

JUNE 2002



## **Brithdir W/11/1800**

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



Report No. 2002/53

Report Prepared for:  
Countryside Council for Wales

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2002/53  
PROJECT RECORD NO. 41706

26<sup>th</sup> June 2002

Brithdir  
Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report

By

Alice Pyper

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## **CALL OUT VISIT**

Following a site visit and survey of the corn mill and other farm buildings by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, a follow up visit by Cambria Archaeology was requested in order to establish the condition of the buildings, and the potential for restoration works.

### **General Description of the farmstead**

Felin Cwm is a small hamlet situated less than a kilometre to the north of the village of Rhydlewis on the gently sloping east bank of the Afon Ceri. The buildings are clustered around a small triangular green, formerly the farmhouse garden. These consist of the Felin Cwm corn mill (PRN 21370), a corn drying kiln, the farmhouse which incorporates a former flannel factory, a cow shed, and a fulling mill (PRN 21369) which was subsequently converted to generate electricity.

### **General Farm Management Recommendations**

This complex of buildings is of great significance, with each of the buildings holding a fascinating history in their own right. However, no single building should be seen in isolation and of greater importance are the relationships of the buildings to each other. It is essential to the understanding of this hamlet that the buildings are managed as a group, providing evidence of a self sufficiency, once common in the area, which has since been lost.

### **PRN 21370 Felin Cwm Corn Mill**

Since the corn mill has already benefited from two previous visits (1/5/2002 and 6/2/1984) by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) who have provided a full description of the building and the surviving mill machinery. This description will elaborate on the current condition of the buildings and record further information which was most helpfully provided by the owner, Mr. Thomas.

Mr. Thomas has a wealth of knowledge and information about the farmstead and remembers the corn mill still in use until 1964. His father travelled to Anglesey to collect two new millstones and these lie ready for use propped against the corn drying building. As previously described the corn mill has two sets of millstones, the French burr stones in the left hand mill were used for grinding flour to a fine consistency for human consumption. To the right were Anglesey mill stones, used for grinding barley for cattle consumption.

Mr. Thomas remembers the mill leat getting frequently silted up, so every year all the neighbouring farmers would give a day over to clear out the mill leat. The mill would be almost constantly in use, only sometimes slackening off over summer.

The current condition of the mill is critical, as the building appears to be under structural strain. The south west gable has 3 iron cross ties, and around these ties the wall appears to be under stress to such an extent as to have caused some stones to have cracked. Mr. Thomas believes these cracks have occurred only recently. Where it is possible to inspect the internal face of this gable wall it shows little cracking and it is possible the wall may be splitting, with the internal face separating from the external (plate 1).

Internally the first floor has collapsed in the central section of the building, and this may be exacerbating the structural problems. The building will no longer be benefiting from the stabilizing influence of the floor structure which helps to tie the walls together.

The south and east sides of the building are very overgrown with ivy, which seems to have taken root from the south side. However, the trunk of the ivy has been cut through but the ivy is still alive and appears to have taken root within the masonry. The ivy is also covering sections of the roof and has penetrated the interior of the structure.





Plate 1 – the cross ties in the south west gable

### **Management Recommendations**

The prospect of restoring this building and retaining the internal working of the mill is to be welcomed. Small water-powered mills with machinery intact such as this are very few in number and give an insight to a smaller scale of farming and production which no longer exist.

The building evidently suffers from a number of structural faults, and specialist conservation advice should be sought to establish the best method for countering these problems (see the attached list of organisations which may be able to provide conservation advice).

At the very least this building should be structurally stabilized to prevent its' further deterioration. However, in the long term this building also provides a wonderful opportunity for presentation to the public and perhaps a further internal restoration.



### **PRN 21369 Pandy Felin Cwm Fulling Mill**

This building, which used to be a fulling mill was converted by Mr. Thomas' father in the 1930's to generate electricity, and successfully supplied the village with electricity up until the 1940's, when mains electricity became widespread.

The original waterwheel to the fulling mill was apparently wood which was replaced by a metal framed waterwheel during the conversion for electricity generation. Mr. Thomas describes how there are two boilers still *in situ* in the ground floor of the mill which were used for dying flannel.

This building is currently very overgrown to such an extent that access and further assessment of condition is difficult. Ivy is extensively covering the roof, especially towards the north end (plate 2).



Plate 2 – the former fulling mill (PRN 21369) and electricity generating mill.

### **Management Recommendations**

This building is also a significant element in the history of this hamlet, and is worthy of preservation. In order to prevent further damage to the masonry by intrusive ivy growth, the ivy should be cut back and allowed to die, and treated to prevent regrowth. The masonry will then require consolidation in traditional materials in conjunction with the removal of ivy.



### **Cow shed**

To the north of the farmhouse is a low one-storey cow house with a former kitchen range at the east end with a chimney in the east gable (plate 3). This section was subsequently amalgamated with the cowshed. This building is now used for storage. The slate roof to the building is in a poor condition with some slates missing.



Plate 3 – the former cow shed.

### **Management Recommendations**

Mr. Thomas expressed his hope to convert this old cow shed into a wood working workshop. The re-use of this building is to be welcomed, and would help to ensure it's continued upkeep. Any repairs or alterations should endeavour to retain the historic fabric and be carried out using traditional materials.

### **Corn drying kiln and cow shed**

To the east of the farm is a long low range of buildings (plate 4). At its southwest end was a former cow shed. The central section used to be a corn dryer, with a chimney at the north east end. The chimney has since been dismantled although the outline is still visible. Mr. Thomas recalls that a mesh floor was used to spread the grain over to dry.

Parts of this range are becoming overgrown with ivy, to such an extent that the ivy is penetrating underneath the roof.

### **Management Recommendations**

This building forms a significant part of the complex and should be retained. The ivy should be cut back and consolidation of the masonry undertaken using traditional materials.

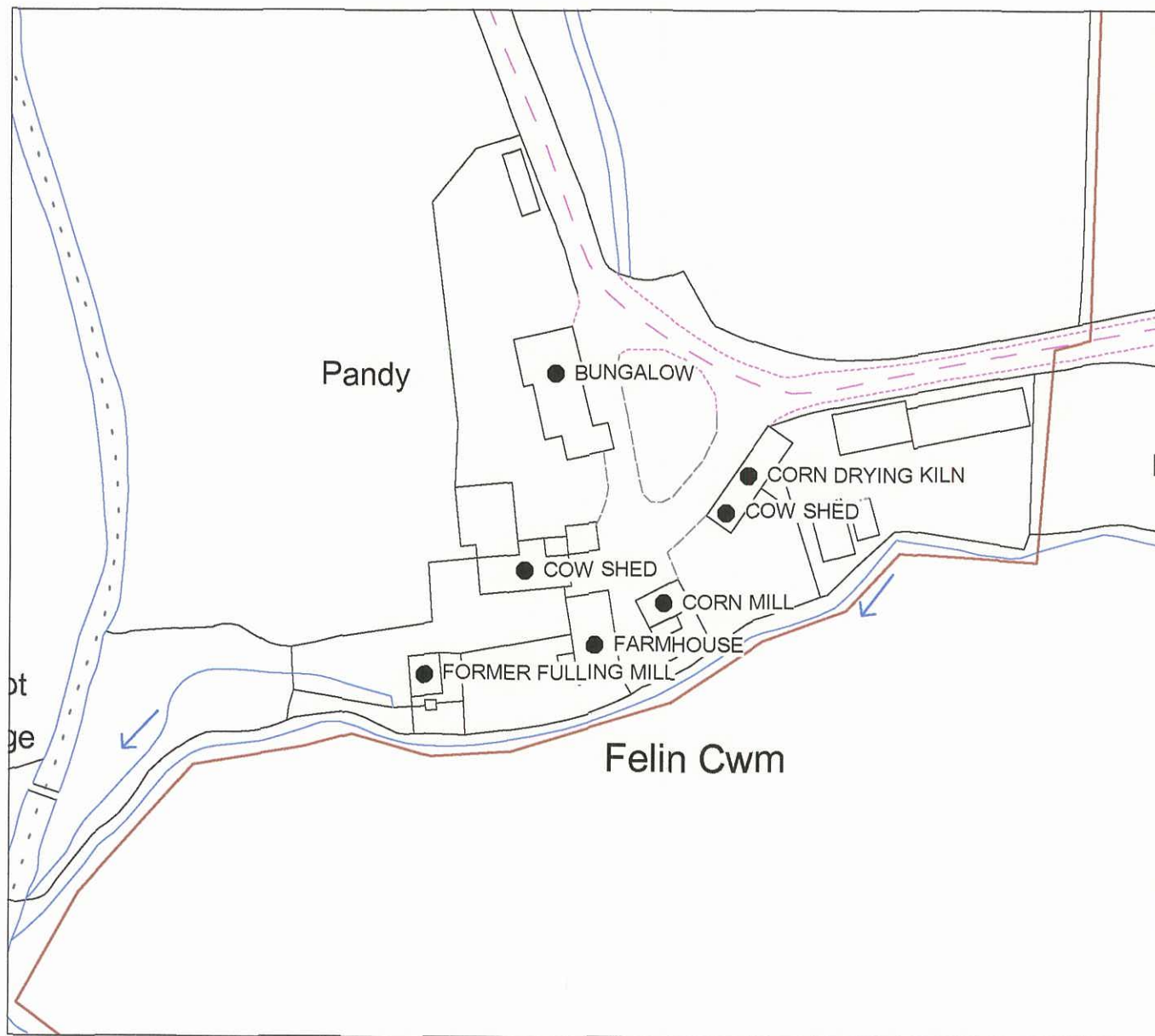


Plate 4 – the former corn drying kiln with Anglesey millstones propped against the near gable end.

### **Management Recommendations**

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**Brithdir (Felin Cwm)**  
**Tir Gofal Historic Environment Consultation**  
**Countryside Council for Wales Reference W/11/1800**  
**Cambria Archaeology Reference Number 41706**  
**National Grid Reference SN34564806**  
**Scale 1:1000**

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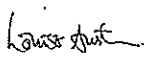
This report has been prepared by Alice Pyper

Position: Tir Gofal Archaeologist

Signature  Date 28<sup>th</sup> June 2002

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

Position: Principal Archaeologist (Curatorial)

Signature  Date 15<sup>th</sup> July 2002

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

## **Tir Gofal list of contact numbers for building restoration**

The following organisations may be able to provide further information or advice to assist with the conservation and restoration of buildings of historic interest:

**CADW** - provide information and advice about the restoration of traditional buildings.

Contact: Judith Alfrey, tel.(02920) 500200 (general enquiries) or e-mail Judith.Alfrey@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK

**St Fagans, Welsh Rural Life Museum** - can provide up to date information and advice about contractors and suppliers that deal with traditional buildings and materials.

Contact: Gerallt Nash, tel. (02920) 573445

**Ty Mawr Lime Ltd.** - suppliers and manufacturers of traditional and natural building materials as well as providing advice, support and training about the use of lime products and other natural building materials for mortars, plasters, renders and paints.

Contact: Nigel and Joyce Gervis, Ty Mawr Lime Limited, Ty Mawr Farm, Llangasty, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7PJ, tel. (01874) 658249, e-mail: tymawr@lime.org.uk

**Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings** - a nationwide organisation providing publications and advice about architectural conservation.

Contact: 37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY  
tel. (0207) 377164 or e-mail: info@spab.org.uk

**South Pembrokeshire partnership for Action in Rural Communities (SPARC)** - provide advice about the restoration of historic farm buildings and information about local building contractors that specialise in traditional methods of restoration.

Contact: Richard Tree (Heritage Officer), tel. (01834) 860965

**Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW)** - provide detailed archaeological and architectural advice about buildings and other features of historic interest in Wales.

Contact: Crown Building, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, SY23 1NJ  
tel. (01437) 720861, [www.rcahmw.org.uk/wms](http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/wms)

**Local Authority Buildings Conservation Officers** - provide advice and information about buildings of historic interest, in particular Listed Buildings.

**Carmarthenshire (01267) 234567**

Contact: David Priest (Head of Conservation), John Llewelyn, Adrian Griffiths

**Pembrokeshire (01437) 764551 ext no. 5720**

Contact: Ian Bartlet

**Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (01437) 764636**

Contact: Rob Scourfield



**Melin (Welsh Mills Society)** - offers information sheets and practical advice about the recording and conservation of mills.

Contact: Hilary Malaws, Y Felin, Tynygraig, Ystrad Meurig, Ceredigion, Wales, SY25 6AE, tel. (01437) 720861, [www.rcahmw.org.uk/wms](http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/wms)

**Association of Energy Conscious Builders**

Contact: Keith Hall tel. (10559) 370908

**Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth** - provide advice about organisations that specialise in the restoration of historic mills. They also provide their own consultancy service.

Tel. (01654) 705989

**British Hydropower Association, Cheshire** - services include consultancy, feasibility studies, refurbishment and repairs of watermills.

tel.(0161) 4409196, [www.brit-hydro.cwc.net](http://www.brit-hydro.cwc.net)

**Dorothea Relations, Bristol** - specialise in the refurbishment of watermills and run a nationwide service.

Contact: G.J.O Wallis, Unit 6, Riverside Business Park, St Annes Road, Bristol BS4 2ED, tel. (01179) 715337, [www.dorothearest.co.uk](http://www.dorothearest.co.uk)

**Heritage Engineering, Glasgow** - specialise in the recovery, restoration and/or replication of water-powered machinery.

Contact: J.S. Mitchell, 22 Carmyle Avenue, Glasgow G32 8HJ, tel (01417) 630007

**Capel (The Chapels Heritage Society)** - offers information sheets and practical advice about the recording and conservation of chapels that are no longer required for their original purpose.

Contact: Penny Icke, RCAHMW, tel. (01970) 621210, [www.rcahmw.org.uk/wms](http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/wms)

**The Welsh Mines Preservation Trust**

Contact: David Bick, Denefield, 111 Barn Lane, Golborne, Warrington WA3 3PR

**Building material specialists** - provide advice about specific traditional building materials.

**Slating Consultant** - Contact: Terry Hughes tel. (01286) 650402

**Timber Consultant** - Contact: Bob Childs tel (02920) 573245

**Architect specialising in Timber Frames** - Contact: Nick Joyce tel. (01905) 726307

**Lead Sheet Association** - tel (01892) 822773