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Parc Henri W/12/3322

Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report



Report No. 2003/67

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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report

By

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CALL OUT VISIT

A preliminary desk based survey of Parc Henri based on information held in the regional Sites and Monuments Record identified three possible Bronze Age round barrows (PRNs 814, 830, 1193) and two possible burnt mounds (PRNs 840, 9740) within the holding. Following a visit by a Tir Gofal project officer, a follow up visit was requested by Cambria Archaeology in order to confirm the presence and condition of these sites, and assess the archaeological potential of two additional sites identified by the landowner; a possible burial mound and a cobble surfaced trackway. The information gained during the visit would be used to determine any management recommendations to be incorporated into the Tir Gofal Management Agreement

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FARM

Parc Henri (SN63171405) is situated to the east of the A483 between Llandybie and Ammanford, on slightly elevated ground between the rivers Loughor and Marlais. Land consists primarily of pasture, although narrow pockets of deciduous woodland are also present along the stream valleys, which cross the holding. The farm is divided into irregular small to medium sized fields by hedges on low earth banks. This together with the small pockets of woodland gives the farm a woody aspect.

The farmstead of Parc Henri is first shown on the 1831 Old Series Ordnance Survey map, although it is recorded in more detail on the 1891 Ordnance Survey map. A rectangular farmyard is shown, defined by agricultural buildings to the north and west, with a smaller building shown to the northeast of the farmyard. The farmstead has since been extensively modernised and little of its historic character remains.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

PRNs 814, 830, 1193 ROUND BARROWS?

The location of round barrows (PRN 814, 830, 1193) is unclear. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales following a visit in 1913 recorded: "On slightly elevated ground between the rivers Llychwr and Marlais are three mounds, the first two on the farm of Gelli Sifor; the last on that of Bryn Marlais. The first does not appear to have been disturbed, the second has been opened, the third has practically disappeared all but the foundations." The grid reference provided does not correspond to the above description and insufficient information is given to accurately locate these features. No evidence of any barrows was identified at the grid reference specified or elsewhere within the holding.

Management Recommendations

No specific management recommendations can be made in this instance.

PRN 840 BURNT MOUND?

There is some confusion about the location of this site. Cantrill in 1906 describes a "doubtful hearth at the side of a stream at the north end of a wood 400 yards southeast of Gelli-Siffor farm," There is clearly some discrepancy between this description and the grid reference (SN62641394), which indicates a location at the top of a ridge in a reseeded pasture field. A visit to the area in 1968 identified no signs of the feature. A visit by Dyfed Archaeological Trust in 1987 during tree felling and replanting revealed a mound of earth and stone, apparently at this woodland location, which was interpreted as a natural feature. The copse in question was heavily overgrown with brambles during the time of the call out visit making further assessment of the site difficult. No evidence of a feature was identified at the ridge top location specified by the grid reference. It is possible that this feature has been confused with PRN 47739.

Management Recommendations

No specific management recommendations can be made in this instance.

PRN 9740 BURNT MOUND?

Again there is confusion about the location of this site, involving alternative recorded locations. A description of the mound by G. Williams of Dyfed Archaeological Trust in 1994 to the east of a stream in the bottom of a valley does not correspond to the grid reference (SN62601391), which is sited to the east of a field boundary on top of a ridge. A "fine burnt mound measuring 14 by 9 metres, crescentic toward the stream with a broad and relatively level top" is described. No evidence of this feature was identified at the location specified by the grid reference. It may be referring to burnt mound (PRN 47739), which is situated 120 metres to the east of this location.

Management Recommendations

No specific management recommendations can be made in this instance.

PRN 47739 BURNT MOUND

This is a fine example of its type, and a nationally important monument. It lies approximately 12 metres to the east of a small stream in a low marshy area, although the ground opens out, eventually falling away to the southwest. It measures approximately 14 by 9 metres, crescentic towards the stream, with a scoop of material missing from the west side. The top is broad and relatively flat at approximately 0.7 metres high, although the southern horn rises to approximately one metre. Several earthfast stones on the eastern and southern edge may have formed an outer kerb. Additional loose boulders to the west of the mound may have been dislodged from the mound in the past. This feature corresponds favourably with the description given for PRN 9740, where it was noted that augering revealed burnt debris including limestone and sandstone, confirming its status as a burnt mound.

The burnt mound at Parc Henri is in a reasonable condition. Several trees are growing around the periphery of the mound, with a mature oak at the southern end. The bulk of the monument is grass covered and lies within a marshy rough pasture field, which appears to be grazed periodically. The site lies at the junction of several fields, and livestock and machinery movements are focused here. A loss of grass cover and some localised erosion, from cattle trampling in wet conditions was identified in several areas around the mound. The marshy ground, which surrounds the mound, was heavily poached, particularly to the north, where tractor ruts were also present. Some deep tractor ruts were also noted around the southern and western periphery of the monument. This is of concern as the area surrounding the mound, and particularly on the side of the stream holds potential for the preservation of associated archaeological features, such as stone, wood or clay lined troughs and gulleys from the stream for example.

A burnt mound is an accumulation of burnt (fire-crazed) stones, ash and charcoal, usually sited next to a stream river or lake, with hearths and/or some form of trough or basin capable of holding water either within the mound or adjacent to it. Size varies greatly from small examples under 0.5m high and less than 10m across to larger sites which exceed 3m in height and 35m across. Burnt mounds are found widely scattered over midland, southern England, and Wales, although examples are also known in Scotland and Ireland. They are frequently interpreted as sauna baths of some kind, although an alternative explanation is that they have been used as cooking sites. Currently available dates suggest that the tradition of building and using burnt mounds spans most of the early, middle and late Bronze Age, a period of perhaps 1000 years.



Plate 1- looking north towards burnt mound (PRN 47739). Tractor ruts are visible in the foreground.

Management Recommendations

Although the site is currently in reasonable condition, some threats to its long term survival have been identified. The tress, which are growing around the periphery of the mound are of concern and will be causing some damage. Any young trees should be cut off at the roots and spot treated to prevent re-growth. The mature trees around the mound appear to be in a stable condition at present. If any are to become unstable, they should be cut off at the roots before collapse in order to prevent tree roots from uprooting buried archaeological remains.

The loss of grass cover and related erosion is an ongoing and serious threat. The landowner has expressed an interest in fencing off the monument in order to bring it into positive management. Ideally the area within 15 metres of the edge of the site should be fenced in order to prevent poaching and damage by agricultural vehicles to below ground archaeological remains. It is recognised that this may not be possible in the area to the north of the site, which provides access to a trackway and fields to the west. The site should be regularly grazed during dry conditions. The aim of management should be to establish a stable grass sward over the monument, with no breaks in the ground surface. Scrub should not be allowed to become established over the site.

PRN 47740 ROAD

An aim of the call out visit was to assess the archaeological significance of a cobbled trackway, which is believed locally to be a Roman road. A trackway forks off the drive to Parc Henri, continuing in an easterly direction for 80 metres before fording the River Loughor. Approximately 10 metres east of the fork, the gravelled surface has worn away to expose several metres of cobbled surface, the cobbles averaging about 10 centimetres square. They appear to be in a stable condition, with none showing any signs of having been displaced recently.

The road is first shown on the 1831 Old Series Ordnance Survey map, although is likely to be of a much earlier date. There is no evidence of a Roman Road in the immediate vicinity of Parc Henri, the nearest being Sarn Helen, approximately eight kilometres to the north. Status as a Roman Road is therefore unlikely.

Management Recommendations

The road should continue to be maintained for use as a bridleway. Exposed cobbles should not be allowed to become unstable.



Plate 2- looking east towards the exposed cobbles of road (PRN 47740) and beyond.

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

- Buckley, V. 1990 *Burnt Offerings: International Contributions to Burnt Mound Archaeology*, Wordwell Ltd. Dublin
- Ordnance Survey Old Series 1831 Volume VI Sheet 41 SE
- Ordnance Survey 1891 Carmarthenshire Sheet XLVIII N.E.
- Ordnance Survey 1907 Carmarthenshire Sheet XLVIII N.E.

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3rd June 2003

This report has been prepared by William Steele

Position: Archaeologist (Tir Gofal)

Signature W Steele Date 5/6/2003

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


Position: Trust Director



Signature G Hughes Date 5/6/03


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

Parc Henri


Tir Gofal Historic Environment Consultation
 Countryside Council for Wales Reference W/12/3322
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 National Grid Reference SN63161408


 Farm Boundary
 Historic Landscape Character Area


Site Category A - National Importance
 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
 Grade 1 and Grade 2* Listed Buildings


 Sites and Buildings of National Importance without a statutory designation

 Registered Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest

 Registered Landscapes of Historic Interest

Site Category B - Regional Importance
 Sites and Buildings of Regional Importance including Grade 2 listed buildings

Site Category C - Local Importance
 Sites and buildings of Local Importance

Site Category D - Unknown Importance
 Sites requiring further investigation and sites with no physical definition

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