

JUNE 2008



## **Pantycoubal W/12/2855**

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



A well preserved section of the substantial trackway at Pantycoubal.

Report No. 2003/78

Report Prepared for:  
Countryside Council for Wales

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2003/78  
PROJECT RECORD NO. 45635

June 2003

Pantycoubal  
Tir Gofal Call-Out Visit Report

By

Polly Groom

*Cambria Archaeology is the marketing name of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited.*

*The report has been prepared for the specific use of the client. The Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd can accept no responsibility for its use by any other person or persons who may read it or rely on the information it contains.*

ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA  
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf  
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF  
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121  
Adran Rheoli Trefladaeth 01558 823131  
Ffacs: 01558 823133  
Ebost: cambria@acadat.com Gwefan: www.acadat.com

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY  
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited  
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF  
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121  
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131  
Fax: 01558 823133  
Email: cambria@acadat.com Website: www.acadat.com

*The Trust is both a Limited Company (No. 1198990) and a Registered Charity (No. 504616)*  
CADEIRYDD CHAIRMAN: B.C.BURNHAM, MA PHD FSA MIFA. CYFARWYDDWR DIRECTOR: E G HUGHES BA MIFA

## **CONTENTS**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Method Statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>General Description of Farm</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Current Condition and Proposed Restoration Works</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Management Recommendations</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Site and Area Status Glossary</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Farm Map</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Quality Assurance Report</b>	<b>12</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report is intended to provide a statement on the condition and recommended management of all known archaeological and historical sites and features on this farm at the time it was visited by Cambria Archaeology. This information will be used to inform the Tir Gofal Management Agreement for the farm.

### **Method Statement**

Pantycoubal was visited in response to a request from the Tir Gofal project officer. A call-out visit was undertaken to give advice on one particular aspect of the historic environment of the farm.

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FARM**

Pantycoubal farm consists of two holdings – W/12/2855 and W/12/2855/a. Land holding 2855/a was visited by Cambria Archaeology in order to provide advice on the restoration of a trackway, and on the possibility of opening the route of the trackway as a permissive path.

The land holding lies at SN53623455, in the community of Llanfihangel Rhos y Corn. It was visited on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2003.

This land holding is centred around the farmstead of Esgair Fynwent (although this is now in separate ownership). On historic maps it can be seen that the farm buildings lie at the centre of a small network of footpaths and tracks which run to the east and west and connect Esgair Fynwent with the village of Gwernogle, the neighbouring farm of Brithdir and local roads. Most of these tracks and paths are still seen on modern Ordnance Survey maps, and one of them (from Gwernogle up to Esgair Fynwent) is still a public footpath.

## **CURRENT CONDITION AND PROPOSED RESTORATION WORKS**

The trackway being considered for restoration under Tir Gofal leads northeast from the farmstead and connects with a minor road that runs past Llanfihangel Rhos y Corn church and up to Llidiad Nenog and Mynydd Llanybyther. The track covers a distance of around a mile and is clearly of a considerable age – it is shown as a substantial track or road on the Ordnance Survey 1831 map, and again on the 1844 tithe map for Llanfihangel Rhos y Corn parish.

The entire length of the trackway has survived, but its condition varies along its length. It can be roughly split into three sections. At its northeast end, the track is flanked by one bank on the north side. A little further west, most of its length survives as a sunken track, with large banks either side. The tops of the banks are planted with trees, some of which clearly show that they have been laid as hedges in the past. By the time the trackway reaches Esgair Fynwent farmstead, however, the bank on the south side has disappeared again.

The trackway is mostly grassed over, but is still sporadically in use. Tyre ruts in the base of the track attest to its occasional use by vehicles, but this does not seem to be heavy enough to cause erosion of the ground surface. It is a classic hollow way, sunken well below the ground level of the fields either side and with pronounced banks.

Generally, the condition of the north part of the track is poor. Sheep grazing in fields either side have eroded the bank, and there are many open sheep scrapes in its base. Along the middle section, the condition is generally better, and the banks stand up to 1.5m in places. Well-worn sheep paths show that livestock regularly cross this trackway, and erosion is becoming a problem in these places. A few sheep scrapes are also visible – some of these are very severe and have not only removed the grass covering of the banks but have eroded away enough soil that the tree roots are exposed. In these places it is possible to see the structure of the banks, and it is clear that there is little or no stone in them. In at least two places the banks have been entirely flattened to allow access between fields, and for the insertion of modern gateways. The tree planting along this section of the trackway has, in general, survived very well although there are a few gaps where mature trees have been lost.

The section of track nearest to Esgair Fynwent has only one bank surviving, although this is in a good condition and does not seem to suffer erosion to the same extent as the rest of the track.

It is proposed that most of the restoration works will be carried out along the middle section of this track, in the area which has both surviving banks. The aims of the restoration are threefold; to allow the length of the track to be opened as a permissive access footpath; to stabilise the existing banks and to re-establish the planting along the banks.

The track is of particular interest since it is more substantial than may be expected for an upland farm of Esgair Fynwent's size. However, it is very similar to trackways seen at Cae Dwgan and Llysten (in Gwernogle and Brechfa). Both of these are also quite small, upland farms and the tracks on their lands are similarly larger than might be expected. It is fairly common to see short stretches of hollow ways which would have been used for driving livestock from fields near the farmstead out to more open grazing or common land. However, in this small region the tracks seem to be much longer, but still very substantially built. It may be that the building of these long tracks is a trait peculiar to the Brechfa area.



## MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, these proposals are to be welcomed. The trackway is significant locally not only as an access route but also as a landscape feature, and restoration works will help to stabilise it and safeguard its future survival.

### Fencing

The trackway is likely to be fenced out of grazing, and consideration must be given to two issues – where the fencing is to go, and access across the trackway, both for livestock and vehicles. At present, a fence-line runs along part of the north bank itself, and some of the gaps between the trees are partially blocked with wire. However these fences are not stockproof, as is seen by the sheep trails leading across the feature. New fencing will need to be put in place along the length of the track, on both sides, creating a ‘corridor’ of land. To avoid damaging the feature the new fencing should not be placed along the banks themselves, but should be at least 2m away from the outside of each bank. This will also help to make the area more stockproof since eroded paths lead through hollows under the existing fencing.

Crossing points (for livestock and vehicles) should only be put in places where the banks are already flattened. Opposing gates would be the ideal solution for allowing access from one side of the farm to the other.

The planting along most of the length of the track seems to consist of single trees lining the banks. These would never have been stock-proof, and re-planting in these areas should not be aiming for a solid boundary but should be filling in gaps where mature trees have fallen. However, along the section of the track nearest to Esgair Fynwent, the character of the planting changes. Instead of having banks topped with a line of trees, the bank is topped with what appears to be a grown-out hedge. Ideally this hedge should be re-instated, and managed to reproduce a stock-proof boundary. In the long term, this would eliminate the need for modern fencing in this section.



**Plate 1.** *View along a short section of track nearest to the farmstead of Esgair Fynwent. Note how, in this area, the trees show clear signs of having been laid as a hedge. In the long term, the ideal restoration would be to reinstate this hedge.*

## Erosion

Grazing of this trackway and movement through it by livestock has caused a problem with erosion in parts of this feature, as already discussed. Fencing the track out of grazing will have the additional benefit of allowing the vegetation cover to re-establish itself on erosion scars. On the most severe of the sheep scrapes, where tree roots are exposed and may be destabilised, it may be necessary to infill the scrapes with earth and re-seed them. If this is carried out it should be ensured that the profile of the bank is re-created as carefully as possible.

Future erosion, by people using the permissive path, should not present a problem since the anticipated level of use is fairly low. Provided that the path is kept clear and passable there should be no need or reason for people to walk on the banks. Occasional monitoring should take place in wet weather to confirm that no further erosion is taking place.



**Plate 2 (above).** *A small section of the bank showing an active sheep scrape which is removing earth from the banks. It also forms a hollow under the fence, preventing this fence from being stockproof.*

**Plate 3 (below).** *View across the middle section of the track. There is a large gap in the line of trees here, and planting to re-instate trees would improve the appearance of the track. A sheep path also crosses both banks, and has caused a clear erosion scar which will need to recover.*





### **Future maintenance**

It is important that the trackway is not only restored, but maintained in a stable condition. The proposed re-planting of trees in the larger gaps is to be welcomed, but existing trees must also be managed to prevent them from falling and bringing up large amounts of the banks. Infilling sheep scrapes which are exposing their roots will help to prevent this. Several patches of weeds and scrub will need removing before the path is opened, and will also need to be kept in check in the future, in order to ensure that the path remains in a useable condition. Vegetation should be cut at ground level and removed, not dug or dragged out.

Ideally, future management of the site would consist of occasional light grazing in dry weather. This would control the vegetation whilst doing minimal damage to the banks. Severe erosion scars and sheep paths may need to be covered with chicken wire whilst grazing is taking place, to discourage livestock from walking across those areas. The wire can be lifted as soon as the vegetation has recovered (Rees,S:1994:p.35).

## **SITE AND AREA STATUS GLOSSARY**

The following abbreviations are used in the gazetteer to refer to site and area status. These schedules, lists and registers are compiled and maintained by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments.

### **SAM - Scheduled Ancient Monument**

This is a statutory designation. Scheduled Ancient Monuments are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

### **LB1, LB2\* & LB2 – Listed Building 1, 2\* & 2**

This is a statutory designation. Listed buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

### **HLW - Historic Landscapes of Wales**

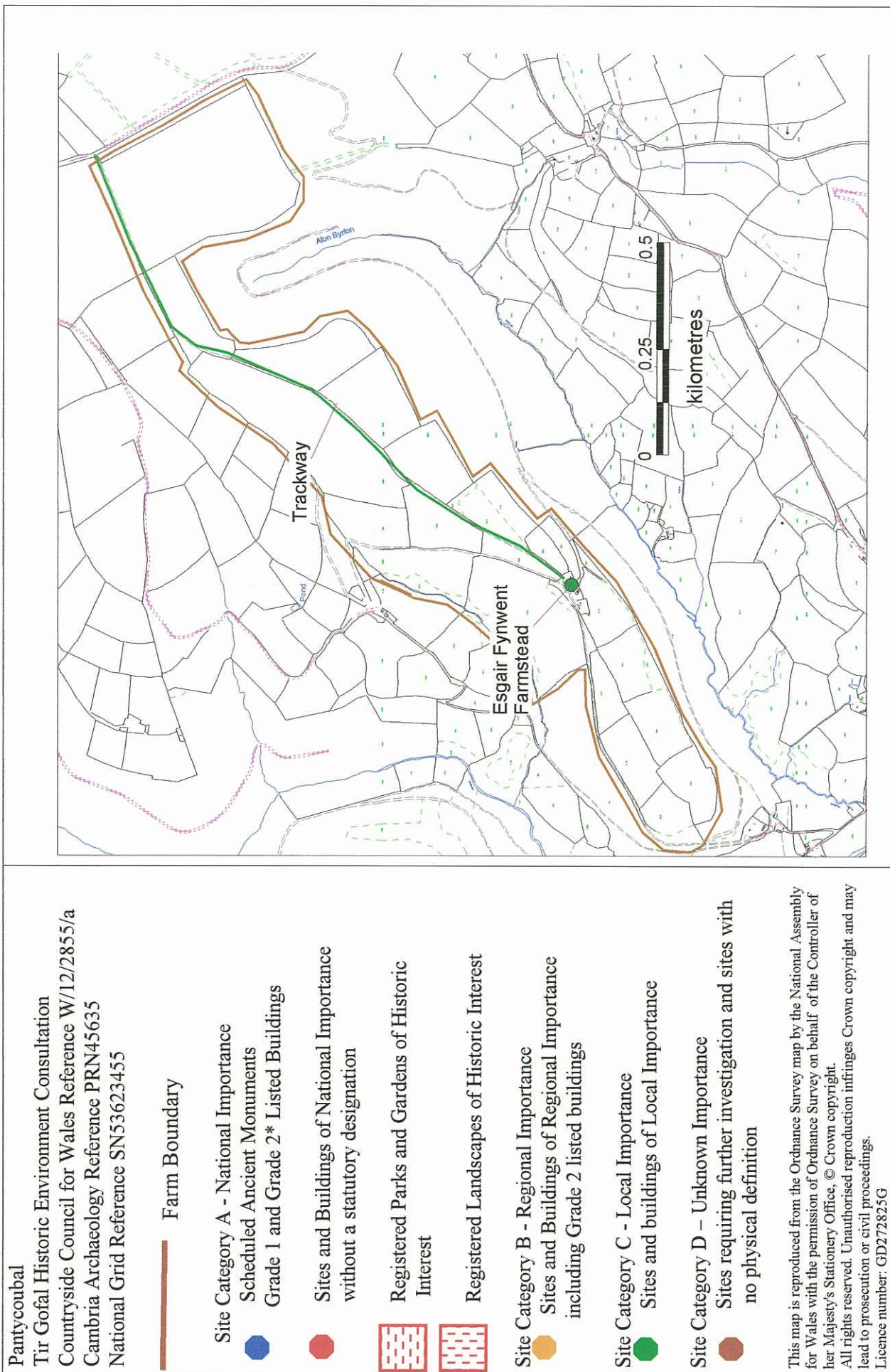
Historic Landscapes of Wales are defined by the *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales: Part 2.1 Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest and Part 2.2 Landscapes of Special Historic Interest*. The register is advisory and has no statutory powers.

### **PGW - Parks and Gardens of Wales**

Parks and Gardens of Wales are defined by the *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales: Part 1 Parks and Gardens*. The register is advisory and has no statutory powers.

## **REFERENCES**

- Rees,S:1994: *Erosion in Wales: The Extent of the Problem*. In Berry, A.Q and Brown,I.W (Eds): *Erosion on Archaeological Earthworks: Its Prevention, Control and Repair* p.29 – 35
- Ordnance Survey Old Series 1831, sheet 41
- Ordnance Survey 1891 Carmarthenshire XV.SE
- Ordnance Survey 1907 Carmarthenshire XV.SE
- Ordnance Survey 1891 Carmarthenshire XXIV.NE
- Ordnance Survey 1907 Carmarthenshire XXIV.NE
- Tithe map 1844 Llanfihangel Rhos y Corn parish



**Pantycoubal  
W/12/2855**

**REPORT NUMBER 2003/78**

**June 2003**

This report has been prepared by Polly Groom

Position: Heritage Management Assistant

Signature P. Groom Date 11/07/03

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

Position: Principal Archaeologist (Curatorial)

Signature Louise Austin Date 11/07/03

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