

Archaeoleg Cambria
Neuadd y Sir
Stryd Caerfyrddin
Llandeilo
Sir Gaerfyrddin
SA19 6AF

Ffon 01558 823131
Ffacs 01558 823133
Ebost: cambria@cambria.org.uk



Cambria Archaeology
The Shire Hall
Carmarthen Street
Llandeilo
Carmarthenshire
SA19 6AF

Telephone 01558 823131
Fax 01558 823133
Email: cambria@cambria.org.uk

BETTER WOODLANDS FOR WALES MANAGEMENT PLAN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (WHE1)

Prepared for: Merrims Gate

BWW Reference No 3357

**Prepared by
Will Steele
Project Record No. 62237**

Archaeological Visit Recommended

An archaeological field visit is recommended to assess the level of survival of a medieval relict field system (PRN 3826) and deserted long-house settlement of Merriman's Gate (PRN 21711), to provide appropriate management advice. The whole consultation area should be considered as archaeologically sensitive.

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Historic landscape character & archaeological and historical content

This application incorporates part of the rounded hill known as Marros Mountain in Eglwyscummyn community, Carmarthenshire. The woodland is part of a Forestry Commission plantation established sometime before the Ordnance Survey 6" mapping of 1971. The name of this application comes from the deserted long house settlement of Merriman's Gate (PRN 21711), situated in a small clearing towards the western end of the application boundary.

Throughout the plantation are traces of a relict field system (PRN 24647), which clearly shows up on vertical aerial photographs (RAF 1946) taken prior to planting. Field assessment by Cambria in 1988 found that the relict field boundaries formed a strip field system with a strip length of some 300m and a width of 10-20m. The boundaries were constructed of earth and stone and narrow ridge and furrow was evident within some of the strips.

Morphologically, this system shares similarities with other published examples found along the South Wales coast, which are accepted to be of Norman date (Murphy 1988, 31). At Merriman's Gate these relict boundaries were incorporated within a later rectangular field system, where they were employed as dividers between the bands of ridge and furrow. In light of the rare survival of a medieval relict field system, the whole consultation area should be considered as archaeologically sensitive.

The importance of this landscape is recognised in its designation as a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest (Taf & Tywi Estuary HLW (D) 9). This particular area has been more fully described as part of the Historic Landscape Character Assessment project and falls within area 135: Marros Mountain.

Historic Environment Objectives

The purpose of the management is to

- Ensure the survival of visible historic features.
- Ensure archaeological deposits beneath the ground surface are not disturbed.
- Prevent progressive degradation of historic environment features by promoting sympathetic woodland management.
- Ensure the long-term preservation of features associated with historic woodland.
- Maintain or restore the historic configuration and visual character of the historic landscape.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

All historic earthworks, structures, archaeological sites and traditional buildings must be retained and protected against damage. The following list identifies those Historic Environment Features affected by this application and the accompanying mapping shows each of these and identifies a sensitive area surrounding it. These sensitive areas must be actively managed for the life of the woodland management plan in accordance with the following requirements, in line with the Forestry Commission's *Forestry & Archaeology Guidelines, 1995*.

Planning

- Ensure that new planting and re-planting schemes are planned to avoid the sensitive areas surrounding historic environment features. Ideally these sensitive areas should not simply be left as unplanted islands in otherwise continuous woodland. Wherever possible these sensitive areas should be incorporated into larger buffer zones or clearings to facilitate access and ongoing management. Specific planting schemes involving historic environment features should be discussed with Cambria Archaeology at the planning stage.
- In areas of grazed woodland, grazing regimes and stocking levels should be approved by Cambria Archaeology prior to implementation. Similar approval should also be sought prior to significant changes to agricultural regimes.
- Consideration should be given to lessening the visual impact of new planting on historic environment features and historic landscapes.
- Consideration should be given to allowing / maintaining public access to historic environment features in woodland where this is both safe and practical. Specific access and interpretation schemes involving historic environment features should be discussed with Cambria Archaeology at the planning stage.
- Ensure contractors and all other workers are aware of the historic environment features and comply with these requirements. They should take appropriate measures to avoid accidental damage.

Mitigation

- Do not plant or re-plant trees within the defined sensitive areas surrounding historic environment features without the prior approval of Cambria Archaeology.
- Do not carry out any excavation or erect any new building or structure in the vicinity of historic environment features without the prior approval of Cambria Archaeology.
- Do not site new fencing or vehicular tracks within the sensitive areas of historic environment features without the prior approval of Cambria Archaeology.
- Do not remove any material from the sensitive areas of historic environment features or deposit spoil or rubbish on them.
- Do not store timber or machinery within the sensitive areas of historic environment features.
- Do not use heavy machinery in the sensitive areas of historic environment features, especially in wet weather.
- Do not harvest or otherwise fell trees within the sensitive areas of historic environment features without prior discussion with Cambria Archaeology.
- No intrusive archaeological investigation (such as excavation, field-walking to collect surface finds or metal detecting) should be allowed without the prior approval of Cambria

Archaeology, to ensure that such work complies with appropriate guidance - the *Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct and Standards and Guidance*, and the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales, 2006*.

Proactive management

- Control scrub and naturally regenerating trees within the sensitive areas of historic environment features. Such vegetation should be cut off at ground level with its roots being left in the ground rather than pulled up or dug out. Ensure that machinery does not cause further disturbance.
- Remove any dead or unstable trees from the vicinity of historic environment features, leaving roots to rot in situ. Ensure that machinery does not cause further disturbance.
- Where appropriate, undertake regular brashing of trees within the sensitive areas of historic environment features.
- Remove brash or other dead vegetation from the sensitive areas of historic environment features with care. Ensure that machinery does not cause further disturbance.
- Wherever practicable, repair and reuse original historic environment features, such as boundary walls, rather than replace them. Repairs should be unobtrusive and where possible make use of appropriate traditional materials and methods of construction. Schemes of repair should be discussed with Cambria Archaeology prior to implementation.

Legislation and Guidance

- **Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)** have statutory protection and consent from Cadw will be required for works to these monuments.
- **Listed buildings** have statutory protection and permission from the Local Planning Authority will be required for some works. Listed status may also apply to buildings and structures within the curtilage of a listed building.
- Areas of **historic parkland** of national importance are included on the Cadw/ICOMOS *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales*. There are also many non-registered parks of lesser quality but which, nevertheless, form an important component in the historic environment and require appropriate management.
- A number of **historic landscapes** are registered in the Cadw/ICOMOS/CCW *Registers of Outstanding and Special Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales*.
- The reporting of **archaeological finds** arising from woodland work must comply with the *Treasure Act, 1996*. Guidance on this and on the reporting of other **portable antiquities** can be found on the Portable Antiquities Scheme website (<http://www.finds.org.uk>).

Scheduled and listed sites and registered areas are identified as such below.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FEATURES

A search of the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) held by Cambria Archaeology has identified the following historic environment features. These are listed and described below and are shown on the accompanying map. Each feature is allocated a unique reference number (a Primary Record Number - PRN) that should be quoted in any correspondence.

Each site listed must be managed in accordance with the General Management Requirements outlined above. Where sites require specific management this is set out below. These Specific Management Requirements are in addition to and (in the case of conflict) take precedence over the General Management Requirements.

PRN 3826	MARROS MOUNTAIN	Medieval strip field system	SN1809
-----------------	------------------------	------------------------------------	---------------

Medieval relict field system on Marros Mountain, Dyfed as plotted from 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs, part of which is now covered by a Forestry Commission plantation. Here the strips were 10-20m wide, defined by low rubble and earth banks, and up to 300m long. A later farmstead, Merrimans Gate (PRN 21711) had been carved out of part of these strip field, though continuing to employ the strip boundaries in a system of agriculture employing ridge and furrow. Merrimans Gate was deserted by 1907. Elsewhere the land survey revealed a similar pattern to that planned in 1985; numerous clearance cairns scattered amongst discontinuous strip boundaries (Murphy 1968, 52).

PRN 21711	MERRIMAN'S GATE	Post Med cottage	SN19550961
------------------	------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------

Deserted long-house farmstead, now situated in a small clearing in dense conifer woodland. The house was occupied in the mid-19th century (Marros tithe map), but had been abandoned by 1907-08 (OS 1907-08). It has associated, a rectangular field system, carved out of earlier strip fields employed as divisors between narrow ridge and furrow (Murphy 1988, 27).

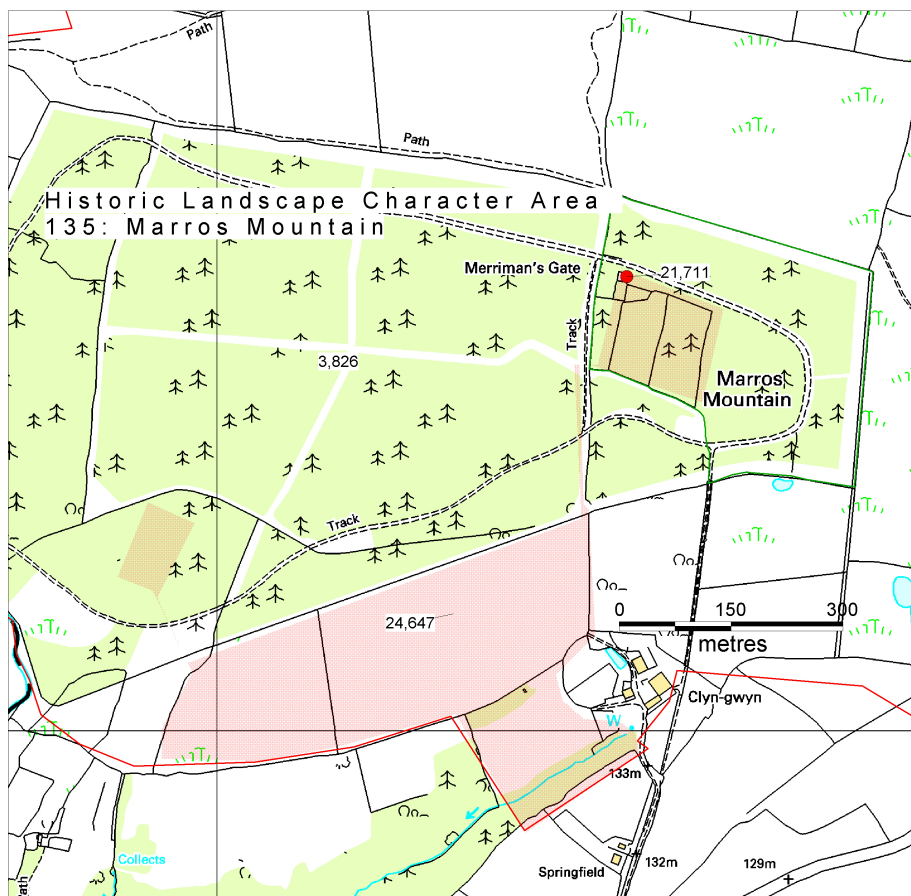
PRN 24647	UNKNOWN	Medieval?;Post Med? ridge and furrow	SN1909
------------------	----------------	---	---------------

The approximate extent of medieval ridge and furrow observed within some of the strips of a relict open field system. Plotted from aerial survey (RAF 1946).

Sources consulted:

Ordnance Survey 1890 Carmarthenshire Sheet 36.01, 25" Ordnance Survey 1907 Carmarthenshire Sheet 36.01, 25"
 Ordnance Survey 1890 Carmarthenshire Sheet 36.02, 25" Ordnance Survey 1907 Carmarthenshire Sheet 36.02, 25"
 Murphy, K 1986 Marros Mountain, Eglwys
 Cummin Archaeology in Wales 26, 1986 Murphy, K. 1988 A Medieval Relict Field System On Marros Mountain, Dyfed The Carmarthenshire Antiquary

Other sites may be known to the landowner and these should be made known to Cambria Archaeology in order to update the Regional Historic Environment Record and where necessary amend management advice.



- | | |
|--|---|
|  Application Boundary |  PRN 3826 Field System |
|  PRN 24647 Ridge and Furrow |  Archaeological Sites (by PRN) |

Based upon the Ordnance Survey map with permission of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright Reserved. Ordnance Survey license number GD272388.06 September 2006 12:00

WS - 07/12/2006 (12:31:05) - HTML file produced for Better Woodlands for Wales WHE1 report, Cambria Archaeology Project record number 62237.
Cambria Archaeology (Dyfed Archaeological Trust), The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6AF.
tel (01558) 823131, fax (01558) 823133, email cambria@cambria.org.uk, website www.cambria.org.uk

APPENDIX:

Historic Landscape Character Area 135: Marros Mountain

CARMARTHENSHIRE: TAF & TYWI ESTUARY

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA: 135 MARROS MOUNTAIN

GRID REFERENCE: SN 217088

AREA IN HECTARES: 309.00

Historic Background

Archaeological survey has shown that during the Medieval period this area, which formed part of the demesne of the Lordship of Laugharne and was held under manorial tenure, was cultivated as an open field system associated with a small settlement. However by 1595, and probably even earlier, the area was under a regime of rough grazing or moorland - 'Mountain' (Laugharne Corporation) - and the settlement had been deserted (Murphy 1998). In the Post-Medieval period, probably as late as the late 18th- or early 19th-century, several small-holdings - Merrimans Gate, Thorning Pit and Ciliau-coch - were carved out of the moorland (Marros Tithe map, c. 1840). Each of the stone-built cottages of these holdings were surrounded by several small fields. These settlements were abandoned by the later 19th-century. After the Second World War a conifer plantation was established across the western part of Marros Mountain, and in the 1980s much of the evidence for the Medieval open field system was erased during land improvement. Following this land improvement several farms were constructed.

Description and essential historic landscape components

This former agricultural landscape lies across the crest and over the north- and east-facing slopes of a rounded hill which ranges in height from 70m to 145m. The greater part of the area consists of bracken and gorse moorland, though the western end is planted with a dense conifer plantation, and the eastern side has undergone much recent improvement. This improvement consists of the establishment of several farms, some with substantial agricultural buildings, complete with new systems of tracks and field systems. The farm dwellings range from temporary structures to substantial modern houses. On the northern fringes of the Mountain moorland has been converted to improved pasture and divided by wire fences. Low boundaries of a medieval field system lie on the moorland and beneath the forestry plantation.

Archaeological sites within the area are typical of moorland landscapes and include the possible sites of a Bronze Age standing stone, round barrows and ring barrows, and a possible prehistoric settlement site. Medieval and Post-Medieval sites are primarily associated with the relict agricultural landscape and include deserted cottages and farmsteads, ridge-and-furrow, and Post-Medieval field systems. There is also a Moravian meeting-house site.

None of the buildings are distinctive.

Marros Mountain is a distinct landscape area even allowing for recent land improvement. It is bordered by high quality enclosed land to the south (Area 137) and to the north (Area 147). Only to the south-east where the Mountain borders the coastal slope and steep valley of Morfa Bychan is there difficulty in defining an exact boundary.

Conservation priorities

There are few historic landscape conservation priorities in this character area. It is however important that the surviving remains of the former strip-field system and its associated features are not erased during any future land improvement scheme or during felling operations in the forest. Otherwise maintain as existing.