

Tir Natur – Heritage and Nature

Ambition:

Current position– We are on the cusp of exchanging contracts for the purchase of the land outlined below – Ochor Soar and Cwm Doethie, with the option for the later purchase of the land to the south east (From Soar y Mynydd – to Llyn Brianne).



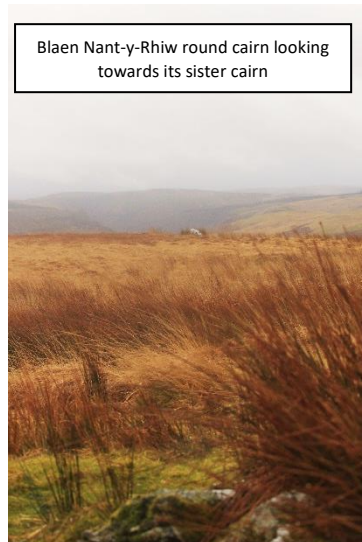
Our ambition is to stimulate ecological recovery and regeneration of nature through the return of heavier feet and hardier stomachs – namely hardy welsh cattle and welsh upland pony. We will be taking a nature-led approach with low density ‘wild grazing’ shaping the land.

This landscape, the habitats and ecosystems found here are intertwined with the history, heritage and activity of the people that used to live here, the cattle drovers, the wool sellers and the hafod grazing.

Our ambition is for visitors, walkers, passers-by to feel immersed not only in Natures revival but in the stories of those that lived here, thrived and survived before us. The exceptional wealth of history held in the medieval farmsteads, lleusts and the two scheduled ancient monuments begin to tell these stories and is something we want to compliment and celebrate.

Our Proposal: In Brief

We will work in accordance with Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 legislation and inline with CADW best practise around Schedule Ancient Monuments (SaMs) and Historic Environment Features (HEFs) and with considered and on-going consultation with Heneb and CADW.



Blaen Nant-y-Rhiw round cairn looking towards its sister cairn

Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

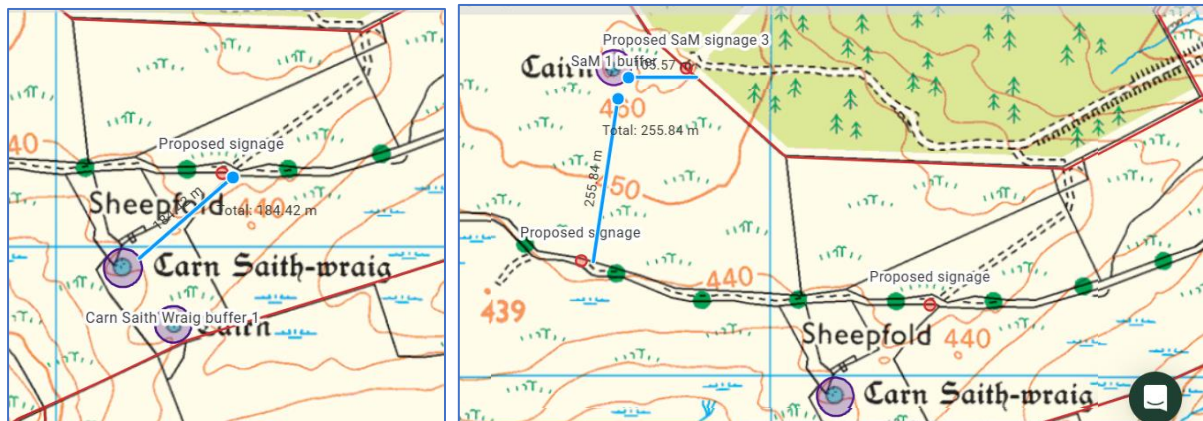
Our aim is to increase the level of care, understanding and public engagement with our cultural heritage - ensuring the future of the two important SaMs in the land. We'd welcome specialist and interest groups to the site. We will seek consultation with relevant bodies/expertise ahead of any undertakings of interventions.

- Provide systemic (non-invasive) conditions assessments that support CADWs work to monitor SaMs (eg photographic)
- With appropriate permissions granted undertake sensitive management to retain low vegetation cover and manage visitor footfall
- With appropriate permissions add landscape sensitive interpretation boards at gate entrance ways. Highlighting the history

and site sensitivity.

We hope that additionally to be informative – these signs will act as a deterrent to off-road riders illegally leaving the (currently closed) by-way.

Proposed signage locations

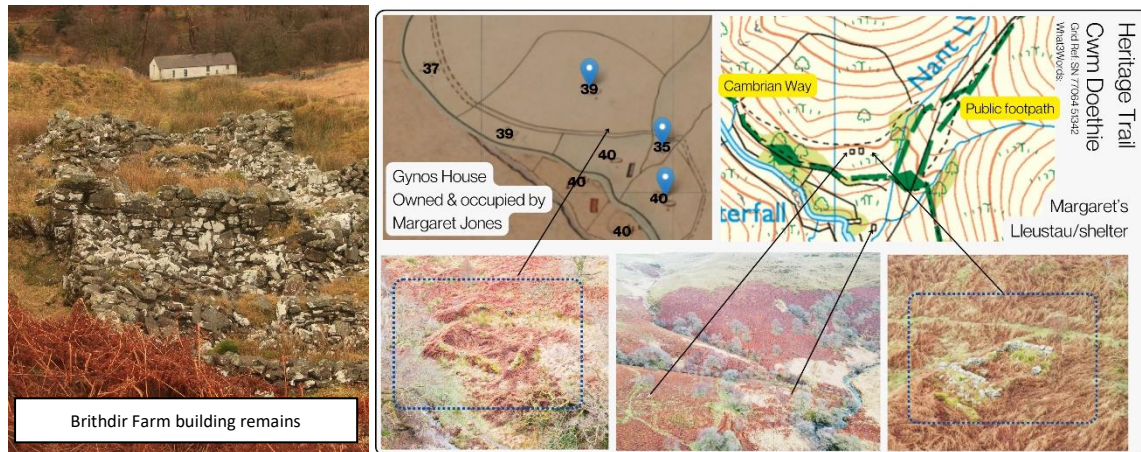


One of the features of Cairn Saith Wraig bronze age cairn and mound

- We will likely continue low density mountain pony grazing in the area surrounding Blaen Nant-y-Rhiw
- In the future we will look to introduce low density hardy welsh cattle (ancient breeds if available)
- In the future we may look to undertake cutting and collecting of dense purple moor grass, an old practise when done by hand known as gwair cwta/rhos hay making - in the areas below Blaen Nant-y-Rhiw, unpalatable to sheep.
- This work whether by traditional or mechanical means would be undertaken with a watching brief, with consultation sort, plans adapted and suitable permissions acquired to ensure the continued health of the SaMs

Historic Environment Features:

The wealth of medieval farmsteads, lleust and building remains – many covered in bracken – tell stories of a vibrant but likely hard life in the Doethie valley, on the Ochor Soar uplands and on the banks of the Camddwr. While drovers moved 400+ cattle along the (now) by-way we know that the residents (sometimes permanent sometimes for the summer months) lived different lives.



Our Proposal in Brief Historic Environment Features:

- To create landscape sensitive signage to highlight the presence of these structures and to increase the understanding to this heritage
- Undertake agreed vegetation clearance to reduce the covering of these, being careful not to disturb below ground remains and damage to the stone work.
- Undertake systematic conditions assessments (photographic & written) with volunteers that can be used to update the HEF register/Archwilio.
- Develop an accessible range of walks on the land, to highlight Heritage and Nature (intertwined) to further the understanding of these HEFs and their sensitivities. Signage at the access points indicating further digital resources.
- Present digital stories of a number of the HEFs and include their stories within our visitor and volunteer experience and on our website.



Tir Natur general management activity:

Grazing:

The exclusion of existing sheep grazing, Nantllwyd ponies staying on the Ochor Soar area (around Blaen nant-y-rhiw) and in time a small number of Welsh Blacks (cattle) joining them. Grazing will be undertaken initially within the existing field boundaries with some of those boundaries reduced over time.

Boundary fences along the east to west byway (Ty Cornell – Soar y Mynydd) will remain up for the foreseeable future.

A small number of pigs (2-4) will (SSSI permissions pending) be introduced likely within closed field systems and initially in areas away from historic environment features.

Further consultation will be sort as and when the use of pigs in the wider holding is being considered. Assume they will not be in the closed fields that included the Scheduled Ancient Monuments- Carn Saith Wraig and Blaen Nant-y-Rhiw.

Noting that medieval farms often included pig and that pig drovers existed in and near the valley.

Tree Planting:

The work of the longest running hydrological study in Europe – sits in the Llyn Brianne catchment. Through a number of peer reviewed studies they identified an immediate and pressing threat to the health of our upland rivers – rising water temperatures are killing the cold water invertebrates and threatening the wider food chain, more frequent heavy rainfall events are flushing organic materials from the systems. The simple way to build resilience in to this critical ecosystem is to see greater levels of scrub and shrub within the river corridors – providing shade and leaf litter.

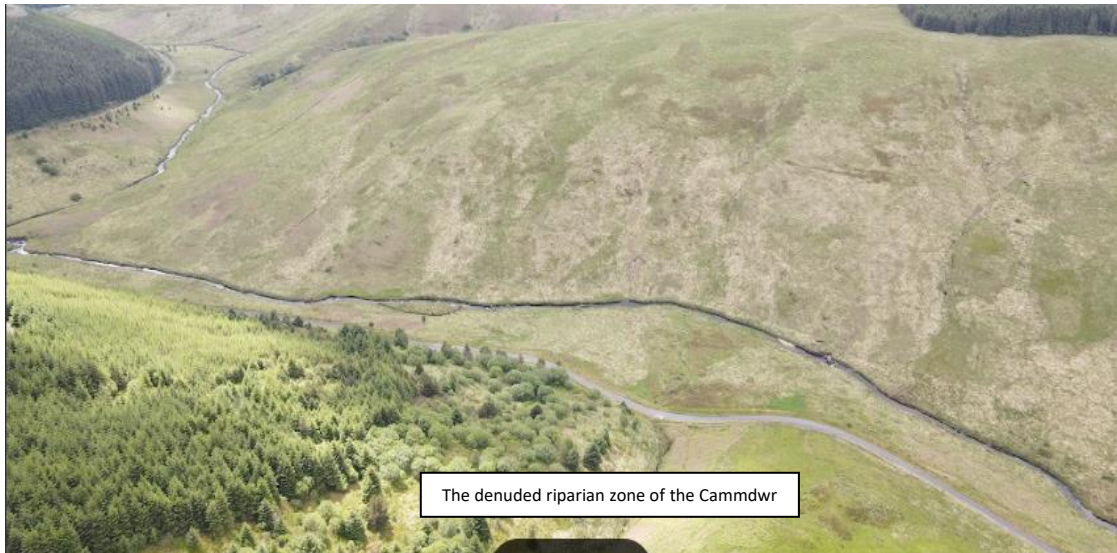
Our preference is to **see natural regeneration deliver** this – the exclusion of sheep may produce this critical change. It might require the pony or cattle to be driven through these corridors to break the *Molinia* sp (purple moor grass) dominance and create space for dormant and newly emerging seed to flourish.

These same river corridors are host to a number of historic environment features.

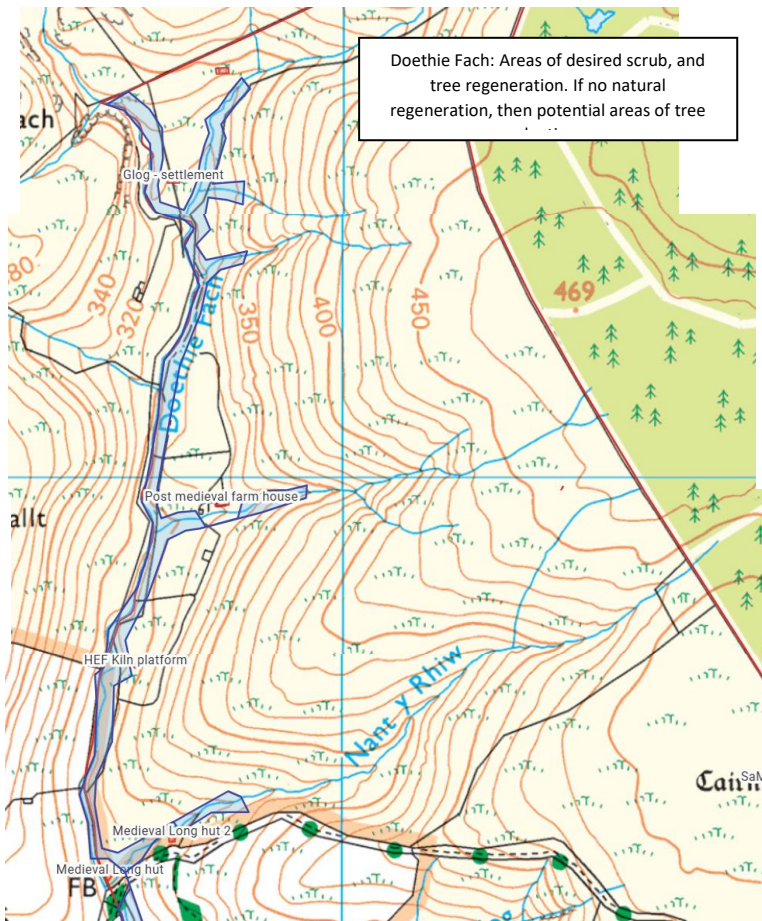
If natural regeneration (after disturbance) and seed sowing do not produce any significant shift planting may be required to address this critical ecosystem issue.

We might seek permissions for targeted tree planting of native, locally sourced wet woodland species along some of the river corridors

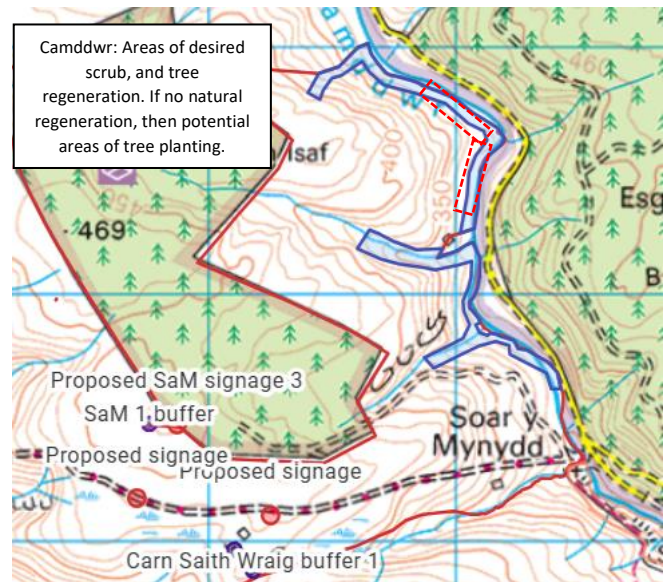
– we will almost certainly exclude areas with existing historic features and include significant buffers if we need to proceed with this course of work [Noting there are 9km of river and an additional 7 named tributaries – the southern end of the Cwm Doethie already scattered in ancient oak wood pasture. The map below outlines what this might look like:



The denuded riparian zone of the Cammdwr



Doethie Fach: Areas of desired scrub, and tree regeneration. If no natural regeneration, then potential areas of tree



Camddwr: Areas of desired scrub, and tree regeneration. If no natural regeneration, then potential areas of tree planting.

