

PARC MAWR, HENRYD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

REPORT NO. 226

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeologol Gwynedd

PARC MAWR, HENRYD

Archaeological Assessment (G1441)

Prepared for The Woodland Trust

by

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INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) was asked by Yr Ymddiriedolaeth Coedlannau/The Woodland Trust to carry out an archaeological assessment at Parc Mawr, Henryd based on map evidence and a field visit.

METHODOLOGY

Desktop work was carried out in the Caernarfon Record Office and in the Manuscripts Room of the library of the University College of North Wales, Bangor. Ordnance survey, tithe and estate maps were consulted, as well as the land tax assessments, the tithe schedules for the parish of Llangelynin and secondary literature on the area. In addition, Mr Robert Vernon, co-author with Mr John Bennett of the *Mines of the Gwydyr Forest* series of books, (Gwydyr Mines Publications, Cuddington, 1989 to date) was consulted; Messrs Bennett and Vernon have currently in preparation a history of Trecastell mine.

Two members of the Trust staff visited the site on 30 October 1996; conditions for fieldwalking were good for the time of the year. Known features were recorded by written description and photography, and the field paths were followed.

The following categories were used to define the importance of the archaeological resource.

Category A - Sites of national importance.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and sites of schedulable or listable quality, *i.e.* those which would meet the requirements for scheduling (ancient monuments) or listing (buildings) or both.

Sites which are scheduled or listed have legal protection, and it is recommended that all Category A sites remain preserved and protected *in situ*.

Category B - Sites of regional or county importance.

Sites which would not fulfil the criteria for scheduling or listing, but which are nevertheless of particular importance within the region.

Preservation *in situ* is the preferred option for Category B sites, but if damage or destruction cannot be avoided, appropriate detailed recording might be an acceptable alternative.

Category C - Sites of district or local importance.

Sites which are not of sufficient importance to justify a recommendation for preservation if threatened.

Category C sites nevertheless merit adequate recording in advance of damage or destruction.

Category D - Minor and damaged sites.

Sites which are of minor importance or so badly damaged that too little remains to justify their inclusion in a higher category.

For Category D sites, rapid recording, either in advance or during destruction, should be sufficient.

Category E - Sites needing further investigation.

Sites whose importance is as yet undetermined and which will require further work before they can be allocated to categories A - D are temporarily placed in this category, with specific recommendations for further evaluation. By the end of the assessment there should be no sites

remaining in this category.

A database of sites was compiled, which appears as appendix 1 to this report.

RESULTS

Parc Mawr is not shown as a discrete enclosure, nor does the name appear, on the unpublished 2 miles to 1" ordnance survey of 1819-1821 (copy in Manuscripts Room, University of Wales, Bangor) nor on the 1 mile to 1" ordnance survey of 1839-1841. It is marked, and shown as falling within its present boundaries (with one slight exception, discussed below) on the Llangelynnin tithe schedule of 1846, when it is described as a "plantation" of 84 acres, 3 roods, 1 perch. It formed part of the possession of Sir Richard Bulkeley Williams Bulkeley of Baron Hill, Beaumaris, who owned extensive tracts in the Conwy Valley, and was leased to Richard Williams of Tan'rallt farm. Commercial exploitation of woodland was practised elsewhere in Dyffryn Conwy by the landed estates, most notably by Lord Newborough of Glynllifon at Coed Dolgarrog.

The tithe map also shows a trackway climbing through the southern part of the property, reaching the old church at Llangelynnin. The church itself is of Medieval origin, whose oldest parts date to the twelfth century (Hughes H *The Old Churches of Snowdonia* Snowdonia National Park 1984 p 73), and the track itself is probably therefore of Medieval origin or older.

Like all the Bulkeley properties in Dyffryn Conwy, Parc Mawr came under the hammer in 1889, when the Baron Hill estate decided to rid itself of its non-Anglesey holdings. In the sale catalogue (Caernarfon Record Office XD/35/7) the property was offered in three lots as "Parc Mawr wood ... in them will be found fine-grown timber trees. They severally or conjointly form fine sites for the erection of Residences."

Though the property appears to have been sold as one, the northern extremity was purchased or leased by the company working the Trecastell mine, and a row of dwellings built there; these first appear on the 25" ordnance survey of 1900, which shows that the area of Parc Mawr had been slightly reduced here. The mine workings may be Medieval or earlier in origin, but as the Pwlltycochion mine these workings had functioned on a small scale in the early nineteenth century. Work began again in 1892, and the mine produced 6425 tons of lead ore and 12,554 of blende by 1913, making it one of the most profitable concerns of its sort in Wales (Lewis WJ *Lead Mining in Wales* UWP Cardiff 1967, pp. 238-40). It closed in 1920, and reopened in 1948, only to be finally abandoned after exploration in the lower levels in 1956 (Williams CJ *Metal Mines of North Wales*, Rhuddlan 1980). The smelter flue and the square-plan chimney are not marked on the 25" ordnance survey of 1913, and they are features too early to be dated to the last phase of the mine's operation after the second world war, and are probably therefore to be dated to the period 1913-1920. The smelter itself appears to have been situated to the east of the road, in an area that was landscaped after the mine's closure.

The three levels immediately to the south, visible as adit mouths and a winze, as well as a small trial nearby, are of uncertain date; it has been suggested that there is evidence of Medieval or earlier working here, since there are unconfirmed reports of stone hammers and other implements having been found there (pers. comm., Robert Vernon).

Other than the mineral workings on the northern part of the site, fieldwork confirmed the partial survival of a number of other features. One of these was the track which climbs through the southern part of the site to the old church at Llangelynnin, on the same alignment as that shown on the tithe map. Remains of fieldwalls were noted in several places, suggesting that Parc Mawr had itself been enclosed at one period. A small quarry was observed at one point, with the possible trace of a concrete chute to a loading level. This may have been worked for building stone for the farm or for roadstone.

CONCLUSIONS

A total of twenty features were identified, of which nine were allotted to category B, and the remaining eleven to category D.

The assessment of woodland sites poses particular problems, and within the constraints of the present project it would not have been possible to cover all the site intensively, and inevitably there may be other archaeological features in the dense woodland. However it has proved possible to confirm that the industrial remains are of at least regional significance with the possibility of medieval or earlier working as well as intensive exploitation in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is therefore recommended that these features remain *in situ*. The trackway to Llangelynin church likewise merits a category B as being of at least Medieval date, and should not be significantly altered. There are also traces of a field system predating the commercial exploitation of the woodland from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Even though these features do not merit more than a category D, a rapid survey is recommended.

ACCESS PROPOSALS

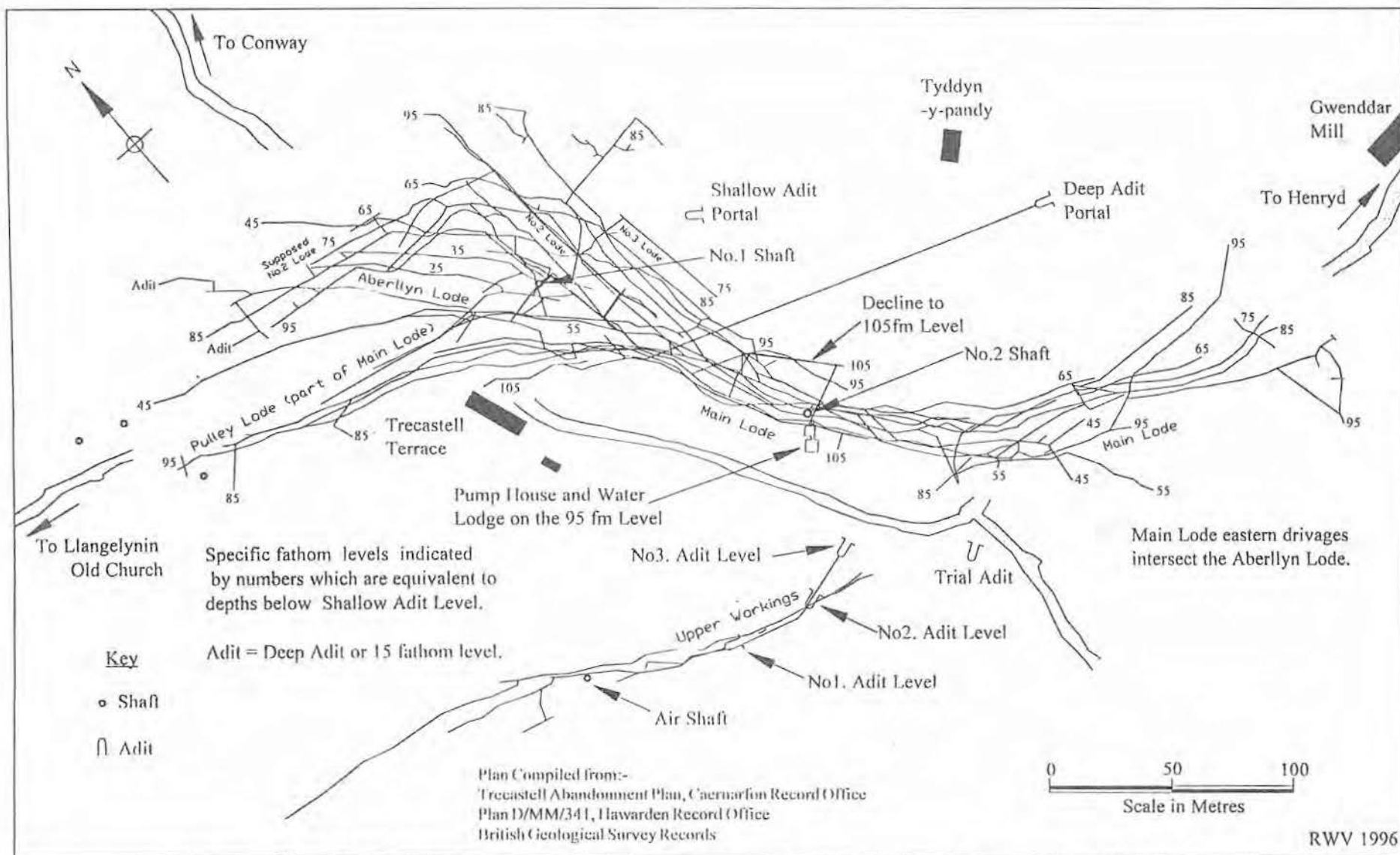
The proposed access route runs from a point near the Tre Castell mine upper workings as far as the track which gave access to Llangelynin church, and which may have formed part of a Medieval network of trackways. The features which the track might affect are therefore all those allotted to category B, for which preservation *in situ* is the preferred option. The possibility that the mine levels might date from the Medieval period or earlier adds to their importance, and the smelter flue and chimney are particularly fine late examples of a technology once common in Wales and beyond. It is therefore desirable that the loading area and car-parking space should not disturb the adit mouths, and that the southern extremity of the proposed track should not damage or alter the trackway to Llangelynin church.

APPENDIX I

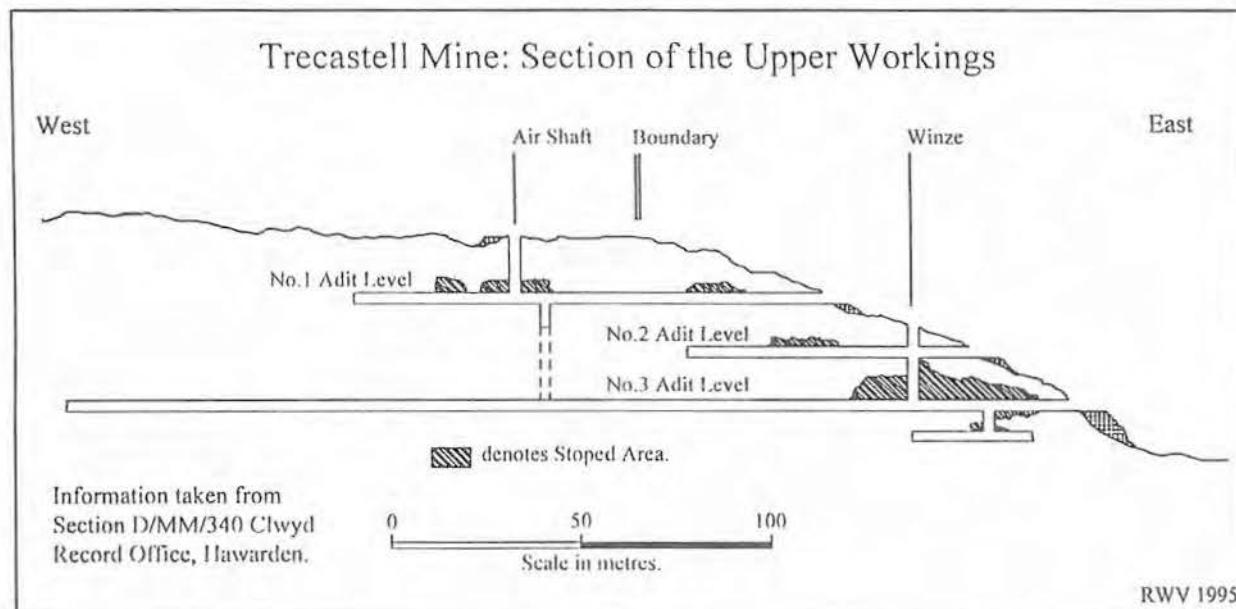
GAZETTEER OF SITES

- | | | | |
|---|---|-------------|------------|
| 1 | Smelter Flue | 76029 74454 | CATEGORY B |
| | A flue from a now-vanished smelter to the east of the road, constructed of rubble stone walls with a slab lintel cover, measuring 65cm wide and 90cm deep. | | |
| 2 | Smelter Chimney | 75966 74466 | CATEGORY B |
| | A square-plan chimney at the head of the smelter flue (1), constructed of stone walls with brick corners and a fine brick cap. The base measures approximately 2.5m square. The flue leads into the east side, and there is a draught hole on the south side. It stands approximately 7m high. | | |
| 3 | 2 level, Trecastell mine | 76003 74443 | CATEGORY B |
| | The number 2 level of the upper workings of Trecastell mine, visible on the surface as a single adit mouth and winze (shaft) 10m to the west. A possible barrow-run for tipping rubble extends to the north as far as the flue (1). This, and the other adits (4 and 5) are of uncertain date, and may have been dug in any period from the medieval or earlier to the nineteenth century. | | |
| 4 | 1 level, Trecastell mine | 75965 74443 | CATEGORY B |
| | The number 1 adit of the upper workings of Trecastell mine, visible as a single adit mouth and as an air shaft to the west of the Parc Mawr boundary. | | |
| 5 | 3 level, Trecastell mine | 76027 74442 | CATEGORY B |
| | The number 3 level of the upper workings of Trecastell mine, visible as two adit mouths and a barrow run or pathway to the north, extending as far as the smelter flue and possibly further. | | |
| 6 | Shaft, Trecastell mine | 76007 74427 | CATEGORY B |
| | A circular depression at the end of a pathway from the 2 adit mouth may be the site of a shaft or winze. | | |
| 7 | Drystone wall | 76048 74087 | CATEGORY D |
| | A drystone wall, 1.2m high, coursed horizontally and not with the slope. This feature and other walls within the boundaries of Parc Mawr suggest that Parc Mawr itself had been enclosed at one time. | | |
| 8 | Path | 76040 74072 | CATEGORY D |
| | A distinct pathway, part turned into the hill, including steps up from Tan'rallt, part of which is recent work but may incorporate earlier stone. | | |
| 9 | Stone quarry | 75848 73340 | CATEGORY D |
| | A stone quarry worked as a single face in the hillside. There is a concrete feature immediately downhill of the path which may be the remains of a chute. There are two banks and an elongated mound immediately to the north of the quarry, and part cut by it. They do not appear natural, but it is difficult to suggest a function or date. They may represent early upcast from the digging of the quarry, or may be the remnants of a much earlier feature. | | |

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|----|---|-------------|------------|
| 10 | Trackway
A sunken trackway running in a zig-zag alignment up the hillside towards Llangelynin church. | 75765 73247 | CATEGORY B |
| 11 | Drystone wall
Approximate location. | 75567 73220 | CATEGORY D |
| 12 | Stones
A mass of loose stones on a steep slope. | 75600 73260 | CATEGORY D |
| 13 | Drystone wall
A length of drystone walling at the junction of the old track (10) and the path to the southern boundary of Parc Mawr. | 75718 73352 | CATEGORY D |
| 14 | Drystone wall | 75754 73415 | CATEGORY D |
| 15 | Drystone wall | 75873 73692 | CATEGORY D |
| 16 | Drystone wall | 75964 73896 | CATEGORY D |
| 17 | Possible wall
A linear feature marked on the 1889 25" ordnance survey and not subsequently, possibly the remains of a wall, or a drain or a pathway. | 75795 73507 | CATEGORY D |
| 18 | Trial, Trecastell mine
A trial of uncertain date associated with Trecastell mine. | 76069 74407 | CATEGORY B |
| 19 | Wall
A boundary wall shown on the 1913 ordnance survey map, possibly showing the limits of the mine permission, running from SH76077 74417 to SH75947 74407. | 76077 74417 | CATEGORY D |
| 20 | Feature
A linear feature shown on the 1913 ordnance survey map, possibly to be identified with the barrow run from the 3 level. | 76051 74407 | CATEGORY B |



Treacastell Mine: Composite Plan Showing Extent of Workings.



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