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# TRE'R CEIRI FOOTPATH IMPROVEMENTS

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

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# TRE'R CEIRI FOOTPATH IMPROVEMENTS

Archaeological Monitoring (G1595)

prepared for Gwynedd Council

## **TRE'R CEIRI FOOTPATH IMPROVEMENTS (G1595)**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Gwynedd Council have undertaken a programme of footpath improvements on the approaches to Tre'r Ceiri Iron Age Hillfort (Scheduled under the Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act 1979). Dylan Ll. Jones was contracted to carry out the improvement works. Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was contracted by Dylan Ll. Jones for Gwynedd Council to monitor works on the upper part of the footpath that passes through some of the outlying enclosures within the scheduled area to the south-west of the hillfort.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Tre'r Ceiri is an exceptionally well-preserved stone-walled Iron Age hillfort. The monument consists of a massive drystone rampart surrounding the flat top of the easternmost of the three peaks of Yr Eifl on the Llyn Peninsular. The remains of over 150 drystone huts and enclosures can be seen within the hillfort. There are also numerous irregular enclosures outside the rampart which extend for 100m down the slope to the south-west of the fort.

This spectacular site has been attracting increasing numbers of visitors (current estimates indicate in excess of 7000 per annum). This has resulted in significant erosion to the fort and the surrounding footpaths. A ten-year conservation project centred on the archaeological remains was completed in late 1998 (Hopewell, 1998). The erosion to the steep approaches to the fort was however becoming a problem. A programme of improvements to the footpaths was therefore undertaken by Gwynedd Council. The majority of the work was carried out outside the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument but the upper part of the footpath impinged on the scheduled area.

#### **RESULTS**

Two lengths of footpath to the south-west of Tre'r Ceiri were consolidated. The lower part (area 1, Fig. 1) consisted of a 60m length of erosion between a fork in the path at SH37083450 and a break of slope at SH37133455. This section of the path did not impinge on any archaeological features as the extra-mural enclosures do not extend beyond the break of slope at SH37133455. The area was inspected before the consolidation works commenced. The erosion along the line of the footpath had cut into natural peat and shattered stone. This was further excavated to a depth of 0.3m by the contractors in order to embed stones into the ground thus forming the footpath. No archaeological features were disturbed. The large stones needed for steps in the path were imported from scree that was well away from the Scheduled Ancient Monument using a four wheel drive vehicle. A few smaller stones were taken from the scree adjacent to the path. Certain areas of scree around the monument have been denuded of large stones presumably by the original builders of Tre'r Ceiri. Any major changes in the composition of the scree would therefore have archaeological implications. The collection of stones was therefore carried out under archaeological supervision and was kept to a minimum in order to avoid changing the character of the scree in the area.

The second area of consolidation (area 2, Fig. 1) was centred around SH37193454. The erosion had occurred on a 10m length of footpath between two of the extra mural enclosures on what was probably the line of the original path into the south-western entrance. Erosion had reduced the path to fairly uniform natural small scree. Further disturbance was kept to a minimum and was closely monitored by the writer. Five shallow steps were built into the path. The five large stones necessary for this procedure could not be imported from the scree to the outside of the scheduled area as the area close to the fort was not accessible to the four wheel drive vehicle. The stones were therefore taken, under the supervision of the writer, from several patches of rubble in the larger enclosures above the path. Great care was taken to avoid any disturbance to the walls of the enclosures and other archaeological features in the area. Shallow holes were dug in order to embed the stones into the path. These were cut into natural scree and no evidence for the survival of the original pathway into the fort was uncovered.

Severe erosion had been occurring along the line of a steep footpath running south from the south-western information board. A wooden barrier had been erected in an attempt to channel visitors around the main footpath. Unfortunately, visitors were still using the eroding path. A further barrier consisting of piled stones alongside the wooden barrier was therefore constructed. The stone was collected from patches of scree to the south of the path, again under archaeological supervision.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

All works within the scheduled area were carried out under archaeological supervision. No archaeological features were disturbed as the footpaths had already been eroded to the level of natural deposits. A small amount of stone was collected from the scree and rubble within the scheduled area but again no archaeological features were disturbed.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Hopewell, D., 1998. *Report on the tenth season of the Tre'r Ceiri Conservation Project*.  
R.C.A.H.M.W., 1960. *Caernarvonshire Inventory. Volume II: Central*.

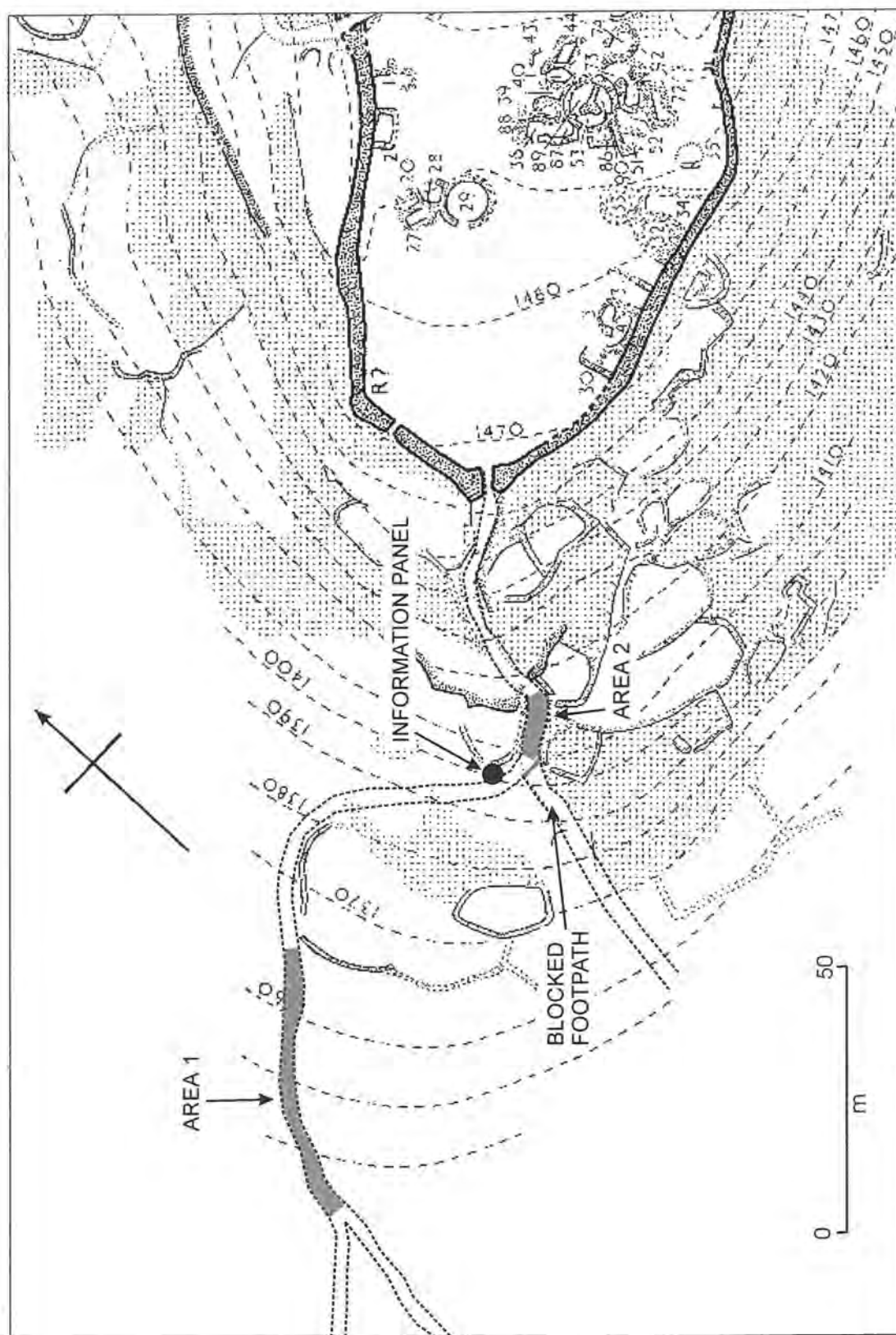


Fig. 1 Tre'r Ceiri; Location of improved footpaths (after R.C.A.H.M.W. 1960)

