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Pantargamddwr W/11/2862

Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report Call Out



The earthwork bank viewed from the north

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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Pantargamddwr Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report

By

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INTRODUCTION

Following a request from the Tir Gofal project officer, a call-out visit was undertaken to establish the nature and possible significance of an earthwork feature identified approximately 300 metres to the southwest of the farmstead of Pantargamddwr.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FARM

Pantargamddwr (grid reference SN66906477) lies approximately 5 kilometres to the north of Tregaron. It was visited by Cambria Archaeology on the 3rd October 2002.

The farm lies on the western boundary of the Upland Ceredigion Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. This registered landscape has been studied as part of the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, which identified 132 areas of diverse historic character. Pantargamddwr lies to the west of the character area of Fullbrook (no. 93), which is defined as an area of undulating land west of the Cors Caron. The landscape pattern consists of scattered farms and small fields bounded by earth banks and hedges. It appears that prior to the late 18th century this area was common land and that only during the late 18th – 19th century was the land drained and divided up into farms. The land here is largely improved although there are areas of poorer low-lying land of rough pasture and rushes.

The farm holding is approximately 72 hectares and lies on the southeast facing slopes to the west of the Cors Caron. The field pattern appears largely unchanged since the late 19th century, with the exception of the removal of one or two field boundaries, the current field pattern was recorded on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1891. The farm is bounded to the east by the river Camddwr and to the south its tributary the Nant yr Efail.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The general topography of this area consists of an undulating slope gently falling away to the southeast and opening out onto the open raised peat bog of the Cors Caron. An earthwork bank is situated in a field to the south of the farmstead of Pantargamddwr, in a field that is bounded to the southwest by the Nant yr Efail. The earthwork is situated between the 170 – 180 metre contours, and lies in a roughly crescent shape along the southwestern and southeastern edges of the field. The northwestern end of the bank merges into the banks above the stream which forms the boundary to southwest and south. At the streamside there are eroded banks which reveal a makeup of river gravels. The stream banks are sparsely wooded with scattered loose rocks, one of which is particularly large at c 1.8 x 1.1 metre wide and roughly rhombus shaped.

Around the southeastern side of the field, the bank is approximately 4-5 metres high, and from the highest point slopes gently to the northwest into a hollow approximately 0.5 metre deep before rising again into the general field slope. At its highest along the southeastern side the bank is more pronounced in profile, reaching up to 8 metres in height. At its eastern end the bank stops short of a track and gateway which lead into the field to the east. Here the bank almost appears to turn back on itself.



The earthwork seen from the east end, showing quite a pronounced end beside a gateway to the adjoining field.



The earthwork bank seen from the northwest showing the pronounced end.

The bank is certainly a prominent feature and its origin is unknown, indeed it is not altogether clear whether it is a man-made or a natural geological feature. It maybe that the bank is the result of natural geological processes, however, it appears to exist in isolation, there were no further features observed to compare to it, which tends to weigh in favour of the bank being artificial.

It is notable that the field itself is improved but the area below the bank is still marshy with rushes growing in patches. The bank therefore almost seems to mark the extent of the good quality land. It is possible that this field represents the margin between the low lying marshy land bordering the Cors Caron, land which appears only to have been drained in the late 18th or early 19th centuries, and the useful cultivatable land of the valley sides. The bank may have been formed by artificial processes but influenced by the topography of the area. The current landowner only knows of this field being ploughed once and it was discovered to be very stony. However in previous centuries, when pressure on land was greater, there may have been attempts to cultivate this field. Indeed the large loose stones which lie to the southwest may be represent the clearing of the field for cultivation. It is suggested therefore, that the bank maybe a headland where the plough turned and deposited a greater quantity of stone and spoil.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This feature is impressive and also intriguing; there may yet be further interpretations of its origin. It is significant in the landscape and should be maintained in a manner which will retain its distinctive profile. This field is currently used for grazing which is the ideal land use for the preservation of such an earthwork. Therefore the present management regime of grazing this field should be continued.

REFERENCES

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Ordnance Survey 1906 Cardiganshire XXI.NW 1:10560

**Pantargamddwr
Tir Gofal Call-Out Visit Report**

REPORT NUMBER 2002/114

July 2003

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