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# Historic landscape characterisation of Ardudwy

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GAT Project G1733

Report no. 473

March 2003

Front cover:     **Harlech Castle**  
                      *Henry Gastineau (1791 - 1876)*

The painting shows parts of areas 29 (wooded hillslopes - foreground), 30 (Morfa Harlech - to the right) and 31 (Harlech castle).

*from* EXULTATION

A white wave, near the homesteads, foams over,  
coloured like hoar-frost in the hour of its advance.  
I love the sea-coast of Meirionnydd,  
Where a white arm was my pillow,  
I love the nightingale in the wild wood,  
Where two waters meet in that sweet valley.

*Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd*

(translated by Gwyn Williams)

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Map showing extent of study area and character areas

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Photographs of character areas follow the descriptive text of each area

## ***APPENDIX I***

Extracts from the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales

Ardudwy HLW (Gw) 2



# **Part A**

## **General information**

## 1 Preface

- 1.1 Natural forces and human activity acting together over the last six thousand years have contrived to produce a landscape of great beauty and variety in Wales, a national asset that is essential both to our national identity and to our individual “sense of place” and well-being. The diversity and imprint of human activity on the landscape is everywhere to be seen, from the enigmatic stone monuments of the prehistoric period and the magnificent castles and abbeys of the medieval period to quite commonplace and typical features like field boundaries that can often be of great age. But the landscape is more than just attractive scenery or a record of the past; it also provides a place for us to live, work and sustain ourselves, through farming, forestry, tourism and so on, processes that all shape, and will continue to shape, the landscape.
- 1.2 Recognising and raising awareness of the importance and wealth of the historic fabric of the landscape has been the central theme and message of the, non-statutory, Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales, the first part of which, covering thirty-six “outstanding” landscapes, was published in January 1998. This is being compiled as a joint initiative between Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), working in collaboration with the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and the Welsh unitary authorities.
- 1.3 The Historic Landscapes Register provides a first step national overview of the historic content of the Welsh landscape. The next step, so essential to the process of informing the way in which aspects of the historic landscape may be managed, is to make available more detailed information about the character of this landscape at a more local level. This is achieved through a process known as historic landscape characterisation which has been developed in Wales jointly by Cadw, CCW and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts. This involves the identification of geographically definable and mappable areas of historic character, as determined by the range and distribution of surviving archaeological and historic features and the main types of historic land use patterns or historic “themes” that have shaped the area. The key historic characteristics of the area are then identified along with recommendations for their positive management.
- 1.4 This report is one in a series of landscape characterisation exercises being undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts with grant aid from Cadw. These studies will initially concentrate on those areas identified on the Historic Landscapes Register, although it is accepted that the whole of the Welsh landscape can be said to be, in one way or another, historic. Information is being prepared in a form which is compatible with CCW’s landscape assessment and decision-making methodology, known as *LANDMAP*. It will be made available to a wide range of organisations and will feed into various initiatives to protect and manage the Welsh countryside, most notably the Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme. It is also seen as making a particularly important contribution to raising awareness and heightening a feeling of local distinctiveness.
- 1.5 The Historic Landscapes Register and these characterisation exercises fully acknowledge the dynamic and evolving nature of the landscape. They promote the view that protecting the legacy of the past in the landscape is not to be achieved by preventing change or fossilising the landscape but rather by informing the process of change, creating tomorrow’s landscapes without necessarily sacrificing the best of yesterday’s.

# 1 Rhagair

- 1.1 Mae'r grymoedd naturiol a'r gweithgaredd dynol a fu'n gweithredu ar y cyd dros y chwe mil o flynyddoedd diwethaf wedi cyfrannu at y broses o gynhyrchu tirwedd o harddwch ac amrywiaeth hynod yng Ngymru, ased cenedlaethol sy'n hanfodol i ni o ran ein hunaniaeth genedlaethol a hefyd o ran ein lles a'n 'hymdeimlad o berthyn i le' unigol. Gellir gweld ymhobman yr amrywiaeth a'r olion a adawyd ar y tirwedd gan weithgaredd dynol, o henebion cerrig enigmatig y cyfnod cynhanesyddol a chestyll ac abatai gwyd y cyfnod canoloesol, i'r nodweddion eithaf cyffredin a nodweddiadol fel ffiniau caeau a all yn aml fod yn hen iawn. Ond nid dim ond golygyfeydd deniadol neu gofnod o'r gorffennol yn unig yw'r tirwedd; mae hefyd yn darparu lle i ni fyw, gweithio a chynnal ein hunain ynddo, drwy gyfrwng amaeth, coedwigaeth, twristiaeth ac ati, oll yn brosesau sy'n llunio, ac a fydd yn parhau i lunio'r tirwedd.
- 1.2 Bu cydnabod a chodi ymwybyddiaeth o bwysigrwydd a chyfoeth ffabrig hanesyddol y tirwedd yn thema ac yn neges ganolog y gofrestr anstatudol, *Cofrestr O Dirweddau O Ddiddordeb Hanesyddol Eithriadol Yng Nghymru*, y cyhoeddwyd y rhan gyntaf ohoni, sy'n cwmparu trideg chwech o dirweddau 'eithriadol' ym mis Ionawr 1998. Caiff y Gofrestr ei llunio fel menter ar y cyd rhwng Cadw, Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru a'r Cyngor Rhyngwladol ar Henebion a Safleoedd (ICOMOS) sy'n gweithio mewn cydweithrediad a phedair Ymddiriedolaeth Archeolegol Cymru, y Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru ac awdurdodau unedol Cymru.
- 1.3 *Y Gofrestr o Dirweddau o Ddiddordeb Hanesyddol* yw'r cam cyntaf, trosolwg cenedlaethol o gynnwys hanesyddol tirwedd Cymru. Y cam nesaf, mor hanfodol i'r broses o lywio'r modd y gellir rheoli agweddau ar y tirwedd cenedlaethol, yw trefnu bod gwybodaeth fwy manwl ar gael ynglyn a chymeriad y tirwedd hwn ar lefel fwy lleol. Cyflawnir hyn drwy broses a elwir yn nodweddiad tirweddau hanesyddol a ddatblygwyd yng Nghymru ar y cyd a Cadw, Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru ac Ymddiriedolaethau Archeolegol Cymru. Golyga hyn nodi ardaloedd o gymeriad hanesyddol y gellir eu diffinio a'u mapio'n ddaearyddol, yn ol yr hyn a benderfynir gan ystod a dosbarthiad y nodweddion archeolegol a hanesyddol sy'n goroesi a'r prif fathau o batrymau defnydd tir hanesyddol neu 'themau' hanesyddol sydd wedi llunio'r ardal. Nodir nodweddion hanesyddol allweddol yr ardal felly ynghyd ag argymhellion ar gyfer eu rheoli'n gadarnhaol.
- 1.4 Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn un o gyfres o ymarferion nodweddiad tirweddau hanesyddol yr ymgwymerir ag ef gan Ymddiriedolaethau Archeolegol Cymru gyda chymorth grant gan Cadw. Bydd yr astudiaethau hyn yn canolbwyntio yn y lle cyntaf ar yr ardaloedd hynny a nodwyd yn y *Gofrestr O Ddiddordeb Hanesyddol*, er y caiff ei dderbyn bod modd disgrifio tirwedd Cymru gyfan, mewn un ffordd neu'r llall, fel un hanesyddol. Mae gwybodaeth yn cael ei pharatoi ar ffurf sy'n cydweddu a methodoleg asesu tirweddau a gwneud penderfyniadau Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru, sef *LANDMAP*. Bydd ar gael i ystod eang o sefydliadau a chaiff ei fwydo i fentrau amrywiol er mwyn diogelu a rheoli cefn gwlad Cymru, yn bennaf y cynllun agri-amgylcheddol sef, *Tir Gofal*. Caiff ei weld hefyd yn gwneud cyfraniad arbennig o bwysig i'r broses o godi ymwybyddiaeth a dwysau'r ymdeimlad o arbenigrwydd lleol.
- 1.5 Cydnabyddia'r *Gofrestr O Dirweddau O Ddiddordeb Hanesyddol* a'r ymarferion nodweddiad hyn yn llawn natur ddeinamig y tirwedd sy'n parhau i esblygu. Hyrwyddant y farn mai nid trwy rwystro newid neu ffosileiddio'r tirwedd y mae diogelu treftadaeth y gorffennol yn y tirwedd, ond yn hytrach drwy lywio'r broses o newid, gan greu tirweddau'r dyfodol heb o anghenraid aberthu tirweddau gorau'r gorffennol.

## 2 Background and acknowledgements

### 2.1 The study area

- 2.1.1 The area which forms the focus of this work encompasses the whole of the area of Ardudwy which has been identified on the *Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales* by Cadw, CCW and ICOMOS, HLW(Gw) 2, in Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, 1995, p 74).
- 2.1.2 The study area is situated in the modern county of Gwynedd, and the historic county of Meirionnydd. It stretches from the vale of Ffestiniog (Afon Dwyryd) in the north to near Barmouth in the south, and from the tops of the Rhinogau mountains in the east down to the coast in the west. It includes a variety of different terrains and habitats, and of different historic landscape types, such as open mountain tops, heavily-wooded valley sides, low-grade agricultural land, small villages and beaches. It is particularly noted for its wealth of extensive relict archaeological remains, mainly dating from the late prehistoric period and for its World Heritage Site (Harlech).
- 2.1.3 There are few large towns within the area: the major settlements are Harlech, Dyffryn Ardudwy, Tal y Bont, Llanaber and Talsarnau, all of which are located on the area's main north-south, coastal axis, the A496. Inland, the area rises, sharply in places, to the tops of the Rhinogau range at 500m plus. There are few significant industrial archaeological landscapes in the area, the main exception being the Hafotty Mines above Llanaber. The area also contains two registered parks and gardens, Cors y Gedol and Glyn-Cywarch.

### 2.2 Acknowledgements

- 2.2.1 The author is grateful to several people for their contributions to this project. Colleagues within and outside the Trust offered helpful advice throughout, especially those involved in the informal 'characterisation working party' comprising the WATs, Cadw and CCW. Judith Alfrey provided much useful information on buildings and commented on a draft text, and Nina Steele provided SMR data in a number of formats. Margaret Mason compiled the entries for the parks and gardens, and George Smith contributed the general section on relict archaeology. Marianne Longley prepared the figures and Nina Steele the maps. The remainder of the work was carried out, and the report compiled, by David Thompson.

### 2.3 Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this report.

CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
DRO	Dolgellau Record Office
GAT	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
GIS	Geographic Information System
HLC	historic landscape characterisation
JMHRs	<i>Journal of the Merioneth Historical Record Society</i>
NLW	National Library of Wales
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
THSC	<i>Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion</i>
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
UWB	University of Wales, Bangor
WATs	Welsh Archaeological Trusts

### 3 Evolving historic characterisation methodology

- 3.1 Historical landscape characteristics are the tangible evidence of the activities and habits of the people who occupied, developed, used and shaped the land to serve human needs in the past; they reflect the beliefs, attitudes, traditions and values of these people. They include the physical remains of all aspects of human activities and exploitation in the past (above and below ground, known and potential), and our understanding, interpretation and even perception of those remains. They may reflect a variety of activities occurring at one time, or evolving functions in different periods of time.
- 3.2 The Countryside Commission (in its document *Views from the Past*, 1996) states that as managers we should be concerned with the historic character of the present landscape, and not with the study of the past for its own sake. It places the idea of 'historic landscape character' at the centre of this concept.
- 3.3 Characterisation is defined as *the process of identifying and defining the particular characteristics which make each area distinctive*, and is rapidly emerging as a sound basis for describing, understanding and managing the environment. It is the great depth of human activity which underpins much of that which we feel is important about locality and landscape, and helps give an area its local distinctiveness. Historic landscape characterisation sets out to establish the historic depth within the modern landscape by identifying its principal historic components.
- 3.4 The term 'historic character' is generally preferred to 'historic landscape', as it is now accepted that all landscape is historic in that it reflects, to a greater or lesser degree, the processes which have occurred in history and which have formed its present appearance.
- 3.5 At present there is no standard, accepted methodology for establishing the historical character of landscape, but recent work in Wales has suggested that a practical approach based on considering the evidence as a series of themes may provide an answer. At a landscape level, what is significant in historical terms might include field boundary patterns (whether they are irregular or regular, their size, date *etc.*); settlement patterns (whether scattered or nucleated, date of origin *etc.*); the relict remains of earlier periods which are to be found in upland or marginal landscapes; the effect of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century estates on the landscape; the impact of industry, military installations and so on.
- 3.6 The dominant historic themes or patterns in a locality help define local historic character. The combination of these characteristics give an area its local distinctiveness, and it is the definition of areas of local distinctiveness which leads to character areas.
- 3.7 The process of characterisation can be briefly summarised as -
- |  |   |                    |
|--|---|--------------------|
| (one or several) components                | → | dominant patterns  |
| (one or more) dominant patterns            | → | coherent character |
| coherent character (with definable limits) | → | character area     |
| (several) character areas                  | → | local landscape    |
- 3.8 Characterisation is a practical tool intended to aid management in its broadest forms. It is essential, therefore, that the process identifies key historic landscape characteristics which are features and/or patterns that can actually be managed, and that the success of this management can be measured for monitoring purposes.
- 3.9 The reports emerging from characterisation work contain a number of elements. The first part of the report contains general information concerning the background to the project, the methodology employed, a glossary of terms and general management issues. The second part contains information relating to the specific area under study, including (a) a general historical introduction to the area divided thematically; (b) a description of each character area split into three parts (an historical background, key historic landscape characteristics and conservation and management priorities – accompanied by a map of the area and an illustration); and a select bibliography.

## **4 GIS-related *proformae***

- 4.1 This section contains instructions on filling in the GIS-linked recording forms created as part of the project. The form consists mainly of ‘tick boxes’ compatible with a table to be created (for example) in Mapinfo, and has now been standardised across Wales. This information is intended to be linked to GIS tables used by *LANDMAP*, and the form contains a number of fields which can be cross-referenced to any subsequent *LANDMAP* exercises.
- 4.2 The form is loosely divided into three parts – the first identifies the study area by name, number, project and location, and contains general information; the second is a list of historic landscape ‘themes’ which is intended to act both as a check-list and to ensure systematic recording (which can be transferred to a database) of all character areas to a certain level (the current list of themes is included in section 6 below); and the third relates to management issues.

### ***PROJECT NO***

This simply records the individual project number each Trust assigns to the particular project (e.g. G1657).

### ***AREA***

This is the name of the area as used in the project: this will usually be based on a geographical, historical or cultural association.

### ***HLCA NO.***

This is simply a consecutive number (beginning at 1) assigned to areas within the project. In this case, PRNs have also been allocated to the areas and these are displayed at the top of the character area descriptions in this report.

### ***HLCA NAME***

As above, a historic, cultural or simple geographic name is preferred (e.g. Pen y Groes), otherwise a more general topographical description (e.g. rolling meadow) might be more appropriate.

### ***LOCATION***

A six figure central grid reference should be sufficient.

### ***SUMMARY OF CHARACTER***

This should be succinct, preferably fewer than c. twenty words (e.g. for Caernarfon - *Roman fort, castle, walled medieval town, slate quay, sequence of housing stock*). This is intended as *aide-memoire* for writing the report.

### ***GENERAL HISTORIC INTEREST***

This is simply a summary of the information contained below in the individual themes to sum up the principal historical interest in the area.

### ***THEMES***

Boxes within each theme should be ticked where that element exists as a significant factor at landscape scale within an area. The ticked boxes will form the basis of the free-text description in the report: this description should refer to as many of the ticked boxes as is thought appropriate, and supply supporting information. An up-to-date list of themes is included below.

### ***PRINCIPAL CURRENT LAND USES***

This field summarises the broad principal land uses within the area in an attempt to try to identify which future management mechanisms (e.g. Tir Gofal for agriculture, UDPs for residential/urban areas) might be relevant to managing the area.

### ***RECORDED BY / DATE***

Name of compiler and date, following standard practice.

***KEY HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS***

This should be a simple list of the principal components within the area (for example - parkland, gentry houses, substantial farmsteads, limestone walls) which make it distinctive.

***CONSERVATION PRIORITIES & MANAGEMENT***

This summarises the key historic landscape components which underlie (and are essential to) the character of the area and therefore need to be managed if the historic character of the area is to be maintained. This can be a summary of the relevant part of the main area entry in the report.

## 5 Current themes in historic landscape characterisation

### SUBSISTENCE

#### AGRICULTURE (Field pattern)

- Unenclosed/open
- Evolved/irregular
- Regular (small)
- Regular (medium)
- Regular (large)
- Large enclosures
- Med. strips
- R+F
- Estate owned and improved
- Varied
- C20th post-war
- Other
- Not present/Unknown

#### AGRICULTURE (Field boundary)

- Dry-stone wall
- Stone-faced bank
- Stone-faced bank with hedge
- Hedge
- Distinctive hedgerow trees
- Earth bank
- Dyke
- Ditches
- Mortared walls
- Slate pillars
- Pale
- Sheepfolds
- Post+wire fence
- Other
- Not present/Unknown

#### FORESTRY

- Ancient woodland
- Other broadleaf woodland
- Plantation
- C20Forestry
- Scrub/unmanaged
- Coppice
- Charcoal burning
- Other
- Not present/Unknown

**+ supporting information (date, historical associations, archaeological data *etc.*)**



## ARCHAEOLOGY

### RELICT

- Prehistoric settlement/fields
- Medieval settlement/fields
- Prehistoric ritual
- Post-medieval settlement/fields
- Turbary
- Other
- Scattered
- Not present/Unknown

### INDUSTRIAL

- Quarrying
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Mill
- Brewery
- Metal processing
- Other processing
- Craft/cottage
- Rural industry
- Other
- Not present/Unknown

### BURIED

- Cropmark/parchmark
- Urban deposits
- Find scatters
- Palaeoenvironmental evidence
- Other
- Not present/Unknown

### MILITARY

- Prehistoric
- Roman
- Early medieval
- Anglo-Norman
- Edwardian
- Welsh
- Tudor
- Civil War
- C19th
- WWI
- WWII
- Other
- Not present/Unknown

**+ supporting information (date, historical associations, archaeological data *etc.*)**

## **BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

### **SETTLEMENT PATTERN**

Loosely dispersed scatter  
Dense scatter  
Clustered  
Ribbon  
Nucleated – planned  
Nucleated – organic  
Business/commercial  
Other  
Not present/Unknown  
Specify date (if relevant)

### **BUILDING TYPE**

Farmhouse  
Cottage  
Terraced housing  
Shops  
Place of worship  
Processing  
Distinctive vernacular style (specify in character summary)  
Other  
Not present/Unknown

### **PRINCIPAL BUILDING MATERIAL**

Stone – random  
Stone – coursed  
Clay/earth  
Wood  
Brick  
Concrete  
Other

### **PRINCIPAL ROOFING MATERIAL**

Slate  
Tile  
Thatch  
Stone tile  
Concrete tile  
Metal  
Other

### **ORNAMENTAL / LEISURE**

Deer park  
Parkland/garden  
Garden/park (C20)  
Tourism  
Sports facilities  
Hunting estate  
Other leisure

### **ECCLESIASTICAL**

Cemetery (medieval)  
Cemetery (modern)  
Church (medieval)  
Church (post medieval)  
Monastic  
Chapel (nonconformist)  
Other

+ supporting information (date, historical associations, archaeological data *etc.*)

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **COASTAL/MARITIME**

- Sea defences
- Intertidal features
- Harbour/fishing
- Other
- Not present/Unknown

### **COMMUNICATION**

- Footpaths
- Tracks
- Lanes-winding
- Lanes-straight
- Turnpike
- Major road
- Ports/docks
- Airfields
- Bridges
- Communications towers
- Public rail
- Industrial rail
- Other rail
- Canal
- Other
- Not present/Unknown

### **RESOURCES**

- Power generation
- Power distribution
- Water supply
- Peat cutting
- Other
- Not present/Unknown

**+ supporting information (date, historical associations, archaeological data *etc.*)**

## OTHER

### HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS

Place-name  
Artistic  
Folklore/legend  
Events  
Literary  
Persons  
Other  
Not present/Unknown

**+ supporting information (date, historical associations, archaeological data *etc.*)**

## **6 Managing historic character**

### **6.1 Rural land-use change**

- 6.1.1 There have been many pressures on the rural environment and the countryside over the last 50 years as a result of changes in land use and shifting priorities for agriculture (the principal rural land use). Agricultural intensification and the maximisation of productivity were the priorities up until the mid-1980s, and as a consequence the character of rural landscapes changed dramatically during this period as hedgerows and trees were removed to create more efficient farming systems. Reclamation of the hills and marginal land led to the removal of significant upstanding archaeological sites and palimpsest landscapes.
- 6.1.2 Currently, due to agricultural over-production and a general greater awareness of and concern for the quality and protection of the rural environment, the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy provides a number of incentives to farmers and landowners to manage their land in an environmentally sensitive manner. The all-Wales Tir Gofal scheme includes provision for the conservation of certain habitats and the protection and enhancement of stone walls and boundaries, as well as sites and features of archaeological and historic landscape interest.
- 6.1.3 However, of the estimated 27,000 farms in Wales, only c. 600 farms per year are currently entering into such agreements, which leaves the vast majority outside any formal management scheme, and so many important archaeological sites and landscape features continue to be lost. The challenge therefore is to identify historic landscape priorities for conservation, protection, enhancement or even restoration both within the scheme and without it.
- 6.1.4 Three of the principal advantages of an approach using character areas are that (a) it is able to identify and map both local distinctiveness and national importance; (b) by identifying physical features which can be managed it can feed directly into land management and development planning strategies; and (c) it sets the management of individual features within their local landscape context, allowing emphasis to be placed on those features which best define local landscape character. It can assist in management plans by setting priorities for management and enhancement, highlighting intrinsic values, and encouraging links to multi-purpose management.
- 6.1.5 Characterisation is about management: if we are going to manage effectively, we must know what is there, what is important and what we want to do with it. Character areas can tell us what is distinctive (*i.e.* important both locally and nationally) about a particular area, and therefore what needs to be managed in order to retain that area's distinctiveness (character).

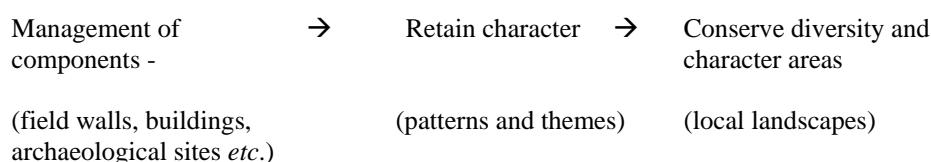
### **6.2 General considerations**

- 6.2.1 Positive management should be aimed at halting and, if necessary, reversing any trends that can be shown to be causing unacceptable damage to the historic landscape resource. If at the same time management can actually enhance the historic landscape, then that is even better. It is essential that such management is continuous, and contains provisions for monitoring and review.
- 6.2.2 One of the basic tenets underpinning management is that we should be aiming to continue (rather than halt) the evolution of the landscape: to do this we must first identify what is important and significant in historic landscape terms. It is the overall historic character of the present landscape (as evidenced in important and significant groupings and patterns) which we should aim to retain, but in order to do this we must concentrate management actions at the level of individual components. We must identify, conserve and enhance the local and regional historic diversity of our landscapes.
- 6.2.3 Agri-environment and other rural initiatives offer the opportunity to integrate the needs of the historic environment with modern land-use requirements to produce a workable, effective management system. More importantly, they should result in a working, viable landscape,

which should provide ways and means for the various human activities in an area to be integrated with each other and with conservation, at the same time providing opportunities for study, research, education, interpretation and quiet enjoyment.

6.2.4 This means that sites and features of historic landscape interest are positively managed for their own sake, rather than just left unimproved. It is important that the management of such features is integral to the management of the farm, or the scheme or park or whatever, as a whole, rather than an isolated, unrelated activity.

6.2.5 By working at the most basic level, management can be used to retain the general historic character of the area -



6.2.6 A management plan should specify conservation objectives for a site/area and how they will be monitored; it should identify points at which some response will be made if monitoring shows that a feature is changing; it should establish what activities/processes will be the subject of monitoring; it should establish what management of on-going activities is required; and identify the types of development or activities which might adversely affect the site.

6.2.7 Not all the sites and features which comprise the historic environment require the same detailed level of management: some sites can be adequately managed by the application of simple, general strategies, while more complex sites merit more detailed, site-specific, problem-led responses.

### 6.3 Mechanisms - general

6.3.1 It is envisaged that characterisation has many potential applications to management including -

- assisting in developing landscape conservation and enhancement projects, by identifying elements and patterns of the historic environment which are considered either typical of a local area (provide local distinctiveness) or are of particular importance (rare at a national level);
- targeting resources within grant aid by government and other organisations towards conserving elements and patterns of the historic environment in the same way;
- developing policies for unitary development plans (UDPs);
- assisting in determining planning applications, especially large-scale developments such as roads, wind-farms, mineral extraction, large-scale landfill, waste disposal, reclamation, water schemes, major settlement and major industrial development;
- aiding the management of land by farmers, and large corporate landowners such as industrial companies, water or electricity companies, the forestry industry and the National Trust;
- providing baseline information for local areas against which future change can be monitored, for example as part of the Tir Gofal scheme;
- providing general information not already on the SMR which can be used to inform advice given as part of a number of rural initiatives such as Tir Gofal, Woodland Grant Schemes *etc.*;
- providing advice in a rural framework to conservation agencies including Cadw, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency, local authorities, national parks and others;

- providing information to a number of wider initiatives, including contributing to our academic understanding of landscape, stimulating further research, raising public perception of the landscape, and the preparation of policy statements by public bodies.

## 6.4 Mechanisms - specific

- 6.4.1 ***Tir Gofal*** is open to applications from farmers throughout Wales. Within the scheme, payments will be made to farmers for observing ‘codes of good environmental practice’, one of which is care and enhancement of the historic environment. As the scheme is a ‘whole farm’ scheme, it allows archaeological management strategies sensitive to the character of the landscape as a whole to be integrated with farming practices. Characterisation is useful for monitoring purposes, as it sets out the wider historic environment framework within which individual farm plans will sit. It can also help prioritise management within a broader landscape context.
- 6.4.2 ***Unitary Development Plans*** address ‘land use’ issues and the UDPs for Snowdonia National Park and Gwynedd are currently being compiled, both of which take into account previous *LANDMAP* initiatives which have recently been completed.
- 6.4.3 ***Countryside strategies*** are the responsibility of local authorities (together with others), which have a general duty under section 1 of the Countryside Act, 1981, to have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside in the exercise of their functions relating to land. Countryside strategies principally address management of the countryside in areas outside settlement limits, but they are also a mechanism, at least in part, for implementing development plan policies. In Wales, such strategies are supported by CCW.

Local authorities have a number of powers which have implications for the management of the historic environment including the power to establish Country Parks (section 7 of the Countryside Act 1968); the ability to declare Local Nature Reserves (section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949); the ability to enter into access agreements with landowners (section 64 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949); the ability to buy derelict land (often of industrial archaeological interest) for reclamation purposes (section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949); the duty to make Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate (section 198 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990); and the duty to apply The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 which controls the removal of certain important hedgerows (from section 97 of the Environment Act 1995). Other powers are treated separately below.

Many local authorities have a countryside warden service which would benefit from characterisation information.

- 6.4.4 ***Local Agenda 21 programme*** At Rio, governments committed themselves to setting up national targets for safeguarding and improving the environment. Local Agenda 21 and Local Biodiversity Action Plans provide the means of meeting these targets, and of promoting the principles of sustainable development, at a local level. Both initiatives are about embracing a conscientious vision of the long-term future by identifying what matters locally and paying serious attention to the global costs of maintaining local lifestyles.

This has implications for archaeology and the historic environment. At a local level, sense of place is a fundamental aspect of quality of life. The present day landscape underpins our sense of the place in which we live. Much of its character and distinctiveness is derived from the historic environment (archaeology and the built heritage in all its forms). The historic environment is of course both fragile and non-renewable. We have a responsibility to maintain it so that future generations can also appreciate and benefit from it in the same way that we do. However, the landscape is not static. Just as today’s landscape is a product of the changing relationships between people and their environment through time, so it must be allowed to continue to change.

The point of sustainability is that it promotes change which meets the needs of the future whilst retaining the integrity of the historic environment. In order to do so decisions have to be made about the relative importance of different elements. Traditionally, evaluation has been based on individual sites, with particular examples being selected out for special protection (known as

scheduling). However, it is the sum total of historical and archaeological features, not individual sites, which gives landscape much its grain and it is often the more ordinary features that create 'local distinctiveness'. In order to ensure that decisions about the future of the historic environment are made on a secure basis, sound information needs to be gathered. Historic landscape characterisation work of the kind being carried out by the Trusts provides historic environment audits, from which decisions of this kind can be made.

- 6.4.5 **Biodiversity Action Plans** Snowdonia National Park has recently prepared a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP): this will to a large extent be informed by the *LANDMAP* exercise recently carried out, which means that historic environment information is available. In addition, the Trust is communicating with the person responsible for the LBAP.

LBAPs are a means by which Local Government Authorities can implement the biodiversity recommendations established after the Rio Summit. They achieve this by building up local partnerships and taking account of both national and local biodiversity priorities to develop strategies for the conservation of species and habitats of local significance. As we are still at the early stages of our involvement, more information will be forthcoming at a later date, but it is already obvious that the type of general information coming from characterisation projects will be able to feed into such plans.

At a general level, archaeology is of relevance to LBAPs because it raises awareness of the historical origins of the contemporary environment. There are no purely 'natural' environments in Britain; the landscape is the product of millennia of human activity. Our knowledge of the changing relationship between people and their environment through history allows us to understand the land-use activities which have led to the creation of contemporary landscapes, and comment from an informed historical perspective on those practices which could be encouraged in order to protect and conserve particular landscapes and ecosystems.

- 6.4.6 **Access** is a key issue in the countryside, if we are to enjoy the landscape and all its inherent interests and in turn engender understanding and respect for the countryside and the way it works. In addition to the rights of way network, the Countryside Rights of Way Act has been passed by Parliament. As many of the best-preserved and most fragile palimpsest archaeological sites and landscapes lie within areas to which there will shortly be greater public access, this has potential implications for archaeological management.

Historic landscape characterisation can identify these areas (*i.e.* where there are well-preserved yet fragile archaeological remains) and thus highlight the potential management problems if the areas are 'opened up' to public access. It may even be that such areas could be excluded from unfettered access under new legislation, either permanently or on a temporary basis.

Characterisation also has the potential to inform leaflets, trails and other interpretative material.

- 6.4.7 **Tourism** The Wales Tourist Board (WTB) has the strategic responsibility for encouraging people to visit Wales and for the provision of tourist facilities. In recent years tourism has become one of the most important growth sectors of the economy. Unitary authorities all have a tourism strategy of some description, and historic characterisation has a part to play in sustainable 'green tourism' in that it can help identify local distinctiveness which can be used both to attract visitors (by way of advertising), create atmosphere and to inform quality initiatives such as local walks, guides and other recreational activities. It can also direct visitors to areas with a robust historic environment, and away from those which are particularly fragile.
- 6.4.8 **Management agreements** In addition, local authorities have the ability (under section 39 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981) to enter into management agreements with landowners. This is an area which could be explored further from the historic environment perspective, as such agreements could cover not only individual monuments but also historic landscape characteristics (such as boundary types).
- 6.4.9 **Other local authority programmes** Local authorities have programmes for economic development, highways maintenance, environmental education and coastal protection. These would all benefit from the information which is being compiled through the characterisation projects, and, in the other direction, the safeguarding of the historic environment would benefit from those drawing up these programmes having direct access to historic landscape



characterisation data. In fact, information at this broad level would probably be more useful than detailed, site-specific SMR data.

- 6.4.10 **Forestry Commission** Information from characterisation projects will be invaluable in contributing to national and regional indicative forestry strategies, indicating where new proposals for planting are likely to be acceptable (or unacceptable) from an historic environment perspective. On a day to day basis, it can provide information at a landscape level which can inform proposals for new planting. It will be particularly useful when considering proposals under any of the challenge schemes.
- 6.4.11 **Environment Agency** is responsible for producing Local Environment Action Plans (LEAPs) and Catchment Management Plans (CMPs). The historic environment does not have a high profile in either of these, and both could therefore benefit from information which characterisation can provide.
- 6.4.12 **Other bodies** Historic landscape characterisation information can be used to educate and inform a wide range of organisations and individuals including statutory agencies, voluntary bodies (RSPB, Woodland Trust, North Wales Wildlife Trust, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, National Trust) town councils, community councils, farming unions and others. It is our experience that often it is easier to explain the importance of, and inherent interest of, the historic environment by using historic characterisation, than by the more traditional means of individual archaeological sites and excavations.

Local distinctiveness and a sense of place, which are of undoubted interest to people, can all be conveyed by such means, and the potential importance of this aspect of characterisation cannot be emphasised too strongly.

## 7 Glossary of keywords and expressions

### 7.1 Definitions

#### *Character*

the overall impression created by an area of landscape which is susceptible to being described

#### *Characterisation*

the process of identifying and defining the particular characteristics which makes different areas of landscape distinctive

#### *Character area*

is where component elements form dominant patterns to allow the definition of an area which can be clearly described: historic character areas are either

a) areas which embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or theme, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction: or

b) areas which show organisation of space either during one particular period or through time. This may be visible in the arrangement of fields or siting of settlements; or a pattern of land-use which represents traditional practices unique to a community; or in the sheer density of remains relating to either a single theme/period or succession of periods/themes; or the grouping together of buildings *etc* which are distinctive in style, design or method of construction; or a transportation system reflecting an important innovation in engineering.

#### *Coherent character*

where the components and patterns across an area of landscape are consistent, coherent character can be defined which can lead to character areas

#### *Component*

the most basic building blocks of the historic landscape, including walls, farms, cottages, archaeological monuments *etc.*, which, when combined, form dominant patterns

#### *Dominant patterns*

patterns formed by components such as field walls which are visually dominant in an area: the spread of a single dominant pattern, or the coincidence of two or more, leads to coherent character

#### *Element*

another word for component (preferred)

#### *Evaluation*

The process of attaching value (non-monetary) to a particular area of landscape, usually by reference to an agreed set of criteria in the context of the assessment

#### *Feature*

another word for component (preferred)

#### *Historic landscape*

the physical remains in the current landscape of the evidence for past human exploitation of the environment over time

#### *Relict*

historic landscape components which are no longer in use are described as relict for management purposes

## 7.2 Process of characterisation

This can be briefly summarised as -

(several) components → dominant patterns

(one or more) dominant patterns → coherent character

coherent character (with definable limits) → character area

(several) character areas → local landscape

## 7.3 Levels at work

<i>level</i>	<i>action</i>
landscape	strategic policies, overviews <b>(national)</b>
character areas	management policies - <i>LANDMAP</i> , UDPs, countryside strategies <b>(regional)</b>
<i>(coherent character</i>	<i>stage of characterisation (general management guidelines))</i>
patterns/groupings	characterisation is undertaken at this level <b>(local)</b>
components	define what's important/typical & manage landscape components <b>(site specific)</b>

## 7.4 Useful descriptive terms

### *presence*

conspicuous, evident, missing

### *scale*

open, exposed, enclosed, secluded, confined, intimate, small scale, medium scale, large scale

### *diversity*

uniform, simple, diverse, complex

### *unity*

unified, ordered, interrupted, fragmented, chaotic, rambling, structured, organic

### *balance*

harmonious, balanced, discordant, chaotic

### *enclosure*

confined, enclosed, open, exposed

### *texture*

smooth, textured, rough, very rough

### *colour*

monochrome, muted, colourful, garish

### *movement*

remote, vacant, peaceful, active

*form*

straight, angular, curved, sinuous

*stimulus*

boring, bland, interesting, invigorating

*other*

palimpsest, aesthetic value, visual amenity, educational potential, sense of place, distinctive character, common character, historically complex, domesticated character, essentially wild

## **Part B**

### **Information specific to Ardudwy**

## 8 Historical processes and background

### 8.1 Agriculture

In the medieval period, the cantref of Ardudwy was sub-divided into the commotes of Uwch Artro and Is Artro along the line of the eponymous river. The maerdref for Ardudwy, which was considered part of Gwynedd, was at Ystumgwern (area 15). The project area falls entirely within this region. Originally, before the Edwardian conquest and the subsequent formation of the county of Merioneth, the name 'Meirionnydd' applied to the cantref to the south of the Mawddach.

Following Edward I's conquest of north Wales in 1284, the three new counties were surveyed. The extent of Merioneth being carried out by John de Havering, the justice of north Wales, and Richard Abingdon, the chamberlain. It was probably drawn up between March 1284 and November 1285. It is arranged under commotes but there is only a summary entry for each one, with few separate entries for the individual townships.

The purpose of the extent was to record the rent, dues and services due a lord from his tenants, and Edward wanted to ascertain what had been owed to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd by his tenants in the post 1277 principality which would now accrue to him. Although they do not yield any information about the 'gwely' and the 'gafael' of individual townships, the section relating to the commote of Ardudwy records an annual payment of fourpence from each one of 80 tenements which are called 'gafaelion'.

By 1352, when new extents of Ardudwy and Caernarfonshire were drawn up, Merioneth had been granted to Walter de Mauny and was not re-surveyed. As new extent of the county, however, was made in 1419-20 and this, too, contains some details of 'gwelyau' and 'gafaelion'. Demesne lands appear to have been more dispersed here than in other parts of Gwynedd, in Ardudwy at Ystumgwern, for example.

Part of the extent which relates to the project area is copied below.

#### EXTENT OF THE COMMOTE OF ARDUDWY

##### *Manor of Ystumgwern: rent*

From one carucate of land in the same manor	20s
From four villeins of the same manor of rent	10d
From the same, 6 crannocks of flour	12s
From certain land now waste for 6 dishes of flour	12d
From the same villeins for feeding sparrowhawks	4d
From the same for works	10s
From Madog ap Robert, <farmer of the pasture of Nantcol>, for rent	5s
From the same for three vessels of butter	12s 6d; he can, however, leave.
From two farmers	10s of rent; they can, however, leave.

Total: 71s 8d

##### *Rent of the free men*

From the free tenants of all the commote for rent of assise at the feast of All Saints	£4
From the same for puture	£28
From the same for puture of the castle	20s
The said free tenants and the villeins of the king's demense will go in the army with the lord King for six weeks at their own cost	
From the same for the maintenance of the houses	20s
From the same for the maintenance of two yeomen and one servant of the King at the feast of Saints Philip and James	5s
From the same and the villeins of the country for the puture of the chief huntsman	

of the King for the year	15s
From 80 tenants which are called <i>gafaelion</i> , from each tenement (26s 8d)	4d
From the said free tenants 15 hens	15d
From the same for the maintenance of two attendants and the otter hunters for 15 days	5s 3d.

Total: £36 13s 2d

#### *Prysor*

From half a carucate of land with meadow in the same manor	13s 4d
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#### *Rent of the villeins*

From the villeins of the whole commote 24 pigs, the price of a pig [being]	16d
And be it remembered that as many of them as have pigs will give	1 pig
From the same 24 crannocks of flour	48s
From the same each year 5 cows and 5 calves and in the fifth year 4 cows and 4 calves	
That is to say, that over five years they will give 24 cows and 24 calves and a cow with a calf is worth 10s and they are worth annually 48s	
From the same for the maintenance of two horses and two servants for half a year	£4 11s
From the same for the puture of two servants for the other half of the year	30s 4d

#### *Rent*

From the same for the carriage of honey and victuals	20s
From the same for works in the autumn	half a mark
From the same for the rent which is called <i>maeronaeth</i>	100s
From the farm of the same commote annually	34s 9d
From Richard ap Dafydd and the son of Ithel ap Cynddelw 5s for their lands in Ystumgwern	
From the same for two vessels of butter	3s
From the same Richard for half the land of John son of <i>Diacony</i>	6s 8d
Llywelyn son of Adda killed against the King held land which is worth 2s and in the hand of the said King	
From Master Iorwerth Foel for the land which was of Gwyn Foel which he holds of the gift of Prince Llywelyn	10s
The same Iorwerth says that he should render nothing	
From the township of <i>Menery</i> Llanfair and Llanddwywe	9s

Total: £22 19s 9d

#### *Mill*

From one mill and half a mill in <Ystumgwern> 32 crannocks of flour £4, the price of crannock [being] 2s 6d.

#### *Pasture and vaccary*

From a certain pasture in Bryncoch which is now waste, in which 40 cows can be maintained and the pasture is worth 1 mark

From a certain pasture in Prysor where 120 cows can be maintained [and] it would be worth £16 if it were stocked

The waste is appraised at 1 mark

From a certain pasture which is called Y Feidiog and in which 60 cows can be maintained and it would be worth £7 10s if stocked, however, it is now waste with a certain parcel of meadow worth 4s

From the pasture in the green island which is called Glasynys [which] if it were stocked could maintain 24 cows and would be worth 60s, now waste with a certain meadow worth 5s.

Total: 115s 8d

### *Pleas and perquisites*

From pleas and perquisites 60s. Total 60s as it appears

Grand total: £72 0s 4d

Grand total of the abovementioned extent of the whole county: £265 14s 10d

(m.2 dorse) Lands contained in the extent bestowed on various men after the completion of the aforesaid extent for which things contained in the same extent the sheriff should not be burdened in his account.

Cancelled here because it is below

[Item, for 20s for one carucate of land in Ystumgwern delivered to the villeins of Harlech for their lands delivered to the burgesses there for which the sheriff should answer for the issues by the hand of the bailiffs of the same town outside the extent]

Item, the sheriff should be burdened with 20s contained above in this extent for one carucate of land in Ystumgwern because that land is delivered to the villeins who were formerly of Harlech for the lands of the same villeins delivered to the burgesses now at Harlech, for which lands thus delivered to the burgesses the lord should be answered by the hand of the bailiffs of the aforesaid town.

Total: 20s

And let it be known that the sheriff should not be burdened in the sum of the whole extent with £10 6s 8d of the pleas and perquisites which are contained in the same extent under the various commotes because the same sheriff answers for them along with the increment in the pleas and perquisites for the whole county under the various headings outside the extent.

And thus the clear total of this extent for which the sheriff should be burdened in his account remains:

£2[42 11s 6d]

£243 19s 10d

Thomas (1967b) has chronicled the extent of 16<sup>th</sup> century (Tudor) enclosures of wasteland in Merioneth, most of which were intakes from the waste. He points out that the areal distribution of the encroachments reveals a heavy concentration in the rugged uplands of Ardudwy (as well as Penllyn). Here lay the greater number of the more extensive parcels, together with a liberal scattering of small plots reclaimed from barren patches in already long-settled lowland margins and valleys which penetrate the moorland (most notably the areas around Tyddyn Felin (ironically on the cusp between areas 15, 25 and 26) above Cwm Bychan; the sea-facing hillslopes between Afon Cwmnantcol and Afon Ysgethin (mainly areas 1 and 7); and on Mynydd Llanbedr (area 16 between Afon Cwmnantcol and Afon Artro).

Activity on the edges of coastal and riverine marsh is clearly revealed by the appearance of large intakes on Morfa Dyffryn in particular (areas 10 and 11, and part of 14). Competition for upland grazing resulting from the expansion of freehold properties, with all its costly litigation concerning appurtenant rights of pasture on the commons, may have motivated many tenants to cast their eyes in the direction of these marshes in order to obtain unspectacular but profitable gains of land in a less controversial area. With the most favourable pastures and potential arable soils already occupied (roughly, areas 1 and 15, along the lower hill slopes) expansion from the medieval bases could have proceeded in either of these directions (uplands or marsh) and it is abundantly clear that available techniques were too unsophisticated to permit large-scale marsh reclamation.

Where documentary evidence is available, it is clear that colonization of the moorland fringe was directed from existing farm holdings (see also section 8.2 below), whose limits were extended in an irregular manner on to the commons, thus providing a marked contrast with geometrical field



patterns associated with the implementation of 19<sup>th</sup> century Parliamentary Enclosure Awards (upland areas 2 and 16 for example). A typical example can be seen on the lower slopes of Mynydd Llanbedr, at SH 620274 around Cae'r Cynog (area 16, but they exist in patches right down the area).

Unfortunately we do not have any data for the relative percentages of tenanted farms in Ardudwy in 1592, but elsewhere in Merioneth (particularly in Ystumanner) it is clear that where the percentage of tenanted land was high, the average size of encroachment plots increased (see also below).

At the same time there was a certain amount of dispersion of settlement and definite indications that some new homesteads were being built on recently-enclosed commons, (see Cae'r Cynog above). However, recorded examples of squatter settlement of this period are remarkably few and their distribution quite haphazard.

Early medieval settlement had been concentrated on the small scattered areas of well-drained soils on the lower slopes (see above and below, section 8.2.2) and subsequent expansion of township communities radiated from these zones. The product of this activity was a new moorland edge, a 'crenellated margin of occupation' (Thomas, 1967b) whose precise course and position depended on a whole complex of interacting factors. These included the tenurial history of encroachable land (since properties associated with Crown Leases attracted more prominent freeholders eager to carve out large enclosures), soil quality and vegetation and the role of altitude.

The only substantial estates in post-medieval period were at Maes-y-neuadd, Glyn Cywarch and Corsygedol (for example, Griffith Vaughan of Corsygedol purchased 20 parcels of 'ffridd' amounting to 533 acres in 1595, land which had passed through various hands since being granted by the Crown 20 years earlier).

During the Napoleonic Wars, demand for increased productivity led to a re-assessment of agricultural resources, particularly of the common lands, many of which had been eaten away over several centuries by private Acts of Parliament and illegal encroachments (Thomas, 1967). At the same time, in 1801, the Merioneth Agricultural Society founded.

The visible results of the partition of common lands among private owners in both lowlands and uplands was dramatic, since the long stone walls which seamed the *ffriddoedd* and the drainage channels which enlightened land-owners caused to be cut in embanked marshes, produced a network of large rectilinear fields which contrasted sharply with the irregular patchwork of the small older enclosures. Common land enclosed at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century included Llanfihangel-y-traethu (1806), Llandanwg (1806), Llanfair (1810), Llanbedr (1810), Llanenddwyn (1810), Llanddwywe (1810) and Llanaber 1810)

The enclosure and draining of part of Morfa Harlech (area 30) in 1789 by the Glyn Cywarch estate (area 31) meant that the burgesses of the town (Harlech, area 18) lost rights of common there. As an inevitable concomitant to these measures, rents increased rapidly and Kay (1794) observed that they doubled or even trebled.

The beneficiaries of improved techniques, enclosure, rising rents and prices were evidently not the smallholders and tenants who formed the bulk of the population, but the magnates who were enabled to entrench their position of wealth and political power. Much of the newly enclosed land was unimprovable under technological conditions then operative and in general the new farms created were out-numbered by extensions of *hafodau* and other pre-existing nuclei on the *ffriddoedd*, or of units which formed part of the pre-enclosure web of settlement. Encroachments of long standing were indeed recognised by the Commissioners as being legal, but the expansion of the agricultural area offered few possibilities for relieving population pressure, because the price and rent mechanisms operated in the interests of the large producers and great landlords against the peasantry, whose clamour for new holdings and leases made the situation worse.

At the other extreme there were those who were prepared to bear the insecurity of fluctuating agricultural prices, mortgages, leasehold problems and bad harvests. Often these families deliberately flaunted the law and set up house as squatters beyond the moorland edge, believing perhaps quite sincerely the '*ty un nos*' tradition gave them protection when in dire need. To the

many *hafodau* and *lluestau* which now became permanently occupied farmsteads were thus added a new settlement element, very similar in form and derived from similar causes, the isolated cabins with one or two small fields or gardens, cut off from the rest of the community in more senses than one.

Such epidemic outbursts of squatting and the more overt prodding of field boundaries into the commons gave the moorland edge a very sinuous and ragged outline by the 1840s and from many a Tithe map one can mentally reconstruct the emergence of the landscape by a study of settlement and field patterns along the margins of surviving areas of common.

As an example of the size of farms in 1840s, in Llanddwywe 27 were between 0-24 acres in size, 25 between 25-49, 20 between 50-99, 9 between 100-199 and 19 were larger than 200 acres.

One of the consequences of encroachment onto the commons and Crown lands in the sixteenth century was the growth of large farms as part of the estates rather than among other freeholders, and it was the landlords who gained most from Parliamentary Enclosure in the early nineteenth century, so that it is generally true that farms on the greater estates in the 1840s tended to be larger than those owned by lesser freeholders or smaller estates.

Thomas (ibid) has argued that in those parts of Arddudwy which had a particularly complex tenurial history since the medieval *gafaelion* were created, especially on the lowland margins of the vast moorland blocks, the resistance of lesser freeholders to estate building had been more effective and that these localities were still areas where smallholdings predominated.

The tithe schedules represent a source of information which is post-Enclosure and pre-railway in many areas of the Highland Zone, the effect of wartime conditions of artificially high grain prices is still much in evidence right up to the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. Nevertheless, some farms on reclaimed marsh show very distinctive field patterns and hence farm boundaries which might lead one to describe them as a new morphological type within that group of holdings where pasture was the over-riding feature of land use.

The whole structure, economy and related social attitudes of the estate system had become deeply ingrained not only in the minds of the people, but also in the landscape, and one is constantly aware of looking at farmsteads that are usually at least a hundred and seventy years old, and at field boundaries that derive basically from the sixteenth century, if not earlier.

In 1840s, according to the Tithe Estate maps the largest farm in the county comprised the 1,425 acres of Graig isaf, Graig uchaf and Graig Fforchog in Cwm Nantcol (area 17 but extending into area 16) leased by William Ormsby-Gore to Morris Jones & Robert Owen. This is an example of another feature of compact gentry estates; the demesne was kept on hand, while other farmsteads were let to individual tenants and, occasionally, even the demesne was tenanted, as at Corsygedol.

From the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards there is evidence of *hendrefi* and *hafodydd* not only as kinds of dwellings but as particular places with specific names. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *hendre* and *hafod* names occur frequently in records; *hafod* names occur much more frequently than *hendre* names, which is to be expected because the latter, being well established holdings, were less prone to be subjects of litigation than were *hafodydd* which were evolving as holdings on the edge of open moorland, and not apparently without aggression and strife. It seems fairly clear from instances noted above that by this time, if not before, the places bearing *hafod* names are, like the *hendre*, distinct places which are owned and let, and it may be that some were already separate from the *hendrefi*.

Edward Llwyd in his Parochialia (1699) notes several *hendrefi* and *hafodydd* in Meirionnydd, listing for example 'Hendre' in Llanfihangel-y-traethau, as being among 'Y Tai Kyvrivol' or 'The Chief Houses' in the county, and 'Hafod y wern' in Llanfihangel-y-traethau amongst 'other houses'. It is clear that the *hafodydd* named by him were separate properties and not the upland appendages of lower-lying farms. In short, in many cases the *hafod* had become a separate farm, although not in all cases.

While it would seem that some *hafodydd* were already distinctive holdings even in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and that the process was well forward by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it is clear that other *hafodydd* continued to be used as centres to tend the use of the upland pastures in summer until the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; several of the travellers in Wales refer to it. The fullest and best-known description is that given by Thomas Pennant and relates to the Snowdon massif. He recorded also (1773) how the owner of Cwm Bychan ‘distributes his hinds among the Hafotys, or summer dairy houses, for the conveniency of attending his herds and flocks.

It is clear that the practice of maintaining a *hafod* and migrating to it for the summer grazing came to an end at different times in different areas, and also that the evolution of some of the *hafodydd* into separate, and eventually independent, farms proceeded at different rates from, at the latest, the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards and probably from an earlier date. It is clear also that not all *hafodydd* became separate farms and it is more than likely that many *hafodydd*, when they became separate holdings, dropped the name *hafod* or *hafoty* and took other names.

The vertical distribution of *hendre* and *hafod/hafoty* names in the area is significant. The *hendre/hendy* names lie, in general, below 180m (Hendre-waelod in Cwm Nantcol is perhaps the highest), while the *hafod/hafoty* and *ffridd* names lie predominantly above 200m. Another occurrence which is worth noting briefly is that of the name *Meifod*. This could mean ‘May dwelling’ or it could mean ‘middle dwelling’ between a *hendre* and a *hafod*. There is a pair of farms so named – Meifod-ucha (72 acres) and Meifod-isa (73 acres) just north of Cors-y-gedol on the middle hill slopes. Their location is consistent with their being an early summer, or middle, station between winter and summer dwellings but the evidence is very scanty.

A particularly significant characteristic of the upland agricultural landscapes of Arddudwy is the detached field barn, or *beudy*, which appear in considerable numbers in association with later post-medieval upland farms such as Gilfach Goch (area 15), with others of identical form at a greater distance (e.g. near Rhydgaed isaf (SH590313). Typically they are built end-on to the hill slope, and the lower part, accessed by a doorway at the lower end, was used to over-winter cattle, while hay and fodder was stored on an upper level access from the opposite gable end. Although these have not been studied or closely-dated they would appear to be late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date (at the earliest) and although some remain in use many of them are now in a ruinous condition, particularly in the more remote locations. This use of outfield barns is particularly characteristic of the Meirionydd area in general, and contrasts with many similar upland areas in Caernarfonshire.

The area has very characteristic ‘traditional’ field walls, most of which are of some form of dry-stone construction. In some areas (for example, 13 and 25) much of the current field pattern is probably prehistoric in origin. Many of the field boundaries appear as low rubble banks, now slightly spread, and are in association with enclosed hut group settlements. Many of these have later stone walls built on top and are still in use, around Bron-y-foel (area 7) and Byrlysg (area 13) for example, while others are relict features. Many of these ‘prehistoric’ boundaries are of orthostatic construction in the foundation, at least in part and particularly distinctive of the mid-upland, sea-facing hill slopes. Their distribution does seem to mirror that of the hut group and curvilinear settlements and none so far observed are in areas away from such sites.

There are very few earthen banks in the area, and no *cloddiau* in the Llyn tradition, and those there are to be found in lowland settings, although many of the earlier boundaries are now quite overgrown and do have this appearance. Due to their continued use over centuries many appear now as terraces or lynchets, with the ground surface on the upper slope side often 2-3 feet above the ground level on the lower side. These boundaries have a distinctive curvilinear pattern in plan, which often follow the grain of the land, which readily marks them out from later boundaries which are principally straight often paying little or no heed to their landscape setting (for example area 02). They are still recorded as ‘wandering walls’ following Bowen and Gresham’s description (1967).

Later (post-medieval) boundaries are again typically dry-stone in construction, are to be found in a bewildering variety of local styles across the landscape, probably marking both chronological development and local vernacular traditions. They vary from the almost-white, straight walls dividing the green fields of the lowland coastal strip (area 03) to the harsh, somewhat incongruous lines which run across the remote uplands (area 2). In between, distinctive styles of construction (particularly the use of coping stones) and technique, and their

physical location (some are built to run down slopes which are almost vertical) make these later stone walls possibly the most distinctive historic landscape feature of Ardudwy.

A regional survey of agriculture in Wales conducted in the early 1940s (Ashby and Evans, 1944) came up with a number of interesting statistics: these included the fact that the average size of holdings in Merioneth as a whole was 46.3 acres, over 56% of the land was rough grazing (the second highest county in Wales), and that 29% of the land was under cultivation (but that only 8.8% of cultivated land was used for growing crops). The uplands of Merioneth had the lowest percentage of cultivated land and the highest proportion of sheep in Wales. Also, north-west Wales in general was the area where large landowners were most prevalent and where there was a significant number of small holdings.

## **8.2 Settlement**

### **8.2.1 *Non-nucleated settlements***

Buildings (with the exception of churches) begin to register in the history of the area from the sub-medieval period (especially later 16<sup>th</sup> century) onwards. The area is comparatively rich in sub-medieval houses, including substantial gentry estates (including Cors y Gedol (1576 - area 9) and Egryn (area 1 – recently dated 1496, the earliest dated house in Ardudwy (Smith, 2001, 424)), as well as more modestly sized farm-houses (Uwchlaw'r coed, Cwm Bychan - area 28) and Lasynys-fach (area 30). This chronology reflects late medieval and Tudor social changes associated with the formation of small estates, and the establishment of a class of tenants holding land on long leases.

By the accession of Elizabeth I the open hall (such as that at Egryn) was beginning to lose favour amongst the middle ranks of Merioneth society and a plan form appears in the sixteenth century that is difficult to relate to the locally common types of medieval hall houses. This was the two-unit, end-chimney, direct-entry house where the ground floor consists of a large room heated by a fireplace and separate from a parlour and store-room by a cross-passage, with two chambers on the first floor. This is by far the commonest sub-medieval type in western Merioneth (Smith, 2001, 432), and the earliest known example (dated by inscription) is Uwchlaw'r-coed – area 28): there are many other undated examples such as Brynrodyn. These houses are relatively small, and for this reason they are often found incorporated in what has been described as the 'unit system' where a second complete house has been added to the first.

Many of the relict archaeological remains (long huts and platform sites particularly) which survive in marginal, upland areas (areas 6, 7 and 26 for example) are probably the sites of contemporary, poorer dwellings.

The known homes of the 'Patrons of the Bards' in the post-medieval period also give a flavour of which were the houses of the relatively well-off. From north to south these have been identified (Bowen, 1971) Plas (probably Llandecwyn), Maesyneuadd, Glyn (Cywarch), Cwmbychan, Gerddibluog, Tyddynfelin, Cae-nest, Talwrn, Maesygarneidd, Taltreuddyn, Corsygedol, Hendrefechan, Egryn and Llwyn-du.

Preliminary impressions suggest that most farmsteads were established early as there is a high preponderance of early (pre 19<sup>th</sup> century in this context) buildings including farm-buildings. Amongst these are Caerwch (SH636369), Cefnfilltir (SH 586337) and Hendre Fechan, Tal-y-bont (SH595212). Llandwywe farm, with its complex of well-preserved agricultural buildings (including barn, cart shed, beudy and potato clamp, next to the church on the main road (area 14) is a remarkable survival. There is also an important series of later, 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, medium sized and even large farms (see above section 8.1), many of which may be either re-builds or later established farmsteads (e.g. at less-favoured locations). A particularly striking example of a 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century farm which is architecturally distinct with no obvious parallels is Penrallt (area 15, just east of Llanbedr): it has a huge and imposing stableyard approached through a grand gateway

These larger farms, by and large, are set in lowland contexts, on lower hill slopes facing the sea or in secluded valleys. In addition, the area is rich in well-preserved small farms of a distinctive

'upland' character, many of which have been listed. Some of the finest examples include Argoed (a small unit-type farmstead with a fine collection of outbuildings set around an irregular yard - area 25), Drws-yr-ymlid (dated 1735 onwards, again with a small collection of outbuildings including pigsty, brewhouse and fowl house - area 25 again), Merthyr (originally a single-storey farmhouse with end-on extensions and a small, informal yard - also area 25), Foel (a simple, small farmhouse with windows only in the front and no outbuildings) and Nant Pasgan mawr and bach (two 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century small isolated farmsteads in the top of area 22).

There are some exceptions to the idea of early-established farms: for example, there is a series of 19<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads set out along the road on Morfa Harlech (Pen-y-waen, Ty'n-yr-acrau, Ty'n-y-morfa, Ty-canol and so on) which demonstrate late settlement of improved coastal lands. There are also several 'model estate' farms dating from the same century, again on the lower, more fertile land, purpose-built with large houses and usually set around some form of courtyard: Felinrhyd-fawr on the roadside in area 5 and particularly Plas y Bryn, just outside Llanbedr - area 14 are good examples. The latter, a part of the Cors y Gedol estate still, has an impressive range of agricultural buildings including a circular dove-cot, cowhouses and a barn with magnificent cast iron pillars).

There are very few small-holdings in the area: a rare example is the listed farm Gilfach goch (SH587326), which dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, just above Llanfair (area 15). There are, in addition a small number of wayside cottages, but the growth of several villages in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see below) could to some extent represent the replacement of earlier, poorer dwellings (a shift from scattered settlement to villages being a well-known 19<sup>th</sup> century pattern).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the emphasis on building appears to have shifted in favour of, first, a village-based followed by a coastal/leisure economy, still largely based around the 19<sup>th</sup> century village nuclei (see next section). This pattern is still very much in evidence today.

### **8.2.2 Nucleated settlements**

Although, as we have seen, much of the area is characterised by the scattered settlement of farming, nucleated settlements are also a distinctive element of the historic landscape. Almost without exception, all the nucleated settlements lie on the lower, sea-facing slopes alongside the main (modern A496) north-south road. The one exception is the small settlement of Pentre Gwynfryn, east of Llanbedr and partway along the road to Cwm Nantcol and Cwm Bychan, for which a 'medieval origin' is claimed in the Atlas Meirionnydd (Bowen, 1971).

Original (and presumably early) 'Celtic' church dedications are to be found associated with Llandecwyn (now an isolated church in area 22), Llandanwg (now surrounded by a 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century 'holiday' settlement - area 4), Llanenddwyn (now almost isolated below Dyffryn Ardudwy - area 14) and Llanddwywe (also almost isolated below Cors y Gedol in area 8). Other medieval dedications include Llanfihangel-y-traethu (on the former island of Ynys, area 19) and Llanbedr (still a substantial nucleated settlement, but with no medieval domestic buildings - area 18). With the exception of Llandecwyn, all of these are on the low-lying coastal strip, within easy access of the sea. Llandecwyn probably lies on an early trackway which led up from the sea (Traeth Bach, at the mouth of the Afon Dwyrdd) and across the mountains to Trawsfynydd (or earlier, possibly to Tomen y Mur).

The single, truly nucleated medieval settlement in Ardudwy was Harlech (area 24, see below): however, even here the ancient origins of the town have left no real trace beyond the castle walls, although Speeds' drawing of 1610 suggests the original town was probably laid out along Stryd Fawr and up Pen Dref. While there are some 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings here, the vast majority are 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in date, and the layout of the town and its building stock clearly reflect both the precipitous location of the town on a steep slope, and the expansion of the town following the coming of the railways and road improvements in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The only other settlement which appears to have a pre-19<sup>th</sup> century core is Llanfair (area 23). Here, the church (13<sup>th</sup> century in origin but heavily restored in 1857) is surrounded by an irregular cluster of probable 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings, while the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century additions straggle out across the hillside above to the north.

All the other nucleated settlements, from small groupings of buildings, often no more than extended farmsteads such as Glan-y-wern near Glyn Cywarch, through sizeable villages such as Ynys, Talsarnau, Llanfair and Tal-y-bont to the largest villages (Llanbedr and Dyffryn Ardudwy/Coed Ystumgwern) appear to have grown up along the main road (but interestingly not the railway) during the nineteenth century. As has already been noted, this reflects the shift in emphasis at this time in favour of, first, a village-based followed by a coastal/leisure economy, still largely based around the nineteenth century village nuclei.

All these settlements have a mixed artisan/holiday architectural character, reflected in the incidence of chapels and of terraced houses as evidence of the former (for instance in Dyffryn Ardudwy on the eastern side of the road - area 12), and taller terraces and bungalows for the latter (parts of Harlech and Llandanwg/Llanfair - areas 24 and 4). The development of the 'holiday' economy and its associated buildings can be charted through several distinct phases and types e.g. private villas, seaside holidays, retirement bungalows, caravans.

Other nucleations are smaller clusters, perhaps established around isolated rural chapels. The smallest nucleations are the 'unit system' farmsteads, which are a significant component of this area: several examples have already been documented (e.g. Argoed, Tyddyn y felin and Llanfair Isaf).

A strong arts and crafts tradition in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century continued an impressive formulation of an architecture of stone: this is seen at its best in the series of houses on the southern edge of Harlech (area 24) associated with a cosmopolitan group of artists etc centred on the figure of A. Davidson, whose home subsequently became the nucleus of Coleg Harlech.

Finally, the new nucleated settlements of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century are in all-to-conspicuous evidence all along the coastline from Tal-y-bont down to Llanaber in the form of vast, regulated static caravan sites (area 3). These make few concessions to local landscape character and have led to some extremely odd juxtapositions of traditional (field walls and stone farm buildings) and modern (caravans, fish and chip shops and entertainment complexes).

### 8.2.3 *Building types and material*

There is a distinctive agricultural economy evident in the pattern of building in Ardudwy. In the upland areas, many farms (e.g. Argoed and Drws yr Ymlid, both area 15; Cefnfilltir, area 7 - see above), are characterised by an informal grouping of buildings in proximity to the house (e.g. Llecheiddor Isaf, area 7) and sometimes, though not often, in-line with it (e.g. Tyddyn Sion Wyn (area 25), Caerwch (area 22) and Llidiart Garw (area 25)). Often, a little further away, there is a detached field *beudy* (Gilfach Goch (area 15) with others of identical form at a greater distance (e.g. near Rhydgaled isaf (SH590313), although many of these are now in a ruinous condition, particularly in the more remote locations.

Ruined structures (e.g. at SH647317 in Cwm Bychan) may be traces of an earlier agricultural economy involving the *hafod* system of seasonal transhumance. The general upper altitudinal limit for farms today is around 200m, and there are none beyond 300m. However, there are recorded deserted rural settlement sites at heights of up to 400m (for example on the lower slopes of ) which have been interpreted as seasonal dwellings (Kelly, 1982).

There are some tighter groupings of farm-buildings in both upland and lowland settings. Buildings for stock, and especially the field cow-house, predominate (see above), but the incidence of threshing barns traces a mixed agriculture. Open-sided hay-barns are also characteristic, mainly in the lower lying areas (for example Felinrhyd fawr - area 5; and Plas y Bryn - area 14) and associated with 19<sup>th</sup> century improved agriculture.

Although there is 'archaeological' evidence for a prior tradition of framing (e.g. the early building at Egryn (area 1), a cruck-framed barn at Coed mawr (area 15), and the high standards of internal carpentry in sub-medieval houses generally), the dominant character of the area is given by the use of stone. Nuances in its use are to be seen especially in the farm buildings, which vary from dry-stone wall construction (mainly upland farms such as Nant Pasgan-mawr), to mortared walls (lowland farms such as Freedman Dolmygliw - near Llanbedr, area 15): this variety is partly connected with the chronology, but also relates to socio-economic factors.

There is considerable variety within each, relating primarily to the quality and character of the locally-available stone.

Amongst the dwellings, the early development of a compact storeyed house stands out (dating from the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards), although there are some examples of ground floor open halls (e.g. Egryn - area 1). Typically, the open hall was superseded by the storeyed end-chimney house, typical of the Snowdonia area (Smith 1985). The earliest dated example of the prevalent 2-unit storeyed house is Uwchlwr coed (1585 - area 7). Others include Bron y foel isaf (also area 7), Cwm Bychan (area 28), Penarth (area 15), Coed mawr (also area 15), Plas Llandecwyn (area 22), Crafnant (area 28) and Llwyn Hwlcyn (which also has an impressive array of outbuildings which includes a threshing barn, cowhouse, stable and cartshed - area 15). These 'gentry-type' houses appear in a surprisingly wide range of geographical locations (upland and lowland) suggesting small estates in scattered locations in the post-medieval period: this might be supported by the relative absence of small holdings on the upland fringes (a landscape which is very different, again, from parts of Caernarfonshire). It has been suggested (by Peter Smith, 2001) that the relatively small size of this house type may be connected with the numbers of unit-system dwellings in this area (see below). This house type readily assimilated the simplified Georgian form characteristic of much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps the most noticeable development being a tendency towards a more compact plan.

The introduction of the Georgian traditional to the regional vernacular tradition from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards (see section 8.2.1 above) had considerable impact on the appearance of the buildings. This is probably most easily recognised in the size and type of windows which vary, again according partly to chronology, but partly to location. For example, late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century lowland farms such as Caerwych (area 22) are two-storeyed, have substantial 'Georgian' sash windows and are of two or even three bays. Upland farms, on the other hand (again probably 19<sup>th</sup> century in the main) are often single-story, sometimes with projecting first floor dormer windows (such as Nant Pasgan-mawr, further up area 22) or alternatively small windows (such as Llecheiddor Isaf (area 7).

Roofs are generally slate, but there is a distinction between graded, random and often bedded slate roofs, and the more regular machine-cut slates. Many farm-buildings are now roofed in tin sheet (presumably replacing slate or thatch) and its red colour is a distinctive element in the landscape, especially amongst the smaller, upland farmsteads (e.g. Argoed).

One point of interest is the almost complete lack of the use of brick as a building material: with the exception of a few houses in Harlech and Llanbedr (including the present youth hostel), all of the building stock of the area is built of stone, although some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings on Morfa Harlech for instance (e.g. Tyn' y acrau - area 30) may be of brick-build underneath their render. There is no use of brick in the upland parts of the area, and no use has been made of the usually-ubiquitous Victorian yellow-brick associated with the coming of the railways.

### **8.3 Relict archaeology**

#### **8.3.1 *The coastal plain***

Much of Ardwyl consists of upland (above c. 240m) or hill slopes marginal to the upland. The lowland area comprises only the coastal plain, narrow at the south (area 3) but broadening to the north in Morfa Dyffryn (area 10 and 11) and Morfa Harlech (areas 30 and 32). These coastal plains are very low-lying and level and the lowest parts have a peat cover. They represent the fringe of a coastline drowned by rising sea-levels during the post-glacial period. The peat cover, with tree stumps of a 'drowned forest' and an underlying salt-marsh clay are exposed occasionally in the intertidal zone of the eroding coast edge. The clay has produced red deer antler and deer and cattle bones that are as yet undated (Kelly 1982) but they can be compared finds from similar deposits studied in some detail at Ynyslas and Borth, further to the south of Cardigan Bay. There, intertidal peats are exposed for some 5km along the shore. They appear as outcrops on the beach from beneath the adjoining Borth raised bog, under which they must extend, and consist of fen, alder carr and forest beds overlying salt marsh clay (Heyworth and Kidson 1982, 102). Radiocarbon dates give a date of c. 6000 BP for the underlying salt marsh and dates of c. 5400 BP to 3900 BP, at its lowest, for the forest bed (*ibid.*). A number of casual archaeological finds have been made from these peats, including a mesolithic flint pick, flint

flakes, an antler tool and a hearth which produced a date of *c.* 4000 BP from the surrounding peat (Sambrook and Williams 1996, 26) as well as bones of red deer and *bos primigenius* (wild cattle).

In Ardudwy, the only humanly worked artefact found is a perforated antler hammer, from Mochras Island (Guilbert 1981), but its exact findspot is unknown. A timber trackway in the intertidal area at Llanaber has been investigated and this produced radiocarbon dates in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. A nearby tree stump, however, produced a date within the Roman period (Musson *et al* 1989). The inundation of the coast created a marshland environment and this would have been little used before large scale drainage in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Taking into account the finds from the peat exposed in the intertidal fringe here and by comparison with those from wetland environments from elsewhere in Wales and England, such as the south Glamorgan and Somerset levels, the peat cover in Ardudwy is likely to preserve an important buried archaeological landscape, covering several millennia. This will include organic items rarely preserved elsewhere inland, such as animal remains and timber jetties, platforms and trackways.

### 8.3.2 *The inland zone*

Finds of flint and stone tools provide a useful pointer to areas of earlier prehistoric activity during the mesolithic and neolithic periods. Flint occurs occasionally in fluvio-glacial clay but is most accessible where it is eroded out of such deposits at the coast edge. Such deposits are directly exposed in Ardudwy from Mochras to Llandanwg, but there are some sea-deposited gravel deposits along much of the coast. Despite the availability of raw material, flint finds are very few in Ardudwy, the only sizeable collection (now lost) reported from Mochras Island (Ffoulkes 1852, 103) and a single find from Llanaber (GAT SMR). To some extent this is due to the lack of cultivated land in the area, so that exposures are few, and partly due to the loss of the early prehistoric coast edge, where the majority of activity would have been, because of rising sea-levels.

Stray finds of neolithic stone axes can also help to show wider exploitation of the inland areas but there are only two from Ardudwy, one from Talsarnau and one from Llanbedr (GAT SMR). The evidence for use of the upland interior before, or even after, the establishment of the first farming communities takes the form of a few flint tools and a radiocarbon date deriving from activity found beneath structures of a settlement of the second half of the first millennium BC at Moel y Gerddi, Harlech (Kelly 1988 - area 26). Pollen studies of valley peats near to Moel y Gerddi also hinted at some mesolithic activity but more certainly of wider human interference in the form of woodland decline and the presence of plants of pasture during the Neolithic period, from *c.* 5140bp (about 4000BC, calibrated) (Chambers and Price 1988).

Ardudwy has a remarkable and well-preserved group of chambered tombs of the early neolithic period, all within an area of some eight miles in extent, suggesting a single population group, made up of several related local communities. These seem to be focussed on rivers and perhaps originally on harbour inlets, now lost to coastal erosion or silting. One outlying tomb, at Gwern Einion to the north, is likely to be focussed on the Afon Artro. To the south are five tombs, around the Afon Ysgethin. Despite the proximity of these tombs they vary considerably in style. Excavations at Dyffryn Ardudwy demonstrated changes in style of building and a long period of use, continuing into the second millennium BC (Powell 1963). There is evidence that the earliest occupation was influenced by western, Atlantic culture with similarities to tombs on the Llŷn peninsula, Anglesey and Ireland, while there were later influences from mainland Britain (Lynch 1969, 124-5).

No settlement remains of this period have yet been found but the immediate vicinity of the tombs has generally been obscured by later cultivation. However, these areas often retain much potential, particularly around the tomb at Dyffryn Ardudwy where deep cultivation terraces are likely to mask neolithic cultivation or settlement remains and around the Carneddau Hengwm, in an uncultivated area where survival may be more extensive, and research is currently under way (Johnson and Roberts 2001 - area 2).

In contrast to the neolithic period, there is a much greater range of evidence of occupation during the second millennium BC, the early and middle Bronze Age, with numerous funerary and ritual monuments, including 42 burial mounds of a variety of styles, 19 standing stones and 4 stone



circles. Some of the burial mounds are very large cairns on prominent isolated summits. The remainder fall into two geographical groups. The first is in the upland around Moel Goedog (principally area 25), the second in upland around Mynydd Egryn (principally area 2). Both areas have very intense relict archaeology with a variety of funerary monuments as well as areas of settlement and fields. It seems significant that both areas adjoin major natural routes and it may be that both are specialised funerary centres somewhat distant from the main areas of population.

The Moel Goedog group appears to be deliberately approached along a track defined by standing stones, possibly originally an 'avenue' which leads between two ring cairns, one of which has produced evidence of much ceremonial as well as funerary activity and a range of dates between about 2000-1750BC (Lynch 1984). The Mynydd Egryn group is traversed by a trackway, alongside which are several monuments that seem closely related to the track, including two large embanked stone circles, a small stone circle, Cerrig Arthur, and a ring cairn or robbed cairn or ring cairn at the shoulder of the pass over to Dyffryn Mawddach, where it has a very obvious relation to the trackway. Neither of these areas is in the most agriculturally favourable parts of Ardudwy and for this reason an unparalleled wealth of upstanding relict archaeology survives.

Environmental study has shown that these uplands had seen a significant phase of woodland clearance during the second millennium BC (Chambers and Price 1988). The woodland soils would have been initially quite fertile and the clearance can be inferred to mean quite intensive use of the uplands for pasture. Numerous scattered, unenclosed stone-walled round house settlements, or isolated round houses survive in these uplands, none excavated, and some may be of bronze age date. Excavations of later settlements have suggested that houses in this phase would probably have been of timber construction and therefore their remains would be difficult to identify (Kelly 1988).

The bronze age clearance of the uplands continued into the middle of the first millennium BC, when a deteriorating climate or simply unsustainable agriculture on thin soils led to the development of blanket peat as demonstrated at the settlements of Erw-wen and Moel y Gerddi (Kelly 1988). These upland settlements seem to have been mainly pastoral but with some evidence of cultivation. However, there were other economic considerations for use of the uplands at this time, as shown by the production of iron from bog ore at the scattered settlement of Crawswellt in the upland at Trawsfynydd not far to the east (Crew 1998).

The main focus of settlement in this later period was on the fringes of the upland, on the better-drained, west-facing hill slopes with numerous settlements of various forms surviving where modern agriculture has not been too intensive. Population was dense enough to have some considerable social organisation, focussed on several small hill forts at Moel Goedog, Clogwyn Arllef, Byrllysg, Craig y Dinas, Pen y Dinas, Castell and Dinas Oleu (Bowen and Gresham 1967). These all overlook lower slopes, well-used for agriculture and in which are numerous remains of round house settlement. The settlements at Erw Wen and Moel y Gerddi were single, concentric enclosed round houses and there are also remains of a range of sub-circular settlements that are not unique to Ardudwy but are locally typical. Some are quite substantially banked and in semi-defensive positions, as at Erw Wen, Llandanwg and Ceunant Egryn, Llanaber. There is some evidence that this settlement style continued from bronze age styles. It evolved into more complex groups of structures, incorporating strongly built stone-walled buildings of different shapes and sizes for different purposes. The main later style of settlement was of more nucleated groups of houses in compact enclosed or unenclosed homesteads of which there are some 25 surviving in Ardudwy. The majority of them still retain a mainly curvilinear shape that can be seen as developed from an original circular layout, for instance at Moel y Glo, Llandecwyn and Muriau Gwyddelod, Llanfair.

The nucleated enclosed and unenclosed hut settlements are to be found all along the west-facing margins of the upland of Ardudwy (concentrated, but not exclusively, in areas 7, 25 and 26). Close to many of them are remains of strongly terraced field systems that indicate intensive arable cultivation, and which give the current landscape much of its distinctive local character. Two of the best preserved areas of such fields are around Cors-y-gedol, Dyffryn Ardudwy (area 9), where one of the associated settlements has been excavated and shown to be of the Romano-British period (Griffiths 1958) and Mynydd Egryn, Llanaber (De Lewandowicz 1981- area 2). This, and comparison with similar excavated examples in north-west Wales shows that the bulk of the relict archaeological landscape represented by these settlements and fields is of the Romano-British period with underlying earlier elements. The same settlement areas were also

often re-used in the medieval period but generally retained the outlines of the Romano-British enclosures or field patterns.

Most of upland Ardudwy, over c. 240m OD had no enclosed round house settlements in the Romano-British period although there are remains of 15 groups of unenclosed round houses and some 20 examples of isolated round houses (Smith 1999), without evidence of cultivation. These can be expected to have been mainly pastoral settlements exploiting what by now were impoverished moorland, much as today. Woodland appears to have recovered to some extent in the later first millennium BC following abandonment of the settlement at Moel y Gerddi, although it declined again in the Romano-British period (Chambers and Price 1988, 99). Some of these settlements may have been seasonally occupied in association with grazing patterns, and these upland round houses are noticeably smaller than those of the lowland settlements (see also section 8.1). This, and the evidence of earlier phases of timber-built houses demonstrated by excavation at Moel y Gerddi shows that the relict archaeology of Ardudwy, represented visually mainly by stone-built structures such as cairns, houses and fields is just the hard outline of a much more intensively occupied landscape.

#### **8.4 Parks and gardens**

There are only two parks and gardens of particular note in the study area, but both are important and they are of similar age and associated with the major families of the area. Cors-y-Gedol is a Vaughan, later Mostyn, house of the sixteenth century with a seventeenth-century gatehouse, situated near the junction of cultivated land with the open hillside; it retains large areas of ancient woodland and the remnants of a probably contemporary garden, overlaid by later features. Glyn Cywarch is a seventeenth-century house built by the Wynn family, whose descendant, Lord Harlech, is the present owner; it too has a gatehouse and the garden areas close to the house probably largely reflect the original layout.

Both gardens are included in the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales Part 1: Parks and Gardens, Glyn Cywarch at grade II\* and Cors-y-Gedol at grade II. The latter grade reflects the state of preservation rather than the importance of the site, which is certainly at least equal with Glyn Cywarch.

#### **8.5 Industrial**

Ardudwy has remarkably little in the way of an industrial archaeological heritage. There has been very little industrial activity in the past which has left a mark on the landscape. Probably the most significant in landscape terms are the Hafoty manganese mines (area 2), but there are also fairly extensive workings around Llyn Eiddew-mawr (area 33 and picture) and further north, on the east slopes of Y Gyrn. There are also the remains of shafts and levels above Coed Crafnant (area 28), and on the lower, northern slopes of Moelfre (area 16) where there are the relatively extensive remains of Moelfre mine along the contour near the modern road (SH615255) and one or two other places.

There are several slate quarries at the bottom of the sea-facing cliffs inland south of Llanfair, including Llanfair, Coed y Llechau, Pantgwyn, Byrlysg and Byrdir, while further inland are the remains of Graig Uchaf quarry. Llanfair was a moderate-sized, almost totally underground working opened in the 1860s. It closed after a few years, re-opened early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and finally closed during World War I. It was used as an explosives store in World War II, and opened as a visitor centre in the 1960s. Coed y Llechau, east of Llanbedr, is a hillside quarry on two levels with an incline leading down to a mill: it has been much disturbed by later stone quarrying, though the mill is in good condition. Pantgwyn and Byrdir were small underground workings, while Graig Uchaf was a tiny pit.

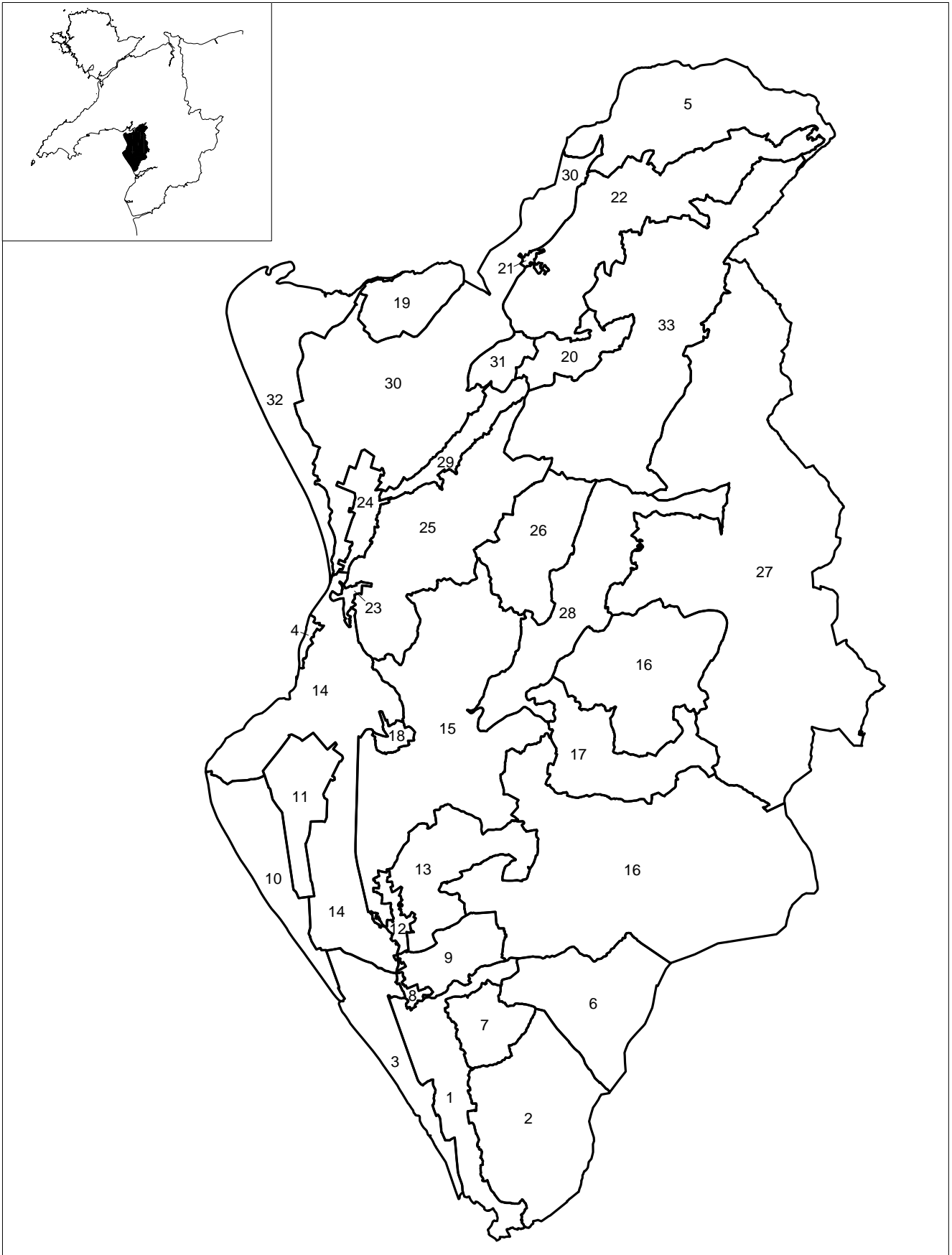
There are three further small, slate quarries in the south of the area, on the western fringes of Is Mynydd (area 2), Ffridd Olchfa and Egryn (small hillside workings) and Hendre Eirian (a small pit which produced green slate).

## 8.6 Communications

The main communication routes in the area are the A496 trunk road and the Cambrian Coastal Railway which run more or less in parallel down the entire length of the Ardudwy coastal plain. So, little has changed since Gerald of Wales travelled northwards through Ardudwy following much the same route in 1188. Other travellers who have visited and described the area include Fenton, Thomas Pennant, who was entertained 'for some days, in the style of an ancient baron' at Cors y Gedol, and who described some of the 'British antiquities' in the area and was beaten by 'the horror' of passing through Drws Ardudwy (1771, 121ff), and George Borrow.

The sea-facing hill slopes are associated with one of the principal drovers' routes, which led from the coast across the mountains to Dolgellau (and ultimately to the borders and the English markets). Traditionally cattle were gathered near Llanfair (where the Pugh family, long associated with droving, lived), and from here the herds were taken inland, heading for Bron-y-foel, and then either over Pont Scethin (there are the remains of an old inn, Ty-newydd, incongruously nearby on the lower slopes of Moelfre) and across the mountain ridge following the old coach road; or over Pont Fadog and across the mountain side and over Bwlch y Rhiwgyr (Pass of the Drovers - top of area 2), before coming down to Bontddu on the Mawddach.

The Aberystwyth and Welsh Coast Railway was authorised in 1861-2, begun in 1863 and extended from Barmouth to Porthmadog and Pwllheli in 1867 when it was renamed the Cambrian Railway. Stations were built either then or subsequently at (from south to north) Llanaber (just outside the project area), below Llanddwywe, Llanenddwyn, two stations below Llanbedr (one south of the Artro and one on the north side), Llandanwg, Harlech, below Glan-y-wern, below Talsarnau and finally Llandecwyn.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Location of character areas  
(for key see next page)

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## 9 Historic character areas

9.1 The study area has been divided into thirty three separate historic character areas as follows:

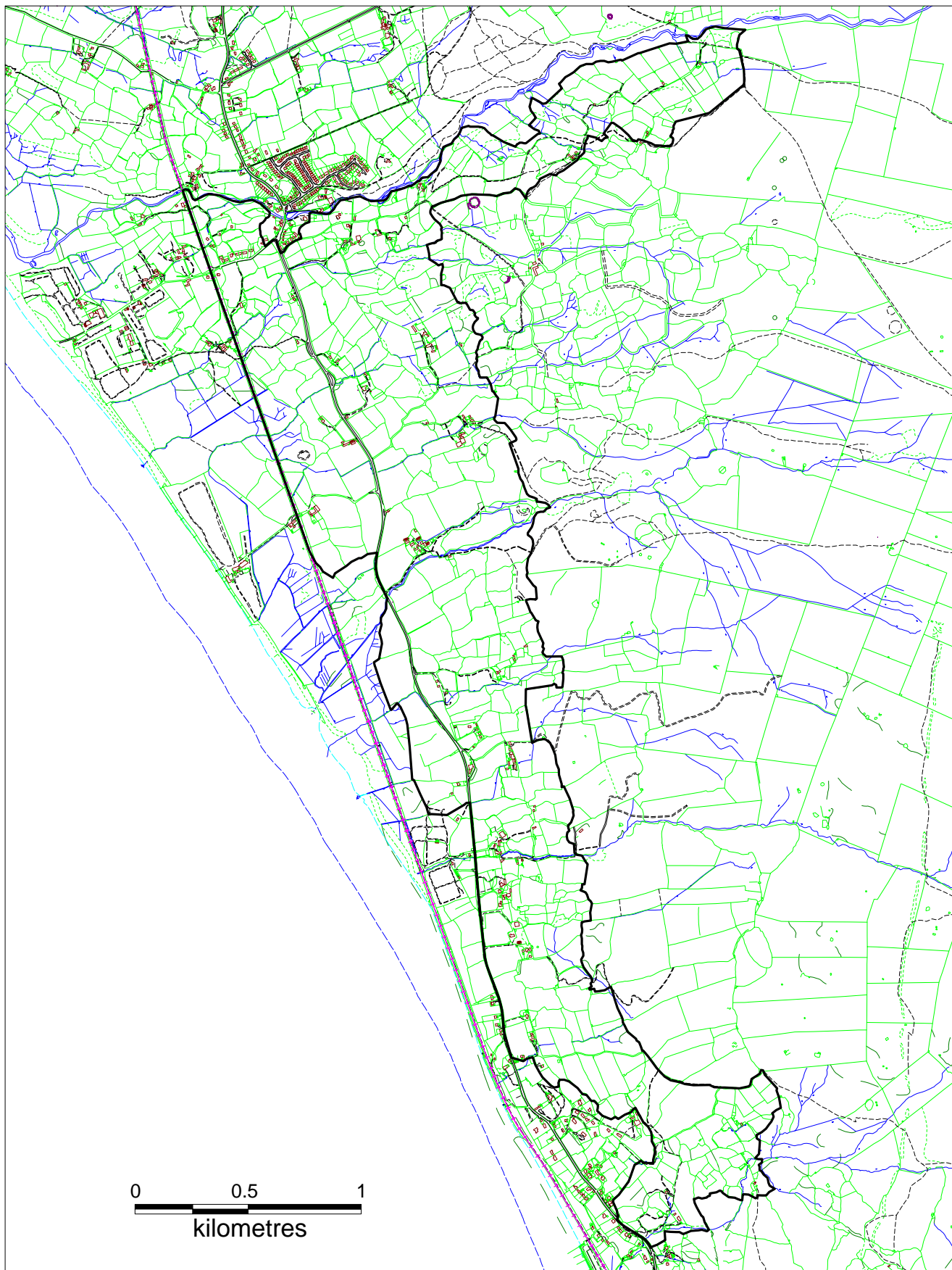
01	Fieldscape, lower hill slopes	(PRN 18234)
02	Is Mynydd & Mynydd Egryn	(PRN 18235)
03	Southern coastal strip	(PRN 18236)
04	Llandanwg	(PRN 18237)
05	Coed Felinrhyd & Moel Tecwyn	(PRN 18238)
06	Upper slopes around Llyn Erddyn	(PRN 18239)
07	Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Cae'r-llwyn	(PRN 18240)
08	Tal-y-bont	(PRN 18241)
09	Cors y Gedol	(PRN 18242)
10	Morfa Dyffryn	(PRN 18243)
11	Royal Aerospace Establishment, Llanbedr	(PRN 18244)
12	Dyffryn Ardudwy & Coed Ystumgwern	(PRN 18245)
13	Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Byrlllysg	(PRN 18246)
14	Coastal plain behind RAE Llanbedr	(PRN 18247)
15	Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Cae'r Meddyg	(PRN 18248)
16	Upper mountain slopes around Moelfre and Mynydd Llanbedr	(PRN 18249)
17	Cwm Nantcol	(PRN 18250)
18	Llanbedr	(PRN 18251)
19	Ynys Llanfihangel-y-traethu	(PRN 18252)
20	Fieldscape around Plas Uchaf	(PRN 18253)
21	Talsarnau	(PRN 18254)
22	Wooded valleys around Bryn Bwbach	(PRN 18255)
23	Llanfair	(PRN 18256)
24	Harlech	(PRN 18257)
25	Fieldscape, hill slopes above Harlech	(PRN 18258)
26	Fieldscape and woods	(PRN 18259)
27	Upper mountain slopes, Rhinogau	(PRN 18260)
28	Cwm Bychan	(PRN 18261)
29	Wooded hill slopes north of Harlech	(PRN 18262)
30	Morfa Harlech - fieldscape	(PRN 18263)
31	Glyn Cywarch	(PRN 18264)
32	Morfa Harlech - dunes	(PRN 18265)
33	Fieldscape - upper mountain slopes	(PRN 18266)

9.2 An overall location map showing the position of these areas in relation to each other is included at the beginning of this section.

9.3 Each area description has been divided into three sections following the model of earlier reports – historic background, key historic landscape characteristics and a management section.

9.4 A map showing the extent and detail of each area is located facing the description. The area is outlined with a solid, black line.

9.5 Colour plates which give an impression of the overall texture and character of each area are also included following the description: some of these are aerial photographs, but sometimes a ground level view has been more appropriate.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
01- Fieldscape, lower hill slopes

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## **01      Fieldscape, lower hill slopes                      (PRN 18234)**

### ***Historic background***

The area contains evidence for late prehistoric settlement in the form of a number of enclosed homesteads and associated enclosures. Aerial photography has shown the potential for recording further, extensive early settlement as now-ploughed out earthworks. The area is agriculturally fertile and has been extensively farmed in the past.

There are several sub-medieval (16<sup>th</sup> century onwards) houses here (e.g. Egryn, Hendre-fechan, Hengwm) which demonstrate the early establishment of large farmsteads on the better-quality land. At the southern end of the area, the place-names Hafotty and Ffridd fechan indicate expansion at some time during the post-medieval period onto the upland fringes.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*drystone walls, fieldscape, post-medieval houses, relict archaeology*

This area lies in a narrow corridor between the sea and the upper mountain slopes just north of Llanaber. It comprises the fieldscape on the fertile and improved lower hill slopes between the main A496 road and approximately the break of slope where the field pattern changes as the ground becomes less fertile (area 02).

The overwhelming historic landscape characteristics of this area are the massive drystone field walls which carve up the landscape into fairly large, regular fields. The contrast between the almost-white walls and the green pasture is particularly striking. Most of these are 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. However, towards the upper part of the area in particular many of the fields here are irregular in shape, size and plan and are generally small. They are defined by dry stone walls in a variety of construction techniques. The curvilinear pattern of many of them betray their origins in the prehistoric period, and there are many well-preserved (as well as some ploughed-out) prehistoric settlement sites and enclosures within this area (for example at Hendre-eirian and around Eithin-fynydd). The agricultural basis of the area is reasonably good pasture which is improved. There are a number of sheepfolds in the corners of some of the fields.

The area is also characterised by a settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, ranging in date, size and importance from 16<sup>th</sup>-century Egryn Abbey to small, 19<sup>th</sup> century upland-type farms such as Ffridd fechan. The field patterns in the south of the area, and the name Hafotty, may relate to post-16<sup>th</sup> century encroachment of the upper wastes (see above section 8.1). In fact, outside the settlement of Llanaber, all the settlement along this stretch of coastline is contained within this area.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

The conservation of the characteristic massive drystone field walls is a priority, as is the preservation of the surviving above-ground relict archaeology. The distinctive settlement pattern should also be protected. It is also important to continue to investigate buried archaeological remains as their preservation from further damage by ploughing is also a high priority.

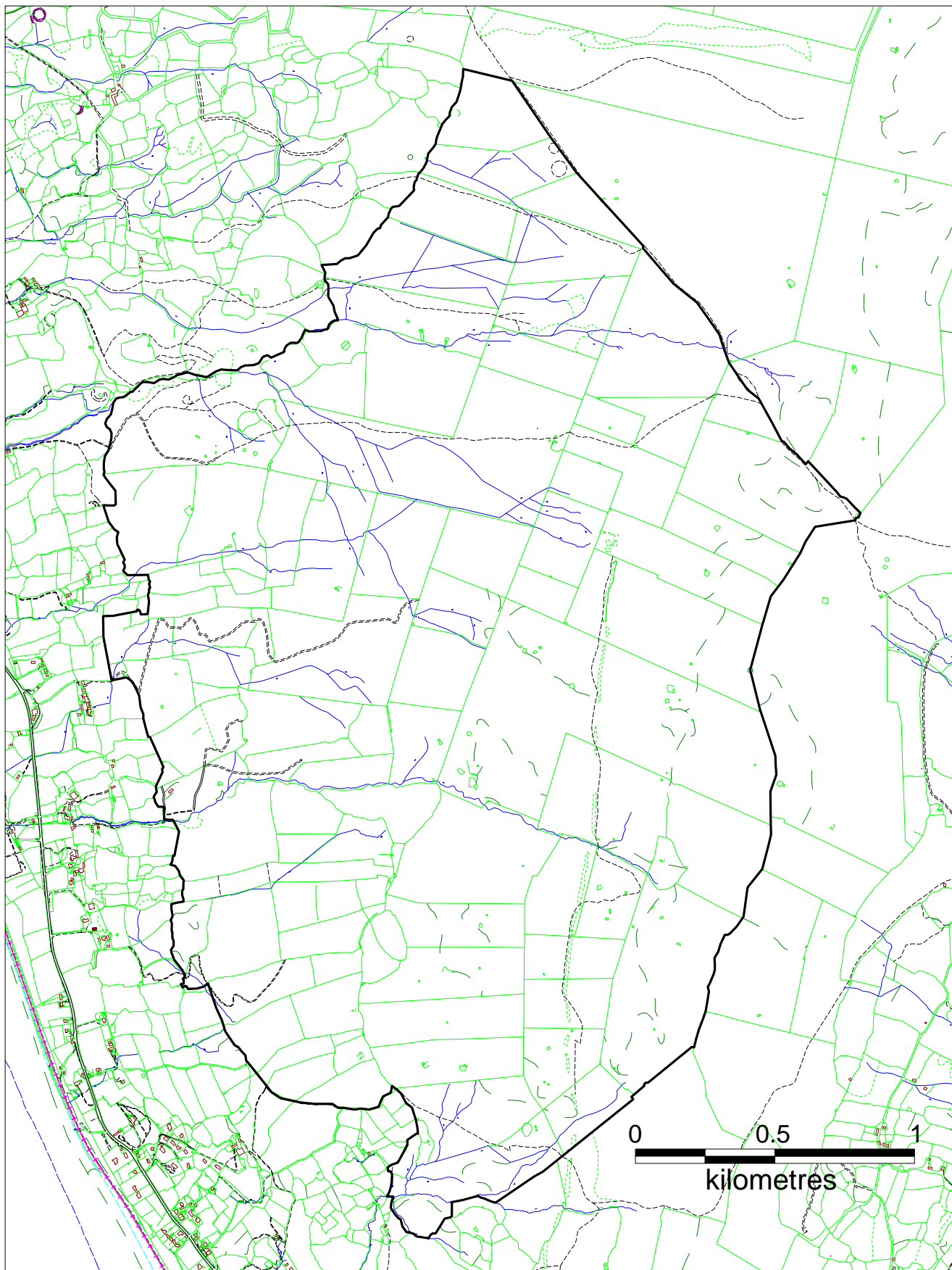
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 43 110 92 003*



Area 01      Fieldscape, lower hill slopes      (PRN 18234)

View showing the distinctive drystone field walls, straight and massive, which characterise this area on the lower hill slopes north of Llanaber: this area lies just above Pont Fadog.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
02 - Is Mynydd & Mynydd Egryn

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***Historic background***

This bleak, upland area contains several important monuments from the early neolithic period (Carneddau Hengwm). Although no domestic activity from this period has yet been found, the potential is immense (given the fact that the area remains relatively undisturbed by recent agriculture) and some work is on-going (see above, section 8.3.2). There is also considerable evidence for occupation during the second millennium BC, with an important concentration of funerary and ritual monuments on Mynydd Egryn. There is a lot of relict archaeology here with a variety of funerary monuments as well as settlement and fields of the later prehistoric period.

The extensive settlement comprising platform houses and associated enclosures, set right at the western edge of this area on the top of the slope, has been dated by De Lewandowicz to the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century and may represent encroachment at that time onto the upland fringes (see section 8.1). Otherwise there is no later settlement known from this area. Hafotty mines, further up and down to the south, are the remains of 19<sup>th</sup> century manganese mining and the straight field walls are of a similar date.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*extensive relict archaeology (early prehistoric funerary and ritual, post-medieval settlement), drystone field walls*

This area extends from the lower break of slope (below which is area 01) which runs approximately along the 200m contour, up to the ridge of the mountain range. The ground is less fertile than area 01, and rock outcrops form a major part of the ground cover. The most obvious features of the historic landscape are probably the lengths of massive dry stone wall, mostly dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which cut across the area in straight lines (sometimes they even cut across earlier features, such as Carneddau Hengwm).

However, the most important aspect of the area is the extensive relict archaeology which spans the period from the neolithic to the later medieval period. The platform settlement on the edge of Mynydd Egryn covers many acres, while some of the earlier sites are more traditional monuments. There is no modern settlement in the area.

***Conservation priorities and management***

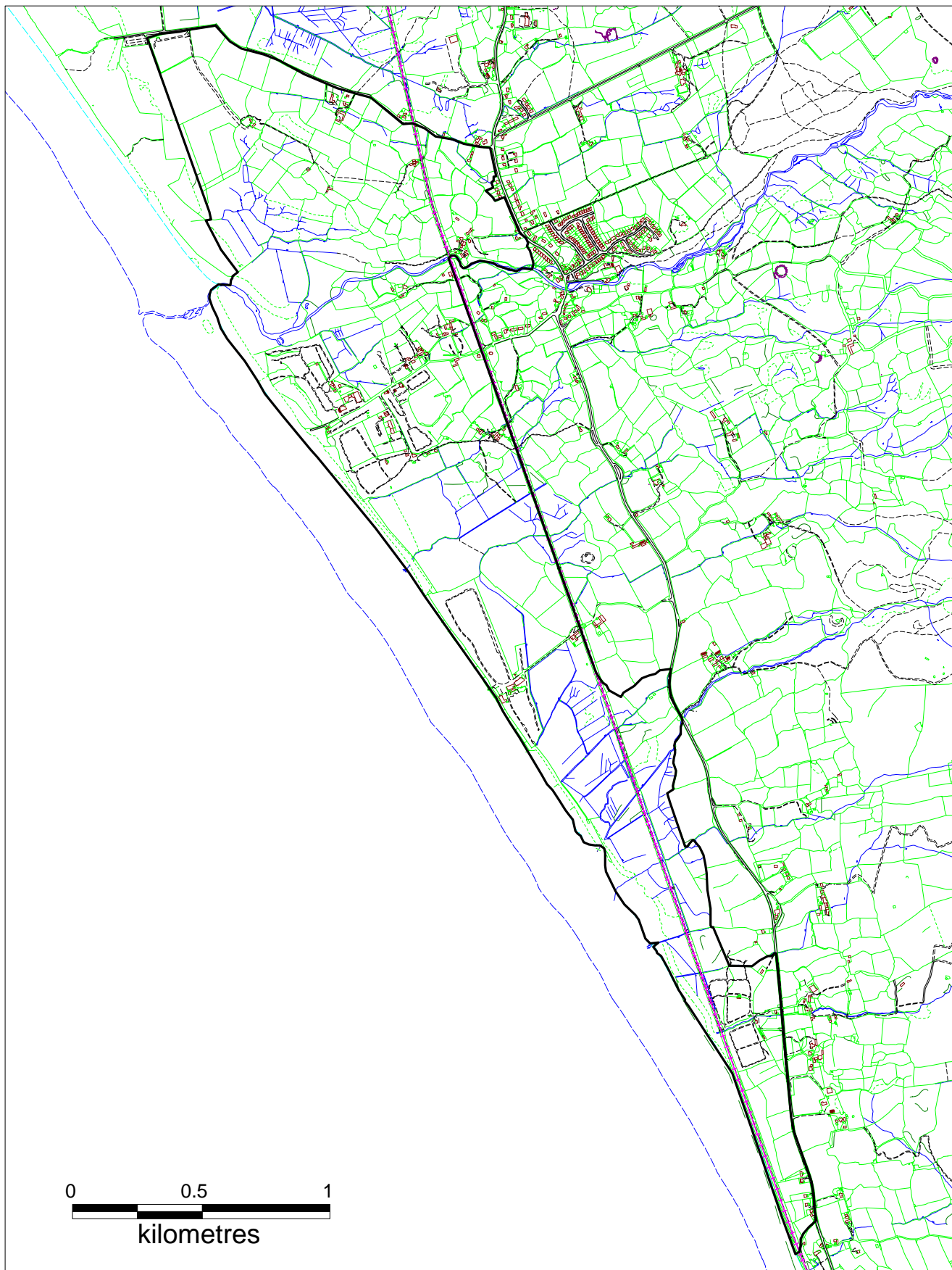
The area contains several scheduled ancient monuments (Carneddau Hengwm, Mynydd Egryn settlement, the Hengwm cairn circle) which continue to well-preserved. However, the potential for uncovering archaeological information relating to a long period of (particularly prehistoric) occupation means that the whole area is sensitive and should be managed in such a way as to prevent ground disturbance. Archaeological research within the area should be encouraged.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 43 110 92 003*



Area 02      Is Mynydd & Mynydd Egryn      (PRN 18235)

Aerial view which clearly shows the nature of the area, unimproved mountain grazing with distinctive, straight 19th century drystone walls diving up the landscape. Carneddau Hengwm cairns are in the centre of the shot.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
03 - Southern coastal strip

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### **03      Southern coastal strip      (PRN 18236)**

#### ***Historic background***

There is little evidence for early occupation this area which conjoins the sea. Plas Benar and Benar isaf in the north of the area may be sub-medieval in date (if the associations of 'uchaf' and 'isaf' placenames elsewhere can be followed, for example on Llyn). The Cambrian Coastal railway (opened in 1867) runs through part of the area, while much of the former pasture is now covered by 20<sup>th</sup> century caravan sites and associated holiday infrastructure.

#### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*drystone walls, caravan parks, seaside holiday infrastructure*

As the photograph shows, the area is an odd juxtaposition of drystone walls defining fields of improved pasture (similar to area 01) (a traditional farming landscape) and caravan parks, entertainment centres, fish and chip shops and beach shops (a distinctive 20<sup>th</sup> century seaside holiday landscape). In the current economic climate, the latter is tellingly taking over the former. There are a limited number of traditional stone-built farms and farm buildings in the area, as well as a railway station. ). The caravans are mainly long, rectangular and the newer ones almost uniformly green in colour (to blend in with the landscape!), and laid out in unsympathetic and striking serried ranks. The associated infrastructure buildings are gaudy and seem out of place in a still largely-rural setting.

Interestingly, the 19<sup>th</sup> century railway which probably was responsible for the start of the growth of the holiday economy serves to divide this area up from the more-traditional farming landscape of area 01 for much of its length.

#### ***Conservation priorities and management***

The drystone walls and farms buildings are in good condition and generally well-maintained (there is presumably sufficient income to help maintain them).

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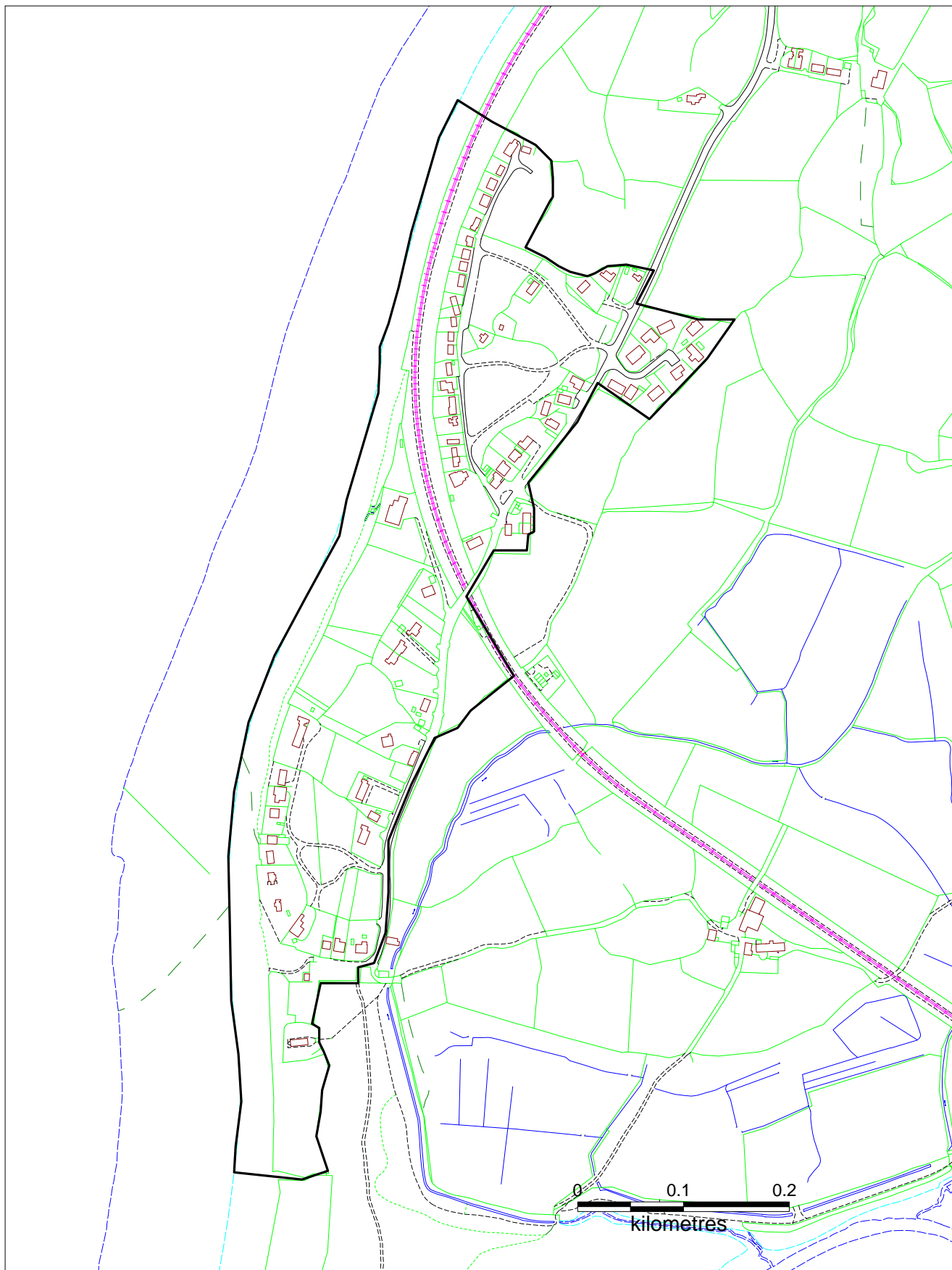




Area 03      Southern coastal strip

(PRN 18236)

View looking inland which shows the juxtaposition of a modern caravan site (foreground) with the traditional drystone walls and pasture fields (behind) which characterises this area.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
04 - Llandanwg

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## 04 Llandanwg (PRN 18237)

### *Historic background*

The present church at Llandanwg, set immediately behind the beach (and usually partially-buried) may be of 13<sup>th</sup> century origin, with a 15<sup>th</sup> century extension. The presence of two 6<sup>th</sup> century inscribed stones and a cross-incised stone imply early activity here (it is at the mouth of the Artro, the principal river of Ardudwy), as does the dedication to St Tanwg, traditionally a Breton saint who accompanied Cadfan to Bardsey.

There are many 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century burials at different levels in the churchyard implying a thriving local population, although the church fell out of use in 1841 when a new one was built in Harlech (area 31) which was then expanding its population.

There is a listed terrace of three two-storey buildings which appear on the 1842 tithe map and are assumed to be 18<sup>th</sup> century in date, and there is a small cluster of farms and associated buildings near the station to the east of the road which are probably late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date (they obviously pre-date the railway).

The Cambrian Coast railway which now bisects the settlement was finished in 1867 and the station is of this date. Llandanwg as it is today expanded after this date as a holiday-related seaside settlement and most of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century building stock reflects this (although even today it is still small).

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*small, 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> century holiday settlement*

Llandanwg remains a small settlement of probably fewer than a hundred houses set right on the coast below the modern main road. It is bisected by the railway and the station is one of only a handful of non-domestic buildings here (there are several small 'seaside' shops catering almost entirely for the summer tourist trade, but there are no other 'amenity' buildings for which people need to travel to Harlech or Llanbedr).

The church is medieval in date (see above) but the earliest surviving buildings appear to be 18<sup>th</sup> century in date (the listed terrace and farm complex mentioned above). Otherwise, the building stock is mainly detached holiday 'villas' and houses, set irregularly in their own grounds along the western side of the road (*i.e.* on the beach side) which leads down from the main A496 arterial thoroughfare to the beach (originally built to link the railway station to Llanfair). The houses are mainly single storey, and of a variety of designs in typical 'holiday-style', surrounded by poorly-developed gardens. The houses are mainly 'individual' - there are not massive estates.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

The church and surrounding graveyard and environs are a priority both for conservation and further investigation (potential for revealing evidence for early activity). Otherwise the listed terrace is the main building conservation priority. The settlement has a fairly distinct 'sense of place' which should be retained by any future development.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 35 7493 061*

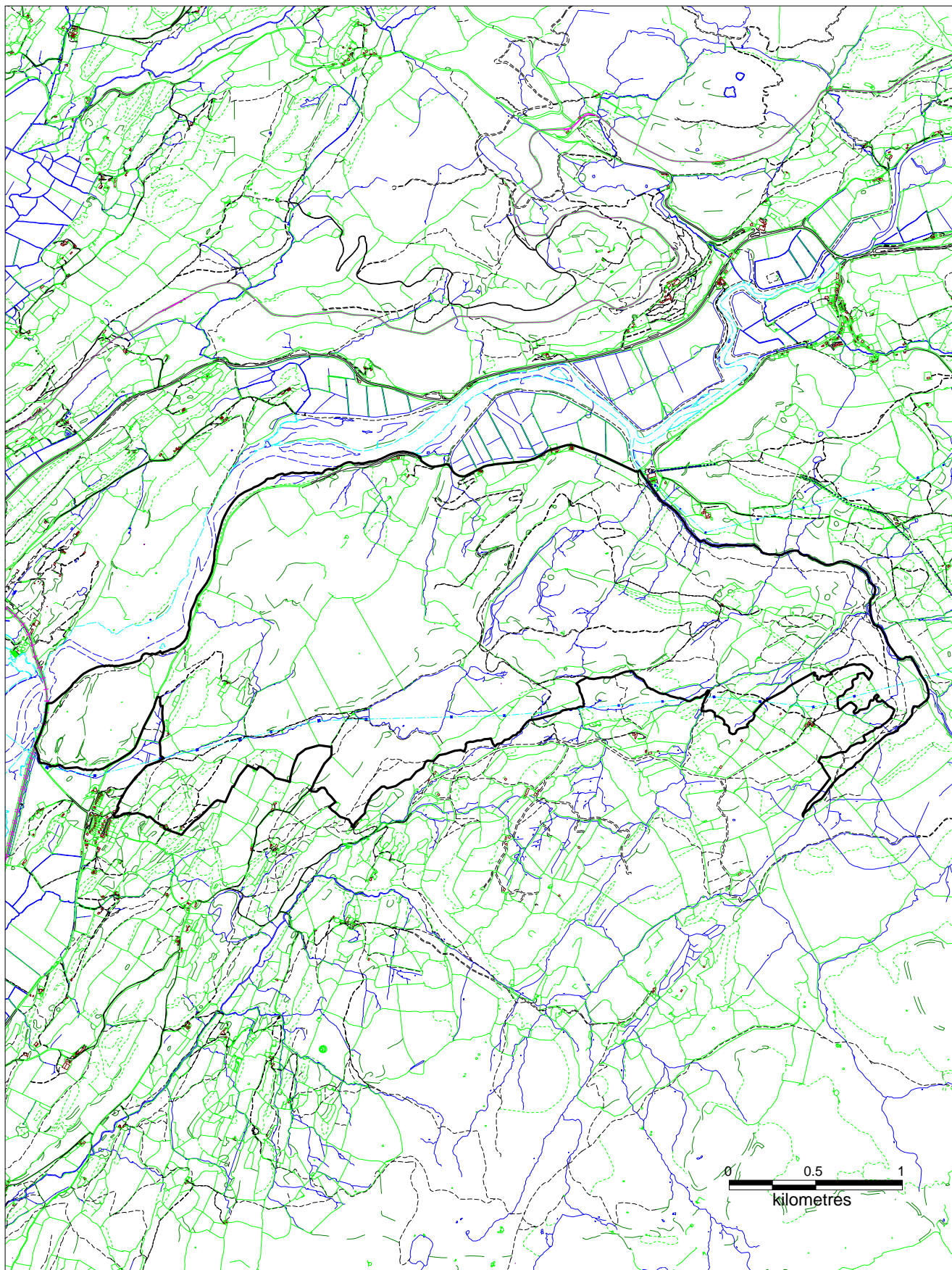




Area 04      Llandanwg

(PRN 18237)

A view showing the settlement in the background consisting of mainly 20th century holiday-related houses strung out along the road which leads to the beach (and also the medieval church and railway station).



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
05 - Coed Felinrhyd & Moel Tecwyn

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## **05 Coed Felinrhyd & Moel Tecwyn (PRN 18238)**

### ***Historic background***

This large area contains little in the way of historical character. Its underlying, rocky nature has meant that it was formerly ‘waste’ and was never improved, and although it contains two upland farms these are 19<sup>th</sup> century in date and probably relate to the period when the field walls were erected. The eastern side of the area is covered by 20<sup>th</sup> century pine forest, although there is some ancient woodland (Coed Cae-yn-y-coed) on the northern slopes above the Dwyrdd and up into Ceunant Llenyrch. Llyn Tecwyn Uchaf is a 20<sup>th</sup> century reservoir in the centre of the area.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*drystone walls, forestry, reservoir*

The area is divided almost into half by current land-use practices, although the underlying geology (and pre-20<sup>th</sup> century forestry historic features) mean it can be treated as one. The western part is still open, showing the rocky mountain land, crossed by a few straight (19<sup>th</sup> century) drystone walls, and containing two small upland farmsteads (see photograph). The area has never been agriculturally improved (there is too little soil anyway), although a number of sheepfolds show that it continues to be grazed. There is also a large, artificial reservoir here connected with domestic water supply.

The eastern part of the area is covered by 20<sup>th</sup> century forestry (probably planted in the 1950s), under which lies a continuation of the drystone walling. It surrounds an area of semi-natural woodland which covers the steep, north-facing hill slope above the Dwyrdd. Apart from this wood, there is little of historical interest here.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

Coed Cae-yn-y-coed is owned by the Woodland Trust and is under appropriate management. The only other significant features to be managed are the drystone walls, which could be included in any subsequent farm management plan.

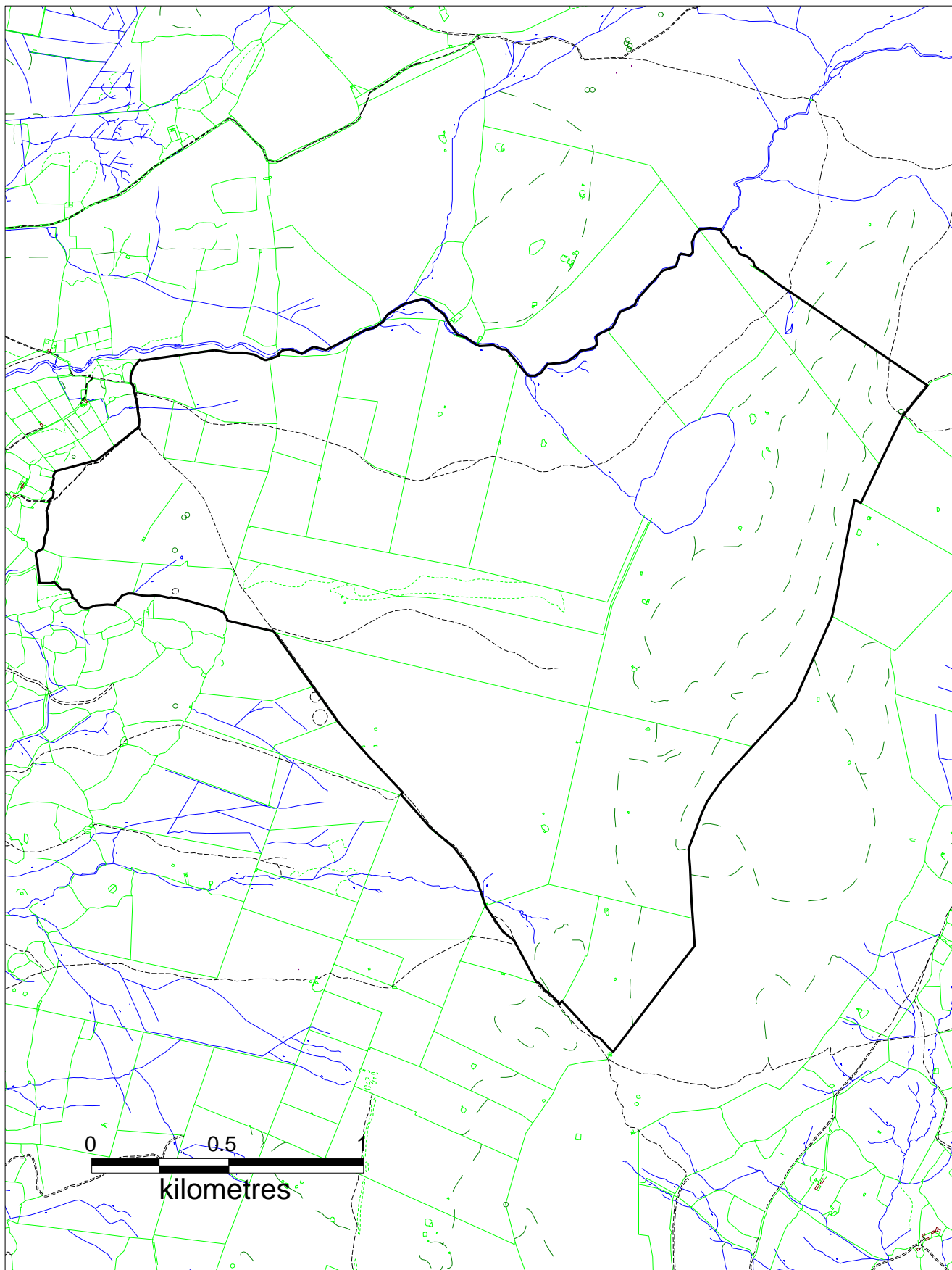
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 30 7093 1203*



Area 05            Coed Felinrhyd & Moel Tecwyn            (PRN 18238)

This photograph illustrates the nature of the stark, rocky massif arising out of the coastal marsh (area 30) which forms this character area. Some of the linear 19th century drystone walls which cross the area to little practical effect can be seen.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
06 - Upper slopes around Llyn Erddyn

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## **06 Upper slopes around Llyn Erddyn (PRN 18239)**

### ***Historic background***

There are several neolithic and bronze age funerary and ritual monuments on the lower altitudes of this area, but otherwise there are no signs of human impact on this area of remote landscape until the building of the characteristic long, straight drystone enclosure walls in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*relict early funerary and ritual monuments, drystone walls*

This area is similar to area 02 but distinct mainly in that it is even rockier and less agriculturally-favourable even than that area. There are a number of early prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments in the lower part of the area, just above Llecheiddior which seem to form a distinct grouping on a ridge above the Afon Ysgethin. Otherwise, the only historic features here are the straight, rectilinear 19<sup>th</sup> century drystone walls. As with area 2 the upper part includes the hillslope up to the top of the mountain ridge and again, there is no modern settlement in the area.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

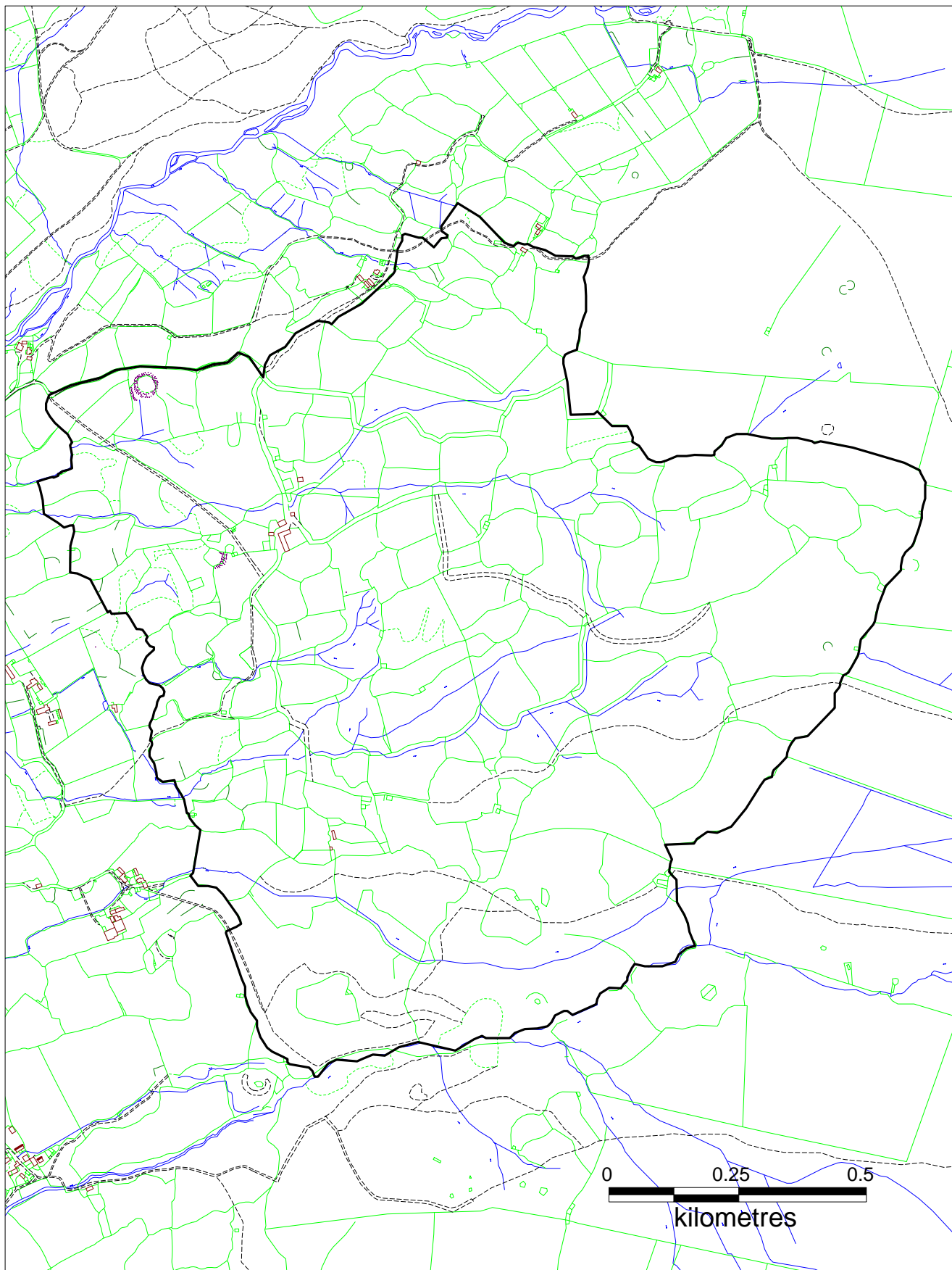
The area contains several scheduled ancient monuments which continue to well-preserved. However, the potential for uncovering archaeological information relating to a long period of (particularly prehistoric) occupation means that the whole of the lower part of the area is sensitive and should be managed in such a way as to prevent ground disturbance. Archaeological research within this area should be encouraged.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 41 101 92 214*



Area 06      Upper slopes around Llyn Erddyn      (PRN 18239)

Aerial view showing the landscape around Llyn Erddyn, with the distinctive drystone walls creating large, rectangular enclosures in the foreground, and the mountain ridge in the distance.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
07 - Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Cae'r-llwyn

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## **07      Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Cae'r-llwyn      (PRN 18240)**

### ***Historic background***

There are several recorded late prehistoric enclosed settlements within this area, and the nature of the field pattern (irregular-shaped enclosures defined by stone rubble banks and heavily lynched) gives the impression of a landscape originally shaped in the late prehistoric period, possibly with post-medieval additions, but with relatively little recent interference. This has been a transition area, always on the cusp between the uplands and lowlands

There are only two farmsteads in the area, both of which give the impression of being post-medieval encroachments onto the edge of the mountain waste (possibly re-using earlier similar encroachments). There is no recent settlement or activity apart from the incongruous 20<sup>th</sup> century reservoir and waterworks.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

#### *late prehistoric settlement and field systems, upland edge encroachment*

This area lies on the mid hill-slopes between areas 01 (improved pasture, 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosures) and 02 (unimproved land, no meaningful enclosures). It is quite distinct from both principally by virtue of its field pattern and agricultural use and history. This area is dominated by irregular, often sub-circular, large enclosures (there is not a straight line or carefully-constructed drystone wall in sight) and although only a few prehistoric settlement sites are recorded, recent fieldwork suggests that many more remain to be found.

In plan, the irregular field pattern (and the altitude and location) suggest that it may represent post-medieval encroachment on to the fringes of the upland waste, but many of the field boundaries are distinctive, mainly comprising stone rubble banks, often quite spread and no longer stock-proof (see photograph), and curvilinear in plan. Many are also heavily lynched, with height differences of up to 1m between different sides. By comparison with other areas in Gwynedd, these suggest a prehistoric date (at least in origin) or many of the fields. There are several minor water-courses running through the area which must always have been relatively productive agricultural land but which has escaped modern improvements. Some of the fields have been cleared (for agricultural purposes) while others remain full of natural stones and boulders.

This area is similar in character to area 13.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

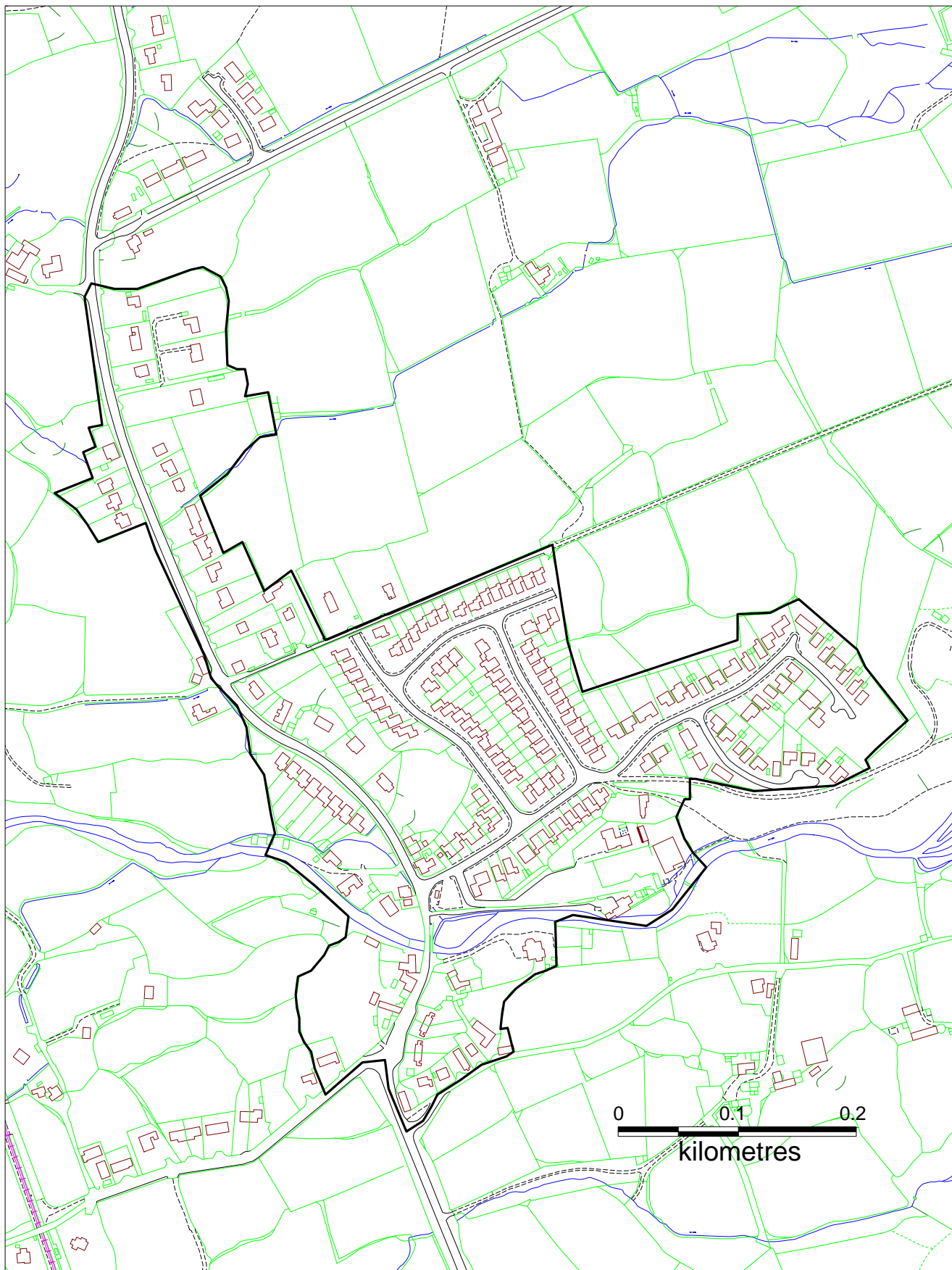
There are two scheduled ancient monuments in the area, both late prehistoric (a hillfort and a hut group), but the whole should be investigated and conserved as a well-preserved landscape which is quite unique in the area generally, and which has considerable archaeological potential (not least environmental potential for buried prehistoric land surfaces below the vast lynched). No land improvement should be allowed, at least not without prior assessment.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 41 101 92 215*



Area 07      Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Cae'r-llwyn      (PRN 18240)

Ground view showing the rubble stone wall of a late prehistoric enclosure and associated lynchet which, together with pasture and scrubby tree growth, characterise this area.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
08 - Tal-y-bont

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## **08 Tal-y-bont (PRN 18241)**

### ***Historic background***

Tal-y-bont is another in the series of small, mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century ribbon settlements which developed along the main north-south coastal road. It is a settlement which was carved out of the southern corner of the Cors-y-gedol estate, and the original ‘core’ of the village, which consists only of a loose cluster of 19<sup>th</sup> century stone houses, was, like Llanbedr, centred on the bridge which carried the road over the Afon Ysgethin. Otherwise the settlement consists of a vast late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estate.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

#### *20<sup>th</sup> century settlement with earlier core*

There is a small cluster of stone-built early 19<sup>th</sup> century houses around (and mainly to the south of) the bridge which carries the main road over the Afon Ysgethin. These appear to pre-date the present road, as they are not built ‘against’ it. The village shop/Post Office (which is the only commercial building in the settlement and again stone-built and which is later 19<sup>th</sup> century in date – see photograph), however, is just to the north of the bridge and obviously was built to front on to the road.

The remainder of the settlement is a rather soul-less housing estate which spreads up the hill to the east of the road (behind the shop). The houses are single-storey (probably 1960s) bungalows, mainly semi-detached with small garden plots, which could be anywhere in Britain. There is no focus for the settlement or character about it and it hardly merits the description of a ‘village’. It is more like a piece of suburbia placed in the countryside.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

There is little of local character to conserve, although from the air the settlement appears incongruous and shouldn’t be allowed to encroach further into the surrounding landscape.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 40 100 92 001*

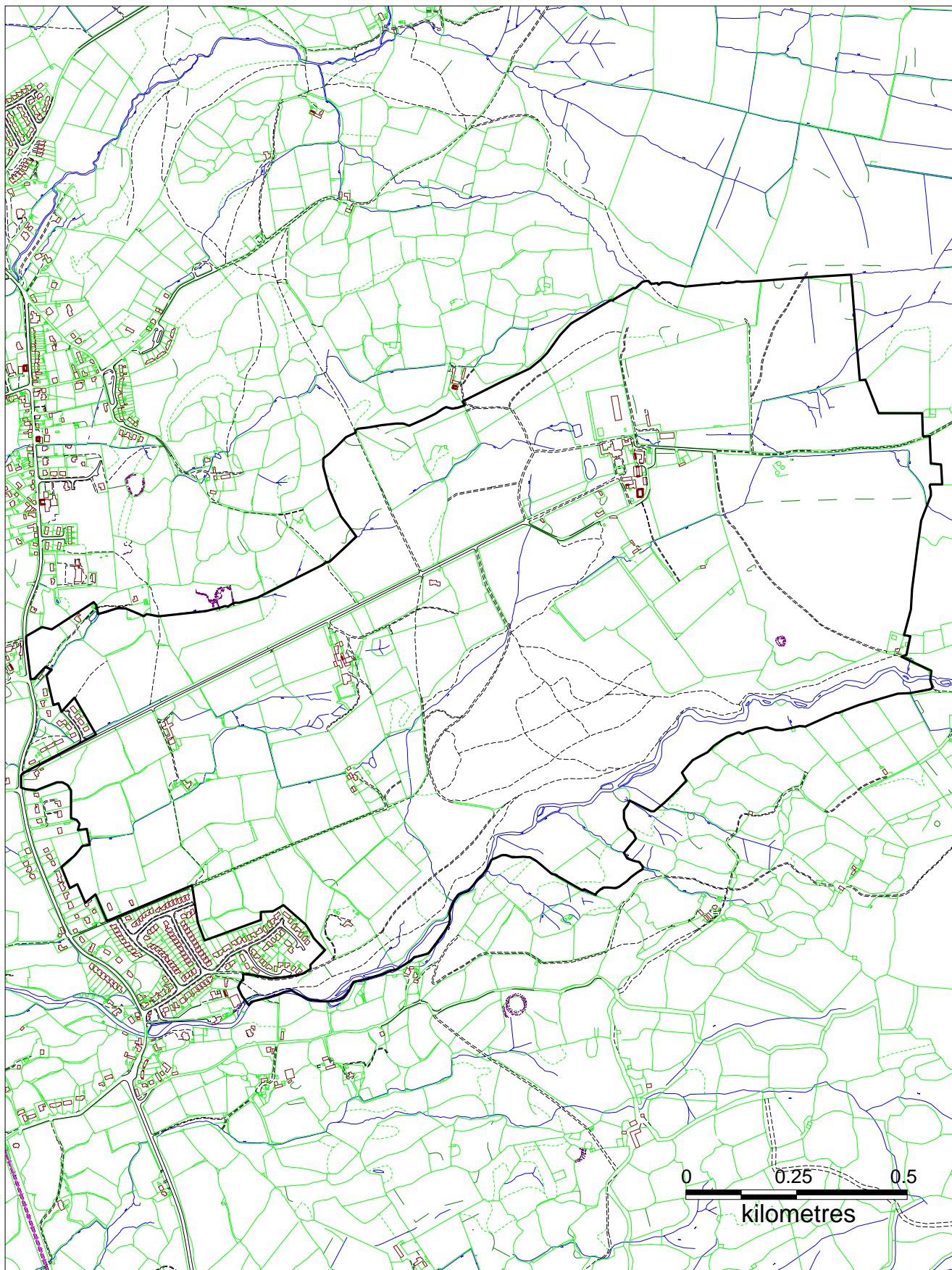


Area 08      Tal-y-bont

(PRN 18241)

This shows the only commercial building in the settlement: a 19th century, stone-built shop fronting on to the main road.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
09 - Cors y Gedol

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## 09 Cors y Gedol (PRN 18242)

### *Historic background*

The house was built in 1576 by Richard Vaughan and the gatehouse in 1630; the house was subsequently very much enlarged but the original block remains well preserved. There are several outbuildings of various dates, though others have been demolished, and a farmhouse close by, representing overall a self-contained small estate. The open land just above the house contains a burial chamber and many prehistoric settlements and trackways, showing that the area has been well settled for millennia.

Cors-y-Gedol passed to the Mostyns by marriage at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was eventually sold in 1858 to the Corbett family, whose generous lifestyle resulted in the house being doubled in size, with a ballroom, and it is largely landscaping of this period which survives in the garden. It was sold twice around the turn of the century, becoming a school and then a hostel, and was purchased by the present owners in 1951. An estate map of 1764 shows a formal layout, possibly the original one, in detail, but little of this now survives, although some elements remain.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*16<sup>th</sup>-century house, ancient woodland and remains of early garden overlain by later developments.*

The kitchen garden at the back of the house is likely to be on the site of the first garden, though it has been much altered since and the raised walk along one side is relatively modern. A narrow enclosure outside the garden on the other side may have been a bowling green.

Little remains of the formal walks and plantations shown on the 18<sup>th</sup>-century estate map, but much of the woodland is of ancient origin, and it has escaped blanket planting of conifers. Garden features including pools and the remains of a folly tower survive from the 19<sup>th</sup> century; some of these are entirely new but others are adaptations of older features.

Outbuildings of various dates (laundry, keeper's cottage, stables etc.), together with formal elements such as the gatehouse and gate pillars, combine to preserve to a great extent the atmosphere of a small, self-contained estate.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

The house and gatehouse are both listed grade II\*; several other buildings, including gate piers, are listed grade II. A large area (over 50 ha) of the woodland is an SSSI. The park and garden has grade II on the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales (p. 180) and the site lies within the Snowdonia National Park. There is also a general Tree Preservation Order. The wider landscape with its many prehistoric features is important as part of the setting, and several of these features are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Coed Cors y Gedol (55 ha in extent, CCW ref. 31 WFE) was designated a SSSI as one of the best examples of a woodland type for which west Wales is an important centre of distribution. The bulk of the central area is composed of young, regenerating sessile oak and birch with smaller amounts of ash and willow: there is greater diversity to north and south of central area. The area is also important for rare birds.

Liaison with Cadw and the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust as well as CCW and the SNP will be necessary for future management.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 40 100 92 002*



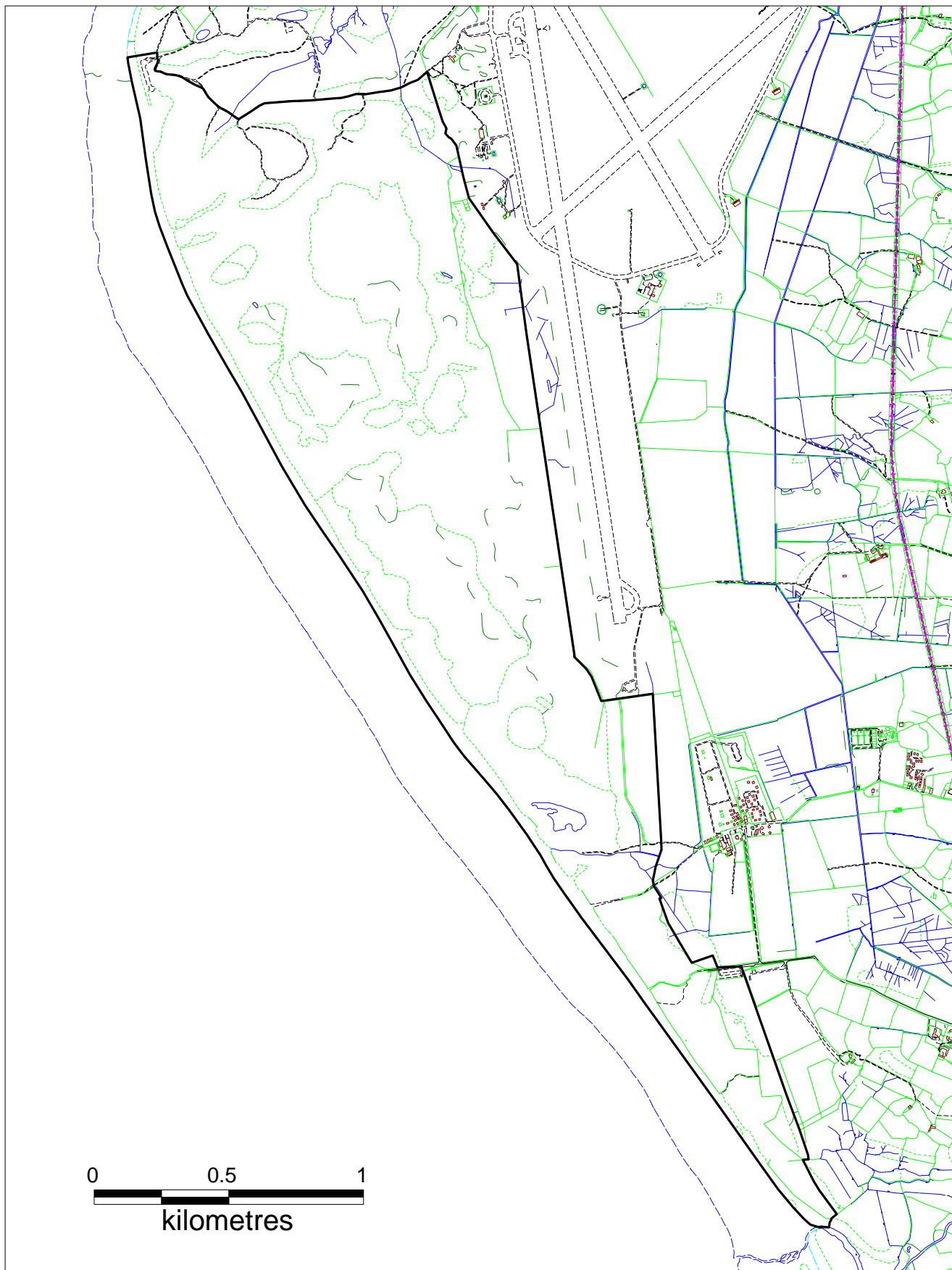
Area 09

Cors y Gedol

(PRN 18242)

View looking towards the gatehouse to the main house, with some of the demesne farm buildings to the right and one of the early garden terraces in the foreground. The trees are also an important part of the park and garden landscape character.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
10 - Morfa Dyffryn

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## **10 Morfa Dyffryn (PRN 18243)**

### ***Historic background***

In the centuries following the medieval period, this coastal area silted up and was classed as marsh waste. The enclosure and draining of much of the area towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Cors y Gedol estate

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

#### *sand dunes*

This character area is defined by the extent of the sand dune system (see also area 32 for a similar system).

Morfa Dyffryn (CCW ref. 31WNS) was first designated an SSSI in 1953, and has since been revised. It extends over 334ha. It is an area of both mobile and fixed coastal sand dunes with saltmarsh and estuary which forms an extension to the Morfa Dyffryn NNR. The extensive calcareous dune system contains dunes rising to 60ft. It is also important for flora and wading birds.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

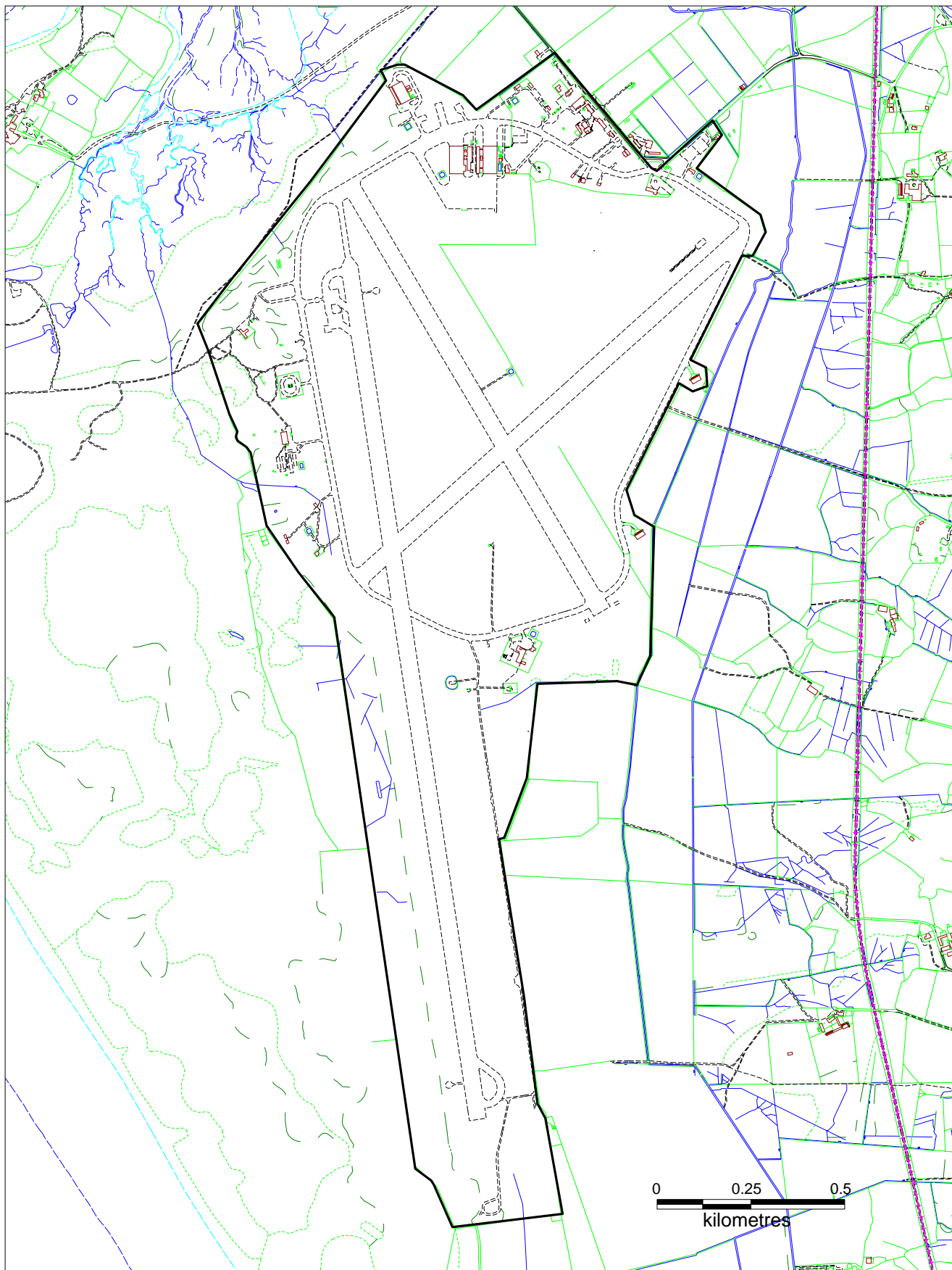
The area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve and is managed by CCW to its own management statement.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 39 10092 106*



Area 10      Morfa Dyffryn      (PRN 18243)

This view shows part of the sand dune system which is both an SSSI and an NNR.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
 11 - Royal Aerospace Establishment, Llanbedr

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***Historic background***

There was an enormous expansion of the RAF during World War II as a result of which many new airfields were required. As a matter of policy, navigation and air gunnery training schools were to be located in north-western Britain which was regarded as relatively safe. Thus the county of Gwynedd came under close scrutiny of surveyors looking for potential sites, and seven locations were chosen for new airfields, the most southern of which, sandwiched between the mountain and sea, was on the coastal flats below Llanbedr.

It acted under the control of Valley as a forward airfield for day operations against enemy raiders in the local sea areas. It was also connected with a training school which continued throughout the war with little change. It was also later used as base for rather unglamorous army co-operation units, towing targets for artillery practice.

By 1945, the airfield was operating at a much-reduced level, and during the 1950s Llanbedr became an outstation for Royal Aerospace Establishment, Farnborough, where research into pilotless target drones was carried out. Only it and Valley continued to be used by the RAF.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*World War II and later RAF airfield with infrastructure*

The basic layout of the present-day airfield is remarkably much as it was in the 1940s, except that of course it has been developed into a modern airfield with much new building having taken place, especially in the 1980s (including some 'industrial-type' units). However, many of the original hangars and wooden buildings remain and are in good condition, and the whole has an almost-unchanged atmosphere.

***Conservation priorities and management***

The main priority must be to retain in good condition any original surviving hangars and buildings, as well as the original layout.

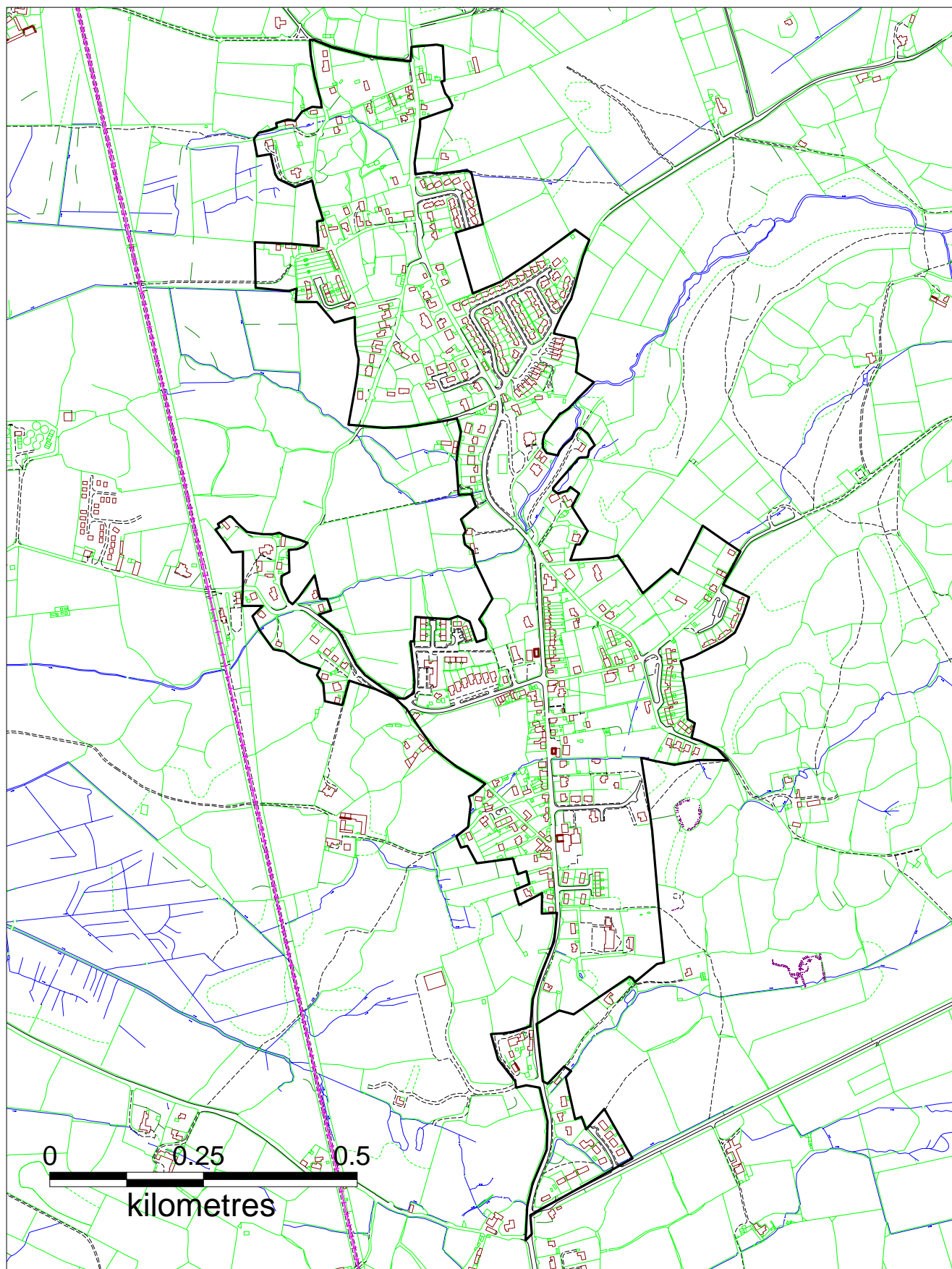
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 38 100 92 106*



Area 11      Royal Aerospace Establishment, Llanbedr      (PRN 18244)

View from the main road above showing the hangars, control tower, associated buildings and runway of the establishment.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
12 - Dyffryn Ardudwy

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## 12 Dyffryn Ardudwy & Coed Ystumgwern (PRN 18245)

### *Historic background*

This character area comprises, in effect, two adjoining ribbon settlements, Coed Ystumgwern and Dyffryn Ardudwy. Ystumgwern was the committal centre of Ardudwy uwch Artro in the medieval period, although the exact location of the *llys* is not known (the farm which retains the ‘Ystumgwern’ name lies just outside the settlement area to the northwest (in area 14).

As with all the nucleated settlements in Ardudwy, this settlement really developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century along the line of the improved road (again the railway lies some distance away to the west), with early cores of buildings (loosely centred around the two churches), although earlier concentrations of buildings exist in small clusters just below the main road. Unlike Llanbedr (area 18) and Tal-y-bont (area 8), both of which grew from strategic road/river crossings, however, there appears to be no apparent reason for the development of Dyffryn Ardudwy (there is no substantial coaching inn, for example).

Dyffryn Ardudwy has seen more expansion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with housing estates built at the south end of the village around the school in the 1930s, and up the hill slope behind in the 1960s. It has a series of commercial buildings which provide local services.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

#### *19<sup>th</sup> century ribbon development around earlier core*

There is a loose cluster of late 18<sup>th</sup> / early 19<sup>th</sup> century stone buildings in Coed Ystumgwern, centred just below the main road around a square of road. More recent (20<sup>th</sup> century) housing estates (set out in rows) stretch up the hillslopes on the other side. The main road here runs very definitely along the bottom of the steep hill slope.

The main centre of the Dyffryn Ardudwy conservation area contains a range of 19<sup>th</sup> century roadside buildings, including shops, a surgery, a bank, Post office, primary school and houses (and a modern garage). Most of the houses are individually-named, detached houses (mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century of various designs, again distributed below the road and apparently pre-dating it, where there was more space: there are two substantial terraces (probably later 19<sup>th</sup> century) set above the road (eastern side) in the northern part of the village (see photograph).

With the exception of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, everything has been built of stone, although many of the earlier houses are distinctively white-washed. Again, the railway station is set below the settlement (interestingly near the medieval church of Llanenddwyn) on a road that formerly led down to the beach.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

The central part of the settlement is a Conservation Area which contains a number of listed buildings. The overall character of the settlement should be retained.

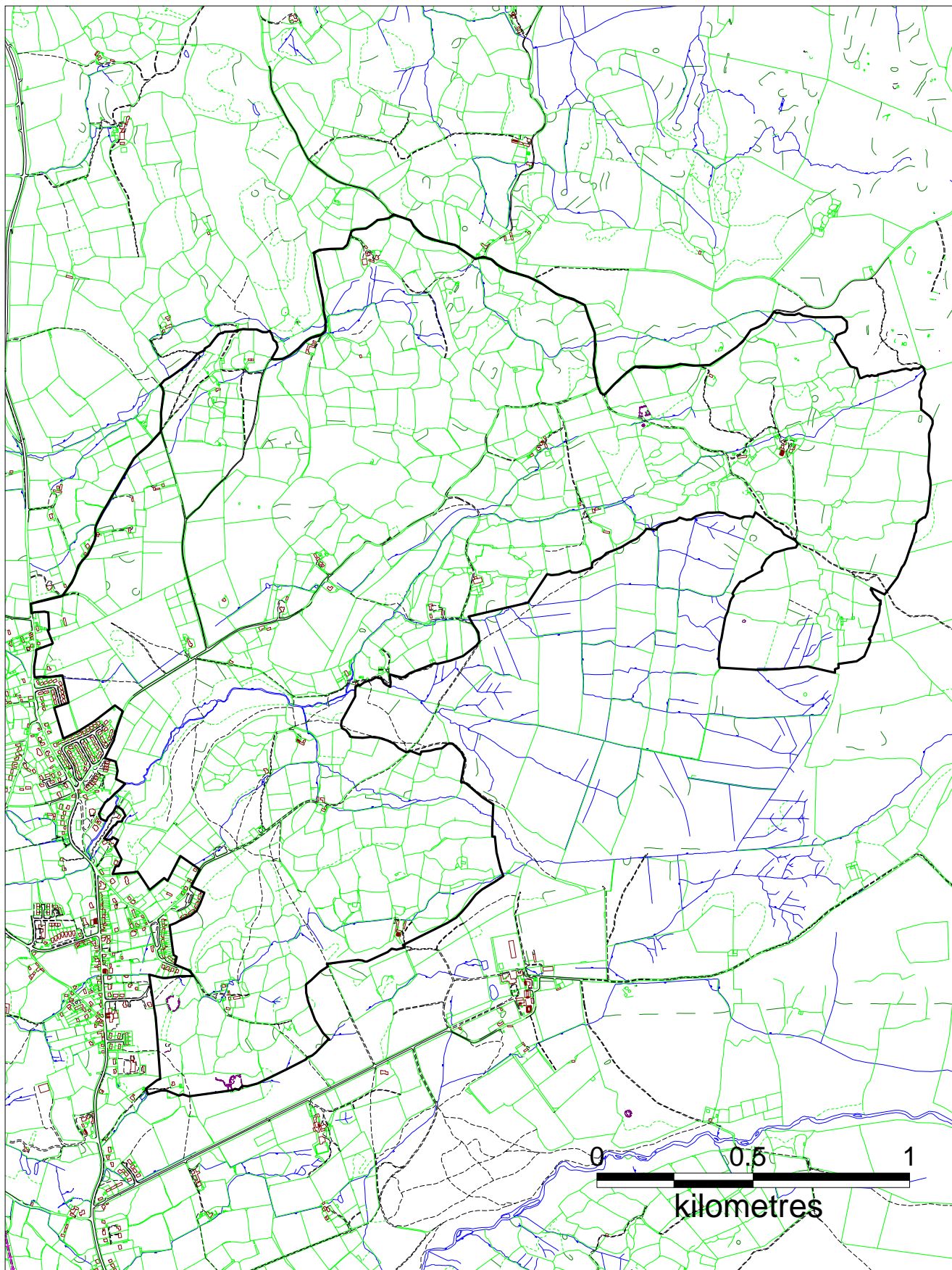
CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 39 100 92 105





Area 12      Dyffryn Ardudwy & Coed Ystumgwern      (PRN 18245)

This splendid row of mid-19th century terraced housing, set back slightly above the road, has a shop at its southern end.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
13 - Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Byrillysg

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## 13      **Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Byrllysg**      **(PRN 18246)**

### ***Historic background***

This intermediary area has a complex history, with a well-preserved series of relict archaeological monuments including early neolithic burial chambers (Bron y Foel west and Dyffryn Ardudwy), prehistoric cairns, later prehistoric hut groups with associated enclosures and small hillfort (Byrllysg). The complex field pattern or irregular, curvilinear enclosures (still in use) show a long and complex agricultural history.

A complex of three farms in the upper part of the area (Bron-y-foel isaf, Bron-y-foel ganol and Bron-y-foel uchaf) may indicate medieval nucleated settlement, particularly as there is reference to Bron-y-foel being a substantial medieval township. There is certainly an interesting set of earthwork and stone-built archaeological remains around here.

There are a number of interesting (later) farms in the area, including Meifod-Isa (73 acres) and Meifod-Uchaf (72 acres) (the only examples from western Meirionnydd). This could mean ‘May dwelling’ or it could mean ‘middle dwelling’ between a *hendre* and a *hafod*. Their location is consistent with their being an early summer, or middle, station between winter and summer dwellings but the evidence is very scanty. Others include Byrdir, Byrllysg (neighbouring farms with interesting placenames), Gwerncarnyddion and Llwyneinion Fechan.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*early prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments, late prehistoric settlement and field systems, upland edge encroachment, farmsteads*

This area lies on the mid hill-slopes, sandwiched in part between areas 15 (improved pasture, 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosures, woodland) and area 16 (largely unimproved mountain, with 19<sup>th</sup> century regular enclosures and many, minor relict archaeological features). It is similar to area 7. It is quite distinct from both principally by virtue of its field pattern (indicating a long and complex agricultural use and history) and its wealth of relict archaeological sites and monuments (many of which are scheduled).

This area is dominated by irregular, often sub-circular, large enclosures (although there are a few, later small regular fields in the lower part of the area around Hwlfa Lydan which are probably 19<sup>th</sup> century) and there are many major, important archaeological monuments (see above); past fieldwork suggests that many more remain to be found.

In plan, the irregular field pattern and the presence of round hut-based settlement and a small hillfort suggest that much of the character is late prehistoric in origin, possibly overlain in the upper area by subsequent post-medieval encroachment on to the fringes of the upland waste. Many of the field boundaries are distinctive, comprising drystone walls over earlier stone rubble banks. Some are lynched while other, especially Bron-y-foel, are distinctly ‘old’. Again, some of the fields have been cleared (for agricultural purposes are have been relatively improved) while others remain full of natural stones and boulders.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

There are four scheduled ancient monuments in the area, two early prehistoric burial chambers as well as a late prehistoric hillfort and a hut group and enclosure (see above). However, together with the field pattern large parts of the area should be seen as important relict landscapes which should be conserved (particularly around Bron-y-foel). In addition, the whole should be investigated further to enable more targetted active management as it has considerable archaeological potential.

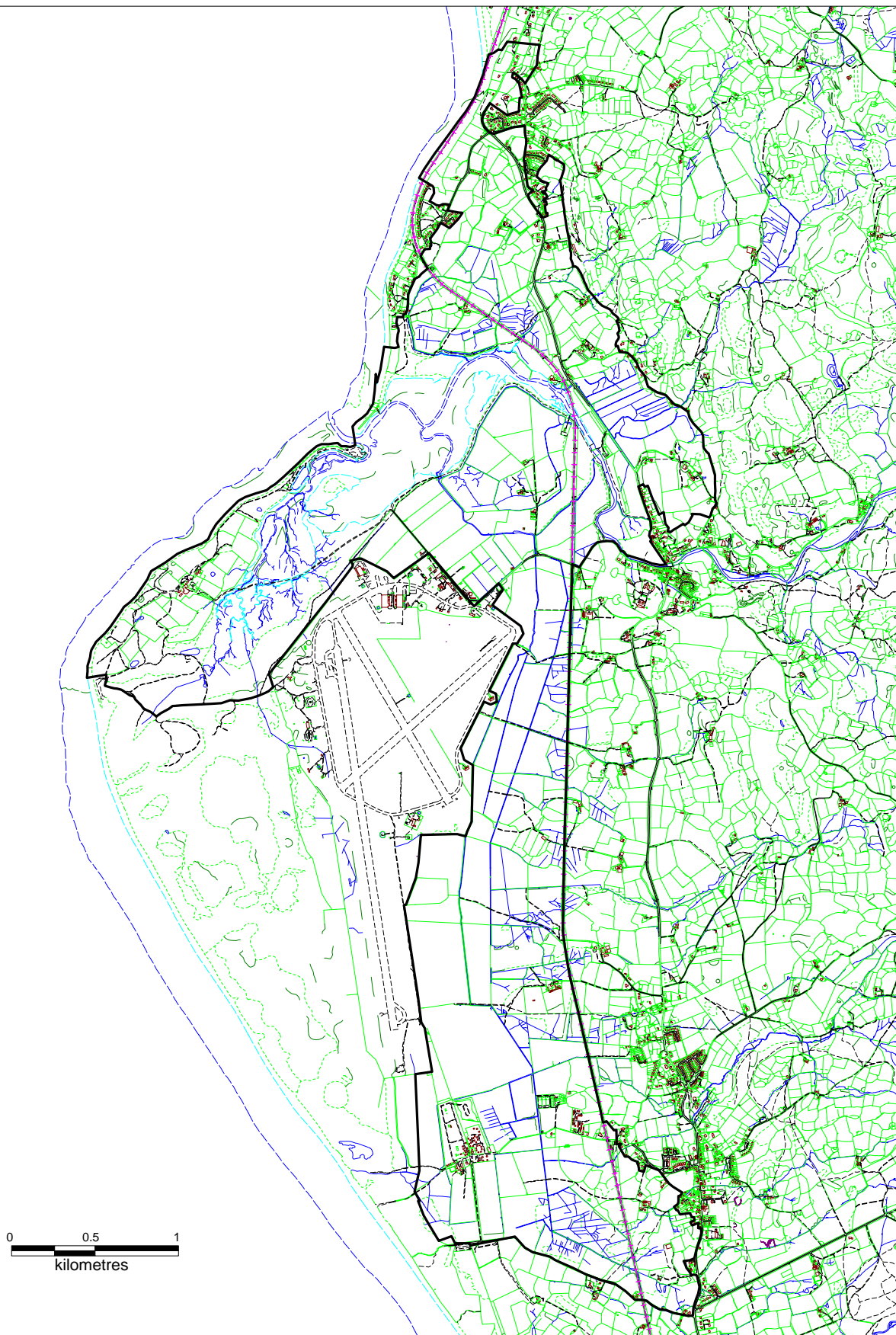
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 39 100 92 105*





Area 13      Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Byrlllysg      (PRN 18246)

Aerial view which shows the distinctive irregular field patterns of this area in the foreground (around Bron-y-foel uchaf), contrasting with the later, straight drystone walls which characterise area 16 behind (on the lower slopes of Moelfre).



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
14 - Coastal plain behind RAE Llanbedr

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## 14 Coastal plain behind RAE Llanbedr (PRN 18247)

### *Historic background*

This area contains the rest of the low-lying coastal floodplain behind Morfa Dyffryn (area 10) and RAE Llanbedr (area 11), in effect up to where the ground begins to rise. It includes land to the south and the north of the Artro where it flows from the hillslopes across the plain and into the sea. The area includes the Llanbedr standing stone right near the mouth of the Artro which have been interpreted as the start of a prehistoric trackway across the upland above Harlech (see also area 25).

Settlement within the area is limited and varied and concentrated on the north side of the river. Here farms (there are no other houses) include Cae Nest farm (important sub-medieval farm) near Llanbedr, Argoed (early 16<sup>th</sup> century farm with later additions, a good example of the unit system arrangement of linked dwellings with attached buildings at the heart of an extensive farmstead) and Llanfair isa farm (possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century, but with earlier origins and a set of outbuildings). South of the river there are a couple of minor farms (including one 'ynys' placename) and a couple of 20<sup>th</sup> century 'seaside holiday estates'. The area also includes Mochras ('Shell island'), which is a 20<sup>th</sup> century tourist holiday location based on earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead (this is cut off from the mainland at high tide).

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*cut drainage features, farmsteads, drystone walls*

For the most part the area is characterised by large enclosures defined by cut features (see also area 30), although in the north of the area, around Llanbedr, there is a definite pattern of improved pasture fields (see photograph) around the three afore-mentioned farms which are defined by the distinctive white, boulder, neat drystone walls (see area 01). However, cut drainage features occur across the area, concentrated around the Artro itself.

Llanbedr station lies on the edge of the area on a road which comes down from the village and leads to RAE Llanbedr (area 11) and eventually (allowing for the state of the tides) to the holiday location of Mochras.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

The area around the Afon Artro is part of the Morfa Dyffryn SSSI and is renowned for wading birds: this is being suitably managed. There is a single scheduled ancient monument in the area, whose appearance and management could be improved (the stones could be released from behind their iron railings). The afore-mentioned farms (especially Argoed which is listed) should be suitably managed, and the field pattern around should be retained. The drainage features will also need continuous management.

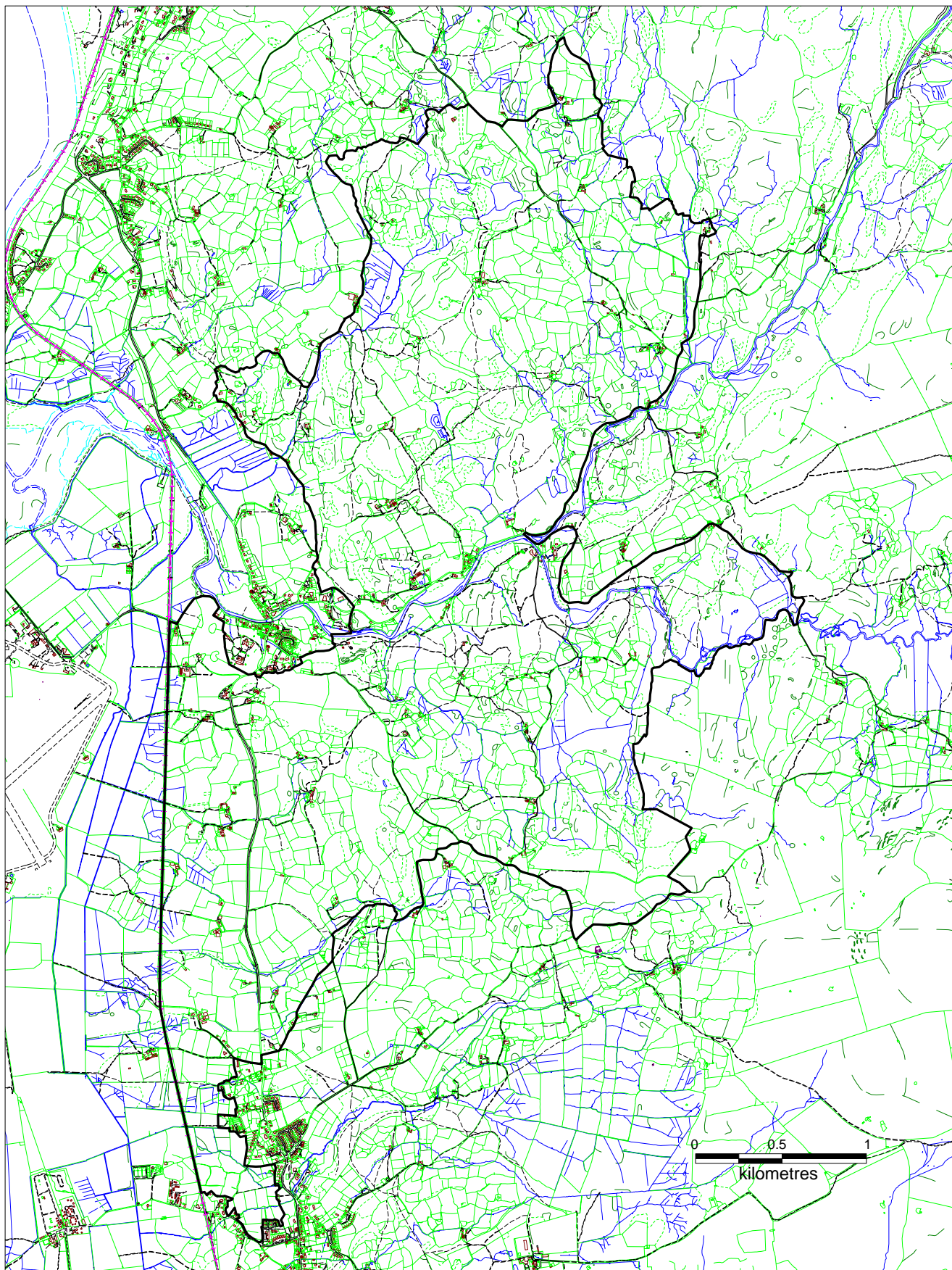
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 39 100 92 105*





Area 14      Coastal plain behind RAE Llanbedr      (PRN 18247)

Aerial view of the area to the north of Llanbedr (the settlement, area 18, is towards the top) which shows the distinctive, flat coastal plain with pasture fields and (top right) the channels which characterise the area. Cae Nest (one of the 'homes of the patrons of the bards' see section 8.2.1) is at the bottom of the view.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
15 - Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Cae'r Meddyg

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## 15      **Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Cae'r Meddyg**      **(PRN 18248)**

### ***Historic background***

There are a few relict late prehistoric settlement sites in the area, but nothing which can be dated to the medieval period. The settlement pattern is of scattered farmsteads, of which there are many of different periods and characters from sub-medieval (for example Penarth and Coed mawr), through 17<sup>th</sup> century (Gilfach goch) to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century examples (notably Gwynfryn and particularly Penrallt (which has an impressive range of stables and outbuildings) north of the river. There is a single small nucleated settlement at Pentre Gwynfryn which is recorded as nucleated in the medieval period, although the buildings there now are 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century in date.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

#### *pasture, woods, farmsteads*

This area is quite unlike any other in Arddudwy. It is divided into two by the east-west running Afon Artro but is generally of consistent, although varied, character. Generally low-lying, it has a variety of different characters based on intermingled areas of largely improved agricultural pasture (for example around hendy and Gilfach Goch south of the river), rocky outcrops (particularly north of the river, for example the one on which the scheduled Clogwyn Arllef is situated), ancient and semi-natural woodland (Coed Lletywalter being the best example, see below) and unimproved marsh wastes ( for example above Alt-goch in the upper part of the southern area.

Apart from Clogwyn Arllef and Gelli-las hut circle, there are no virtually recorded relict prehistoric or medieval archaeological sites in the area (although no fieldwork has been undertaken here), and generally fewer sites on the SMR. Outside Pentre Gwynfryn (see above), the settlement pattern of post-medieval scattered farmsteads has already been described. The area does contain several good examples of outlying field barns (for example connected with Penrallt), and there are also sheepfolds. All the building stock is of stone, mostly with slate roofing (although in places tin is common for farm outbuildings).

The main north-south road runs through the lower part of the area, while another important heads off east from Llanbedr and divides in two to carry on up Cwm Nantcol and Cwm Bychan. There are just three other roads which cross the area. Most of the smaller farms lie at the end of minor trackways.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

Two woods within the area have been designated SSSIs. Coed Aber Artro (CCW ref. 31WFQ) was designated for its oceanic bryophyte interest, while the tree species in the wood are dominated by sessile oak with ash and wych elms and some beech. On the opposite side of the Artro, Coed Lletywalter (CCW ref. 31WMZ) is a large area (38ha) of broadleaved woodland at low altitude with a bedrock of Cambrian grit. Most of the woodland is comprised of sessile oak, with birch and some sycamore. Beech is also abundant in parts. The almost complete absence of old trees indicates substantial selected felling, perhaps during WWII. It has extremely varied and interesting habitats with cliffs, rocky knolls, streams, small glades and boulder-strewn slopes. It is ungrazed and has good regeneration. Both these woods are owned and managed by the Woodland Trust.

In addition, three areas of semi-improved grassland and unimproved neutral grassland around Caeau Bwlch (SH5925, CCW ref. 31WGM) covering 26.5ha have been designated a biological SSSI selected for its invertebrate interest (hornet robberfly, nationally scarce and a UK BAP priority species).

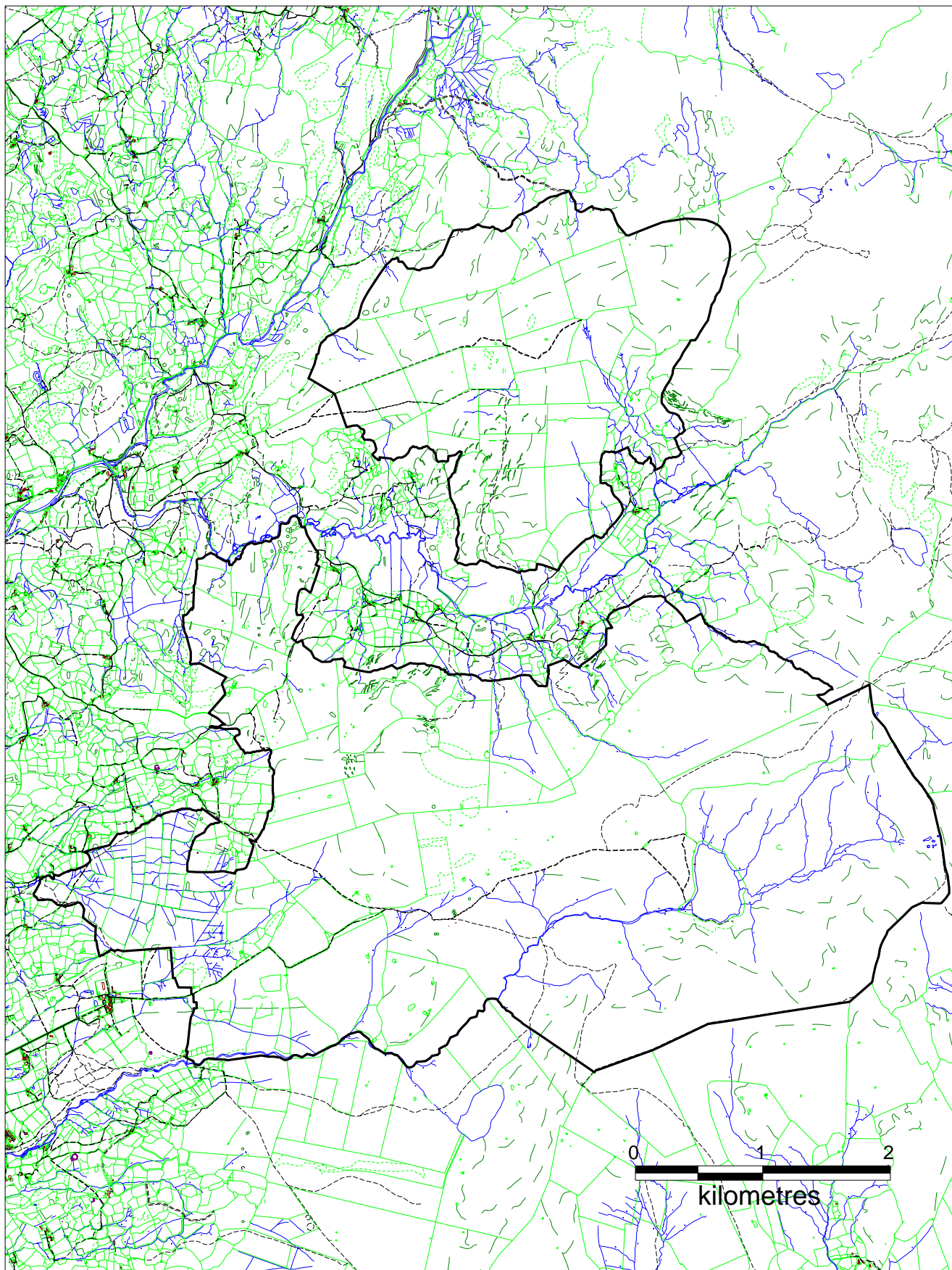
Otherwise, there are two scheduled ancient monuments and several listed farm buildings. The field boundaries are varied and interesting but not especially noteworthy. The area should continue to be managed for its mixed character of pasture, woods and wetlands.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 39 100 92 103*



Area 15      Fieldscape, mid-hill slopes around Cae'r Meddyg    (PRN 18248)

Aerial view of the rocky landscape immediately around Clogwen Arllef showing the distinctive pattern of woods and irregular enclosures which characterise this area. The fields in the background are within area 25.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
16 - Upper mountain slopes around Moelfre

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## **16 Upper mountain slopes around Moelfre and Mynydd Llanbedr (PRN 18249)**

### ***Historic background***

This area comprises two huge areas of mountainous upland extending roughly from the 200m contour up to the mountain ridge itself (principally area 27) in certain places at over 750m, based on the areas of Moelfre (to the south) and Mynydd Llanbedr (to the north). They are so similar in archaeology and character that they can be treated as a single area.

Although both areas are now completely free of settlement, archaeological fieldwork (initially by Bowen and Gresham (1967), by Richard Kelly (1982) and targeted upland survey in the area below Llyn Bodlyn (southern area) and on Mynydd Llanbedr by GAT (1988 and 1992) has demonstrated that these uplands have a complex history which needs to be drawn out.

The upland survey in particular identified, in two relatively restricted areas, dozens of sites of archaeological interest of all periods, from early prehistoric cairns and standing stones, hut circles and enclosures, clearance cairns, mounds long huts, building foundations, sheepfolds, mining remains, peat cuttings and many more ephemeral stone features. None of the sites have been excavated but morphologically they indicate some sort of occupation and human exploitation of these remote areas (not necessarily continuously) over the last three or four millennia.

The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century coach road from Bontddu down to the coast passes through the centre of the southern area (across Pont Scethin) and Ty Newydd (on the southern slopes of Moelfre) was a well-frequented stopping-over place.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*relict stone-built archaeological remains, drystone field walls*

The most immediately visible historic features are the great lengths of straight, 19<sup>th</sup> century field walls which cut directly and unsympathetically across these craggy and rocky areas. However, as the above section has shown, closer examination reveals a more complex historic landscape which requires further detailed investigation and analysis. These stone-built relict remains, varied in period and type and slight in nature, and their sheer numbers are the main characteristic of the historic landscape here.

One of the principal characteristics of the areas is that they have no modern settlement, and the only access is on foot via a small number of footpaths. They are, indeed, remote.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

The southern area contains four scheduled ancient monuments, two of which (Craig y Dinas settlement and the extensive area of settlement and fields above Cors y Gedol, both late prehistoric with medieval remains overlying) are substantial in area. The northern area contains a single scheduled hut group. These appear to be under sympathetic management, but the means that further detailed field survey (perhaps preceded by aerial photography) to increase the knowledge base (which would prevent accidental damage to sites) is the main priority here.

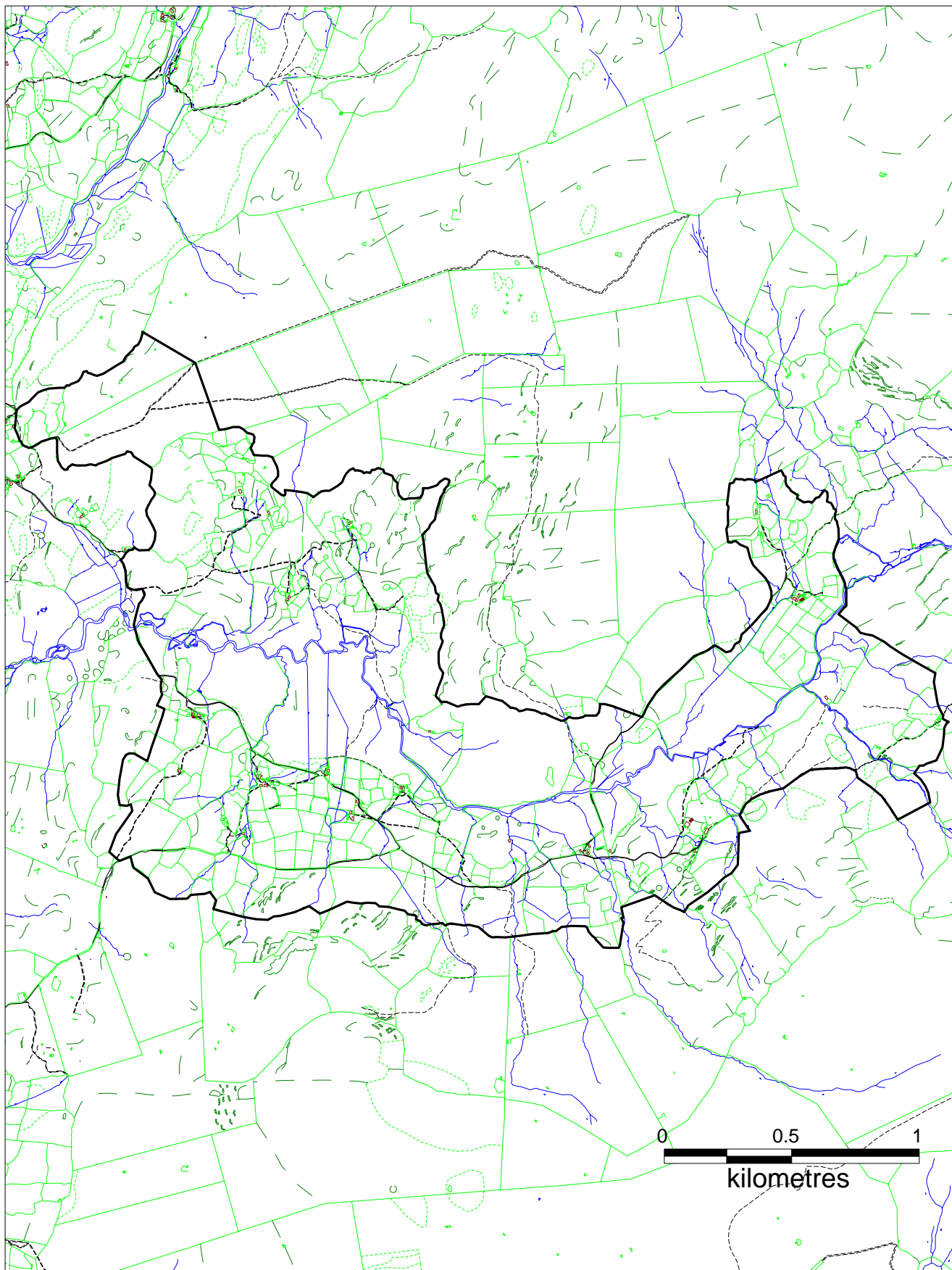
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 39 100 92 101*





Area 16      Upper mountain slopes around Moelfre      (PRN 18249)

View of the landscape around Cae'r Cynog, which shows the irregular fields at the end of Cwm Nantcol (area 17) which probably represent 16th century encroachments of the mountain (see section 8.1), contrasting with the later, straight walls on Mynydd Llanbedr which characterise this area beyond.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
17 - Cwm Nantcol

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## 17 Cwm Nantcol (PRN 18250)

### *Historic background*

Cwm Nantcol is one of the two (along with Cwm Bychan, area 28) river valleys which cut into the upland massif of Arddudwy. The area extends roughly east-west and is centred on the Afon Cwmnantcol which flows along a narrow, flat-bottomed valley with steep, rocky sides. A single, large cairn at the top of the valley on the flat bottom is probably the only known prehistoric site within the area (although no fieldwork has been carried out here, and it is possible that the irregular fields along the valley sides might contain evidence of prehistoric occupation).

The important, sub-medieval house of Maesygarneidd dominates the end of the valley and is associated with John Jones (1597?-1660), who was the brother-in-law of Cromwell and one of the signatories of the death warrant of Charles I.

At the neck of the valley, and between it and Cwm Bychan (area 28) is an area of curvilinear, stone-walled fields around the farm of Cae'r Cynog (see photograph) which is probably an example of 16<sup>th</sup>-century encroachment on to the upland margins (see section 8.1). There is a similar-looking complex right at the end of the valley around a farm eponymously called Nantcol, and it is likely that this is of the same period.

In the 1840s, according to the Tithe Estate maps, the largest farm in the county comprised the 1,425 acres of Graig isaf, Graig uchaf and Graig Fforchog (located on the south side of the valley near the top, but whose land extended into area 16), leased by William Ormsby-Gore to Morris Jones & Robert Owen. This is a good example of a feature of the compact gentry estates; the demesne was kept on hand, while other farmsteads were let to individual tenants.

There are other large 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century farms and larger complexes along the south side (where the only road is), notably Hendre-waelod and Twllnant. There is no 20<sup>th</sup> century development apart from 'improvements' to existing farms (and a 'phone box').

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*agriculturally-improved remote valley, substantial farmhouses, field patterns*

The main defining characteristics of the area relate to its topographic feature as a river valley cutting into an upland massif. The valley bottom is flat and has improved pasture fields in a regular pattern (at the top) while lower down there are extensive tracts of marshy land. The area extends partway up the valley sides to the top of the fields (mainly irregular in pattern and layout with sheepfolds and some woodland at the southern end (see below)). A series of fields at the neck of the valley on the northern side are characteristic of early post-medieval encroachment (see above).

The few scattered farmhouses (the only settlements in the area, and all on the southern side where the single road in the area runs) are impressive and substantial stone-built structures. There is a distinct atmosphere of a remote place, largely untouched by the 20<sup>th</sup> century (although unfortunately Maesygarneidd has been spoiled by the recent use of upvc windows).

### *Conservation priorities and management*

At the top of Cwm Nantcol, on the southern slopes is Coed Graig Uchaf, designated an SSSI (CCW ref. 31 WFM) as an example of a woodland with a rich oceanic bryophyte flora. The ground is a boulder field covered in luxuriant growths of bryophytes. Stunted sessile oak dominate in some areas, with thickets of hazel, ash and mature rowan. The variety of habitats increased by the presence of small streams running through the wood.



In general, the main priority is the preservation of the overall atmosphere of the remote valley as a place beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Any development or re-aligning of the field patterns should be resisted.

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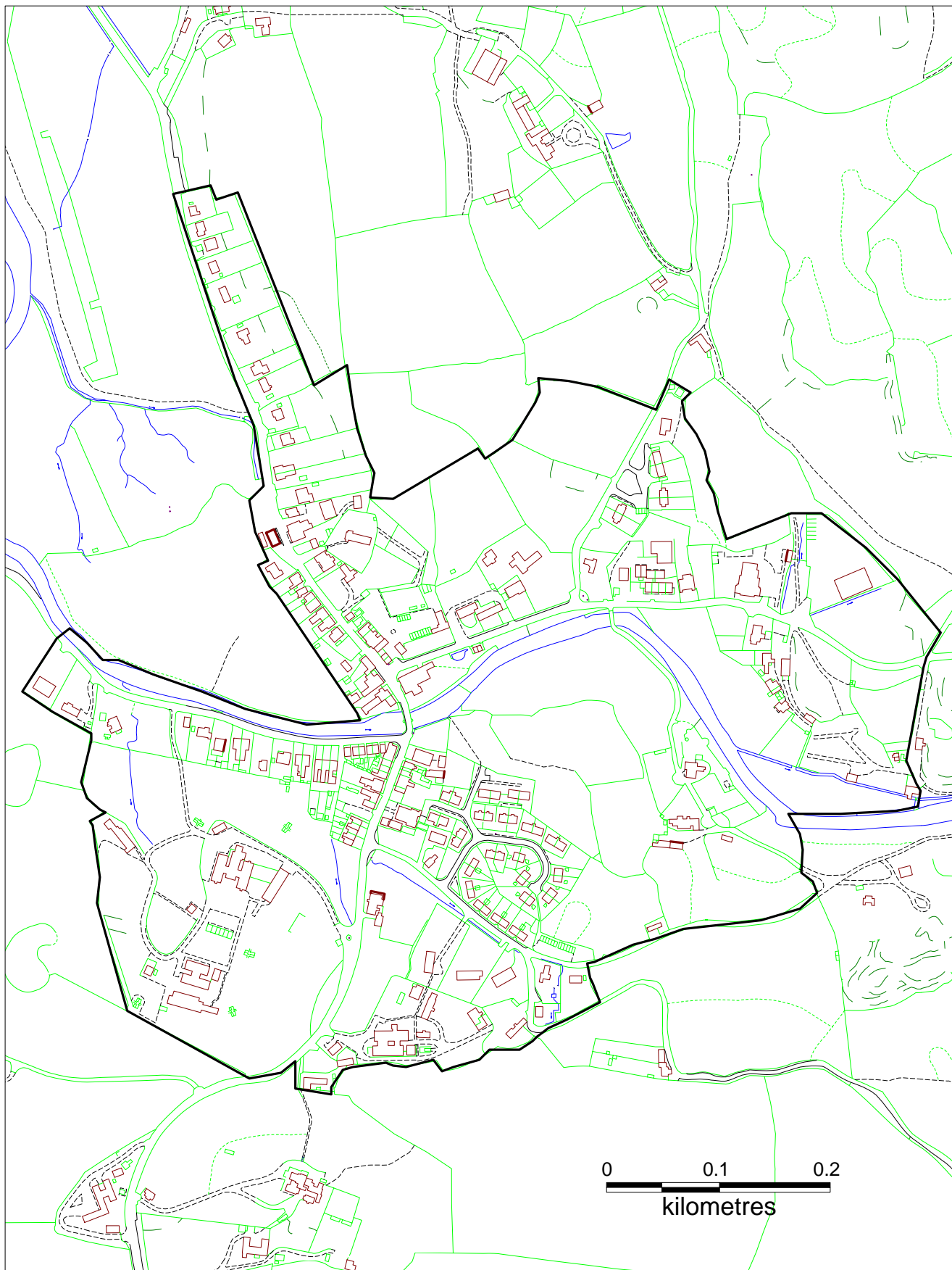


Area 17

Cwm Nantcol

(PRN 18250)

View looking across Cwm Nantcol, which shows the narrow, flat, valley floor with its pasture fields, and the irregular fields and woods above on the southern side of the valley. The open mountain sides of area 16 lie above.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

### Historic Landscape Character Area 18 - Llanbedr

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***Historic background***

The dedication of the church at Llanbedr is medieval but there is no evidence of early settlement in the present buildings in the village, all of which are more recent (18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century). The settlement developed as a loosely ribbon development centred on the bridge (a scheduled ancient monument) which carries the main north-south road over the Afon Artro. The church and the nucleus of the earlier buildings appear on the north side of the river which was in the commote of Ardudwy Uwch Artro in the earlier medieval period.

Most of the buildings are of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century date, and relate to the development of the settlement in the latter century, probably around the Victoria Inn which was a strategic coaching inn on the main road down the coast. The settlement also forms a cross-roads, with roads heading off eastwards to the remote valleys of Cwm Bychan and Cwm Nantcol, and westwards down to the beach and dunes, where the road ends in the holiday complex of Mochras (Shell island). The houses and a few commercial buildings grew up (pub, school, stores post office, garage) along these four roads. In the later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, several holiday ‘villas’ were built on the outskirts of the village (particularly on the northern side) emphasising the development of the local economy.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century ribbon settlement*

The settlement is an attractive small nucleation based on the crossing of the Artro. The older buildings (late 18<sup>th</sup> century) lie on the north side of this and include the main commercial buildings (for example the Victoria Inn, a single-storey building with a typically-intricate internal layout whose substantial stables and outbuildings lie across the minor road to the north, the Wenallt Stores (a large imposing, double-fronted building see photograph) and other buildings which are now restaurants serving the holiday trade. Other commercial and domestic buildings extend along the road towards Llanfair, where the medieval church, shops, a couple of 19<sup>th</sup> century chapels and 20<sup>th</sup> century ‘villas’ standing in their own grounds add to the character of the settlement. Many of the commercial buildings appear to have substantial yards and outbuildings behind them.

The majority of the domestic buildings in the settlement are detached houses, some standing in large gardens (to the north and south of the river. Plas Gwynfryn, for example, is a large complex, but others such as Ty’n Ddol and Bronafon are smaller but substantial dwellings, probably early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the houses are of two stories and usually two bays; the use of ground floor covered verandas along the fronts is a common feature.

There are also fine examples of terraced housing in the settlement, all of which are south of the river: these include one of five houses (which includes Mona and Derwen) along the main road which are again of two stories with dormers in small front-facing gables on the upper floor, and Moelfre Terrace which is on the road out to the beach. This is an interesting terrace of small groups built in different but compatible styles with upper dormers, built onto the road. To the west is a more imposing short terrace of large three-storeyed houses with substantial front gardens, probably early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date.

There is an imposing group of 20<sup>th</sup> century detached houses within their own landscaped grounds (for example Craig Artro), to the south of the nucleated settlement. Typically of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century settlements which have grown up along the main road, the railway station is some distance outside the main centre on the road down towards the beach (area 14).

All the buildings are of ashlar stone (dark granite), with the odd exception of a building immediately south of the bridge (now a youth hostel) which is incongruously built of brick. To the east of the village is a well-preserved mill and associated race, associated with a small slate quarry.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

Several of the buildings in the settlement are listed, and the centre is a Conservation Area. In addition, the bridge is a scheduled ancient monument. The conservation of these should be a management priority

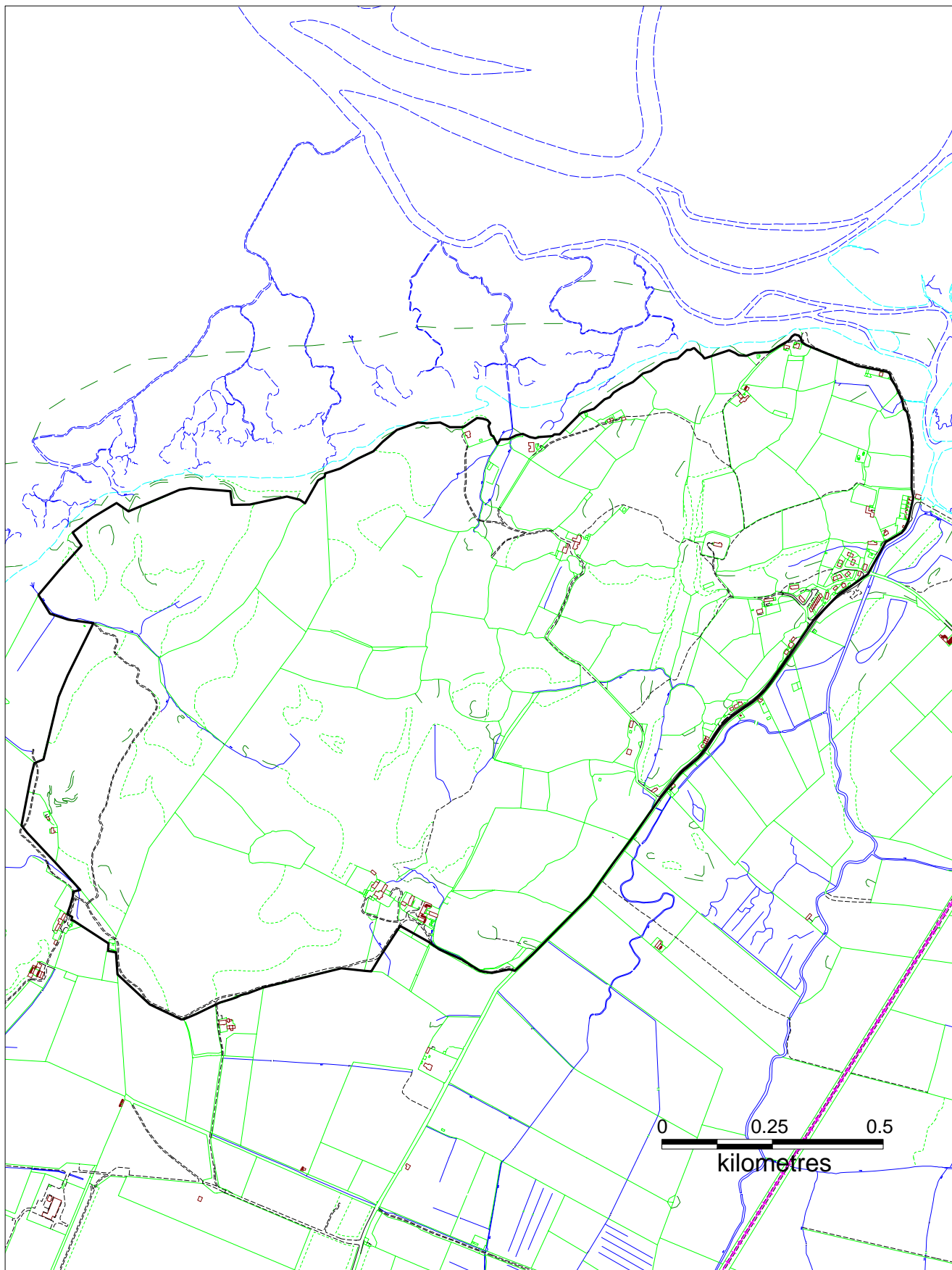


Area 18

Llanbedr

(PRN 18251)

This shows the impressive main shop and Post Office in the village, Wenallt Stores, standing opposite the road which leads out to Cwm Bychan. The former stables of the Victoria Inn are just visible on the right of the photograph.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
19 - Ynys Llanfihangel-y-traethu

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## 19 Ynys Llanfihangel-y-traethu (PRN 18252)

### *Historic background*

The name of this character area betrays its origin as an island off the north-west coast of Meirionnydd since linked to the mainland by the enclosure and reclamation of the morfa by Glwyn Cywarch after 1798 (see area 30). The area gave its name to the large parish of Llanfihangel-y-traethu which extended a long way inland in the medieval period.

The church has medieval origins (and is surrounded by a circular churchyard which stands isolated on the eastern side of the area, protect from the weather), and although there is no other evidence of early occupation on the ynys, a series of lynchets is quite clearly visible on aerial photographs on the slopes of the central 'hill' (which rises to a height of 70m OD).

The principal small, nucleated settlement ('Ynys') here lies below the church and a craggy cliff, on what would have been the original shoreline opposite the mainland and on the mouth of where the river (Afon y Glyn, now canalised through the reclaimed marsh) would have entered the sea. Although most of the buildings here are 19<sup>th</sup> century, an early origin for this settlement is indicated for the reasons given. The village lies at a bend in the main A496 road which now crosses the morfa. Otherwise, there are a few scattered farmsteads across the ynys.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*unenclosed pasture, fieldscape, farmsteads*

The ynys is divided into two different areas: the western end is higher, centred on Ogof Foel which rises to a height of c. 70m OD. This is largely unenclosed, with a few straight walls (probably 19<sup>th</sup> century) running across the area and dividing it into large enclosures. There are just three farms here, set around the base of the hill. In contrast, the lower, eastern end (sheltered from the worst of the weather) has a series of large, irregular enclosures and five or six farms.

The buildings stock of the small nucleated settlement of Ynys is mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century, stone buildings of various designs, hemmed in against a sheer cliff. There are no amenity buildings, only houses, but the settlement is located on the main road (and only a short distance from the nearest railway station) within easy reach of Harlech.

There are no relict archaeological sites here, and only a few short stretches of minor no-through roads.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

The main characteristic of the area is still its original status as an island, and the detached nature and atmosphere of the place needs to be conserved. The differences in the open/enclosed natures of the two ends of the area needs to be retained, as does the settlement pattern of scattered farms and small nucleation.

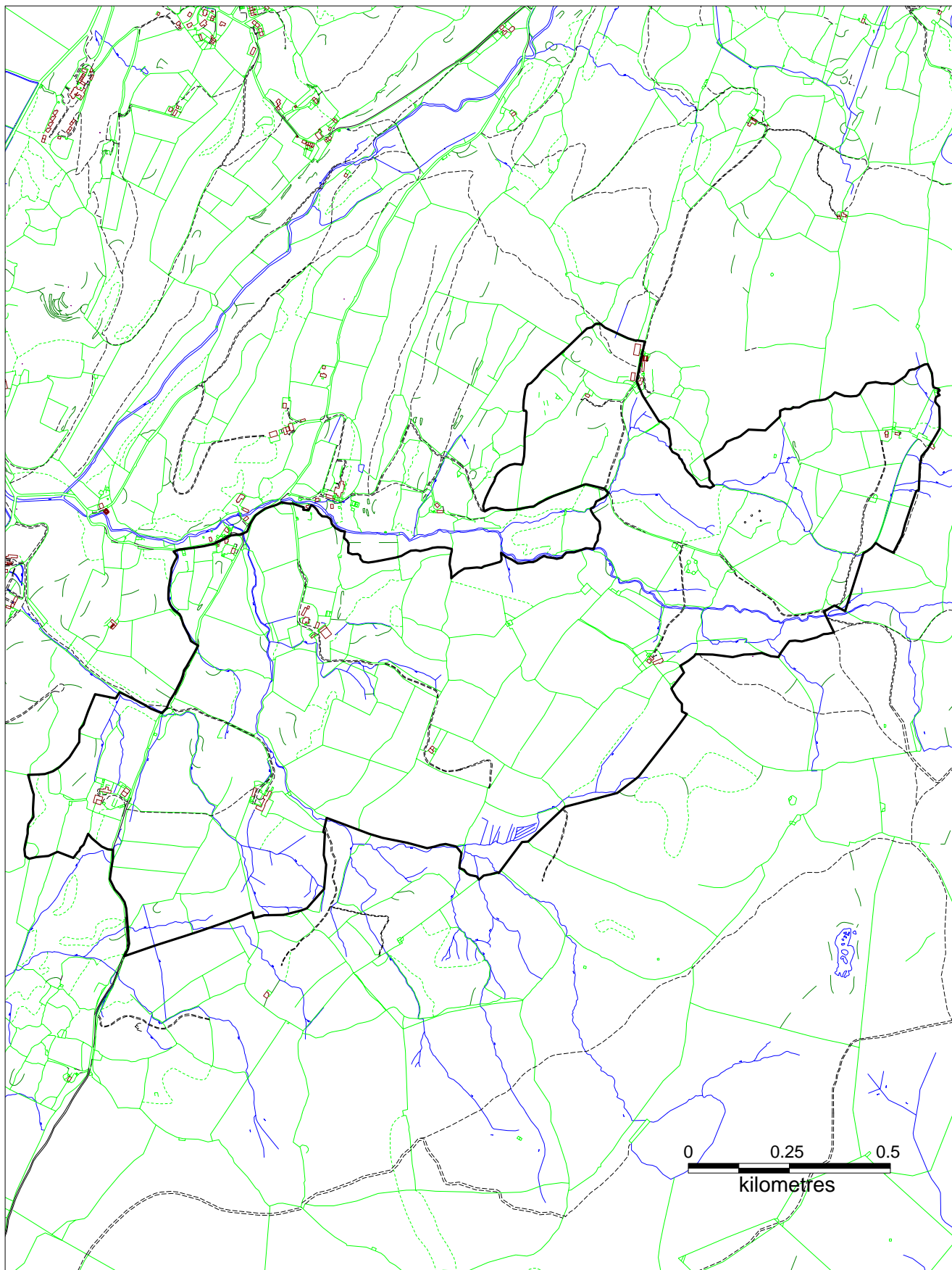
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 32 7493 190*





Area 19      Ynys Llanfihangel-y-traethu      (PRN 18252)

Aerial view of the former island, with the farm of Ty Cerrig in the foreground, showing the open nature of the area.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
20 - Fieldscape around Plas Uchaf

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## 20      **Fieldscape around Plas Uchaf      (PRN 18253)**

### ***Historic background***

This is a relatively small area of improved pasture fields between the wooded areas of Glyn Cywarch (area 31) and slopes around Bryn Bwbach (area 22), downslope, and the marginal, rocky area 33 above (see photograph). The earliest evidence for human occupation is a (bronze age) burnt mound, north of Moel Glo, and there is evidence for later prehistoric settlement in two (also scheduled) late prehistoric hut groups (near Moel Glo and Esgair-olwyn). Otherwise there are no relict sites in the area, and the next settlement is in the form of just five farms ( Plas-uchaf, Ffriddfedw, Moel-glo (photograph), Moel-y-geifr and Tynybwllch): most of these would appear to have relatively early, post-medieval origins, and the nature of the pasture implies a long history of improvement.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*pasture fields, stone-built farms, relict archaeological sites*

The open, improved pasture fields are the main characteristic features which defines this area. The enclosures are large and irregular (probably late), with both straight and some curvilinear boundaries, but the existence of prehistoric settlement sites implies that this layout has superseded an earlier one. The upper reaches of the area are poorly-drained and unimproved.

The scattered, stone-built farms are also important for local character, and the relict sites add historical depth to an otherwise consistent landscape (see photograph).

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

There are three scheduled ancient monuments here which are well-managed. The fields are defined by drystone walls which should continue under sympathetic management, and the farms are the other priority for conservation.

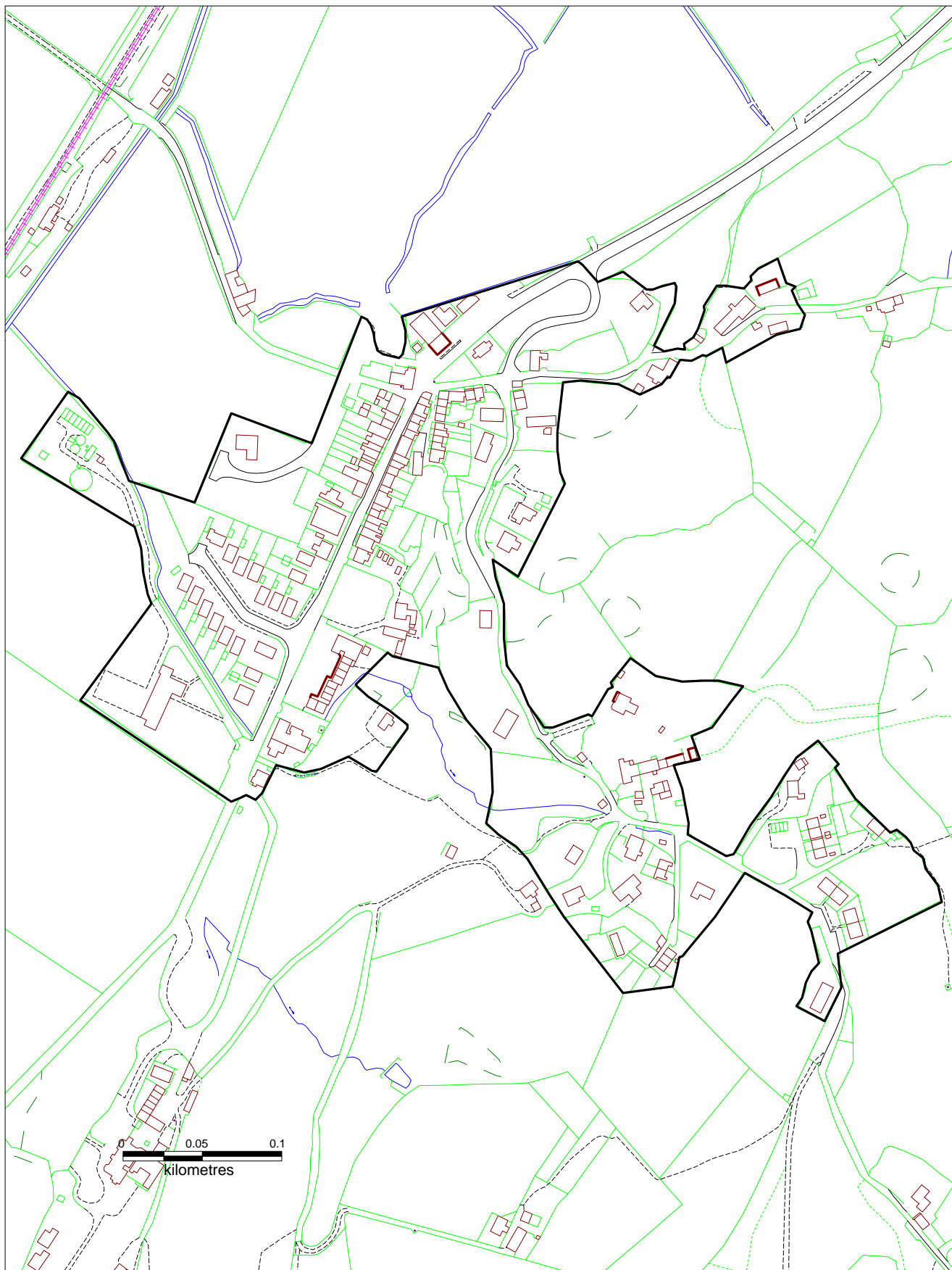
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 33 7493 175*



Area 20      Fieldscape around Plas Uchaf      (PRN 18253)

Aerial view of the farm of Moel y Glo, showing the distinctive difference between the improved pasture fields of area 20 (to the right) and the unimproved, rocky nature of area 26 (to the left).





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
21 - Talsarnau

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## 21 Talsarnau (PRN 18254)

### *Historic background*

This small settlement appears to be a 19<sup>th</sup> century ribbon development around an earlier core centred on the church. Some of the non-roadside buildings, above, may be 18<sup>th</sup> century in date, but the bulk of the building stock is 19<sup>th</sup> and some 20<sup>th</sup> century. Again, the railway station is some way below the settlement on the morfa (area 30), reached by a minor road.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

#### *19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century ribbon development*

There is a small cluster of stone buildings above the main road, around the post-medieval church which indicate an earlier settlement and the reason for the development of Talsarnau in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (it is, in effect, the next settlement along the main road from Maentwrog to the north, and in many ways it is similar to that settlement in its architecture and style, but on a less impressive scale). The early houses are straggled around the hill slopes above the present road and are a mixture of types, while the 'modern' extension of the village is in the opposite direction (across the morfa).

The core of the village is formed by a single short street lined with terraced houses: those on the east (upper side) are two storeyed and rather plain, especially as they are rendered, but those opposite (see photograph) are more interesting, being a series of short terraces of different designs. On the street side, these are two storeyed in appearance, but as the road was apparently constructed right on the break of slope, the rears of the houses show they are three storeys and quite impressive.

In addition to the domestic buildings, there are a couple of public houses, a chapel, shop and a modern motel (looking rather incongruous on the southern edge of the settlement, but arguably maintaining the tradition of the village providing a stopover opportunity for travellers).

### *Conservation priorities and management*

The visual appearance of the village and its stone-built, terraced buildings stock should be maintained.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 32 7493 194*

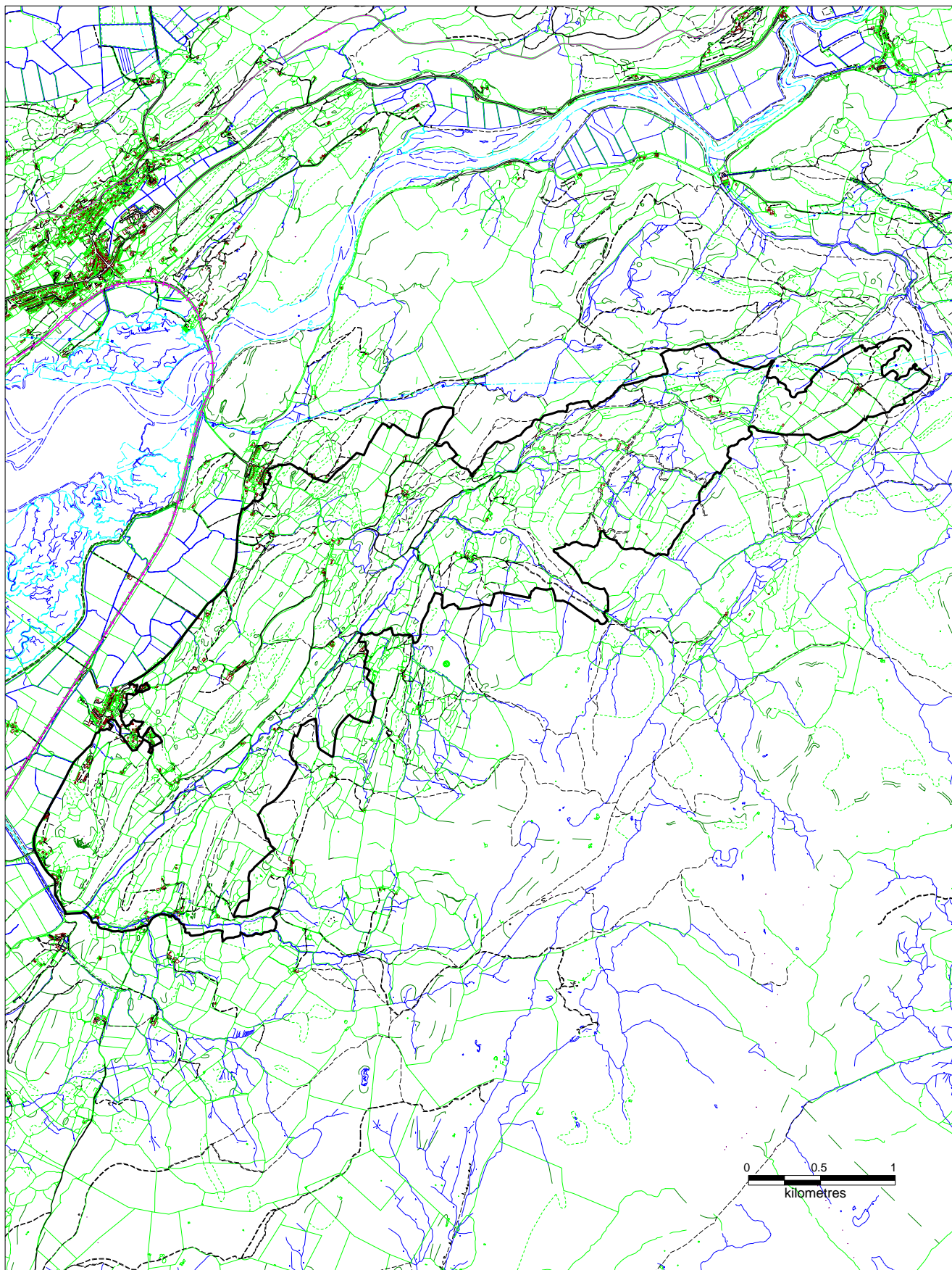


Area 21

Talsarnau

(PRN 18254)

A view of the main village shop and some of the terraced housing along the western side of the road in the village. This terrace is built right on the edge of a steep drop in ground level and although they are two storeyed in front the rears, overlooking the reclaimed marsh and the railway, are three storeyed and appear very substantial.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
22 - Wooded valleys around Bryn Bwbach

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## 22      **Wooded valleys around Bryn Bwbach      (PRN 18255)**

### ***Historic background***

This is an elongated area of mixed character which is centred on a north-east south-west river valley (Afon y Glyn). To its north is a spit of higher land which rises above the coastal morfa (area 30), and on the other (southern) side the land again rises steeply on a series of wooded slopes to the open uplands of area 33. To the north, the valley opens out while still maintaining its heavily-wooded character with area 05 defining its northern side.

There are virtually no sites within the area recorded on the SMR, and so no evidence for early settlement or land-use here. Llandecwyn church has medieval origins (the only such church in Arudwy which does not have a coastal setting) and is probably set on an early route from Traeth bach over the northern mountains inland towards Tomen y Mur. There are no indications of contemporary settlement. Maes-y-neuadd is a major sub-medieval house with a substantial (later) walled garden (now run as a well-known restaurant), and Plas Llandecwyn is an important sub-medieval two-unit, storeyed house: other farms (e.g. Caerwych) are pre-19<sup>th</sup> century foundations. Further inland, Nant Pasgan-mawr and Nant Pasgan-bach are good examples of 19<sup>th</sup>-century upland farms in the local vernacular tradition.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*wooded hill slopes, stone-built farmhouses*

The principal historic characteristics are the heavily-wooded hillslopes, with intervening pasture fields (see SSSI citation below). The other defining characteristic are the scattered farms of different period and styles which comprise the main settlement pattern (there is a small nucleation of 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses at Bryn Bwbach which is rather incongruous): amongst these are Plas Llandecwyn, Caerwych, Aberdeunant, Tallin, Yr Onen, Nant Pasgan-mawr and Nant Pasgan-bach. In the upper reaches of the area, around the latter farmsteads, the enclosed fields and woods give way to marshy, upland waste. There are virtually no relict archaeological sites here, and just a couple of minor roads and trackways.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

The area contains two SSSIs. The larger one is Maes Meillion a Gefail-y-cwm (CCW ref 31WGE and 19.6 ha in extent) which is of special interest for its species-rich lowland dry grassland and the associated mixture of wet pastures and mire vegetation. Dolorgan Barn (CCW 31WVY) is a 17<sup>th</sup> century barn designated as a breeding ground for the lesser horseshoe bat. The principal characteristics of the area which need careful management are the woodland and the stone-built farmsteads (including outbuildings). Coed Garth-byr is owned and managed by the Woodland Trust.

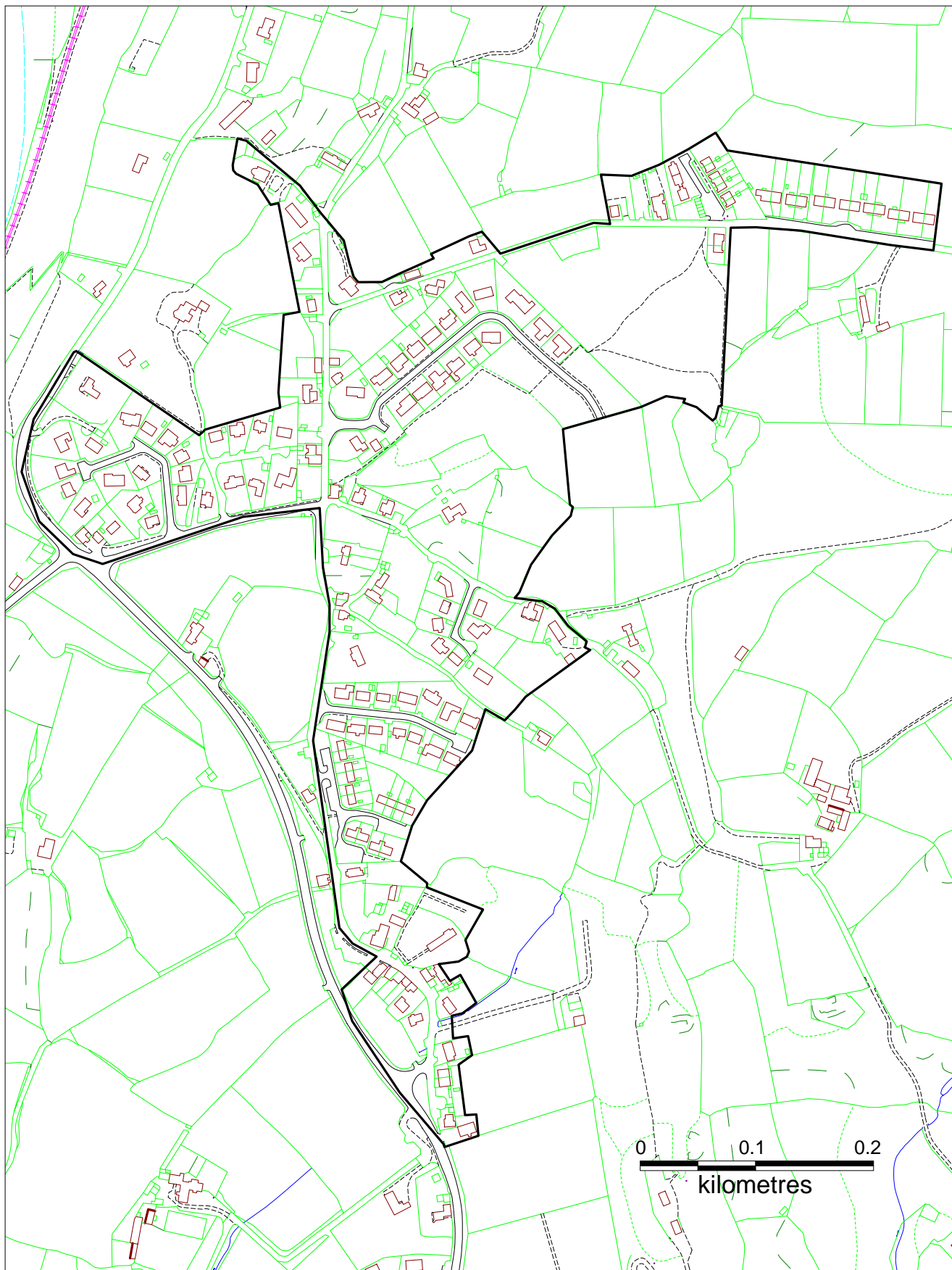
There is a single scheduled ancient monument (prehistoric homestead) in the area, and a number of the buildings are listed.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 32 7493 194*



Area 22      Wooded valleys around Bryn Bwbach      (PRN 18255)

An aerial view of the area, with the post-medieval house of Maesyneuadd (now a hotel) in the foreground, and the characteristic landscape of improved pasture surrounded by wooded slopes beyond.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
23 - Llanfair

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***Historic background***

Llanfair is a straggling, loosely-nucleated settlement set above the main north-south A496 road (rather than along it as are the other settlements in the area, such as Dyffryn Ardudwy, Llanbedr *etc.*). The church is medieval in date, and although there is no further evidence for medieval occupation here, there appears to be a loose core of late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries houses around it (on the early route of the main road before re-alignment).

Most of the settlement is to the north, initially set out along the southern route of what begins as Ffordd Uchaf from Harlech (possibly an early route of the main road), and the 20<sup>th</sup> century houses (mainly rows of unimaginative single storey bungalows) which numerically comprise the main part of the settlement range up the hillslope to the north again (above the current main road). An incongruous row of late 20<sup>th</sup> century, semi-detached houses lies along the northern side of the minor road which leads out on to the uplands (area 25), and aerial photographs show how close these are to late prehistoric settlement sites.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*modern settlement off-set from an earlier core*

The early core of the settlement lies around the medieval church (see photograph), while the rest struggles up the hill slopes above the road to the north. There is no overall plan, and even the 20<sup>th</sup> century houses appear to have been built in *ad hoc* arrangements. Some of the early houses (there are no non-domestic buildings in the settlement, the nearest amenities being in Harlech) are built with their long axes perpendicular to the slope within an organic settlement lay-out (many of these houses are white-washed, and the whole gives an impression of being ‘tidy’).

There are also some short 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces of tall houses, and a lot of 20<sup>th</sup> century inter-war ‘holiday’-type houses. Llanfair slate caverns extend south of the settlement along the cliff edge.

***Conservation priorities and management***

The character of the early houses around the church should be conserved. Further extensions to the settlement would adversely impact on the surrounding areas, especially in the uplands (not necessarily on the settlement itself).

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 35 7493 061*



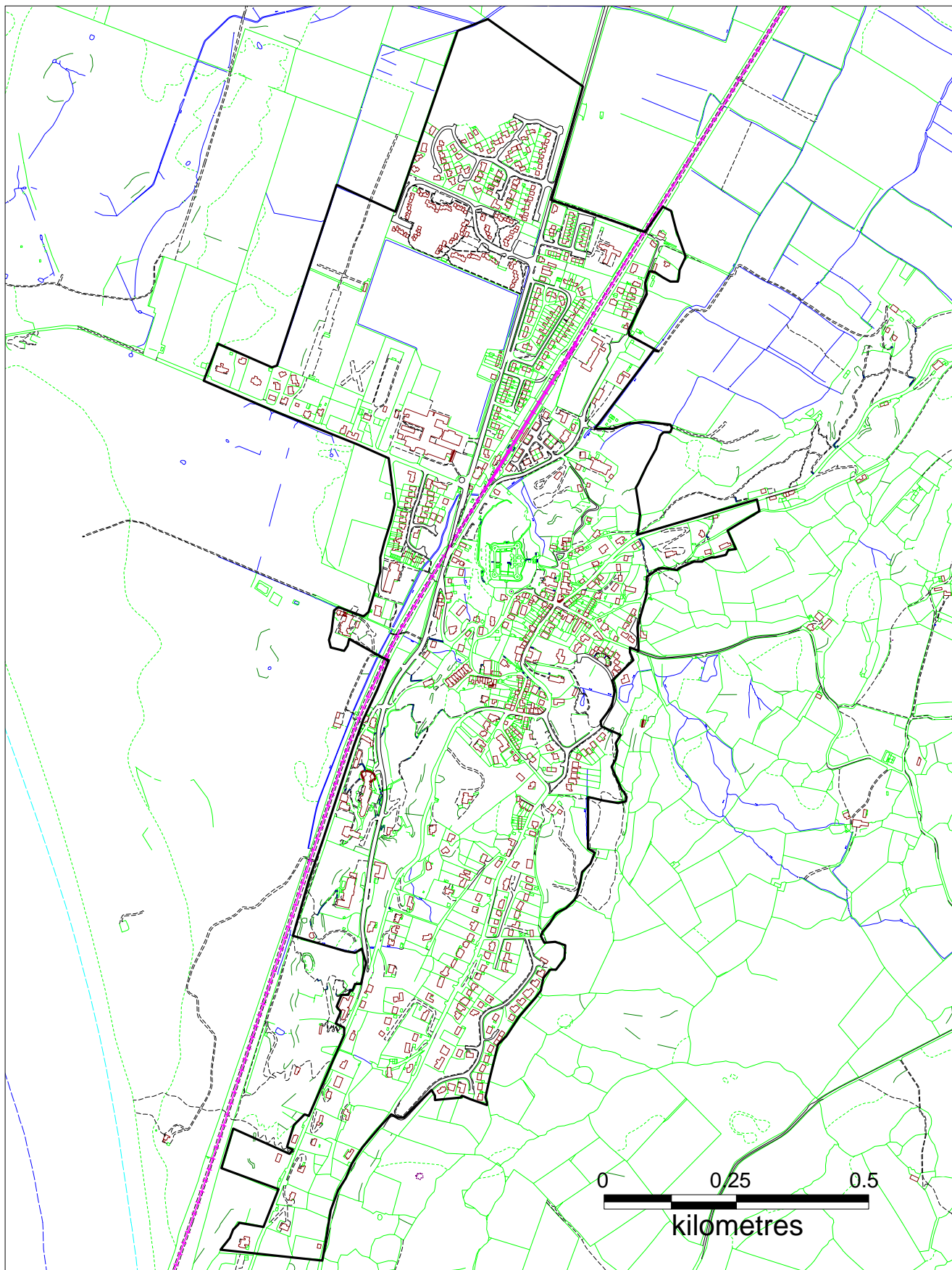
Area 23

Llanfair

(PRN 18256)

View of the settlement from above, showing the earlier core of buildings centred on the church. The modern part of the settlement is off to the right.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
24 - Harlech

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*Historic background*

The castle and town of Harlech both occupy an impressive promontory site which overlooks Tremadoc Bay and across the Llyn Peninsula. They were jointly conceived as part of the chain of castle-boroughs intended to encircle North Wales by Edward I. Building operations began in 1283 and progress was sufficiently rapid for the new borough to receive its royal charter in the following year. Despite the grandeur of the castle, which was largely complete by 1289, the town proved to be the smallest of the Edwardian planned boroughs and only 12 taxpayers appear in the Subsidy Roll of 1292—3. By 1305 the burgage total stood at 24½, and by 1312 it had risen to 29, but neither figure suggests that the population of the community exceeded 150 persons.

Like nearby Cricieth the medieval settlement at Harlech was a poor companion to its splendid castle, although it had its commercial and administrative functions since both the hundred court and the county sessions met here, and there was also a weekly market on Saturdays together with four annual fairs. No attempt was made to wall the borough, however, a decision which must have been regretted after Glyndwr's attack when 46 houses, virtually the whole town, were destroyed. Neither was a church built within the area of the early town, although there was a medieval chapel which Speed (1610) marks as standing in Stryd Fawr, immediately to the east of the castle in the area of the modern hotel'. He adds that the building was then 'decayed and without use', and no traces of it remain, although its site appears to correspond with the area of the hotel car park since this land appears on the 1843 Tithe Map as 'Chapel Yard'. Attached to the chapel was a small graveyard, and several burials were unearthed during building operations in 1808. Few other vestiges of urban life are recorded. The borough had its mill, mentioned as early as 1305, and Speed shows its position as beyond the north-eastern corner of the castle where the land falls sharply down to the caravan park. There was also an early town hall, but its site is not known; the building was ruinous at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its site had been built on by 1813.

The later history of Harlech is poorly documented and appears to have been uneventful except for the role of the castle during the Wars of the Roses and the Civil War. Speed's plan suggests that the borough failed to recover from the ravages of Glyndwr, who held the castle for nearly five years, and he indicates a mere handful of tenements lining Stryd Fawr with the beginnings of a secondary street at right-angles to it, the present Pen Dref. Harlech declined during the later middle ages as its military function became superfluous, although it retained some administrative status and later attracted renewed commercial activities which caused it to assume a "sub-urban" character in which small-scale rural industries played an increasingly important role. A contemporary description of the borough referred to 'a verie poore towne ... having no traphicke or trade', and 200 years later Fenton was still able to observe that it was 'the most forlorn, beggarly place imaginable'.

Harlech is also the court in which Bendigaefran is sitting at the beginning of the second branch of the Mabinogi, *Branwen ferch Llŷr*, when Matholwch arrives from Ireland seeking marriage with Branwen. Obviously the place was associated with a royal court and would have been well-known to the story's audience.

*Key historic landscape characteristics*

*medieval castle, largely 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape, elegant stone buildings, arts and crafts houses*

Harlech is the only true town in Ardudwy, although there are no buildings within the town itself which betray its medieval origins. The layout of the town has been dictated by the local topography: it is set on a steeply-sloping hill side above the now-enclosed and drained Morfa. The main thoroughfare through the town (formerly the main road running through Ardudwy, but that now runs along the Morfa and climbs the hill at the southern end of the town) is Stryd Fawr, and is probably on the line of the medieval main street. The buildings are all of stone, in a bewildering variety of styles but mainly 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century (although many of the non-

domestic buildings have 20<sup>th</sup> century frontages), mostly in short terraces, either 2 or 3 stories high. This street contains most of the town's amenities - as well as terraced houses, there are shops, banks, a surgery, a library, a chapel, hotels and restaurants.

Pendref, which also probably lies on the line of a medieval street, leads off from Stryd Fawr at right-angles up a very steep hill. Apart from the hotel on the corner, most of the buildings here, all of which are on the south side of the street, are short, terraced 2 storey houses. A longer terrace is set again at right-angles to the north side, and above them are several, larger villa-type houses on individual plots.

As the main street heads southwards out of town it passes around in a loop to keep the contour of the ground where it becomes Ffordd Isaf. Below this are a series of stone-built terraced houses, many of which are listed: these include Tryfar (several short terraces of 2 or 3 storeyed houses of different designs opposite a smaller terrace of one build) and Bronwen Terrace (a superb one-build terrace of two-bay 19<sup>th</sup> century houses, 3 storeys high).

A strong arts and crafts tradition in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century continued an impressive formulation of an architecture of stone: this is seen at its best in the series of houses on the southern edge of the town above Ffordd Isaf, all individually designed and built in their own grounds (such as Bron Meillion surgery, Maelgwyn, Perthi) associated with a cosmopolitan group of artists etc centred on the figure of A. Davidson, whose home subsequently became the nucleus of Coleg Harlech which is set right down at the bottom of the town alongside the railway.

Elsewhere there are large, detached 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century houses (many in a 'villa' style) set irregularly below the castle, as well as hotels, testifying to the increasing importance of Harlech as a holiday destination.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

Harlech Castle is a scheduled ancient monument in Guardianship and also a World Heritage Site. A large number of buildings in Harlech are listed, and the whole 'historic' core is a Conservation Area. SNP has detailed photographic records of many of the buildings in their 'Traditional buildings file (NP5/61)'. With all of these designations, the successful future management of the town and castle should be endured.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 35 7493 061*



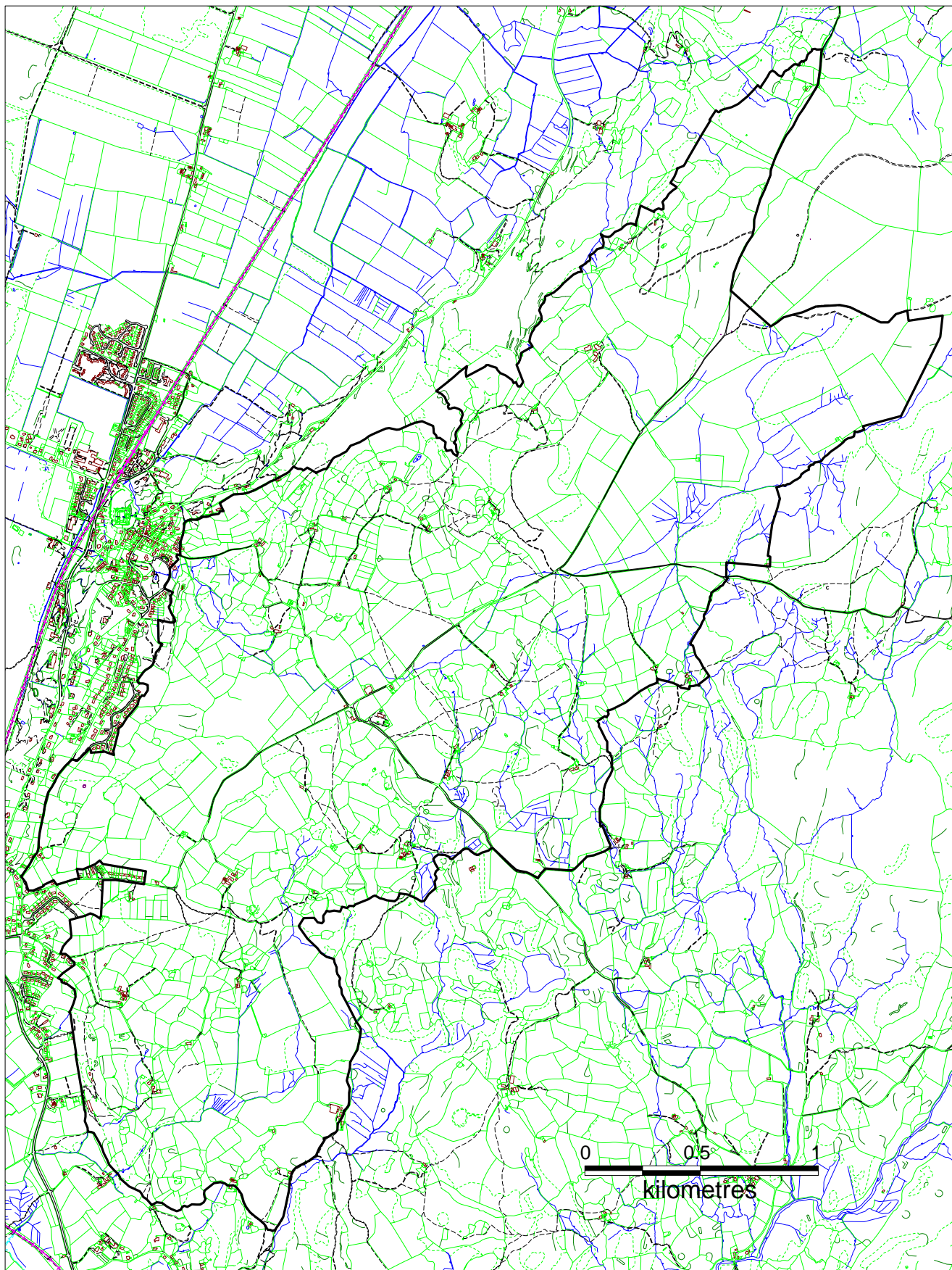


Area 24

Harlech

(PRN 18257)

Aerial view of the town and castle looking south, with the castle in the centre, Stryd Fawr running up the left-hand side of the view, and the (newer) lower town on the morfa to the right.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
25 - Fieldscape, hill slopes above Harlech

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***Historic background***

This upland area contains a wealth of well-preserved relict archaeological monuments. There is a single (and outlying) neolithic burial chamber at Gwern Einion in the southern part of the area which seems to be focussed on the Afon Artro although no contemporary settlement has been identified in the surrounding, improved fields. To the north is one of Ardudwy's two main concentrations of second millennium BC funerary and ritual monuments (the second is around Mynydd Egryn (principally area 2)). The Moel Goedog group appears to be deliberately approached along a track defined by standing stones, possibly originally an 'avenue' which leads between two ring cairns, one of which has produced evidence of much ceremonial as well as funerary activity and a range of dates between about 2000-1750BC (Lynch 1984). The area has very intense relict archaeology with a variety of funerary monuments as well as areas of settlement and fields. It seems significant that it also adjoins a major natural route and it may be that it represents a specialised funerary centre somewhat distant from the main areas of population.

Environmental study has shown that these uplands saw a significant phase of woodland clearance during the second millennium BC. The bronze age clearance of the uplands continued into the middle of the first millennium BC, when a deteriorating climate or simply unsustainable agriculture on thin soils led to the development of blanket peat as demonstrated at the settlements of Erw-wen and Moel y Gerddi. Indeed, the main focus of settlement in this later period was on the fringes of the upland, on the better- drained, west-facing hill slopes with numerous settlements of various forms surviving where modern agriculture has not been too intensive (see also area 33).

The settlements at Erw Wen and Moel y Gerddi were single, concentric enclosed round houses and there are also remains of a range of sub-circular settlements that are not unique to Ardudwy but are locally typical, although there no actual hillforts in this area. There is some evidence that this settlement style continued from bronze age styles. It evolved into more complex groups of structures, incorporating strongly built stone-walled buildings of different shapes and sizes for different purposes. The main later style of settlement was of more nucleated groups of houses in compact enclosed or unenclosed homesteads of which there are some 25 surviving in Ardudwy. The majority of them still retain a mainly curvilinear shape that can be seen as developed from an original circular layout, for instance at Muriau Gwyddelod, Llanfair.

The nucleated enclosed and unenclosed hut settlements are to be found all along the west-facing margins of the upland of Ardudwy and associated with many of them are remains of strongly terraced field systems that indicate intensive arable cultivation, and which give the current landscape much of its distinctive local character. The same settlement areas were also often re-used in the medieval period but generally retained the outlines of the Romano-British enclosures or field patterns, although there is little evidence for this in this area.

There are several post-medieval upland farms in the area (see below), and the field patterns around some of these (comprising small, regular enclosures, often in a row (for example near Groes Lwyd) reflect economic improvements in agriculture carried out during the late 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the fields have been cleared of stone in relatively recent years, although this has probably now stopped.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*relict prehistoric settlement sites and field systems, fieldscapes, upland farms*

Much of the relict archaeology that it is particularly characteristic of this area is described in the above section. There is a single neolithic burial chamber at Gwern Einion, and a concentration of standing stones and ring cairns to the north.

Particularly characteristic features in the landscape here are the nucleated groups of houses in compact enclosed or unenclosed homesteads, many of them retaining a mainly curvilinear shape that can be seen as developed from an original circular layout, many of them associated with remains of strongly terraced field systems, also often curvilinear in plan. The field patterns around some of the upland farms are later, reflecting economic improvements in agriculture carried out during the late 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. These comprise small, regular enclosures, often in a row (for example near Groes Lwyd) or grouped together around a farm (e.g. Brwyn-llynau).

There is an interesting range of stone-built, upland farms. Drws Yr Ymlid has been mentioned before (section 8.2.1); Cefnfilltir has a range of stone outbuildings set informally around a courtyard; Merthyr is a low, single storey farm, with side extensions and an informal courtyard of outbuildings; while Rhydgaled uchaf and Foel area simple, small 19<sup>th</sup> century farms with no outbuildings. there are also outlying barns such as that near Rhydgaled isaf.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

Almost all of the recorded archaeological sites within the area are scheduled ancient monuments (Gwern Einion burial chamber, Fonlief hir standing stones and cairns, Muriau Gwyddelod, Brwyn llynau homestead, Tyddyn Du homestead, the hut group at Groes-las, Cefnfilltir enclosure, homesteads south of Moel Goedog, Erw Wen etc.). These must be a priority for conservation and sympathetic management, although efforts should be made to extend some of the scheduled areas to include more of the contemporary field systems. As elsewhere, further research on and around the sites (including the fields) would add to our knowledge and inform a better management.

It is also important to conserve the variety of field patterns (see above) and traditional boundaries, and to retain the local, upland character of the stone-built farms and their outbuildings.

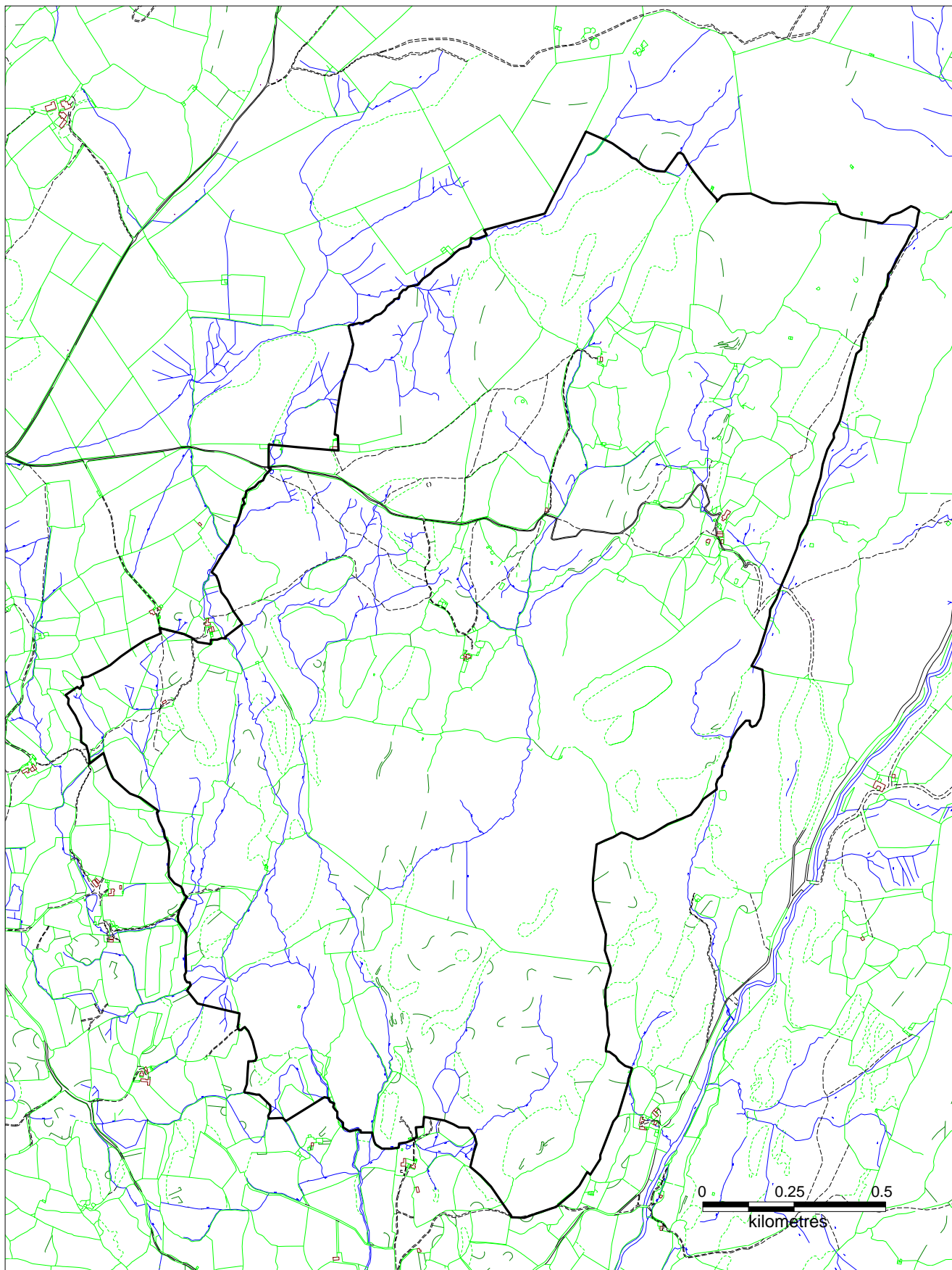
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 35 7493 058*





Area 25      Fieldscape, hill slopes above Harlech      (PRN 18258)

Aerial view of the central part of this distinctive character area looking east, showing the mixture of early and later fields, scattered farmsteads and relict archaeological sites.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

### Historic Landscape Character Area 26 - Fieldscape and woods

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***Historic background***

The presence of a small stone circle above an area of boggy marsh (partly within area 250) testifies to early prehistoric activity here, but this is likely to be associated the extensive group of funerary and ritual monuments focussed further west in area 25. There are also several hut circles and associated enclosures. Their relatively small size, and the fact that they are unenclosed, might suggest that they are either bronze age in date, or are simply typical of later, upland settlement.

Gerddi Bluog is the largest house in the area, and was originally built probably late in the 17<sup>th</sup> century: it was associated with the Prys family for many years, and thus has a particular status in Welsh cultural history. It was modernised by Clough Williams-Ellis in the 1960s. It has an interesting set of outbuildings. The only other two farms here (Ffridd farm and Rhyd yr Eirin, both stone-built and solid) are probably 19<sup>th</sup> century, as are most of the large irregular enclosures which divide up the land, although there are interesting clusters of small enclosures, all stone built), around the three farms.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*irregular enclosures, drystone walls, some relict archaeology*

This character area is in some ways an 'upland extension' of area 15. It is characterised by its rocky outcrops, relatively-unimproved land (a contrast to area 25 to the west), patches of wood in the lower parts of the area and almost total lack of settlement (in the past as now). Lying between the busy uplands of area 25 (to the west), and the enclosed valley of Cwm Bychan (area 28 to the east) it has the atmosphere of a remote, possibly inhospitable place. There is just one, single track road which crosses the area, and no permanent settlement (there are only three farms anyway – see above).

There are no proper fields (in the sense of agriculturally-improved spaces), rather the area is divided up into large, irregular enclosures defined by drystone walls which struggle over and around the rocky outcrops which cover the area. There are also several. Sheepfolds.

The area contains a number of relict archaeological sites, mainly prehistoric huts and associated enclosures, and more are visible on post-war vertical aerial photographs than are recorded on the SMR.

***Conservation priorities and management***

Two of the relict sites are scheduled ancient monuments, the stone circle and a hut circle below Gerddi Bluog. Conservation of these and the other relict archaeology (and the identification of further sites) must be a priority. Otherwise the farms and walls are the main historic characteristics to be managed, but it is also important to retain the overall atmosphere of remoteness.

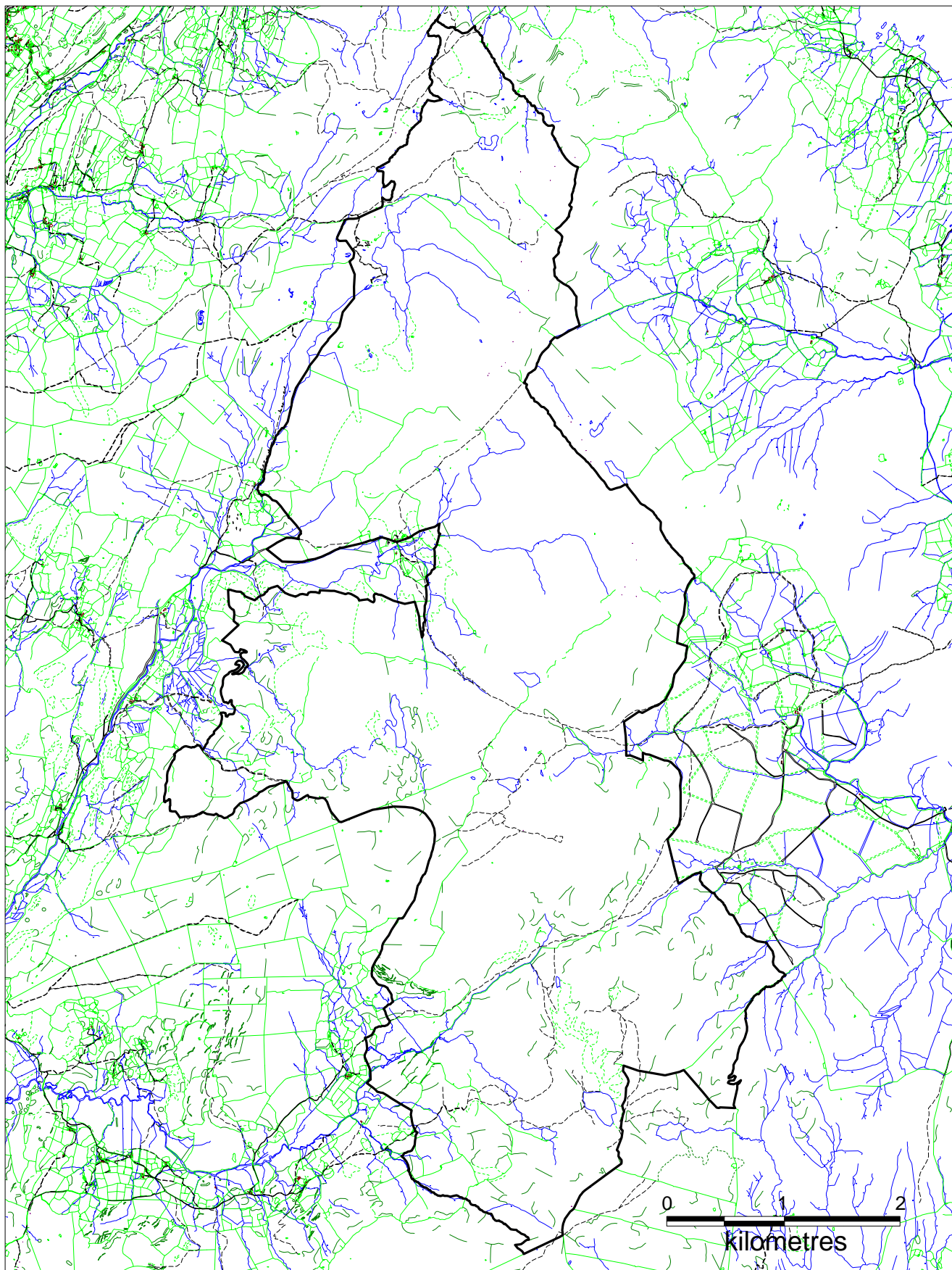
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 35 7493 055*





Area 26      Fieldscape and woods      (PRN 18259)

Ground view of Ffridd farm, graphically illustrating the open, rocky and harsh landscape of this area.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
27 - Upper mountain slopes, Rhinogau

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## **27 Upper mountain slopes, Rhinogau (PRN 18260)**

### ***Historic background***

There are few signs of past human activity in this wild and remote, mountainous landscape, with the exception of one or two isolated late prehistoric hut circles in the northern part of the area. The upland grazing here has only been lightly influenced by grazing. The mountain range is a dramatic backdrop to Arddudwy and forms an almost impenetrable barrier. There are three paths over the summit which follow traditional routes. The two northern ones lead out of Cwm Bychan (one un-named over Bwlch Gwilym, and the other known as the Roman Steps (Bwlch Tyddiad), while the southern one carries on from Cwm Nantcol and is known as Bwlch Drws Arddudwy.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

#### *open rugged mountain*

Rhinog has been designated a SSSI and National Nature Reserve (CCW ref. 31WNX). The area covered is massive, the NNR extends for c. 598ha centred on SH662290 (which all falls within this character area), while the SSSI covers in total 2681ha (most of this lies within this character area, but it also extends over small parts of areas 16 and 28).

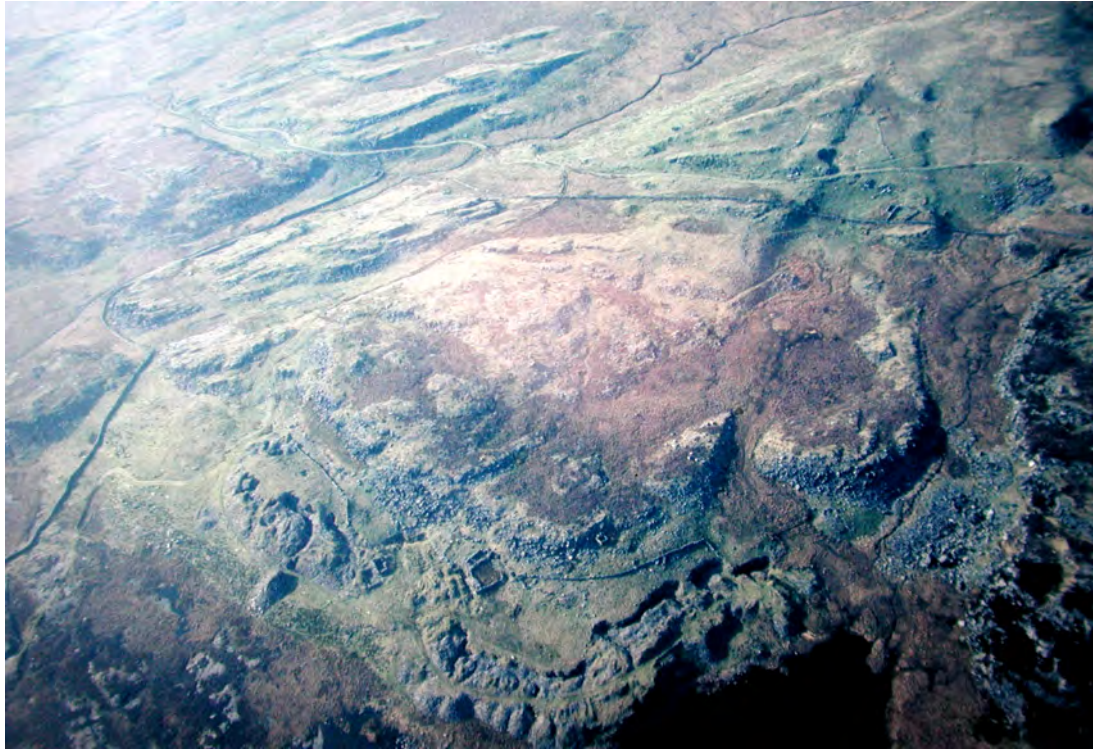
The reserve covers rugged mountainous country including Rhinog Fawr and Rhinog Fach. Its ecological and physiographical features probably have no counterpart in the rest of Wales or England. On the Cambrian gritstones, the whole area is an example of upland vegetation only lightly influenced by grazing.

One or two 19<sup>th</sup> century drystone walls (either typically straight or more sinuous following gulleys intrude), a few sheepfolds, some mountain cairns (or 'piles of stones') and small areas of abandoned tips and levels are the only human artefacts here (although where the slopes are less rugged and rocky at the range's northern end there are one or two isolated hut circles).

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

As the area is both an NNR and SSSI the area is suitably managed to retain its rugged, wild mountain character.

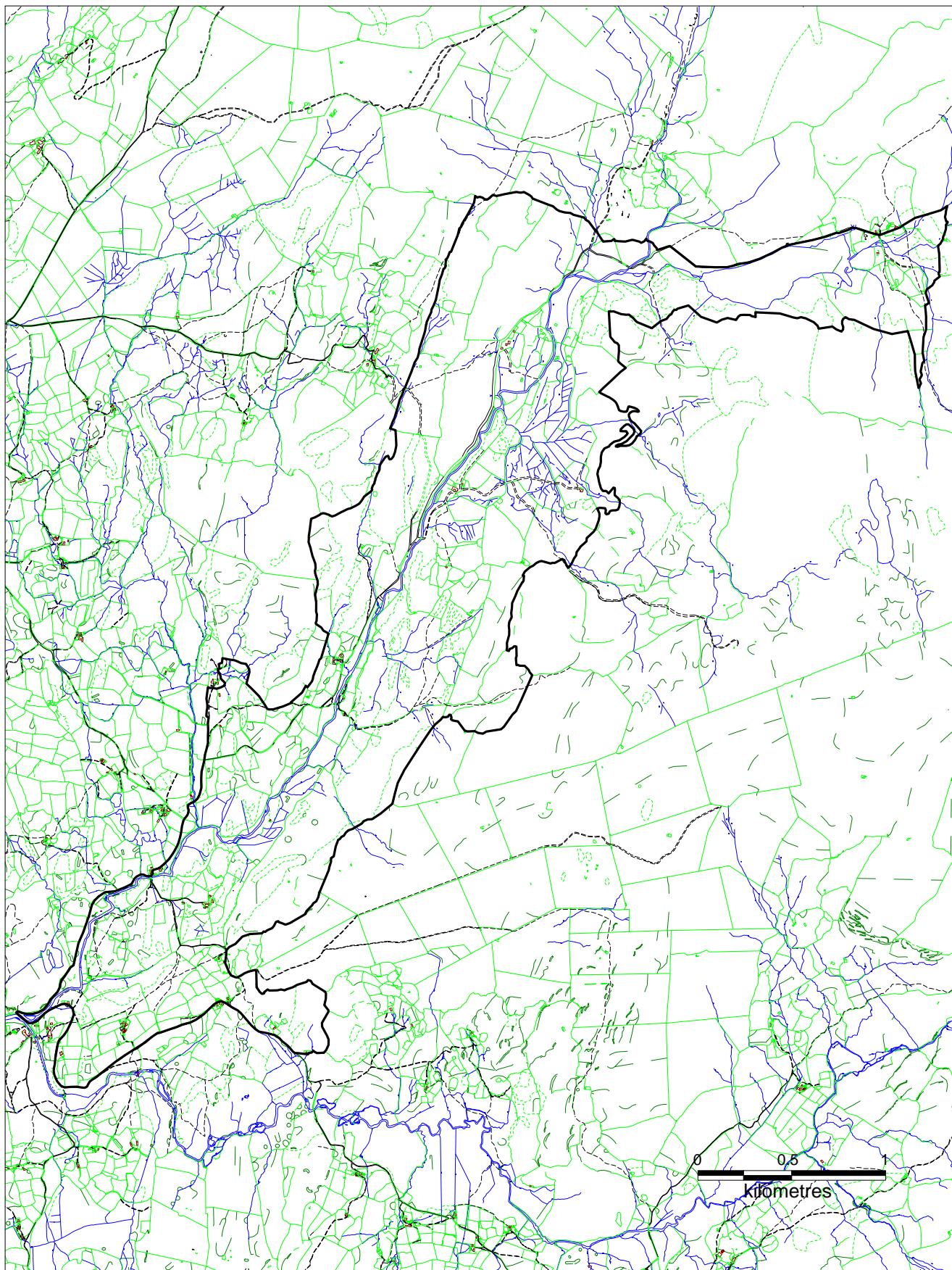
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 35 7493 055*



Area 27      Upper mountain slopes, Rhinogau      (PRN 18260)

Aerial view of the disused mine workings around Llyn Eiddew mawr which are one of the few signs of human impact on this craggy area of remote mountain.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
28 - Cwm Bychan

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***Historic background***

Cwm Bychan is one of the two narrow river valleys which cut into the upland massif of Ardudwy (Cwm Nantcol, area 17, being the other). Both rivers feed into the Artro, the main river of Ardudwy, which passes through Llanbedr and out into the sea near Llandanwg (area 04). Cwm Bychan runs south-west north-east for most of its course before veering east.

There are no relict sites of archaeological interest here (although it seems likely that the valley, lying between area 25 and 16, for example, which are full of evidence for prehistoric occupation, was certainly exploited since early times. Cwm Bychan (at the very top of the valley) is a fine example of a sub-medieval, two-unit storeyed house: it is recorded as one of the homes of the patrons of the bards and thus was one of the principal houses of Ardudwy at this time. It is surrounded by several pasture fields. Further down the valley are a few scattered farmsteads (*e.g.* Dolwreiddiog, Cwm-yr-afon, Crafnant and hen Dolbebin) which date from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are no 20<sup>th</sup> century settlements here.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*sheltered valley, broadleafed woodland, farmhouses*

The principal defining characteristic of this river valley is probably the woodland that extends along both steep sides of the valley for almost its entire length. None have been designated as SSSIs, but Coed Dol-wreiddiog, Coed Gerddi bluog, Coed Crafnant, Coed Dolbebin and other areas are broadleafed woodlands (comprising mainly sessile oak and other species) which represent an important resource. The names of the woods (linked with the names of the farms) imply that they may have originated in the early post-medieval period, although it is likely that they had earlier origins (there are no obvious earlier field systems preserved within them).

Below the woods, the floor of the valley is very narrow and flat for certain lengths (some areas are marshy), and above them the landscape gives way to the rugged uplands of areas 26 and 16. The substantial stone farms and houses are the other main characteristic of the valley, while the few field boundaries (there are only limited areas which could be described as fieldscapes, towards the southern end) are drystone.

***Conservation priorities and management***

Continuing management of the woodland for its habitat interest is the main conservation priority, while the stone-built houses should be encouraged to maintain their traditional character.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 35 7493 055*



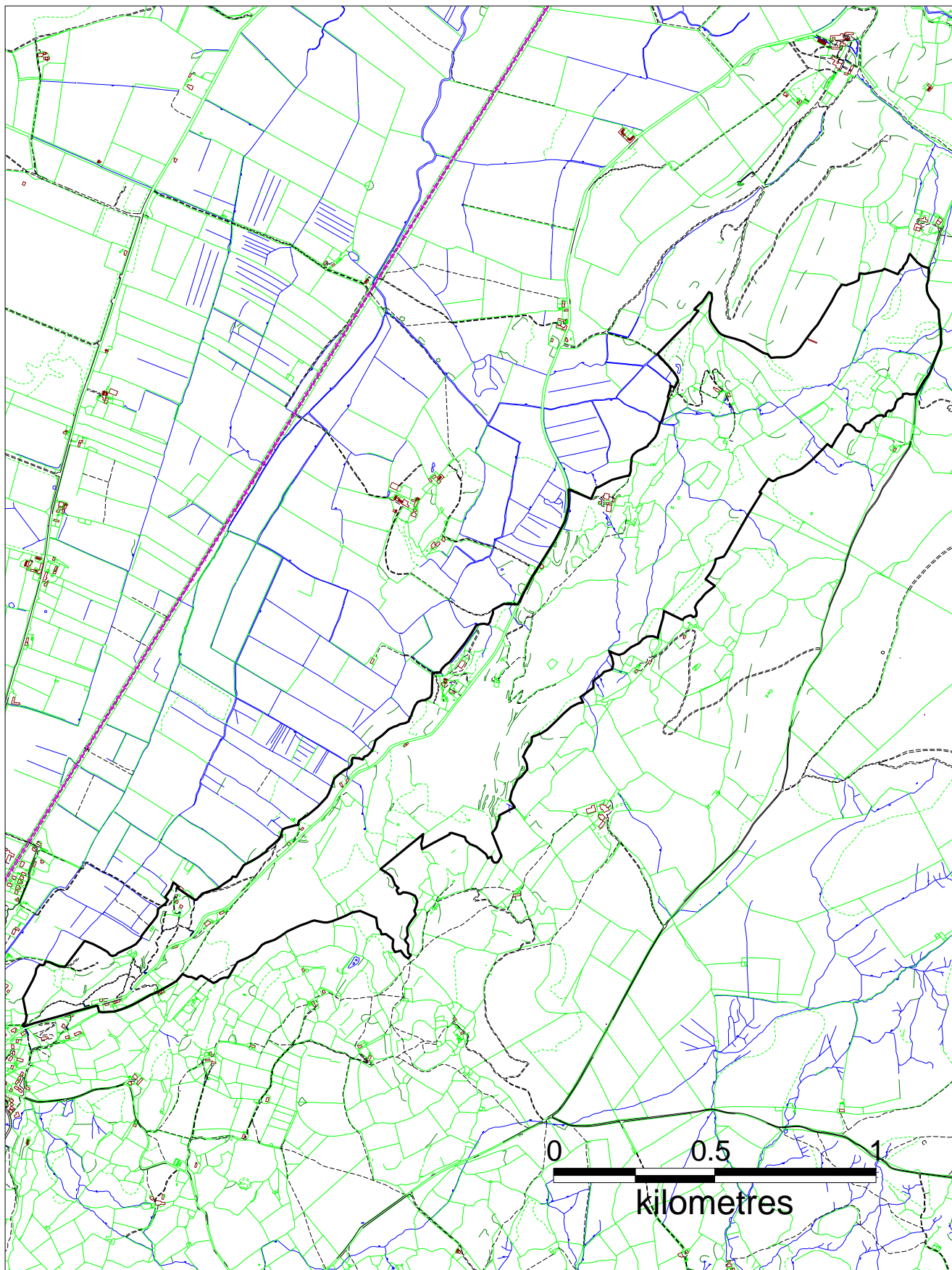


Area 28

Cwm Bychan

(PRN 18261)

Ground view across the top of Cwm Bychan showing the remote location with its pasture fields, patches of woodland, tumbling, drystone walls and solitary farm, with the open mountain of area 27 behind.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
29 - Wooded hill slopes north of Harlech

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## **29      Wooded hill slopes north of Harlech      (PRN 18262)**

### ***Historic background***

The hillslopes north of Harlech have been wooded since at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see front cover), and the species present suggest for much longer. However, early edition OS maps (1889) indicate that at that time most of the property was clear of woodland and was probably used as rough grazing.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

#### *broadleaved woodland*

Coed Llechwedd, towards the southern end of the area, was designated an SSSI in 1971 (CCW ref. 31WMY). It is 60ha in extent and set on a steep north-west facing slope at an altitude between 50 – 600ft with base-rich outcrop. Sessile oak is dominant, but there are other species (including blackthorn, ash, wych elm and hazel) and it is unusually diverse. It is also an important woodland for invertebrates and breeding birds. Similar woodland, but less diverse and with less botanical interest exists along the hill slopes to the north east (Coed Careg-wen) to the estate parkland of Glyn Cywarch (similar in type, but a different character area).

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

The southern part of the area is an SSSI and owned and managed by the Woodland Trust. Their management aim for Coed Llechwedd is to protect the conservation and landscape interest of the site by careful management of the existing broadleaved woodland cover. The aim should be for the remainder of the woodland here to be managed in a similar way.

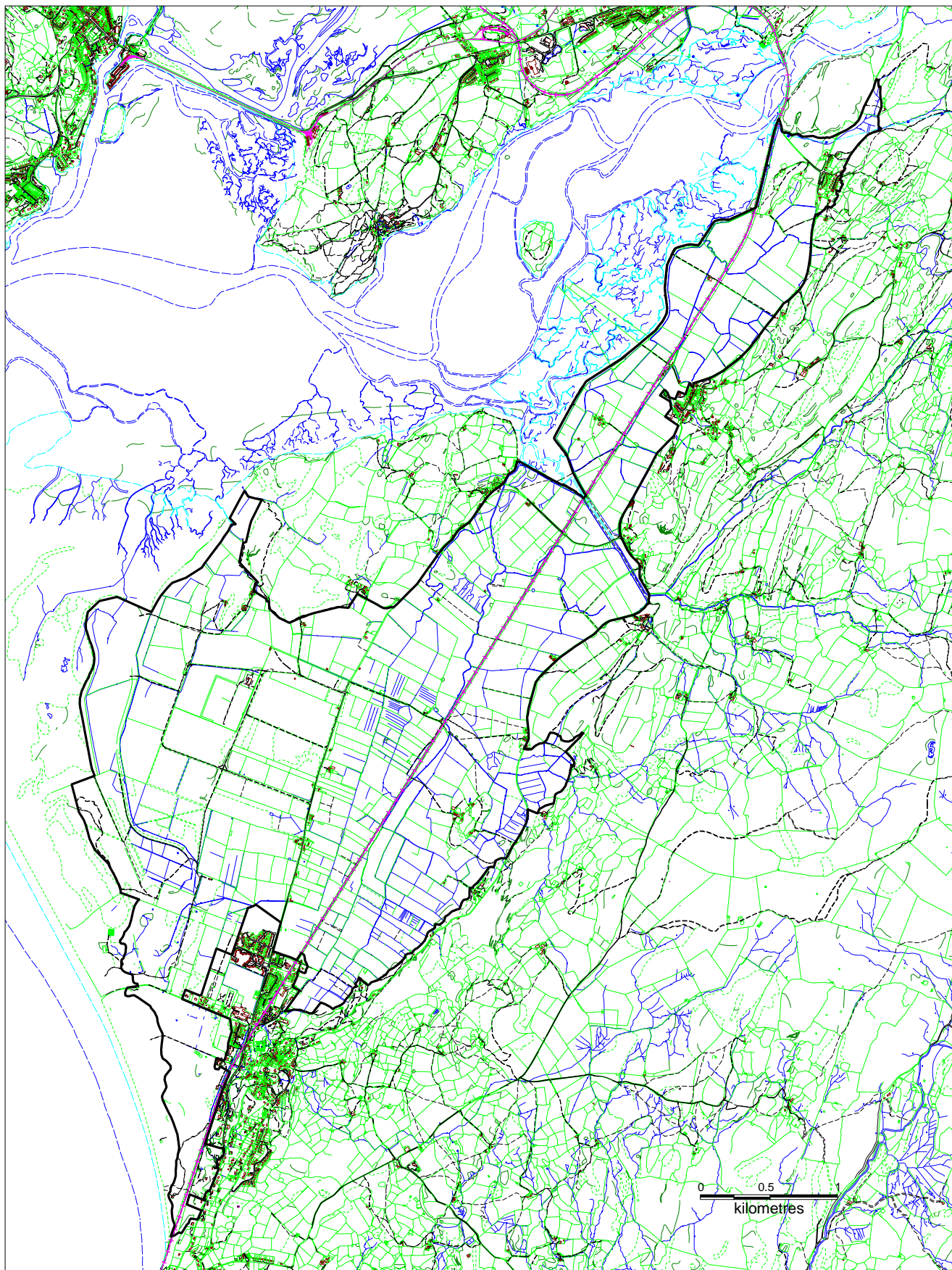
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Area 29      Wooded hill slopes north of Harlech      (PRN 18262)

This view from Lasynys (area 30 - foreground) shows the wooded hillslopes which formerly acted as the coastal edge. The main road running down through Ardudwy, and one of the distinctive 19th century houses built alongside it, can be seen in the middle foreground at the bottom of the slope.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
30 - Morfa Harlech - fieldscape

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## 30 Morfa Harlech - fieldscape (PRN 18263)

### *Historic background*

In the medieval period, Harlech castle (and town – area 18) were built on a rocky promontory above the sea. Over the next centuries, the area below the town silted up (see also section 8.3.1 above) and was classed as marsh waste. The enclosure and draining of part of Morfa Harlech in 1789 by the Glyn Cywarch estate (area 31) meant that the burgesses of the town (Harlech, area 18) lost rights of common there.

The area has always contained a series of offshore islands and outcrops (much like nearby Traeth Mawr across the estuary at the mouth of the Glaslyn), as the ‘ynys’ placenames testify (area 19, for example, and the smaller Lasynys which is associated with the bard Ellis Wynne (1671-1734) (Y Bardd Cwsc).

The main north-south road from Porthmadog to Barmouth was diverted in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, from its original route at the bottom of the coastal hill slopes (area 29) and now crosses the morfa in a virtual straight line, after first cutting across the northern end of the area to link up with the previously-isolated settlement of Ynys (area 19). At around the same time, the Cambrian Railway was built and this cuts across the area from below the town of Harlech to a bridge across the Dwyryd at the morfa’s northern end.

A series of later 19<sup>th</sup> (and early 20<sup>th</sup>) century farmsteads were established along the line of the road (including Ty’n y acrau, Ty’n y ffordd, Glyn Morfa, Ty Canol etc.- see above section 8.2.1), and a large area behind the dunes (area 32) was planted with ubiquitous conifers by the Forestry Commission in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recent years, the expanding town of Harlech and a golf course have further encroached on the southern part of the area.

(See also area 32.)

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*reclaimed marsh, regular field pattern, cut drainage boundaries, 19<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads*

Most of the area (outside the areas of forestry, road and modern encroachment mentioned above) is agricultural in nature and is characterised by a regular pattern of fields, defined mainly by cut drainage features (some with hedges alongside) and/or earthen banks. The cover illustration (allowing for artistic interpretation) and the fact that the farmsteads are late 19<sup>th</sup> century in date show that this pattern is relatively recent, although we know that the former marsh was being actively reclaimed from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The farmsteads themselves, late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century in date (see above section, and section 8.2.1) consist of fairly standard, two-storeyed, two bay, square houses with two side chimneys. Although they appear to be stone-built, they are often rendered, so they may, in fact, be built of brick and stone (Pen y waen, for example). Most of them have associated outbuildings, either tacked on to the rear of the house (Glyn morfa and Ty Canol) or around a small yard (Gilarwen). Ty’n Morfa has a very nice two storey threshing barn.

The main road, alongside which the farms have been built, and the railway cut across the area, and appear, at least in parts, to predate the field pattern. The area also contains three railway stations (below Glan-y-wern, Talsarnau and Llandecwyn) which serve settlements above on the main road which, in the northern part of the area, still skirts around the edge of the morfa. Other parts of the morfa are either planted with 20<sup>th</sup> century conifer plantations (now being removed) or are sand dunes (area 32).



### ***Conservation priorities and management***

The area is for the main part characterised by the straight fields defined by cut drainage features and hedges and banks: these must be considered a priority for conserving the character of the area. The farmsteads are also important, especially as they all lie alongside the road and are therefore quite prominent to the traveller: the road itself (and the railway) also make significant contributions to the appearance and appreciation of the area. The forestry adds little to the area's sense of place.

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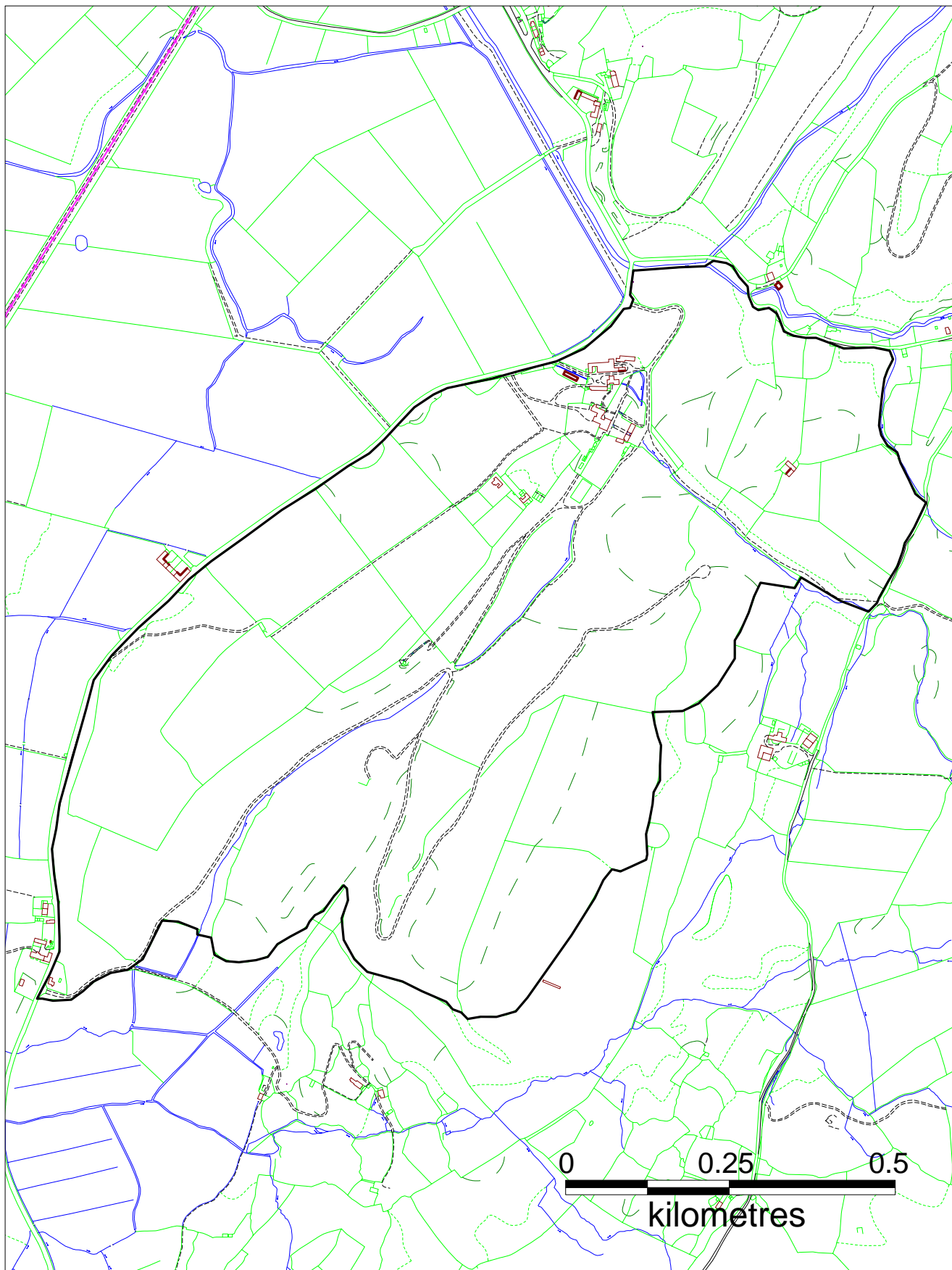


Area 30

Morfa Harlech - fieldscape

(PRN 18263)

A view from the top of the hillslopes above the morfa show its distinctive flat nature, and the fieldscape (defined largely by the regular pattern of cut drainage features) which covers it. The 19th century road runs from right to left mid-centre, with the 20th century forestry beyond. Ynys Llanfihangel-y-traethu (area 19) can be seen on the right of the picture.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
31 - Glyn Cywarch

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***Historic background***

The house was built by William Wynn in 1616 (possibly on the site of an earlier one), and the gatehouse, though undated, may be contemporary. Extension and restoration in the 1870s was sympathetic. A drawing by Moses Griffith shows the house in 1805.

Later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the estate came by marriage into the hands of the Owens of Clenenney and Brogyntyn, and for most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Glyn was the agent's house, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century began to be used for summer visits. It remains with the same family (despite several name changes due to passing through the female line), and is still a secondary house, a fact which may have contributed to its survival without major alteration. However, the fact that the family title, conferred in 1876, is Baron Harlech may indicate that the estate was always considered of importance to the family.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*early 17<sup>th</sup> century house with small, semi-formal garden, walled kitchen garden, park and extensive woodland*

The terrace in front of the house and the courtyard between house and gatehouse, with other areas close to the house, are probably much as originally laid out in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The present walled garden also probably overlies an original enclosed garden. It continues to be well maintained in traditional style.

The layout, with woodland on one side of the valley at the head of which the house lies and open parkland on the other, may have remained little changed until the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, when changes to the house indicate a period of renewed activity. The lookout tower at the top of the north-west valley side and the walk leading to it are likely to date from this period, and some of the surviving ornamental planting may also do so. The farm, close to the house but hidden at a lower level, is of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date. Much of the woodland now consists of 20<sup>th</sup>-century conifer plantations.

***Conservation priorities and management***

The house is listed grade II\* and the gatehouse grade II. The site appears in the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens: part 1 at grade II\*, and is within the Snowdonia National Park. The walled garden, unusually, continues in use and is very well maintained; efforts should be made to support this. In addition, one outbuilding, a potting shed and an adjacent wall have been designated a biological SSSI as the breeding roost of the lesser horseshoe bat.

The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, as well as the Snowdonia National Park, should be consulted on future management strategies. The replacement of at least some of the conifer plantations with broadleaved or mixed woodland should be encouraged, but a survey to find any surviving older trees should be undertaken before any work is done in the woodland.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 32 7493 193*



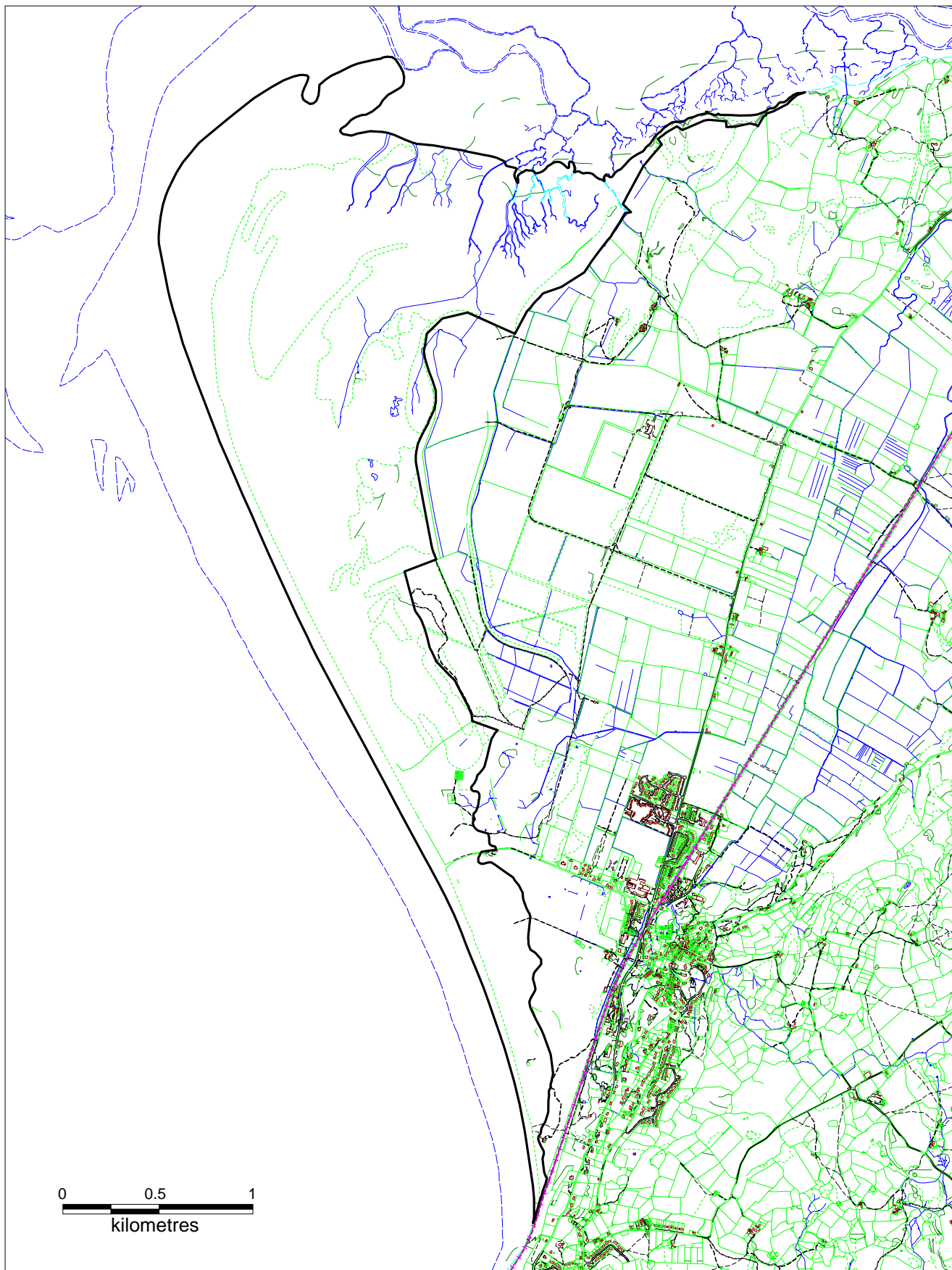
Area 31

Glyn Cywarch

(PRN 18264)

A view of the rear of the house, showing the nature of the planted woodland and parkland surrounding the house.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
32 - Morfa Harlech - dunes

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## **32 Morfa Harlech - dunes (PRN 18265)**

### ***Historic background***

In the medieval period, Harlech castle (and town – area 18) were built on a rocky promontory above the sea. Over the next centuries, the area below the town silted up (see also section 8.3.1 above) and was classed as marsh waste. The enclosure and draining of part of Morfa Harlech in 1789 by the Glyn Cywarch estate (area 31) meant that the burgesses of the town (Harlech, area 18) lost rights of common there.

This area of sand dunes is distinct in character from the rest of the morfa (see area 30), and was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve in XXXX.

### ***Key historic landscape characteristics***

#### *sand dunes*

This character area is defined by the extent of the sand dune system (see also area 10 for a similar area).

Morfa Harlech was first notified as an SSSI in 1953 and has subsequently been revised (CCW ref. 31WNT). It is 1536ha in extent. It was designated as a combined biological and geomorphological site. An extensive area of estuary mudflats, saltmarshes, sand dunes and dune grassland, all of considerable biological value. Morfa Harlech is an important site for geomorphology studies. It comprises a major cusped foreland in which the alignment of a sand beach and dunes at an acute angle to former cliffs has encouraged extensive sedimentation.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

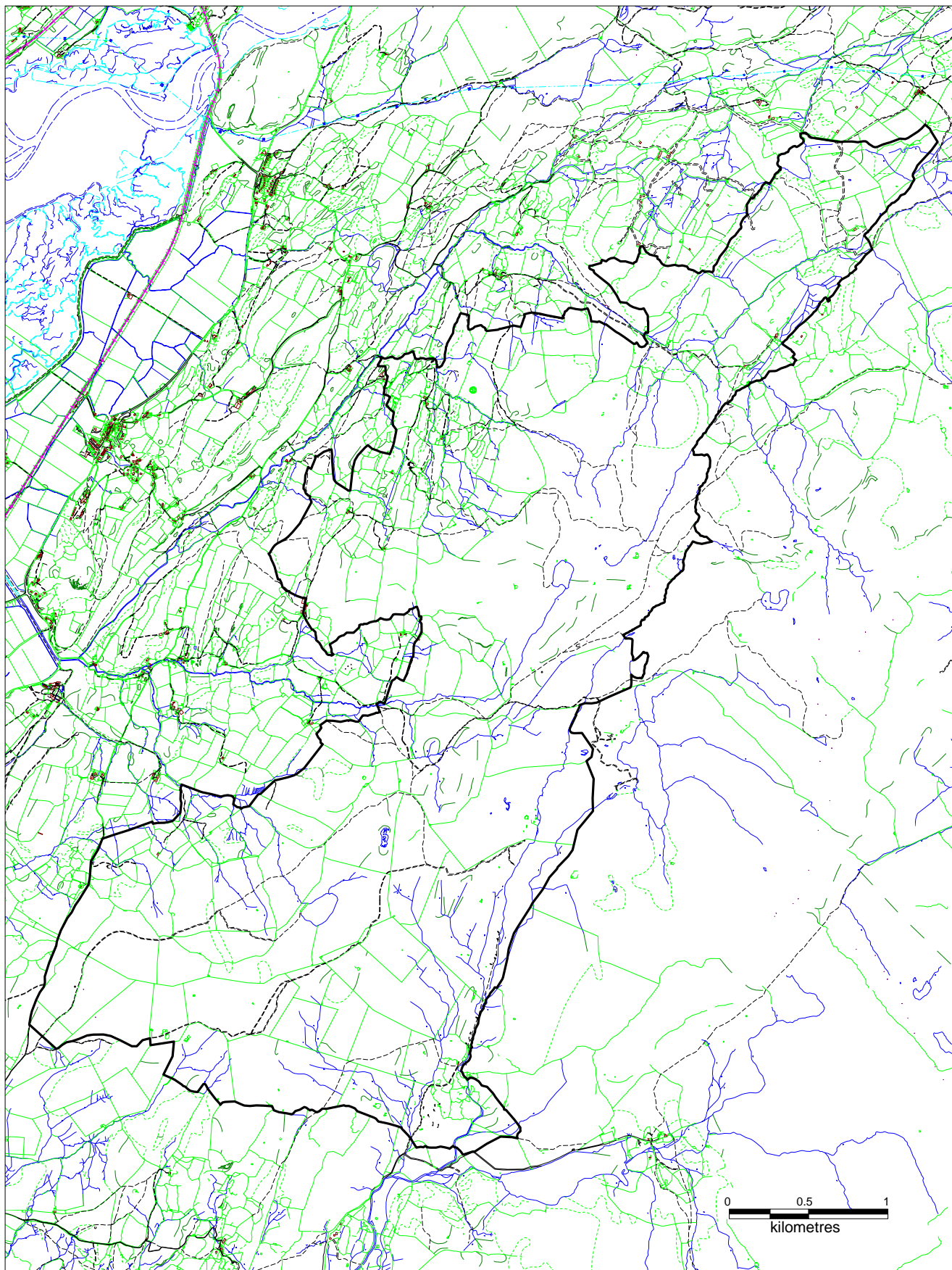
The area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve, designated and managed by CCW and has its own detailed management statement.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 33 7493 181*



Area 32      Morfa Harlech - dunes      (PRN 18265)

This view shows part of the sand dune system which is both an SSSI and an NNR.



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ardudwy

Historic Landscape Character Area  
33 - Fieldscape, upper mountain slopes

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### 33      **Fieldscape - upper mountain slopes**      **(PRN 18266)**

#### *Historic background*

This area, as with area 25 and some others, comprises a large extent of upland which contains a vast wealth of relict archaeological remains. This area is located (principally) between the wooded hill slopes and valleys of area 29 and the rugged mountains of area 27.

There is a range of evidence of early and middle bronze age funerary and ritual monuments in the area, focussed at either end of the area (the southern end includes some of the standing stones and cairn circles near Moel Goedog discussed under area 25, while at the north end is another concentration around Bryn Cader Faner). It may be significant that both areas adjoin major natural routes (which may even be linked), one from the coast and the other across the mountains.

There is no known settlement evidence for this early period, but in the later prehistoric period the main focus of occupation was on the fringes of the upland, on the better- drained, west-facing hill slopes with numerous settlements of various forms surviving where modern agriculture has not been too intensive. Again, these sites are concentrated in the south of the area (focussed on the hillfort on Moel Goedog) and in the north (concentrated between Moel-glo and Coetty-mawr, with outlying single huts at higher altitudes around Bryn Cader Faner).

The settlement at Maes-y-caerau (see photograph) is a form of the concentric enclosed round house that is not unique to Ardudwy but is locally typical. There is some evidence that this settlement style continued from bronze age styles. It evolved into more complex groups of structures, incorporating strongly built stone-walled buildings of different shapes and sizes for different purposes. The main later style of settlement was of more nucleated groups of houses in compact enclosed or unenclosed homesteads (of which there are examples near Moel Goedog in the south and at Moel y Glo and Coetty-mawr in the north).

The nucleated enclosed and unenclosed hut settlements are to be found all along the west-facing margins of the upland of Ardudwy and here they are distinctly concentrated in the irregular fields on the lower west slopes of Moel y Geifr. Interestingly, though, these sites do not appear to be associated with strongly terraced field systems that exist further south (for example in area 25).

There are a number of relict sites which demonstrate occupation in the later, medieval period, again mainly within the irregular fields around Bryn-melyn and Coetty-mawr, but the evidence for later occupation is scarce. There are just four post-medieval farms in the area (again on the north-west facing slopes of Moel y Geifr) which are 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. The fields around these farms may represent 16<sup>th</sup> century encroachment on to the upland fringes (see section 8.1 above), which had earlier, abandoned (prehistoric) occupation.

#### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

##### *relict prehistoric sites, fieldscapes*

This upland area is in one of the least agriculturally-favourable parts of Ardudwy and for this reason a wealth of upstanding relict archaeology survives, particularly around the hillfort of Moel Goedog in the south and on the slopes of Moel y Geifr in the north. Most of the relict archaeology that is particularly characteristic of this area has been described in the above section. There is a concentration of standing stones and ring cairns in the south, and a group of cairns in the north.

Particularly characteristic features in the landscape here are the nucleated groups of houses in compact enclosed or unenclosed homesteads, many of them retaining a mainly curvilinear shape that can be seen as developed from an original circular layout. There are in addition many, less-substantial relict features (many of which still await recording) which are an important part of

the history and the landscape of the area. The central part of the area is surprisingly 'empty' of archaeological sites, but this may simply reflect a lack of fieldwork.

The irregular field pattern around the farms in the northern area, north-west of Moel y Geifr, probably has its origins in the prehistoric period (most of the prehistoric homestead sites area), but in their later phase may represent 16th century or later encroachment on to the upland fringes. This is a particular characteristic of upland fringes not only in Ardudwy, but also further north in Caernarfonshire (for example around Nantlle). Away from here, the whole area is divided up into large, irregular enclosures by substantial drystone walls (probably 19<sup>th</sup> century in date), although the pattern is less regular than elsewhere on the Ardudwy upland (area 02 for example).

There is a small number of stone-built, upland farms on the steep, sea-facing slopes of Moel y Geifr. There are no roads in the area and the farms are reached only by steep trackways that come up through area 22. There is no modern development here.

### ***Conservation priorities and management***

There are many scheduled ancient monuments in the area (including Moel Goedog hillfort and two homesteads in the south, and Bryn Cader Faner and other cairns, plus homesteads at Moel y Geifr and Coetty-mawr, in the north). These appear to be sympathetically managed. However, these represent just the tip of the iceberg as upland fieldwork in the area around Bryn Cader Faner has clearly demonstrated (a square kilometre here was found to contain a couple of dozen hitherto-unrecorded sites including cairns, hut circles, platform houses, peat stacks, mining remains, sheepfold enclosures, building foundations, and other stone features). A priority therefore must be further fieldwork to identify the resource of the archaeology of the uplands so that it can be conserved and managed as a landscape, not just a collection of unrelated sites.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 35 7493 058*





Area 33      Fieldscape, upper mountain slopes      (PRN 18266)

Aerial view of Maes y Caerua prehistoric settlement, showing its landscape setting of rugged, agriculturally-unfavourable land, with some irregular enclosures defined by drystone field walls.



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*Dolgellau Record Office*

ZS collection

## ***APPENDIX I***

Extracts from the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales

Ardudwy HLW (Gw) 2