

JUNE 2003



PENLAN WOOD

HEATHLAND AND NATIVE WOODLAND RESTORATION PROJECT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING FOLLOWING FELLING



Report No. 2003/92

Report Prepared for:
PEMBROKESHIRE COAST
NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY



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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2003/92
PROJECT RECORD NO. 48002

PENLAN WOOD
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By

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INTRODUCTION

An archaeological assessment of Penlan Wood was undertaken in September 2000, by K Murphy, prior to tree felling being carried out. Amongst other information the assessment identified historic landscape evidence from aerial photographs taken in 1946, before the area was afforested. These include the remains of stony boundary banks and cultivation evidence comprising ridges between 0.5 and 1.5m wide. In addition a possible prehistoric site was also identified. Following the felling of the area of the wood that contained the possible prehistoric features a site visit was made to record the visible remains.

PENLAN WOOD ENLCOSURE PRN 41477

A possible hut circle noted on aerial photographs was visited on May 9th 2003. The site had been obscured by the conifer plantation at Penlan Wood for several decades and there had been no archaeological record or visit undertaken prior to the land being planted. The felling of the forest compartment therefore made it possible to view the site for the first time.

Aerial photograph analysis had made it possible for the site to be described relatively accurately as a "roughly circular earthwork enclosure, approximately 10m in diameter, with the defining bank standing to perhaps 1m. It is most likely to be a hut circle, but could potentially be a Bronze Age ritual or funerary site."

The field visit made it possible to photograph the site and make a more accurate measurement possible, but the surface evidence does not allow for a more definite interpretation of the site that previously made.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The feature in question is located on a small, natural terrace on a south facing slope on the southern flank of Mynydd Caregog. This area had been formerly part of Carningli Common but had evidently been enclosed for agricultural purposes by the early 19th century. Much of the ground around the site had been destoned in the past, although some larger natural boulders still lay within the field parcels carved out of the mountain common.

The feature is sub-circular rather than truly circular. It is defined by a low, denuded bank, up to 2m wide and no more than 0.5m high, being best preserved on its eastern and northeastern sides. The northern side is very low, less than 0.2m high. This bank is apparently mostly of earth, with only three stones visible on the surface, one of which was a relatively large block of dolerite at the northeastern side of the feature. A slight ditch around the outside of the feature may have been created by the digging of earth, upcast to form the bank.

Conifers had been planted on and within the feature and therefore some root damage has inevitably been caused during the period of afforestation. The presence of tree stumps on the feature and also the surface disturbance caused as the trees grew means that the monument is not in pristine condition, even though its chief characteristics have survived fairly well.

The bank encloses an internal depression, which measures c.5m north-south x 4m east-west. There is no evidence of an entrance through the bank into the central depression.

No associated features were seen around the site or elsewhere within the felled area.

INTERPRETATION

The apparent lack of an entrance through the enclosing bank would suggest that this may in fact be a Bronze Age ring barrow rather than a fold or hut platform. However, surface evidence alone makes interpretation uncertain. Archaeological excavation could clarify the nature of the sub-surface archaeology of the site.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This site should not be further disturbed. Ground breaking activity should not occur within a radius of 10m from the outer edge of the feature. Consideration should be given to carrying out a partial excavation of the site to help establish its true nature.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Murphy, K, 2000, Penlan Wood Heathland And Native Woodland Restoration Project – Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

PHOTOGRAPHS



1. A view of the felled area from its southern edge. PRN 41477 lies at the top (furthest) end of this area, with the top of Mynydd Caregog beyond the trees on the horizon.



2. This is almost a reverse view of Plate 1, looking east-southeast from the top of the felled area. PRN 41477 can be seen in the centre of the photograph, roped off within a ring of posts. Note the view towards the main Preseli range to the south-east, with the peak of Foel Eryr at just left of centre of the photograph.



3. A closer view of PRN41477 from the north.



4. PRN 41477 viewed from the west.



5. PRN 41477 viewed from the east.



6. PRN 41477 viewed from the south.

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REPORT NUMBER 200392

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This report has been checked and approved by Louise Austin on behalf of Cambria Archaeology,
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Signature *Louise Austin* Date *19/08/2003*

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