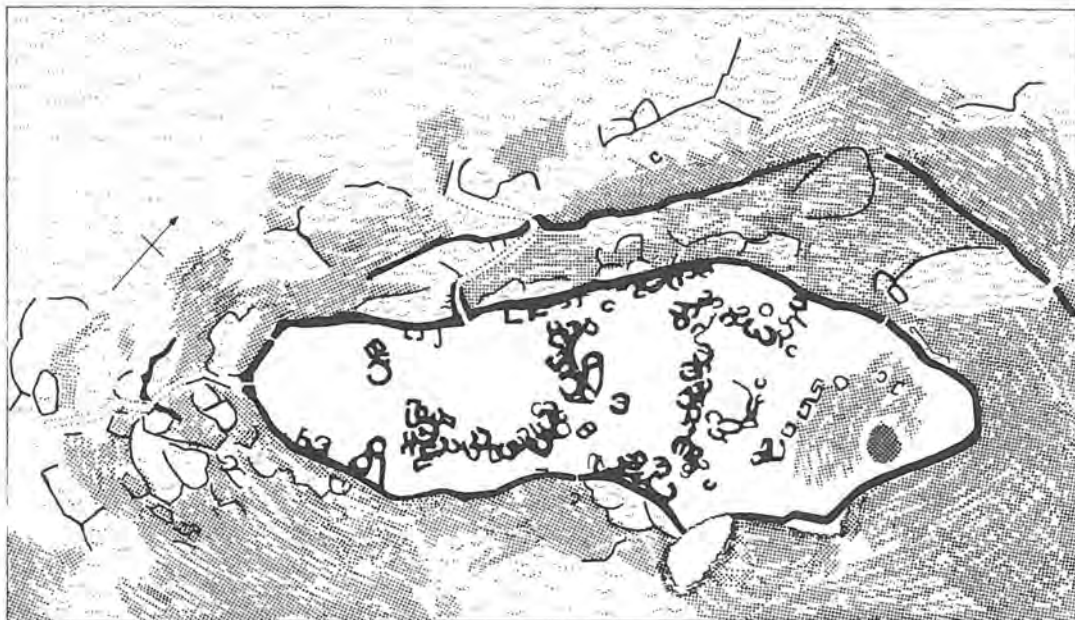


# TRE'R CEIRI MONITORING VISIT

JUNE 2003

Report number : 486



Prepared for  
**GWYNEDD COUNCIL**

JUNE 2003

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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## **TRE'R CEIRI MONITORING VISIT: JUNE 2003 (G1605)**

### **Introduction**

Tre'r Ceiri (SH373446) is an exceptionally well preserved hillfort standing at a height of 485m on the easternmost of the three peaks of Yr Eifl, on the Llyn Peninsula. The two-hectare fort is bounded by a massive, 2.3 to 3.0m thick, dry-stone wall. Unusually, due to the inaccessibility of the site and the abundance of stone on the peak very little masonry has been cleared from the site for re-use. The rampart has survived close to its original height of up to 3.5m in places, the best-preserved portions retaining a dry-stone rampart. A further outer defensive wall stands to the north-west of the fort. There are two defended entrances through the inner rampart, at the south-west and north-west of the fort with additional simple gaps in the rampart at the north, west and south-east. The rampart is carried over the north 'postern' by several stone lintels. The north-west entrance appears have been the main entrance into the fort with a 15m long passage leading to a terraced pathway and a further gateway through the outer defensive wall. The interior of the fort contains the remains of about 150 dry-stone huts and enclosures exhibiting a great variation in size and shape, ranging from simple round huts to irregular and rectangular structures.

This spectacular site has been attracting large numbers of visitors for at least 100 years. Complaints about visitor damage were made by the Cambrian Archaeological Association as long ago as 1894 (Cambrian Archaeological Association 1895). The erosion and general deterioration in the condition of the site prompted Cyngor Dosbarth Dwyfor, in conjunction with Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments and Gwynedd County Council, to embark in 1989 on a conservation project to consolidate the site. The project ran for an initial five years. Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was commissioned to provide archaeological supervision and to record all works as they progressed. A management plan was produced at the end of the fifth season including a survey of all unconserved areas in the fort, recommendations for a further, concluding, five years' work and a long-term management strategy. Funding was subsequently agreed by Cyngor Dosbarth Dwyfor, Cadw and Gwynedd County Council for a further five-year program which commenced in 1994. Local government reorganisation in 1996 led to the formation of a new unitary authority, Gwynedd Council, who took over the management of the project from C.D.D. again with financial help from Cadw. The tenth season of the project was managed by C.D.D. and funded by Cadw. Work was completed in mid November 1998.

A strategy for the long-term management of the site was agreed during the latter years of the project and a management plan was produced (Hopewell 1999). The masonry on the site had been stabilised but remained somewhat vulnerable to erosion by the increasing numbers of visitors. Study of previous damage to the site had shown that the most efficient way of conserving the masonry is to consolidate damage soon after it has occurred thus ensuring that any areas of instability do not spread into the surrounding masonry.

It was therefore agreed that two monitoring visits should be carried out per annum. These visits would allow minor stabilisation work such as the backfilling of metal detector holes and the replacement of occasional stones to be carried out. A contingency budget was also put in place allowing a team of 3 stonemasons to be contracted for three days per annum to allow for the conservation of any more serious problems. Regular monitoring visits have been carried out by G.A.T. since the end of the conservation project. The first monitoring visit of 2003 was carried out on 16<sup>th</sup> June. Weather conditions were good with clear skies and low winds.

### **Results of the monitoring visit**

All masonry on the site was inspected for damage and points of instability. Provision was made for photographic, drawn and written recording.

The following minor areas of damage were identified and were marked onto a plan of the site (Fig. 1). Written records were kept of all works.

### *The Huts*

No damage to the huts was recorded during this visit.

### *The Ramparts*

Six areas of instability were identified.

1. A large header had been pulled from the top of the outer face and was lying on the wall top. This appeared to be an example of deliberate damage. The stone was replaced in its original position.
2. Another header had been pulled from the top of the outer face and was lying on the wall top. The stone was replaced in its original position.
3. Yet another header had been pulled from the top of the outer face and was lying on the wall top. The motive for lifting up heavy stones and leaving them on the wall top is unclear. The stone was replaced in its original position.
4. A large flat header on the inner wall top had been pulled forwards as a result of visitors climbing onto the ramparts close to the north postern. The stone was pushed back into place and the core was repacked.
5. There were two loose headers on the top of the inner face where the rampart climbs towards the cairn. This was clearly threatening the stability of the masonry further up the slope. The stones were left in place and two wedge-shaped packing stones were inserted thus locking the headers in place.
6. Two flat slabs had worked loose on top of the inner face. The slabs were reset and the core repacked.

### **General observations**

All three notice boards were still standing and in reasonable condition. Much of the conserved masonry is now showing signs of grey lichen growth and is beginning to blend in with the original masonry. The good weather during the spring has also encouraged the growth of grass and heather. Some of the lesser pathways within the fort have now grown over and most of the vegetation on the floor of hut 3 has now regrown. The barrier preventing access to the steep eroding path leading to the south west entrance has partially collapsed and a new footpath is beginning to be established.

### **Discussion**

The level of damage recorded during this monitoring visit was relatively slight. There was, however, again evidence of deliberate or thoughtless damage. The regular monitoring of the site and repair of any instability is clearly a successful strategy as there has been no deterioration in the condition of the monument since the completion of the conservation project in 1998.

### **References**

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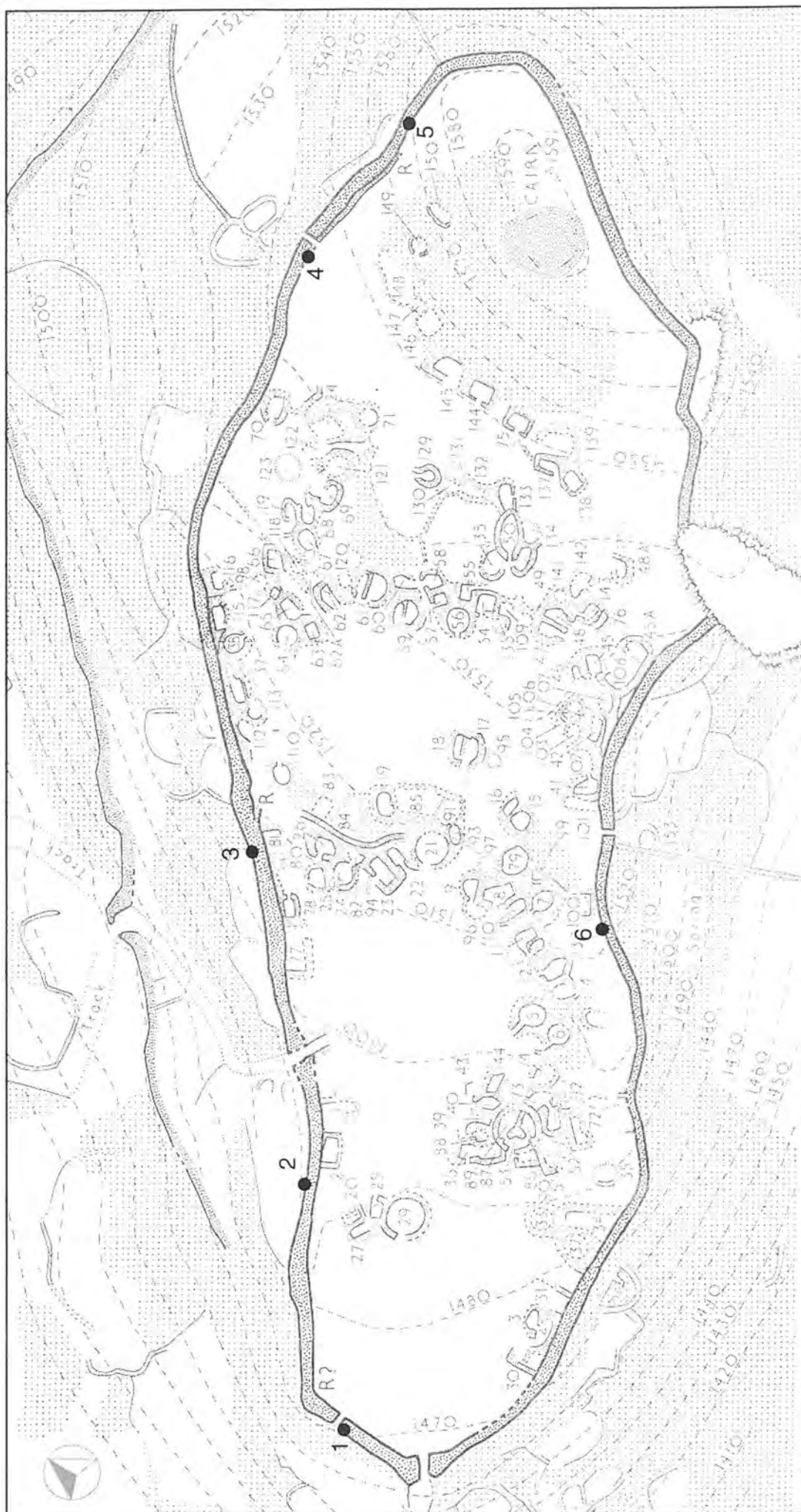


Fig. 1 Tre'r Ceiri showing points of collapse identified in the June 2003 monitoring visit (after R.C.A.H.M.W. 1960)

