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## **Pantglas Farm**

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



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Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report

By

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### **CALL OUT VISIT**

Following a visit to Pantglas Farm by the Tir Gofal project officer, a call out visit was requested by Cambria Archaeology. This was specifically to provide advice on proposals for parkland tree planting, to ensure that they are in keeping with existing historic landscape character. The restoration of an orchard wall was also considered during the call out visit.

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FARM**

Pantglas farm (SN57711955) lies around 1.5 kilometres to the west of Golden Grove, near Llandeilo in Carmarthenshire. It occupies approximately 290 hectares on a north facing slope, stretching down to the floodplain of the River Tywi to the north. Land here is a mixture of rough, improved and semi-improved pasture divided into small, regular fields, enclosed by hedges on earth banks. Mature hedgerow trees, together with surviving parkland trees in some fields combine to give Pantglas Farm a wooded aspect.

The appearance of Pantglas Farm, has been heavily influenced by its status as an estate farm. The 1837 Llanfihangel Aberbythych parish tithe map identifies Pantglas as belonging to the Earl of Cawdor, and a tenant farm of the Golden Grove estate. At its peak, this comprised over 50,000 acres spread throughout southwest Wales (Jones 1962, 258). The influence of the estate is visible in the finely built estate farm buildings at Pantglas, and within the landscape of the farm itself. The farmstead of Pantglas is first shown on a 1790 map of Pantglas in the Cawdor Estate Map Book, although its depiction is stylised and it may not be an accurate representation. It is also shown on the 1831 one inch to a mile Old Series Ordnance Survey map, and the 1837 tithe map (also stylised). It is shown in closer detail on the 1891 six inch to a mile 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map. It is situated at the end of a long driveway, which opens out into a rectangular yard, defined by an L-shaped building range to its west and north. A rectangular building on a north-south alignment is situated in the southeast corner of the yard. Two smaller buildings, both aligned east-west lie outside the farmyard to the east. Abutting the L-shaped range to the west is an enclosed area, the orchard, and to the south of this is the farmhouse. The majority of the buildings shown on these early maps survive today, although those to the east of the farmyard have been lost due to the addition of modern agricultural buildings.

Carbury Mount lies a short distance to the east of the farmstead, and occupies a naturally prominent position within the landscape. Its east and south sides appear to have been landscaped to enhance its appearance as a circular mound, and it may have its origins as a Victorian prospect mound. Prospect mounds were generally placed within parkland as viewing points, whilst also serving as a visual focus within the park layout. Carbury Mount offers fine views across the Tywi Valley to the north, west and east towards the Tudor Gothic mansion of Golden Grove itself, the centre of the estate.

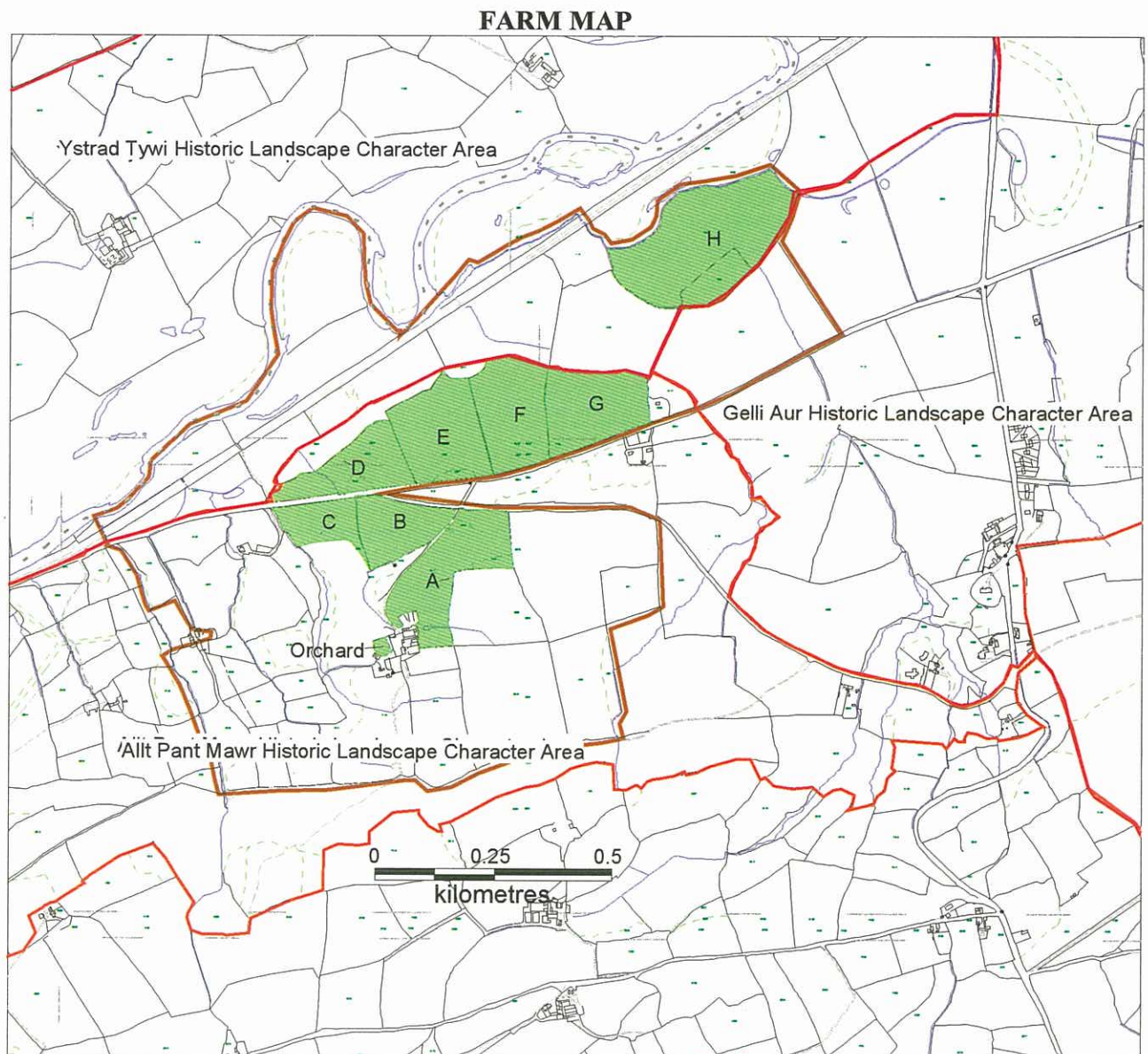
In the centre of the farm, on either side of the roads, which bisect the farmstead are remnants of parkland tree planting. This planting may have been designed before the nineteenth century as part of a parkland landscape on the approach to the Golden Grove village and estate, which lie approximately 1.5 kilometres to the east. This characteristic arrangement of parkland trees is first shown on a 1790 Cawdor Estate Map of Pantglas Farm. Few of the trees remain today, and of the surviving examples, several are thinning and old. This erosion of historic landscape character is a particular concern.

The park, which surrounds the Golden Grove mansion itself is included in the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales, and has been given a Grade II\* status (Ref no. PGW (Dy) 10 (CAM) Whittle 1999). The estate landscape beyond this has



received no such formal designation, although it provides an important wider context for the park and mansion.

Pantglas farm lies at the junction of three Historic Landscape Character Areas; 182 Ystrad Tywi, which incorporates the floodplain of the Tywi; 194 Allt Pant Mawr, which includes the steep wooded slopes above the floodplain to the south; and 193 Golden Grove, which centres around Gelli Aur and its parkland. These character areas mention distinctive hedgerow trees, and stands of trees contributing to a parkland feel as essential historic landscape components. The maintenance of this distinctive landscape is identified as a core priority.



### **PARKLAND TREE PLANTING**

The planting of replacement native trees in parkland fields was proposed within the Tir Gofal scheme. One of the aims of the call out visit was to ensure that any future planting is in keeping with existing landscape character.

Four parkland fields were identified by the Tir Gofal project officer, on the basis of loosely scattered mature oaks within them. These may be remnants of a pre nineteenth century Golden Grove estate landscape, as depicted on the 1790 estate map. Three of these fields (A,B,C) are situated in the centre of the holding to the north of the farmstead. An additional field (H) lies on land adjoining the River Tywi in the north-eastern corner of the holding. Several additional former parkland fields (E,F,G) were identified from early map sources, although their parkland feel has since been eroded by the loss of characteristic trees. These have also been identified as areas with potential for parkland restoration.

### **Parkland Field A**

This field lies to the northeast of Pantglas Farmstead. The long farmstead drive forms borders it to the west. Most of the field lies under open grassland today, although the area around a quarry at the north end of the field is now much overgrown, with mature ash and oaks established here. The 1891 Ordnance Survey map depicts the layout of individual trees in accurate detail, and there is no evidence of any parkland tree planting as such in this field. Several trees are shown to follow the line of the northern half of the farm drive, and some of these survive today.

Carbury Mount, a likely Victorian prospect mound lies adjacent to this field to the east, and would have provided a viewing point across the Tywi Valley to the north, east and west. Any parkland tree planting in this field would have obstructed views to the west from the mound, and this area of landscape may have been left intentionally clear for this purpose.



Looking west towards Carbury Mount, a possible Victorian prospect mound.

### **Management Recommendations**

In keeping with existing landscape character, any tree planting should be along the line of the lower driveway in order to retain the character of this approach to the house. There is no evidence of any formal tree planting within the field interior, and the planting of parkland trees within this area is thought inappropriate. This would obstruct views to the west from Carbury Mount, and this area of landscape may have been left intentionally clear for this purpose.



### **Parkland Field B**

This field lies downslope of field a to the north, and adjoins the road to Golden Grove estate village. Part of the farm drive forms its eastern boundary. This field contains several mature oaks, which are randomly spaced, and are likely to be a product of estate landscaping. The 1891 Ordnance Survey map shows several scattered parkland trees here, and some of these have been lost since.



Looking west across Parkland Field B from the road to Golden Grove estate village.

### **Management Recommendations**

Planting of replacement trees within this field is to be welcomed. Future planting should be random and evenly spaced in order to emulate a parkland environment. The trees shown on the 1891 Ordnance Survey map provides a useful reference to inform new planting.



### **Parkland Field C**

This is next to field B, and also adjoins the road to Golden Grove estate village. This is shown to have typical parkland layout of scattered trees on the 1891 Ordnance Survey map, although few of these trees survive today and the parkland feel has been lost.

### **Management Recommendations**

Although not marked for parkland restoration by the Tir Gofal Project Officer, this field also offers potential for recreating the parkland environment. Planting of replacement trees within this field is to be welcomed. The parkland layout shown on the 1891 Ordnance Survey map provides a useful reference to inform new planting.

### **Parkland Field D**

This triangular field lies at the foot of the valley slope opposite Fields B, and C from which it is separated by the road. Allt Pantglas forms its northern boundary. Several mature oaks survive within this field, and another has died, although remains standing. The 1790 Cawdor Estate map and later map sources indicate that these may be remnants of estate landscaping.



Looking east towards parkland trees in Parkland Field C

### **Management Recommendations**

Planting of replacement trees within this field is to be welcomed. Future planting should be scattered in order to re-establish a parkland environment. The 1891 Ordnance Survey map depicts an accurate layout of the individual trees within this field, and could be used as a guide to target future planting to ensure that it is in keeping with historic landscape character.

### **Parkland Fields E, F, G**

These fields border the modern B4300 to the south. Scattered parkland trees are shown on the road margins of these three fields on the 1891 Ordnance Survey map. Few of these trees survive today.

### **Management Recommendations**

These fields, although not already targeted for tree planting by the Tir Gofal Project Officer, offer potential for recreating the parkland environment. The layout of trees shown on the 1891 Ordnance Survey map provides a useful reference to ensure that any new planting is in keeping with existing historic landscape character.

### **Parkland Field H**

This field lies in the northeastern corner of Pantglas Farm, on the floodplain of the River Tywi. Several scattered oak trees survive here, although some of these are dying and one has fallen recently. The 1837 tithe map and 1891 Ordnance Survey map indicate that this land parcel was formerly divided into several smaller fields, and the trees, which remain today are likely to survive as remnants of hedge banks.

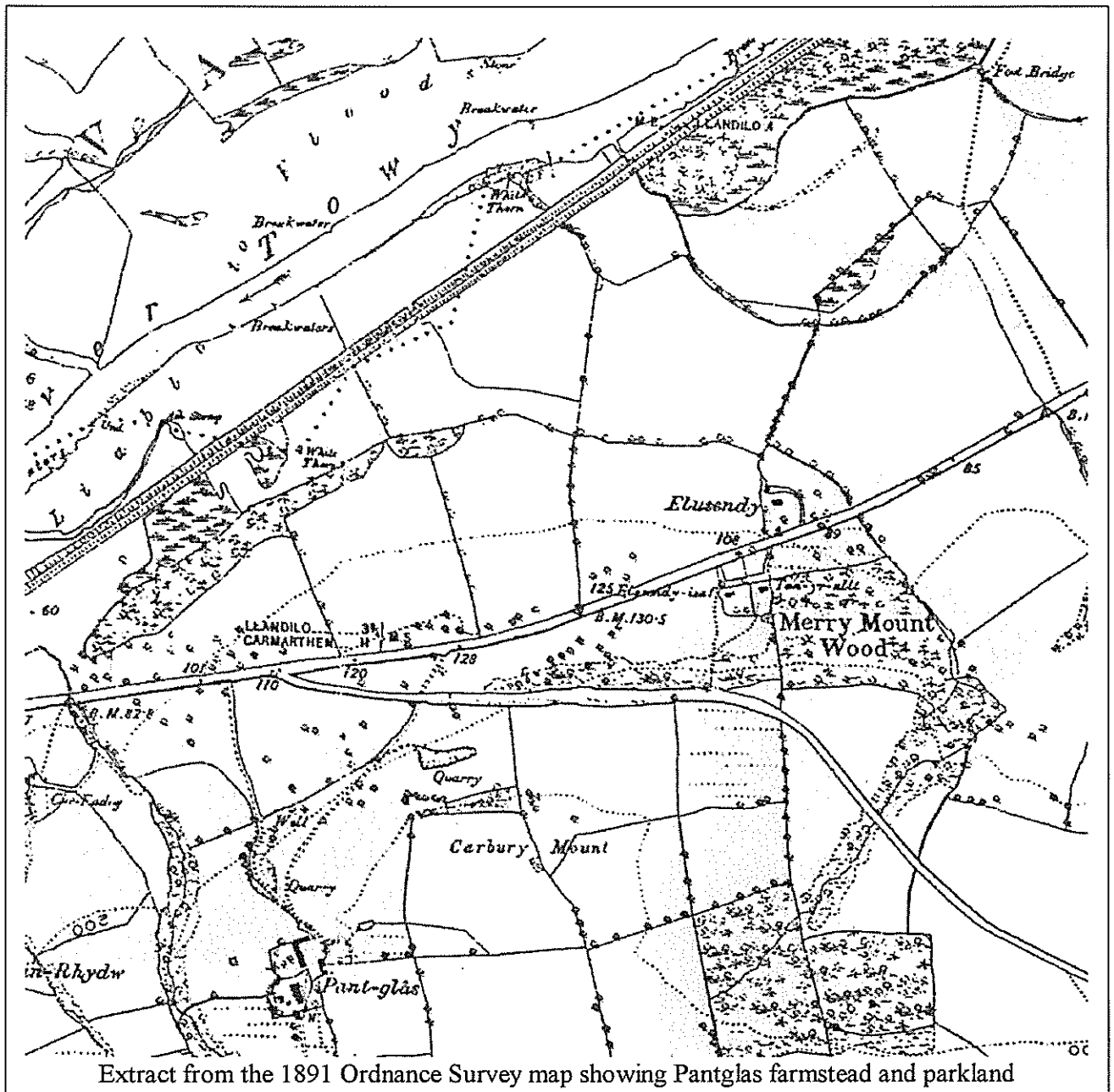


Relict hedge banks in parkland field H

### **Management Recommendations**

The oak trees within this field survive as remnants of relict field boundaries. There is no evidence to suggest that these trees form part of a programme of deliberate parkland tree planting. The planting of scattered parkland trees in this field would be out of touch with existing historic landscape character.

If oak trees are to be planted within this field, planting should endeavour to replicate the line of the field boundaries shown on the 1891 Ordnance Survey map.





### **ORCHARD RESTORATION**

One of the aims of the call out visit was to advise on the restoration of the walled orchard to the west of the farmyard at Pantglas. Agricultural buildings form its boundary to the east, and it is defined to the north and west by stone revetted earth banks, topped with hedges. A lime mortar and stone rubble wall, with a narrow central gateway marks its southern boundary. This wall forms the focus of the present enquiry.

It is currently in a poor condition, and is partially collapsed in places. This is particularly acute for a length of approximately 10 metres to the east of the central gateway. Although the wall has been capped with concrete in the past, water has washed out masonry bonds and made the structure unstable. Stone blocks have fallen out of the wall, undermining large sections. As a result, lime mortar bonds are further exposed, risking further collapse. Ivy and grass growth threatens to break up masonry bonds further.

Today, much of the orchard interior lies under pasture, which is grazed periodically. A few pear and apple trees survive as remnants of the original orchard, which is first identified on the 1837 Llanfihangel Aberbythych Parish tithe map.



Damage to the south wall of the orchard.

### **Management Recommendations**

Vegetation should be removed from the walls and spot treated to prevent re-growth. This should be followed up by a programme of re-pointing and masonry consolidation where necessary. The collapsing parts of the wall should be repaired, and rebuilt using materials faithful to those of its original construction. In order to prevent water ingress from weakening the wall in future, it should be capped with a lime mortar mix.



The landowner has expressed an interest in replacing lost orchard trees. This is to be welcomed, and it will enhance the historic character of the farmstead. If possible, replacement trees should be traditional orchard species of local provenance. Existing orchard trees should be maintained if possible.

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Signature W. Steele Date 30/7/2003

This report has been checked and approved by Louise Austin on behalf of Cambria Archaeology,  
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on the content or presentation of this report