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TIR GOFAL MANAGEMENT PLAN: HERITAGE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (HE2)

Prepared for:
Nantllwyd



**Tir Gofal Reference No
W/11/7161**

**DAT Report No. 2008 / 59
Project Record No. 56755**

**Prepared by
Mike Ings**

**Other documents enclosed:
Historic Landscape Area Description 13: Bryngwyn Bach**

A) INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

2. Historic landscape character & archaeological and historical content

Historic Landscape Character

Nantllwyd is a substantial holding lying within the community of Llanddewi Brefi, Ceredigion, close to the county boundary with Brecknockshire and Carmarthenshire.

The surrounding landscape is visually dramatic, comprising a large block of upland within the heart of the Cambrian Mountains just north of Llyn Brianne reservoir, with a wealth of relict archaeological remains from the prehistoric, medieval and later periods represented. The importance of this landscape is recognised in its designation as the Upland Ceredigion Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. This area has been further assessed as part of the Historic Landscape Characterisation project (Historic Landscape Character areas are intended to define places where local land-use patterns have left particularly strong or distinctive evidence in the landscape), and lies within area 13: Bryngwyn Bach. This is a very large tract of unenclosed or semi-enclosed upland with an uneven and widely dispersed settlement pattern of upland farms. Included within it are parts of the Bishop of St David's Llanddewi Breifi estate and Strata Florida Abbey's Penardd Grange. It is likely that by the late-medieval period both these holdings would have been divided into farms which were leased out and farmed on a commercial basis. The antiquity, however, of the upland farms contained within this area is uncertain, but it is likely that some originated in the Medieval Period, in the manner indicated above, while others may well have started as squatter settlements in the 18th- or early 19th-century. The 20th century has witnessed an abandonment of these farms, and very few are now occupied (Murphy 1999).

The southern boundary of the holding has been revised since the HE1 report as a new fenceline has been erected to partition the north holding from the south.

Archaeological and Historic Content

There is plenty of archaeological evidence of prehistoric activity preserved on this upland farm. Several Bronze Age (c2000 - 500BC) round barrows (PRNs 5555, 8527, 8528 and possibly 9009), are located on the plateau heights above the Afon Doethie. Barrows are circular burial mounds and here they take the form of large stone cairns. A further possible barrow or hut circle (PRN 9118), and a striking quartz recumbent standing stone (PRN 9117, see photograph on front cover) are also recorded, again of probable Bronze Age date. A standing stone is defined as a singular upright monolith or boulder set in the ground and assumed to be a ritual monument of prehistoric date and recumbent stones are a sub-type included within this monument type.

Situated along the stream valleys that cross this landscape are numerous abandoned cottage and other settlement sites that indicate a greater population level in the area up until the 19th century. These include the earthwork and stone remains of simple one or two celled deserted rural settlements (PRNs 43200 and 64690) through to standing buildings from the 18th or 19th Centuries (PRNs 9289 and 9112). The origins of

many of these deserted rural settlements are poorly understood but some may date back to the medieval period as seasonal dwellings in the pastoral economy whereby sheep and cattle were moved onto the uplands during the summer months to free up the lowlands for crop production.

Key Objective

The management priority is the sensitive management of the prehistoric archaeological remains on the farm. The main concern is not with the farming practices but with the illegal use of the area by off-road vehicles, a destructive pastime that is beyond the landowners' control.

B2) HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FEATURES

All known historic environment features are marked on Map 1 of this agreement

These are divided into three types:

- i) Archaeological and Historic Features: Archaeological sites, earthwork monuments, ruined structures and individual historic garden features.
- ii) Traditional Buildings: Structures built before 1918 using traditional materials and methods of construction.
- iii) Historic Parks and Gardens: Discrete areas of land laid out in an ornamental way for the pleasure of the owner.

All historic environment features have been allocated categories of importance:

Site Status A: Sites and Monuments of National Importance.

Site Status B: Sites/Features of Regional Importance.

Site Status C: Sites/Features of Local Importance.

Site Status D: Minor and damaged sites.

Site Status U: Sites requiring further investigation.

General requirements

Historic earthworks, stone structures, archaeological sites, traditional buildings, parks and gardens must all be retained and protected against damage. The management of these features must comply with the following general requirements.

- Do not remove any material from archaeological sites or historic features, or deposit spoil, farm waste or rubbish.
- Ensure contractors and all other workers on the farm are aware of the historic environment features and comply with the requirements of this agreement. They should take appropriate measures to avoid accidental damage.
- Do not carry out any excavation, erect any new structure or plant any trees without the prior approval of the Project Officer.
- Do not site new fencing or vehicular tracks on archaeological or historic sites without the prior approval of the Project Officer.
- Ensure that the use of metal detectors and the reporting of discoveries

complies with the Treasure Act 1996 and associated codes of practice. The Portable Antiquities Scheme website (<http://www.finds.org.uk>) provides valuable guidance and information.

- Please report all discoveries of archaeological interest to the Dyfed Archaeological Trust (01558 823131). This enables them to maintain an up-to-date record of archaeological discoveries.

"Scheduled" Ancient Monuments (SAMs) have statutory protection and consent from Cadw may be required for works to these monuments. Consult the Project Officer for advice.

"Listed Buildings" also have statutory protection and permission from the Local Planning Authority may be required for some works. This also applies to buildings within the curtilage of a listed building. Consult the Project Officer for Advice

In addition to these general requirements you must comply with the specific sets of prescriptions set out below:

i) ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC FEATURES:

Archaeological sites, earthwork monuments, ruined structures and individual historic garden features.

Location and description:

A search of the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) held by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust has identified the following sites and monuments which are indicated on Map 1.

Other sites may be known to the landowner and these should be identified to the Project Officer who will pass the information to the Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

Name (& PRN)	Period/Site type	NGR	Status SAM/listing	Management required
CARN SAITH-WRAIG <u>(5555)</u>	Bronze Age round barrow?; ring barrow?	SN77105297	A	Generic

This is a large, disturbed composite ring-cum-round cairn. It is situated on a shelf in a secluded position on the southwest side of a broad ridge at 430m above OD. It comprises a ring of earth and stones, 4m wide and 21.5m in diameter overall. Where best preserved, in the northeast quadrant, the ring is 0.4m high on the outside and 0.3m high on the inside. Within the ring is a mass of tumbled stone and it is reasonable to suppose that this mass represents a round cairn formerly existing at the centre of the ring. The mass has been cleared to ground level along a line from the northeast side to the centre and beyond, and a cutting has been made through the ring to the southwest. There is no sign of a cist. A pile of fence posts have been dumped on top of the cairn and a small fire has recently been lit. Vehicle tracks are encroaching upon the site and pose an immediate threat. NC 2001.

A further visit to the site (2004-05) noted a modern marker cairn had recently been placed at the centre of the monument, modern fenced-off sheep pens were located within 2m of the site and most of the pile of fence-posts had now been removed. This is a very impressive monument and appears to be quite deliberately sited for its stunning views. The site also looks out over to the location of the Bryn Gorlan group of monuments to the northwest. NC. 2006

The site appeared little changed during a Tir Gofal field visit on 29/05/08 to the previous descriptions. The mapping of the cairn on the 1:10000 Ordnance Survey map has extended the dimensions of the feature by including its topographical situation. The site looked stable, the reported pile of fence posts had been removed and a walkers' cairn was in evidence near the centre of the monument. The cairn is within a field of low-intensity grazing. A long-standing farm access runs close to the eastern edge of the site that would not normally pose a problem due to the low-level impact of farm vehicles. Unfortunately the illegal use of the land by off-road vehicles does create a threat to the welfare of the archaeology and a solution to this unwelcome trespassing is, as yet, unforthcoming. The fences of sheep-holding pens run close to the northern perimeter of the barrow and, while not perceived as a problem in themselves, they do force any vehicular access to the west, authorised or not, close to the monument. It is suggested that should the fence need replacing at any time that the corner is cut off to widen the area between it and the barrow.

It is understood that Cadw plan to schedule the site in the near future; recognising the status of the monument as being of national significance.



Looking west across Round Barrow PRN 5555

CARN SAITH-WRAIG **Bronze Age round** **SN77185288** **A** **Generic**
[\(8527\)](#) **barrow**

A round cairn situated at 430m above OD, upon a low ridge in open moorland. Composed of stones and small boulders with some quartz and turf covered along the perimeter, it has a diameter of c.13.5m and a maximum height of 0.8m. It has been dug to the centre from the north, east and west sides. At the centre are a number of flagstones up to 0.5m across, possibly the remains of a cist/cists, but at present they are lying in disarray within the central crater. There are no traces of kerbing. This cairn is intervisible with nearby cairns PRN 9009 and PRN 5555. NC 2001.

The cairn was revisited during the Tir Gofal visit of 29/05/08 and appeared as described during the field visit of 2001. The mapping of the cairn on the 1:10000 Ordnance Survey map has extended the dimensions of the feature by including its topographical situation. Its location on the crest of a ridge helps to protect it from the potential threat of the farm access track to the west and the recently erected fenceline to the south of the monument is unlikely to have caused any damage to the site. As with cairn PRN 5555, the main problem concerns the illegal and unpredictable action of off road drivers trespassing on the land. The monument is within a field of rough, low intensity grazing. It is understood that Cadw plan to schedule the site in the near future; recognising the status of the monument as being of national significance



Looking west across Round Barrow PRN 8527

BLAEN NANT-Y-RHIW **Bronze Age round** **SN76765347** **A** **Generic**
[\(8528\)](#) **barrow**

A small round cairn on the highest point of a broad ridge at 461m above OD. The site consists of a rough platform of large stones, 6m in diameter and 0.2m high. The feature is grass-covered and would appear to be undisturbed except for a small modern marker cairn, 1.2m in diameter and 0.3m high surrounding a wooden post, which has been erected at the centre of the monument. The cairn is intervisible with standing stone 9117 and another possible prehistoric cairn, 9118, to the S and SW of this site respectively. The site enjoys extensive views out down the Doethie valley and over to the Brecon Beacons. NC 2001.

A further visit to the site was made in 2004-05, when the following record was made; the vegetation surrounding the monument was clearer and revealed the cairn to have a diameter of c.8m and a height of 0.4m. The site was clearly distinguished from the surrounding long grass by noticeably shorter vegetation and probing with a ranging rod suggests only a thin grass cover. NC 2006

During the field visit of 29/05/08 the site appeared little changed from the description offered in 2001. The wooden post erected at the centre of the monument had been removed but the site appeared undisturbed and was stable beneath a good coverage of rough grasses and reeds. The area is under low intensity grazing. The only potential threat at present is the illegal use of the area by off road vehicles. The mapping of the cairn on the 1:10000 Ordnance Survey map has extended the dimensions of the feature by including its topographical situation



Looking southeast across grassed-over cairn PRN8528, walkers' cairn on top

CARN SAITH-WRAIG; **Bronze Age round** **SN77125291** **A** **Generic**
BLAEN NANT-Y-RHIW **barrow**
[\(9009\)](#)

A partially disturbed cairn located 100m southeast of Carn Saith-Wraig round barrow (PRN 5555) on a narrow ridge. The cairn measures roughly 13m in diameter and stands to a height of 1m and is intervisible with both cairn PRN 5555 and another Bronze Age cairn, PRN 8527, located a further distance away to the southeast. Extensive views out over the surrounding landscape. NC 2001. The mound is turf consolidated, with hardly any stone visible. NC 2006

This barrow site was not located during the Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit of 29/05/08 despite an

extensive search of the area, including the use of a GPS, suggesting that the recorded location (2001) may be incorrect. There are several glacial knolls in the vicinity.

NANT-Y-GRAIG ([9111](#)) **Post Medieval dwelling** **SN77975419** **B** **Generic**

Pair of buildings at right angles with one another. Shown on Tithe map. NC 2001. The site was not seen during the Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit of 29/05/08 as the landowners said that the buildings had been sold off and were therefore no longer within the Tir Gofal scheme.

BRYN-BRITH ([9112](#)) **Post Medieval dwelling** **SN77655387** **B** **Generic**

Pair of buildings in line, shown on Tithe map. NC 2001.

Site visited on 29/05/08 and seen to be in an upland field of rough grazing, stable and under no immediate threat. A tree stands close to the east of the buildings but it isn't considered a problem, being healthy, sturdy and with no trailing branches. There are at least two ruinous buildings; the better preserved aligned East-West with an entranceway on the southern side. On the same alignment but staggered so that its northern wall is in line with the southern wall of the first building, the second building is less complete and may be an earlier structure. This appears to have two entrances, one at the northeast corner of the eastern wall and one at the northwest corner of the northern wall. Further banks/possible walls are apparent to the south and west of the buildings, either the remnant of further buildings or associated plots. The remains of another building (PRN 64691) were recorded nearby, to the west.



Looking east across deserted dwelling PRN 9112

BRITHDIR ([9113](#)) **Post Medieval farmstead** **SN78155322** **B** **Generic**

Small farmstead complex now ruined. Shown as a parallel pair of buildings on the Tithe map. NC 2001. PRN 9113 was not visited during the Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit of 29/05/08.

BLAEN NANT-Y-RHIW ([9117](#)) **Bronze Age? standing stone?** **SN76755339** **A** **Generic**

A large recumbent white quartz boulder, facing N-S, and intervisible with prehistoric cairns PRN 9118 and PRN 8528 which lie a short distance away to the SW and N respectively. The stone is situated on a small knoll that forms part of a ridge running across an undulating high plateau with extensive views, particularly in the southern sector down the Doethie valley. The view to the N is obscured by forestry. The stone measures 1.8m in length N-S, 1.15m wide at its widest point E-W and 0.7m in height at its northern end, tapering to 0.55m in height at its southern tip. Extensive views are achieved from the site, which may well have enjoyed a 360 degree panorama, and the Brecon Beacons were clearly visible to the SE. NC 2001.

The boulder appears to sit upon a possible platform of earthfast stones, exposed by sheltering sheep on the southeast side, and an angled stone on the northeast side is suggestive of a possible stone-setting. The monument is within a field under low-intensity rough grazing and appears stable. The only potential threat is the unpredictable action of illegal off road drivers on the land.



Looking northwest over recumbent standing stone PRN 9117

BLAEN NANT-Y-RHIW **Bronze Age?** **SN76605333** **A** **Generic**
[\(9118\)](#) **round**
barrow?;hut circle

The remains of a probable prehistoric cairn sited a short distance away from standing stone 9117 and cairn 8528, and intervisible with both. Fantastic views out over the Doethie valley with the Brecon Beacons also visible on the horizon to the SE. A winter visit will better establish the exact shape and nature of this monument. NC 2001. On the ground it looks like a pair of spectacles, that is, two circular cairns joined by a linear bridge. The site was previously recorded as a possible hut circle but the site is far more typical of a cairn than a domestic dwelling. As much as anything it is located in a very exposed location offering no shelter. It is possible that this site consists of two small Bronze Age cairns, c.3m in diameter and 0.3m high, with a 'bridge' of stones, 2m long, connecting the two together – possibly a very rare form of monument known as a 'conjoined cairn' NC 2006

The site is located on a natural knoll or terrace, grassed over and stable. It was recorded during the 2008 Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit as a relatively small, oval cairn with a slight (approximately 0.30m) bank defining the edge of the monument, some 6 metres in diameter east – west. The pile of loose stone to the northwest was interpreted as the possible discard from the excavation of the centre. The only potential, immediate threat could be the illegal use of the land by off road vehicles.



Looking northeast across cairn PRN 9118

NANTIEUAN; **Post Medieval** **SN75765396** **B** **Generic**
DOETHIE FACH [\(9289\)](#) **farmstead**

Stone farmstead and enclosed in-field. Evidently in use in 20th century. Farmhouse consists of two equal sized rooms, overall length 17.7 x 6.3m east-west. Possible footing of earlier building under the western end. Collapsed roof slate. Entrances to the south into each room and through the west wall. NC 2001.

The site is remote, located in the river valley of the Doethie Fach. Certain aspects of the building suggest a possible longhouse with its two rooms and its side entrance/exit facing onto the enclosed in-field. The building to the west of the house is unusual, the lower courses of stones appear to form a circular structure, maybe a pigsty, but the wall abutting and partly overlying the top of this is straight and possibly forms part of a later building. Some roof slates. ceramic ridge tiles and broken fragments of two cauldrons were seen

within the house perimeter. The current condition of the site, when visited on 29/05/08, is stable and there are no immediate threats apparent.



(Left), Looking north, up the Doethie Valley, over possible deserted longhouse PRN 9289. (Right) Circular structure, possible pigsty, to west of house.

GLOG ([43199](#)) **Medieval?;Post Medieval?** **SN75725451** **B** **Generic**
deserted rural settlement

A rectangular dry-stone building located within the NW part of a square enclosure. Both the enclosure and building have entrances to the E. A possible dam is represented by a length of wall outside to the NW. Lines of stones were noticed edging the stream above the site to the NW. NC 2001. This site was not seen during the Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit of 29/05/08.

NANT Y RHIW ([43200](#)) **Medieval?;Post Medieval?** **SN75625335** **B** **Generic**
deserted rural settlement

Single-unit long hut, 9m x 5.6m, with stony banks, c.0.5m high, and aligned N-S. An entrance opens to the E. The hut is set into the slope with a drop to a stream to the S and E. SE corner is gradually being eroded. NC 2001.

It is not certain whether or not this site was seen during the Tir Gofal field visit of 29/05/08. A similar single-unit long hut was identified but several details of description and location did not match up and a new record number, PRN 64690, was created to avoid future confusion.

GLOG FACH ([43205](#)) **Medieval?;Post Medieval?** **SN758547** **B** **Generic**
deserted rural settlement

Site spotted from an aerial oblique photograph awaiting a field visit. NC 2001. This remote site was not visited during the Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit of 29/05/08, although possible house platforms were spotted, from a distance, on south-facing slopes within the river valley of the Doethie Fach.

SOAR-Y-MYNYDD ([43212](#)) **Post Medieval** **SN7843753249** **B** **Generic**
deserted rural settlement

Lying immediately to the W and in front of Soar-y-Mynydd chapel (7844) is a two-celled building, terraced into the hillside and cut into outcropping bedrock on its N side. The walls stand to a height of c.0.4m and the settlement was sited adjacent to Nant Brithdir stream. Although much ruined it is still possible to see the walls of the house itself which measure 10m x 6m, aligned NW-SE, measuring some 0.7m wide in places and standing on average to a height of 0.3m. The N cell is the smaller of the two, measuring 3m x 6m, with access through the E side. The second cell is roughly square, measuring 6m x 6m. The E side of the building is much disturbed and possibly robbed. A small garden or animal plot lies immediately abutting the house on its E side and is evidenced by an artificial platform, possibly of laid stone, although the feature was too disturbed to properly assess it. There appears to be no ancillary outbuilding associated with the house, but the long grass prevented a thorough examination and the site would benefit from being properly surveyed and re-visited in the winter months when the vegetation has died back. There was however a substantial

stone and earth boundary bank running N-S c.13m to the W of the house, 1.4m wide and partitioning the land from the edge of the track leading up to the Brithdir settlement (9113) down to the Nant y Brithdir stream which creates a natural boundary to the house on its southern side.

The site was not seen during the Tir Gofal Archaeological farm visit of 29/05/08.

NANT-Y-BENGLOG (63321)	Post Medieval deserted rural settlement	SN75925308	B	Generic
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Stone rectangular dwelling of 2 units roughly NS with outbuilding/stockyard enclosures of stone to East and earthwork banks around. Paired site. (TA & HJ James 1995). The site was not visited during the Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit of 29/05/08.

(64689)	Post Medieval kiln	SN75645368	B	Generic
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The site of a possible kiln comprising a circular platform of stones, some 3 metres in diameter, with a rectilinear offshoot of stones, aligned east-west, creating an overall length of approximately 6.5 metres. The whole resembles a 'tennis-racquet' shape, the handle interpreted as the flue or passage-way along which smoke would be drawn to dry the grain raised on a platform within the circular chamber. The feature is located in the grass bank above the Doethie Fach, on the edge of a pasture field, and has distinct edges and good definition. The site was first recorded during the Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit of 29/05/08 and it appears stable and unthreatened, with a location on the stream bank within a pastoral field.



(Left) Looking west, downslope towards the River Doethie, across possible kiln site PRN 64689 with circular platform of stones in foreground. (Right) Looking east, upslope, along flue towards circular platform.

(64690)	Medieval; Post Medieval Long hut	SN75605331	B	Generic
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The remains of a probable deserted long hut, dating from the late medieval - post-medieval period. It is located to the northeast of the ford on the Doethie Fach and north of both the trackway and the Nant y rhiw. Lying below a natural rock outcrop, the remains are aligned Northeast-Southwest and comprise a linear, irregular mound of earth and stone under grass. No discernable entrance was noted and the definition of the structure was somewhat indistinct. The site was recorded during a Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit on 29/05/08 and may possibly be the same as PRN 43200, although the description and recorded location of the latter suggests otherwise.



Looking east across possible deserted long hut PRN 64690. Trackway in background.

[\(64691\)](#)

**Post Medieval
deserted rural
settlement**

SN77625384

B

Generic

Remains of a building aligned north-south and measuring approximately 18.5 x 6.5m. Site appears to comprise three cells, with a hollowed central compartment and banked annexes to north and south. It lies in close proximity to the deserted rural settlement PRN 9112, to the east, and possibly formed part of the same complex. First recorded during the Tir Gofal archaeological farm visit of 29/05/08, close to the northeastern boundary of Blaen Nant-y-rhiw forestry plantation. The site lies within a field under rough pasture and it is grassed over and stable.



Looking west across deserted settlement PRN 64691

Historic Environment Objectives:

The purpose of the management is to:

- Ensure the survival of visible features.
- Ensure archaeological deposits beneath the ground surface are not disturbed.
- Prevent progressive degradation by adopting sustainable farming practices.

In order to achieve this you will need to observe the following:

Generic Management Prescriptions - see also General Requirements - Section B2

1. Maintain the agreed stocking level to encourage a sound grass sward or low growing vegetation, without poaching or causing erosion.

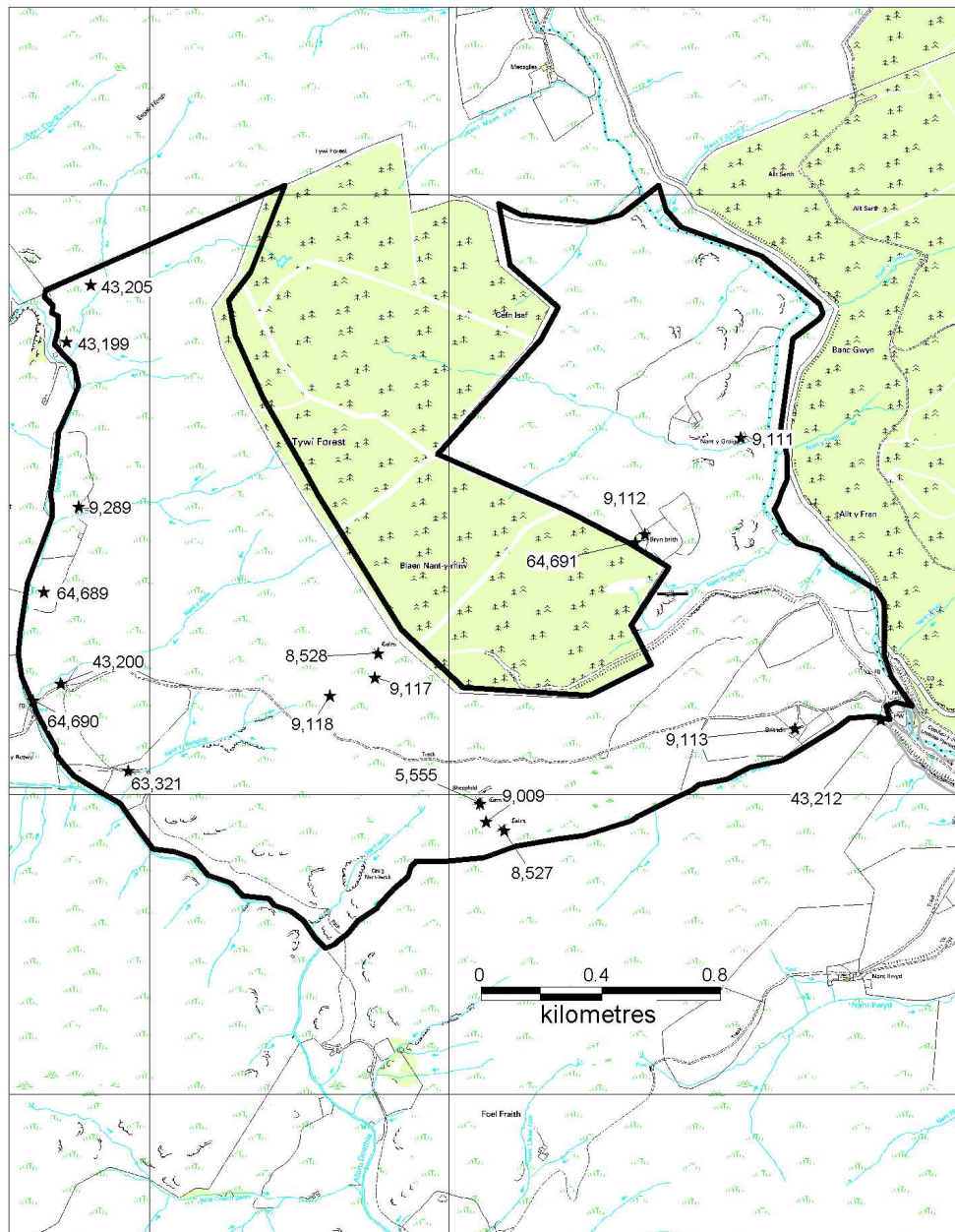
2. Do not install new drains or underground services.
3. Locate feeding and watering stations away from archaeological and historic features.
4. Avoid using heavy machinery on sites or close to archaeological and historic features, especially in wet weather.
5. Do not plough archaeological or historic features, or cultivate so close as to cut into the remains. A minimum buffer zone of 2m is advised. In the case of monuments already under cultivation and where the agreement does not exclude the monument from cultivation, ensure that the depth of cultivation is not increased.
6. Remove any dead and unstable trees from the vicinity of archaeological and historic features with care, leaving roots to rot in situ. Ensure that machinery does not cause further disturbance. Agree with the Project Officer a suitable method for repairing any damage caused, for example, by wind-throw.
7. Control scrub on archaeological and historic features by cutting. Roots must be left in the ground and must not be pulled or dug out. Treatment with an approved herbicide may, exceptionally, be permitted in agreement with the Project Officer. (Capital Works Option).
8. Do not burn materials on site.
9. Ensure that rabbits are kept under control, but not by excavating within an archaeological or historic feature.
10. Consult your Project Officer a suitable method for repairing any damage caused by burrowing animals. (Capital Works Option)

ii) TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS:

There are no Traditional Buildings in the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record for the application area

iii) HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS:

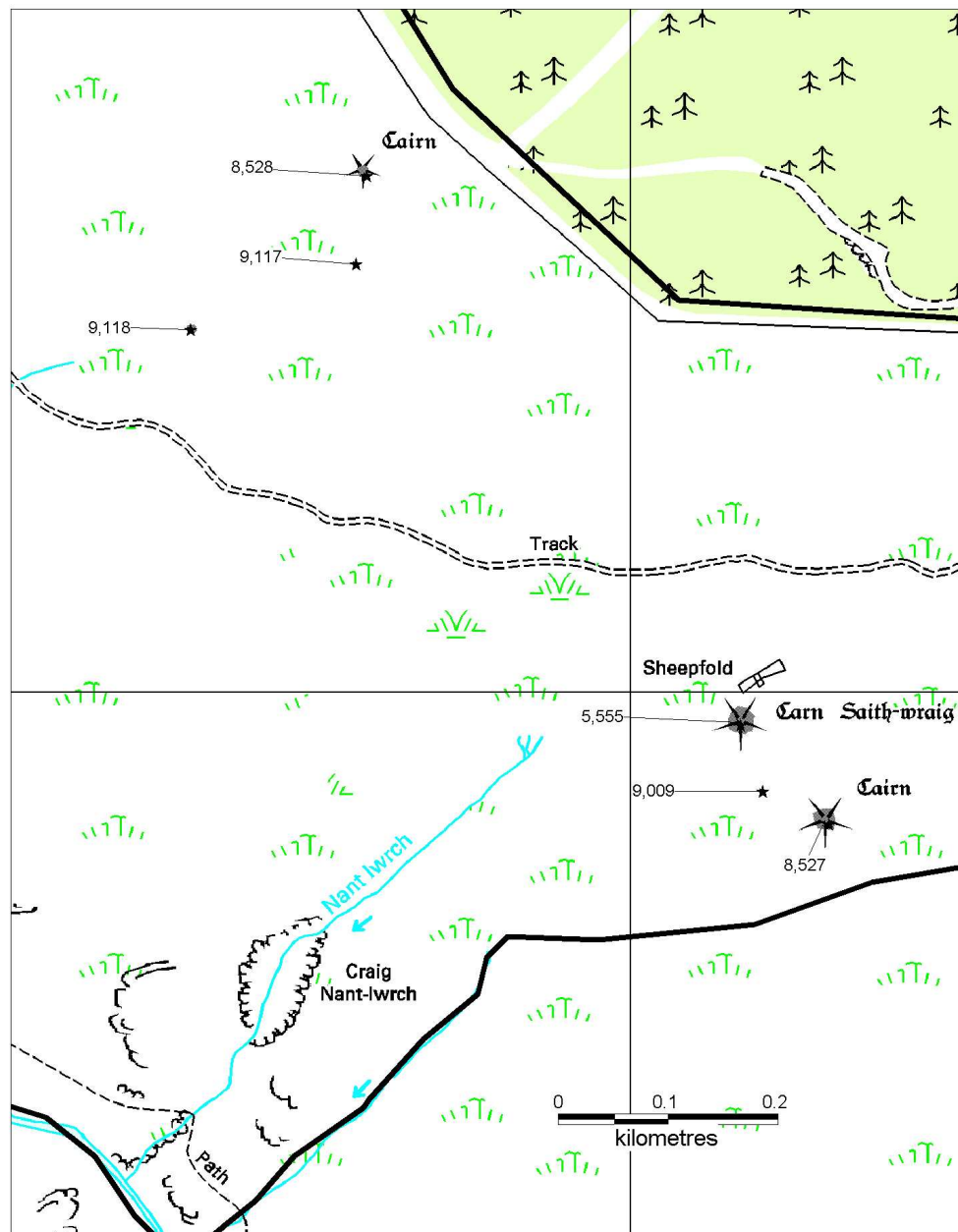
There are no Historic Parks and Gardens in the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record for the application area



- Farm Boundary
- ▨ Archaeologically Sensitive Areas (by PRN)
- ★ Archaeological Sites (by PRN)

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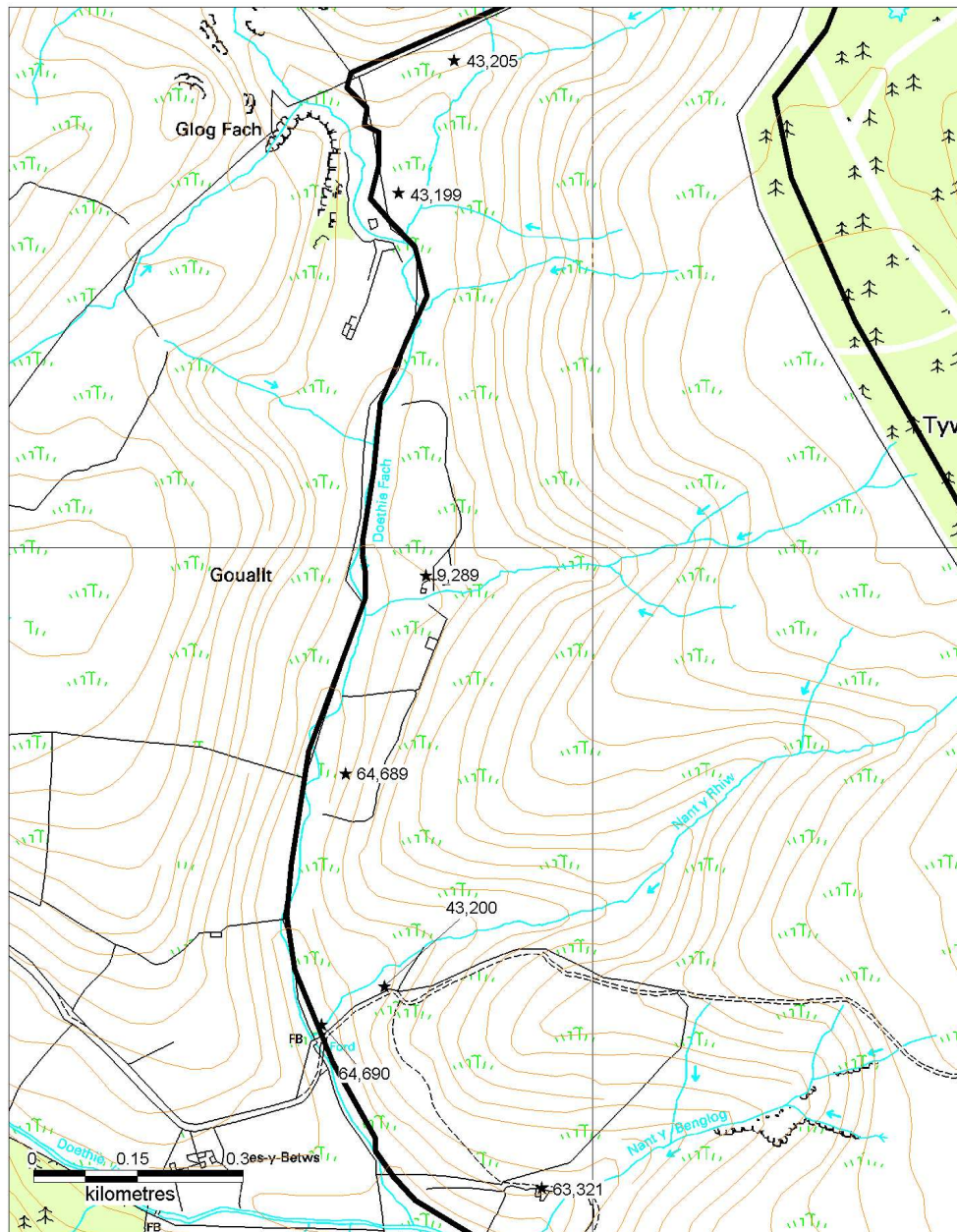
Fig 1: Overall map showing location of recorded archaeological sites within holding



— Farm Boundary ■ Archaeologically Sensitive Areas (by PRN)
 ★ Archaeological Sites (by PRN)

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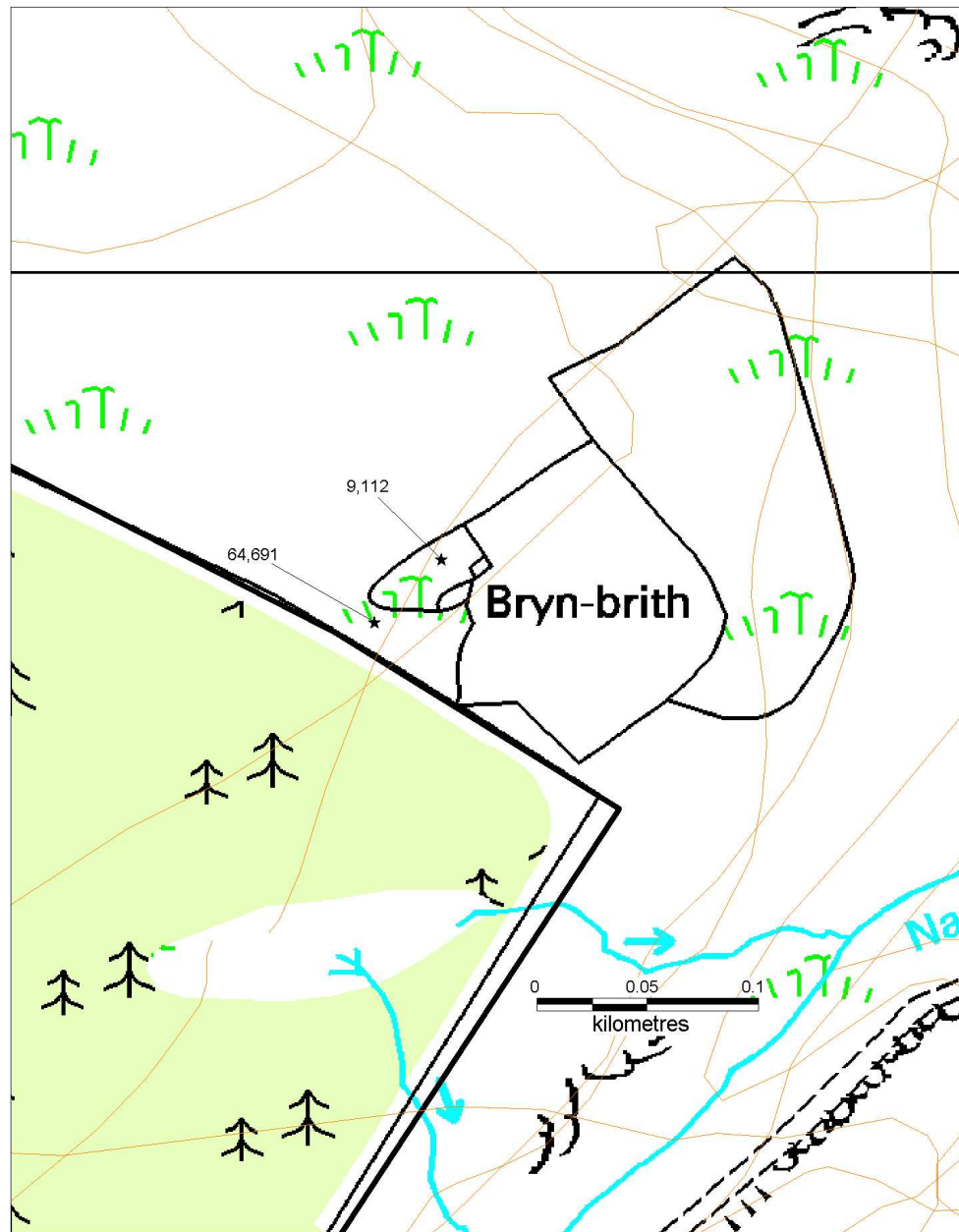
Fig 2: Map showing location of recorded prehistoric sites



- Farm Boundary
- Archaeologically Sensitive Areas (by PRN)
- Archaeological Sites (by PRN)

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Fig 3: Map showing location of Deserted Rural Settlement sites along the Doethie Valley.



- Farm Boundary
- ▨ Archaeologically Sensitive Areas (by PRN)
- ★ Archaeological Sites (by PRN)

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Fig 4: Map showing Deserted Rural Settlement sites to east of Blaen Nant-y-rhiw plantation

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This HE2 report supercedes the information given in the [HE1 report](#) for this farm.

Sources consulted:

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1905 Cardiganshire Sheet 28SW, 6"

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1905 Cardiganshire Sheet 36NW, 6"

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UPLAND CEREDIGION

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA: 13 BRYNGWYN BACH

GRID REFERENCE: SN 757574

AREA IN HECTARES: 3916

Historic Background

This extremely large historic landscape area crosses from Ceredigion into Carmarthenshire. It is entirely upland and included within it are parts of the Bishop of St David's Llanddewi Breifi estate and Strata Florida Abbey's Penardd Grange. It is likely that by the late Medieval Period both these holdings would have been divided into farms which were leased out and farmed on a commercial basis. The antiquity, however, of the upland farms contained within this area is uncertain, but it is likely that some originated in the Medieval Period, in the manner indicated above, while others may well have started as squatter settlements in the 18th- or early 19th-century. The 20th century has witnessed an abandonment of these farms, and only a handful are now occupied. The surviving chapel at Soar y Mynydd testifies to the once more populated nature of this area. The farms are clearly an important element in the landscape, but the vast majority of the land in this area is, and has been for a least the last few centuries, unenclosed, and would have been claimed by the Crown. Crossing the area are important trans-mountain natural route-ways linking the farming communities of Ceredigion with lands and towns to the east. These trans-mountain route-ways are celebrated for their use by drovers in the historical period, but they are likely to be of great antiquity, and not only provided communication across the Cambrian mountain chain, but allowed access onto the high moorland for the establishment of permanent or seasonal settlement, for the grazing of animals and for peat cutting.

Description and essential historic landscape components

This is a very large tract of unenclosed upland with an uneven and widely dispersed settlement pattern of upland farms. At the northern end unenclosed land runs down to as low as 200m, with heights of over 500m achieved in the central area. On average the height range is between 300 and 450m. The landscape is rarely craggy; wide stretches of undulating moor with blanket bog on higher levels and peaty hollows is the norm. There is abundant evidence of deserted settlements across this area, particularly along the route-ways. Occupied farms, of note is Nantymaen, are traditionally stone built, surrounded by a collection of modern farm buildings, and situated within a system of just a few fields. Older boundaries of these fields consist of earth banks, but wire fences now provide the stock-proof

barriers. These fields now comprise improved pasture, and there are further blocks of unenclosed improved pasture close to the farms. Apart from a block of recent forestry, this is a treeless landscape.

The recorded archaeology of this area is rich and varied. Considerable time-depth to the landscape is provided by the numerous Bronze Age monuments that include single or groups of round barrows and cairns, standing stones and stone circle. No occupation sites of this date are known, but the density of these ritual and funerary monuments surely indicates a settled landscape. Castell Rhyfel is an Iron Age site towards the border of the area, and Gwys-yr-Ychen Bannog a defensive or administrative linear earthwork. Numerous abandoned cottage and other settlement sites indicate a greater level of population across this area up to the 19th century. Agricultural features and evidence of peat cutting testify to this former occupation.

This is a very well-defined area, to the east and west lie very extensive forestry plantations (areas 2, 3). The north and northwestern boundary is mainly composed of lower-lying enclosed and settled land (areas 27, 28, 29, 126).

Aerial Photographs: 14, 15, 16

Nantllwyd

W/11/7161

This report has been prepared by Mike Ings

Position: Heritage Management Archaeologist

Signature Date

This report has been checked and approved by Alice Pyper on
behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Position: Project Manager (Heritage Management)

Signature Date.....

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