

Brynele W/11/1795

**Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report
Call Out**

Report No. 2004/06

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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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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

Brynele Farm lies at grid reference SN56676031, in the community of Nantcwnlle. A farm visit was previously undertaken for this holding, and an HE2 report produced in April 2002. In response to a request from a Tir Gofal Project Officer a further visit was carried out by Cambria Archaeology on Friday 12th December.

A call-out visit was requested to address the management of a group of sites in the northeast of the holding – PRNs 44834 – 44840. These sites are set near to an area of ridge and furrow which was not previously allocated a number, but has now been given the number PRN 49945. These sites all represent traces of post-medieval settlement, probably dating to the 17th – mid 19th centuries. Brynele occupies an upland position, and much of the land in the north of the farm holding was unclosed until the late 19th century. It was probably common moorland for much of the post-Medieval period (Ludlow, N:2002:5). Land of this nature was often occupied by the poorest members of rural society, who encroached illegally onto the commons during a period of significant population expansion and increasing pressure on productive agricultural land. Some of the original dwellings on these so-called ‘squatter’ settlements would have been *tai unnos* – cottages built according to a tradition that, provided there was smoke from the chimney by daybreak, the occupant was entitled to keep the house and the plot of land around it (Cadw:2002:14). Such houses would have been flimsy and badly constructed, and were probably re-built shortly afterwards.

Proposed Works

These sites were highlighted on the original HE2 report, and it was recommended that no ground intrusive activities should be undertaken around the sites. However, when the final Tir Gofal Farm Management Plan was drawn up and signed, it was found that the fields containing these sites had been included in an area due to be ploughed for root-crops. Once this had been realised, Cambria Archaeology were asked to visit again, to assess to the extent of the archaeology and to agree a suitable margin around the sites to protect them from damage.

When the farm visit was undertaken, an added complication arose! The sites had unfortunately been mis-located on the maps provided with the HE2. **The map and site descriptions provided with this report, therefore, should be considered the most up-to-date information available, and should supercede the original HE2.** It must be stressed that this applies only to the section of land shown on the attached map – the management recommendations made in the HE2 for other sites on the farm are not affected. The sites are still included within fields due for ploughing under the Tir Gofal Management Plan.

Management Recommendations

The sites potentially contain valuable evidence for early post-Medieval settlement of the uplands. They also have a 'group value' – the presence of one deserted farmstead (PRN 44838), a probable long hut (PRN 44835), plough marks (PRN 49945) and a further deserted building and yard (PRN 44834) implies that this area was occupied for some time, and indicates that further features may yet come to light. The preservation and maintenance of these sites is therefore important.

A recommended 'no-plough zone' is shaded in red on the attached map. The eastern part of this 'zone', against the farm boundary, is an area of wet, marshy grassland with rushes and is therefore designated as a habitat area for Tir Gofal. This habitat is protected from all intrusive activities – including ploughing – so it should be straightforward to extend this protection further to the west to also cover the areas of archaeological sensitivity.

The plough marks are also included in this 'no-plough zone'. The marks are only visible on the steepest part of the slope, and it was not felt that this section of the field was particularly suitable for modern root-crop cultivation. However, the level areas of ground above and below the plough marks now contain no visible earthworks, and can be included in an arable rotation if necessary.

Recommendations specific to individual sites are made in the gazetteer.

Gazetteer of Sites Affected

PRN	44834	Site Name	Grid Reference	SN57586074
Site Type	DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENT	Period	POST- MEDIEVAL	

Description

The site of a rectangular building, now represented by low turf banks. At most there are only 0.1m high. They contain some limestone rubble and are, presumably, of crude, drystone construction. The building measures approximately 4m east-west and 2m north-south and is set across an east-facing hillslope at the northeast edge of the farm holding.

Adjacent to the building, similar low banks define a roughly rectangular 'yard', around 8m x 4m. The site probably derives from 'squatter' settlement – illegal encroachment onto the unenclosed common moorland. This took place during the 17th – mid 19th centuries, as pressure on productive agricultural land grew and the rural population increased.

The site is not marked on historic maps, so it is possible that it had been abandoned prior to the production of the 1834 Ordnance Survey map (the earliest historic map consulted).

There is no visible evidence for any other accompanying enclosures, and this small settlement may have been pastoral. However, it is interesting to note that there are plough marks (date unknown) surviving on the steepest part of the slope in the field 150m to the south.

Condition and Management Aims

The site is in a good, stable condition and is not eroded or poached by stock. The aim for this site is to maintain an even grass covering, and to ensure that neither the earthwork itself, nor any associated buried archaeology, is damaged or disturbed.

Recommendations

The site is included in a recommended 'no-plough' zone.

Site Category B

PRN 44835 **Site Name** **Grid Reference** SN57606078

Site Type LONG HUT? **Period** POST-MEDIEVAL

Description

A rectangular platform cut into an east facing hillslope at the northeast edge of the holding. The platform measures around 3m north-south and 1m east-west. The eastern edge of the platform seems to be cut by a sheepwalk or footpath.

The feature may represent a long hut, suggesting that it belongs to early post-medieval settlement, when this part of the holding was still open, unenclosed moorland. There is no visible, physical evidence for associated enclosures which could have been used for cultivation, so it is possible that the settlement was largely or completely pastoral. However, it is worth noting that there are plough marks (date unknown) surviving on the steepest part of the slope in the field 150m to the south. The site is not marked on historic maps so may have fallen out of use before the production of the 1834 Ordnance Survey map (the earliest historic map consulted).

Condition and Management Aims

The site is in fair –good condition and does not appear to be suffering from any erosion or poaching. The aim for this site is to maintain an even grass covering, and to ensure that neither the earthwork itself, nor any associated buried archaeology, is damaged or disturbed.

Recommendations

The site is in a recommended ‘no-plough’ zone.

Site Category B

PRN 44836 **Site Name** BLAENPANT **Grid Reference** SN57566058

Site Type LONG HUT? **Period** POST-MEDIEVAL

Description

The site of a possible long hut within the abandoned farmstead of Blaen Pant (PRN 44838). The building is defined, at its west end, by a vertical rock outcrop about 1m high and 3m north-south. Leading eastwards away from this exposed rock are two parallel banks of earth and rubble. These are presumably the remains of the north and south walls of a building. This structure may have been a long hut, suggesting that Blaen Pant farmstead originated as early post-Medieval settlement of unenclosed common land. Blaen Pant is seen on historic maps including the 1834 Ordnance Survey map, but seems to have fallen out of use by the time of the 1906 Ordnance Survey map.

Condition and Management Aims

See also PRN 44838. This feature survives only as tumbled lines of stone set within an area of light scrub and some tree-growth. It is generally stable, and the area is currently grazed. The management aim for this feature is to maintain the stability and visibility of the stone remains.

Recommendations

See recommendations made for Blaen Pant farmstead (PRN 44838).

Site Category C

PRN	44837	Site Name	Grid Reference	SN57536068
Site Type	BUILDING?	Period	POST-MEDIEVAL	

Description

The 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps (1891 and 1906) depict a building here, with a small yard or enclosure directly to the south of it. There is now no clear physical evidence for the site, though there is apparently a short stretch of limestone rubble walling remaining, the continuation of a field boundary bank. This may have been the south wall of the building seen on the 1891 map (Ludlow,N:2002:25). There is no trace of the yard to the south.

Condition and Management Aims

Any remains of this building are very fragmentary and slight. The management aim should be to ensure that any buried archaeology is not damaged.

Recommendations

The building is set into the corner of a field, against a field boundary. No stonework should be removed from the field banks. Ploughing should not be carried out tightly against the field banks in order to prevent damage to any remaining archaeology.

Site Category D

PRN	44838	Site Name	BLAEN PANT	Grid Reference	SN57586058
Site Type	FARMSTEAD	Period	POST- MEDIEVAL		

Description

The site of Blaen Pant farmstead which is marked and labelled on historic maps including the 1834 Ordnance Survey map. By the time of the tithe map (1839, Nantcwnlle parish), Blaen Pant consisted of two buildings (see PRNs 44836 and 44839) set within four small enclosures. The farmstead seems to have fallen out of use by 1906, when the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map was published.

The site of the farmstead today is visible as a flattened terrace against an exposed rock-face. The remains of one possible long hut (PRN 44836) are quite visible, but the other building(s?) is represented only by tumbled building stone (PRN 44839). Faint traces of a trackway lead into the site from the north. The enclosures around the site are no longer visible.

Condition and Management Aims

The site is slightly overgrown with scrub and young trees, which make it difficult to see immediately. It is on a level platform forming a break in an otherwise steep slope. The ground is poached in places.

The management aim for this site is to ensure that the upstanding remains are maintained in a stable condition, and that earthworks retain an even grass covering.

Recommendations

Ideally, the vegetation would be cut back and removed from the site. A regime of light grazing would help to prevent undergrowth from re-colonising and would aid in the long-term preservation of the farmstead. However, under the Tir Gofal agreement, this field has been included in a plough rotation. The site should not be ploughed (see the recommended 'no-plough' zone on the attached map) or otherwise disturbed. The rocky slope above it, and the stone on the site will also help to prevent ploughing from encroaching into this area.

If the field around it is to be ploughed and not used for pasture, there is a real danger that the undergrowth will swamp this site. Occasional use of this field for grazing (as discussed above) will help to prevent this, otherwise scrub clearance will have to be carried out.

Site Category C



View of the site of the now-abandoned Blaen Pant farmstead (PRN 44838).

PRN	44839	Site Name	BLAEN PANT	Grid Reference	SN57566060
Site Type	BUILDING?	Period	POST- MEDIEVAL		

Description

The ruins of at least one building within Blaen Pant farmstead (PRN 44838). Historic maps show Blaen Pant as consisting of two buildings – one (PRN 44836) survives as a fairly clear ‘footprint’ but the only trace of the other building is tumbled building stone and possibly a slight earthwork.

Condition and Management Aims

This feature survives only as tumbled stonework within an area of light scrub and some tree-growth. General management aims are as for PRN 44838.

Recommendations

See recommendations for PRN 44838, Blaen Pant farmstead.

Site Category C

PRN 44840 **Site Name** **Grid Reference** SN57526049

Site Type BUILDING? **Period** UNKNOWN

Description

An amorphous limestone rubble spread, occupying a 15 square metre area of a steep, east-facing slope at the northeast edge of the farm holding. This may represent the site of a now-demolished building, presumably of crude, drystone construction. No form or structure can now be defined. The building may have derived from squatter settlement in the 17th – mid 19th centuries. There is no visible evidence for any enclosure associated with it, but probable plough marks survive around the site. The plough marks run down the steepest part of the slope.

The building is not marked on historic maps.

Condition and Management Aims

It is not certain if this site does indeed represent the remains of a building. However, if it does, there is potential for associated features to survive as buried archaeology. The ‘building’ remains are set in a patch of gorse, on a steep part of the slope. Management of this site should aim to protect these potential features as far as possible.

Recommendations

Ideally, this site would not be ploughed or subjected to any ground intrusive activities, and would be maintained under pasture. However, within Tir Gofal, this field has been included within a plough rotation. It is unlikely that the site of the building itself will be ploughed, due to the gorse cover over it, and its position on a very steep part of the slope. Ploughing around the site should not encroach into the spread of rubble, and the stone should not be cleared.

See also the recommendations made for the plough marks (PRN 49945).

Site Category D

PRN	49945	Site Name	Grid Reference	SN57476040
Site Type	RIDGE AND FURROW	Period	POST-MEDIEVAL?; MODERN?	

Description

An area of ridge and furrow, visible as slight earthworks running down the steepest part of an east-facing hillslope. The ridge and furrow seems to be 'narrow rig' and fairly straight. However, it is difficult to be sure of its form since only a small section of it remains – any plough marks on the more level areas (either above or below this slope) have presumably been lost to modern agriculture.

If it is narrow-rig, it may result from post-medieval steam ploughing. There is also a possibility that the plough marks are associated with 'squatter' settlement on the upland commons. Such settlement is represented by sites like the deserted settlement (PRN 44834) and probable long hut (PRN 44835) which lie only some 150m to the north.

Condition and Management Aims

The area of ridge and furrow is generally in fair condition, although the earthworks are quite slight. Management should aim to retain these features as evidence of past land use.

Recommendations

This field has been included in a plough rotation under Tir Gofal. However, the steepness of the bank on which the ridge and furrow lies makes it inappropriate for modern root-crop cultivation. Consequently, this area of ridge and furrow has been included in the suggested 'no-plough' zone. The level areas above and below retain no evidence of ridge and furrow, so ploughing those areas should not be problematic.

Site Category C

References

Cadw: 2002: Caring for Lost Farmsteads

Ludlow,N:2002: Tir Gofal Farm Visit Report: Brynele Home Farm W/11/1795, report number 2002-41

Ordnance Survey Old Series 1834, sheet 57

Ordnance Survey 1891 Cardiganshire XX.SW

Ordnance Survey 1906 Cardiganshire XX.SW

Tithe map 1839 Nantcwnlle Parish

Brynele

Tir Gofal Historic Environment Consultation – Call Out


Countryside Council for Wales Reference W/111/1795


Cambria Archaeology Reference PRN41691

National Grid Reference SN56676031


 Farm Boundary

Site Category A - National Importance


 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Grade 1 and Grade 2* Listed Buildings

 Sites and Buildings of National Importance
without a statutory designation


Site Category B - Regional Importance

 Sites and Buildings of Regional Importance
including Grade 2 listed buildings

Site Category C - Local Importance

 Sites and buildings of Local Importance

Site Category D – Unknown Importance

 Sites requiring further investigation and sites with
no physical definition

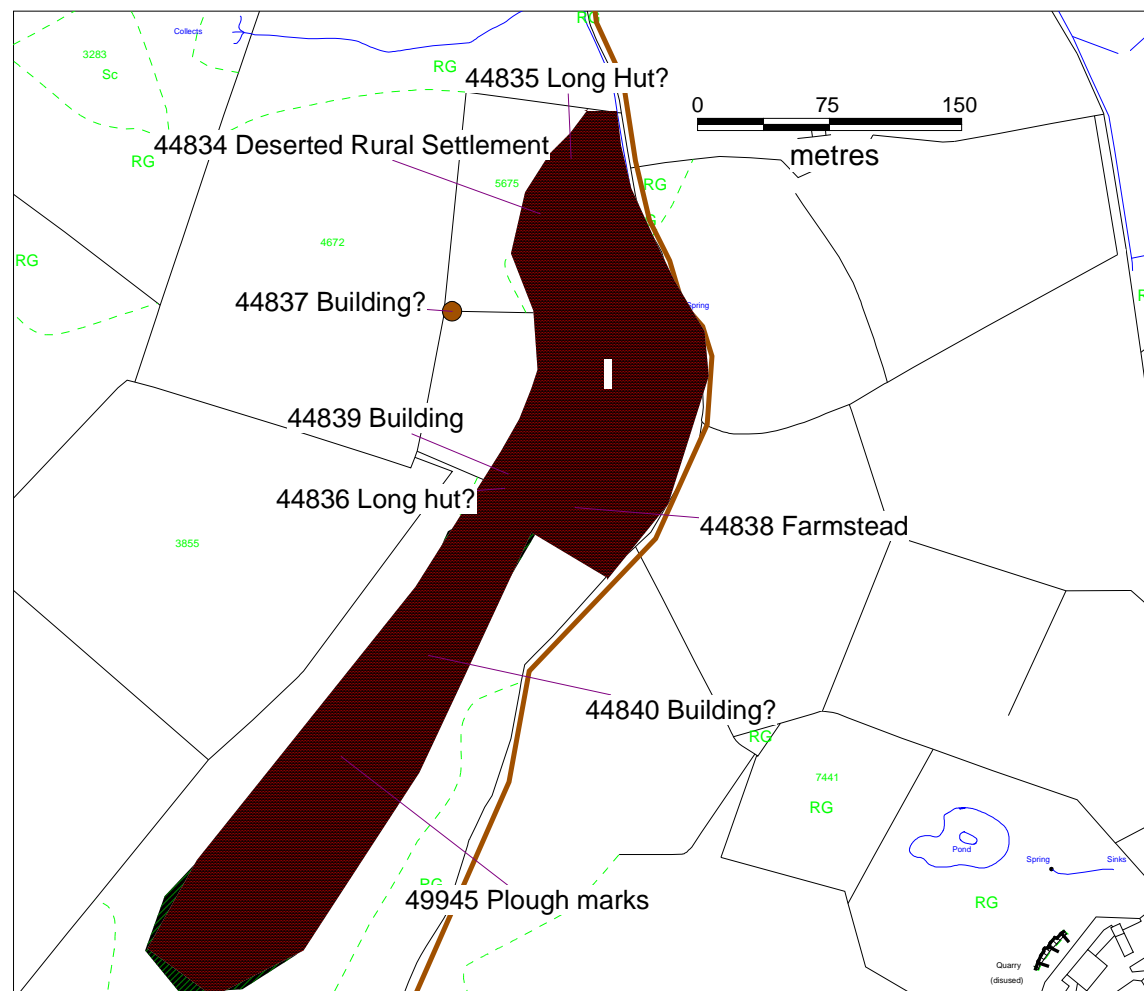


Suggested 'no-plough zone'

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Signature Date

This report has been checked and approved by Louise Austin on behalf of Cambria Archaeology,
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