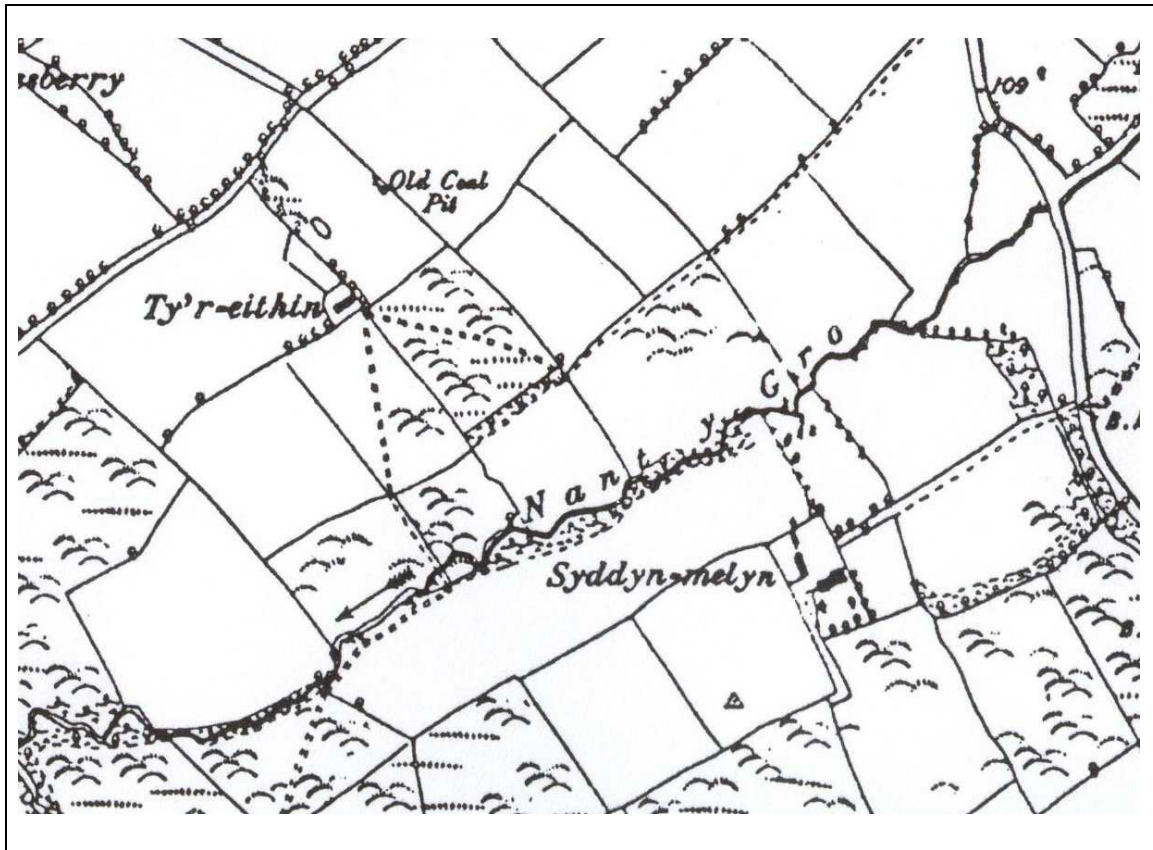


# Syddyn-Melyn W/12/1531

## Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report Call Out



Detail from 6 inches to 1mile Ordnance Survey map of 1891 showing Syddyn-melyn farmstead and Ty'r-eithin cottage

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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Syddyn-Melyn  
Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report  
Call Out

By

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### **Introduction**

A farm visit was undertaken at the request of the Countryside Council for Wales to address specific management issues on this farm. The aim of this report is to make an assessment of these issues in order to provide management recommendations to be incorporated into the Tir Gofal Management Plan. This report is not intended to assess the structural condition or stability of any given site.

The Call Out Report responds to management concerns regarding specific sites, it does not provide management advice for all known sites on the farm, for these recommendations please refer to the Historic Environment Report 1 (He1).

### **General Description of Farm**

Syddyn-Melyn is centred on grid reference SN44900597 and lies within the community of Trimsaran in Carmarthenshire.

The farm holding comprises a series of regular, medium sized rectilinear enclosures on either side of the Nant y Gro. Surviving earthworks indicate that ridge and furrow (PRN 24539) was carried out in the vicinity of the holding and the field boundaries may represent the enclosure of former strip fields. The tithe map indicates that the process of enclosure was still taking place after 1841.

Coal mining was carried out in this area from an early date and as far back as 1540 Leland writes. "Ther lieth along on each side of Wendraeth Vawr Pittes where menne digge coal" (Thomas 1926-7, 38). A number of pits were known to be operating around Trimsaran by the 18th century. Little is known of coal working in the holding area of Syddyn-melyn itself, although one "Old Coal Pit" is marked on the Ordnance Survey map of 1891.

The farmstead of Syddyn-melyn (PRN 24544) first appears on the 1 inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map of 1830. It follows an L-shaped plan with buildings facing on to a partial courtyard. This layout remains comparatively unchanged today. The farmhouse with attached outbuildings is situated at right angles to a barn. Modern buildings have been added to the north and west.

Ty'r-Eithin cottage (PRN 24545) occupies rising ground on the opposite side of the valley. It is typical of many small rural dwellings which were built up until the end of the nineteenth century. These were the homes of the rural poor; small holders or landless labourers living off a wage. The cottage is of a late nineteenth century date, although is now derelict having fallen out of use some time ago. A call out visit was requested in order to make a preliminary record of this building and advise on its sympathetic restoration.

### **Ty'r Eithin Cottage PRN24545**

A derelict one-and-a-half storey cottage above the Nant y Gro. It appears on the 6 inches to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map of 1891 and is probably of a later nineteenth century date. It has been abandoned for some time and is now roofless. This cottage is typical of many small rural dwellings, which were built up until the end of the nineteenth century. These were typically the dwellings of landless labourers living off a wage or poor peasants assisted by employment on larger farms. Ty'r Eithin cottage was probably abandoned after the land was acquired by the coal board in advance of anthracite extraction sometime in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 9m E-W by 6m N-S. It is of stone rubble construction and substantially built, with walls averaging 0.5m thick and roughly squared quoins. None of the original roofing materials survive, although like similar examples, it was probably slated originally.

The front (north) wall of the cottage faces on to a garden enclosure. A central doorway is flanked on either side by rectangular windows. This wall survives to eaves height at either end, although is diminished around the door and window heads where the lintels have collapsed. The rear (south) wall survives to near full height for the entire length. A small rectangular ground floor window arranged centrally is the only opening in this wall. The east gable end is complete and is dominated by a wide fireplace, offset from centre to the right. It is about 3m wide by 1.5m high with yellow brick dressings supported on an iron lintel.

A small fireplace, about a metre wide, is set into the west gable end. The fireplace is partially collapsed internally, although the wall stands to near full height.

The original ceramic tile floor remains, although it obscured by vegetation in places. No sign of any original internal partitions was observed and the historic internal layout of the cottage is not known.

A modern annex abuts the southwest gable end of the cottage. It measures approximately 3.5m N-S by 6m E-W. The walls are diminished and stand to no more than 1.5m. Internal debris suggest that the annex may originally have had a corrugated iron roof.

### **Statement of Condition**

Despite its derelict state, the cottage remains in a relatively stable condition. Water ingress continues to wash out masonry bonds in the exposed wall tops however. Some mosses and ferns have become rooted in the masonry. Young trees have become established in the wall footings and inside the building.



Plate 1- Ty'r Eithin cottage viewed from the south-east.



Plate 2- view of fireplace in west gable end.

### **Proposed Works/ Management Recommendations**

The landowner is keen to return the cottage to a weatherproof condition under the Tir Gofal scheme. Cottages of this type recall a time of increased rural population before social change led to their abandonment or change out of all recognition. Restoring Ty'r Eithin cottage will secure its long-term future at a time when many similar buildings are being lost. The cottage will subsequently be used as a store for agricultural materials.

The restoration works should be based around the principle that replacement building materials should be compatible with those traditionally used. Where the original appearance of a part of the building is not already known, it will be appropriate to seek comparison with similar examples. This will ensure that the historic character of the building is appropriately maintained.

The cottage will require some masonry consolidation and rebuilding before it can be re-roofed. It is important that these works are in keeping with its historic appearance. Rebuilt wall sections should not project beyond original wall height and original door and window openings should be retained. The original stone from the walls remains where it has fallen around the edge of the building and will provide appropriate material for the rebuild. If additional stone is required, it should be similar in appearance to that used originally.

The roof trusses, purlins, battens and slates are also to be replaced. The true appearance of the roof is not known. It is important that the replacement trusses are of traditional materials, made with traditional techniques in this instance. The timbers in the nineteenth century agricultural buildings at Syddyn Melyn farmstead will provide a useful source of comparison to inform these restoration works.

It is preferred that replacement slates should be from a local source. It is intended that a supply of redundant slates from a nearby converted building will be used to re-roof Syddyn-Melyn cottage.

The landowners have expressed a desire to remove the annex, which abuts the west end of the cottage. It is a modern structure and out of keeping with the historic character of the cottage. Its removal is to be welcomed and will enhance the cottages historic appearance.

A preliminary archaeological record was made during the call out visit. This comprised notes, an annotated sketch plan and some digital photos. It is recommended that further recording should be made during and after restoration works in order to enhance the existing record of the structure. Some guidelines on the general photographic survey of buildings are attached.

Restoring the cottage will also require some general vegetation clearance, both with the cottage itself and around the site in general. Care should be taken during these works not to damage any associated structures, which may presently be obscured.

**References**

Ordnance Survey 1891 Carmarthenshire Sheet LIII NE, 6"

Ordnance Survey 1907 Carmarthenshire Sheet LIII NE, 6"

Tithe Map and Apportionment 1841 Pembrey Parish

Thomas,R.G (1926-7) Pembrey Parish: Early Industrial Efforts in Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society Field Club Vol. XX



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