order to protect as much of the surviving structure as possible. This site, along with PRN 44875, is located close to the line of a footpath and they could be cleared to sites of interest along the path.

PRN 44879 (railway and bridge)

To protect the structure of the bridge, the ivy should be removed by cutting the main stem at the base and allowing the plant to die back before removing it. The embankment and track-bed should be maintained in its present condition.

## **SITE AND AREA DESIGNATIONS**

The following abbreviations are used in the gazetteer to refer to site and area status designations.

### **SAM.**

Scheduled Ancient Monument. SAMs are notified under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The register of SAMs is maintained and administered by Cadw.

### **LB1, LB2\* & LB2.**

Listed Building categories. Listed buildings are notified under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The list is maintained and administered by Cadw.

### **HL - Landscapes of Exceptional and Great Historic Interest.**

Defined by the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales: Part 2.1 Landscapes of Exceptional and Great Historic Interest. The register is advisory only and has no statutory powers. The register is being compiled by Cadw in partnership with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and is concerned with historic elements of the landscape.

### **HGP - Register of Historic Gardens & Parks.**

Defined by the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales: Part 1 - Parks & Gardens. The register is advisory only and has no statutory powers. The register is being compiled by Cadw in partnership with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and is concerned with historic elements of the landscape.

## GAZETTEER OF SITES AND MONUMENTS

<b>PRN</b>	4464	<b>Site Name</b>	Parc Maen Llwyd	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN09652163
<b>Site Type</b>	Standing stone	<b>Period</b>	Bronze Age	<b>Site status</b>	

### Description

A field name on the Llan-y-cefen parish tithe map of 1844 indicating the possible presence of a standing stone. No stone survives.

### Recommendations

No specific management recommendations.

**Site Category** D

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<b>PRN</b>	14333	<b>Site Name</b>	Brechfa	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN09442245
<b>Site Type</b>	Cropmark	<b>Period</b>	Prehistoric	<b>Site status</b>	

### Description

A cropmarked site identified in 1989 as 'a presumed concentric antenna enclosure (presumed because the flanking entrance ditches are not certain). Maximum diameter of cropmark 235m; inner enclosure 65m, entrance in northwest. Hints of field ditches outside on the northeast side and possible internal division in outer enclosure' (information taken from SMR record form). There are visible traces of the enclosure on the ground.

### Recommendations

The area of the cropmarks should be accurately plotted from rectified air photographs and the area defined. This area should then be excluded from ploughing or other ground breaking operations.

**Site Category** D

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<b>PRN</b>	14334	<b>Site Name</b>	Brechfa II	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN 099219
<b>Site Type</b>	Cropmark	<b>Period</b>	Prehistoric	<b>Site status</b>	

### **Description**

A cropmarked site, first identified during an air survey in 1989 and recorded as a probable concentric antenna enclosure, with an entrance to the south. There are no visible traces of the enclosure on the ground.

### **Recommendations**

The area of the cropmarks should be accurately plotted from rectified air photographs and the area defined. This area should then be excluded from ploughing or other ground breaking operations

**Site Category** D

<b>PRN</b>	17623	<b>Site Name</b>	Brechfa farm	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN09922168
<b>Site Type</b>	Quarry	<b>Period</b>	Post-medieval	<b>Site status</b>	

### **Description**

Quarry shown and labelled on the Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:10560 map (sheet Pembs. XXIV.NW) published in 1908. In an area of woodland, and not found during this farm visit.

### **Recommendations**

Maintain as a landscape feature, do not use for dumping and keep clear of rubbish.

**Site Category** D



<b>PRN</b>	23242	<b>Site Name</b>	Brechfa Isaf	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN10302207
<b>Site Type</b>	DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENT	<b>Period</b>	Post-medieval	<b>Site status</b>	

### Description

An 18<sup>th</sup> century farm shown on a Picton Castle Estate map of 1773 as Vrechfa Issa. The farm and has now been incorporated into modern Brechfa Farm and the house and yard area was abandoned in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today the site consists only of a few low walls, which survive as earth covered banks, from the house and outbuildings and vestiges of the enclosure banks. Trees grow on most of the banks, some of the walls and inside the enclosures; the trees are used as shelter by cattle, which is causing severe erosion. Material created by the construction of a new track has been dumped on the south side of the former buildings. It is difficult to assess the extent of the surviving buildings from the surface evidence, but a reasonable amount of internal detail may survive.

### Recommendations

The site of the buildings should be cleared of brambles and regenerating vegetation. Cattle should be excluded from the site of the buildings. No material should be dumped on or removed from the site of the buildings.

**Site Category** C



PRN 23242 – The remains of Brechfa Isaf farm, showing the tree growth on the site.

<b>PRN</b>	23299	<b>Site Name</b>	Cwm Barau	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN09982175
<b>Site Type</b>	DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENT	<b>Period</b>	Post-medieval	<b>Site status</b>	

### **Description**

Cwm Barau was an early 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement, which on the Llan-y-cefen parish tithe map of 1844 consisted of a cottage set within a small garden enclosure. It was abandoned sometime during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and today the site lies in an area of overgrown woodland. The site was not seen during the farm visit, as its location must be overgrown, so it is not clear what if anything remains. The site lies in an area that is outside normal farming operations and is therefore reasonably well protected.

### **Recommendations**

No specific management recommendations, but if the woodland is to be brought into active management then archaeological advice should be sought prior to felling close to the site.

**Site Category** D

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<b>PRN</b>	44875	<b>Site Name</b>	Cwm Brechfa	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN09212228
<b>Site Type</b>	DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENT	<b>Period</b>	Post-medieval	<b>Site status</b>	

### Description

Cottage and outbuilding shown on the Llan-y-cefen parish tithe map of 1844. The site was still shown on the Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:10560 (sheet Pembs. XXIV.NW) map of 1908, but it had been abandoned by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the cottage is visible only as low, vegetation-covered walls, sitting on a terrace cut into the steep wooded slope. The outbuilding survives in better condition, as a single-cell building, c.2.5m x 2m with a slate gabled roof.. Entry was gained via a single door in the south gable wall. Low stone walls forming a second cell are visible to the south of the structure. It is possible that the second cell was a small yard and the building was an in-and-out pigsty.

### Recommendations

The remains of the cottage should be maintained in their present condition. Vegetation could be cleared and regular monitoring should be carried out to ensure that no trees become established on the surviving structure. The outbuilding/possible pigsty should be retained in its current condition. No stones should be removed from either structure. These features along with PRN 44876 make interesting features along the footpath, which is shown on recent Ordnance Survey maps.

**Site Category** C



PRN 44875 – The remains of the small outbuilding, possible pigsty, showing the collapsed roof.



<b>PRN</b>	44876	<b>Site Name</b>	Cwm Brechfa	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN09122247
<b>Site Type</b>	DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENT	<b>Period</b>	Post-medieval	<b>Site status</b>	

### Description

Small settlement shown on a Picton Castle estate map of 1773 (NLW ref: Picton Castle Volume 1, pg.31) on a small terrace on the bank of the Afon Rhyd-afallen. On the Llan-y-cefen parish tithe map of 1844 two buildings are shown, but only one was shown on the Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:10560 map (sheet Pembs.XXIX.NW) of 1908. The building that survived until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is in an area of dense woodland, although the external walls and several internal walls are visible surviving to a height of c.1m. The building is positioned just below a large flat terrace cut into the steep hillslope, which was formerly occupied by the second building shown on the tithe map. There are no visible traces of this building, although there is a large amount of roof slate spread across the surface.

This settlement site is now very overgrown and despite there being a footpath marked on recent Ordnance Survey maps it does not appear to have been visited for many years. Enclosures associated with the settlement are just visible within the woodland, but they are in poor condition and frequently difficult to trace. The site well outside the area of normal farming operations and the woodland is not actively managed.

### Recommendations

The surviving building should be cleared of vegetation, although major trees could be left, to expose the remains of the building. The associated enclosure banks could also be partially cleared. The footpath should be cleared and this site and the nearby settlement PRN 44875 would make interesting features along the path. The vegetation should be cut and allowed to die back before it is removed, in order to protect as much of the surviving structure as possible.

### Site Category C



PRN 44876 – The very overgrown remains of the cottage.

<b>PRN</b>	44879	<b>Site Name</b>	Maenclochog Railway	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN10152144 SN10002350
<b>Site Type</b>	Dismantled railway	<b>Period</b>	Post-medieval	<b>Site status</b>	

### Description

The line of the former Maenclochog Railway, constructed in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. In places the line survives as a large embankment, up to 3m high and 6m wide. It crosses the Eastern Cleddau on a single span stone bridge at SN10290979. Most of the disused track-bed is now utilised as a farm track. The embankment survives in good condition and the bridge over the Eastern Cleddau is also in good condition, although there is some ivy growth on the low parapet walls.

### Recommendations

To protect the structure of the bridge, the ivy should be removed by cutting the main stem at the base and allowing the plant to die back before removing it. The embankment and track-bed should be maintained in its present condition.

**Site Category** C



PRN \*\*\*\* - a view southwest along the former track bed of the Maenclochog Railway across the bridge over the Eastern Cleddau. The track bed and the bridge and the bridge are in good condition.

<b>PRN</b>	44880	<b>Site Name</b>	Llwyn-crwys	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN09672260
<b>Site Type</b>	DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENT	<b>Period</b>	Post-medieval	<b>Site status</b>	

#### **Description**

Cottage shown on the Llan-y-cefen parish tithe map of 1844 and named Llwyn-Crwys on the Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:10560 map (sheet Pembs.XXIV.NW) published in 1891. Today the site is occupied by a new sectional steel and timber shed. There are no visible remains of any earlier structures.

#### **Recommendations**

No specific management recommendations.

**Site Category** D

<b>PRN</b>	44882	<b>Site Name</b>	Ty Newydd	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN10102128
<b>Site Type</b>	DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENT	<b>Period</b>	Post-medieval	<b>Site status</b>	

#### **Description**

Cottage alongside railway line, first shown on the Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:10560 map (sheet Pembs.XXIV.NW), but gone by the time the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition maps were published in 1908. This site was not visited, so its condition is not certain.

#### **Recommendations**

If there are any surviving remains they should be maintained in their present condition. No stones should be removed and the site should not be used as a dump.

**Site Category** D



<b>PRN</b>	44881	<b>Site Name</b>	Llandre Lane	<b>Grid Reference</b>	SN08762351
<b>Site Type</b>	Track	<b>Period</b>	Post-medieval	<b>Site status</b>	SN09512359

### Description

Embanked track leading from Llandre farm to an area of woodland on the edge of the narrow valley of the Afon Rhyd-afallen. This track, which has existed in its present form since at least the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, is 3-4m wide and the banks are c.1m high and topped with mature hedges. It is still maintained and used as a farm track.

### Recommendations

The track should be maintained in its present condition.

**Site Category** C



PRN 44881 - view west along Llandre Lane.

## REFERENCES

- 1773 Plan of Vrechfa Uchaf and Vrechfa Issa (NLW ref: Picton Castle Volume 1, pg.31)
- 1844 Llan-y-cefen parish tithe map and apportionment
- 1891 Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:10560 (sheet Pembs. XXIV.NW)
- 1908 Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:10560 (sheet Pembs. XXIV.NW)



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