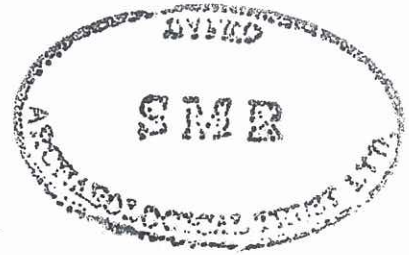


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# **TREPRIOR FARM**

## **W/11/1516**

### **Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report**



Report No. 2003/24

Report Prepared for:  
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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2003/24  
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20<sup>th</sup> February 2003

TREPRIOR FARM  
Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report

By

Duncan Schlee

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### **CALL OUT VISIT**

Within the Tir Gofal application, the owner Mr Lewis had expressed an interest in restoring the pond that is situated on the edge of the farmyard. Following a site visit by a Tir Gofal project officer, a follow up visit by Cambria Archaeology was requested to establish the condition of the feature and to provide recommendations for its sensitive restoration.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Treprior is mentioned as the ancient occasional residence of the Benedictine Prior of Cardigan by S. Lewis in 1833. It was part of the priory estate until it was sold in 1886. Although not included in the HE1 report for the farm, two of the buildings on the west side of the farmyard have been designated as listed buildings. The listing descriptions are included as appendices at the end of this report. If funding for repairs to these buildings cannot be obtained through the Tir Gofal scheme, it is recommended that Cadw be contacted regarding funding. The 'Call Out ' visit was primarily intended to ascertain any archaeological concerns regarding the renovation of the farmyard pond.

## **THE POND**

The pond is situated in the south-east corner of the farmyard and is an interesting feature associated with the rest of the farmyard complex. The pond is roughly square with rounded corners. The west and north sides are terraced into the bedrock, while the east and south sides are formed by a substantial retaining wall. The pond is fed by a spring situated in its north west corner and the water level was previously controlled by an overflow, lined with an iron pipe, in the east side of the retaining wall. There is also an arrangement for draining the pond in the east wall. This feature may have undergone various alterations. At present there is an iron pipe exiting from the pond at ground level. According to Mr. Lewis, the outflow pipe was previously boxed-in and controlled with a plug. It is possible that the pipe replaces an earlier sluice arrangement, but this needs to be confirmed by careful clearance of obscuring vegetation.

At present, the water level in the pond has dropped due to leakage through the retaining wall. The pond has recently been cleaned out down to its base of natural stone (shale?) bedrock in advance of trying to restore the pond to its original capacity.

The foundations of the retaining wall are substantially built from large close-set boulders, with an attractive herring-bone patterned coursing of smaller stones above. The owner is keen to restore the pond to its former capacity, but ideally wishes to retain the stonework as a visible feature.

## MAIN MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The pond is an attractive feature that enhances the character of the farmyard. From an archaeological perspective it is an integral part of the farmyard complex and reflects the age and history of the property. It is desirable that the long term future of the feature is ensured with minimal disturbance to its structural character and integrity.

The intention of Mr. Lewis is to repair the ponds' retaining bank so that the water level can be restored to its previous depth. When the site was visited the water level in the pond was very low and the only visible water leak was in the vicinity of the drain or sluice feature. There was apparently no evidence of a clay lining to the interior of the pond, it is therefore assumed that the retaining wall has a clay core that helps retain the water. There is no surviving evidence that the face of the wall was ever pointed with mortar. Root disturbance from tree growth and other vegetation that now covers the retaining wall is most likely to have caused the leaking.

Although possibly an extremely specialist and extensive job, it is felt that the repair and restoration of the bank would be the best solution for the long term survival of this feature. This would, however, require the removal of the trees that are growing on the bank to prevent further root damage and extensive repair and rebuilding of the retaining wall.

The following suggestions are less intrusive solutions that may enable the water level to be restored, but will not prevent further degradation of the retaining wall.

The retaining wall in the vicinity of the drain/sluice should be cleaned back to investigate any previous drainage arrangements that might be reinstated or more effectively blocked to prevent further leakage from around the existing drainage pipe.

The retaining wall, especially on the internal face is well constructed and rather than being entirely dismantled and rebuilt, could be repaired and stabilised where necessary.

Lining the pond to prevent further leakage is a preferred solution. There are several options for this, each of which has advantages and drawbacks.

A puddled clay lining would be environmentally desirable but there is a concern that the depth of clay needed might make the pond too shallow. In addition it might not prevent leakage through the bank, and the development of further leaks in the future.

A plastic lining would effectively seal the pond, but would detract from the appearance of the feature as it would be necessary to cover up the stones of the retaining wall. A plastic lining might be expensive, and difficult to repair if a leak develops.

A possible third option might be to point the stonework with lime based product that would help to stabilise the structure and might at least temporarily reduce leakage through the bank.



It is recommended that further advice is sought regarding the maintenance of water features and natural habitats before deciding on the most appropriate methodology. If full restoration is proposed further advice should be sought from Cambria Archaeology.

The following photographs hopefully illustrate some of the main features of the pond.



**Plate 1:** The base of the retaining bank is constructed from impressive stonework, suggesting that this aspect of the feature was intended to be visible. Material that has fallen from the bank could be removed to expose more stonework and to supply stones for making repairs to the structure.



**Plate 2:** This stone slab may indicate that there was an earlier mechanism for draining the pond than that which exists at present. It is suggested that vegetation be removed in this area to ascertain whether this is so and if it could be restored to its original function.



**Plate 3:** The outflow pipe for draining the pond. Water was observed leaking from around this pipe suggesting that it is an area of weakness in the retaining bank. Vegetation and loose material could be removed to ascertain how this could be repaired.



**Plate 4:** The overflow pipe for the pond, indicating the level to which the water could rise. Larger vegetation that is causing the stonework to loosen should be removed to prevent further weakening of the retaining bank. Stonework should be repaired with the same materials, techniques and pattern as was used in the original construction.





**Plate 5:** If the long term future of this feature is to be secured, it will be necessary to cut down the trees growing on the retaining bank to prevent further damage to the structure. Depending on the extent to which the bank has been weakened by this tree growth, it may be necessary to remove the stumps and roots and reconstruct the stonework.



**Treprior Farm  
W/11/1516**

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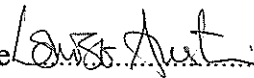
This report has been prepared by: Duncan Schlee

Position: Archaeologist

Signature  Date 11/03/03

This report has been checked and approved by L. Austin on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Position Head of Heritage Management

Signature  Date 11/03/03

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report