



CEREDIGION

LANDMAP

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

TECHNICAL REPORT

Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Countryside Council for Wales and
Ceredigion County Council



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RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2009/47
RHIF Y PROSIECT / PROJECT RECORD NO. 95172

Ebrill 2009

April 2009

CEREDIGION LANDMAP HISTORIC LANDSCAPE TECHNICAL REPORT

Gan / By

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SUMMARY

Ceredigion has a rich and varied historic landscape with strong contrasts between the richer agricultural land of the west and the open moorland flanking the eastern side of the county. Two hundred and fifty-four historic landscape character areas are identified in this study. The majority of these, over 160, are classified as agricultural and represent a landscape dominated by dispersed farms and irregular fields. Marginal land – moorland – is the next largest category with 30 areas. Marginal land is interspersed with the only major intrusion into the historic landscape – 20th century coniferous plantations. Towns, hamlets and villages are not a major component of the historic landscape. However, almost all these settlement types retain their historic character. Evaluation demonstrates the high value of the historic landscape, with 220 of the 254 areas (86%) classified as outstanding or high and just 34 as moderate or low. These high values not only indicate the quality of the Ceredigion historic landscape, but also its good survival rate, its integrity and its condition.

CRYNODEB

Mae gan Geredigion dirwedd hanesyddol gyfoethog ac amrywiol, sy'n cynnwys cyferbyniadau cryf rhwng tir amaethyddol ffrwythlonach y gorllewin, a'r gweundir agored sy'n rhedeg ar hyd ochr ddwyreiniol y sir. Nodir 254 o ardaloedd cymeriad tirwedd hanesyddol yn yr astudiaeth hon. Dosberthir y mwyafrif o'r rhain, dros 160 ohonynt, yn ardaloedd amaethyddol, a ffermydd gwasgaredig a chaeau afreolaidd yw'r dirwedd hon yn anad dim. Tir ymylol – gweundir – yw'r categori mwyaf nesaf, ac mae 30 o ardaloedd felly. Mae'r unig ymwithiad mawr ar y dirwedd hanesyddol – planhigfeydd conwydd yr 20^{fed} ganrif – yn britho'r tir ymylol. Nid yw trefi, pentrefannau a phentrefi yn elfen amlwg o'r dirwedd hanesyddol. Fodd bynnag, mae bron pob un o'r mathau hyn o anheddiad yn cadw'u cymeriad hanesyddol. Mae gwerthuso'n dangos gwerth uchel y dirwedd hanesyddol, ac mae 220 o'r 254 o ardaloedd (86%) wedi'u dosbarthu yn ardaloedd â gwerth eithriadol neu uchel, a 34 yn unig sydd wedi'u dosbarthu yn ardaloedd gwerth cymedrol neu isel. Nid yn unig y mae'r gwerthoedd uchel hyn yn dangos ansawdd tirwedd hanesyddol Ceredigion, ond mae'n dangos hefyd ei chyfradd goroesi da, ei chyfanrwydd a'i chyflwr.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach for this study was that outlined in CCW's Historic Landscape Guidance document dated June 2003. A few qualifying comments are required here in support of the data produced by Dyfed Archaeological Trust for the Ceredigion Historic Landscape study.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT) has undertaken Cadw grant-aided Historic Landscape Characterisation projects of the landscapes listed in the *Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales* (Cadw 1999, 2001). Some of these landscapes are wholly or partly in Ceredigion, namely: Upland Ceredigion, Tywi Valley, Dolaucothi, Drefach and Felindre, and Lower Teifi Valley (Murphy 1999, Murphy and Ludlow 2000, Murphy and Ludlow 2004).

As a large part of the county was characterised during this Cadw-funded work, it was decided that the character areas generated would be used to inform this Landmap study.

DAT also completed the Landmap historic landscape studies for Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. In instances where landscape character areas of these two counties cross the county boundary into Ceredigion then the area of the character area and their descriptions and supporting data have been transferred directly into the present study.

The areas described previously were defined at Level 4 according to Landmap methodology. The present work has been defined at Level 3. In order to maintain a consistent approach, character areas across the rest of the county were defined at Level 4, although supporting data and descriptions are generally at Level 3.

In 2007-08, Ceredigion County Council funded DAT to complete the first part of the Ceredigion Landmap historic landscape study. This essentially consisted of identifying and mapping that part of the county that had not been subject to a historic landscape characterisation study or was not part of a Carmarthenshire/Pembrokeshire Landmap study. Following this work DAT was commissioned to complete the historic landscape study for the county by incorporating data generated for the characterisation studies and previous Landmap projects into the Ceredigion database. At the same time the Countyside Council for Wales commissioned DAT to produce an evaluation of all the Landmap historic landscape areas. This short report summarises the results of these Ceredigion Landmap projects.

THE CEREDIGION HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

It would be inappropriate to provide a detailed account of the development and character of the historic landscape in this short technical report. However, a few of the major themes are identified; most of these require a further research.

The contrast between the open moorland dominating the east of the county and the enclosed farmland elsewhere is the most striking aspect of the historic landscape. It is clear that unenclosed land formerly comprised a far greater proportion of Ceredigion than it does now. Between the late 18th century and the early 19th century vast tracts of common, unenclosed sheepwalks and rough grazing were enclosed by a variety of agencies. Large estates that dominated the economic, social and political life of the county were responsible for much of this enclosure, but tenant farmers and owner-occupiers also had a role. Of particular significance in Ceredigion were 'squatters' who constructed tai unnos (one night houses) wherever open land was available – mainly along the upland fringe - and created a landscape of dispersed cottages and small fields. Their legacy is still evident in the landscape today. Very little parliamentary enclosure is recorded in the county. The various types of enclosure noted above constitute easily recognisable landscape types along the upland fringe, and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the county.

Away from the upland zone a landscape of irregular fields and dispersed farms dominates the historic landscape. Nucleated settlements such as hamlets and small villages are not a prominent feature of the landscape. Very little research has been done into the evolution of the rural landscape, and therefore its origins are not well understood. Some field systems did evolve from medieval open fields, particular along the coastal strip, but elsewhere research into the date and origin of field systems, and that of their associated settlement pattern, is awaited.

Hedges on banks are ubiquitous across the agricultural landscape, and are the most common historic landscape component. Bank materials vary according to the local environment. The quality of hedges also varies. In lowland areas banks are generally topped with well-maintained hedges with trees lending a wooded aspect to the landscape, but in the upland fringe the absence of hedges on banks contributes to the open feel of the landscape. It is also in these upland fringes that more variety of boundary types occurs, such as rubble banks and dry-stone walls. Wire fences supplement all boundaries in upland and lowland environments. Variations in this aspect of the historic environment are partly due to differing agricultural regimes, but the primary influencing factor is relief.

Ancient deciduous woodland is not a prominent feature of the historic landscape, with the exception of steep slopes along some of the major river valleys, such as the Rheidol. Coniferous plantations, however, are, and in some of the uplands and upland fringes are a dominant feature. Nearly all date to the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

Apart from metal mining, industry is not a major contributor to the historic landscape. Metal mining was mainly confined to the upland fringes in the central and northern part of the county where its legacy is deeply ingrained in the historic landscape.

As noted above large estates, some of which grew out of monastic granges, controlled large amounts of land in the county. As well as constructing large houses and creating parks, estates were often the driving force behind agricultural improvements, rationalising field systems and replacing outdated

farm buildings with new ones. These improvements are frequently detectable in the landscape.

Stone with north Wales slate is the traditional building material across the county. The 19th century was a period of great rebuilding across rural west Wales, with the vast majority of houses and older agricultural outbuildings dating to between 1840 and 1890. Regional patterns are present, such as the use of the distinctive Teifi Valley slate as a building material in the south of the county. Generally local, rough-coursed stone, often cement rendered, is the norm. In towns greater ranges of both materials and dates are evident.

Urban areas are not a dominant feature of Ceredigion's historic landscape, but they contribute to it. Aberystwyth is the largest town, with Cardigan, Aberaeron, Tregaron and Lampeter in the second tier. In most instances the medieval town layout is evident, historic buildings are a prominent feature and the overall historic character is retained.

RESULTS

General

Two hundred and fifty-four historic landscape areas have been identified, mapped and described for Ceredigion. There is a huge size range in these areas, from less than 40 ha in some of the complex settlements along the upland fringe, to over 30,000 ha in the largest upland block. The types of landscapes also vary enormously from open moorland to small urban areas. These are summarised below, and their distribution is shown on Map 1.

Level Two Classification

The 254 areas are divided into the following groups according to Landmap level two classification:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|--------------|
| Agricultural | 167 | bright green |
| Non agricultural | 57 | dark green |
| Settlement | 6 | red |
| Other built environment | 2 | purple |
| Industrial | 2 | black |

The colours noted above relate to Map 2. What is striking about the map is the clear east-west division in the county, with agricultural land to the west and non-agricultural land to the east. Relief largely governs this division, as demonstrated by Map 3. Also note on Map 2 the very small areas of settlement and other landscape types.

Level Three Classification

At this level the 254 areas are divided as follows:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| Irregular Fieldsapes | 119 | pale green |
| Regular Fieldsapes | 20 | mid green |
| Other Fieldsapes | 27 | pale to mid green |
| Horiculture | 2 | mid to dark green |
| Marginal Land | 30 | brown |
| Woodland | 19 | dark green |
| Water & Wetland | 6 | blue |
| Nucleated Settlement | 23 | red |
| Non nucleated Settlement | 2 | pink |
| Other Settlement | 1 | orange |
| Military | 2 | black |
| Extractive | 2 | yellow |

The colours noted above relate to Map 4. This map maintains the division between west and east as shown on Map 2. However, more useful comments can be made.

The western agricultural zone is dominated by irregular field systems with the exception of the southwest of the county and on pockets of higher ground. The former, on rich farmland to the north of Cardigan, is probably the result of the enclosure of medieval open fields. The latter is the result of 18th and 19th enclosure of open moorland. Along the margins of the upland zone, roughly a north-south band, field systems are varied and complex and the result of numerous influences over a long period of time.

Woodland is dominated by forestry plantations, apart from some ancient deciduous woodland on steep valley sides in the north of the county, and is

characteristic of upland areas. Almost all was planted after the Second World War.

One of the most striking features of Map 4 is the very complex historic landscape on the upland – lowland (or marginal land – fieldscape) interface running approximately north-south. However, even at level 3 complexity is smoothed out; the true character of the landscape only being hinted at. Along this zone are, for instance: small historic nucleated settlements, relict industrial landscapes, 18th-19th century ‘squatter’ settlements, 19th century enclosures, ancient field systems, estates with parks and gardens, forestry plantations and much more. Level 4 analyses would emphasise these differences.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the 254 areas produced the following results:

| | | |
|-------------|-----|-------------|
| Outstanding | 141 | red |
| High | 79 | orange |
| Moderate | 23 | yellow |
| Low | 11 | pale yellow |

The colours noted above relate to Map 5. The vast majority of the Ceredigion historic landscape has been evaluated as outstanding or high. When combined, these two upper evaluation categories account for 220 of the 254 (86%) historic landscape areas. In area terms this is greater than 86% of Ceredigion as all of the largest 254 areas have been valued as outstanding or high (the area in hectares of these landscape values has not been quantified). These high values are very much a reflection of the integrity, survival and condition of the most of the Ceredigion historic landscape.

The differences between an outstanding and high value landscape are often marginal and may hinge on the presence or absence of nationally important monuments or buildings. However, the difference between a high and a moderate value landscape is generally quite marked.

Higher value landscapes are distributed evenly across the county. Lower value landscapes (moderate and low) are concentrated in the uplands and are generally associated with large coniferous plantations.

Of interest is the relationship of Registered Historic Landscapes and landscape values, shown on Map 6. Upland Ceredigion comprises a very large proportion of the eastern side of the county and the Lower Teifi Valley a part of the southwest of the county. Other Registered Landscapes mainly related to neighbouring counties. Whilst the landscapes areas in Lower Teifi Valley are evaluated as outstanding or high, those in Upland Ceredigion are mostly outstanding but with a significant proportion of low value areas. As noted above these are coniferous plantations.

REFERENCES

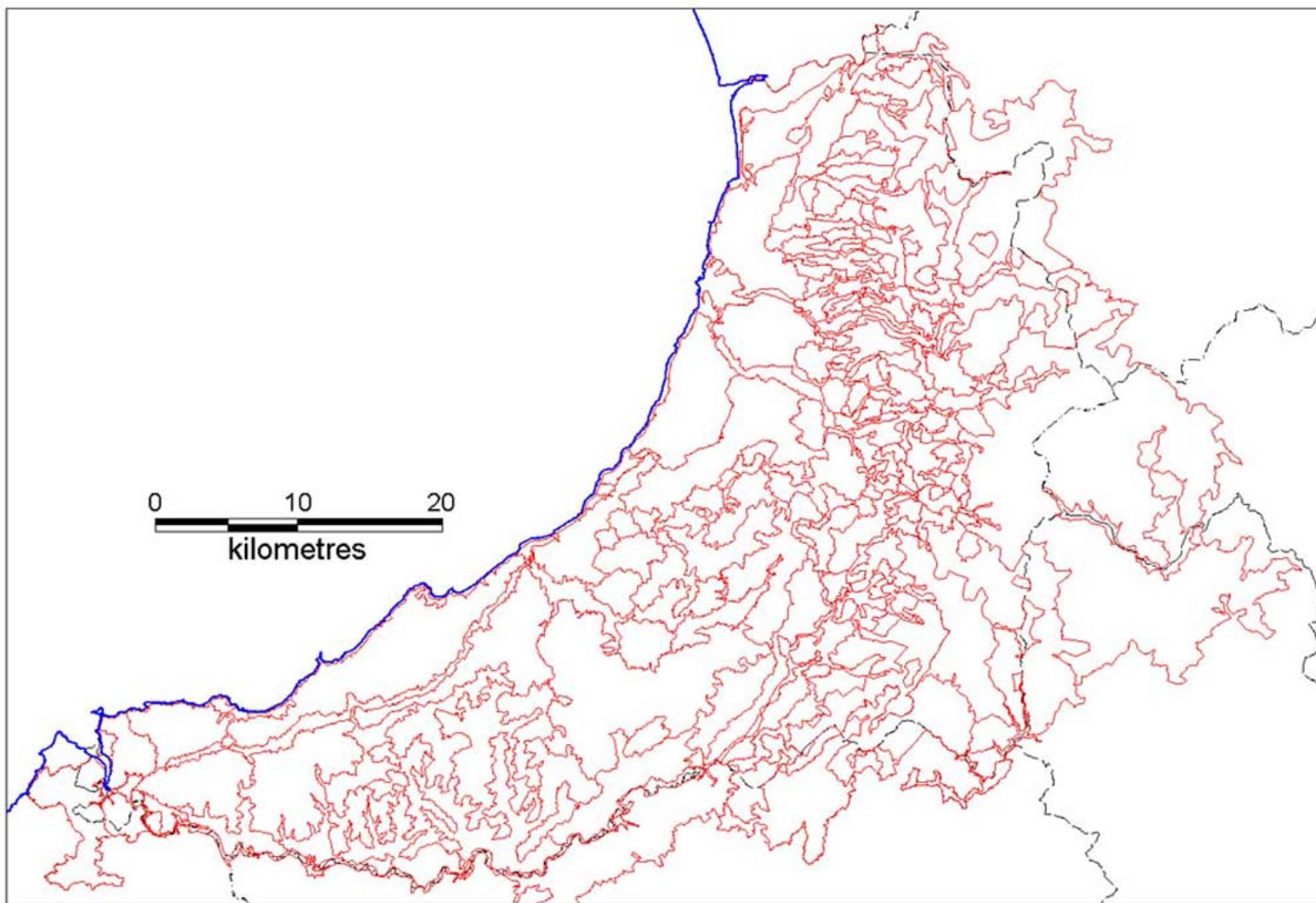
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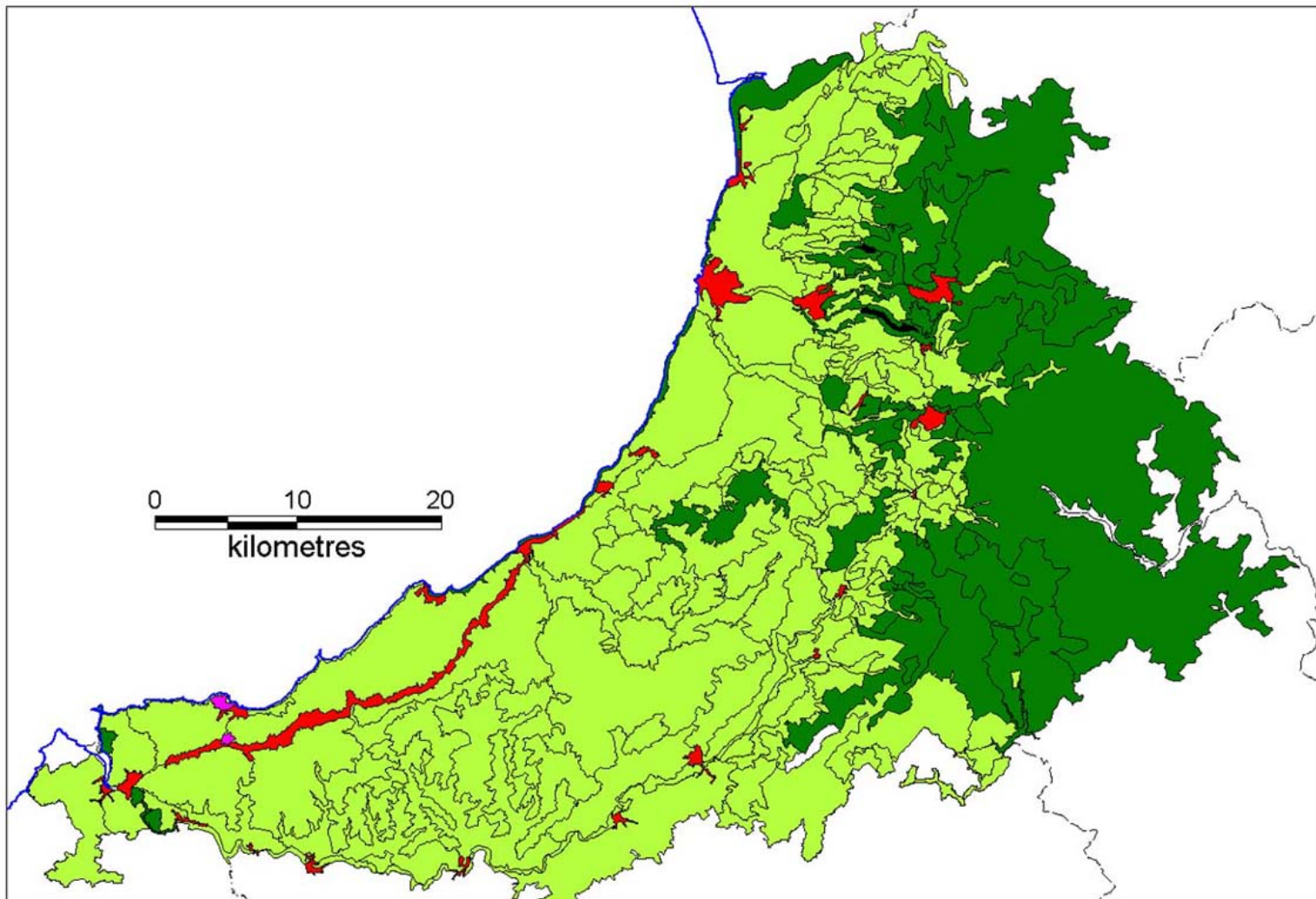
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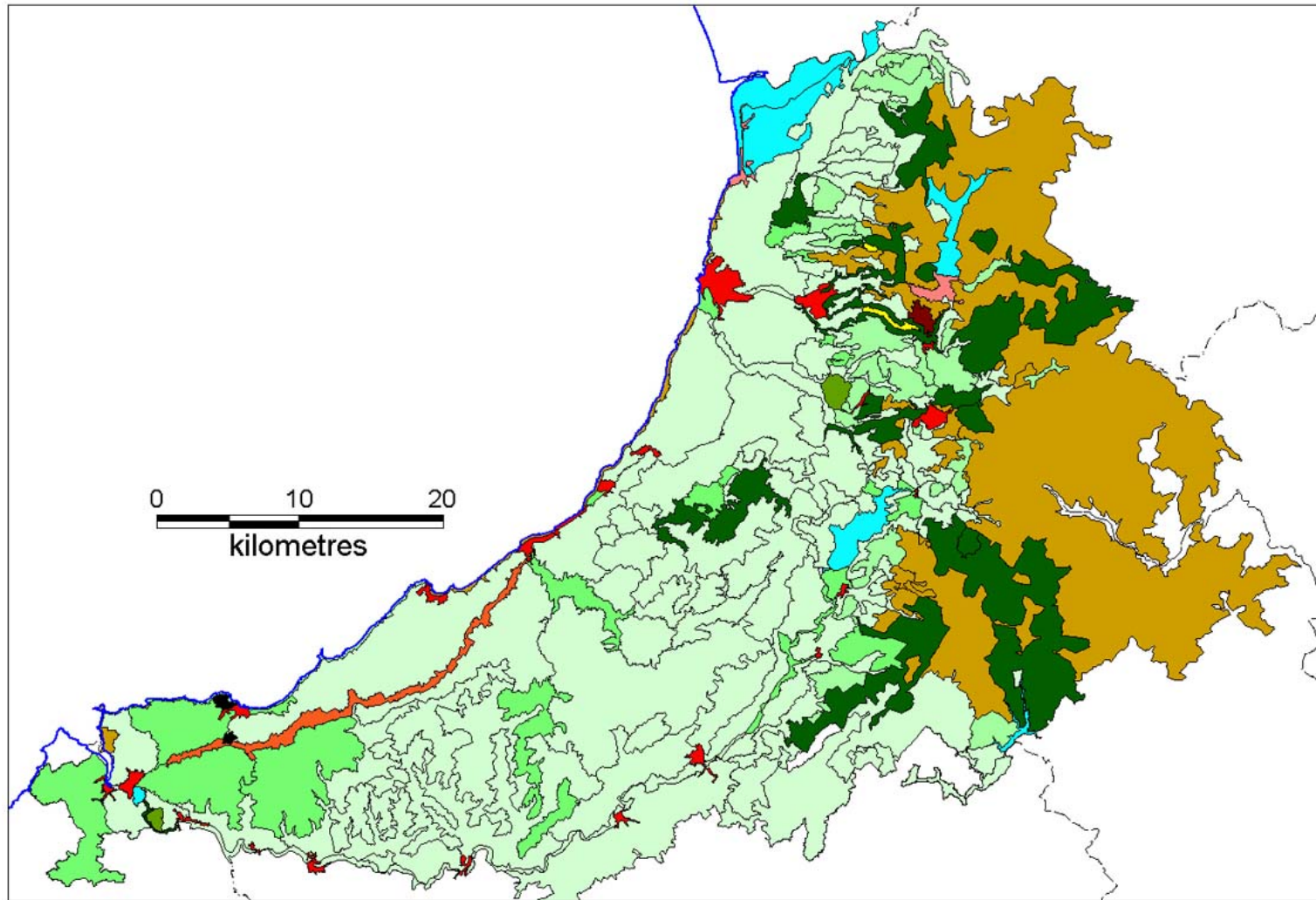
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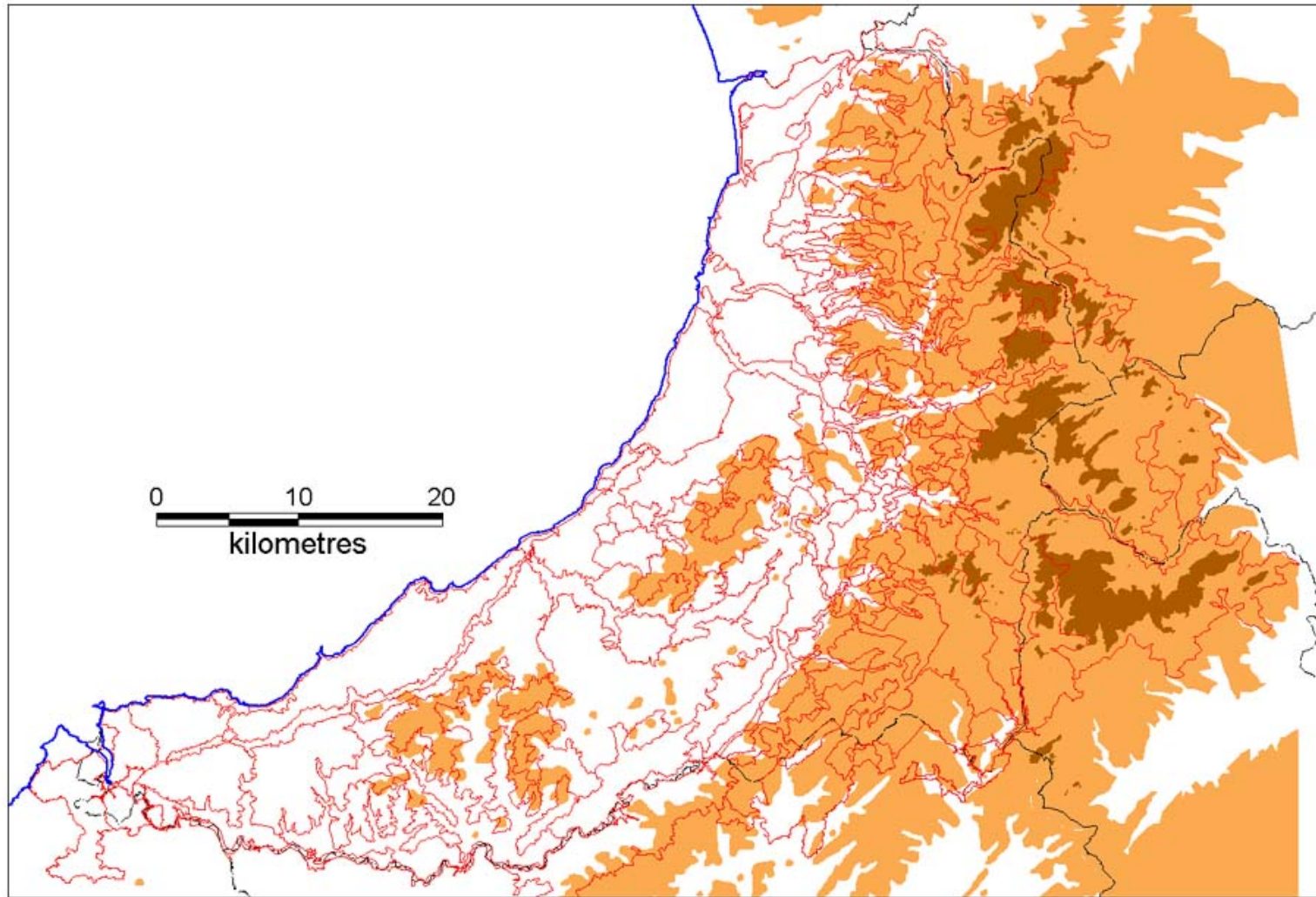
Map 1. Ceredigion showing all 254 Landmap historic landscape areas.



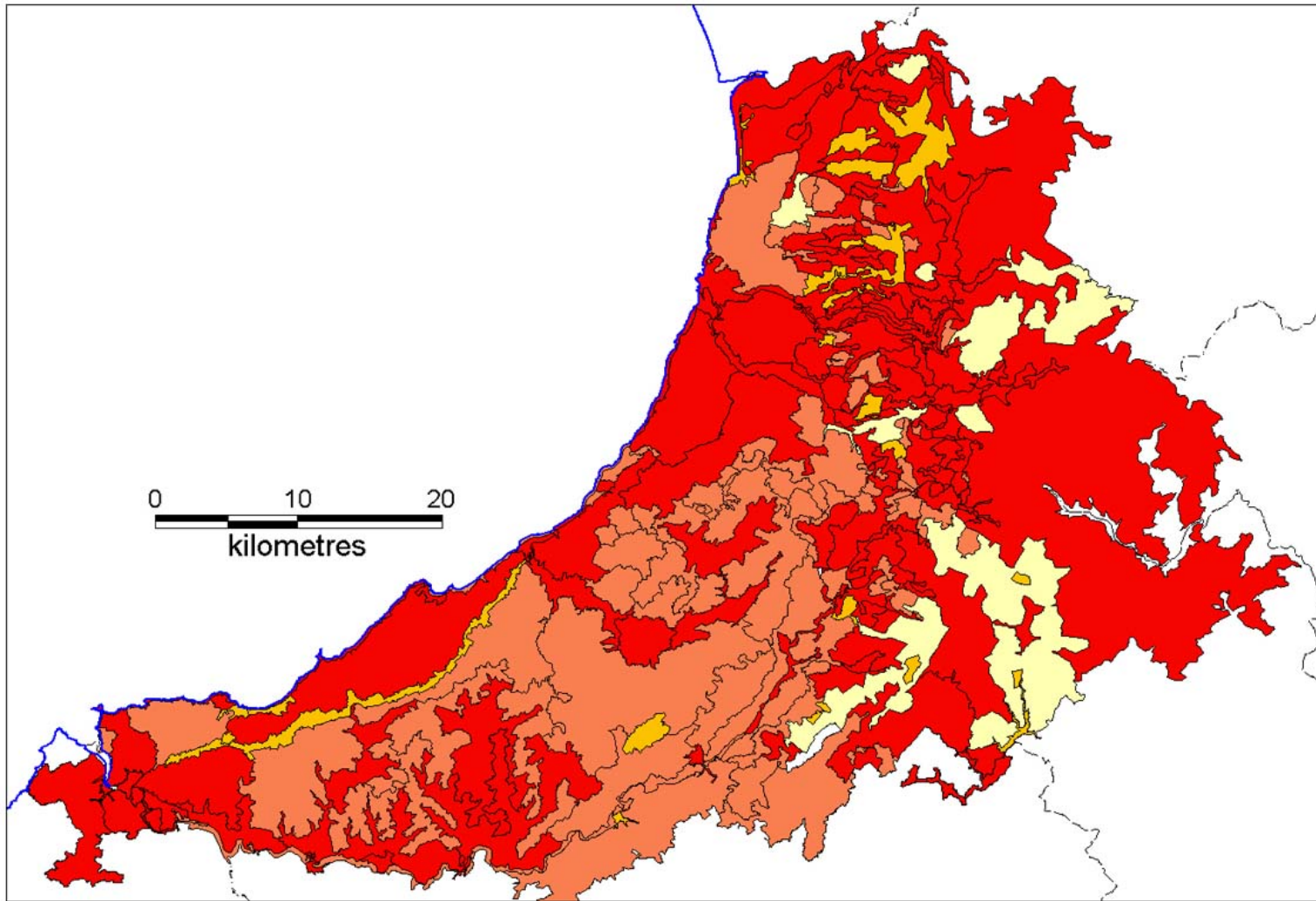
Map 2. Ceredigion Landmap historic landscape showing all areas at level two classification. Agricultural = bright green. Non agricultural = dark green. Settlement = red. Other built environment = purple. Industrial = black.



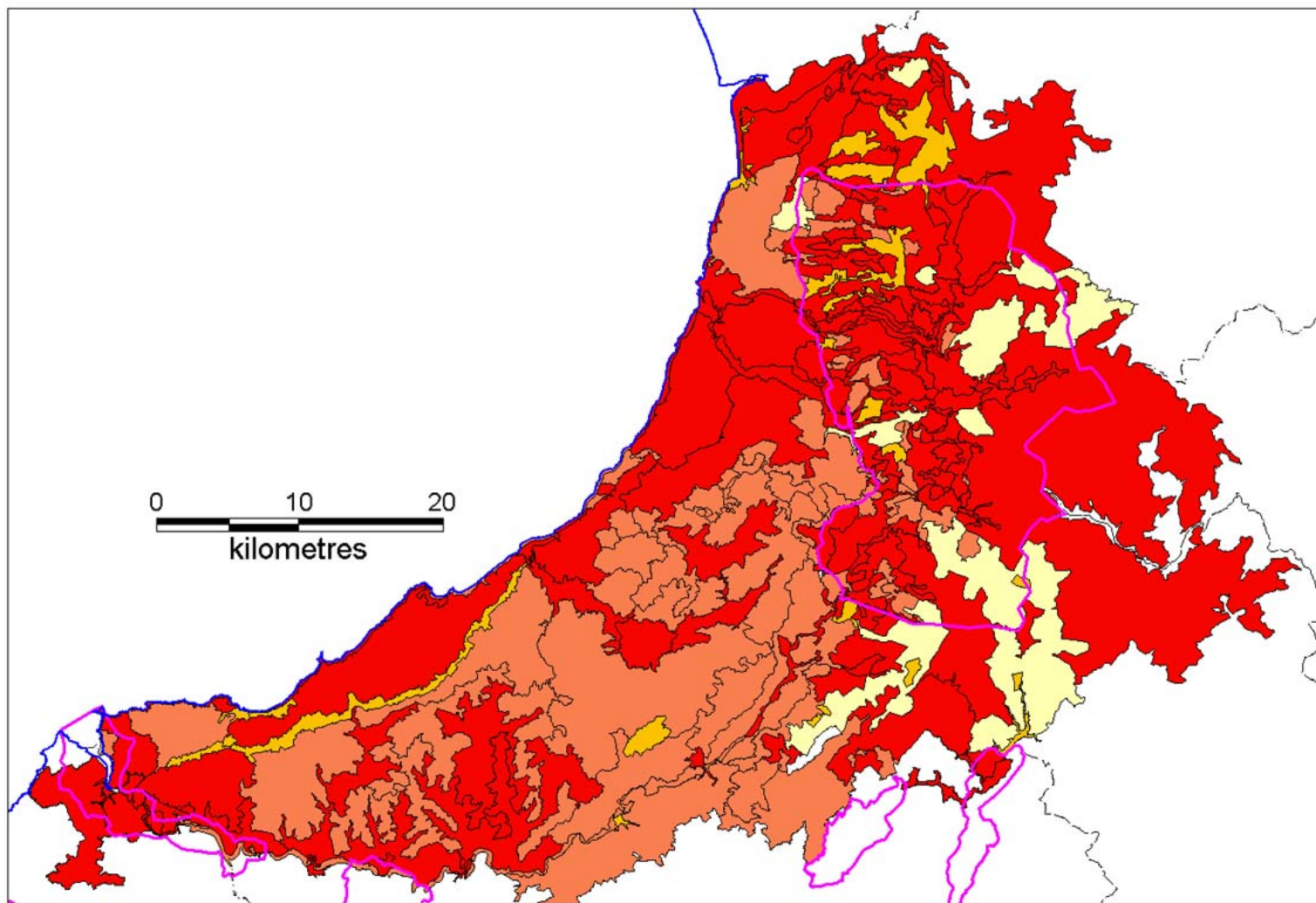
Map 3. Ceredigion Landmap historic landscape showing all areas at level three classification. Irregular Fields = pale green. Regular Fields = mid green. Other Fields = pale to mid green. Horticuture = mid to dark green. Marginal Land = brown. Woodland = dark green. Water & Wetland = blue. Nucleated Settlement = red. Non nucleated Settlement = pink. Other Settlement = orange. Military = black. Extractive = yellow.



Map 4. Ceredigion Landmap historic landscape showing all areas in relation to relief. Land over 250m and 500m is shown shaded.



Map 5. Ceredigion Landmap historic landscape showing evaluation of all areas. Outstanding = red. High = orange. Moderate = yellow. Low = pale yellow



Map 6. Ceredigion Landmap historic landscape showing evaluation of all areas in relation to Registered Historic Landscapes, shown in purple outline.

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Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by K Murphy

Swydd / Position: Trust Director

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

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This report has been checked and approved by D Schlee

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Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

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comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report