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**GWYNEDD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

**TRE'R CEIRI CONSERVATION PROJECT**

**PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE NORTH-WEST ENTRANCE**

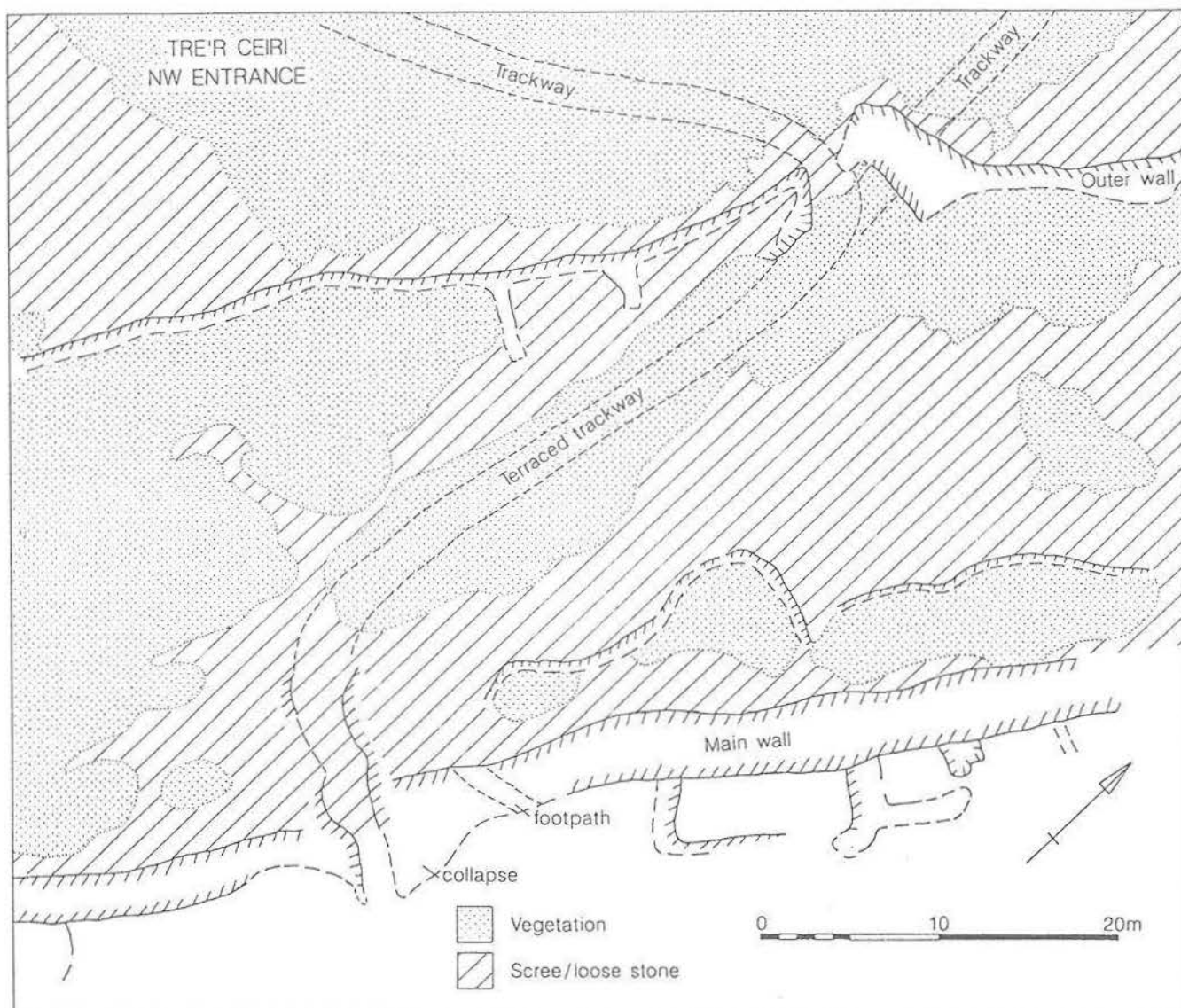


Fig. 1. The North-West Entrances. Scale 1:200

## TRE'R CEIRI CONSERVATION PROJECT

### PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE NORTH- WEST ENTRANCE.

#### Introduction.

Only two of the entrances to Tre'r Ceiri, the S.W and the N.W., provide good access to the fort. Both are approached by cleared trackways running through substantial outer defences. As the fort is usually approached from the S.W. the entrance here is usually seen as the main passage into the fort. This became very dilapidated and consolidation works were carried out here in the 1992 season. The N.W. entrance although not as commonly used is now very fragile and the unweathered collapses that can be seen in several places indicate the continuing erosion of this feature.

It has therefore been proposed that during the 1993 the Project should turn its attention to the consolidation of this entrance. In view of the success in redefining the severely eroded inner end of the S.W. entrance it is felt that a similar approach should be used here. A basic survey and assessment of the N.W. entrance was carried out, the results of this are set out below.

#### Description of the remains.

Fig.1 shows the main features of the entrance, the plan is based on the Plowman Craven photogrammetric survey of 1980 with a number of additions and revisions by the writer.

Two trackways can be seen when approaching the fort from the N.W., one running from the W and one from the N. Both run towards a gateway in the outer wall., The trackway running from the N. is apparently blocked by the N. side of the gateway an impression confirmed by excavations at this point by Hogg in 1959. The trackway running from the W.S.W. turns to the E. as it runs through the outer wall. The outer wall at this point stands to a minimum height of 2m and is constructed from massive polygonal blocks of stone, making it noticeably different in character to the inner rampart. The gateway is asymmetrical, the N. side being markedly out-turned and the S. side being thickened, particularly on the inner face. There is a large void on the N. side of the out-turned wall where a number of stones have fallen out of the face. The northern corner of the passage bulges inwards and has collapsed down to ground level. The S. side of the passage is well preserved, a hole in the facing interpreted by Hughes in 1906 as a 'mortise hole, to receive the end of a baulk of timber', and recently observed by the writer has been filled with stones. There is no inner face to the outer wall at this point, the space between the outer face and the steep hillside being filled with rubble.

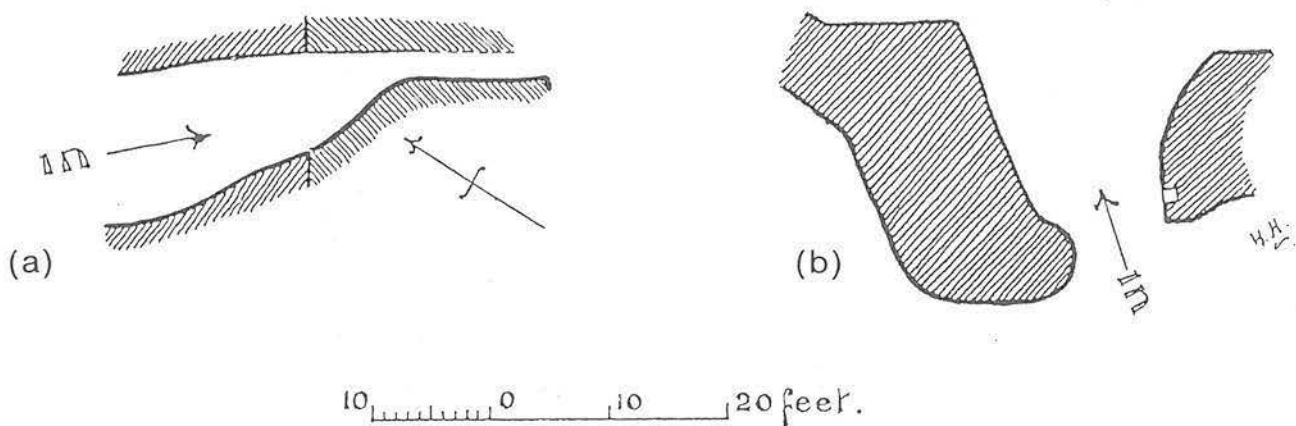


Fig. 2. Hughes' plan of (a) The North-West Entrance and (b) The North- West Entrance through the Outer Wall.

The pathway continues beyond the outer defences for 38m in a southerly direction. The path runs at an even gradient and is terraced. Beyond this the path curves round to the E. where it is flanked by two low partially collapsed walls for 6m leading to the inner N.W. entrance passage.

The passage is approximately 7m long. No clear distinction is visible between the outer flanking walls and the passage walls and they may be continuous. Hughes recorded this passage in 1906, (Fig. 2a) and states that the 'gateway narrows from a width of 12ft. (3.6m) at the entrance to 2ft. (0.7m) at the inner end'. The S.E. wall of the passage is concave and somewhat collapsed at its outer end, becoming straight at it runs into the fort. The facing is generally stable and stands to a maximum height of 1.8m. The N.W. wall is practically straight standing to a height of 1.3m at its outer end. This falls away at the inner end where 4m of facing has been reduced to a rubble slope, this has obviously been further eroded since 1906 as the passage no longer narrows to 0.7m. The passage is choked with stones fallen from the walls at either side, at one point the facing can be seen to continue down beneath the rubble for 0.75m.

The outer face of the main wall runs towards the passage at 90° but peters out on both sides about 1m from the edge. The inner face of the rampart has totally collapsed for 5m to the S.E. of the entrance and is now indicated by a low rubble slope. 11m of facing have been lost on the N.E. side, much of this erosion has been caused by a footpath running over the ramparts 9m from the entrance.

### **Proposed consolidation.**

The above plan and descriptions are a preliminary survey, detailed pre-conservation plans using a total station will be produced along with a detailed written and photographic record.

The outer gateway needs work in two areas, the void in the out-turned face will be packed and the collapsed facing on the N. corner of the passage will be rebuilt to a height sufficient to prevent further erosion.

The passage through the main wall will be cleared by the writer and an assistant from G.A.T., a careful watch will be kept for evidence of a paved way and features associated with the entrance. The cleared stone will be used to redefine the inner N.W. corner of the passage if the line of the facing can be traced and to repair the collapses in the passage and outer flanking walls. The tops of the passage walls will have to be secured and possibly raised by about 0.5 m in order to stabilise the core standing above them. an attempt will be made to establish the relationship between the passage walls, the outer face of the main rampart and the outer flanking walls.

The inner face of the main rampart around the entrance cannot at present be traced, the collapsed masonry will be cleared and if possible the face will be redefined. If insufficient evidence emerges the core will be retained using a rough-racking technique.

This is a very sensitive area of the fort and great care must be taken at all stages of the conservation work. Detailed recording particularly during clearance is essential with a greater emphasis than is usual on the drawn record.

### **Bibliography.**

- Hogg, A.H.A., 1960. 'Garn Boduan and Tre'r Ceiri, Excavations at two Caernarvonshire Hill-forts', *Archaeological Journal* 117, 1-39.  
Hughes, H., 1907. 'Report on the excavations carried out at Tre'r Ceiri in 1906'. *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 6th series VII, 38-62.

