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# Historic Landscape Characterisation

## Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

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GAT Project No. G1772a

Report No. 491

September 2004

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*Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd*  
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**Front cover:** Aerial view looking south over Llyn Trawsfynydd and the nuclear power station (area 05), with the rural areas characterised by farmsteads in the foreground (area 16) and beyond (area 09).

Dim ond gwenlloer borffor,  
Ar fin y mynydd llwm,  
A swm yr Afon Prysor  
Yn canu yn y cwm

*Hedd Wyn*

Cynnes iawnllel cenais i,  
Fu'r llys hwn, fawr lles inni,  
Yno'i caid – on'd enwog hyn?  
Ced yrhawg, Coedyrhygyn

*Ruffudd Phylip, c. 1638*

### **Rhyfel**

Gwae fi fy myw mewn oes mor ddreng,  
A Duw ar drai ar orwel pell;  
O'i ôl mae dyn, yn deryn a gwreng,  
Yn codi ei audurdod hell.

Pan deimlodd fyned ymaith Dduw  
Cyfododd gledd I ladd ei frawd;  
Mae swm yr ymladd ar ein clyw,  
A'i gysgod ar fythynnod tlawd.

Mae'r hen delynau genid gynt  
Ynghrog ar gangau'r helyg draw,  
A gwaedd y bechgyn lond y gwyne,  
A'u gwaed yn gymysg efo'r glaw.

Ei aberth nid â heibio, - ei wyneb  
Annwyl nid â'n ango,  
Er i'r Almaen ystaenio  
Ei dwrn dur yn ei waed o.

*Hedd Wyn*

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Extract from the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor HLW (Gw) 11	65
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### ***Figures***

Map showing extent of study area and character areas

Maps of character areas face the text

Photographs of character areas follow the descriptive text of each area



## **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 gwych 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 cwmpasu 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 'thema' 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 Trawsfynydd basin & Cwm Prysor which has been identified on the *Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales* by Cadw, CCW and ICOMOS, HLW(Gw)11, in Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, 1995, p 110).
- 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 the edge of the forestry of Coed y Brenin, and from the lower slopes of the Rhinogau mountains in the west up to the top of Cwm Prysor in the east. It includes a variety of different terrains and habitats, and of different historic landscape types, such as open mountain tops and slopes, wooded valley sides, low-grade agricultural land and a single small village. It is particularly noted for its wealth of extensive relict Roman archaeological remains.

### 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 Nina Steele provided SMR data in a number of formats. 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).

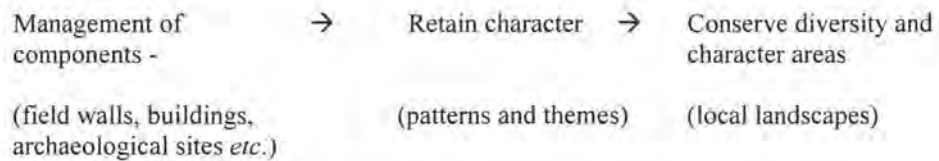
### **6.2 General considerations**

- 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> patterns/groupings	<i>stage of characterisation (general management guidelines)</i> 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 Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor**



## 8 Historical processes and background

### 8.1 Introduction

This landscape area occupies an inland, largely marginal situation, stretching from the lower eastern slopes of the Rhinogau mountains (at a height of up to 450m OD) eastwards across the low-lying valley through which the Afon Eden slowly flows (at around 200m OD) and up to the top of Moel Oernant and Moel Ddu ( a maximum of 500m OD): the eastern extent of the area is the top of Cwm Prysor. The area extends from Gellilydan (a 20<sup>th</sup>-century settlement largely the product of workers imported to build the dam (area 05) for the hydro-electric scheme) in the north, to the edge of main forestry block of Coed y Brenin in the south.

The principal themes which make this particular historic landscape outstanding include well-preserved evidence of communications and recurrent military use from Roman to recent times, and the creation of power in recent times. On top of this 'hard' evidence, the area is also rich in historic legendary and literary associations.

There are no hillforts in the area, but the military complex at Tomen-y-Mur (mainly area 17), most of which is scheduled, which extends over many hectares comprises one of the most important relict Roman landscapes in Britain. The fort at the heart of the complex was probably built in AD 77 or 78 as a result of Agricola's campaign. Under Hadrian, it was reduced in size and rebuilt in stone, although the fort does not seem to have been garrisoned for long after the rebuilding, and may have been abandoned by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The fort is surrounded by an extensive complex of ancillary earthworks, including an amphitheatre, bath house, mansio, practice camps and burial monuments., some unique in Britain.

However, the name Tomen y Mur derives from the Norman motte for which the fort provided a ready made bailey. Very little is known of the history of the motte beyond the fact that William Rufus campaigned there in 1095. About four miles to the south east is Castell Prysor (area 12), a 'particularly impressive Welsh motte an bailey castle' (Avent, 1983, 8). Originally revetted or faced with mortared masonry, today it survives as a series of low rubble walls on top of a natural stone outcrop, with a series of buildings (presumably the original bailey) around its base. It was an important base, probably the *llys* of the commote at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (and Edward I sent a letter from here in 1284), dominating the east-west running valley from which the surrounding valley derives its name, one of the major routes into the heartland of medieval Gwynedd.

Around five miles to the south of Tomen y Mur, a small military camp was established at Bryn Golau, on the southern outskirts of Trawsfynydd village at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (southern edge of area 12). In 1906, a larger, more permanent site was established at Rhiw Goch further south: the War Office bought land from the locals and the camp developed. Soon the War Department owned 8,020 acres in Trawsfynydd parish, mainly for artillery practice for both the Regular and Territorial Army. During the First World War the camp became a busy centre not just for accommodation for soldiers, but also as an artillery range and a prisoner-of-war camp.

By World War II, more-permanent structures had replaced the tents as accommodation. Once again it was also used as a POW camp, though this time mainly for Italian, rather than German, prisoners. After 1945, the camp gradually lost its importance but was used more as a firing range for unused ammunition, conveyed by rail to Trawsfynydd and then by lorries to Rhiw Goch. By 1948 the 'Trawsfynydd Artillery Range' extended to some 8403 acres

The camp was finally closed as a military establishment in 1957-8, and was re-opened almost immediately to accommodate over 800 non-local construction workers involved with building the Trawsfynydd power station (area 05).

Prior to this, the land on which the Maentwrog hydro-electric power station, and the lake and dam necessary to supply water to it, was purchased in the mid-1920s by the North Wales Power Company: work began in 1925 and the station was opened in October, 1928. The lake was formed by the construction of four dams which between them impounded the water to form Llyn

Trawsfynydd. Work on the construction of *Atomfa Trawsfynydd* (power station) begun in July, 1959, and the station was finally opened in October 1968. It has since been decommissioned, and the site is being heavily promoted as a leisure and tourist attraction, principally for fishing and boating.

Moving to cultural associations, Tomen-y-mur (under the guise of Mur Castell, as it is known in the story) is one of the main scenes of action in the fourth branch of the Mabinogi, *Math vab Mathonwy* (see below section 8.7). Ellis Humphrey Evans (whose bardic name was Hedd Wyn) was born at Penlan, Trawsfynydd, Meirionnydd in 1887, and soon afterwards the family moved to his father's old home 'Yr Ysgwrn' a small hill farm about a mile to the east of the village of Trawsfynydd (area 12). He famously won the chair for poetry at the National Eisteddfod in 1917 in Birkenhead for his *awdl*, 'Yr Arwr' (The Hero), having been killed a month earlier in the war at Passchendaele. In scenes of great emotion and sadness the chair was covered with a black cloth, and today the Birkenhead Eisteddfod is still referred to as 'Eisteddfod y Gadair Ddu'. Saint John Roberts, one of Wales's most famous Catholic martyrs, was allegedly born at Rhiw Goch, Trawsfynydd, in 1577. Having been raised as a Protestant, educated at Oxford and studied further in France and Spain he was eventually found guilty of high treason (having converted to Catholicism) and was executed in 1610.

## 8.2 Land holding

The project area lies almost entirely within the parish of Trawsfynydd which, in the medieval period, was within the commote of Ardudwy Uwch Artro (the largest and most-densely populated commote in Merioneth) (Williams-Jones, 1976). In the Merioneth Lay Subsidy Roll of 1292-3, Trawsfynydd is recorded as one of the poorest parishes in the county, worth between 10 – 20 shillings per thousand acres.

There are very few early references to land holdings here in the archives; the most significant (though not terribly helpful) is in the first Nannau papers (NLW Nannau MSS A1 (1<sup>st</sup> August 1420/1)) which records a release by Goronwy ap Llywelyn of Adda of Trawsfynydd [probably modern day Cae Adda – area 06] to John Salghell, burgess of Harlech, of a tenement called Hen Gastell in Trawsfynydd [possibly Tomen-y-mur].

Information on the Trawsfynydd tithe map and apportionment (dated 1840), which covers almost 90% of the project area, shows just five 'large' landowners in the parish, with the majority of farms owned by individuals. For example, Thomas Price Anwyl, Esq., owned much of the land within area 06, south of the present lake (i.e. farms which appear to be late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date; in the same area, the land owned by Coed-y-rhygen (owner's name illegible), an apparently earlier settlement, is also very large; while Anne Jones owned several farms in Cwm Prysor (including Ysgwrn) as well as land in the south of the area; while the Trustees of the late Richard Parry, Esq., owned a large number of farms around Trawsfynydd (now within areas 9, 12 and 16).

The Maentwrog tithe map (1841), which covers the northern part of the project area including areas 16, part of 17 and 18, shows no large farms or estates, just lots of small parcels of tenanted land. Most of the enclosures here are large and irregular, possibly due to the marginal land involved.

It is likely that much of the area was formally enclosed around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (see areas 9 and 16), although there is evidence for earlier enclosure in the field walls and patterns to the west of Llyn Trawsfynydd (area 06), along the southern side of Cwm Prysor (area 12) and in the small valley to the west of Moel Ddu (area 10).

During the last century, large portions of the western part of the area (area 01, 06 and 18 in particular) were planted by the Forestry Commission with conifers. Study of earlier maps (and recent fieldwork, D Thompson, *pers comm*) suggest that these plantations mask evidence for landscape composition which duplicates in most cases that to be seen to their immediate east (i.e. a landscape of 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure of marginal land, with scattered small-farm settlement and irregular field enclosures).

### 8.3 Agriculture

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the land in Trawsfynydd parish was described as being so poor that over half of the parish was not cultivated (Lhwyd, 1911). At that time, the parish was described as having indifferent pasture ground, while some bogs had excellent turves and there was heath for sheep and cattle: around eight hundred cattle, two thousand lambs, a hundred goats and a hundred horses were kept at that time. In addition, oats were grown, along with some rye and barley (ibid).

As recorded above, the Trawsfynydd tithe map and apportionment (dated 1840) shows just five 'large' landowners in the parish, with the majority of farms owned by individuals. Unfortunately the apportionment does not always record field names, although those it does imply (perhaps surprising given the upland, pasture appearance of the landscape today) a mixed agriculture of pasture and some barley, with smaller 'garden' plots immediately surrounding the farmhouses.

There is little evidence for early (prehistoric or medieval) agricultural practices remaining in the landscape: the scheduled site at the northern end of Crawcwellt (area 04) below the Rhinogau, which comprises a series of ill-defined wandering walls below a hut group site which is probably late prehistoric in date, suggest some form of cultivation and animal husbandry (see section 8.3 below), although recent excavation has suggested that this was a subsidiary part of the local economy at this period. Another isolated site on Ffridd Wen (area 11), this time an apparent enclosed hut group surrounded by a partial survival of a ridge and furrow system (presumably later – see photograph) gives a glimpse of an early agricultural economy which involved cultivation.

However, analysis of the current field walls and patterns strongly suggest that it is likely that much of the area was only formally enclosed around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (see areas 9 and 16). Certainly the area to the south of the present Llyn Trawsfynydd, given its SSSI status (area 7), and the areas immediately adjacent to its east and west sides suggest that this area has not been subject to long-term agricultural improvement. However, there is some evidence for earlier (medieval?) enclosure in the field walls and patterns to the west of Llyn Trawsfynydd (area 06), along the southern side of Cwm Prysor (area 12) and in the small valley to the west of Moel Ddu (area 10). With the possible exception of area 10, however, none of these display classic evidence of extensive enclosure from the prehistoric period.

The northern part of the project area, which includes areas 16, part of 17 and 18, shows no large farms or estates, just lots of small parcels of tenanted land. Most of the enclosures here are large and irregular, possibly due to the marginal land involved, and suggest late enclosure of waste land in the post-medieval period. Similarly, the enclosures below the Rhinogau (area 02 in particular), but also many of the enclosures typical of the field systems visible in area 09 to the west of the modern road on the edge of the SSSI suggest late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century encroachment on to former waste (although recent analysis of some of the houses here (e.g. Bryn Maen Llwyd) suggest a possible 17<sup>th</sup> century date (J Alfrey, *pers comm*)).

Some of the farms along the southern side of Cwm Prysor (Ysgwrn, Bodyfuddau, Bronasgellog - area 12) and their associated field systems also may be of sub-medieval date, the field walls showing evidence of 'early' construction and re-builds.

The preponderance of out-lying cow houses (mostly two-storey, stone-built constructions built perpendicular into slight slopes, with an open lower end and door access for hay and straw at the upper end) in most of the lower-lying, less marginal situations (such as areas 09 (see photograph), 10, 12 and 16) display good evidence for a concentration on a cattle-based agricultural economy in the last couple of hundred years. Many have machine-cut slate pillars holding up the bulk of the roof structure, which suggests construction after c. 1840. It is significant that many of these have been repaired as part of recent agri-environment schemes (Tir Cymen and Tir Gofal).

Meanwhile, in the upland areas (for example on the eastern flanks of the Rhinogau and on Moel Oernant), there are the remains of several (although not numerous) *hafotai*, some with small

enclosures and sheepfolds. However, these are not extensive when compared with areas to the north and west.

#### 8.4 Settlement

Evidence for prehistoric settlement of the area is largely limited to Crawwellt (where there is an extensive field system lying below a scattered group of circular huts – area 04), and a more self-contained site on the north-east-facing slopes of Ffridd Wen (area 11). A detailed description is to be found in section 8.5. The impressive evidence for Romano-British settlement (one of the principal reasons underlying the inclusion of this area on the Register) is summarised as part of area 17). It includes, as well as the central fort, an amphitheatre and other structures relating to a military infrastructure.

Only three townships are recorded in this huge parish in the medieval period (Williams-Jones, 1976), all at its northern end: Trawsfynydd (a modern village at SH706355, the only nucleated settlement in the area – area 08), Prysor (whose name is recorded today in both a major valley and in the castle which lies at its centre (SH758369 - area 12), and Cefn Clawdd (now an isolated farm at the base of the Rhinogau (SH678336) – area 02). The Merioneth Lay Subsidy Rolls records 105 tax payers in the parish in 1292-3 (a relatively high number compared with other parishes, no doubt in part explained by its size), most of whom were, typically, paying tax at the lowest rate possible. However, there is little if any physical evidence in the landscape for (medieval) settlement in the form of 'long huts', even in the upland, marginal areas, which is quite surprising.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the number of houses in Trawsfynydd was put at c. 300 and the number of inhabitants estimated at c. 1200. There were 12 houses and a church in Trawsfynydd itself, and the land was so poor that over half of the parish was not cultivated (Lhwyd, 1911). In 1801 the census shows that the population of Trawsfynydd parish (which comprises most of the project area) was 1232; thereafter there were small rises until 1881 when there was a big jump from 1553 to 1930. Interestingly, the number of people working in the quarries at Blaenau Ffestiniog fell from 1834 onwards so it is not known how these people were employed. By 1891 the population dropped rapidly to 1615 but had risen again to 1708 by 1911 (by which time the Army camp was well-established): it declined thereafter until 1961 (when the nuclear station was being built) when it was up to 1878 people: it was down to 1030 in 1971, and has continued to decline ever since.

The date of the turnpike road (now the modern A470) (see below section 8.6) as being newly constructed between 1777 and 1823 supports the suggestion that the settlement of this central area (between Trawsfynydd and Coed y Brenin) is principally late 18<sup>th</sup> century/early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. Most of the farmsteads appear to date from this period, almost all of which lie to the west of (and below) the main road, and their surrounding field systems have the appearance of encroachment on the fringes of marginal land (for example around Bryn-crwn and Adwy-deg). Certainly all were established by 1840, but none (farms nor field pattern) appear to be as old as the farms in the smaller valley to the east (area 10) and it would seem that the emphasis of settlement shifted from this latter area to the edges of the Common in the early modern period following the improvement of access.

Some of the farms along the southern side of Cwm Prysor (Ysgwrn, Bodyfuddau, Bronasgellog - area 12) and again their associated field systems also may be of sub-medieval date, the field walls showing evidence of 'early' construction and re-builds.

Just outside the area to the north, Gellilydan is a rather sprawling settlement which developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century due to workers (many Irish Catholics) imported to build the dams for the hydro-electric scheme (area 05). The wayside shrine and Roman Catholic church to the east of the main road here also owe their origins to this phase of settlement in the area. The former army camp at Bronaber (area 20) was taken over in the late 1950s by construction workers brought in to build the nuclear power station at Trawsfynydd, and many of the structures date from that period, although the layout of the settlement belongs to its earlier life.



#### 8.4.1 *Non-nucleated settlements*

According to Lhwyd (1911), in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century the houses occupied in Trawsfynydd parish included Rhiw Goch (described as a 'park' and owned by the Honourable Sir John Wynne (area 20), Orsedd-lâs (area 09), Wyddow (unlocated), Ysgwrn (area 12), Bronasgellog (area 12), Caer y Cyrrach (unlocated), Tyddyn Gwladus (unlocated), Celligen (unlocated), Llech Edris (possibly Bryn Maen Llŵd), Dolgen, Goedyr hygun (unlocated) and Cae Adda (area 06).

The chronology of surviving building in this area suggests a definite history of settlement which may be related to other evidences of historical land use. The earliest surviving buildings appear to occupy the southern slopes of Cwm Prysor (area 12) and the steeper western slopes below Moel Ddu (area 10). Some may be traceable to the late sixteenth century, though many are more recent than that. Most are relatively small farmsteads (of which Ysgwrn and Tyddyn Mawr, both of which are listed, are good examples), with the single exception of Rhiw Goch which is an early 17<sup>th</sup> century gentry house, typifying the aspirations of ambitious estate-building gentry at the period – the house is large, and originally approached by a separate gatehouse. Both house and gatehouse are enriched with armorial panels in celebration of genealogy. In these character areas, the earlier houses are characterised by the longer plans of the sub-medieval tradition, with some sited against the slope, again an indication of early origins.

A small area of relict settlement on the western shores of Llyn Trawsfynydd may also be of earlier origin: Tyn Twll is another farmhouse clearly built within a sub-medieval tradition (the voussoir-arched doorway suggests a late 16<sup>th</sup> - early 17<sup>th</sup>-century date).

West of Afon Eden (area 09), the settlement pattern suggests later encroachment onto waste land (though the site of a medieval township suggests some at least of this may have much earlier origins). Evidence from these buildings is probably consistent with late 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century development, though few have been examined in detail (and recent evidence suggests that Bryn Maen Llŵd at least is earlier (J Alfrey, *pers comm*)).

#### 8.4.2 *Nucleated settlements*

There is only one nucleated settlement in the area, the village of Trawsfynydd itself (area 08): it has the characteristics of a nineteenth-century industrial village which expanded during the century (although precisely what its economic base was is unclear). Short terraces of workers' housing predominate, but there is a clear chronology of building within the village, which has a recognisable early nucleus around the church where there is some evidence of earlier buildings, including the inn (Ty Gwyn) with stabling at rear. An early 19<sup>th</sup>-century phase of growth is traceable in several Georgian vernacular buildings (for example the White Lion on High Street, and Glasfryn) which used large blocks of stone; whilst later 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces (in snecked masonry) developed along the main road to the north and south of the original centre. There are no listed buildings in the village (except for the church), where there has been a high level of loss of detail but, that said, it retains strong overall character.

#### 8.4.3 *Building types and material*

Almost all of the buildings outside Trawsfynydd (see above and description for area 08) are farms or farm buildings. Linear farms (where the farmhouse and outbuildings are in line) appear to be more common in more upland locations (for example Tyddyn Mawr, area 09); while elsewhere, grouped specialist buildings seem to predominate (for example, Bryn Maen Llwyd and Tyddyn Sais, area 09). Detached cowhouses (and some haybarns, for example attached to Berth Ddu, area 09, and in area 16) are also a distinctive feature of the landscape.

Generally within the area, local building stone predominates, generally without limewash or render. Most of the farmhouses (and other buildings) are of mortared stone, either worked as boulders or quarry-dressed, although drystone walling is used for some farm-buildings (although this does not seem to be as common in this area as it is in Arudwy, for example). Later nineteenth century work has characteristic snecked masonry, enabling clear phasing distinctions to be drawn, for example in the village of Trawsfynydd (area 08). Regrettably, the strong local tradition of bare masonry has been rudely disrupted in the small industrial settlement adjacent to the former station (Arudwy terrace and Ty-llwyd terrace) where housing 'improvement' has

introduced spar-dash render. Generally, however, the exposed stone walling provides one of the strongest elements in the character of the area, and the maintenance of this tradition is highly desirable.

With the exception of Rhiw Goch, which has some Renaissance characteristics, building seems to be rooted firmly in a regional vernacular tradition, remaining so until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when a simple Georgian style had taken hold. One farm, Berth ddu (area 09), however, takes up a Georgian vocabulary earlier in the nineteenth century. It has all the appearance of an estate farmhouse. This fits in well with the proposed model (see above) of the agricultural development of the central area around this date.

To the north of Afon Prysor (area 12), the buildings appear in general to be much later, with little to suggest a building date prior to the nineteenth century (although most of the farms were in existence by 1841). Many of the farms in this area have been heavily altered in more recent times, but their outlines suggest the more compact planning of a later period.

## 8.5 Relict archaeology

The upland basin was originally an extensive peat bog, Gors Goch, before the construction of the present reservoir in 1926. This basin may once have contained a natural lake which could be expected to have been well visited and a focus of activity in the early prehistoric period as a resource-rich area for a hunter-gatherer economy (see the SSSI designation within the description of area 07). Environmental studies of pollen preserved in upland peats in Ardudwy, close by to the west have shown that these uplands were covered by well developed woodland before the middle of the fourth millennium BC (Chambers and Price 1988). However, there is no archaeological evidence of human activity in the Trawsfynydd basin belonging to that period. To some extent this reflects a similar pattern found elsewhere in north-west Wales where most evidence of activity before the neolithic period is concentrated around the coast. Inland and upland areas may have been inaccessible in this period, with resources that were harder to exploit and so less frequently visited. However, other upland basins elsewhere in north-east and south Wales have produced evidence of activity during the mesolithic period and it may well be that at Trawsfynydd there is archaeological evidence hidden by blanket peat or now submerged beneath the reservoir.

A similar situation exists for the neolithic period, for which most known evidence, particularly the distribution of chambered tombs, comes from areas close to the coast. Settlement would have been confined to small areas of the most easily cleared and cultivated soils. However, the economy continued to rely to some extent on hunting and gathering and the distribution of chance finds of neolithic stone axes provides clues to the wider presence of activity in the landscape. Such finds occur beyond the distribution of chambered tombs, in the major valleys but still largely avoiding the uplands. There are several axes from the valley of the Mawddach and upper Dee basin although the nearest to Trawsfynydd comes from a little way to the south at Y Garn. There is however, one object of probable Neolithic date, a flint scraper found in the eroding edge of the reservoir at the foot of Bryn y Bleddiad in 1929. There is therefore likely to be other material of that period buried beneath the blanket peat.

During the second millennium BC evidence of activity in the uplands of north-west Wales becomes much more widespread as shown by the presence of several hundred burial monuments of types typical of that period. They are found in three types of situation, firstly on prominent summits, secondly close to trackways and thirdly in groups that might be seen as specialised cemeteries or funerary and ceremonial areas. Unfortunately none of these locations need necessarily be close to areas of actual settlement. Around Trawsfynydd there are only two cairns and these are situated close together on shelves overlooking the west side of the basin. Their non-prominent setting and local aspect may indicate that they were associated with settlement close by. However, they also overlook a major ancient trackway through the mountains and so may be just related to that route.

There is other evidence of activity in the basin during the second millennium BC in the form of several mounds of burnt stone around Cwrcwellt and Bronaber. Examples that have been excavated and dated elsewhere have shown them to belong mainly to that period (Davidson 1998). They are typically found alongside a water supply and with a timber-lined pit in which it

is thought meat was cooked by use of heated stones. They have not been proved to belong to permanent settlement and are thought to represent seasonally visited sites associated with hunting or herding.

Environmental evidence from Ardudwy shows that the uplands were becoming deforested during the third and second millennia and evidence of human interference was appearing (Chambers and Price 1988). The upland of Ardudwy was certainly settled by the early first millennium as shown by the excavation of two similar settlements each consisting of a single large round house within a circular concentric enclosure (Kelly 1988). There is only one possible example of a similar settlement in Trawsfynydd, at Fridd Ddu on a hillslope at the south side of Cwm Prysor (see photograph for area 11). This has not been excavated but seems to have been a concentric enclosed roundhouse later modified by the addition of further houses or huts and a rectilinear enclosure annexe.

Finds of stone artefacts of types typical of the second millennium BC in north-west Wales, such as axe-hammers and perforated mace-heads have a similar distribution to that of Neolithic stone axes, confined mainly to the lowland and valleys and there are none from the Trawsfynydd area. However, there are finds of bronze axes, two from around Tomen y Mur and one from Cwm Prysor as well as a hoard of three rapiers and a spear-head from Cwm Moch. None of these necessarily indicate settlement since all are close to major routes. Such items were anyway introduced and the Cwm Prysor axe, of late bronze age type, from the early first millennium BC, is of a style typical of south-east England or the Continent. The trackway through Cwm Moch originates in the west, possibly from a harbour at the mouth of the Afon Artro in Llanbedr and its route is fringed by standing stones and a variety of burial monuments (Bowen and Gresham 1967). It is believed to have crossed to the south of the main Trawsfynydd basin, near to Bronaber where there is a standing stone, Maen Llwyd, and then continued into the valley of the Afon Gain close to another standing stone, Llech Idris.

The area was certainly settled towards the end of the first millennium BC and there are a number of scattered settlements of small round houses linked to irregular curvilinear fields or enclosures on Crawcwellt, partly buried by blanket peat, as well as in Cwm Moch and Cwm Prysor. Excavation of one of the settlements on Crawcwellt (area 04) has shown that it was occupied between about 300 AD and 50 AD and its main economy was not agricultural but based on exploitation and smelting of local bog iron ore (Crew 1998). The same may have been true of other settlements nearby and all would have declined as iron became available more cheaply from other sources after the Roman invasion. Estimates from the quantity of slag suggest that the settlement would have produced about half a tonne of refined iron during its lifetime (*ibid*). The area also contains some isolated huts in higher land and these are likely to have been pastoral settlements, for instance in Cwm Moch at the west and on Fridd Wen at the east.

There are no hillforts immediately around Trawsfynydd to indicate that there was any centre of authority here in the later first millennium BC even though its location at the focus of a number of natural routes was seen as strategically important when the Romans established the fort at Tomen-y-mur (area 17). There has been, however, one particularly high status find from peat-cutting somewhere in the basin during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is a tankard of yew with a casing of bronze and a handle in very finely executed late Celtic style, dating to the end of the first millennium BC. It was probably made in the south-west of England and so was an imported item. It may have been a funerary or ritual deposit but possibly again was associated with trackways rather than local settlement.

There are several settlements here of more substantial stone construction and complexity than those at Crawcwellt, including that at Fridd Ddu, mentioned above, and one at Cae Ddu, Gellilydan. These are nucleated groups of buildings and yards. That at Cae Ddu also contains a rectangular building and these settlement types are believed to have been farmsteads carrying out both arable and cattle farming. By comparison with similar settlements excavated elsewhere in north-west Wales these were almost certainly occupied during the Romano-British period and would have benefited from the political stability and market opportunities of the Romanised economy, possibly helping to supply the fort at Tomen-y-mur.



## 8.6 Parks and gardens

There are no designed parks or gardens of note within the area. The only possible exception might be the landscape immediately around Trawsfynydd power station which was designed by Sylvia Crowe in 1961/2. The area surrounding the new, concrete monolith set within a National Park was deliberately designed to blend in with the surrounding (natural) landscape and to this end it was a successful undertaking: there is now actually nothing to differentiate between the 'natural' and the 'planted' (see photograph of area 05). On the Trawsfynydd tithe map, the only farm shown as having an established garden (with trees etc.) is Bronasgellog on the southern side of Cwm Prysor (area 12).

## 8.7 Industrial

From an historical point of view, the most significant industrial remains are the Roman tile kilns which lie alongside the former Roman road at Penystyrd on the south-western slopes of Moel Ddu (area 19). There are undoubtedly connected with Tomen y Mur to the north, and form an important part of the extensive relict Roman landscape which surrounds the fort.

Otherwise, there is little of industrial archaeological interest in the area, apart from a few small, dis-used slate quarries. The only significant one, Braich-ddû slate quarries to the north of Tomen y Mur (area 15), closed in 1868 (and was the last quarry to have slate taken down to the Afon Dwyryd to be taken out by boat), although it was used briefly in the 1980s and the remains are somewhat disturbed (Richards, 1991, 145). There is a small pit and adit, with outbuildings, at Cefn Clawdd (area 04).

## 8.8 Communications

There is good evidence for the Roman roads which extended outwards from Tomen-y-mur north-eastwards towards Bryn-y-gefeiliau fort, north-westwards (possibly down via a harbour on the Dwyryd at Felinrhyd) to Llystyn and eventually Segontium, eastwards (via the practice camps at Doldinas) to Caer Gai, and southwards (past the Roman tile kilns at Penystyrd) to Brithdir. (A detailed description of the roads is to be found in Hopewell, 2004, summarised in the description of area 17 below) The former and the latter form part of Sarn Helen which has passed into medieval Welsh folk-lore (see below, section 8.7.1). It is likely that these roads continued into use well into the medieval period (see the description of the settlements in area 09 below).

The Hengwrt archives (Trans. Hon. Cymrod, 1927) contains some ancient maps of Merioneth, and the earliest, dated 1578, shows not a single road in the county. The next (probably also 1578) shows just one, which runs from Dinas to Dolgellau to Llanfacreth (sic) and then takes a straight line over the mountains to Harlech.

The first turnpike roads in Wales were established in 1777 (Pritchard, 1961). The Act which established the Trust was general and embraced all the principal highways in Meirionnydd: it was kept going until the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Meirionnydd Trust was a single entity but was split up into five districts of roads, including Dolgellau and Mawddach, the road to Barmouth and the road between Dolgellau and Maentwrog as far as the bridge at Trawsfynydd (see area 09).

George Kay, writing in 1794, comments that in recent times roads in Merioneth had been improved by the turnpikes but were, in his opinion, still too narrow. In April, 1834, a correspondent for the Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald (C&D, 19/4/1834) described the state of the Trawsfynydd to Dolgellau road as 'disgraceful and dangerous', adding 'in every yard of it there is a rut deep enough for the grave of a child and to ensure breakdowns the space between is filled up with lumps of stone each as large as cannon balls of Swedish turnips' (Pritchard, 1961, 29).

The first advertisement for bids for the letting of the Trawsfynydd toll gate appeared in 1823, which may well indicate a date for the completion of the building of this section of road.

However, a Post Office map dated 1823 (Dolgellau Archives, Trawsfynydd parish file) does not show any road northwards from Dolgellau although 'Transvynith' is shown, along with Bala, Dolgellau, Harlech and Tan-y-bwlch (the latter was a hotel and Post Office in 1798 (it had its own stamp)) (ap Owain, nd). It was certainly shown on a map dated 1827 (Dodd, 1925, 139). The road appears to have been a brand new turnpike construction (see description of area 09 below for the development of farming settlements in this area), but nothing is known of the route beyond Trawsfynydd except that the Oakely Arms at Tan-y-bwlch was the next post office on the chain along this route so the road must somehow have linked these two places. The Trawsfynydd gate was let in 1862 for just £47 10s, one of the lowest rents in the county (Dolgellau Archives, ZM/581/5). The road was further straightened and improved in 1970.

The 25½ mile Bala to Blaenau Ffestiniog branch of the Great Western railway was one of the most expensive to be built (with its more than 70 bridges and viaducts, plus miles of embankment and ledges) and was probably the least profitable of all the Welsh railways (Richards, 201, 141ff). Part of it (towards the Bala end) was opened on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1882 (Southern, 1995), and it finally reached Blaenau in 1884. The route came from Bala, and entered the study area at the head of Cwm Prysor where it crossed the huge viaduct (see area 12): it then clung precariously to the north side of the valley before reaching Trawsfynydd station and then proceeding northwards (just to the east of the present A470 road – see area 17), with a small junction at Maentwrog Road where traffic from Braich-ddu quarry joined it, eventually to Blaenau Ffestiniog. Slate was taken from Blaenau to Bala (and then onwards), and passenger and goods services extended to Trawsfynydd and Prysor (via an infrastructure of sixteen stations and halts). However, its greatest impact was to enable a large military training camp to be established from 1903 at Bronaber (area 20 – it remained open until the 1950s), and in 1911 a special station was built at Trawsfynydd (immediately to the north of the public station) (Southern, 1995, has detailed plans) where troops, horses and artillery coming from Bala were off-loaded and travelled the last section by road. The ranges were used by both the Regular and Territorial Army during an annual camping season which was usually spread over c. 6 months during the summer.

The railway was finally closed to passengers in 1960 and to freight in 1961 although the Trawsfynydd to Blaenau section was retained and a connection made to Llandudno Junction to service the building of the new Trawsfynydd power station (area 05). The station was finally closed on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1964. The remains of most of the line of the railway are still visible crossing the landscape, and the relatively extensive remains of Trawsfynydd station and goods yards are now an agricultural supplies depot. The remains of the military station, some 200 yards to the north, are largely intact.

## 8.9 Cultural associations

### 8.9.1 *Mabinogion*

Tomen-y-mŵr (under the guise of Mur Castell, as it is known in the story) is one of the main scenes of action in the fourth branch of the Mabinogi, *Math fab Mathonwy*. Following the defeat of Pryderi and the birth of Lleu Llaw Gyffes, Math and Gwydion create for Lleu a wife out of flowers from the oak tree, broom and meadowsweet, and by their enchantment created the fairest maiden that any man had ever seen, and baptised her with the name 'Blodeuedd'. When Gwydion points out to Math that nevertheless, without land, it is difficult for any man to keep dominion, Math agrees to give Lleu the best possible cantref, Dunoding, and there he settles him in a court called Mur Castell, in the uplands of Ardudwy, where he rules to the satisfaction of everyone.

One day, when Lleu has returned to Caer Dathal to visit Math, Blodeuedd hears the sounds of a nearby hunt and she invites Gronw Peifr, the lord of Penllyn, into the court. That night they are immediately attracted to each other and sleep together. They fall in love, and on the second night Gronw Peifr suggests that they should kill Lleu, and instructs Blodeuedd to find out how they should accomplish the deed, which she does by close questioning. Following his betrayal by Blodeuedd, Lleu is struck by Gronw on the banks of the Afon Cynfael with a spear which it has taken the latter a year to make, and flies away almost dead in the shape of an eagle. Blodeuedd and Gronwy return to the court, and on the following day Gronw conquers Ardudwy and rules over it and Penllyn.

Gwydion eventually tracks down the eagle, turns Lleu back into human form and takes him to Math's court to recover. A year later, they set off to seek revenge on the man that had caused Lleu's suffering. They muster an army from Gwynedd and march to Arduwy, to Mur Castell. Blodeuedd flees the court and is turned by Gwydion into an owl, while Gronw is killed by Lleu in the same manner in which he himself had been struck. Then Lleu Llaw Gyffes conquers the country again and rules over it prosperously, eventually becoming lord of Gwynedd.

### 8.9.2 *Hedd Wyn*

Ellis Humphrey Evans (Hedd Wyn) was born at Penlan, Trawsfynydd, Meirionnydd in 1887, the eldest son of eleven children born to Evan and Mary Evans. Soon afterwards the family moved to his father's old home 'Yr Ysgwrn' a small hill farm about a mile to the east of the village of Trawsfynydd (area 12). Apart from a very brief spell working in south Wales, it was here that he lived all his life until he was called up by the army. 'Yr Ysgwrn' (now a listed building) to this day remains in the hands of the family with Gerald, a nephew to Hedd Wyn, continuing the farming tradition.

Ellis began writing poetry at an early age, winning his first competition at the age of twelve at a local literary meeting. At Bala in 1907 he won his first chair with a poem called *Dyffryn* (Valley). Following this he won chairs at Llanuwchllyn (1913), Pwllheli (1913), Llanuwchllyn (1915) and Pontardawe (1915). Apart from competing he also composed poetry about events and people in the Trawsfynydd area. He was given the bardic name Hedd Wyn at a meeting of local poets held at Ffestiniog on August 20, 1910.

Though not a soldier by intent or inclination Ellis was called up in January 1917. After a brief training period at Litherland, near Liverpool, he arrived in Flanders sometime during the summer. By the end of July his regiment was stationed near Pilken Ridge in preparation for the battle of Passchendaele. On July 31 there was fierce fighting with great loss of life, amongst them Hedd Wyn, who died of his wounds. He was buried on the battlefield before his body was moved after the end of the war to Artillery Wood cemetery.

In 1917, the National Eisteddfod of Wales was held in Birkenhead. 'Yr Arwr' (The Hero) was set as a subject for the chair and Hedd Wyn decided to compete. Working diligently, he finally completed the poem in Belgium, in 1917. On Thursday, September 6 the Eisteddfod pavilion was packed to hear the adjudication of T. Gwynn Jones. In his opinion, and that of his two fellow adjudicators, the poet with the nom-de-plume of 'Fleur-de-lis' fully deserved to win. The Archdruid Dyfed then rose to tell the audience that the winner was a Private E H Evans – Hedd Wyn – who had been killed a month earlier in the war at Passchendaele. In scenes of great emotion and sadness the chair was covered with a black cloth. Today the Birkenhead Eisteddfod is still referred to as 'Eisteddfod y Gadair Ddu' – the Black Chair Eisteddfod. The Eisteddfod chair had been made by Eugeen Vanfleteren a Belgian refugee who had settled in Birkenhead. Using Celtic and Welsh symbols Vanfleteren created one of the most impressive Eisteddfod chairs ever made. On September 13, 1917 the chair arrived in Trawsfynydd by train and was carried by horse and cart to 'Yr Ysgwrn'.

In 1918 a volume of Hedd Wyn's poetry was published – 'Cerddi'r Bugail' and on August 11, 1923 a statue of him was unveiled in the village of Trawsfynydd. In 1991 a feature film was made about him which received an Oscar nomination (as best foreign language film).

### 8.9.3 *Saint John Roberts (1577 – 1610)*

He was allegedly born at Rhiw Goch, Trawsfynydd, in 1577, and probably baptised at St. Madryn's Church, Trawsfynydd. He was the eldest son of Robert and Anna Roberts, a brother to Ellis, Cadwaladr, Gwen, Margaret and Ellen. It is mentioned that they lived at Gelli Goch or Tyddyn Gladys. He was a cousin to Robert Lloyd, Rhiw Goch, first MP for Merioneth. The ashlar dressing to the door opening at Rhiw Goch carries Robert Lloyd's initials, together with the year 1610, when St. John Roberts was martyred. It is believed that he received his early education from a dispossessed monk from Cymer Abbey, following the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII.

He was raised a Protestant, and joined St. John's College, Oxford, on 26 February 1595/6. There he came into contact with John (Leander) Jones and William Laud, later to become Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury. He left Oxford to study law at Furnival's Inn, London before deciding to travel to the continent. Whilst in Paris, he became a Catholic at Notre Dame cathedral and he then went to the Jesuit College at Bordeaux, before joining the same order at the English College in Valladolid, Spain, on the 18 October 1598. The following year he went to St. Benedict's Abbey, Valladolid, where he became a Benedictine, and after a few months he went on to do his novitiate in the famous Abbey of St. Martin in Santiago de Compostela, towards the end of 1600. He adopted the name of Fray Juan de Mervinia, Brother John of Merioneth – an unusual choice, since most priests chose the name of their monastery. This suggests that his old country was very dear to him, and that he had a high regard for Wales.

He was ordained and set forth on the English Mission on the 26 December 1602 – he was the first monk to return to England following the closure of the monasteries by Henry VIII. This fact is considered very important since parallels are drawn with St. Augustine. Dom. Weldon wrote: "He was the first who, out of a monastery, after the suppression of monasteries in England, attacked the gate of hell, and provoked the prince of darkness, in his usurped Kingdom, which he overcame, like his great master, the Prince of Martyrs, by losing his life in the conflict".

Lewis Owen (Y Llwyn, Dolgellau), the spy, said of him "He was the first that had his Mission from the Pope, and his own Spanish prelate to go to England, which made him not a little proud that he should be a second Augustine monk, to convert and reconcile his countrymen to the Roman Anti-christ". Despite being followed by spies, he managed to land in England in April 1603.

He fell into the hands of the authorities four or five times, once in November 1605, during the Gunpowder Plot, whilst in the house of Mrs Percy (wife of Thomas Percy), but on each occasion after a short term in prison, he was sentenced to be exiled. The Plague was always around at the turn of the sixteenth century, and he made quite a name for himself attending to the sick and dying at that time and was noted for his constancy, zeal, charity and persevering devotion.

Despite knowing that he faced execution, he returned to England for the last time in 1610. Whilst he was finishing Mass he was taken away in his vestments by pursuivants to Newgate. He was found guilty of high treason and was executed on the 10 December 1610.

He was executed by being hung, drawn and quartered. It was traditional to disembowel the victim whilst still alive, but the crowd would not allow this – these were the poor folk that he had cared for during the Plague, and they remembered his kindness – therefore the executioner had to wait until he was dead. Another tradition was for the executioner to seize their hearts after disembowelling then showing them to the people, crying: "Behold the heart of a traitor!" with the crowd replying "Long live the King" – not one word was uttered by the crowd on this occasion.

With the help of Dona Luisa de Caravajal, a Spanish lay missionary, the monks took his remains to Douai in France. The relics went missing during the French Revolution. Some of his remains also went to Valladolid and Santiago de Compostela, but they were also lost.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Location of areas (see next page for key)

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## 9 Historic character areas

9.1 The study area has been divided into 21 separate historic character areas as follows:

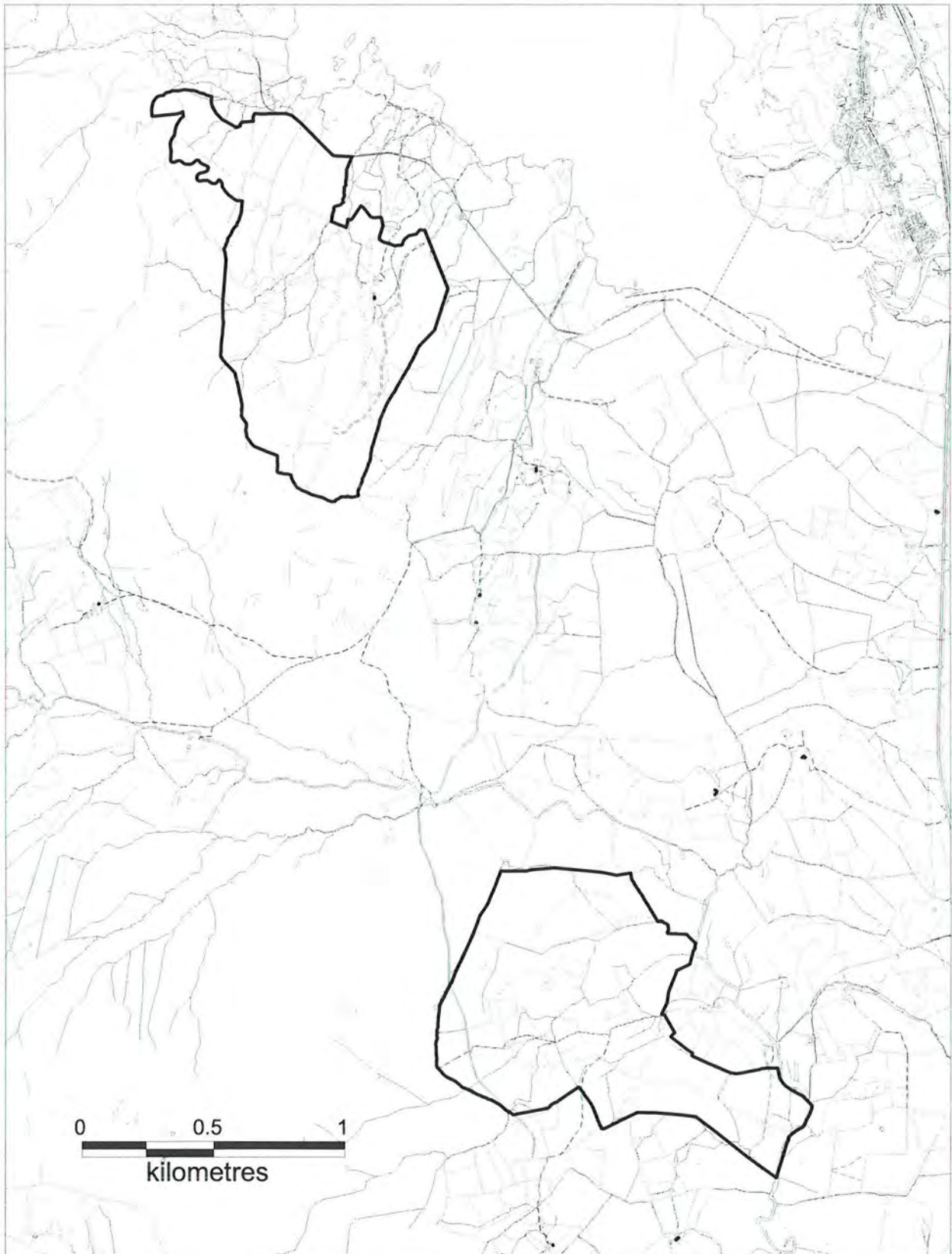
01	Ffridd Lŵyd – forestry	(PRN 18267)
02	Cefn Clawdd – settlements and enclosures	(PRN 18268)
03	Rhinogau – rocky lower eastern slopes	(PRN 18269)
04	Crawcwellt	(PRN 18270)
05	Trawsfynydd power station and lake	(PRN 18271)
06	Scattered settlement, south-west of Llyn Trawsfynydd	(PRN 18272)
07	Bog, west of Bryn-crwn	(PRN 18273)
08	Trawsfynydd village	(PRN 18274)
09	Farming settlements south of Trawsfynydd	(PRN 18275)
10	Early settlement south of Plâs Capten	(PRN 18276)
11	Intermediary slopes, Ffridd Wen	(PRN 18277)
12	Cwm Prysor – valley bottom	(PRN 18278)
13	Hill slopes – Moel Uchaf Dô-haidd	(PRN 18279)
14	Intermediary slopes – north side of Cwm Prysor	(PRN 18280)
15	Unenclosed mountain north of Cwm Prysor	(PRN 18281)
16	Farming settlements north of Trawsfynydd	(PRN 18282)
17	Tomen y Mur relict Roman landscape	(PRN 18283)
18	Coed Caersaeson	(PRN 18284)
19	Unenclosed mountain – Moel Ddu & Moel Oernant	(PRN 18285)
20	Bronaber army camp	(PRN 18286)
21	Upland enclosures – Dôl-gain	(PRN 18287)

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 - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
01 - Ffridd Lwyd - Forestry

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***Historic background***

This character area comprises a block of modern (20<sup>th</sup>-century) forestry plantation above the south-west shore of Llyn Trawsfynydd, probably planted at the same time as the large blocks of similar forestry in and around Coed y Brenin to the south. The tithe map shows a concentration of largish fields centred on Cae Rhys (which are still shown on the modern OS map and presumably still survive within the forestry), with the area above apparently unenclosed waste (leading into area 03).

***Key historic landscape characteristics******20<sup>th</sup>-century forestry***

This area is a block of modern forestry comprising the usual species, planted over an earlier fieldscape defined by drystone walls.

***Conservation priorities and management***

The principal priority is to preserve the fieldscapes (dry-stone walls and associated features) which are still preserved within the forestry. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93201*





01 Ffridd Llwyd – forestry

(PRN 18267)

This view looking westwards towards the Rhinogau from south of Lake Trawsfynydd shows the extent of the 20th-century conifer plantation, with area 07 in the foreground, area 06 below the forestry and area 03 beyond.



### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
02 - Cefn Clawdd - settlements and enclosures

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*Historic background*

Cefn Clawdd is one of only three medieval townships within this Register area, although little is known about it. There is an extensive (late prehistoric) settlement just to the east (outside of the area), but the four settlements here (Wern-fâch, Wern-cyfrdwy and one un-named, in addition to Cefn Clawdd) and their associated fields resemble farmsteads carved out of inhospitable uplands during the late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Certainly all four farms (and their fields, which are large, irregular enclosures typical of marginal land encroachment) appear on the 1830s tithe map with little change from the modern day.

*Key historic landscape characteristics*

*upland farmsteads, irregular fields*

Only one of the farmsteads (Cefn Clawdd) appears to still be farmed (the fields below the house being cut for hay/silage in August): Wern-cyfrdwy may have been modernised and been used as a holiday home, but the other two settlements appear to have been abandoned, along with their fields.

*Conservation priorities and management*

The semi-derelict pattern of enclosures and settlements is typical of landscapes of upland-edge marginal farming of the late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (one of which is still in use in this instance) and should be retained. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

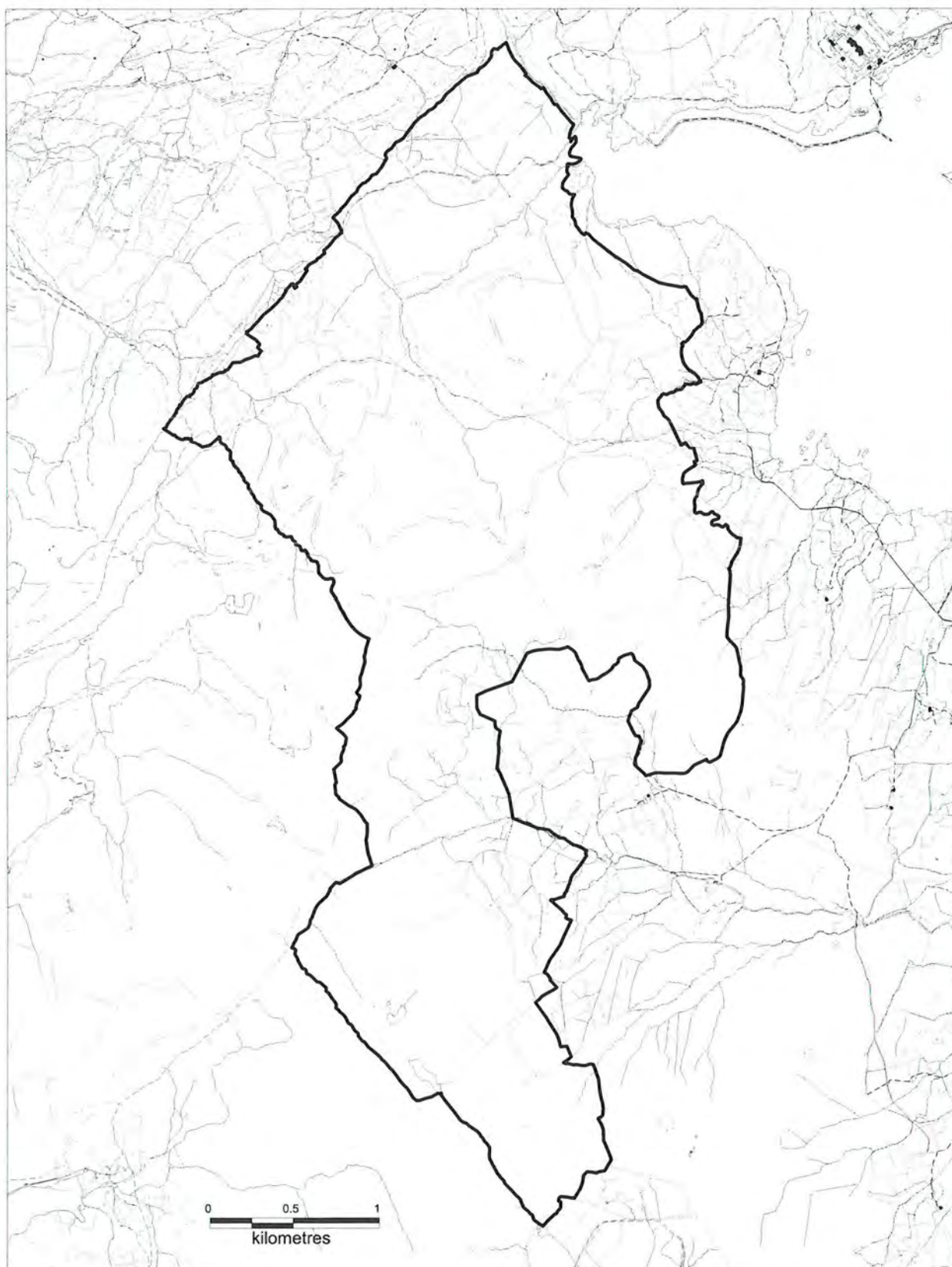
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93201*





02      Cefn Clawdd – settlements and enclosures      (PRN 18268)

View looking west towards the modern farm of Cefn Clawdd surrounded by a small area of enclosed and improved fields (with area 04 in the foreground and area 03 behind).



## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
03 - Rhinogau - rocky lower eastern slopes

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***Historic background***

This area of natural rocky ridges on the lower east-facing slopes of the Rhinogau contains only a very few traces of past human activity, in the form of a number of large, irregular enclosures which include a small number of sheepfolds. The eastern extent of a pass from Cwm Bychan (to the west) over Craig Drwg and down to Crawcwellt (probably originally to Cefn Clawdd and beyond) bisects the area. There is a single prehistoric hut circle towards the northern end of the area, but the area has never been fully enclosed and exploited.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*rocky ledges, drystone walls, trackway*

The area comprises a natural series of rocky ridges which bear few traces of past human activity beyond a few drystone walls, and the route mentioned above.

***Conservation priorities and management***

Retention of the wild, remote and undeveloped nature of the terrain is essential. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93201*



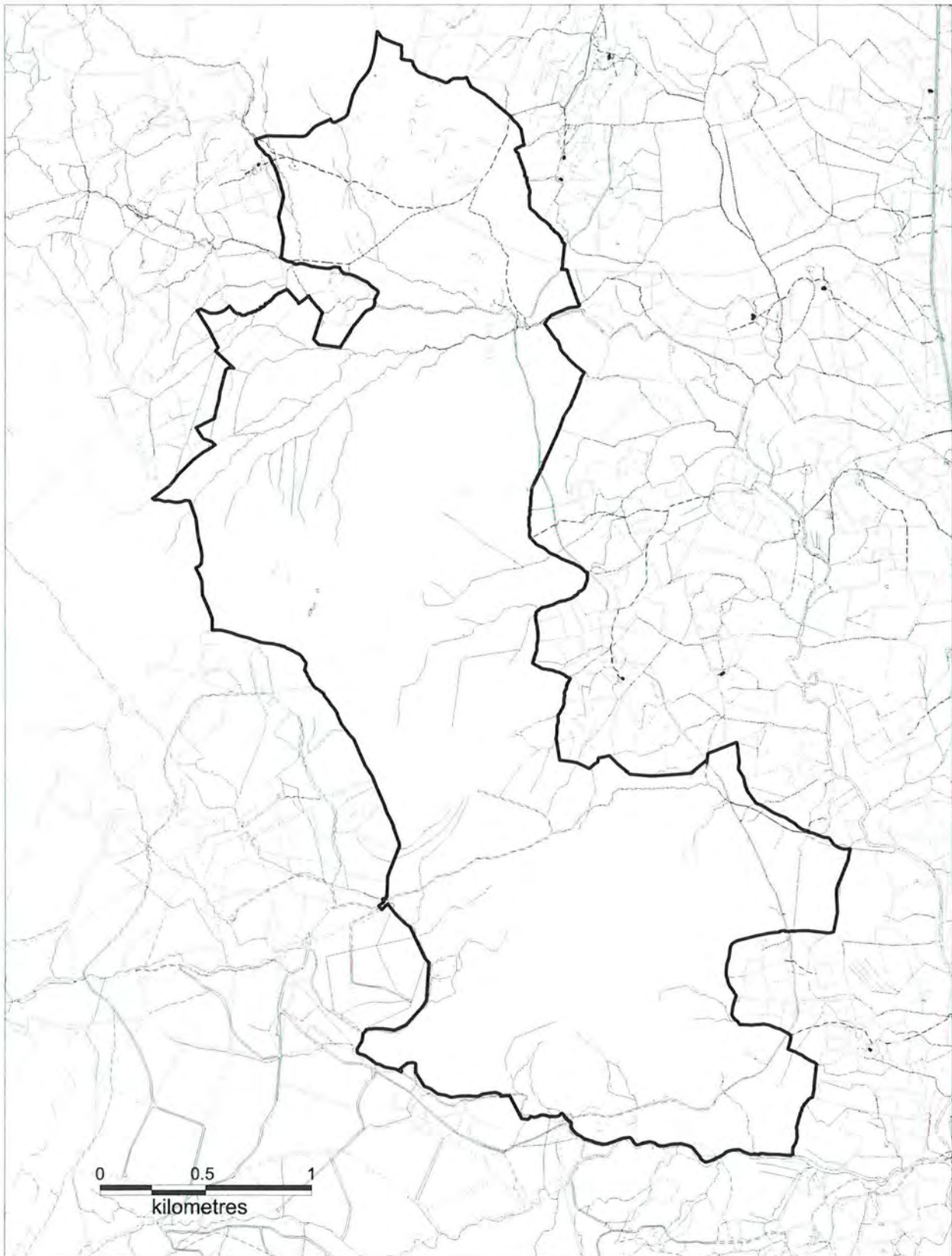


03 Rhinogau – rocky lower eastern slopes

(PRN 18269)

View, looking west, showing the open, rocky character of the lower eastern slopes of the Rhinogau above the forestry (area 01).





### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
04 - Crawcwellt

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***Historic background***

The upland basin of which this area forms a large part, was originally an extensive peat bog, Gors Goch, before the construction of the present reservoir in 1906. This basin may once have contained a natural lake which could be expected to have been well visited and a focus of activity in the early prehistoric period as a resource-rich area for a hunter-gatherer economy (see section 8.3 above). Other upland basins elsewhere in north-east and south Wales have produced evidence of activity during the mesolithic period and it may well be that at Trawsfynydd there is archaeological evidence hidden by blanket peat or now submerged beneath the reservoir.

There is some evidence of activity in the basin during the second millennium BC in the form of several mounds of burnt stone around Crawcwellt and Bronaber. The area was certainly settled towards the end of the first millennium BC and there are a number of scattered settlements of small round houses linked to irregular curvilinear fields or enclosures on Crawcwellt, partly buried by blanket peat, as well as in Cwm Moch and Cwm Prysor. Excavation of one of the settlements on Crawcwellt has shown that it was occupied between about 300 AD and 50 AD and its main economy was not agricultural but based on exploitation and smelting of local bog iron ore (Crew 1998). The same may have been true of other settlements nearby and all would have declined as iron became available more cheaply from other sources after the Roman invasion. Estimates from the quantity of slag suggest that the settlement would have produced about half a ton of refined iron during its lifetime (*ibid*).

The 1840 tithe map shows this entire area as being unenclosed and labels it Crawcwellt Common.

***Key historic landscape characteristics******Prehistoric settlement (some buried), bog***

The area today is a large area of upland bog which bears few no outward signs of past human activity, although at least two extensive prehistoric settlements (comprising scattered hut circle settlement surrounded by a series of 'wandering walls' and enclosures) in the northern and southern parts of the area, and recent excavations by P Crew, have demonstrated that the area was heavily exploited in the prehistoric period, and has considerable potential for further buried remains. There are, in addition, a few hafotai and sheepfolds in the lower part of the area.

***Conservation priorities and management***

The identification, recording and conservation of the (partially-buried) prehistoric archaeology of the area must be the priority. There are two extensive (scheduled) prehistoric settlements with fields at the very northern (Cefn Clawdd, PRN 1649) and very southern (Crawcwellt, PRN 5160) ends of the area. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93202*

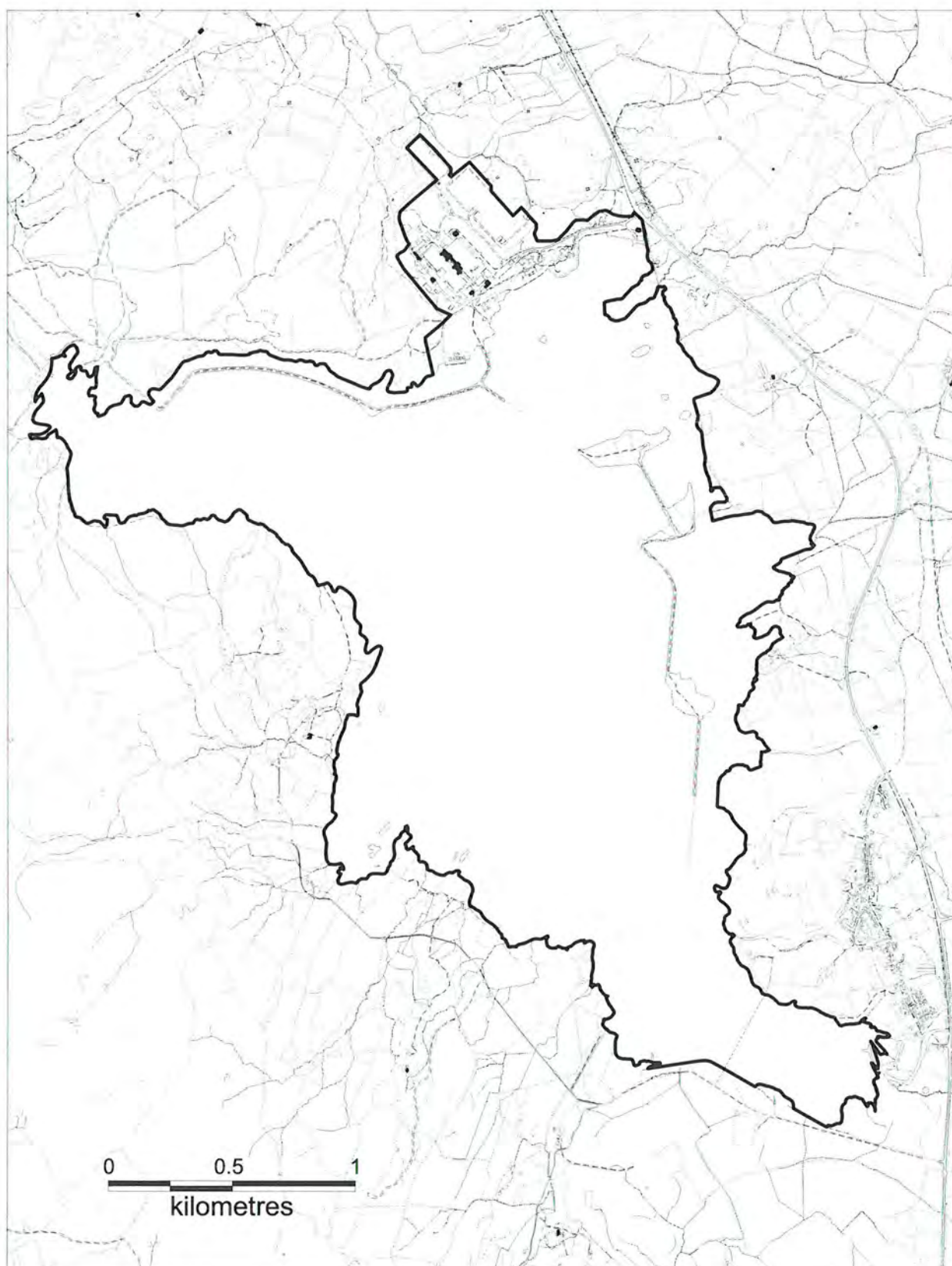


04      Crawcwellt

(PRN 18270)

View, looking south, showing the open, inhospitable nature of this character area.





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
05 - Trawsfynydd power station and lake

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*Historic background*

The 1840 tithe map shows at least two farms (Brynhir at c. SH699351, and Llwynderw at c. SH703370) near the former course of the river which are now below the lake. Little else is known of the early history of the area.

The land on which the Maentwrog hydro-electric power station, and the lake and dam necessary to supply water to it, was purchased in the mid-1920s by the North Wales Power Company; work began in 1925 and the station was opened in October, 1928. It originally had an 18 megawatt output from three turbines driven by generators, but a fourth was added in 1934 increasing its output to 24 megawatts. It was refitted in 1991, and following the installation of computer software in 1996 it is now operated remotely by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.

The lake was formed by the construction of four dams (Smith, 1971) which between them impounded the water to form Llyn Trawsfynydd. The principal dam, built cross the Afon Prysor (at the northern end of the lake), was the first large arch dam ever built in Great Britain (*ibid.*, 232) and was 96 ft high and 37 ft thick at the base. In 1987 it was decided to replace the original dam, and this lengthened the life of the power station by 60 years.

Irish workers had been brought from County Cork to build the original dam, and some stayed on leading to an increase in the local population: the local tannery on the eastern edge of Gellilydan (on the edge of area 16) was converted to a Catholic church in the 1960s and is still a noticeable wayside shrine.

Work on the construction of *Atomfa Trawsfynydd* (power station) begun in July, 1959, by which time Snowdonia had been designated as a National Park. Over 800 non-local workers lived in the Bronaber camp (area 20), recently vacated by the Army. Both of the station's reactors were in operation by March 1965 and the station was finally opened in October 1968. Built at a cost of £103 million, Trawsfynydd power station was the former Central Electricity Generating Board's (CEGB) first inland power station, and the first to use a lake to obtain water for cooling the condensers of its turbo-alternators. Although it has since been decommissioned, at its height the station discharged 70,000 gallons of effluent weekly into the lake (which usually contained c. 35million gallons of water. The landscape immediately surrounding the station (particularly to the north) was designed by landscape consultant Sylvia Crowe and architectural consultant Sir Basil Spence (although little remains today).

*Key historic landscape characteristics**lake, dam, power station*

Most of this character are comprises an artificial lake built in connection with two power stations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are several dams associated with the lake, and two power stations, one on the northern shore and the other outside the project area to the north on the banks of the Dwyryd. The nuclear station has now been decommissioned, and the site is being heavily promoted as a leisure and tourist attraction, principally for fishing and boating.

*Conservation priorities and management*

The nuclear power station has now been closed and is being dismantled, while the hydro-electric one remains in use. No active conservation is proposed. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93203*

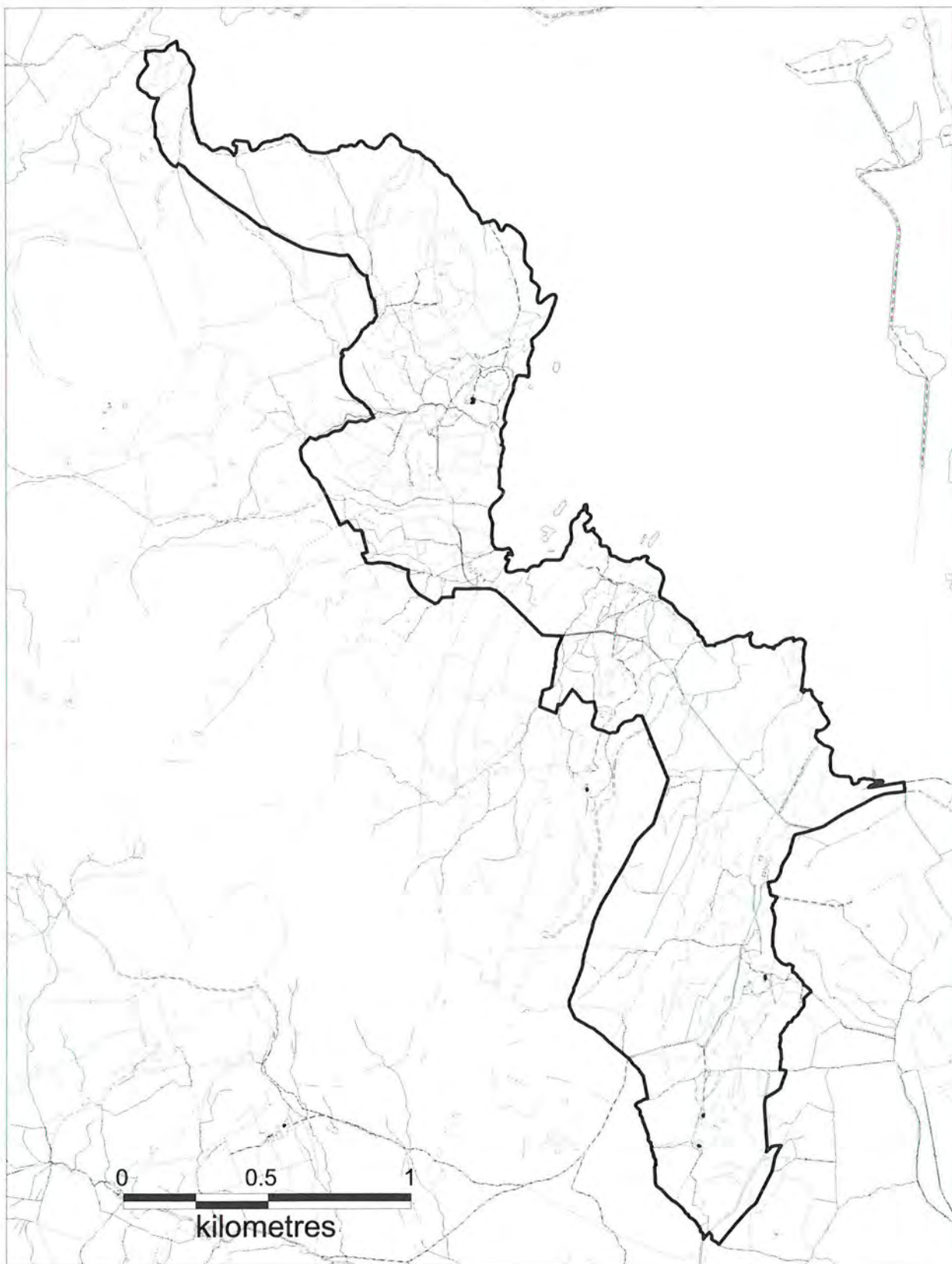


05 Trawsfynydd power station and lake

(PRN 18271)

Aerial view of the nuclear power station (opened in 1965 and now decommissioned) situated on the northern shore of the artificial lake first constructed in 1906.





### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
06 - Scattered settlement, south-west  
of Llyn Trawsfynydd

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## 06 Scattered settlement, south-west of Llyn Trawsfynydd (PRN 18272)

### *Historic background*

This area contains eleven or twelve farmsteads, all of which are shown on the Trawsfynydd tithe map (1840), including Ty-cerrig, Muriau-bychan, Tyndrain, Cae Adda, Tyn Twll, Moelfryn uchaf, Moelfryn isaf and Coed y rhygen (mentioned in a mid-17<sup>th</sup> century poem – see frontispiece). The latter, set amidst a complex of drystone, curvilinear field walls and some woodland on slightly higher ground, are probably 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century in date (and are thus amongst the earliest surviving buildings in the project area), while the others occupy the edges of the boggy, lower ground (areas 04 and 07) and have the appearance of being late 18<sup>th</sup> / early 19<sup>th</sup> century encroachments on to Crawcwellt Common along the older road to Cefn Clawdd below the mountain scree.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*farmsteads, small enclosures, woodland*

This area contains the only occupied settlements west of the Afon Eden (with the single exception of Cefn Clawdd (area 02) and east of the Rhinogau range). They are single farmsteads set within their own field systems. Moelfryn uchaf, Moelfryn isaf and Coed y rhygen (and possibly also Tyn Twll and Cae Adda) are relatively early in date (17<sup>th</sup> century?) and are set within small complexes of outbuildings: the construction and pattern of their surrounding fields (large and irregular stone walls on sloping ground, often with phases of construction evident), which are all down to improved pasture, as well as the pockets of woodland, also suggest an early date.

Ty-cerrig, Muriau-bychan, Muriau-bychan-isaf and Tyndrain look later in date, probably late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and have their farm buildings attached to the end of the house. They are built below a rocky outcrop and at the edge of the bog (area 07). Their surrounding fields, which are all improved, are small and irregular and appear to be contemporary with the farms. The road which runs past them formerly led to Trawsfynydd before the building of the lake (area 05) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

Coed y Rhigen SSSI (CCW ref. 31WBT) in the north of the area is of national and international importance for the richness of its Atlantic moss and bryophytes, and is included in the Meirionnydd oakwoods SAC, extended in 1994.

The settlement pattern, and probably much of the field pattern, have remained unchanged since the tithe map was drawn, and these should be conserved if the character of the area, distinct from the surrounding areas, is to be retained. The appearance of the farms, the stone walls and patches of woodland should also be retained. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

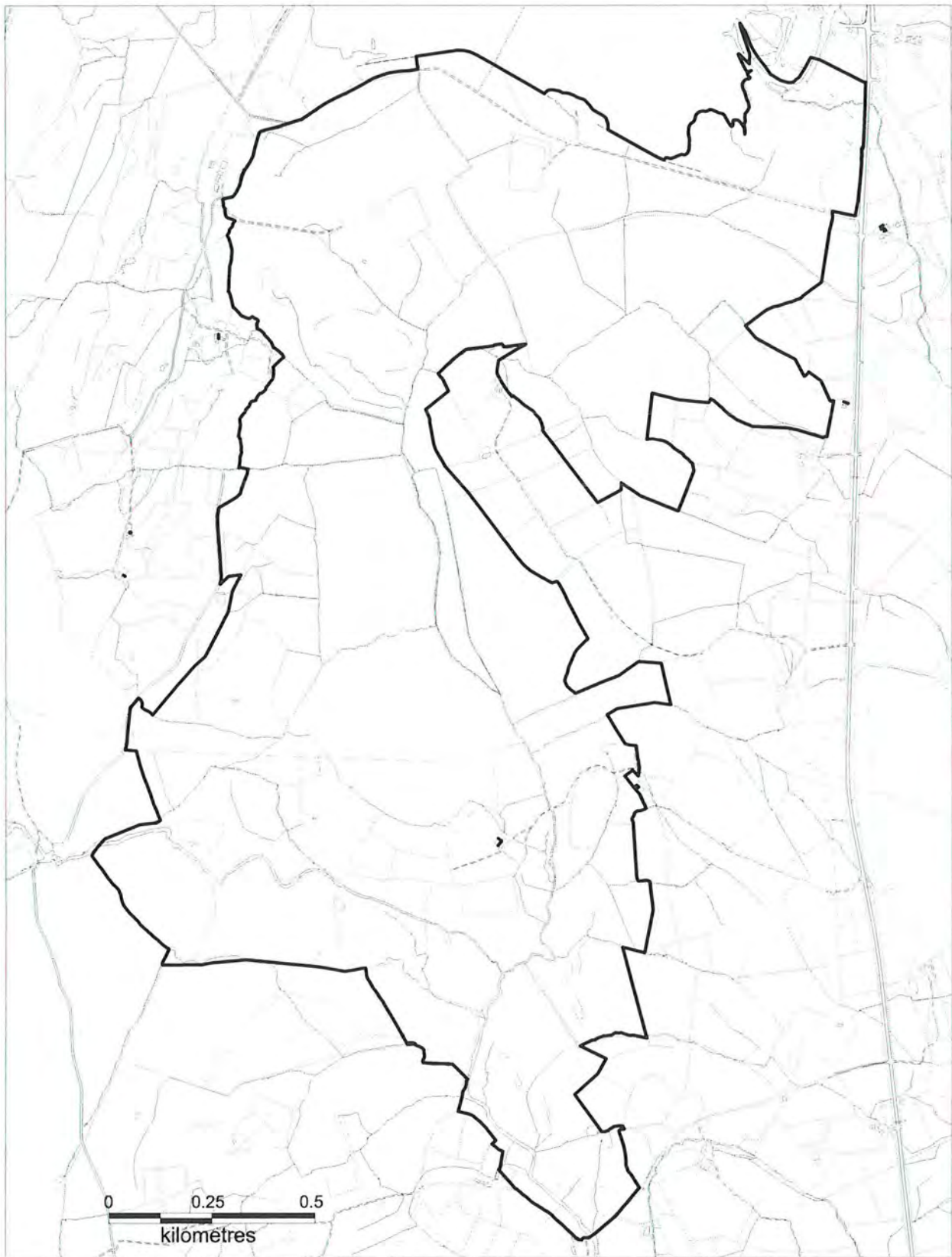
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93203*



06      Scattered settlement, south-west of Llyn Trawsfynydd      (PRN 18272)

View looking west showing the 19th century farmstead of Muriau-bychain surrounded by a series of enclosed fields between the unenclosed bog (area 07) in the foreground and the forestry (area 01) behind.





### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
07 - Bog, west of Bryn-Crwn

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*Historic background*

This area comprises a small area of bog (see below), similar to area 04, which occupies the bottom of the river valley at this point, up to the edge of the artificial lake (area 05). It contains very little visible evidence for past human exploitation, although this may be buried (see section 8.3 above) with the exception of a few walls, a couple of trackways which cross the area and some evidence for past drainage activities. As the settlements to the west and east of the area appear to be mainly 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date (this area is devoid of settlement), these features presumably also date to that period.

*Key historic landscape characteristics**unenclosed area, bog*

The area is characterised by its lack of enclosure and subsequent agricultural improvement: it is largely 'natural' in appearance (undoubtedly a result of over-exploitation in the later prehistoric period – see section 8.3) although a few stone walls divide it into a number of large enclosures and a couple of footpaths (presumably former trackways) cross it from west to east. The area also contains some evidence for water management in the form of short stretches of canalisation and ditches.

*Conservation priorities and management*

The area corresponds neatly with Afon Eden which was designated a SSSI (CCW ref. SSSI 'Afon Eden' 31 WBM) in 1995, initially as Bryn Crwn SSSI for its biological interest including lowland grassland habitats. The area, which is also a candidate SAC, extends southwards along the course of the river, although it is at its widest at the northern end (where it also includes parts of area 09), where it originally extended into the area now below the lake. Its interest centres on a combination of freshwater, mire, woodland and grassland habitats and species, including raised bog, blanket bog, neutral and acid grassland, broadleaved woodland and a mixture of associated habitats including marshy grassland and flush. As far as management is concerned, the management plan drawn up by CCW insists that the protection of a river ecosystem demands a catchment-scale approach, possibly to be managed under the EU water framework Directive which CCW intend to pursue. Most of the farms which own the land are already in, or are applying to join, Tir Cymen of Tir Gofal. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93203*



07 Bog, west of Bryn-crwn

(PRN 18273)

View, looking south, showing the open, unimproved nature of this boggy SSSI.





### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
08 - Trawsfynydd village

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*Historic background*

The village of Trawsfynydd was apparently originally called Llanedenowan, but this was later (date uncertain) changed and, according to Lhwyd (1911), the current name is thought to have no derivation other than that most (all?) of the roads leading to it crossed over mountains. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were 12 houses and a church in Trawsfynydd itself (*ibid*).

The village has grown considerably since 1840 (when it was shown on the tithe map). Situated on the then main road and some distance, surprisingly, from the bridge where the road crossed the Afon Prysor (the village is actually sited on the top of a small but distinct ridge), it then comprised a main core centred on the 'square' just to the south of the church (see photograph). This was a pre-Reformation church, originally dedicated to St Mary and later to the Holy Trinity and is closely associated with St. John Roberts (see above, section 8.7.2). Post-disestablishment, it was re-dedicated to St Madryn, was burned down in 1978 and re-opened in 1981 (it remains the only listed building in the village). At that time, there was very little other development along the roads which radiated out to the north, east and south. This core was surrounded by a pattern of small, irregular fields (possibly remnants of a late medieval organisation).

Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the village expanded: in addition to several chapels, two inns and several shops (including the Cambrian Stores) next to the original core, ribbon developments were built along the three roads leading from the centre: along the road to the north, Fron-galed and Pant-yr-celyn terraces were built; on the eastern road, Ty'n-y-pwll cottages and particularly Ardu dwy and Ty-llŵd terraces (the name of the latter taken from a farm marked here on the tithe map) and eventually the station (the Great Western Railway line from Bala to Ffestiniog, and thus the station here, opened in 1882 and finally closed in 1964 – see area 12); and, on the main road to the south, a hotel, Fron-wynion terrace, Glascoed, Rhiwlas, Bryn-hyfyrd and other short terraces, along with another chapel. Further out, nearer the bridge, Gwyndy and Bron-gwynydy are two short terraces opposite each other alongside the road. Interestingly, the physical expansion of the village in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century is contradicted by the fall in the number of inhabitants working in the quarries at Blaenau Ffestiniog, which fell from 120 in 1839 to just 12 in 1874-9. Hedd Wyn (see above section 8.7.2), was born in the village on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 1887, before his family moved to Yr Ysgwrn, a farm in Cwm Prysor (area 12).

Trawsfynydd was bombed on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1940, possibly in an attempt aimed at destroying the station. The Royal Artillery had had a permanent training range at Bronaber (area 20) since 1905, and since then (and particularly after the station had been extended in 1911) there had been heavy military traffic on the branch line (particularly in the summer months) as all personnel, horses and guns came in by rail.

When the A470 was improved in the early 1970s, the village was by-passed, from Pont Trawsfynydd at the south end of the village to the eastern end of Fron-galed terrace, cutting off the direct link with the former station and eastern part of the village.

*Key historic landscape characteristics*

*terraced housing, chapels, village infrastructure, disused station*

The village has the characteristics of a nineteenth century industrial village which expanded during the century (although its economic basis is unknown). Short terraces of workers' housing predominate, but there is a clear chronology of building within the village, which has a recognisable early nucleus around the church, and there is some evidence of earlier buildings in this area, including the inn (Ty Gwyn) with stabling at rear. An early 19<sup>th</sup>-century phase of growth is traceable in several Georgian vernacular buildings (for example the White Lion on High Street, and Glasfryn) which used large blocks of stone; whilst later 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces (marked by their snecked masonry) developed along the main road to the north and south of the original centre.

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

There is a single listed building in the village (St. Madryn's church); there has been a high level of loss of detail in the buildings generally, but, that said, it still retains a strong overall character. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93204*

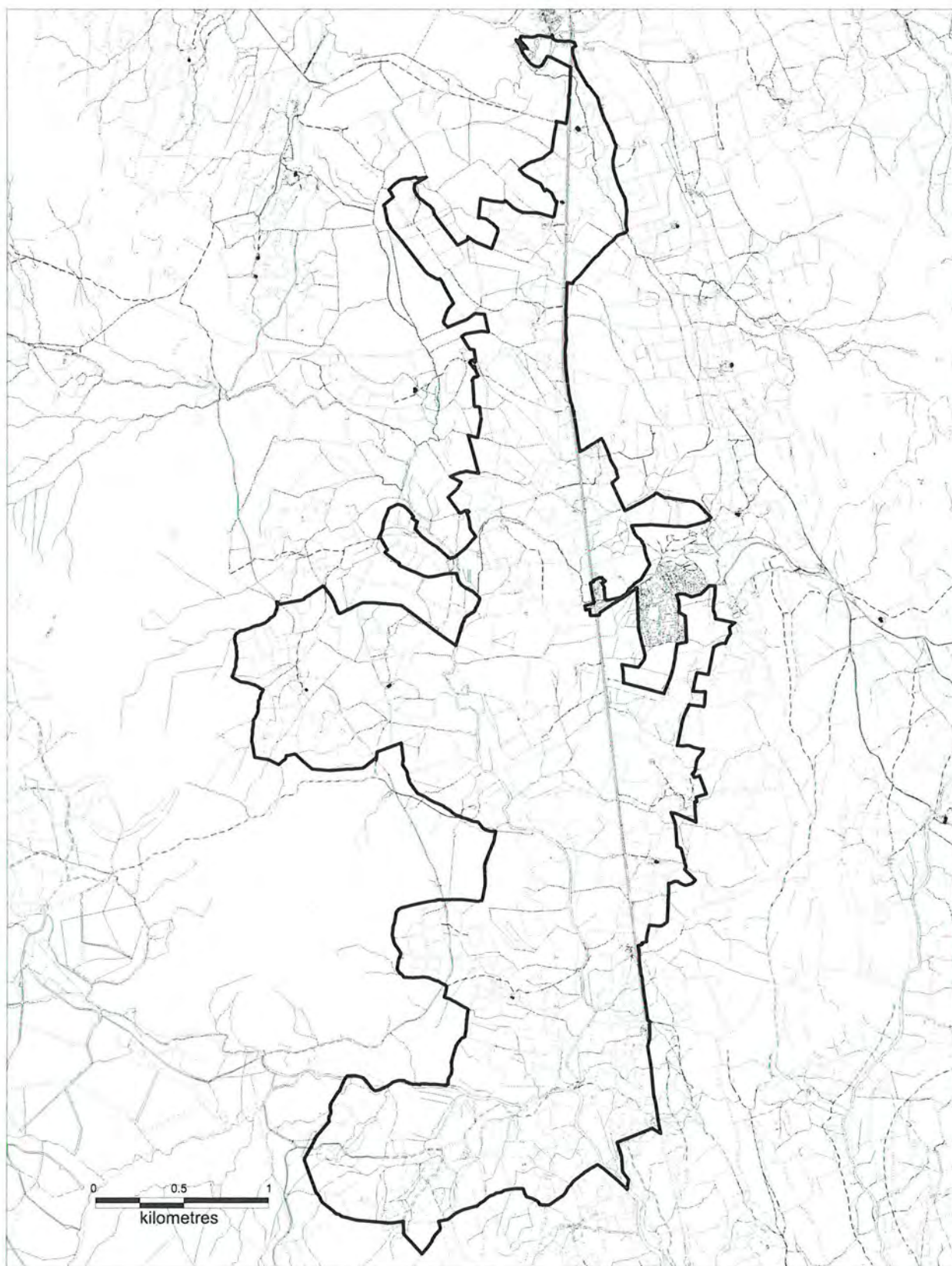


08 Trawsfynydd village

(PRN 18274)

View of the northern side of the main street, just east of the village centre, showing the characteristic and typical mid-19th century stone-built terraced housing set alongside the narrow street, which, until fairly recently, served as part of the main route leading from north to south Wales.





### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
09 - Farming settlements south of Trawsfynydd

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*Historic background*

This relatively large area, which runs north to south across the central part of the study area, contains a farming landscape which appears to have been largely formed by the time of the tithe map in the 1830s. The area stretches southwards from Fron-oleu, situated just south of Pont Trawsfynydd (where there has been an important road junction since at least the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with roads forking east (up Cwm Prysor) and west (across the Rhinogau) from the main road, to Caeau-cochion, and includes land which lies to both sides of the modern A470 (the latter improved in the 1970s, but probably originally built between 1780 and 1824 (see above, section 8.6)).

Almost all of the farms here are recorded on the tithe map: these include Berth-ddu, Tyddyn-sais and Bryn Maen Lŵd, which lie immediately west of the present road, and those which lie south of Bronaber (such as Tyddyn Mawr, Tyddyn-du (see photograph), Cae Gwyn and Gal-llynau-duon). The field pattern also seems to have remained largely unchanged, and given the absence of evidence for earlier settlement (either relict or in the form of sub medieval houses – see areas 06 and 10) it would seem that we are looking at a marginal farming landscape of late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century date, probably developed around the same time as the road was constructed (i.e. sometime between 1780 and 1824), literally right on the edge of the marsh and the mountains.

However, recent work suggests that at least one farm (Bryn Maen Llwyd) may be earlier, and Lhwyd (1911) claimed that Orsedd-lâs was occupied in the 17<sup>th</sup> century: also, there is some evidence that the fields around the three farms here (Tyddyn sais and Berth-ddu in addition to these) are older. It is still a bleak environment.

*Key historic landscape characteristics*

*farmsteads, enclosures, forestry*

The principal characteristics of the area are the stone-built farms, built in an apparent variety of styles but all of granite with slate roofs, surrounded by their outbuildings. The area also contains a number of detached (and sometimes substantial) field barns. The fields are defined by stone walls built in a variety of different styles and producing a variety of field patterns: those on the slightly higher and 'better' ground are more regular in shape, while those surrounding the farms on the very edge of the low-lying boggy land to the west (such as Adwy-deg and Cae'y-y-cefn) have more of the appearance of what would be described as a *parc* in Caernarfonshire (i.e. small encroachments on the fringes of marginal land, with a small holding surrounded by a series of small, irregular enclosures).

*Conservation priorities and management*

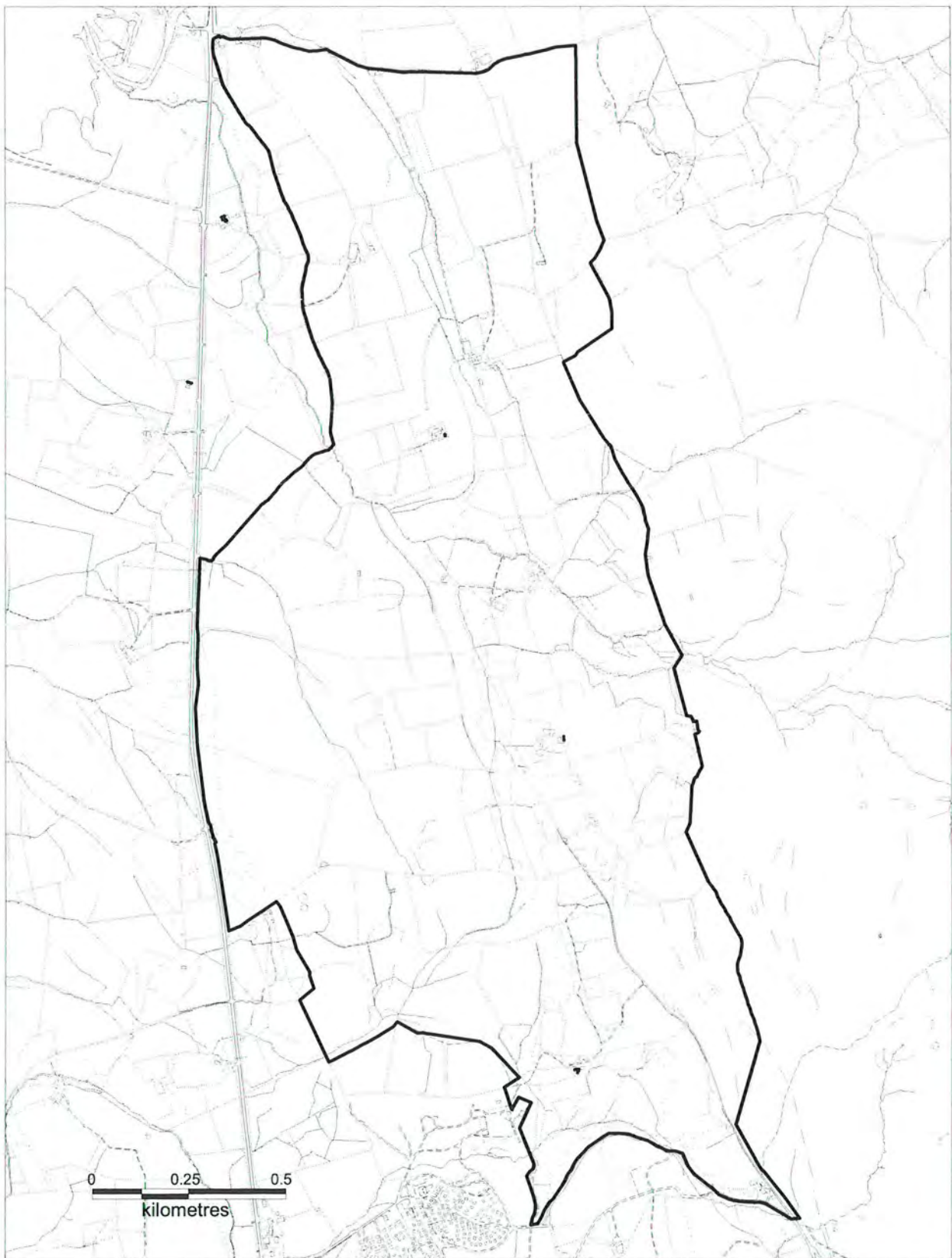
A number of the farms here are in either Tir Cymen or Tir Gofal, and several outbuildings have been repaired with assistance from these schemes. The houses (and outbuildings) do not comply with a single style, and their distinct characters should be preserved. The stone-walled field enclosures should also be maintained wherever possible, particular the distinctive *parc*-like enclosures in the lower part of the area. The main road has already been 'improved' and lost any character. The only scheduled ancient monument here is a single standing stone (Maen Llwyd), while the sole listed building is the farmstead of Tyddyn-mawr (grade II – east of the road), which is 17<sup>th</sup>-century in origin. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93205-7*



09 Farming settlements south of Trawsfynydd (PRN 18275)

View, looking east from the main A470 road, towards Tyddyn-dû, a 19th century farmstead set in its irregular fieldscape below the wooded slopes of area 21 rising above it.



### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
10 - Early settlement south of Plas Capten

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*Historic background*

South of Plâs Capten, situated in a small valley which runs north-south to the east of the minor road which runs from Pont Trawsfynydd up to Penystryd (probably the fore-runner of the modern, main road), is a series of farmsteads which appear to be substantially sub-medieval in date. They include Derwgoed, Bryn-llefrith, Tyddyn Bach, Erw-ddwfr and Gilfach-wen and are linked now by a pathway which passes either through, or close to, the farms and leads eventually to Rhiw Goch (now a hotel, but originally built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century - see area 20).

The fields around Plâs Capten are shown as quite regular and ordered on the tithe map, much as they are today, but to the south in the narrow valley they become less so. It is likely that this area (which incidentally lies just west of and below the former Roman road which ran south from Tomen-y mur) was occupied from a much earlier period than that to the west (*i.e.* area 09). In addition to the houses, the construction and patterns of the field enclosures also indicate earlier (*i.e.* than the 19<sup>th</sup> century) use.

*Key historic landscape characteristics*

*farmsteads, enclosures, stone walls, footpath*

The farmsteads are small but quite distinctive in character, which differentiates them from the later farms in area 09: they are also located in a narrow, steep-sided valley, again unlike the settlement to the west. The fields are similarly distinctive, being very small and compact (mainly due to the terrain) with often-massive stone walls defining them. Presumably this was (and is) the better agricultural land within the vicinity which explains the early date for the settlements here.

The area contained, until the building of the new turnpike road at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, part of the principal routeway between north (originally Tomen y Mur and later Maentwrog and Trawsfynydd, leading to Tan y Bwlch) and south (originally Penystryd and later Dolgellau) in this harsh and inhospitable upland environment.

*Conservation priorities and management*

The principal characteristics of the area are the farmsteads, the enclosures and the (original) trackway. These need to be recorded in detail and conserved (it is interesting that none are listed). The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93202*

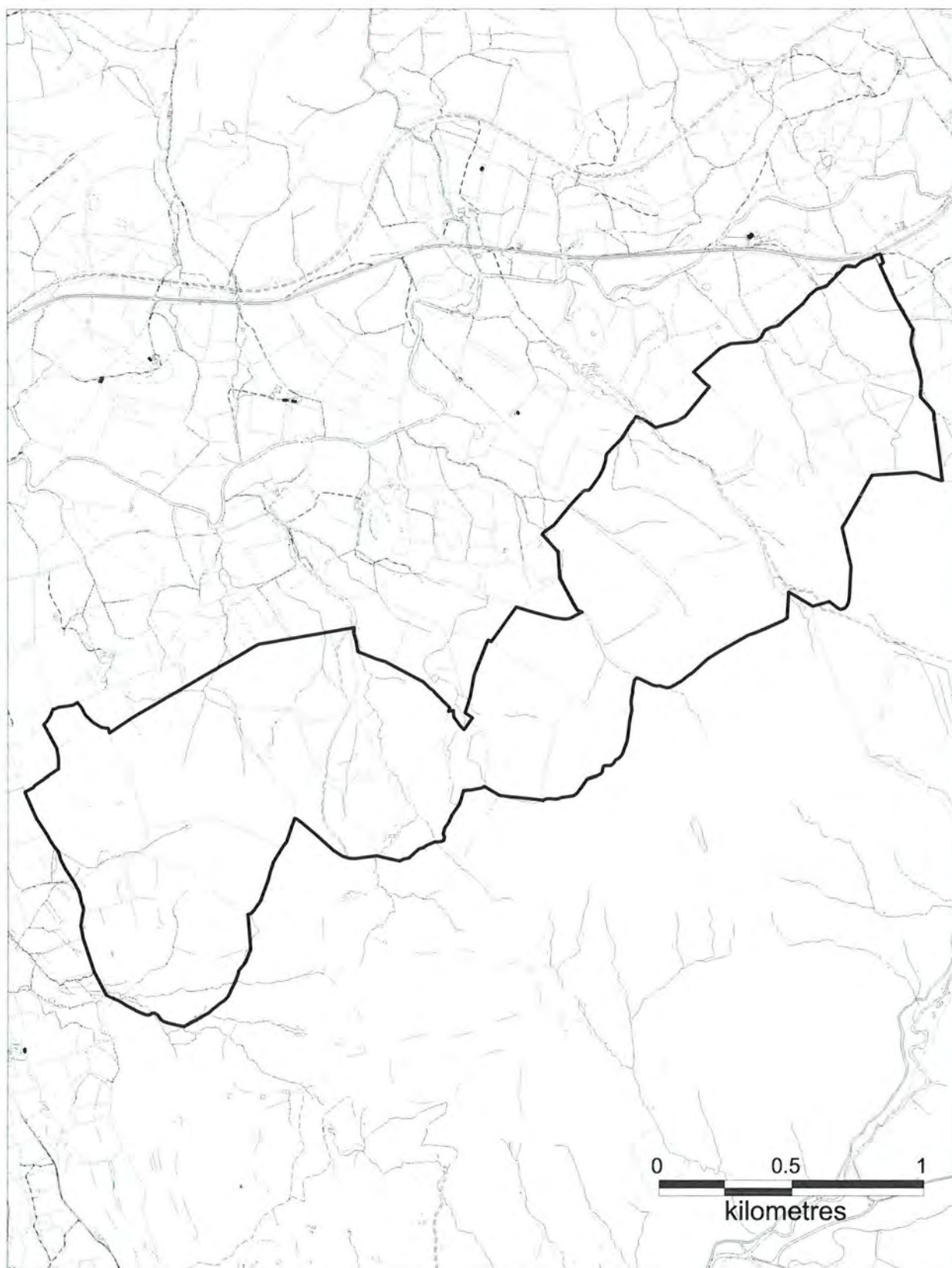


10 Early settlement south of Plâs Capten

(PRN 18276)

View, looking south-east, of Tyddyn Bach farmstead, set in stone-walled fields and surrounded by interesting and quite exotic tree plantings protecting the house. The open mountain slopes of area 19 rise in the background.





### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
11 - Intermediary slopes, Ffridd Wen

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## 11 Intermediary slopes, Ffridd Wen (PRN 18277)

### *Historic background*

This is an area which comprises the intermediary north-facing slopes of Ffridd Wen on the southern side of Cwm Prysor, between the open, unenclosed mountain top (area 21) and the farming settlements on the valley floor and lower slopes (area 12). There is a single (well-preserved and scheduled) enclosed hut group settlement within the area (one of the few such 'inland' sites), but the large enclosures into which the area is divided are later in date (most appear to be shown on the tithe map and so are probably 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date).

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

#### *large enclosures, stone walls*

This area is differentiated from that above it (19) by the large enclosures, defined by stone walls, which characterise it. At the same time, these enclosures are larger and more sparse than those below which define the lower valley slopes of Cwm Prysor (12). There is no modern settlement in the area.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

The most important site here is the (scheduled) enclosed prehistoric hut group, surrounded by ridge and furrow cultivation (see photograph); otherwise, there are only the drystone walls which define the large enclosures. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93205-7*

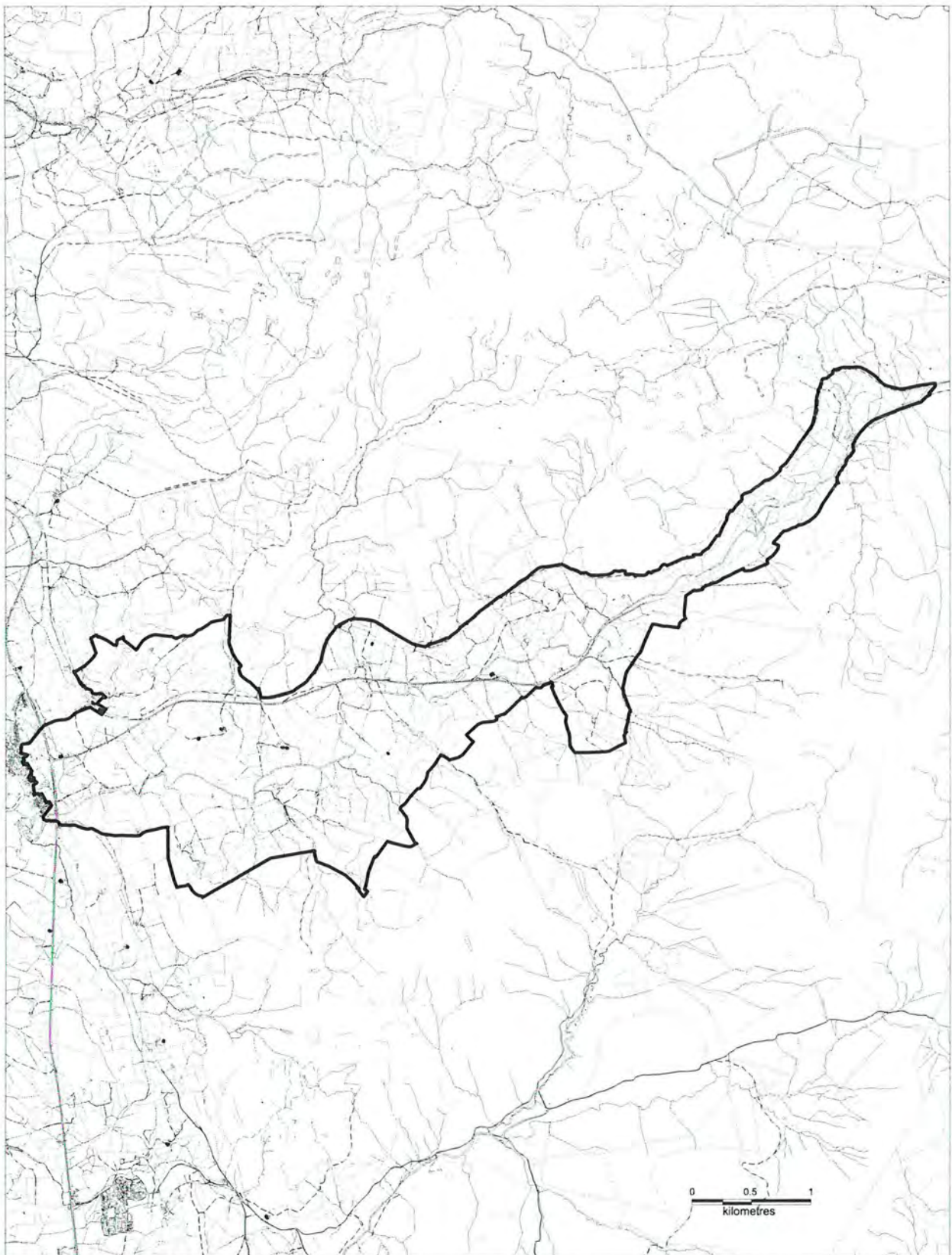


11 Intermediary slopes, Ffridd Wen

(PRN 18277)

Aerial view looking west of the enclosed homestead (PRN 1604) with late ridge and furrow agriculture below it, and the unenclosed mountain above (with a further enclosure typical of the area visible).





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
12 - Cwm Prysor - valley bottom

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*Historic background*

Cwm Prysor is a steep-sided valley extending eastwards from the village of Trawsfynydd which has long served as a communication route. The presence of Castell Prysor (a survey and description of the site appears in de Lewandowicz, 1998) on a small knoll in the valley bottom testifies to the strategic importance of the area in medieval times as a route into the fastness of Gwynedd. The 1840 tithe map shows two tracks leading up the valley, along the north and south sides of the Afon Prysor, the northern one originating direct from Trawsfynydd and the southern one from Pont Trawsfynydd. The route of the latter, interestingly, defines the edge of areas 11/12 for much of its route, marking the edge of the enclosed, improved fields. These roads joined up just west of Hendre-bryn-crogwydd whence it continued to the top of the valley where it apparently ended at Blaen-y-cwm (according to the tithe map). The modern road follows more or less the old route, and now continues over and down to Bala.

The modern farm of Wern-gron, on the river in the western end of the area, was called Pandy in 1840 and was presumably a fulling mill. All the farms in the area (Ysgwrn, Bodyfaddau, Hafodwen, Pen-y-bryn etc.) were also recorded at that time and have retained their original names. Bronasgellog is shown as having a substantial, formal garden (unique to the area at that time, and probably still), and further east, around Ysgwrn, there are several areas of woodland (as today): the only other substantial area of woodland (Nurse Bryn-celynog), across the valley, is also recorded on the tithe map.

Most of the fields then were shown as moderately large, irregular enclosures, although some of these along the valley bottom in the western part of the area have been 'straightened' since. The lower valley slopes retain much of their mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century appearance. There is a notable cluster of smaller fields around Blaencwm, and up-slope from here is a series of very large, irregular enclosures. A small military camp was established at Bryn Golau (ironically the farm adjacent to Ysgwrn, the later home of Hedd Wyn (see section 8.7.2 above)), on the southern edge of the area at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century before it was moved down to Rhiw Goch (area 20).

The remains of the Great Western Railway line from Bala to Ffestiniog, opened in 1882, defines the northern limit of this area for much of its extent. The Cwm Prysor viaduct, at the eastern end of the area, is 120ft high at its maximum and has nine spans (unfortunately it collapsed at Whitsun in 1881, but was re-built that year in time for the opening of the line).

*Key historic landscape characteristics*

*farmsteads, pasture fields, roads, railway*

The area is characterised by an improved, pasture landscape, with irregular enclosures defined by drystone walls. A scattered settlement pattern of stone-built farms along the lower slopes is also distinctive, with those on the southern side strung out along a former road (now partially closed and turned into a footpath); some of the farms at least are possibly sub-medieval in date. Isolated field barns, again stone-built, are also characteristic of the area. There are also a few small areas of woodland. The modern road has been much improved, but the railway which for a large length defines the northern edge of the area remains largely intact.

*Conservation priorities and management*

The northern part of this area lies partly within one of the largest (19,983ha) upland SSSIs in Wales, Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt (CCW SSSI ref. 31WNR), which also extends to cover area 15, most of area 14, and the northern part of area 17. [For further details, see area 15.]

The characteristic pasture landscape, with its irregular enclosures defined by drystone walls, should be preserved, as should the distinctive stone-built farms and farm buildings. The only listed building is Yr Ysgwrn (grade II\*), built c. 1830 and best known for its association with the poet Hedd Wyn (see above, section 8.7.2). The few small areas of woodland need also to be



managed. The modern road has lost any character, but the Bala-Ffestiniog railway has considerable potential for being turned into a cycleway or footpath (it is currently a permitted right of way). Castell Prysor is a scheduled ancient monument. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

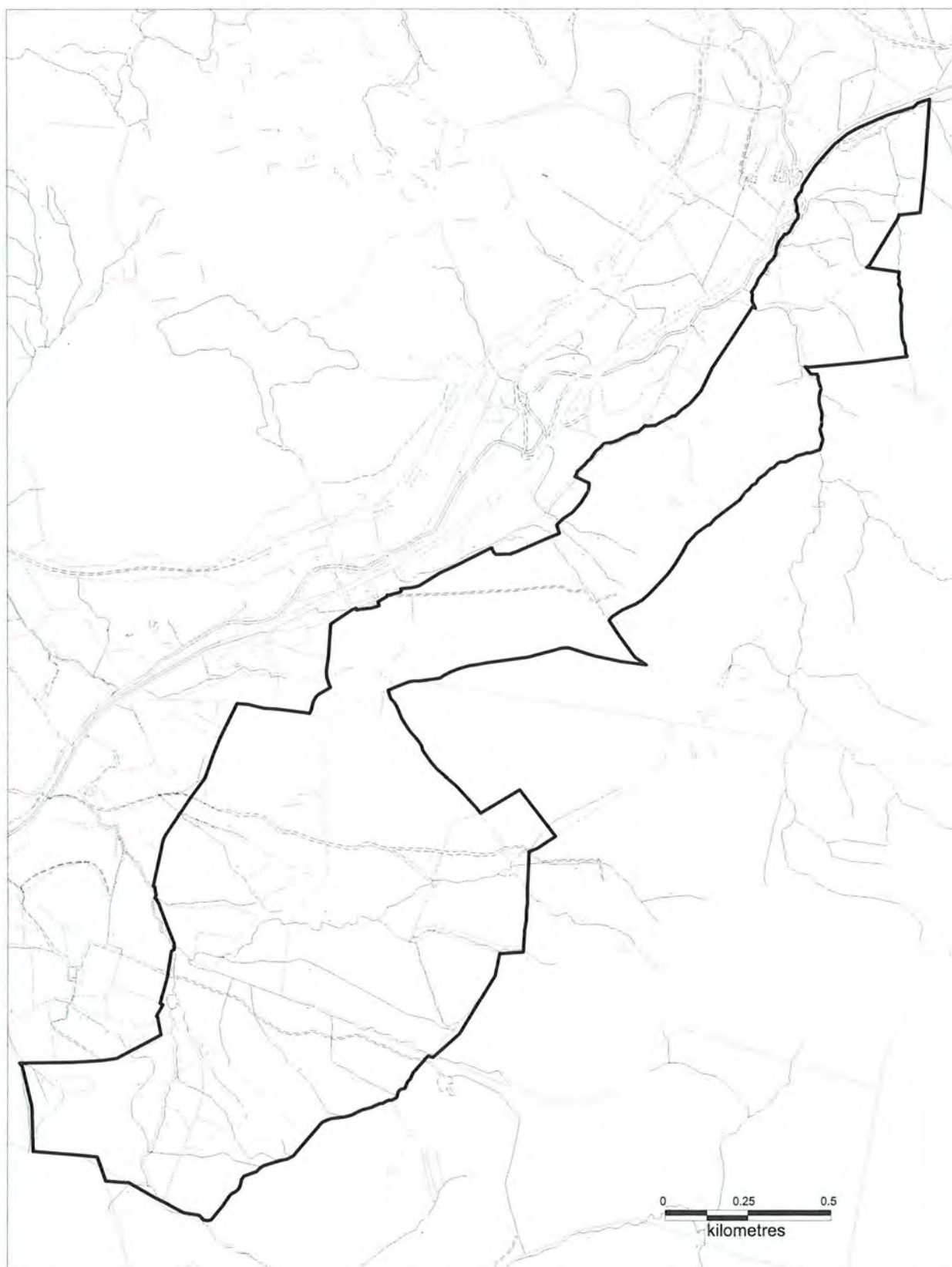
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93202*



12 Cwm Prysor – valley bottom

(PRN 18278)

View, looking west, of a typical 19th-century farm towards the western end of the area, surrounded by an untidy set of buildings and by characteristic, irregular enclosed fields defined by hedgerows and trees. The farm is set high up on a ridge and is protected from the prevailing weather by a shelter of trees.



### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
13 - Hill slopes - Moel Uchaf Do-haidd

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## 13 Hill slopes – Moel Uchaf Dôl-haidd (PRN 18279)

### *Historic background*

This is a relatively small area of partially-enclosed mountain waste on the north-facing hill slopes at the top (eastern) end of Cwm Prysor. The area lies above the settlement and enclosed fields (area 12) in the valley bottom, and below the virtually unenclosed mountain top (outside project area to the south). It is divided into a number of large, irregular enclosures, defined by straight stone walls, probably 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, and contains in addition a couple of sheepfolds and some disused mining trials. Much of the area is described as Gallt-y-Daran Common (falling largely within Llanycil parish) on the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century tithe map.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*stone walls, sheepfolds, mining levels*

The area has little of historic interest but is defined by its intermediary position between the unenclosed mountain tops and the fields and settlements in the valley bottom. It lies in a small basin, and a number of streams cross the area.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

There is little worthy of conservation here, except perhaps the stone walls, sheepfolds and mining remains. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 70 93218*

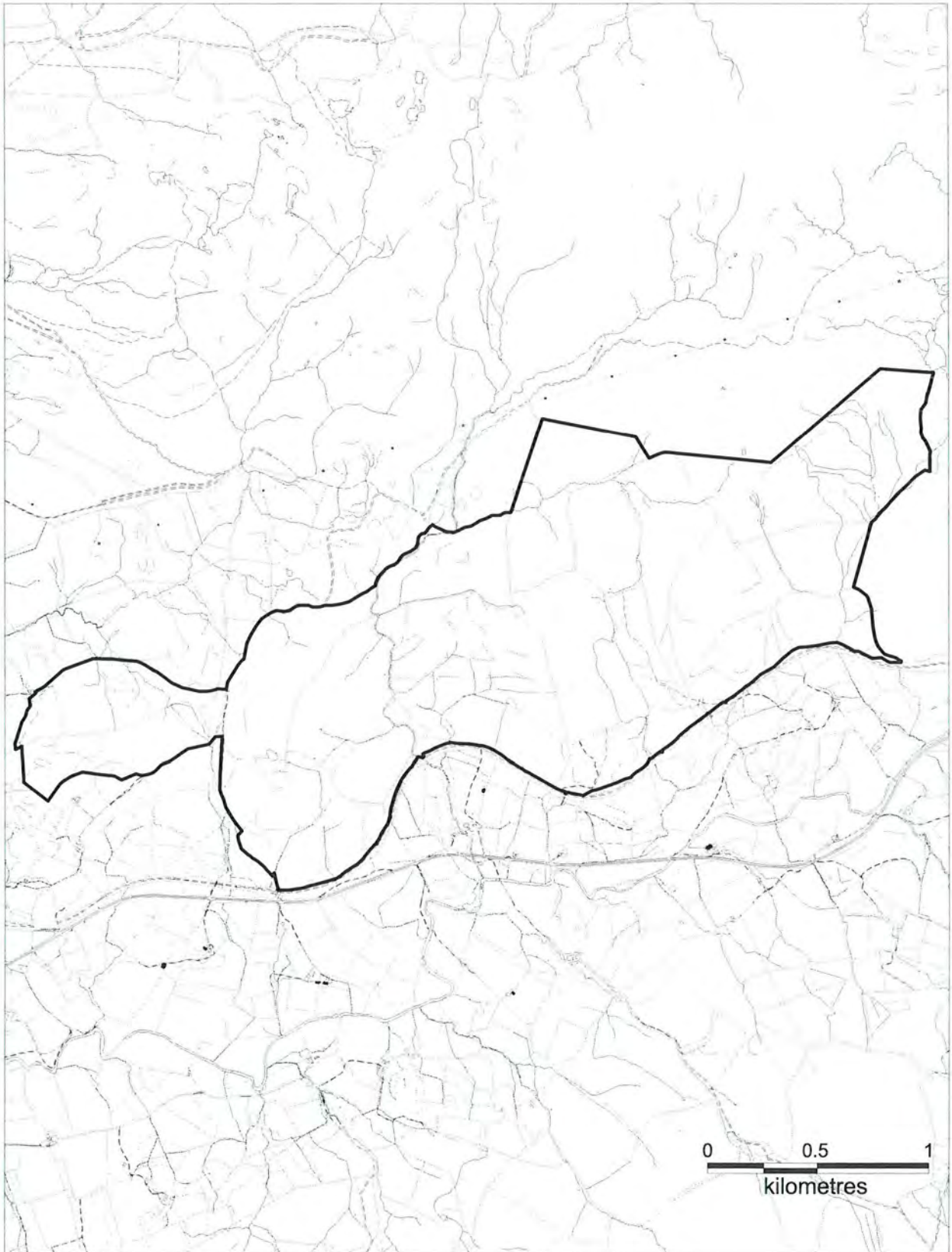




13 Hill slopes – Moel Uchaf Dôl-haidd

(PRN 18279)

View showing the steep and unenclosed nature of the area towards its eastern end in Cwm Prysor, contrasting with the enclosed pasture fields of area 12 below it.



### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
14 - Intermediary slopes - north side of Cwm Prysor

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## **14 Intermediary hill slopes – north side of Cwm Prysor (PRN 18280)**

### ***Historic background***

This area of intermediary hill slopes is similar to area 11 (the southern side of Cwm Prysor). The large, irregular enclosures which differentiate this area from areas 15 (unenclosed upland above) and 12 (enclosed fields below) probably represent post-1840 enclosure/encroachment of the upland margins along this area. There are no farms or evidence of earlier settlement within it, just a couple of sheepfolds.

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

#### *irregular enclosures*

A few large, irregular drystone enclosures, which bear little relationship to the underlying topography and are not directly associated with any farmsteads, are the only historic landscape features here.

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

This area lies mostly within one of the largest (19,983ha) upland SSSIs in Wales, Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt (CCW SSSI ref. 31WNR), which also extends to cover area 15, the northern part of area 17 and a small part of the northern end of area 12. It includes three upland blocks which have been selected for their biological and geological interest. Habitats of special interest include blanket bog, wet and dry heath, flushes, oligotrophic and dystrophic lakes, upland woodland, acid grassland, neutral grassland, calcareous grassland, rush pasture and swamp. They also support upland breeding birds. The aim of the management of the site is to promote the natural diversity with particular emphasis on the sympathetic management of the habitats for which the site has been designated. It is hoped that this will result in the habitats covering the site in the proportions and conditions to be expected in a natural system, whilst also maintaining the plants and animals for which it has been notified.

Conservation of the large, irregular drystone enclosures and the generally wild, uninhabited nature of the landscape is of particular importance here. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 70 93213*



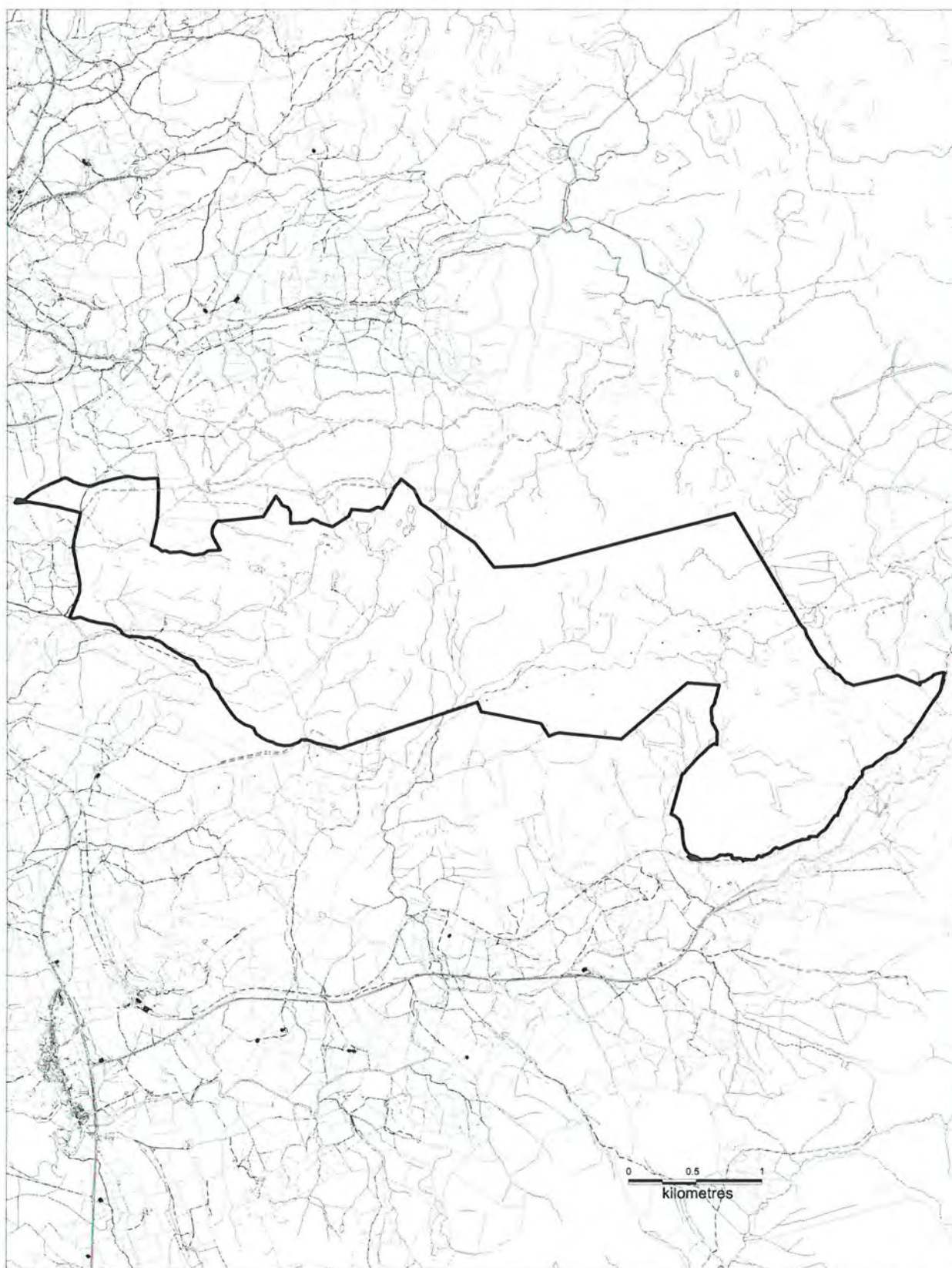


14 Intermediary slopes – north side of Cwm Prysor

(PRN 18280)

This view looks north across part of area 12 (defined by enclosed fields in the foreground) towards the steep hill slopes of area 14 which rise above the 1880's Bala-Ffestiniog railway line (one of whose many viaducts can be seen at right of photograph).





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
15 - Unenclosed mountain north of Cwm Prysor

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*Historic background*

This character area comprises a large block of virtually 'untouched' upland to the north of Cwm Prysor, starting at the eastern end with the huge, imposing crags of Y Garn above the railway and extending to Llyn yr Oerfel in the west. All of this area (and extending to the south into area 14) is shown as 'Mignant Common' on the 1840 Trawsfynydd and 1841 Maentwrog tithe maps. According to the latter, the fort of Tomen-y-mŵr (area 17) lay right on the edge of the Common.

The principle 'human-made' remains are associated with Braich-ddû slate quarry (above Tomen y Mur) and a couple of disused mines along Bwlch y Llŷ. The southern limits of the area are, in the main, defined by the line of the Bala-Ffestiniog railway (see above – area 12).

*Key historic landscape characteristics*

*unenclosed area of upland*

The area is characterised by its open, unenclosed nature which contains no significant features relating to the historic environment. It is without even the usual large enclosures defined by straight stone walls, with the exception of a small area of encroachment evident at the eastern end of Llyn yr Oerfel around Tir-y-mynydd. The southern limits of the area are, in the main, defined by the line of the Bala-Ffestiniog railway although this lies in area 12.

*Conservation priorities and management*

This area lies entirely within one of the largest (19,983ha) upland SSSIs in Wales, Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt (CCW SSSI ref. 31WNR), which also extends to cover most of area 14, the northern part of area 17 and a small part of the northern end of area 12. It includes three upland blocks which have been selected for their biological and geological interest. Habitats of special interest include blanket bog, wet and dry heath, flushes, oligotrophic and dystrophic lakes, upland woodland, acid grassland, neutral grassland, calcareous grassland, rush pasture and swamp. They also support upland breeding birds. The aim of the management of the site is to promote the natural diversity with particular emphasis on the sympathetic management of the habitats for which the site has been designated. It is hoped that this will result in the habitats covering the site in the proportions and conditions to be expected in a natural system, whilst also maintaining the plants and animals for which it has been notified.

The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

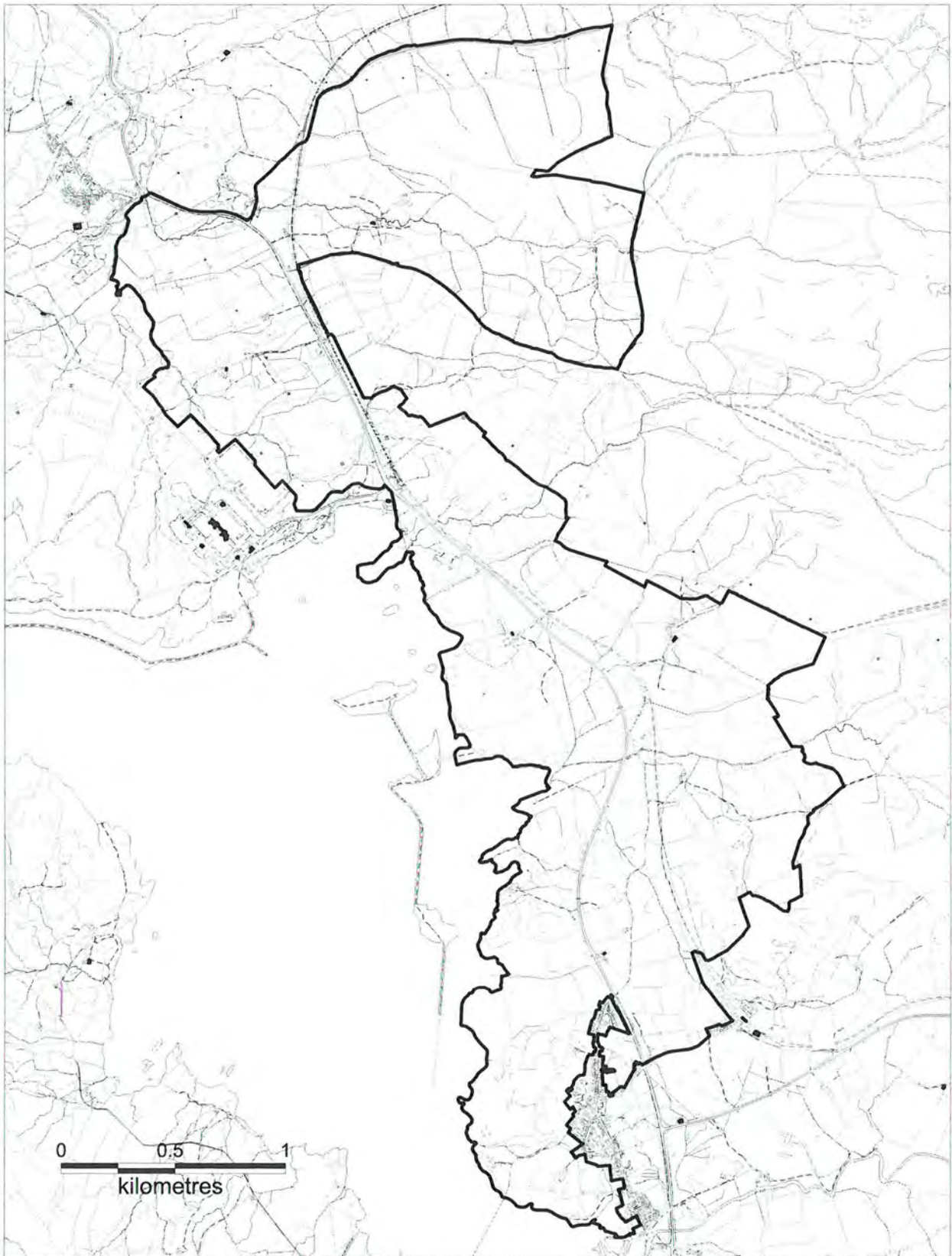
*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 70 93212*





15      Unenclosed mountain north of Cwm Prysor      (PRN 18281)

View looking north-east showing the unenclosed nature of this area which is lacking in evidence of past human settlement.



### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
16 - Farming settlements north of Trawsfynydd

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## 16 Farming settlements north of Trawsfynydd (PRN 18282)

### *Historic background*

This area (similar in character to area 09 to the south), which lies north of Trawsfynydd, contains a farming landscape which appears to have been largely formed by the time of the tithe map in the 1840s. The area stretches from Trawsfynydd, north to the edge of the study area and lies mainly to the west of the modern A470 (see front cover).

The farms within the area (such as Goppa Farm, Coed-cae-dû, Ty Gwyn and Creigiau-duon) are recorded on the tithe map (Goppa Estate was put up for sale by Robert Lloyd in 1845) and the field pattern also seems to have remained largely unchanged. Given the absence of evidence for earlier settlement (either relict or in the form of late medieval houses – see areas 06 and 10) it would seem that we are looking at a marginal farming landscape of late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century date, probably developed around the same time as the road was constructed (i.e. sometime between 1780 and 1824). Certainly the regular field pattern around Coed-cae-du (a listed building dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century) suggests a relatively late date (later than Coed-y-rhygen (area 06) now on the opposite side of the lake (area 05), and they could have been laid out alongside the original 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century post road which came up from Tan-y-Bwlch and ran to the west of the farm (it is still visible in part) and was presumably re-routed when the lake was constructed. The modern A470 follows the latter line.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*farmsteads, enclosures, woods*

The principal characteristics of the area are the regular fields and areas of woodland which contain stone-built farms, built in an apparent variety of styles but all sturdy, built from granite with slate roofs, surrounded by their outbuildings. There is also some use of corrugated iron as a structural material and as weather-proofing.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

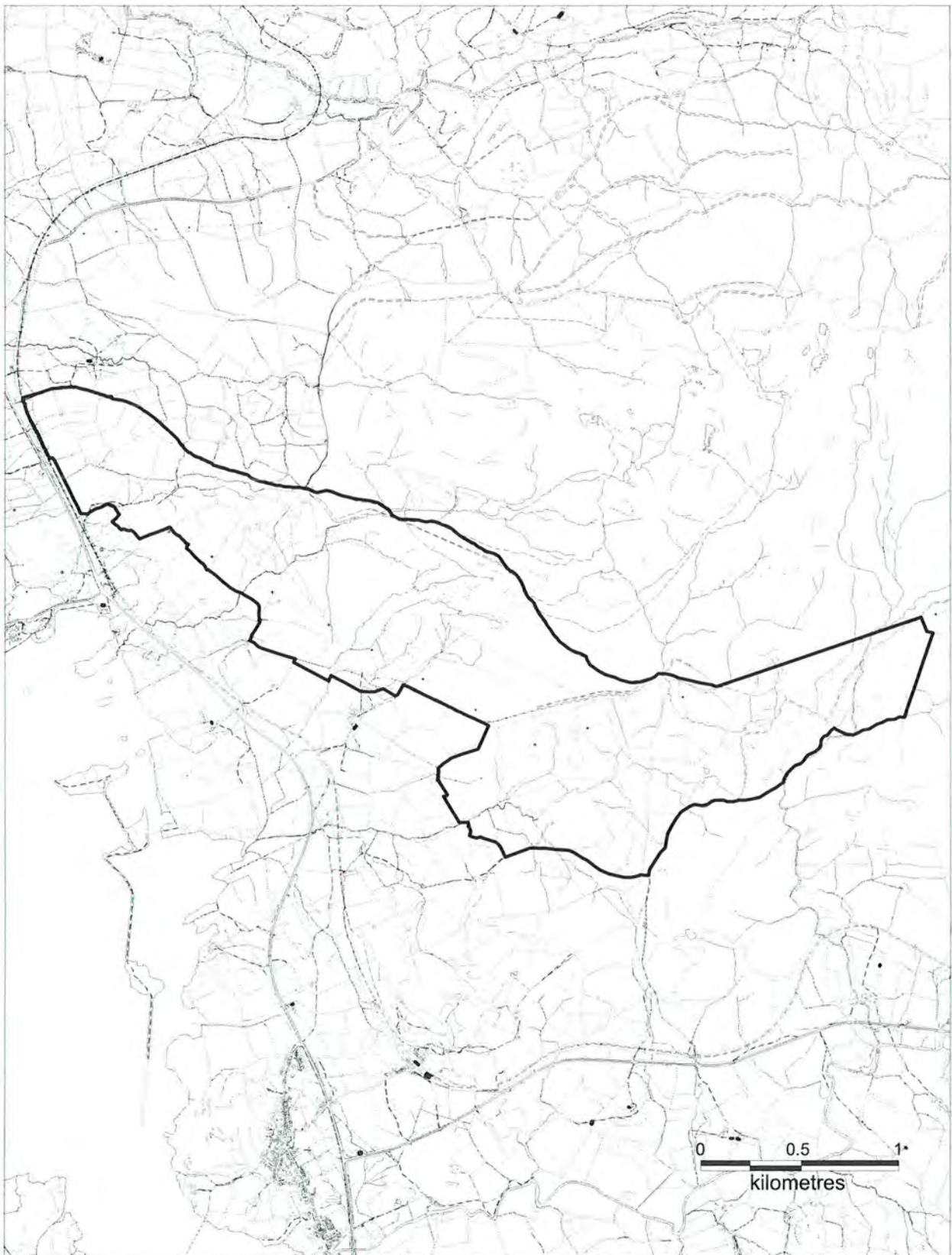
The farm houses (and outbuildings, which include at least one small water mill) do not comply with a single style, and their distinct characters should be preserved. Two farmhouses (Coed cae-du, 16<sup>th</sup> century with later additions, and Cynfal-fawr, also 16<sup>th</sup>-century with a stable-block dated 1794 – both grade II) are listed. The stone-walled field enclosures should also be maintained wherever possible, as should the small areas of woodland. The main road has already been 'improved' and lost any character. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 74 93205-7*



16 Farming settlements north of Trawsfynydd (PRN 18282)

View, looking west from the main A470, of Creigiau-duon farmstead, a typical stone-built 19th century farm surrounded by a small courtyard of buildings. (The small watermill connected with this particular farm is just out of shot to the right foreground.) (The partially-cleared woodland on the top of Coed Caer-saeson (area 18) is visible in the background.)



### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
17 - Tomen y Mur relict Roman landscape

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*Historic background*

The Roman fort complex at Tomen y Mur lies at the cross roads of four Roman roads: where the road from Caernarfon and Pen Llystyn (RRX95, Hopewell, 2004) becomes the road to Caer Gai (RR68), which crosses (at a point south of the fort) the road south to Brithdir (RR69b) and north to Canovium (RR69a) (Hopewell, 2004). It is situated on the brow of a low spur, c 280m OD, which commands good views of the local area.

Three main periods of occupation are visible on the site (Jarrett, 1969, 112). Fragments of the bath-house, which lies south-east of the fort were examined in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, while the two main structural phases were examined by excavation in 1962. It was probably originally built in AD 77 or 78 as a result of Agricola's campaign, its earthen defences enclosing an area of 1.7 hectares. Under Hadrian, it was reduced in size (by bringing the north-west line of defences 'into' the earlier fort) and rebuilt in stone, a process recorded in a series of 10 centurial stones discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (some now in the National Museum). The fort does not seem to have been garrisoned for long after the rebuilding and may have been abandoned by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, although a 5<sup>th</sup>-century gravestone found nearby indicates some form of continued settlement.

The fort is referred to as Mur y Castell in the Mabinogion (see section 8.9.1 above), the name Tomen y Mur deriving from the motte the most prominent feature on the site) for which the later (smaller) fort provided a ready made bailey (the motte lies over its north-west defences). Very little is known of the history of the motte beyond the fact that William Rufus campaigned there in 1095.

The fort is surrounded by an extensive complex of ancillary earthworks, described below. Around the Roman practice camps at Doldinas, a series of nine fields along with a set of buildings show early 19<sup>th</sup>-century encroachment on to the Mignant Common (area 15). There is a similar (albeit larger) example of similar encroachment at Dolbelydr to the north west.

*Key historic landscape characteristics**relict Roman archaeology*

The earthworks as they stand today (and are visible on the photograph) constitute one of the most impressive and interesting Roman sites in Britain, not only because of their sequence of construction, reduction and medieval reuse, but because the fort is surrounded by an exceptionally complete and well preserved series of ancillary buildings: bath-house, mansio (guesthouse), practice earthworks, leats, roads and burial monuments.

The rampart of the fort is possibly best-preserved near the former north-east gate (near where the later, ruinous farmhouse stands). Here it is fronted by a modern wall built from well-cut, undoubtedly Roman, stone. Between here and the motte is a levelled platform on which the stone-built headquarters building (principia) stood. The motte, surrounded by a sharply cut ditch, covers the narrow stone bank which was the north-western rampart of the reduced fort. The rounded earth banks of the original, larger fort are still visible to the west and south-west. The double guardchambers and central pier of the south-west gateway, as well as the stone blocking (probably original) exposed by 19<sup>th</sup> century excavations, are still clearly visible.

Outside and to the north of the fort, the clearest of the ancillary earthworks is a small amphitheatre, some 25m in diameter and unique in Britain. It comprises an oval area surrounded by quite high banks and has been interpreted as being used as an arena for weapons training. Today, the remains are confused by the road, a modern wall and a raised tramway from the Braich Ddu slate quarry which bisects the centre. There are slight but definite earthwork remains (possibly belonging to further practice camps, or part of a *vicus*) in the improved field outside the north-west bank of the first fort.



Outside the south-east gate are the remains of the bath-house excavated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while on the other side of the road was a large courtyard building, probably a mansio or guesthouse. Beyond these are the remains of the bridge abutment.

Between these buildings and the amphitheatre lie the 'parade ground' and a series of enigmatic earthworks (sometime interpreted as a 'tribunal' (saluting podium), but possibly simply the remains of quarry. The parade ground – a levelled space about 120m square – is a rare survival. The short military history of the fort may explain its unfinished state: the northern half, in contrast to the crisp southern section, is insufficiently levelled. The leat which supplied water to the bath-house runs between the 'tribune' and the parade ground. It can be followed for some way up the river. Two other leats carried water through this valley. The upper one, which can be traced for 200-300m to Llyn yr Oerfel, runs at the level of the principia and may have reached the fort on a raised launder.

North of the quarry tramway are a number of natural hillocks: nearby, seven small square burial mounds, very low, can just be recognised on the nose of the westernmost rise, close to the later field bank. Like the cemetery on the east side, these graves were placed in accordance with Roman tradition, close to the road.

The road, once over the bridge, heads south-east past an enclosed cemetery (300m away, just north of the road). The most notable monument is a fine, square, ditched barrow. This road (as well as the regularly placed scoops from which its material was quarried) has been traced by recent aerial photography to run over two miles to a series of eight military practice camps (in two groups) at Doldinas (although there may be more), judged the best preserved in Britain. The situation here (a short distance from the main fort and close to a military road) is typical.

About six miles south of the fort, at Pen y stryd, are the remains of two tile kilns, situated adjacent to the road to Brithdir (see above) and a source of water: suitable clay could be obtained from about 1m away. They may have supplied the fort with bricks and floor and roof tiles for the fort buildings. The Roman road itself is clearly visible here (especially from the air) as two parallel ditches with a slightly raised roadway or agree between them as it runs down the northern slope and approaches the stream.

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

Conservation effort should be concentrated on recording, revealing and preserving this important Roman landscape, one of the best-preserved in Britain, in its entirety. Many of the features are already scheduled and the landowner is known to be sympathetic to their careful management (and some positive management work has recently been carried out). A large part of the site is open access to the public, and appears to be well-visited without any obvious problems.

The northern part of this area lies within one of the largest (19,983ha) upland SSSIs in Wales, Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt (CCW SSSI ref. 31 WNR), which also extends to cover area 15, most of area 14, and the northern part of area 12. For further details, see area 15. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 70 93212*



17 Tomen y Mur relict Roman landscape

(PRN 18283)

Aerial view looking south of the main Roman fort at Tomen-y-Mur, showing the typical 'playing card' shape within which is the later Norman motte, with some ploughed-out earthworks to the north-west.



### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
18 - Coed Caersaeson

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### *Historic background*

This area comprises mainly 20<sup>th</sup> century forestry on top of a rocky outcrop, with a number of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century farms to the north. The area lies between two rivers, Afon Tafarn-helyg to east and Afon Prysor to west, and is bounded by Llyn Trawsfynydd to the south, and the edge of the project area to the north. The underlying rocky outcrop of Craig Gyfynys has been planted by sitka spruce and this comprises the largest part of the area.

The six farms in the northern part of the area (including Caersaeson, Ysgubor-hên, Llwyn) are all recorded on the 1840 tithe map, clustered together in a relatively small area surrounded by a pattern of small, irregular fields with an area of woodland on the edge of what is now Llyn Trawsfynydd (the area now under the lake is taken up with much larger (presumably more-productive) fields. The then-main road to Harlech which led from the predecessor to the A470, passes through the area, more or less along the line of the current road which forms the northern edge of the area.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

#### *forestry, farmsteads*

Most of the area comprises a large rocky outcrop which is mainly covered by modern forestry, which is currently being harvested. The farms just within the northern bonds of the area appear to be 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

The farmsteads and associated field patterns are worthy of conservation. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 70 93208*

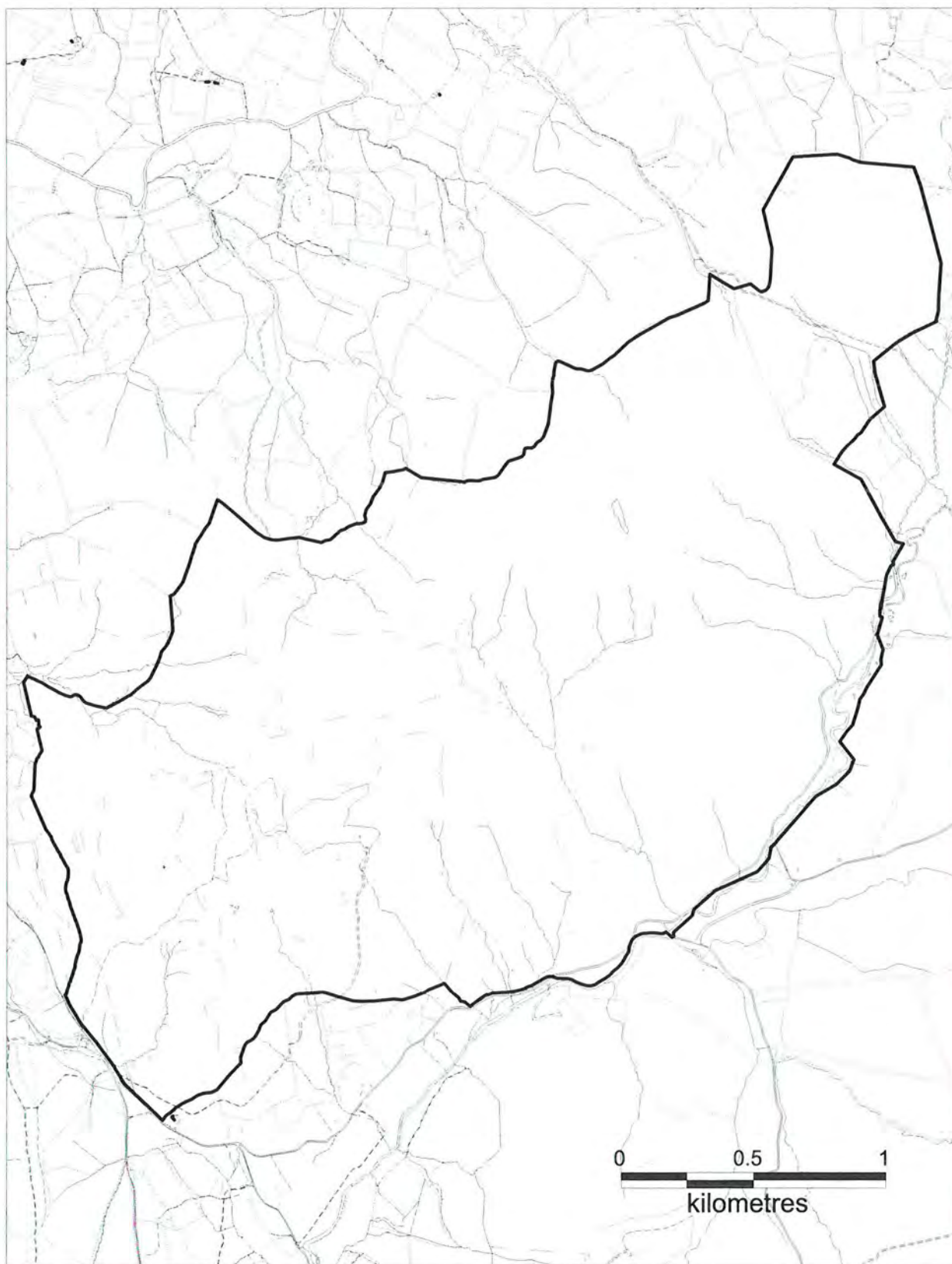




18 Coed Caersaeson

(PRN 18284)

Aerial view looking south across Lake Trawsfynydd with the hillside covered by Coed Caersaeson in the front right-hand corner. Since this photograph was taken, the woodland has been partially felled and cleared.



### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
19 - Unenclosed mountain - Moel Ddu &  
Moel Oernant

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## 19 Unenclosed mountain – Moel Ddu & Moel Oernant (PRN 18285)

### *Historic background*

The very south-western edge of this area is crossed by a stretch of Roman road and includes the tile kilns of Pen-y-stryd. The area of unenclosed upland based on Moel Ddu and Moel Ornant is shown as 'Llechwedd Cain Common' on the 1840 tithe map. A map drawn up in 1948 (Dolgellau Archives, ZP/12/10) shows the extent of the 'Trawsfynydd Artillery Range' (see area 20) including the whole of this area. Apart from the above, and several unexploded shells, the area contains no notable features of historical or archaeological importance, not even enclosure walls.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

#### *unenclosed area of upland*

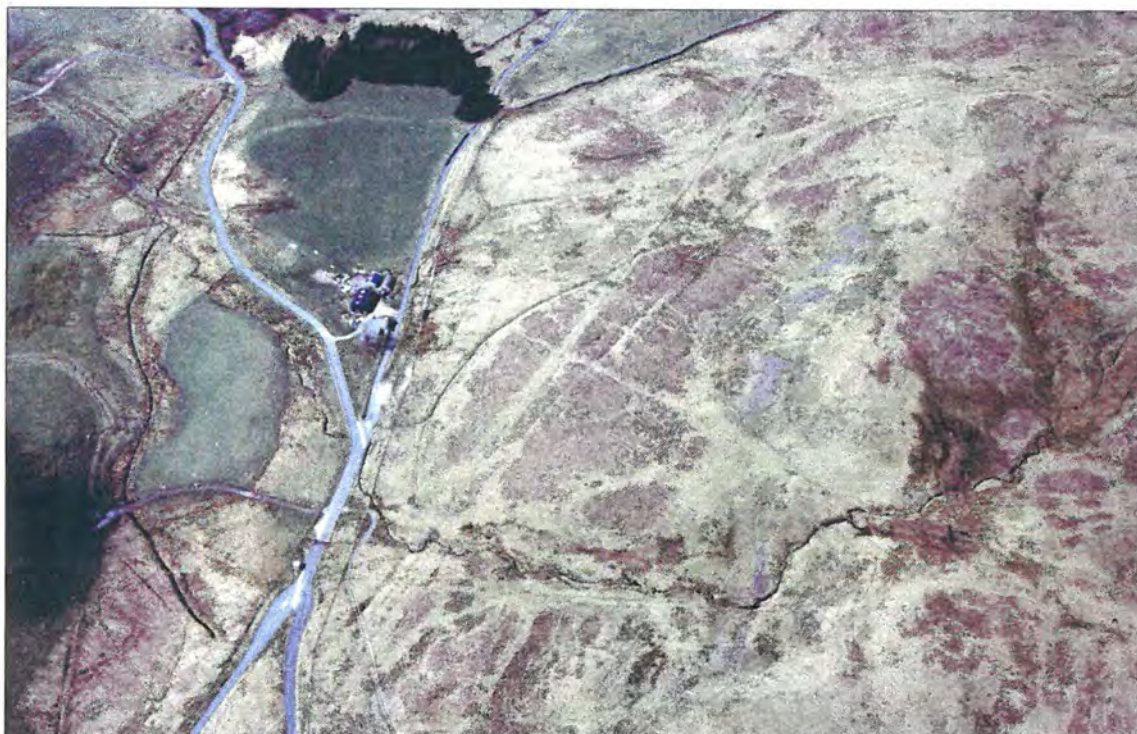
The area is characterised by its open, unenclosed nature which contains two (scheduled) important prehistoric and Roman sites, and served as a firing range for artillery in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

Preservation of the 'natural', unspoiled nature of the area is important. In addition, there are two scheduled ancient monuments here – Craig-las-eithin, a prehistoric upland settlement closely associated with a peat bog, and the Roman tile kilns and stretch of Roman road at Pen-y-stryd. The area also formed part of the artillery firing range based on Bronaber (see area 20). The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 33 7493 164*

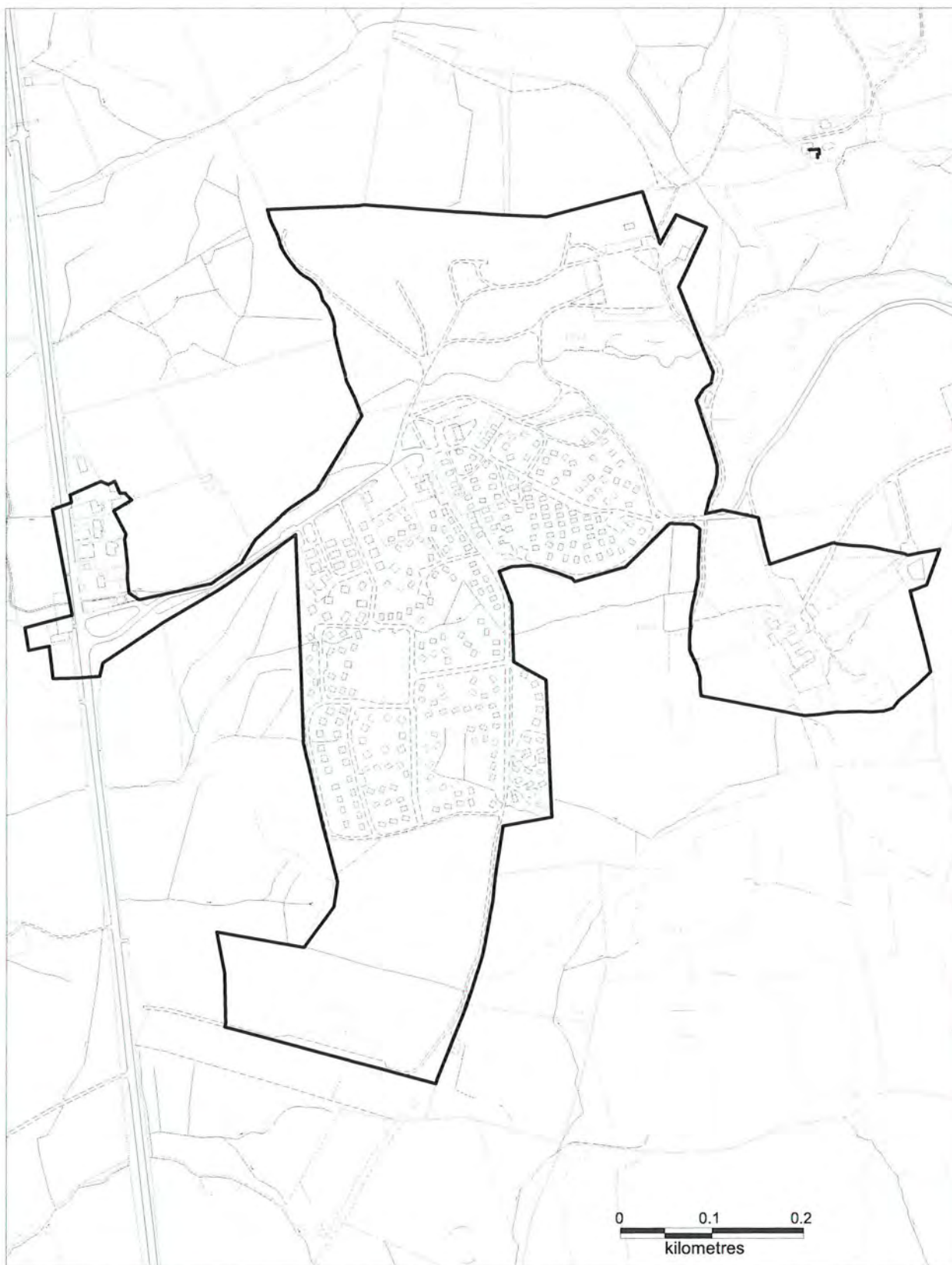




19 Unenclosed mountain – Moel Ddu & Moel Oernant (PRN 18285)

This almost-vertical aerial view shows the location of the Roman road and tile kilns to the south of Tomen-y-Mur, which are situated on the edge of this open, upland character area which is to be seen to the right-hand (east) side of the illustration. (The enclosed fields to the left are within area 21.)





## Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
20 - Bronaber army camp

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### *Historic background*

A small military camp was established at Bryn Golau, on the southern outskirts of Trawsfynydd village at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (southern edge of area 12) (Southern 1995). In 1906, a larger, more permanent site was established at Rhiw Goch further south: the War Office bought land from the locals and the camp developed. The site was roughly divided into two – North and South – and tents were used to accommodate soldiers in the early years. In 1911, a military railway station adjacent to the existing one at Trawsfynydd (see area 08) and road were built to ease the conveyance of guns, trucks, waggon, horses and personnel to the camp. The military road went from just south of the present junction of the A470 and A4212 north-east to the station, and made transportation much easier. Soon the War Department owned 8,020 acres in Trawsfynydd parish, mainly for artillery practice for both the Regular and Territorial Army. During the First World War the camp became a busy centre not just for accommodation for soldiers, but also as an artillery range and a prisoner-of-war camp.

Typically, soldiers stayed at the camp for two weeks during the summer months, while between the end of September and February the camp was closed to allow repair, replacement and maintenance work (carried out by both Royal Engineers and locals) to take place. As commercialism increased, a small, purpose-built village was established c. ½ mile west of the camp and was named after a nearby farm, Bron Aber (although it became known locally as Tin-town!). It comprised a collection of metal huts accommodating cafés, shops and petrol stations, and was used by both soldiers and locals. The camp prospered and an observatory was built on the top of Craig y Penmaen (area 21) to observe the shelling of both eastward ('live') and westward ('dead'/blank) shells.

By World War II, more-permanent structures had replaced the tents as accommodation, and Rhiw Goch house, built in 1610 and one of the earliest houses in the project area (listed grade II), had been converted into the camp's Officers' Mess (unfortunately the interior was much altered in the next few years). Once again it was also used as a POW camp, though this time mainly for Italian, rather than German, prisoners.

After 1945, the camp gradually lost its importance but was used more as a firing range for unused ammunition, conveyed by rail to Trawsfynydd and then by lorries to Rhiw Goch. A map drawn up in 1948 (Dolgellau Archives, ZP/12/10) shows the extent of the 'Trawsfynydd Artillery Range' at some 8403 acres ('land owned by the War Department'), stretching from c. Orsedd-lâs farm (SH700313) in the west to c. Foel Boeth (SH778343) and Moel y Slat (SH785365), both outside the project area, in the east. A public enquiry was opened in November 1949, as the MOD was looking for an extra 5120 acres to provide a 'practical training area' using live ammunition under tactical circumstances (Daily Post, 18/11/1949). The MOD claimed that the land, mainly upland additions to the eastern extent of the area, was of no great agricultural or tourist wealth. By 1950, still no decision had been made, and protests were held against the expansion in 1951.

The camp was finally closed as a military establishment in 1957-8, and was re-opened almost immediately to accommodate over 800 non-local construction workers involved with building the Trawsfynydd power station (area 05), still a self-contained community with its own shops, church, canteen and cinema. When this was finished, the land was gradually sold back to the original owners (wherever possible). 'Tin-town' was largely demolished in 1971, during the widening of the A470, although a few buildings still exist to the east of the road. The camp complex is now a hotel and chalet establishment, alongside an artificial ski-slope.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*typical and distinctive camp layout, wooden cabins, associated 'village'*

Although Bronaber is principally a construction of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, nevertheless the tithe map shows a small concentration of buildings at the road junction here and some of these are still

evident (despite much 'modernisation' in recent years). The area is now known as 'Trawsfynydd Holiday Village', and most of the structures here are neat, Scandinavian-style wooden cabins (see photograph) set amongst manicured areas of grass and gardens which nevertheless preserve the original layout of the army camp. The former officers' mess and supposed birthplace of St. John Roberts is still preserved (although much-altered) in the Rhiw Goch hotel, just above and slightly away from the main camp. There is also a dry-ski slope alongside the hotel which adds to the slightly surreal appearance of the area in the middle of a National Park. There are a few remains of the purpose-built 'tin village' of Bronaber down alongside the modern A470 which are also incongruous in the otherwise bleak, remote, upland landscape.

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

The pattern of the original camp buildings, the remaining structures in Bronaber and Rhiw Goch hotel, as well as the surreal atmosphere created by the entire ensemble, should be preserved. Rhiw Goch (17<sup>th</sup> century) is the only listed building here. The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 34 7493 81*

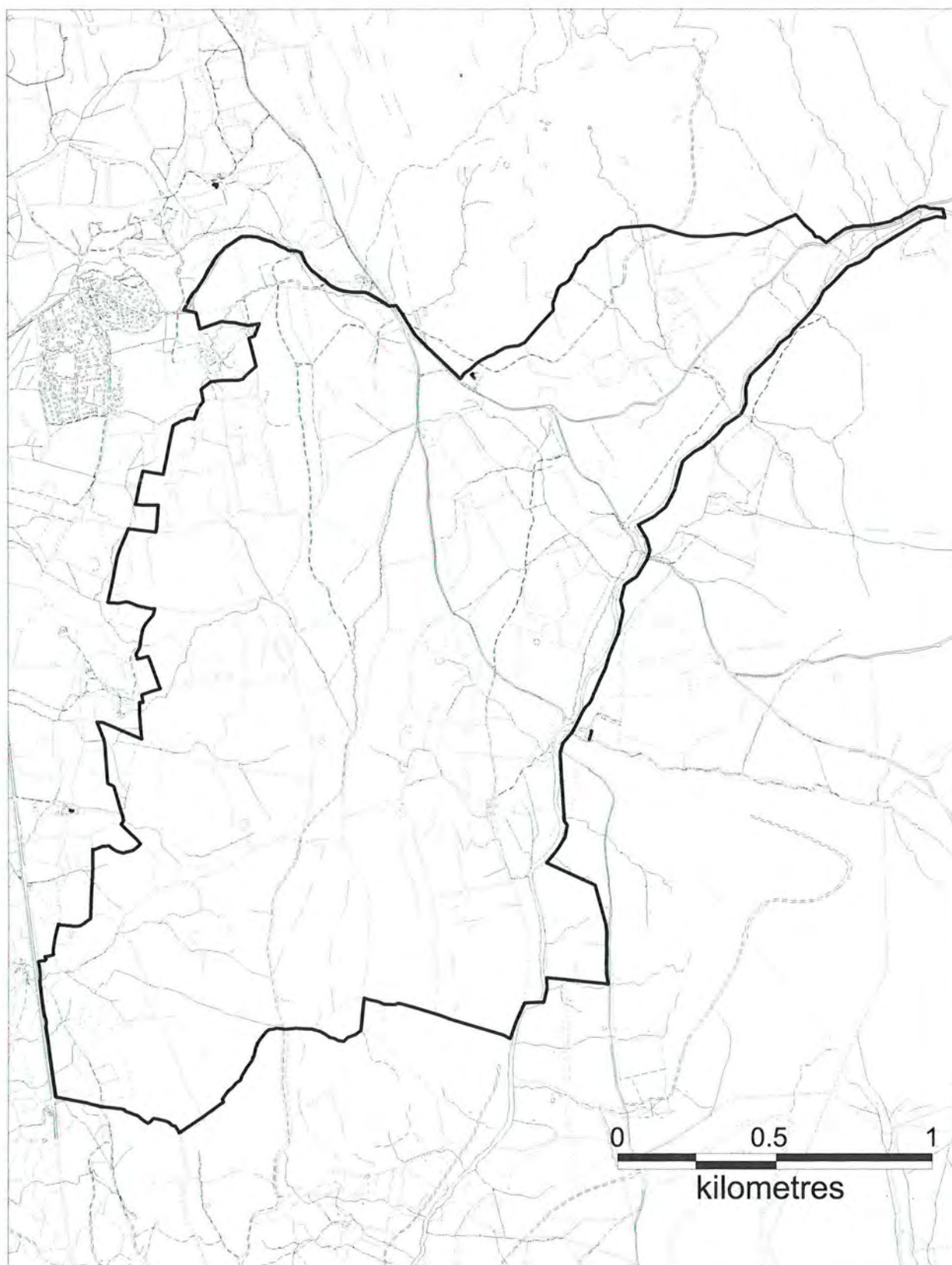


20 Bronaber army camp

(PRN 18286)

View looking north across the original perimeter road of the camp to some of the wooden chalets which now characterise the site.





### Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor

Historic Landscape Character Area  
21 Upland enclosures - Dol-gain

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### *Historic background*

This is an upland area of somewhat mixed character, based on a series of large, irregular enclosures but with no modern settlement. Relict archaeological features include a standing stone, part of the route of the former Roman road and Penystyd Roman tile kilns alongside it, Bedd Porus (early Christian inscribed stone), the remains of a quarry on the lower slopes of Pîg Idris, where there is also a series of small encroachment-like enclosures. There was also a look-out for the firing range down at Bronaber built on the top of Craig y Penmaen between the wars. A number of trackways cross the area and the western parts are covered by scrubby woodland where there are also a number of former mines and related remains. Despite these important individual archaeological monuments, there is no real historical cohesion about the area.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*stone walled enclosures, trackways, relict archaeological features*

The enclosures here are large and irregular without forming any particular pattern: they are fairly typical of remote, upland areas. The area is bisected north-south by the route of the former Roman road, and there are three other (later) roads which demonstrate the importance of this area (rather than the later, lower route to the west currently occupied by the main A470) as a means of communication in past times. Other features are minor in landscape terms.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

The stone-walled enclosures, trackways and relict archaeological features are all worthy of conservation in order to preserve the character of this disparate area, which includes a single scheduled ancient monument (Llech Idris stone). The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.

*CCW vertical AP reference: Geoscan, 1993, line 35 7493 44*



21 Upland enclosures – Dôl-gain

(PRN 18287)

View looking south-west over enclosed fields towards the top of Craig y Penmaen where the artillery watch-tower was established in the inter-war years.

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## ***APPENDIX I***

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

Trawsfynydd basin and Cwm Prysor HLW (Gw) 11