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# Historic landscape characterisation of Bala & Bala Lakesides

GAT Project G1904

Report no. 638

March 2007

*Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd*
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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**Front cover:** Bala and Bala Lakesides (from the air, looking south-west)

**Inside cover:** Bala railway station (top):
Llyn Tegid under cloud (bottom)

*Mae'n gwlad yn rhywbeth byw, nid yn fedd marw dan ein traed. Mae I bob bryn ei hanes, i bob ardal ei rhamant.*

Our land is a living thing, not a grave of forgetfulness under our feet. Every hill has its history, every locality its romance, every part of the landscape wears its own particular glory.

*O M Edwards*

'At one end of this long, oval lake rise the wild summits of the Aran mountains: at the other stands the market town of Y Bala, a straggly group of grey houses around its shopping street. Between the two, the lake, when the day is right, is Dufy-like in its innocent vivacity, the water so greeny-blue, the meadows around so comfortably wooded, the harsh uplands at the southern end so severe by contrast, while the bright sails of yachts flicker all over the mere, flags fly and oars splash, and along the eastern shore a little steam train of *Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid,* the Bala Lake Railway Company, trundles its complement of two boxy coaches from Y Bala to Llanuwchllyn.'

*Jan Morris*

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# Part A

# General information

## Project summary

The purpose of the present study is to provide a more detailed characterisation of the Bala & Bala lakesides historic landscape area as defined in the Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest (Cadw/ICOMOS, 1992). For the sake of consistency with previous historic landscape characterisation projects, and with the recently-completed *LANDMAP* (Level 3) exercise carried out within Snowdonia National Park and Gwynedd, some of the character areas identified by this study have been extended or reduced to their logical limits (see Map 1). The present study therefore covers an area which is not precisely contiguous with the historic landscape area defined in the Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest. The Bala and Bala lakesides historic landscape area remains as it is defined in the Register.

# 1 Preface

Natural forces and human activity acting together over the last six thousand years have combined 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 imprint of diverse human activities 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, such as 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.

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, 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.

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. The process involves the identification of areas of historic character which may be geographically defined and mapped, as determined by the range and distribution of surviving archaeological and historical 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.

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 in 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.

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

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.

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.

Y Gofrestr o Dirweddau o Ddiddordeb Hanesyddol yw'r cam cyntaf, trosolwg cenedlaethol o gynnwys hanesyddol tirwedd Cymru. Y cam nesaf, mor hanfodol i'r broses o lywio'r modd y gellir rheoli agweddau ar y tirwedd cenedlaethol, yw trefnu bod gwybodaeth fwy manwl ar gael ynglyn a chymeriad y tirwedd hwn ar lefel fwy lleol. Cyflawnir hyn drwy broses a elwir yn nodweddiad tirweddau hanesyddol a ddatblygwyd yng Nghymru ar y cyd a Cadw, Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru ac Ymddiriedolaethau Archeolegol Cymru. Golyga hyn nodi ardaloedd o gymeriad hanesyddol y gellir eu diffinio a'u mapio'n ddaearyddol, yn ol yr hyn a benderfynir gan ystod a dosbarthiad y nodweddion archeolegol a hanesyddol sy'n goroesi a'r prif fathau o batrymau defnydd tir hanesyddol neu 'themau' hanesyddol sydd wedi llunio'r ardal. Nodir nodweddion hanesyddol allweddol yr ardal felly ynghyd ag argymhellion ar gyfer eu rheoli'n gadarnhaol.

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn un o gyfres o ymarferion nodweddiad tirweddau hanesyddol yr ymgymerir 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 dwyshau'r ymdeimlad o arbenigrwydd lleol.

Cydnabydda'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

The area which forms the focus of this work encompasses the whole of the area of Bala & Bala Lakesides which has been identified on the *Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales*, HLW(Gw)16 (Cadw, 2001, p 68).

The study area is situated in the modern county of Gwynedd, within the historic county of Meirionnydd. It stretches from south-west of Llanuwchllyn to beyond Llanfor in the northeast; and between the two mountain ridges which run parallel along the northern and southern sides of Llyn Tegid. It includes a more limited variety of terrains and habitats than some other Register areas, including open mountain tops (now mostly designated Access Land slopes), parkland, rolling pasture fieldscapes defined by trees and hedgebanks, some low-lying marshy land and four nucleated settlements. It is centred on the largest natural lake in Wales, and is particularly noted for its associations with the development of Welsh Non-conformism in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as the (more recent) growth in leisure and tourism.

## 2.2 Methodology

A workspace was created in MapInfo version 8.0 and the Register area was digitised (see map 1). The Regional Historic Environment Record (HER), held and maintained by GAT, was interrogated against this polygon, and the recently-completed *LANDMAP* exercises' polygonised data was also cross-referenced: all areas were examined against modern Ordnance Survey (OS) raster (1:10,000) and vector (LandLine) map-bases.

Vertical aerial photographs taken in 1992 (CCW Geoscan 1992) were examined against this map base. The *LANDMAP* areas already defined were subsequently updated and divided where necessary, and a programme of desk-based research and fieldwork was able to finalise the details of the extent of the character areas.

As part of the historic landscape characterisation process, a total of 18 historic landscape character areas was defined (see map 5), representing discrete geographical areas of broadly consistent historic character represented physically by a dominant land use or form of settlement, for example, informed by the datasets noted above, or by historical associations (Cadw & CCW, 2003). The character areas are primarily intended as a means of describing rather than classifying the historic elements of the landscape.

The study has been primarily desk-based, drawing upon information in the regional HER, and readily-available aerial photographic, cartographic and published and non-published written sources, principally in the county archives in Dolgellau. Original fieldwork was undertaken to test the validity of the desk-based assessment and to provide ground-based photography. Original aerial photography was, unfortunately, not possible.

## 2.3 Presentation

The results of the study are presented here in three sections. The first section contains general information relating to the concepts behind, and the processes involved in, historic landscape characterisation in general: this has been updated from reports on previous exercises. In the second part of the report, the first section provides a thematic narrative of the historical development of the

*Bala & Bala Lakesides* landscape, along with various thematic notes. This is followed finally by a description of individual historic landscape character areas, accompanied by a list of essential sources, location maps, photographs and key historic landscape management issues.

A bilingual version of the report will be available in due course on the GAT website (www.heneb.org.uk) as part of the historic landscape characterisation initiative, a consideration that has influenced the format and layout of this printed report to some extent. An illustrated leaflet about the historic landscape will also be produced to draw attention to the information available on the Internet.

## 2.4 Acknowledgements

The authors are 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. The preface was written by Richard Avent and Richard Kelly. Judith Alfrey provided much useful information and advice on buildings and other sections, and Nina Steele provided HER data in a number of formats. The section on prehistoric landscapes was written by George Smith, and that on Roman landscapes is based on recent work carried out by David Hopewell, re-compiled by Ashley Batten; Margaret Mason contributed the section on Rhiwlas and proof-read the draft report. Ashley Batten prepared the maps and illustrations. The remainder of the work was carried out, and the report compiled, by Ashley Batten and David Thompson.

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this report.

| | |
|---|---|
| BAP | Biodiversity Action Plan |
| BBCS | Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies |
| CCW | Countryside Council for Wales |
| DRO | Dolgellau Record Office |
| GAT | Gwynedd Archaeological Trust |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| HER | Historic Environment Record |
| HLC | Historic landscape characterisation |
| JMHRS | Journal of the Merioneth Historical Record Society |
| NLW | National Library of Wales |
| PPS | Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society |
| THSC | Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion |
| LDP | Local Development Plan |
| UWB | University of Wales, Bangor |
| WATs | Welsh Archaeological Trusts |

# 3 Evolving historic characterisation methodology

Historic landscape characterisation is a contribution towards the overall historic landscape initiative currently being funded by Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales and ICOMOS UK. Its principal aim is to provide information to aid the management of the historic environment in Wales.

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 those people. They include the physical remains of all aspects of human activities and exploitation of the land 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.

The Countryside Commission (in its document *Views from the Past*, 1996) stated 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.

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.

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.

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 18th- and 19th-century estates on the landscape; the impact of industry, military installations and so on.

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 the definition of 'character areas'. The concept of 'character areas' differs somewhat from comparable studies in England, which are based on 'historic landscape types', where the predominant form of the present landscape is identified principally by the existing patterns of enclosures within areas of landscape.

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 |

Characterisation is a practical tool intended to aid management in its broadest forms. In order to be of any practical use, this has to be translated into the management of 'landscape tangibles' (i.e. the evidence for historical processes and periods in the modern landscape). It is essential, therefore, that the process identifies key historic landscape characteristics which are features and/or patterns to which can be applied management prescriptions whose success or otherwise can be measured for monitoring purposes.

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 (a historical background, key historic landscape characteristics and conservation and management priorities – accompanied by a map of the area and an illustration); and (c) a select bibliography.

# 4 Managing historic character

## 4.1 Rural land-use change

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.

Currently, due to agricultural over-production and a generally 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.

However, of the estimated 27,000 farms in Wales, around 300 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, although it is hoped that the recent introduction of the (more straightforward) entry-level Tir Cynnal scheme will address part of this problem. The challenge is still, therefore, to identify historic landscape priorities for conservation, protection, enhancement or even restoration both within the schemes and without them.

Three of the principal advantages of an approach using character areas are that (a) it is able to identify and map both local (and regional) distinctiveness and national importance; (b) by identifying physical features which can be managed it can feed directly into general 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.

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).

## 4.2 General considerations

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 so much the better. It is essential that such management is continuous, and contains provisions for monitoring and review.

One of the basic tenets underpinning management is that we should be aiming to continue (rather than halt) the evolution of the landscape: in order to do this we must identify, conserve and enhance the local and regional historic diversity of our landscapes. 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 often concentrate management actions at the level of individual components.

Agri-environment schemes 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.

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, scheme, park or whatever the unit is as a whole, rather than an isolated, unrelated activity.

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

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Management of components (field walls, buildings, archaeological sites *etc.*) | → | Retain character (patterns and themes) | → | Conserve diversity and character areas (local landscapes) |

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 ongoing activities is required; and identify the types of development or activities which might adversely affect the site.

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.

### 4.3 Mechanisms - general

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 local development plans (LDPs);
- 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 and Tir Cynnal schemes;

- providing general information not already on the HER which can be used to inform advice given as part of a number of rural initiatives such as Tir Gofal, Better Woodlands for Wales *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.

### 4.4 Mechanisms - specific

***Tir Gofal*** is open to applications from farmers throughout Wales. Within the scheme, payments are 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.

***Local Development Plans*** address 'land use' issues and will replace Unitary Development Plans in time.

***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 control 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.

***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 of 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 WATs provides historic environment audits, from which decisions of this kind can be made.

***Biodiversity Action Plans*** Snowdonia National Park has 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. 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 Wales; the landscape is the product of millennia of human activity interacting with nature. 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.

***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 is now in force. 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 now that some areas have been 'opened up' to public access. Characterisation also has the potential to inform leaflets, trails and other interpretative material.

***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 to attract visitors (by way of advertising), create atmosphere and 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.

***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).

***Other local authority programmes*** Local authorities have programmes for economic development, highway 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 will often be more useful than detailed, site-specific HER data.

***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 a historic environment perspective. On a day to day basis, it can provide information at a landscape level which can inform proposals for management under the Better Woodlands for Wales scheme. It will be particularly useful when considering proposals under any new 'challenge' schemes.

***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 the information which characterisation can provide.

***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.

# 5 Glossary of keywords and expressions

## 5.1 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 make different areas of landscape distinctive

*Character area*

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

## 5.2 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

## 5.3 Levels at work

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

## 5.4 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

# Bala & Bala Lakesides
## Historical development and themes

*Extract from the*

**Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales**

**Bala and Bala Lakesides**

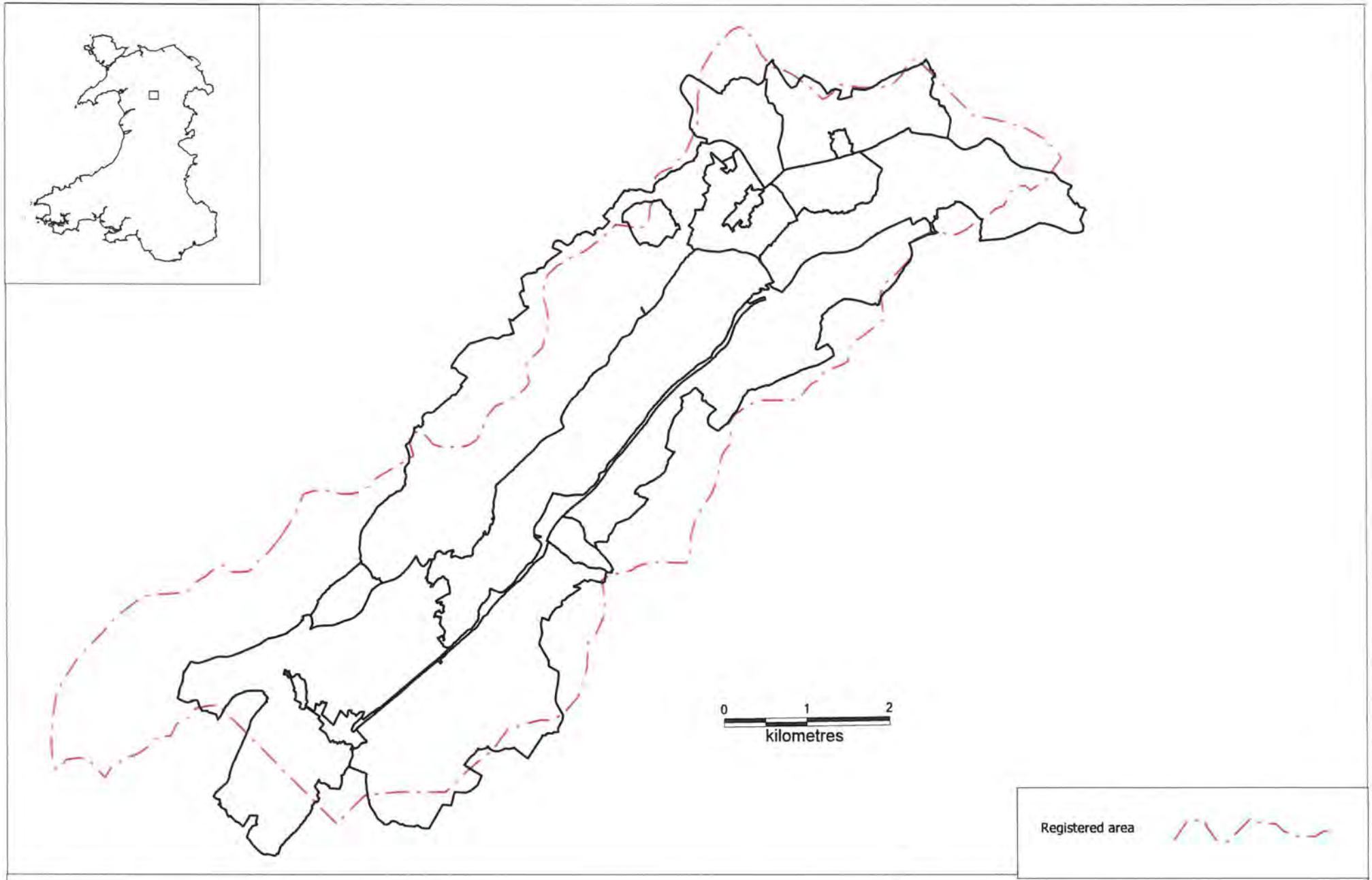
Bala Lake, or Llyn Tegid, is Wales's largest natural lake and the area described here includes the lake and its immediate catchment at the north east end of the Bala cleft, a major geological fault cutting north-east to south-west across north Wales. The cleft forms a narrow, but geographically and scenically distinctive, valley which is drained by the River Dee and its tributaries. The infant Dee is swelled by the Rivers Lliw and Twrch at Llanuwchllyn in the south-west and then flows into the lake, before becoming a sizeable river at Bala. Here it is joined by another tributary, the Tryweryn, beyond which it continues to flow east and out of the area.

There is little in the way of recognised monuments from the prehistoric period in this area, the main historical interest of which begins in the Roman period. A complex of Roman enclosures was identified in the immediate vicinity of Bala, at Llanfor, by aerial reconnaissance during the dry summer of 1976. There appeared to be a fort, containing a granary and barrack blocks, a stores compound with a second granary or storehouse, and a third enclosure, possibly the earliest of the three, perhaps a temporary camp. Subsequent geophysical survey, in advance of the Welsh National Eisteddfod being staged on the site in 1997, revealed further details of the complex, including a number of earlier, bronze age burial and ritual sites, and later traces of medieval settlement and fields. So far, the Roman remains at Llanfor are undated, but they might belong to the earliest phases of Roman conquest and control of this area, the base for which would thus have been strategically sited along one of the principal lines of communication into north Wales.

**SUMMARY**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ref number** | HLW (Gw) 16 |
| **Index map no.** | 53 |
| **OS map** | Landranger 125 |
| **Former County** | Meirionnydd |
| **Unitary authority** | Gwynedd |
| **Principal area designations** | The greater part of the area is within the Snowdonia National Park. The area includes Llyn Tegid Site of Special Scientific Interest; Castell Carndochan, Caer Gai and Llanfor Roman forts and camps (Scheduled Ancient Monuments); Bala Conservation Area. |
| **Criteria** | 3, 4, 5 |
| **Contents and significance** | The upper Dee valley provides a natural and historically strategic and important route corridor across north Wales, the area identified here being centred on Bala Lake and its immediate catchment, where there is a succession and concentration of defensive |

sites and settlements from the Roman and medieval periods. The area includes: a large crop-mark complex of hidden prehistoric funerary and ritual sites, Roman military enclosures and medieval settlement and fields; a Roman auxiliary fort; evidence of Early Christian activity; medieval defensive structures and settlements, including a planned borough at Bala, which became one of the foremost centres of Nonconformist religion in Wales during the 19th century; several important historic cultural, religious and political associations.




**Historic Landscape Characterisation - G1904 Bala**

**Map 1 - Extent of Register area mapped against character areas**

# 6 Physical landscape

## 6.1 Physical setting and environment

Bala Lake, or Llyn Tegid, is Wales's largest natural lake (see section 6.2 below, and character area 01) and the area described here includes the lake and its immediate catchment at the north-east end of the Bala cleft (the 'Bala fault'), a major geological fault cutting north-east to south-west across north Wales. The lake developed in a trough left by glaciation and lake levels have gradually risen as the lake has infilled with silt. The cleft forms a narrow, but geographically and scenically distinctive, valley which is drained by the River Dee and its tributaries.

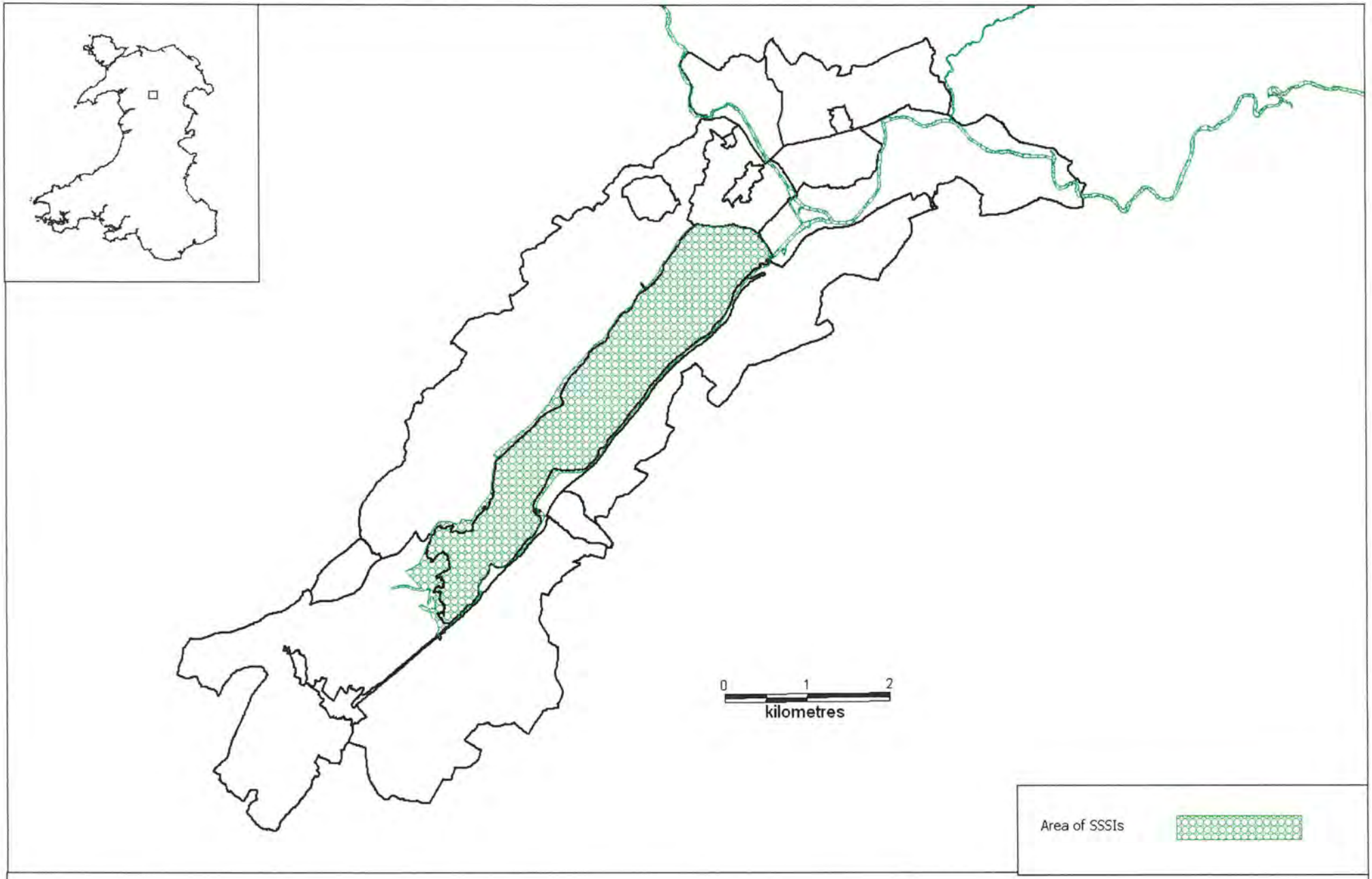
The River Dee is joined by the Rivers Lliw and Twrch near Llanuwchllyn (area 14) and then flows through the 5.5km long lake, exiting at the far end as a large river, where it is increased by another tributary, the Tryweryn (area 10), and flows east and out of the project area. The 1km wide, flat valley floor is at 160m above OD, while the surrounding sides rise fairly steeply to between 250m and 500m above OD, where there is a series of rounded hills, ridges and upland plateaux forming the foothills of the Arenig and Berwyn Mountains on either side. The valley provides a natural route corridor across north Wales and its strategic importance in the past explains the succession and concentration of defensive sites (from the Roman period onwards) and settlements located in the area.

## 6.2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest

There are only two SSSIs within the project area, and brief descriptions of these areas are included here as this 'natural' environmental interest will influence any future management of the character areas or the area in general.

***Llyn Tegid*** (Lake Bala - area 01) covers 484ha. Located in a glacially-cut basin on a geological fault line, Llyn Tegid reaches 42m in depth and the underlying rocks are predominantly acidic. Llyn Tegid is considered a nationally important site in ecological terms, and its value is enhanced by the amount of research invested in its fish populations by Liverpool University. Aquatic vegetation is limited along the rocky shores to species such as shoreweed and water starworts. Better-sheltered stretches have an interesting flora including floating pondweed, branched bur-reed, and the uncommon floating water plantain. The invertebrates of Llyn Tegid include eight species of gastropod, including the rare *Myxas glutinosa*. A range of fish species is present including perch, pike, roach, grayling and the unique *gwyniad*, a subspecies of European whitefish. The brown trout population has been reduced due to the lowering of the water level in 1995 which has restricted its spawning shallows. Llyn Tegid is of some ornithological interest and the south-western end has been designated as a protected breeding ground; small numbers of duck such as pochard and wigeon overwinter, while great crested grebe breed.

***Tryweryn River Sections*** (in area 18) is of special scientific interest because it contains the type locality of the Rhiwlas Limestone, an important fossil-bearing unit of late Ordovician age. The site is located approximately 1km north of Bala and comprises two short sections situated on opposite banks of the Afon Tryweryn.




**Historic Landscape Characterisation - G1904 Bala**

**Map 2 - Location and extent of SSSIs mapped against character areas**

# 7 Historic landscapes

## 7.1 General introduction to historical themes

The following period sections are intended to set out the general background to the development of the landscape over time, rather than describing the physical attributes of what is visible today. The latter is more relevant to the 'thematic landscapes' included in the following section, as well as the individual character area descriptions.

There are few monuments from the prehistoric period in this landscape (section 7.2), the main historical interest of which effectively begins in the Roman period (section 7.3). A complex of Roman military structures were discovered at Llanfor in 1976 (area 07), and Llanfor continued to be of importance following the Roman period, as shown by the early foundation of the church there indicated by its 6th century AD early Christian inscribed stone (area 06). The unusual oval earthwork north of the church may also be of early medieval date, possibly the centre of an early lordship in the area. There was obviously an important focus of settlement and a market here before the foundation of Bala and the latter's emergence as the 'major' nucleated settlement in the area (see section 8.2).

The Roman road ran from Llanfor (ultimately from Chester) along the north-west side of the lake to the garrison at Caer Gai (and subsequently on to Brithdir (near Dolgellau)), which occupies a spur above the other end of the lake (area 15). Caer Gai could represent the consolidation of the Roman conquest of the area, being a permanent auxiliary fort, possibly replacing the temporary works at Llanfor. A *vicus*, or civilian settlement, is known to exist to the south and also possibly to the east of the fort, while again there is evidence to suggest that the site persisted as a centre of activity and cultural importance in the post-Roman period. In the medieval period, Caer Gai was probably superseded by Castell Carndochan to the south west (outside the current project area): this site has been dated to the mid-13th century, despite the lack of any supporting architectural or documentary evidence, and described as 'an important citadel of the lords of Penllyn' (White, 1985). It occupies a strong, commanding position on a high spur overlooking the entrance of the Lliw valley: this site was, in turn, eclipsed by the borough of Y Bala (area 02). In the 16th and 17th centuries, Caer Gai was the home of the Vaughan family, Royalist sympathisers who suffered when the house was sacked and burned by Parliamentarian troops in 1645.

The town of Bala, now the major settlement focus in the area, lies along the course of the main road from England (Shrewsbury) to Dolgellau, sandwiched between the north-east end of Llyn Tegid and the Afon Tryweryn. In the medieval period, Bala was probably the *maerdref* of the commote of Uwch Tryweryn in the *cantref* of Penllyn. Two mottes, presumed to be Norman or of similar origin, stand close to each other here (see below). Thus the landscape themes of fortification and the subtle shift of the focus of (administrative and military) control continues over a thousand years.

Bala is undoubtedly the best example of a planned English borough in Meirionnydd. It was possibly founded by Edward III to bring law and order to the surrounding commote of Penllyn for which it became the administrative centre (but see below). It was initially successful, with all but nine of its 53 burgages taken up within a year of its foundation, and the markets and fairs previously held at Llanfor (see above) were transferred here and the borough was given formal grant of privileges in 1324. However, the town declined during the later middle ages as its military functions became superfluous, although it retained some administrative status and later attracted renewed commercial activities which caused it to assume a more urban character. During the 18th century, for example, a hosiery industry developed which led to much rebuilding in the town and to an expansion of building beyond the extent of the medieval borough (section 8.3 below). By the middle of the 19th century, however, the industry had to compete with the factories of the English Midlands, with the

consequence that the area's stocking trade gradually declined until it finally disappeared during the early years of the 20th century.

During the 19th century, Bala significantly developed culturally into an important and flourishing centre for Nonconformist religious movements in Wales, particularly during the ministry of Thomas Charles, the famous Welsh Methodist leader (section 8.6). From early on in the century, the town hosted the Methodist Preaching Festival, when thousands of people would gather on the Green to listen to famous preachers, and in 1837 the Methodists established a college in the town (area 03), and this was followed in 1842 by a Congregationalist college. Connected with the town's colleges and chapels were men influential not only in the area, but also across the whole of Wales and beyond. They include O M Edwards, the famous educationalist and writer, Michael D Jones, the Congregationalist leader and protagonist for the Welsh colony in Patagonia, Argentina, and others, to whom there are several monuments and memorials in this town and Llanuwchllyn (area 08).

Outside the town, to the north of Bala, the Rhiwlas estate (section 7.5, area 05) has played a major part in shaping the landscape of the area. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, R W Price of Rhiwlas was committed to a policy of converting marginal pasture to meadow, and meadow to arable. It has been said that the Rhiwlas estate at this time illustrated the amalgamation tendency. This prevented young farmers from setting up on their own land and led eventually to depopulation and a contraction of settlement distribution; by 1797 many cottages on lowland farms were uninhabited (E Thomas, *pers comm*). Half a century later, the estate owned almost 16500ha of land in Merionethshire.

During the latter part of the 19th century, Rhiwlas estate was developed into a 'game' estate by R W Price with considerable success, which altered the appearance of this northern end of the study area (ditto). For example, this colourful character was responsible for the first sheepdog trials, which took place when he accepted a challenge from a neighbour who claimed that his Scottish shepherds were better than the Welsh shepherds employed on the estate here. There has been a succession of houses at Rhiwlas, and the present house was designed by the architect Clough Williams-Ellis to replace an earlier, rather grandiose castellated structure (mirrored in the former railway station at Bala, also long since gone) that was requisitioned by the military during the war and had deteriorated to the point that it had to be pulled down in 1951.

The landscape area also has other important historic and cultural associations (section 8.7). It has long been suggested that it was once rich in mythology and legend: for example, Sir John Lloyd (History of Wales, II, 614) wrote about Penllyn that 'the land is one of legend, rather than of history'. Caer Gai is held in Welsh literary tradition to be the home of Cei mab Cynyr, Sir Kay in Arthurian romances (White, 1985). Llanfawr (Llanfor) and some of the local rivers are recorded in the early Welsh stanzas, Canu Llywarch Hen, which probably date to the 9th century, while the poet himself is remembered in the old name for the earthwork north of Llanfor church, Castell Llywarch Hen (area 06). Llyn Tegid/Bala Lake (area 01) was a particular focus of legends and tales, many of which, perhaps not surprisingly, are concerned with flooding and drowning (section 8.6).

In recent times, the landscape area regained its cultural pre-eminence in Wales as a centre of considerable religious significance, with Bala and its numerous Nonconformist colleges and chapels (and lake) being famously described as the Geneva of Wales (section 8.6). Fach-ddeiliog, overlooking the lake near Bala (area 11), was the summer retreat of the well-known antiquary Richard Colt Hoare, while Coed-y-pry, Llanuwchllyn, was the home of the famous Welsh writer and educationalist Sir O M Edwards (area 08).

## 7.2 Prehistoric landscapes

The earlier prehistoric period, before about 5000BC, is poorly represented in Meirionnydd in general, which is notable for the small number of stray finds of lithic objects belonging that period compared to the coastal areas of Llŷn, Anglesey and north Gwynedd (Smith, 2001). The inland area around Llyn Tegid is no exception, although there is more evidence of activity than in the surrounding uplands. 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).

The lower-lying area immediately around Llyn Tegid and in the valley of the River Dee might be expected to have had considerabley more potential for early prehistoric settlement, for fishing for example, than the evidence currently suggests. The lake developed in a trough left by glaciation, and lake levels have gradually risen as the lake has infilled with silt. It may be, therefore, that early prehistoric lakeside settlement or activity areas have been submerged. Possible evidence of this comes from 19th century reports of finds of worked flints collected from the lake shore at the north-east near Bala (area 10), at the south-east near Llangower (area 12) and at the south-west near Glanllyn (area 14) (RCAHMW, 1921, 2): however, there have been no recent similar finds to confirm this. The lack of finds of this period is common to the whole of inland north-west Wales and must be partly because of the lack of suitable raw materials for lithic tools, but may also be largely due to a lack of appropriate fieldwork and research.

Evidence of activity in this area during the neolithic period between about 5000-2000BC is also largely absent, although there are large burial mounds that might be of neolithic date in the upper valley of the Dee to the east of the study area, one of which at least, Tanycoed, is chambered (Gresham 1967, 29-32). There is also a group of certainly neolithic tombs close to the coast, in Ardudwy, to the west. The valley in which Llyn Tegid lies forms a natural route between these areas and the use of this route is suggested by two finds of neolithic stone axes and three others just outside the Llyn Tegid area, to the north-west. Firm evidence of actual settlement in this period is lacking, but recently a large sub-circular enclosure has been identified on the flood plain of the Dee, at Ty-tandderwen, just east of Llyn Tegid, from aerial photographs and geophysical survey, and this seems likely to be a neolithic settlement or ceremonial enclosure (Smith and Hopewell, 2006).

There is also a historical record of a stone circle, Pabell Llywarch Hen ('The tent of [the poet] Llywarch the Old'), not far to the north, close to Llanfor. The circle was unfortunately removed in the 17th century during agricultural improvement but was described in an 18th century document (Gresham 1967, 283). Such stone circles are rare and their presence almost certainly indicates areas that were centres of later neolithic, and perhaps early bronze age, activity (perhaps emphasising the area's continuing importance, already alluded to during the Roman and early medieval periods - see above). Such a focus has been indicated by the discovery of a possible avenue of large posts to the south of the probable site of the stone circle during geophysical survey at Llanfor (Crew 1997, 18).

Despite the lack of burial monuments there is some evidence that lowlands, such as the area around Llyn Tegid, were occupied, and perhaps were *foci* of settlement, in the second millennium. This takes the form of stray finds of artefacts, rather than landscape features as such, including two stone axe-hammers and a perforated stone axe of the earlier second millennium BC. In Meirionydd, such axes are generally found in valley bottoms, close to rivers or lake shores (Gresham, 1967, 41). There are also finds of bronze objects of the second millennium. These comprise a spearhead of the first half of the second millennium BC, found in Llyn Tegid by a fisherman (Savory, 1980, 11), a palstave (an early type of axe) of the second half of the second millennium BC and a bronze mould for making a palstave (Gresham 1967, 74-5). Most such finds have been made in the lowlands and seem to indicate a higher status of activity in those areas than in the uplands. This is supported by the fact that where burial monuments have been identified in the lowlands they tend to be larger and have richer grave-

goods than those in the uplands. Three ring ditches belonging to former burial mounds of this period have recently been identified on the valley floor to the east of Llyn Tegid during geophysical survey of the complex of Roman forts there (area 07 - Crew 1997, 17-18) and there are historical records of standing stones near to Llangower (area 12) on the south side of Llyn Tegid. Associated settlement sites are likely to exist in the area and may be discovered during aerial survey work, as with the possible neolithic enclosure at Ty-tandderwen mentioned above.

The first millennium BC is a period, however, when actual settlement remains become quite numerous, with over a thousand examples known in north-west Wales (Smith, 1999). However, this settlement is concentrated around the western fringes of the uplands with little inland, and this holds for inland Meirionnydd and the Llyn Tegid area. The earliest excavated evidence in Meirionnydd is from the uplands east of Harlech, where two settlements were shown to have origins in the earlier first millennium BC (Kelly, 1988). However, recent detailed survey of uplands just to the north-west of Llyn Tegid has identified previously unknown widespread settlement remains there (Muckle, 1993). These are undated but are of a type of scattered settlement more typical of uplands. The later first millennium BC was a period of developing tribal groupings, with some clearly wealthier, substantial enclosed settlements as well as strongly defended sites that were probably *foci* of status and authority.

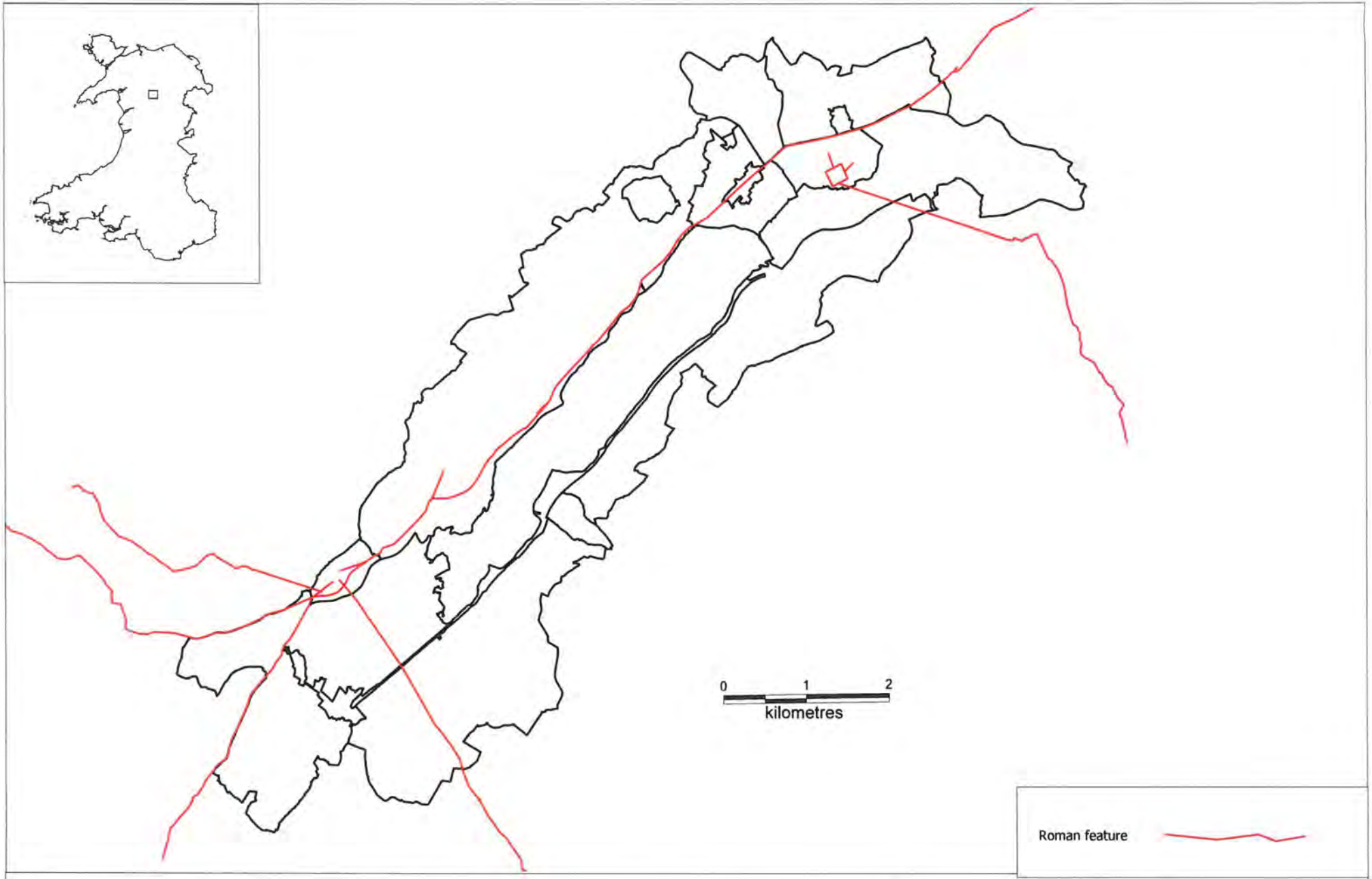
There are no known enclosed settlements or defended enclosures or hillforts of the first millennium BC in the Llyn Tegid area, and the nearest are three sites about 10km to the east. One is a simple, lightly-defended hilltop on Mynydd Mynyllod, which may well be of late bronze age date. The second is a partly-bivallate hillslope enclosure at Cefn Ddwysarn, possibly an unfinished site. The third is a large hillfort at Cefn Caer Euni, a strongly-defended bivallate fort with evidence of numerous houses and probable extension and refortification. This fort is the only candidate for a development of central authority in this area in the later first millennium, and significantly it overlooks the major route between the coast and inland that was eventually taken by a Roman road, rather than overlooking the Dee Valley, and the river crossing at the east end of Llyn Tegid was clearly an important point on this route. That, and the proximity of the hillfort, may have influenced the siting of the early Roman fort at Llanfor, just east of Bala (see above and below), and its apparent continuing importance, although later a new, stone-built fort was constructed at Caer Gai, at the west end of Llyn Tegid (area 15).

Excavations and chance finds elsewhere in north Gwynedd and Anglesey show that most native iron age settlements, including some of the hillforts, continued to be occupied during the period of Roman control. Indeed, settlements probably expanded due to settled conditions and a developing market economy. However, there is no evidence of such an expansion in central Meirionnydd or the Llyn Tegid area, perhaps because of poorer agricultural resources or because society was less Romanised.

Currently, the best potential for prehistoric settlement outside area 07 (cropmark evidence) is the southern (upper) end of area 13. Two or three obvious small sub-circular enclosures are visible on the 1957 aerial photographs (58/2122/145-53 (Flight 22) 12/03/1957), their existence confirmed by more recent maps, and preserved by later field walls immediately south of Llechweddystrad, near Bryn Hynod and around the other farms here.

### 7.3 Roman landscapes

Communication links through this central part of Roman Wales were extensive. Five major Roman roads are known to pass through this landscape; those from Tomen y Mur to Caer Gai, Caer Gai to Deva, Caer Gai to Brithdir, Caersws to Caer Gai and Canovium to Varis. The setting of this landscape area would, therefore, have been an attractive prospect for Roman settlement, not least because of its ease of communication and its proximity to sources of gold, lead and manganese. The easily defensible lowland location makes it a good spot for a military stronghold, whilst its sheltered,




**Historic Landscape Characterisation - G1904 Bala**

**Map 3 - Roman forts and Roman road network against character areas**

temperate position, fertile soils and well-stocked freshwater lake make it a more sustainable option for settlement.

Most of the Roman activity in the study area is thought to have been focused on two sites, Llanfor (area 07) and Caer Gai (area 15). Both are primarily fortified military encampments with associated infrastructures and civil settlements.

Llanfor is situated at the confluence of two rivers, the Tryweryn and the Dee, on low-lying ground at the east end of Llyn Tegid. Absolute dating of the site has proven difficult, but it is thought to predate Caer Gai and to relate to the Flavian or pre-Flavian periods. There are two phases of occupation: an earlier fort, and a much larger marching camp which is thought to post-date it. Archaeological evidence suggests that the fort was constructed in a single phase, that it was heavily garrisoned and that it was about twice the size of any of the auxiliary forts that characterise the Flavian garrisoning of Wales. The fort was probably only in use for a very short period and is thought to have been abandoned before AD 75-80, suggesting its purpose was very different from that of other auxiliary forts at this period.

Geophysical evidence suggests that a *vicus*, or settlement, existed just outside Llanfor fort (Hopewell, 2004). The road running out from the north side of the fort appears to be flanked by hearths and rectangular buildings or plots. This settlement is much sparser than that at Canovium or Cefn Caer, perhaps reflecting a short period of occupation. A further possible road running north-east from the *porta praetoria* is principally defined by a scattering of hearths to either side. These very faint rectangular anomalies could therefore indicate further *vicus* buildings. None of this evidence is visible as above-ground features in the present landscape.

Caer Gai is a strategically-positioned, rectangular Roman auxiliary fort that was probably garrisoned from *c.* AD 75-130: the earliest part of the fort is a rectangular turf rampart that has been dated to AD 70-85. In contrast to Llanfor, much of the earthwork complex associated with the site is extant, and on the south-west side of the fort the rampart stands as a bank 8m wide. Both the south-east and south-west corners are very well-preserved, with the ditch curving around them. The bank is surmounted by a modern field wall, probably partly overlying the foundations of the original Roman stone wall that surrounded the whole area and incorporates a few of its squared stones.

Aerial photographic evidence has shown that there is a complex of roads running through Caer Gai fort, and recent geophysical survey work has shown ribbon development in the form of a possible *vicus*, or settlement, running alongside the north-east roadway. The *vicus* appears to include a shrine and an extensive complex of buildings of unknown date and function. A variety of specifically military features is also clustered around the fort, which includes a bathhouse, a parade ground and a possible *mansio*. A cemetery is also known to exist within the field now known as Y Fynwent. The extent of the cemetery is not known, but its existence indicates a sustained period of occupation.

## 7.4 Medieval landscapes

### *7.4.1 General*

The project area falls wholly within Merioneth, one of the three original shire counties created by the Statute of Rhuddlan in 1284, following the Conquest of Edward I. It also lies within the (earlier-established) medieval commote of Penllyn (Bowen, 1972, 42), itself divided into Uwch Tryweryn (to the south-west) and Is Tryweryn (to the north-east), which appear to have divided down the Afon Tryweryn (and Dee) east of Bala. Although this is a larger area than is covered by the current project, it is actually the only meaningful division of the medieval landscape which can provide relevant data for the present study, and so is necessarily quoted below.

The current community councils which extend over the study area are also based on the medieval parishes of Llanuwchllyn, Llanycil, Llangywer and Llanfor. These four parishes correspond with the churches recorded in the Valuation of Norwich in 1254 (Davidson, 2001), although none retains any medieval masonry. The eastern commotes of Meirionnydd, including Penllyn, belonged to the diocese of St Asaph (while the western ones confusingly belonged to Bangor). Both diocese were creation of the 12th century (Price, 2001).

### *7.4.2 The situation at the time of the Conquest*

By the 12th century the *commote* had become established as the manageable territorial unit for regional administration. The town of Bala may well have been the *commotal* centre of Uwch Tryweryn in Penllyn in the period leading up to the Conquest (it having probably shifted from Llanfor). The prince maintained a royal estate, or *maerdref*, within each commote, and it was here that he would stay on his royal circuit (the governance of medieval Gwynedd being peripatetic), where there were the royal halls and other important buildings. In the prince's absence the *llys*, or estate centre, would be maintained by royal officials, who would also manage the tenants on the estate and supervise the food renders and work services from the *commote* generally.

An inquisition taken in 1308 (*i.e.* later than both the Extent of 1284 and the Subsidy Roll of 1292-3 (see below)) reported that after the death of Maredudd ap Cynan ap Owain Gwynedd in 1212, Meirionnydd was divided between his two sons, Llywelyn Fawr and Llywelyn Fychan (Carr, 2001, 704). Demesne lands in the various *commotes* appear to have been more dispersed in Meirionnydd than in other parts of Gwynedd: in Penllyn, for example, there were demesne lands at both Bala and Crogen.

During the wars of 1282-3, there had been considerable destruction across north Wales, particularly in Penllyn where whole townships were described as *terra vasta*, and beyond them the collapse in the values of the upland vaccaries implies a massive reduction in their livestock numbers caused by invading armies. There is evidence that during the final campaign to defeat Llywelyn Fawr, cattle were removed from the vaccaries in Penllyn to feed the English armies, and it was clearly some time before their subsequent restocking restored them to their former value (Smith, 2001, 428). The entry for the township of Penmaen (just north of the study area) may bear witness to the destruction wrought by the war in 1282-3 (see Williams about Basingwerk below, 7.4.3). Here we have a snapshot of many aspects of society and economy in Merioneth as they were when the independence of Gwynedd came to an end.

### *7.4.3 Ecclesiastical land*

Basingwerk Abbey was 'technically in Wales but not of it in nationalist feeling' (its home lordship was on the Dee estuary (Williams, 2001, 178)), and became Cistercian in 1147. It held a number of granges in the area around Bala, to the south-west and north-west of the town, including the grange of Gwernhefin, which was a large acreage of pasture centred on the present farm of that name (south-west of Llyn Tegid, area 16, centred on SH894329). In addition, it also owned the important asset of Llyn Tegid, where fishing was of considerable importance to the economy of the abbey. (Strata Marcella also had lands which abutted Basingwerk lands in Bala-Penllyn, but these were to the north of the study area).

Some medieval granges or farms were little more than glorified sheep runs (*ibid,* 192), while others were substantial complexes, important not only for agriculture, but also for the transaction of business and the hospiality they afforded. They were model farms of their day, with their nucleus comprising a refectory and dormitory, an oratory, a granary and other necessary farm buildings, probably built of a of mixture of wood and stone. Those in low-lying situations were generally much smaller than upland ones, which were mostly employed for sheep rearing, frequently with boundaries delineated by streams and rivers, and which can possibly be traced at Gwernhefin.

During the late 12th and 13th centuries, pastoralism formed the mainstay of the Cistercian economy in Wales (*ibid,* 246). The numbers of sheep given in the *Taxatio* (1291) show that Basingwerk had over 2,000 sheep in Penllyn alone (*ibid,* 252), and it certainly had a home trade in wool throughout the 14th century.

During Edward I's second campaign (1282-3), his troops were forbidden to take Basingwerk's corn, despite which they appear to have ransacked land and property belonging to the abbey, including burning houses and corn at the distant grange of Gwernhefin, although some compensation was later paid. In 1285, Basingwerk was able, in Penllyn, to take what it needed 'of the wood there, both green and dry' for houses, hedges, fuel and other purposes (quoted *ibid,* 228). Basingwerk probably saw monastic life end in the autumn of 1536, and there are no records of dispensations for the monks.

### *7.4.4 The situation immediately following the Conquest: 1284 Extent of Merioneth*

The three new counties of the principality of north Wales were surveyed in 1284 to produce an Extent (Carr, 2001, 702), work undertaken by John de Havering (the justice of north Wales) and Richard Abingdon (the chamberlain). The purpose of an Extent was to record the rents, dues and sevices due to a lord from his tenants, and Edward's intention in 1284 was to establish what had been owed to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd by his tenants in the post-1277 principality, which would now accrue to him. So they do actually refer to the period before the Conquest, which makes them particularly interesting. These Extents were set out in the form normally used in England for manorial surveys, and therefore they do not yield any information about the *gwely* and the *gafael* , or about the tenurial pattern in each individual township (Thomas, 2001).

T Jones Pierce (1972, 107) has suggested that the survey of Merioneth was probably drawn up between March 1284 and January 1286. It appears to be less detailed than those for Anglesey and Caernarfonshire and is arranged under commotes, although there is only a summary entry for each one, with few separate entries for individual townships. It is possible that the surviving document is, in fact, a digest rather than the Extent itself.

It is probably worthwhile quoting the Extent, as it relates to Penllyn, in full:

***Extent of the commote of Penllyn***

***Bala Artenlyn and Llandderfel***

| | |
|---|---|
| From two carucates of land of the same manor | 40s |
| From one meadow | 5s |
| From one carucate of land in the same | 1 mark |
| From one meadow | 2s 6d |

From the same township which is the Lord King's escheat by the death of Rhirid an Einion *Goth Wreyk* of two carucates of land [in Llandderfel] 26s 8d

<Item, from half a mill there which is escheat after the extent and is worth annually 10s>

| | |
|---|---|
| From a fishery | 2s |

Total: £4 19s 6d

(m.2) Rent of assise

| | |
|---|---|
| From the rent of assise of the free tenants | 24s |
| From the same for maintenance | £16 0s 11d |

However, from these who were accustomed to do that service for [their] share 16½ carucates of land are waste

| | |
|---|---|
| From the land of *Baglas* of farm | 2s 6d |
| From the land of Einion ap Iorwerth for farm | 2s |
| From the land which was of Hywel ap Elise | 20d |

From the son of Philip ap Cynwrig, half a crannock 12d
And in cash 6d

Total: £17 12s 7d

***Pennant-lliw*** [based to the north of the study area]

From the land which is called Pennant-lliw in the aforesaid commote 45s, of which 31s 8d [is due] from land [which is] waste [in the hand of Madog ap Iorwerth for life by the King's gift.]

***Rent of villeins***

From 40 villeins of the whole commote whoe were accustomed to give 3½ crannocks of flour worth 7s
From the same for works in the autumn 3s 4d
From the same for carrying victuals 10s
From the same for the puture of men and horses at the four terms of the year £4
From the same for two tenements which are called *Vianell'* and for a certain service which is called *maeronaeth* [this was a render of dairy produce] 46s 8d
From the same for the maintenance of one horse and one servant for the said year 46s 8d
From the same for the maintenance of two servants looking for sparrowhawks in May for 15 days 2s 6d
Of which 40 villeins there are 10 surviving and they render annually 30s

***Penmaen***

From the men of Penmaen, half a crannock of flour annually that they be not compelled to mill at the King's mill 12d. They are dead and the lands are waste.

***Rent of freemen***

From the same free tenants from this side of the water which is called Is Meloch, 16½ crannocks of flour 33s
From the same free men, 70 measures of butter 23s 4d, the price of a vessel [being] 4d.
However, their lands are waste in the 16 carucates of land above written.

***Rent of farmers: Brynbanon***

From four farmers from this side of the water of Is Meloch, 4 crannocks of flour 8s [Carr notes here that this is one acre of land according to the 1308-9 sheriff's account; the other renders suggest that they were actually farming the whole township which was uninhabited, possibly as a result of the war.]
From the same 7½d of annual rent.
From the same for works in the autumn 20d
From the same for puture 3s
From the same for carrying 16d
From the same for the puture of otter-hunters 5s
From the same for oats for fodder 5s
From the same for the puture of one servant looking for sparrowhawks' nests 12d
The lands of these are waste.

Total: £4 2s 11½d.

***Maintenance***

From the whole commote for the maintenance of the houses of Bala 5s

***Decay which the King remitted by his charters***

From the monks of Bochraeadr for the puture which they were accustomed to provide for the prince for one night £6

[NB This was formerly Mochraeadr, in Llanycil near Llyn Celyn, and presumably Gwernhefyn, see below, a grange of Basingwerk. In 1285 an inquisition reported that Llywelyn ap Gruffudd took puture for 500 men and two

yearling foals from the abbey when he came to Penllyn to hunt. When he did not come, he took money instead. Llywelyn ap Iorwerth and Dafydd ap Llywelyn had taken puture for 300 men when they came, and nothing when they did not.]

From the same monks two colt of their superior breed of the value of 40s, the value of a colt being 20s.

Total: £8

***Crogen*** [centred to the east of the study area]

| | |
|---|---|
| From one carucate of land in the same manor | 20s |
| From one meadow | 5s |
| From five villeins of annual rent | 10s |
| From each of the said villeins, 2½ crannocks of flour | 25s |

Total: 20s

***Mill***

From the mill which is called Penaran 12 crannocks of oatmeal 24s

***Vaccaries***

From three vaccaries on this side of the water of Is Meloch in which they can maintain 200 cows and each cow is worth 2s if the King has his own cows and if he has not he can lease the pasture for 1 mark.
From one vaccary on the other side of the samewater where 50 cows can be maintained and it is worth 100s

Total: £6 17s 4d

***Pleas and perquisites***

From the pleas and perquisites of the same commote 40s

Total 40s as it appears.

Grand total: £58 9s 9½d

For comparative purposes the grand totals of the other commotes in Merioneth were -

| | |
|---|---|
| Tal-y-bont | £77 2s 7¼d |
| Ardudwy | £72 0s 4d |
| Penllyn | £58 9s 9½d |
| Ystumanner | £58 2s 2¾d |

In order to effect the pacification of a potentially hostile population, Edward built a ring of castles in north Wales, and planted boroughs where English colonists could settle and live by trade. There were three such boroughs in Merioneth - Harlech, Bere (which, according to evidence within the 1284 Extent, was probaby the prime symbol of princely authority in the pre-conquest cantref of Meirionydd) (Carr, 2001, 704) and Bala.

The first two were of royal creation, existing to perform a military function (they had castles) and strategically placed, but Bala was different. Its borough status was granted by a 1310 grant of Roger Mortimer, the king's justiciar in north Wales. It has been suggested that it was created for the purpose of pacifying Penllyn during the turbulent time of Edward II, but there were clearly other reasons for its existence, and better prospects for its success. It was situated in more hospitable

territory, and better-placed as a centre for trading activity than the earlier two, and it is obvious that its economic function soon eclipsed whatever military function it might originally have had.

### *7.4.5 The Merioneth Lay Subsidy Roll of 1292-3*

The Merioneth Lay Subsidy Roll of 1292-3 gives the overall size of Penllyn as 98,721 acres, with the number of taxpayers as 493, giving a possible population density of 24.9 taxpayers per thousand acres (the most sparse in Merioneth, which probably had an overall average density of 33.9) (Williams, 1976, cxl). The Roll is again arranged under commotes, but there is only a summary entry for each one, with few separate entries for the individual townships, and again, it does not yield any information about their respective *gweliau* or *gafaelion.*

Only a handful of townships is recorded (*ibid,* map C, cxxxviii) as existing within the study area at this date: Llanfor (area 06), Llangywer (area 12), Llanycil (part of area 16), Bala (area 02), Dwygraig (which may be remembered in the name Mynydd Cefn-ddwy-graig at SH935340, area 13), and Gwernhefin (area 16, formerly a grange of the abbey of Basingwerk - see above).

Smith's 2001 map 4 (of Penllyn), showing the locations of medieval townships, is based on the above evidence, although townships known from other medieval sources have also been included, and some amendments have been made (*e.g.* Cynlas is assigned to the parish of Llanfor in one period, and to Llandderfel in another). Accurate delineations of township boundaries would be impossible to achieve across the county as a whole, due to the variety in the quality of the evidence and lack of current resources, so any maps produced must use simple point data (mainly from place-names of existing vilages, hamlets or farms) as a guide. Some (*e.g.* Panaran in the parish of Llanuwchllyn), however, comprised broad expanses of upland terrain, and the point represents simply a central location. Some other parishes have detached portions, such as Llangar in Penllyn.

Williams-Jones (1976, *xlv)* also has an interesting table which shows the growth in relative populations of the parishes between 1292-3 and 1801: Llanfor had 179 people taxed in 1292-3, 144 tenements in 1592, 222 people taxed in 1670, with a population of 1,705 in 1801: Llangywer had 27 people taxed in 1292-3, 22 tenements in 1592, 69 people taxed in 1670, with a population of 430 in 1801: Llanuwchllyn had 104 people taxed in 1292-3, 41+ tenements in 1592, 147 people taxed in 1670, with a population of 1,191 in 1801: and Llanycil had 93 people taxed in 1292-3, 104 tenements in 1592, 230 people taxed in 1670, with a population of 2,445 in 1801. This statistical table should be treated with some care as it does not necessarily reflect trends in population growth, but it does provide an interesting set of 'snapshot' figures in certain set years.

### *7.4.6 Model of medieval land divisions*

Territorial divisions must have posessed remarkable continuity, as they survived the changes made in the period following 1292-3 (Thomas, 2001). The neat hierarchical scheme laid out in the Welsh Laws, whereby cantrefs were divided into commotes which in turn consisted of two royal townships and forty-eight other townships grouped into twelve maenolau, was probably always an ideal, but it is useful for a basic understanding of how the landscape worked (see below). For administrative purposes, as stated above, the commote remained the key institution. Most commotes were further subdivided (see below) and accordingly Penllyn was divided into Is Meloch and Uwch Meloch (see the Extent above), which later appear to have become Is Tryweryn and Uwch Tryweryn, their designations possibly referring to relative location vis-à-vis the district caput (probably Llanfor or Bala in this instance - which is interesting as they are on different sides of the Afon Tryweryn, which might account for their re-naming).

The fundamental land unit, the *tref* (township), varied in size, both geographically in terms of population, and in most of Merioneth, certainly in Penllyn, several townships were contained within the boundaries of a single ecclesiastical parish. The origins of townships and parishes have not been

easy to establish, but it is probable that both secular and ecclesiastical units had been established before the end of the 12th century (Gresham, 1987, 137-49). Penllyn appears to have contained quite extensive townships, probably reflecting its physical geographic setting (again giving rise to disparities in population distribution and density) (Thomas, 2001).

Thomas (*ibid,* 182), among others, discusses the difference between bond and free townships. In each commote the main *tir gyfrif* (bond township), the *maerdref*, was the administrative centre and was where the *llys* (prince's court) was located. The importance of the *tref* continued during the transformations which followed the Conquest. Matters which required regulation in the use of arable, pastoral and woodland resources were decided at the level of the *tref*.

According to the Welsh Law texts, each *tref* should consist of 256 *erwau* (or customary acres) and of 64 *tyddonod* (each *tyddynod* comprising 4 *erwau*), but this stereotypical pattern probably rarely existed, as has already been stated. At the close of the 13th century, the five commotes in Merionnydd incorporated some 121 *trefi* (figures based on the 1284 Extent, and 1292-3 Subsidy Roll, see above) (Thomas, *ibid*, 185). Some, in rugged upland districts, such as Gwernhefin in Penllyn, often extended over 10,000 statute acres, while those settled in more lowland areas would have been much smaller.

It is not possible properly to reconstruct the *gwely* and *gafael* land holding groups at this time (see above sections, 7.4.4, and 7.4.5), although Thomas concludes (*ibid,* 183) that by the late 16th century far-reaching changes had been made in the landholding pattern, and he infers that medieval Welsh society was not in essence grounded in concepts of territoriality. Although he discusses the relationship at great length he is unable to reach any firm conclusions regarding how either would have appeared in landscape terms, and concludes that the disposition of social and territorial units in Penllyn was quite varied, both in combinations of numbers and in groupings of townships. He also discusses the differences between the 'free' and 'bond' elements of society, and how they held and land and used their labour (*ibid,* 189). Despite fundamental changes in the nature of bond tenure, bond status continued to be distinguished from its free counterpart until it was abolished in the 16th century.

There is no apparent great correspondence bewteen the theoretical model laid out in the Laws, and the actual township disposition in any of the commotes in Merioneth, with most having only about half the 'proper' number of 50 townships, although the hypothetical two royal townships seem to be better represented in the settlement patterns (with prince's mills, symbolic economic indicators, recorded at Penaran (south-west of the study area) and Bala in Penllyn).

T Jones Pierce (1972, 195-227) 'defines' *gafael* as a fairly precisely determined plot of land, functioning as an independent farm, essentially small, compact, and often located on the dispersed patches of better quality soils in the more remote, upland terrains that characterised Penllyn and Ardudwy, while Thomas adds that nothing can be inferred in terms of landscape division concerning the size of *gwely* and *gafaelion* (2001, 193) (although he adds that piecemeal evidence might be found in 18th- and 19th-century estate maps, if farms mentioned therein can be traced back through 16th century deeds to properties mentioned in 1420). He concludes that, certainly in Penllyn, a *gafael* was not necessarily a subdivision of a *gwely*, but was a family holding used by the lord as a fiscal unit (*ibid,* 195).

Unfortunately the map published by Glanville Jones (1978) depicting 'settlement nuclei in north-west Wales during the late 13th and early 14th centuries' did not include Penllyn. However, Thomas (2001, p191ff) carried out a more precise distibutional analysis of the tenural structure in Penllyn (and other commotes), focusing attention on bond or free status at *gwely* and *gafael* as well as *tref* level. In eastern Penllyn, admittedly mainly outside the study area, free *gafaelion* outnumbered bond ones by a ratio of six to one, and three quarters of the seventeen townships recorded in the 1420 extent were free in tenure.

Of prime significance in the definition of territorial units were natural features such as the courses of rivers and streams and mountain ridges, particularly prominent in Merioneth. This propensity to use particular natural elements as zones of demarcation has implications with regard to the medieval landscape, as remote upland and valley bottoms seem to have been regarded as agriculturally negative areas, while moorland slopes had a vitally important function in supporting livestock at particular times of year (Thomas, *ibid,* 185).

## 7.5 Post-medieval landscapes

### *7.5.1 General*

Following the Act of Union in 1536, Harlech was established as the county town of Merioneth, but the great sessions, which met twice annually, were shared between Harlech and Bala, and the first recorded meeting of the quarter sessions was held at Bala in 1546. At this time Merioneth was still regarded as one of the most lawless parts of the country (Carr, 2001, 704). Its economy was still suffering from the depradations of the Glyndwr rebellion and the Wars of the Roses, and the burgesses regarded the sessions meetings as their only economic lifeline, since such meetings brought in revenue. Later sessions were divided between Dolgellau, Llanfor and Dinas Mawddwy, but for judges travelling from England and for JPs from the eastern part of the county, Bala was evidently more convenient.

Enclosure of common land was a frequent practice from the 16th century onwards (see section below), mainly for sheep grazing (there were frequent protests of 'sheep eating up men') (Thomas, 2001, 207), although there are a few references to earlier enclosures in official documents of the period 1569 to 1591 (J G Jones, 2001). There was a remarkable increase in population throughout Wales after 1550, and by 1670 the population of Merioneth had increased by 85% (Smith, 2001 (b)). Uplands which had been abandoned because of depopulation caused by the Black Death and intermittent warfare were again restocked. Grazing rights on common land which was attached to freeholds in *hendrefi* were important to an economy of graziers, and as early as 1573 in some areas there were complaints of overgrazing of commons by intrusive settlers who had built cottages on the commons and claimed a right to graze the land. Freeholders from a number of counties, including Merioneth, gave evidence to the sheriffs of the four mid-Wales counties at this time that overstocking by strangers, deemed to be Englishmen, affected the number of cattle and sheep they were able to keep and find winter fodder for: it was maintained that this problem had arisen since the Acts of Union. Williams-Jones has put forward the idea that farms in 17th-century north Wales probably encompassed '8 to 20 acres of normal farming land' (Thomas, 1968, 34).

Industrial activity, when it came to Merioneth, was geared to the cloth industry which began to flourish before the end of the 17th century, reaching its halcyon days in the 18th, and this was centred on Bala and Dolgellau. This was based on the raising and movement of large numbers of sheep (see below).

### *7.5.2 Development of the estates*

The growth of landed families in Merioneth during the course of the 16th century was a relatively speedy process, but the shire's social structure militated against the creation of prosperous families with extensive material resources. At the end of the 16th century the majority of farmsteads in Merioneth were still owner-occupied, although a 1592 rental shows that several townships in the county had at least half of the householders as tenants, including Rhiwaedog in Penllyn (Thomas, 1972, 333).

The circumstances surrounding changing settlement in the Tudor period gave the gentry of Merioneth the basis upon which to develop their powers as landowners, exercise control over institutions of government and consolidate their status and leadership in local community life (J G Jones, 2001). For example, Huw Nannau Hen (*d* 1623) was very influential in county affairs, and took full advantage of changes in landowning in the county: he married his 5 daughters into substantial houses including Rhiwedog and Caer Gai). However, it was not until the 18th/19th centuries that their pre-eminent wealth and status were absolute.

It is quite clear from late 16th -century documents (mainly regarding the elusive Forest of Snowdon (Thomas, *ibid,* 337)), that illegal encroachments had been made over the centuries, principally on areas of upland pasture which had once functioned as common grazings for medieval townships, and that monastic granges (including that in Penllyn) represented the greatest prizes, certainly in terms of area. Thomas opines that, in general, largely due to a combination of arranged marriages and 'financial dealings that aimed at consolidating family fortunes', the growth of estates in the later medieval period led to the creation of the modern landscape of Merioneth (Jones, *ibid,* 341).

The Rhiwlas estate has certainly played a major part in shaping the landscape of the area. The Prices of Rhiwlas, descended from Marchweithian, emerged in the 16th-century to achieve a position of some importance in Merioneth. During the period when Cadwaladr Price (who formally adopted the family name) was head of the household, Rhiwlas reached its ascendancy. Educated at Hart Hall, Oxford, he served as Deputy Lieutenant and Sheriff (1592-3) and was member of Parliament in 1584-6, and he was rated highest in the general subsidy in 1598, assessed then at £5 and in 1600 at £10. He and his son prospered from encroachments made into the Forest of Snowdon, especially the Ystrad Marchell possessions in Penllyn, which comprised some 1,400 acres in Llanfor, Llandderfel, Llanycil and Llanuwchlyn. Other lands were added, including holdings in Penllyn and adjacent properties. At this time, it represented perhaps the best example of wide dispersion of property interests in Merioneth (Jones, *ibid,* 338).

During the late 19th century, R J Lloyd Price successfully developed Rhiwlas estate, which then owned almost 16,500ha of land in Merionethshire, as a 'shooting estate', following examples set by Scotland, but positioned closer to England, and thus more affordable. The modern 'coverts' in the southern part of area 05 were developed for pheasant shooting, and the 2nd edition OS map shows a long row of pheasant-rearing cages along the northern side of what is still the main road out to the east. Cottages for several keepers were dotted around the estate (for example, at Tan-y-garth and Bryn-ffynnon), and these sometimes also acted as temporary accommodation for the servants of clients ('big businesses'), who were attending shooting parties on the estate (and who mainly stayed in the main house or at the Goat in Bala). At the same time, a number of small tenements were consolidated (e.g. Ty'n garth) towards the same end. He also opened a short-lived Welsh Whiskey distillery at Fron Goch.

Further north (and outside the study area), the essential Rhiwlas 'home territory' was focused around Cwmtirmynach, former Basingwerk Abbey land (see above) which had been the first and principal acquisition of land in the Tudor period: the landscape remains of rabbit warrens is reflected in place-names such as Eglwys Anne Warren.

However, despite Price's best efforts, the estate was actually only saved in 1887 by a wager laid on the horse Bendigo that won the Kempton Park Jubilee race in that year (the same one in which Price died), and it is entirely fitting that a memorial to the latter in Llanfor churchyard (area 06) includes an inscription which reads: 'As to my latter end I go to seek my Jubilee, I bless the good horse Bendigo, who built this tomb for me' (E Thomas, *pers comm*).

The Atlas Meirionnydd (Bowen, 1972) shows three (post-medieval) estates within the area: Caer Gai (home of the Vaughans, area 15), Glanllyn (with land around Llanuwchllyn, largely areas 14 and 16, latterly owned by the Williams Wynns of Wynnstay) and Rhiwlas (seat of the Prices, and spreading

across areas 5, 7, 9, 10 and 11). In 1850, the estates of Rhiwlas and Glanllyn between them extended to more than 14,000 acres, possibly then the third largest in Meirionnydd. James (1966) lists Merioneth as having a total size of 302,657 acres in 1873, with an overall rental of £183,253, of which 137,698 acres and £80,711 belonged to the 'great landowners' (of which R J Lloyd Price and Sir W Williams Wynn had interests in this landscape area). Lower down the order were the Lloyds of Rhiwedog who, around the same time, increased their territory by 460 acres.

Kay (writing in 1794) reported that 'very few gentlemen reside in the county to look after their own interests, which may be the cause of much inattention. Their estates are run by agents who seldom look after anything but the rents, and thus great losses accrue'.

The land at this time was mostly enclosed, with the exception of the extensive sheep walks, although the enclosures were in general small. Kay extolled the virtue of improving the land by draining, but as few proprietors then lived in the county it was almost totally neglected. However, he does cite the examples of Oakley at Tan y Bwlch embanking and draining delightful vale, and Corbett of Ynysmaengwyn embanking and draining large tracts.

The 19th century was the great age of estate building (Alfrey, 1989), with estate building programmes which had disinctive architectural characteristics as well developing a vision for the countryside as a 'landscape aesthetic'. By this time,estates were conspicuously richer than ever before, and were developing as an expression of the power and influence of wealthy landlords, enlarged through acquisition and consolidation. From the beginning of the 19th century, Snowdonia was 'being discovered' by growing numbers of tourists, and the estates had a major role in fostering tourism, with financial investment in turnpikes, builders of their own roads and hotels (Alfrey, 1989). Their activities were being carried out under the eye of a discriminating public. Landowners were encouraging tourism, but also shaping its object: improved agriculture, plantations, enclosures, mansions and their offices, even industry, were every bit as interesting and fascinating to visitors as the mountains themselves.

However, cottage building did not appear to be a lucrative proposition for most estates: Alfrey (*ibid*) quotes the example of Mr Owen Slaney Wynne (Sir W Williams Wynn's agent in Merioneth) who thought that 'you cannot build a decent cottage of any kind under £140'. According to him, cottages were expensive to build 'and you get nothing for it'.

In 1859, there was a contested election in Merioneth, a county which, despite its being overwhelmingly Nonconformist, had become notorious for its reluctance to move against the no-less overpowering presence of landlordism. Now, a lawyer called David Williams was put up against W E E Wynne, the celebrated antiquarian from the mighty Peniarth estate. Williams stood for Nonconformist relief and he got within thirty-eight votes of the Tory. Following this, Price at Rhiwlas and other estate landlords evicted a dozen or so tenants and raised the rents of others, because they had refused to vote in the election as they had been instructed. The shock was considerable, as never before had landlords felt the need to carry their high-handedness that far, and a campaign was started across Wales. The Merioneth evictions became one of the most potent images in a new national mythology of particularly Nonconformist character and the landlords, for the first time, began to feel the ground shift under their feet.

The focus of a subsequent measured and cautious shift into political disaffection was Bala, with its increasing Methodist influence, and a successful campaign to restore the town's incorporated borough status, which expanded into a careful reform campaign, made progress among the tenants and some of the lesser gentry. The response from the landlords was crushing, and the 'reformers' got no further in the election of 1865. However, two years later came the Reform Act which tripled the electorate, and many quarrymen in particular now had the vote.

The 'peasants' revolt' in Merioneth had been partially won, but more evictions followed all over rural Wales. The new Welsh MPs got a Ballot Act, but it took another Reform Act, that of 1884 which turned Britain into a democracy, before, in 1886, Merioneth found its true man. Its voters elected Thomas Edward Ellis, the son of a tenant farmer on the Rhiwlas estate (and educated at Aberystwyth and Oxford) who was briefly to become the shining hope of a new Welsh radicalism before his early death (Williams, 1985).

The *Return of owners of land, 1873* (James, 1966) recorded the landlords in Wales whose lands exceeded 3,000 acres, and had rentals of at least £3,000 per annum. In this part of Merioneth, the two 'great landowners' were R J Lloyd Price of Rhiwlas (who owned an estimated acreage of 18,403 with a rental value of £9,762), and Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Bt., of Wynnstay, Denbs. (with an estimated 87,919 acres with a rental value of £43,274).

### 7.6 Modern landscapes

The project area currently lies within the Unitary Authority of Gwynedd, part of which is, in effect, administered by the Snowdonia National Park Authority.

A regional survey of agriculture in Wales conducted in the early 1940s (Ashby and Evans, 1944) listed a number of interesting statistics, including the facts that the average size of holdings in Merioneth as a whole was 46.3 acres; over 56% of the land was rough grazing (the second highest total for any county in Wales); and that 29% of the land was under cultivation (but that only 8.8% of cultivated land was used for growing crops). The uplands of Merioneth, although this project area falls mainly outside that category, had the lowest percentage of cultivated land and the highest proportion of sheep in Wales. Also, north-west Wales in general was the area where large landowners were most prevalent but where there was a significant number of smaller holdings.

Meirionnydd has always been a typical highland agricultural county, and this part of it is no exception, although the study area stops short of including any 'proper' upland territory (being defined along the north-west and south-east reaches of Llyn Tegid by the lower extent of 'Access land'). Typically, farming settlement and enclosed fields, comprising ridges of relatively fertile pasture, cover the area's lower slopes and foothills, below the open (and almost barren) mountain ridges and hill tops. (It is this topography which has also dictated major transport routes (see section 8.4 below)). Only rough grazing takes place on the higher slopes; for example, Gwastadros Common to the north of the project area, and the equivalent land on the opposite side of the lake, whose extents remain as shown on the 1840s' tithe maps. The area, therefore, contains no recorded archaeological evidence for *hafodtai* or transhumance.

A particularly significant characteristic of the southern parts of this landscape (areas 11 and 13 in particular) is the detached field barn, or *beudy*, which appear in association with later post-medieval upland farms. Typically, they are built end-on to the hill slope, and the lower part, accessed by a doorway at the lower end, was used to over-winter cattle, while hay and fodder was stored on an upper level accessed from the opposite gable end. Although these are yet to be studied or closely dated they would appear to be late 18$^{th}$ or early 19$^{th}$ century in date (at the earliest), and although some remain in use many of them are now in a ruinous condition. This use of outfield barns is particularly characteristic of the Meirionydd area in general, and contrasts with many similar upland areas in Caernarfonshire.

The project area has very few distinctive, 'traditional', stone-built field walls, there being no obvious supplies of the raw material (except in the eastern extent of area 11), and most of the boundaries are of the tree/hedge-bank form (but not *cloddiau* in the Llŷn tradition), mainly very denuded and largely supplemented by modern post-and-wire fences. They are all 'later' boundaries in appearance, with the evidence of the tithe maps perhaps confirming that they were built in the late 18$^{th}$ or early 19$^{th}$

centuries: there is no evidence for the distinctive patterns of quillets within the areas around the known medieval townships.

Present boundaries are characteristically straight in plan, often paying little or no heed to their landscape setting: many run directly up and down steep hill slopes, and there are no examples of the 'wandering wall' type of boundary which are indicative of earlier (prehistoric) settlement in areas to the north (*e.g.* Ardudwy), although there are hints of earlier patterns around the farms in area 13. Fieldwork has shown that the present agricultural regime consists entirely of pasture fields (mostly cattle, with some horses and sheep), and no arable was noted (although the cropmarks at Llanfor (area 07) on the Dee floodplain suggest that this area is ploughed from time to time, possibly for re-sowing as pasture). However, the 1844 tithe map for Llangywer shows that more fields existed then than today in areas 11, 12 and 13, particularly on the lower slopes where they have, perhaps, been destroyed by the building of the later railway (area 17).

# 8 Thematic landscapes

## 8.1 Land use

### *8.1.1 Pastoral and arable*

There are abundant references in the Extent of Merioneth of 1284 to livestock husbandry and cultivation, which include mention of particular crops and animal produce, and which clearly indicate that land and its exploitation constituted the mainstay of contemporary life. The poorest commote was Penllyn, where assessed rents amounted to only £17 12s 7d (the most productive,Taly-y-bont, was worth over £77). A significant note was made of the existence of sixteen carucates of land (*c.*1920 acres), half of which were at that time waste. The extensive manor of Bala had five carucates of arable land and two meadows, along with a mill and fisheries in Llyn Tegid, which yielded £4 19s 6d, although much of the land was still 'wasted' and tenants dead following the wars of 1282-3, which must have necessitated some adaptation in agrarian practices.

The rents and services of the bond communities of the commote in relation to the free groups, however, were amongst the best in the county. The residents, who were described as tenants of the Crown, were either Welshmen (described as 'cattle breeders') or foreigners (Englishmen and Irishmen who were recorded as being 'agricultural workers'.

There is no real evidence by 1292-3 of non-agricultural occupations in Penllyn (Williams-Jones, 1976), although 178 individuals (6.7%) are identified by 37 different occupational suffixes implying part-time craftsmen. Most were weavers, cobblers, smiths and carpenters.

A later (possibly 1318 - Williams-Jones, 1976, cxiv) 'local' extent of western Penllyn (which encroaches on to the study area) seems to demonstrate that the main source of wealth in the area was cattle, and at this time they were clearly the mainstay of the national, as well as the local family, economy. Indeed, recent research has refined the traditional view of the medieval economy of north Wales as being one which was dominated by pastoralism in a largely free social context (Thomas, 1968).

It is difficult to to calculate the relative proportion of revenue derived from cultivation against livestock, largely because of the disparate way in which renders and profits have been set out for the different commotes. However, it is clear (Thomas, *ibid,* 204) that the principal function of Penllyn was as an area of cattle-rearing and a source of livestock trading with the market towns of the borders: the origins of the drovers' routes of more recent centuries undoubtedly lie here. Thomas claims (2001, 203) that the real key to Penllyn's economic geography lay in the capacity of its three seigniorial vaccaries in Is Moloch to support 200 cattle, and one in Uwch Meloch to sustain 50 cows, a pastoral capacity paralleled in the proportion of payments from freemen made up from dairy produce: Is Meloch rendered 66 bushels of flour worth 33 shillings, but 70 measures of butter worth £1 3s 4d, implying greater investment in the pastoral sector.

Cultivation in Penllyn was meagre even in periods of settled political conditions: oats were the only cereal grown and only two royal mills were needed to deal with cereal production, although several townships had their own mills. The importance of oats came from its role as livestock fodder in what was essentially a pastoralist region, and also from its relatively greater tolerance of the low temperatures and acidic soil typical of Penllyn. Thomas argues (1975) that an average stake of *c.* 3-8 acres of arable land might yield up to four bushels of oats per acre.

Thomas notes that very extensive lands in Merioneth were not strictly contained within the township framework, largely belonging to Cistercian monasteries. The latters' activities in Merioneth were largely devoted to the exploitation of upland pastures such as Gwernhefin, and there are numerous

examples of their occupying only the most exposed moorlands of higher tributary valleys which extended into the rough grazings, while the *gwely* nuclei and *gafaelion* of the bond and free men tended to be located in comparatively sheltered positions with a potential for clearance for cultivation (2001, 205). Sheep from Cistercian pastures must have supplied the early fulling mills and local weavers of Merioneth, partly helping to integrate the regional economy with a wider world (Parkinson, 1981-4, 420-56), while specialist horse-breeding appears to have been carried out in Penllyn by the monks of Basingwerk (Williams, 2001).

Cultivation obviously did not occupy much of the area of Penllyn, and the whole atmosphere of the uplands was, as it is today, very different from the lowlands, as suitable arable land was more difficult to find, more difficult to clear of boulders and drain, climatically more rigorous and locationally more remote, and under such conditions it was the *cytir*, or common grazing, rather than the open field strips of the *rhandir* (shareland), that sustained the economy and shaped the landscape. If there were boundaries, they would have consisted of low walls and ditches or mere lines of stones, rather than neat fences or the unploughed baulk which represented the limits of the gardens and *erwyau* of the *maerdef* (Thomas, 2001).

The ratio of cattle to sheep in medieval Wales has been the subject of debate for some time (*e.g.* Thomas, 1968; Emery, 1973-6), with Emery suggesting for the 16th century a ratio (sheep to cattle) of c.2.5:1, with Hughes et al (1973) suggesting this predominance might extend back, on monastic lands, to the end of the 13th century, although this does not appear to correspond with the Lay Subsidy Roll, where cattle and oxen combined exceed the numbers of sheep (Thomas, 2001, 207).

### *8.1.2 Woodland*

Thomas (2001, 199) details the importance of woodland to the economy of the time, and its continued importance to Edward I following the Conquest. Ministers' accounts from the late 13th-early 14th centuries show that the office of *woodward,* and the income derived from it, assumed greater importance in upland commotes such as Penllyn than those which were more densely populated. Substantial removal of woodland, Thomas claims, seems to have begun some time around the 12th century.

The predominantly woodland context of primary settlement at this time may be inferred from several sources. Texts of the Welsh laws of the 'Gwynedd tradition', dating from the 13th century but probably reflecting an earlier tradition, stress the value of individual tree species such as oak, hazel, alder and willow , and also mention woodland animals such as the stag and wild boar in the context of hunting and trapping (Evans, 1973).

During the Tudor period, court records and estate documents contain details of clearances of even oak woods on an extensive scale, and stands of birch and alder acted as particularly attractive targets for agricultural colonisation, and farm names of medieval or 16th -century origin also indicate how widespraed and varied was the woodland cover in localities that are today almost devoid of trees (Thomas, 2001, 198).

Sir John Wynn of Gwydir (Sir John Wynn, History of the Gwydir family and memoirs, ed J Gwynfor Jones, Llanddysul, 1990) writing in the late 16th -century remarks that 'all the whole country then was but a forest, rough and spacious as it is still, but then waste of inhabitants and all overgrown with woods'. Fifteen years of Glyndwr's wars brought desolation and destruction but in 'those' days all Merionethshire was wooded, having few more inhabitants than in 'his day'.

### *8.1.3 Enclosure and later medieval landscapes*

Farmsteads with the name *hendref* (Davies, 1973; GAT DRS survey of Meirionnydd) have long been regarded as focal points in Welsh settlement studies, which presuppose a basically sedentary life, in particular a wide scatter of *hendre* and *bod* place names across Merioneth in general, generally below the 250m contour, from which subsequent expansion possibly proceeded. However, none have survived in the study area, just as there is no evidence of deserted rural settlement sites with which they have generally been connected.

Merioneth then, as now, was an upland environment where ecological considerations precluded the possibility of large-scale arable farming and where medieval sources reveal overwhelmingly free communities (Jones Pierce, 1972, 339-51), although there can be no simple social and agrarian dichotomy between lowland and upland.

Thomas (1967) records the locations of over 400 encroachments on common and wasteland (owned by the Crown but including monastic property which the Crown had confiscated at the time of the Dissolution) in Meirionnydd in the late 16th century, recorded in an inventory dawn up in 1592. He points out that the areal distribution of the encroachments reveals a heavy concentration in the rugged uplands of Penllyn (as well as Ardudwy). Here lay the greater number of the more extensive parcels, together with a liberal scattering of small plots reclaimed from barren patches in already long-settled lowland margins and valleys which penetrate the moorland.

Most of this involved the embryonic gentry families. The Prices of Rhiwlas had certainly benefited from monastic property in Penllyn and from the abbey of Basingwerk, so that their landed interest was becoming dispersed over a wide area; while the Lloyds of Rhiwaedog obtained thirty tenements to form a compact estate, as well as ten parcels of land amounting to 460 acres (Carr, 2001, 283). Merioneth was in a state of turmoil in the last three decades of the 16th century, and the freeholders of Ystumanner, Tal-y-bont and Penllyn petitioned the Lord High Treasurer in 1576 (Thomas, 2001, 284) complaining abut the activities of one Robert Lloyd who was pretending to be the deputy to the surveyor of north Wales and commanding bailiffs to distrain on their possessions (although it is likely that these activities were initiated from the Exchequer in Caernarfon).

The predominant post-enclosure use of encroachments was for cattle and sheep pasture, probably in response to the increasing demands for beef and wool marketed through Bala (as well as Dolgellau - see section 8.3) and then the towns of the Welsh border. The value of land increased from 6d to 3s, or 5s per acre if it was enclosed and drained.

According to Thomas (1973 and 2001) many of the medieval field patterns (such as they were) were eradicated by 18th and 19th century transformations of the rural fabric, and only historical cartography (particularly estate surveys and tithe maps) have the potential to provide fascinating glimpses of former patterns, although this is lacking from studied maps of the Penllyn area.

The upper borders of permanently exploited land were generally marked naturally, and eventually by the man-made linear boundary of the 'mountain wall', but culturally they were also familiar as the *friddoedd*, a band of unenclosed, comparatively sheltered and well-drained pastures, which constituted the margin of fixed proprietorship during the 16th -century, after the encroachments on to the former *cytir* had commenced. Varying in width according to local conditions, this zone acted as a late medieval pioneer fringe for settlement, and contained dispersed sites for permanent homesteads on pockets of cultivable soil that stood apart from the historically established agricultural core. It was from this same crenellated ribbon that, towards the later medieval period, fragments of former princes' vaccaries and monastic granges were passed into private hands by Crown leases (2001, 212).

### *8.1.4 State of agriculture in Merioneth - contemporary views*

Leland, in his tour through Merioneth at about the time of the Act of Union, noted that in Penllyn there was little corn but plenty of pasture (Leland, Itinerary, 77-8). Camden simply stated that the inhabitants of the county applied themselves wholly to the breeding of cattle (Camden, 1695) and more recent writers (*e.g.* Emery, 1967) have confirmed the emphasis on stock-raising in both Penllyn and over much of the other commotes (J G Jones, 2001).

Kay's 1794 *General view of the agriculture of North Wales* provides a useful account of the then contemporary state of the agriculture of Merioneth, although it is much shorter than his accounts of some of the other counties and as a result is very general. However, several references to Penllyn give an interesting insight to the area at that time.

Merioneth he described as being the roughest and most mountainous of all Welsh counties, whilst exhibiting a much more pleasant appearance than Caernarfonshire, 'its being better embellished by woods'. He also drew attention to a great variety of plains and beautiful valleys, and several large lakes. The staple agicultural 'product' was sheep, although black cattle were also reared in great numbers. Very little corn was cultivated and scarcely any green crops: oats were the principal grain grown, with a little barley and still less wheat. Turnips and potatoes were 'less cultivated than they ought to be' while summer fallow was seldom practised. Clover was sometimes sown and did well where the land had been properly prepared. 'Some of the vales' produced oats, and a little barley (Kay, 1794, 7).

The land was mostly enclosed, with the exception of sheep walks, while the enclosures were generally small and principally laid down to pasture: lime was the chief manure used, with little dung due to the lack of housing for cattle. There were few hedges, dry-stone walls being the most common 'fence' type, 'some 6ft high with coping stones which still did not prevent sheep getting over' (*ibid*). Kay extolled the virtue of improving the land by draining, but as few proprietors then lived in the county it was almost totally neglected. However, he does cite the examples of Oakley at Tan y Bwlch embanking and draining delightful vale, and Corbett of Ynysmaengwyn embanking and draining large tracts. The county was occupied by small farmers, £100 being an unusually high rent, which normally didn't get above an average of £30.

While better-wooded than Caernarfonshire at the time, in many places Merioneth was very bare of trees, oak being the principal type grown, and the woods were frequently little attended-to, not only with regard to fences through which the cattle passed and destroyed plantations, but also with regard to pruning and thinning which were not often carried out. Goats were strictly not allowed, but apparently they existed and did get in and browse plantations (*ibid*. p 9).

The breed of sheep in Merioneth was considered the most pure of any in north Wales, being domesticated and very hardy with no other attempt having been made to improve it. They were much longer-bodied than the common breed, and the wool was white and was all manufactured into webbs and flannels in the county. The practice of clipping twice a year was confined to the neighbourhood of Cadair Idris and from there down to Tywyn, where they were clipped in June and at Michaelmas, with the summer fleece being the largest. The wool was left to keep the sheep warm in the winter. The sheep were always kept upon the mountains, except for when the ewes were brought down in the lambing season, with a single lamb being most common: they were always fed in the valley for the first season as they were considered not hardy enough.

The rearing of pigs was a very profitable business, and consequently a great many were bred. Goats were not common, while both horses and oxen were employed for ploughing, harrowing and carting, although they were 'light and weakly and very badly managed'. However, the pure or native breed of black cattle were the most contemptible of any in Wales, being small and very ill-shaped (*ibid*).

The practice of paring and burning was still common, although in many places the bad effects of it were easily discerned. Apparently, it was frequently done where the soil was really too thin to allow it, and so the land produced almost nothing. Many of the landords, according to Kay, prohibited their tenants from pursuing this activity. The farm houses, he considered, were in general very bad, and almost without 'any kind of offices, nor do the farmers in general have leases'.

### *8.1.5 The 19th century*

The Merioneth Agricultural Society was founded in 1801 as the Napoleonic Wars' demand for increased productivity led to a reassessment of agricultural resources, particularly of the common lands, many of which had been eaten away over several centuries by private Acts of Parliament and illegal encroachments (Thomas, 1967). An Act permitting enclosure of the commons and wasteland was passed in October 1810.

In 1813, the Cambrian Traveller's Guide described the grassland in the Bala area as being let at ¾ guineas an acre, at a time when the average rent for arable land was less than a guinea in 'the vales' and around £1 5s on the hills. Sheep were valued at 4d a head. It stated, perhaps rather sweepingly, that 'agriculture is little attended to here', although the view south-westwards from the Bala end of Llyn Tegid was described as 'a line, along the northern side, of rich cornfields and verdant meadows'.

There are four tithe maps which cover the area: Llanuwchllyn (1849, Davies, 1999, no. 702, 2nd class), Llanycil (1842, Davies, 1999, no. 703), Llangywer (1844, Davies, 1999, no. 700) and Llanfor (1838, Davies, 1999, no. 696). These provide the earliest comprehensive map evidence for the rural parts of the project area, although unfortunately none tells us much about the contemporary agricultural landscape, as they all simply record the extent of properties without going into details of field patterns, uses or names.

The south-west part of the study area is covered by the map for Llanuwchllyn, when much of the parish was owned by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Bart., of Denbighshire, who had a shooting lodge built at Glanllyn (area 14). It is scant on detail, showing an irregular field pattern, similar to that in existence today. The tithe map for Llangywer covers the southern and eastern parts of the area (principally areas 11, 12 and 13). It shows a scattered pattern of large farms, most of which are still there today, set in a landscape of smallish, irregular fields, many of which have since been amalgamated into today's pasture landscape. Several cowhouses attest to the agricultural regime of the area at the time. Indeed, anything else would have been impractical given the angle of the hillslope. Llanycil tithe map covers the area north of the lake, and includes Bala itself (area 02), as well as character areas 15, 16 and 18. It is quite detailed (more so than the other three), and shows amongst other characteristics a more intricate pattern of small fields around Llanycil church (and the golf course – area 18) than survives today, while the field pattern to the south-west is largely unchanged.

Finally, the Llanfor tithe map covers the northern part of the area (principally areas 5 - 10), and demonstrates amongst other things the fact that the river has changed course since then (see area 10). Again, the field pattern depicted implies that little change has taken place since: the fields are smaller and more irregular on the hill slopes (area 9) than in the valley bottom. It also shows a series of small, irregular fields around the farms of Garth-lwyd and Y Garnedd towards the eastern edge of the area, much as they are now.

## 8.2 Settlement

### *8.2.1 Settlement patterns - nucleated*

Penllyn has never been an area of dense urban settlement, and this was true of the medieval period, although it did contain concentrated, permanent and often privileged centres in which most of the population were engaged in non-agricultural activities.

The term townships (used for taxpaying purposes) does not imply the existence of a nucleated settlement pattern, although there is no doubt that Merioneth encompassed a range of settlement forms. Whilst the vast majority were undoubtedly scattered throughout the countryside in single homesteads (DRS report), small hamlets and clusters also existed, particularly where there were formative influences such as royal demesnes (*maerdrefi*), mills, markets and fairs, defensive strong points and churches. All acted as physical *foci* for at least periodic meetings of people drawn in from a wider hinterland.

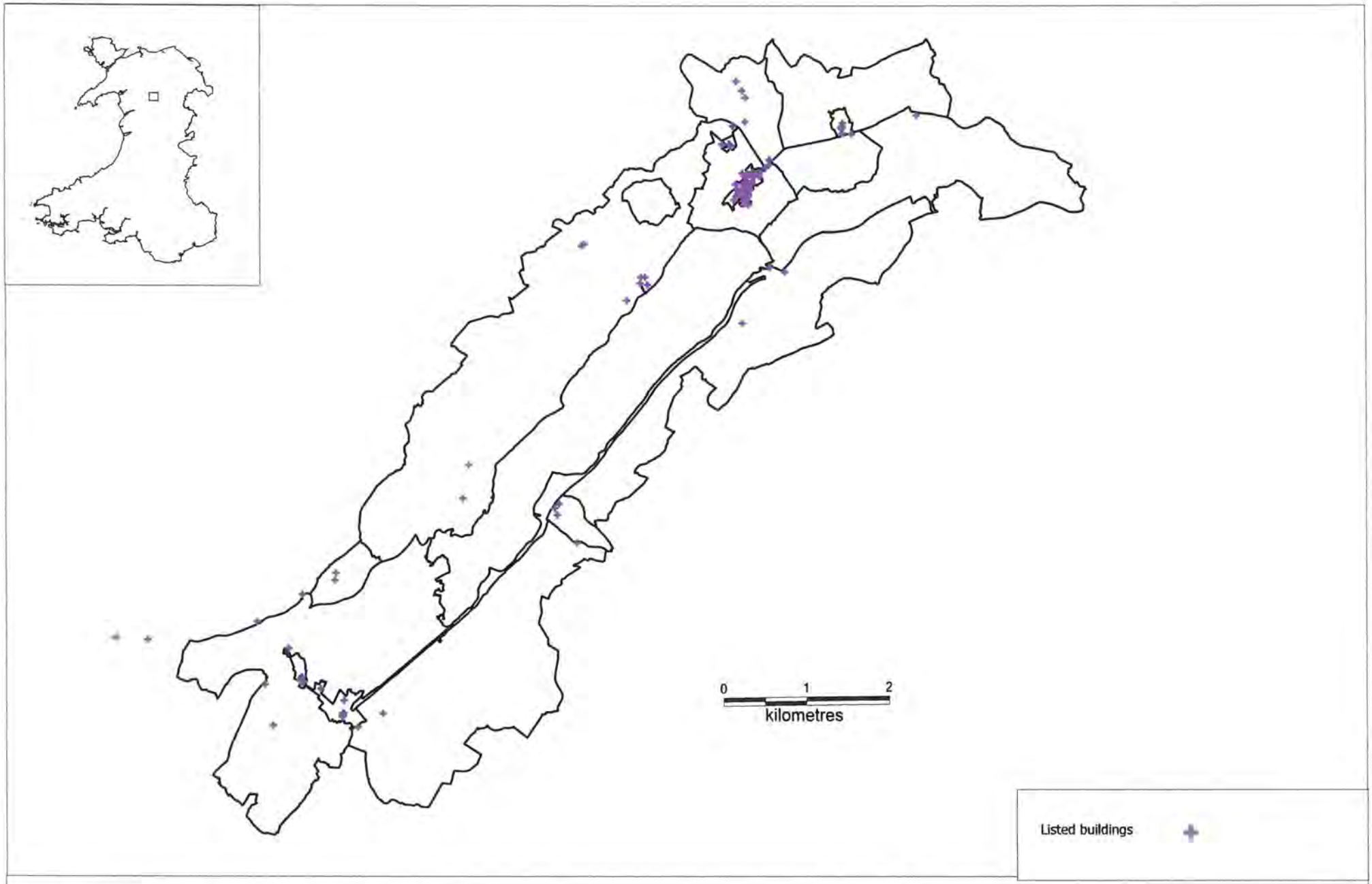
As already mentioned, four medieval settlements are known to have existed within the project area. All developed from a church site (Davidson, 2001) which is thought to have an early foundation, and Llanuwchllyn (area 08), Llangower (area 12), Llanfor (area 06) and (to a lesser extent) Llanycil (area 16) still retain their status as the four main settlement *foci* after Bala town (areas 02-04), although they survive today in very different forms.

Llanfor was the most significant medieval settlement in the locality, holding the local markets and fairs up until the fourteenth century when its fair and market were removed to the 'new town of Bala' (the latter was not mentioned in the subsidy roll of 1292-3) in 1310-11. The reasons for this are unclear, as Llanfor had long been the site of commercial activity, an ecclesiastical settlement of some antiquity and the site of a substantial Welsh stronghold. However, its high status at that time is not evident in the character, form or layout of the modern village. Apart from a small, modern housing estate attached to the west side of the village, the (informal) layout remains unchanged from that of the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map (1888). The buildings are not positioned to follow any particular line or street frontage and the village has a haphazard layout reflecting its organic development, based around the church.

Most notably, Bala (area 02) was partly founded for 'the greater security of the parts of Penllyn and to reform the marauding habits of the native population' (Smith, J B, 2001 (b), 225). The Bala charter was granted by Edward II in 1324, and it reveals that the town had been established earlier (by Roger Mortimer in 1310-11) 'for the king's benefit, for the security of those parts and to restrain the malice of evildoers and robbers in the locality', and that it was to be a free borough (*ibid,* 230). It was was certainly referred to prior to this in 1191, and Llywelyn Fawr conquered 'the castle of Bala' (possibly a Norman motte) in 1202, while buildings at Bala were mentioned by royal surveyors in 1284. A royal mill was located at Bala to which the bond tenants of the townships of Llanycil, Cyffty and Bedwarian owed suit (Lewis, 1912, 55-6, Jenkins, 1941-6, 167).

By the mid-fourteenth century Bala had become the main settlement in the locality, its fine transport links on the main road to Shrewsbury making it a hub in the region. It remains the administrative and commercial centre for the surrounding communities as well as being the most populated settlement.

Llanuwchllyn has the appearance of a mid-nineteenth century workers' settlement, dominated by terraced rows. The majority of the housing is located on the main street that runs north-south through the centre of the village and reflects planned development during that period. The surrounding village landscape consists of large detached dwellings dating to the later 19th - and 20th - centuries and includes some significant properties. Little of the sub-medieval character evident on the




**Historic Landscape Characterisation - G1904 Bala**

**Map 4 - Distribution of listed buildings within character areas**

tithe map remains in the village today: for example, the small estates with attached plantations are no longer evident.

Llanycil and Llangower consist of little more than their respective churches and rectories, although Llanycil school house still exists and Llangower has now expanded to encompass a few brick-built, modern, semi-detached houses of incongruous character. The core buildings of both villages date to the nineteenth century and are of significant historic character, some of them being listed or recorded by RCAHMW. These settlements must have served the educational and spiritual needs of the residents in the dispersed properties that spread across the hillsides.

### *8.2.2 Settlement patterns - scattered*

Personal name evidence confirms the expected overwhelmingly Welsh nature of the Merioneth population at the end of the 13th century, with all rural townships in the subsidy roll of 1292 -3 obviously occupied by Welsh people (Williams-Jones, 1976). Although the charter granted to Bala in 1324 also specified 'our English men and burgesses' (Lewis, 1912, 283), there is no evidence of English settlement in the Merioneth countryside until the early 15th century.

The general pattern of settlements and agriculturally-occupied land was probably neither stagnant nor regularly increasing during the centuries following the Conquest (Thomas, 2001, 178), although it might be fair to say that settlement expanded out from original centres onto surrounding commons (probably less productive), probably contracting in less propitious times. Thus not all the townships listed in the 1292-3 subsidy roll have survived in modern landscape as reconisable entities (see above), or possibly even into the 15th century.

Merioneth was economically one of the poorest Welsh counties but, while aspects of its ecclesiastical architecure hint at relative poverty (*e.g.* lack of early towers), its houses surviving from the 15th to 17th centuries far surpass those of richer agricultural counties further south, and particularly notable are the clusters of houses around, for example, Bala (Smith, P, 2001).

The tithe maps (see above) show the dominant settlement pattern of the project area by the first half of the nineteenth century to be that of scattered independent estates, set within extensive grounds. This loosely dispersed settlement pattern can still be seen today with listed and undesignated 18th and 19th century villas and country houses surviving across the hillsides overlooking Llyn Tegid.

The influence of the large landed estates is clear. The creation of the vernacular as picturesque owes much to the estates which were its custodians during the 19th - century (Alfrey, 1998). Glanllyn, at the west end of the lake, was built by the Wynnstay estate and there are several other buildings in the area which carry its hallmark. Gwernhefin, which was the agent's house, was built by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn and includes an extensive quadrangular agricultural complex to serve the estate. The impact of the Rhiwlas estate (area 05), in the east of the study area, can be seen across the Dee valley on both the northern and southern slopes (areas 10 and 11 in particular). This extensive landscaping includes a home farm with spectacular stables, estate cottages, managed woodlands and planned agricultural holdings on the lowland floodplain, as well as a series of revetment walls acting as a ha-ha some 2km south-east of the estate. Several of the scattered estates further east also have associated working farms and some still maintain sizeable plantations.

Along the banks of the River Dee and further west, flanking either side of the lake, the large 18th and 19th century dwellings reflect the gentrification of the locality during this period. As part of the picturesque movement popular at this time an appreciation of the aesthetic, both natural and man-made, led to the development of many of these scenic locations. 'The picturesque movement inspired a vision of and for the landscape seen at its clearest in the landscapes most often scrutinised by tourists. In this visualised, idealised landscape, architecture had an important role to play. Buildings

were the stuff of the picturesque (as opposed to the sublime)..... Irregularity and variety were axiomatic' (Alfrey, 1998, 213).

Lavish country residences in landscaped gardens around the northern end of the lake make optimum use of the spectacular views across the lake. Richard Colt Hoare's villa at Fach-ddeiliog (area 11) was probably the first of these and was used throughout the first decade of the nineteenth century as a fishing lodge, or gentleman's retreat. Conceived as a bungalow-style one-storey structure, it was thatched and the whole front canopied under wooden poles. It was a highly unusual style, designed along a single-storey, linear range in order to maximise the views across the water from every room. The garden is depicted on the second edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of Merionethshire XXII, sheet 7 (1901) as having a flagstaff, boathouse, parkland, woodland and reservoir. Opposite, Bryn Tegid was built in 1849 by a former Indian army officer as a Victorian gentleman's residence to serve a similar purpose. Both are now popular tourist hotels, still faithfully serving their original functions.

Traditional rural farms reflect the agricultural socio-economic environment that preceded the proliferation of gentry housing in the area. Many of the lowland estate farms have developed into large, modern working farms (area 14), whilst the majority of the smaller, upland farmsteads have preserved their pastoral character.

### *8.2.3 Architectural character*

*Building materials*

An eclectic mixture of materials and building styles helps to define the distinct character of the Bala landscape. Local stone is the dominant building material and is utilised in a variety of ways. Everything from undressed field boulders to dressed rubble is used, sometimes, but by no means always, lime-washed. Stone is also used in conjunction with other materials especially within the more built-up areas.

In Bala and Llanuwchllyn in particular, brick is used as a dressing material, in windowsills, lintels, around doorways and on chimney pots. This is particularly common in the planned terrace rows of the mid-late 19$^{th}$ century, and can be seen as a reflection of an increase in industry in the locality. The arrival of the railway facilitated an influx of material from, in particular, the Ruabon brickworks and within Bala town several buildings embrace the material whole-heartedly: the HSBC building is constructed almost entirely from glazed red brick, and is particularly striking.

Facades and cladding can be found in Bala, though neither is commonplace. Render is also to be seen in much of the polite architecture from the earlier 19$^{th}$ century onwards. There is some evidence for an earlier timber tradition in some of the more rural areas (11 and 13). Nant y meirch cottage, adjacent to Plas Moel y Garnedd, has *cruck* trusses inside, as does Ty Cerrig on the southeast side of the lake.

A tradition of oxide-red, corrugated tin sheds seems to exist on a small number of the farms in the vicinity of Caer Gai (areas 15 and 16). They are of both ridged and curved roof construction and appear to be distinct to this locality.

*Building functions / types*

The building types within Bala are varied, and the themes of use seen here are not necessarily represented elsewhere within the more rural contexts of the wider landscape. Bala is home to the usual urban buildings associated with the essential infrastructure of a town, such as banks, shops and the town hall. It also contains evidence of the former industries which supported the local economy (see section 6.9) and has a great number of schools, inns and religious institutions (6.13.1). Outside the great colleges of Bala (area 03), the only other schools within the study area are found at

Llanuwchllyn and Llanycil, the latter having been made redundant shortly after its foundation in the mid-nineteenth century.

Within the wider rural landscape of Bala, farms are undoubtedly the most frequently-occurring building type, and the associated outbuildings reflect the strongly pastoral theme, with haybarns being common. The small upland-type farms are often linear in arrangement, for example at Pant-y-ceubren, Llanuwchllyn (area 13). Rhyd-fudr, however, which is a good example of an upland farm, has a detached farmhouse. The farm buildings also include a good example of an early, boulder-built cow house. Lowland farm types, such as those in Llanfor village (area 06), are generally larger with detached buildings in a yard. Estate farms are characterised by tighter planning and a formal layout (good examples are Glanllyn Farm and Gwernhefin, which has a quadrangular agricultural range).

*Building chronologies*

A significant building horizon from the 16th century is marked by the construction of some important homes: Caer Gai (area 15), the former seat of the Vaughan family, one of the principal families of the county during the seventeenth century, is one such property.

A steady process of building continued across Bala throughout the post-medieval period. Many smaller farms survive from the 18th – 19th centuries, and at this time the development of the larger country estates and the proliferation of gentry villas were the main contribution to the built environment. In 1813, the Cambrian Travellers' guide described the houses in the area as 'generally very low'.

Of the earlier housing stock, the most prominent examples are all of gentry status with only smaller farms surviving from the 18th century. The 19th and 20th centuries, however, represent a much broader social profile. This period of economic growth saw major building activity, most notably in the colleges and chapels of Bala, but also in the numerous terraces of workers' housing that form the centre of Llanuwchllyn.

The 20th century brought further development, with expansion beyond the historic core of Bala town (areas 02 - 04). The area around Bodiwan and the Methodist College to the north of Bala was the first to be developed during the early 20th century, a cluster of grand townhouses taking advantage of the fine views. Apart from a small, inter-war council estate that was developed to the south of the town (area 04), almost all later development has occurred to the north. A secondary school constructed in the 1960s, playing fields and several modern housing estates have since been developed on the fields adjacent to Ffrydan Road and those further west.

The 1951 Festival of Britain to celebrate the centenary of the Great Exhibition was an attempt to give Britons a feeling of recovery and progress and to promote better-quality design in the rebuilding of British towns and cities following the war. The festival culminated in many Land Improvement Schemes across the country, where good architectural practice was paramount. It could go some way to explaining the interesting 1950s terrace at Lon (area 16) designed by Sidney Colwyn Foulkes.

During the late 20th century a series of conversions and new-build homes have also sprung up on the outskirts of Llanfor (area 06) and Llanuwchllyn (area 08).

## 8.3 Local industries

The Bala area has little in the way of a traditional, heavy industrial archaeological heritage, and there has been very little industrial activity in the past to leave a mark on the present landscape. In Meirionnydd in general, the major 'industries' were directly or indirectly related to agriculture, as

exmplified, for example, in the distribution of water mills in the county (corn mills, woollen mills), mostly situated at lower altitudes near to settlements in the central areas (Parkinson, 1984).

Probably the most significant local industry here , in both landscape and cultural terms, was the woollen industry. By 1780, the Meirionnydd woollen trade was flourishing and most of the finished products went to Shrewsbury. Following that, a direct export trade to English ports grew, but by 1793 and the outbreak of war, goods were being sent directly to Shrewsbury again, although there was also a weekly market in Bala for locally-made small, woollen articles such as stockings, wigs and gloves which were a by-product of the main trade and which brought in much-needed cash.

Kay, writing in 1794, commented on the type of sheep bred in the area (see section 7.4 above), and Arthur Aikin (1797), who toured north Wales in 1796, wrote a serious and well-observed account of the Welsh woollen trade at the time, although he claims he had difficulty getting at the facts, both because of its disorganised state (which he compared unfavourably with his native Yorkshire) and also because of the 'shyness and jealousy of those concerned in the trade'.

The knitting and woollen industry gradually developed throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, and the well-known 18th century traveller Pennant remarked that the production of garments so dominated the town that knitters of both sexes were often to be seen sprawled all over the castle mound, working to get their wares ready for market. In and around Bala, women and children could be seen walking along the roads and knitting in summer, while in the winter evenings they held knitting meetings where they knitted furiously at gloves and woollen wigs to the accompaniment of harp music and old songs.

Bala was so noted for its vast trade in woollen stockings, gloves and caps called 'Welsh Wigs' (then made from the hair of wild goats) that by 1830 32,000 dozen pairs of stockings, 10,000 dozen pairs of socks and 5,500 dozen pairs of gloves were being made annually. The fame of the stockings spread far and wide, even to the English court, and when George III could stand his rheumatic legs no longer, he sent to Mr Davies, a draper of Bala, for special black woollen stockings. They were knitted by the daughter of a Trawsfynydd vicar, and duly despatched (Harris, 1980). However, by the 1830s, the sale of stockings had dwindled from an estimated maximum of 200,000 pairs annually to just 42,000, as the market was flooded by machine-made articles from the Midlands, and by 1921 only 11 women in the whole of north Wales made their living by hand-knitting (Snowdonia National Park, 1954).

Six woollen factories around Bala and one near Llanuwchllyn were recorded on the 1840s' tithe maps, but few of the mills remain intact and there are now few permanent reminders of the importance of this once major activity in the local landscape (Parkinson, 1984).

The sale of butter was also an important source of income, as was the sale of Welsh ponies, known as 'merlins', which lived wild in the surrounding hills (Harris, 1980). (Interestingly, the grange at Gwernhefin was noted in the pre-Conqest period for the quality of its horses (see above, section 7.4)). Another significant local industry was printing: at one point, there were eighteen printers listed in Bala, the first of whom was John Rowland who set up business in 1761, and the production of Bibles was of particular importance (see below, section 8.6).

Drovers' routes from Ffestiniog, Ardudwy and the Dolgellau area passed through Bala and Llandderfel before going on to Corwen, whence many of the cattle finally passed on to Billericay in Essex (Godwin & Toulson, 1977, 78). Bala thus became important as a meeting-place and shoeing station for drovers, which coincided with its importance (above) as a centre for marketing woollen goods. Hugh Jones and John Thomas, both Bala drovers, also subscribed to the 18th century Wales' Golden Treasury [of poetry].

## 8.4 Communications

### *8.4.1 Roads*

Communication links through this part of Roman Wales were extensive, and there is good evidence for the Roman road system which existed in the area (see section 7.3, and areas 7 and 15).
Five major Roman roads are known to pass through this historic landscape area, and the advantages of this natural corridor between blocks of upland landscape from the borders towards the coast have continued to be an attractive prospect for communication throughout subsequent periods.

Regular journeys between settlements, mills *etc.* in the medieval period would have been essential (Smith, 2001), and in this region it is not unreasonable to assume that main arterial ways followed the established network of Roman roads (see the role of Sarn Helen in Welsh folk-lore (GAT report G1772a, p32)), while it has been suggested that the current pattern of (local) footpaths also has it origins in this period for the above reason (Thompson, forthcoming).

Good roads are one of the first improvements of a county, a fact which, however, had been long neglected in Merionethshire in the early post-medieval period. The Hengwrt archives (THCS, 1927) contain some 'ancient' maps of Meirionnydd, and the earliest, dated 1578, shows not a single road in the county. The next (probably also dated about 1578) shows just one, which runs from Bala to Dolgellau and 'Llanfacreth' [sic] and then takes an apparent straight line over the mountains to Harlech. Robert Norden's map of north Wales (1694) shows the mail route from the West Midlands to Caernarfon via Bala for the first time, as well as including some other Welsh towns.

The first turnpike roads in Wales were established in 1777 (Pritchard, 1961). The Act which established the Turnpike Trust was general and embraced all the principal highways in Meirionnydd: it was kept going until the last quarter of the 19th century. The Meirionnydd Trust was a single entity, but was split up into five road districts, including that from Bala to Dolgellau. George Kay, writing in 1794, commented that turnpikes were being amended daily in all parts of the county, although he still thought them too narrow, often less than 20ft wide. He decided that want of funds might have been to blame for this, but nevertheless opined that they should still be at least 40ft wide, and broader if they were to be truly more cost-effective and better in the long run, as they would allow carriages to move sideways across the highway according to local conditions. In around 1755 the 'modern' road from Bala to Dolgellau was built, replacing the old track (Pritchard, 1961, 29).

The existing road system seems remarkably unchanged since the mid 19th -century, judging by the four tithe maps (see above, section 7.5) which were reproduced in the Atlas Meirionnydd (Bowen, 1972, 78). The principal road (now the A494(T)) runs north-east to south-west through the area following the natural topography. It enters the area from the direction of Corwen (and England) and continues through to Dolgellau, passing along the north side of Llyn Tegid: the route is shown on a map of 1794 but is undoubtedly considerably earlier as it appears to follow the route of the Roman road. A smaller road, also formerly a turnpike road, runs along the south side of the lake. Further roads led from Bala over the mountains southwards to Dinas Mawddwy, and north towards Trawsfynydd and Ffestiniog.

Before the 1860s, the daily Royal Mail coach route ran from Shrewsbury to Dolgellau, via Bala. This route had been established since at least the middle of the 18th century and is shown on a series of contemporary maps.

### *8.4.2 Rail*

The standard gauge railway between Bala and Dolgellau was built by the Bala & Dolgelley Railway Company (which used the English spelling for the latter place), following in part the route of the road along the southern side of the lake, and opened in 1868. The railway joined the Corwen and Bala Railway at Bala, and the Cambrian Railway at Dolgellau. The line was operated by the Great Western Railway (GWR), which absorbed it in 1877. In 1896 the GWR enlarged Llanuwchllyn station (area 17), with an extended building and a new signal box, while a long passing loop and second platform were added at the same time.

The 25½ -mile Bala to Blaenau Ffestiniog branch of the GWR was one of the most expensive to be built (with its numerous bridges and viaducts), and was probably the least profitable of all the Welsh railways (Richards, 2001, 141*ff*). The Bala end of it was opened on 11th November, 1882 (Southern, 1995), finally reaching Blaenau in 1884, although its line (which crossed through areas 10, 4 and 5) can no longer be easily be traced on the ground today.

Although originally earmarked for dieselisation by the Western Region of British Railways in the early 1960s, the Ruabon to Bala/Barmouth line was eventually included in the infamous Beeching Report in 1963. From that time, it was gradually run down, with the long-distance holiday trains and through-freight traffic being diverted to the Cambrian main line through Welshpool, while other facilities were rationalised. Goods traffic finally ceased running on 1st January 1968, when the Pontcysyllte branch was closed. However, through rail services had effectively ceased by December 1964 when the last mail train from Chester used the line. Rebirth came in 1971 when a section was opened as a narrow gauge railway (see area 17

According to Rear & Jones (1990), the Llyn Tegid station of the Bala Lake Railway (see inside cover) stands on the site of the original terminus of the Corwen and Bala Railway, which was replaced by Bala Junction station for the link to Bala town when the line to Blaenau Ffestiniog was opened in 1882, and was still clearly visible on RAF vertical aerial photographs as late as 1957 (see area 04). A station on the site was re-opened in 1934 to encourage tourists along the line. It was opened under its current guise in the 1970s.

## 8.5 Tourism and leisure

### *8.5.1 The Picturesque movement*

A growing interest in Wales from the middle of the 1760s had much to do with unrest in England, and a rather patriarchal view of the Welsh peasantry, an idea supported by Richard Wilson's Welsh landscapes (Andrews, 1989, 111), which presented a view of an awesomely beautiful and benign landscape inhabited by a contented peasantry, representing the discovery of a landscape very different from English scenery. On a more prosaic level, it was also partly a result of improvements in the road infrastructure, as well as the 'closing-off' of the European mainland due to the Napoleonic Wars.

The 'picturesque' movement developed following the publication of Gilpin's 'Remarks on forest scenery' in 1791, where he wrote about the picturesque appeal of twisted trees, exposed roots and irregular land forms. A year later he published an essay in which he wrote that while beauty is usually associated with the smooth and the neat, such as the gently sculpted landscapes of (*inter alia*) 'Capability' Brown with their 'smooth lawns leading down to placid lakes', this should be challenged. 'The purpose of [picturesque] landscape was to arouse the emotions, stir the imagination, and to delight the eye with its naturalness' (Bermingham, 1989).

Some of these visitors to Wales, known as 'tourists' to distinguish them from 'ordinary' travellers whose main object was simply to travel from A to B, came to 'admire her sovereign mountains, beautiful vallies and surprising cascades' (Pritchard, 1961) and kept accounts of their journeys or 'tours' (see next section).

### *8.5.2 Historical tourism around Bala*

The first recorded Picturesque tour in north Wales took place in 1771. Sir W Williams Wynn, probably the wealthiest and most important man in 18th -century Wales (see section 7.5), set out on his two-week tour in the late summer of that year, with the artist Paul Sandby (and a total company comprising 5 gentlemen, 9 servants and 13 horses). They travelled from Llangollen to Dolgellau via Bala, then swung north and returned to Holywell (Andrews, 1989, 112), this despite the poor conditions of the roads at that time (see section 8.4) and the fact that the country was unimproved, agriculturally or ornamentally, giving it little appeal for most observers.

The various accounts of these travellers are invaluable sources of information on the state of the country at the time: some writers translated 'Llyn Tegid' as the 'Lake of Beauty', while others noted the waterside residence of the Denbighshire grandee Sir W Williams Wynn (area 14), part of the Glanllyn estate. One of the foremost was Thomas Pennant, who was more interested in antiquities than scenery and who travelled through the country with Moses Griffiths as his artist.The publication of his 'Tours in Wales' in the early 1780s influenced many others to travel here (J Gwynfor Jones, 1981).

Although Bala appears not to have been on any of the 'standard north Wales tours' (Andrews, 1989), nevertheless, by 1800, many travellers were passing through Bala, notebook in hand, in search of the fashionable 'picturesque and sublime' in nature. Many of them noted the serenity of the lake and its size, as well as the finely graded meadow slopes to the east.

In 1798 and 1801, Rev. Bingley's tour took him on an excursion around Llyn Tegid, and he toured down its eastern side. Later, Fenton (1804-13 - Fisher, 1917, 90) describes how this side of the lake was then 'covered with woods, in the elbows of the hills, prettily recessed at the head of lake where stands the villa of Sir Richard Colt Hoare' (area 11). He called on him as the latter was about to embark on his usual evening diversion of fishing for perch 'in a commodious boat' belonging to Sir W Williams Wynn. (In the 19th century, angling on Lake Bala was freely permitted (but not the use of nets) by Sir W Williams Wynn, and gentlemen came from as far as London specifically for this purpose.) Fenton added that Colt Hoare's mornings were occupied by antiquarian research in the neighbourhood.

An unfailing item of interest to those who stayed in the Bala hotels (area 02) throughout the 19th century was the fish which had been plucked out of the lake (area 01) and set before them on their dinner plates. While the trout and salmon were universally enjoyed, opinions differed concerning Llyn Tegid's unique attraction the *gwyniad* . The Reverend Bingley wrote circumspectly about this curiosity which, at that time, was fished in great quantities: 'With respect to the taste, this fish is generally said to be insipid: the noble traveller quoted in a preceding page asserts, however, that it is so delicate that his friend would prefer the flavour of it to even the lips of the fair maids of Bala'.

The White Lion on the High Street is one of Bala's most famous inns. It was immortalised by George Borrow, who enjoyed the most sumptuous breakfast of his life here in the 1850s during the tour which he recorded in 'Wild Wales': 'a noble breakfast, such indeed as I might have read of but never before seen'. It included local salmon, trout, eggs, and mutton chops (Borrow, 1862, chapters 49-50).

### *8.5.3 Present day attractions*

The area around Llyn Tegid and centred on the Upper Dee remains very much a picturesque landscape, with wide open areas of pasture, dotted with mature trees and 'haphazardly' divided by hedges and hedgebanks into irregular enclosures (area 10), and a series of gentlemens' residences looking across the northern end of the lake (areas 11 and 16, for example) (E Thomas, *pers comm*). The whole offers the impression of a 'naturalistic' landscape, which (ironically) has nevertheless been carefully nurtured over the years.

Llyn Tegid lies at the hub of present-day tourist/leisure activity, not only in this area, but in much of mid-Wales generally. The lake remains a coarse fisherman's paradise, where daily catches of between 50 and 60 lbs are not uncommon. There are fourteen species of fish in the lake including salmon, pike, perch, grayling, roach and gudgeon, but fish patterns are always changing. Brown trout have been in decline since *c.* 1955 since the lowering of the water level at that date.

Bala sailing club is based at the north-east end of the lake, giving access to one of the most picturesque (*sic*) sailing waters in Wales. There are excellent sailing conditions here, and other water sports are encouraged on the lake (with the exception of power boats, which are banned): in summer, the lake is a pageant of coloured sails, canoes, sailboards and rowboats. The demand for recreation is increasing, and as many as 40,000 visitors arrive annually by car; the authorities have placed a limit on the camping and caravan sites around the margins.

The standard gauge railway between Bala and Dolgellau was built by the Bala & Dolgelley Railway Company and opened in 1868 (see section 8.4, and area 17), but effectively closed down in 1964. It was re-opened in 1971 as a narrow gauge tourist railway, and today is a very popular tourist attraction during the summer months, supported by the Bala Lake Railway Society (*Cymdeithas Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid*).

Bala golf club (area 18) was relocated to its curret position in 1928, and the present clubhouse was built in 1973 as part of improvement works. The current course is 9 holes and nearly 5000 yards in length.

## 8.6 Cultural associations

### *8.6.1 Legends - general*

Holistic landscape character encompasses ecology, scenic values, appreciation, perception and associations (Fairclough, 1999, author's emphasis). Place, memory and tradition are of paramount importance to approaches to landscape studies (Johnson,2007), which should stress the continuing uses of a landscape (agricultural, social and ritual) spanning several periods. The Register of Historic Landscapes acknowledges cultural associations as an element in the formal process by which Welsh landscapes were evaluated and selected for inclusion (Cadw, 2002). The term 'associative landscape' is used to signify the historic landscape insofar as it articulates or evokes the intangibles of mentality, memory or imagination, belonging or alienation.

Sir John Lloyd (1905, 614) wrote about Penllyn that 'the land is one of legend, rather than of history', and it could be argued that the foremost criterion for the inclusion of Bala and Bala Lakesides is indeed its cultural associations.

### *8.6.2 Legends - Llyn Tegid*

A considerable number of 'drowning' tales are associated with Llyn Tegid (area 01), but possibly the best-known can be summarised as follows (after Morris, 1984).

Long ago, Robyn the harper went to play at a princely banquet in a magnificent palace in Gwynedd. As he played and sang, he felt something ominous in the air. The prince was not a good prince, and there surrounded the palace that night some sense of impending retribution. A small bird hovered above his harp and told him to be gone as vengeance was coming. This continued throughout the evening which became increasingly tumultuous. When the orgy finally ended, Robyn took his harp and wandered out into the dark, where a terrific gale was blowing, and went to sleep under a hedge. The storm blew all night, but when he woke in the morning it had died away and a strange calm lay over the country. He looked down the hill towards where the lights of the palace had shone so brightly the night before, but there was nothing to be seen. The waters of the mountains had burst their banks, and poured down to cover the splendours of the former palace under the surface of Llyn Tegid – around whose shores on stormy nights the sounds of gaiety may still be heard and in whose green depths, by moonlight only, you can see the golden baubles of the palace towers.

Recent explanations for the flooding of Lake Bala have done little to weaken the force of old legends. Another version that was current among local people, and apparently given credence until as late as the 18th century, also told that the deluge was caused by human oversight. In the vicinity of Bala town, at Ffynnon Gower, a guard was mounted daily over a precious spring which had been protected by walls and a cover (Berry, 2004, 2). If the lid was not replaced and secured each evening (the story went), evil spirits, even the devil, would invade the water. One night the keeper of the well neglected his duty and forgot to fix the cover: catastrophe ensued. The waters poured out in torrents, gurgling and gushing over the valley flanks, and eventually flooding the nearby town. Horrified inhabitants fled for their lives, screaming that the devil was abroad. At length, Bala disappeared under a huge lake, and all traces of civilisation were erased.

Although in later centuries a new Bala rose up (apparently!), locals never forgot the tragedy. Boatmen claimed that on clear days, as they drifted on the lake surface, they could make out the chimneys and roofs of the sunken town below. When storms gripped the lake, they said, water oozed and squelched up through the floors of their houses, and they recited the prophecy that the future held some new watery disaster, another deluge that would swallow up new Bala and the nearby village of Llanfor:

'Bala the old lake has had, and Bala New
The lake will have, and Llanfor too'.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, drew inspiration from the area and its legends, and stayed at Bala while composing *Idylls of the King*. At the end of the section on Geraint and Enid, for example, he wrote of the latter's womanly powers that they

'Filled all the genial courses of his blood
With deeper and with ever deeper love,
As the south-west that blowing Bala lake
Fills all the sacred Dee'.

### *8.6.3 Legends - Taliesin*

Further legends describe Llyn Tegid as a dwelling-place of supernatural beings (Morris, 1984). The ancient Welsh sun god, Lleu, was said to live in a palace called Mur y Castell, on the lake shores, while the famous story of the mystic poet Taliesin's birth begins on an island in the centre of the lake. Taliesin's origins are detailed in a tale, sometimes appended to the Mabinogion (although the Taliesin manuscript dates from 200 years later, and is probably not authentic). According to this source, the poet was the offspring of Ceridwen, the goddess of nature, and a nobleman called Tegid Voel, who lived on the lake's island. Horrified when her son turned out to be desperately ugly, the goddess

determined that what he lacked in looks he would make up for in intelligence, and she devised a potion to make him the cleverest in the world.

The plan was to boil a concoction in a cauldron, an elixir of inspiration and science which, after boiling for one year and a day, would yield up three divine 'drops of inspiration'. When her son drank these down, he would become a genius. The cauldron was set up, and Ceridwen scoured the countryside for ingredients. While on one such mission to gather magical herbs, however, she left behind a youth called Gwion to mind the pot, and things went wrong. As the surrogate brewer stirred, three intelligence-bearing drops splashed up on to his finger. He put his finger in his mouth, and the powers destined for Ceridwen's son were bestowed on him. Gripped with fear, and knowing that the goddess would be furious, Gwion ran for his life. Meanwhile the cauldron burst open, releasing a poisonous liquid which ran into a stream and ultimately killed some local horses.

On her return, Ceridwen realised the reason for Gwion's flight and began to chase him across north Wales. It was an epic pursuit: as he crossed mountain and moorland with superhuman speed, Gwion took on different shapes to try to elude her, but she matched him, metamorphosing her own shape into various forms and chimerae. When he became a hare she chased him as a greyhound: he became a fish, and she swam after him in the river as an otter. In a final confrontation, the goddess, in the guise of a black hen, succeeded in devouring Gwion after he had turned into a grain of wheat. Out of his death came life, and nine months later she gave birth to a boy. Yet she found herself unable to keep him for her own, and instead cast him adrift on the sea in a leather bag. He was discovered floating in the Dyfi estuary by Prince Elphin, son of the ruler whose lands had been flooded in the catastrophe at Catref-y-Gwaelod. Elphin named the child Taliesin, and found as he grew that he possessed unique powers of insight and prophecy (presumably the magic cauldron's gifts).

He went on to become Wales' most famous bard and an influential figure at the court of King Arthur.

### *8.6.4 Legends - other*

Llywarch Hen, a 6th century prince of the northern kingdom of Rheged, reputedly invited to Penllyn by a nobleman from Llanfor, is associated with nearby Rhiwaedog (on the edge of area 10) . Tradition says he was buried at Llanfor aged 150, having outlived his 24 sons. His last son was reportedly killed in a local battle with the Saxons, who pursued fugitives down the Hirnant (Berry, 2004, 18).

### *8.6.5 Nonconformist religion*

Forms of worship and belief which are radically different from those sanctioned by the state tend to flourish in geographically remote areas, where local power structures are either weak (as at Dolgellau - GAT report 497) or actively sympathetic to the new movement (as at Bala). The level of economic surplus which the landscape generates is also important: the weavers at Bala, for example, were self-employed or worked in small groups, and were used to thinking for themselves (Williams, 1985).

Radical Christianity (Protestant dissent), and in particular Calvinistic Methodism, has had a tremendous impact on the landscape of modern Wales, visible everywhere. Thousands of rural chapels sometimes hark back to the very earliest days, while even the smallest of villages might have several chapels, in which variously Calvinists, Baptists, Independents and Wesleyans worshipped. Chapels in larger towns, such as Bala, are often huge buildings, witnesses to the self-confidence of Welsh life in the period, and to its comparative prosperity.

Several places in Wales are particularly associated with Nonconformist Christianity, and foremost amongst these are the neighbouring towns of Bala and Dolgellau with their surrounding rural hinterlands. Bala was known as 'the Geneva of Wales', the great centre of Calvinistic Methodism, the oldest of the specifically Welsh connections. Here we can see how patterns of power and plenty in the

landscape have affected religious life, and how radical Christianity has in turn left its own profound mark on the landscape.

Bala's main street is lined with trees, and at seemingly every corner there is a reminder that this was once a hotbed of radical Methodism. From the Berwyn Bakery to Barclay's Bank there are plaques and statues commemorating the great days of the Nonconformists. Howell Harris preached here, and at the beginning of the 20th century a congregation of some 20,000 believers assembled on the green at the northern end of the town, where the tourist buses park today and a Gorsedd has left behind its circle of stones.

It was with the arrival in 1742 of John Evans of Wrexham (1723-1817), a weaver and a book-binder, that Methodism first became established in the area. The initial *sassiwn* was held at Bala as early as 1760 and by the early 19th century these were being held at Llanfor (area 06), where the preachers of the day would address the multitudes from wooden stages. Vast open-air meetings such as these remained a feature of Welsh religious life until the religious revival of 1904.

Simon Lloyd of Plas yn Dre (1730-1764) came under the influence of Methodism (and under the sway of Sarah Bowen, whom he eventually married) on a visit to Howell Harris's community at Trefeca in Breconshire. He readily granted leases to the Methodists, who dominated the growing town, and before long the medieval street-plan was once again lined with houses. His son, Simon (1756-1836), and his university friend Thomas Charles (1755-1814), a farmer's son from Cardiganshire, became the leading lights of Bala and north Wales Methodism. When in 1811 the two men sanctioned the ordination of ministers, effectively breaking with the Anglican church in which they had been raised and in which they had served, it was at the Bala *sassiwn* that the ordinations took place.

Robert Roberts, *sgolor mawr*, describes how, when he went to study at the Methodist academy established there in 1837 'nearly all the people in town were members of the Big Chapel. Even the Squire attended occasionally. The 'Cause' was triumphant everywhere. There was no Church in the town; the parish church [Llanycil] was a mile off, in a retired spot on the bank of the lake'.

The 'Big Chapel' was Capel Tegid, outside which there now stands the statue of Thomas Charles, and it was to see him, and to buy her bible, that Mary Jones famously walked to Bala over the Berwyns. The townscape of Bala, with its memorials, its college and its chapels, even its secular buildings, under lease from Squire Lloyd, embodies the powerful coincidence of forces which shaped this uniquely Welsh denomination. The Independent academy survives as a building, recently restored, and the Methodist College now serves as the Welsh Presbyterian Church's Youth Centre (area 04), and the town is also remarkable for its statues.

Though attendances at chapel have declined as Wales appears to be moving into a secular age, these buildings continue to dominate its landscapes and townscapes, and, in less obvious ways, continue to inform the way we look at society and community. Indeed, the history of Wales throughout the 19th century, and for much of the 20th, has been dominated by the traditions of religious dissent (D Gwyn, *pers comm*).

### *8.6.6 Secular thinkers*

By the beginning of the 18th century, the established cloth industry was expanding rapidly. Traditionally, weavers and cloth-workers were among the most intellectually independent and radical of workers; being out-workers, rather than factory employees, they could control their own work and time, and being based in small groups they had the chance to talk and debate. Equally important, at Bala, the squires, the Lloyds of Plas yn Dre in the centre of the town, a branch of the Lloyds of Rhiwaedog in nearby Llanfor, had long been sympathetic to dissent.

Sir O M Edwards, the educationalist and man of letters, Thomas Edward Ellis, Member of Parliament for Merioneth, D R Daniel, trade union leader and civil servant and John Puleston Jones, the blind minister and theologian, were all contemporaries at Bala Grammar School towards the end of the 19th century. None was born into particularly privileged circumstances, yet at a time when educational opportunities were still comparatively few, that three of them should have made their way to Oxford, and all four exert a profound influence on late 19th century Wales, was a remarkable coincidence of able men. Without a doubt Bala was a fertile intellectual soil in the late 19th -century, as the home of both the Methodist and the Independent theological colleges (area 03) as well as the Grammar School: this was a culture which identified and prized clever boys.

### *8.6.7 Quaker connections*

Quakers, followers of a movement which grew out of the radical Christian movements of the Reformation, and which throughout its history has stressed individual conscience and non-violence, have no clergy, no liturgy, and congregate in meeting houses rather than in churches. A number of the farmers to the north of Bala had become members of the Society of Friends in the 17th century, and maintained links with their co-religionists in Bala. In 1732 John Kelsall, manager of the Dolgun blast-furnace, negotiated with Lloyd of Rhiwaedog for use of a hall and lodging houses for the annual Quaker meeting, and Lloyd of Plas yn Dre let the growing Independent community meet in a store-room attached to his house before the building of their chapel.

The principal residences of the rural families with Quaker leanings included Gwernefail, Ciltalgarth; Fron Goch, Penmaen; Y Wern Fawr, Llaethgwm, Nantlleidiog and Ucheldre (none of which are listed buildings). However, following migrations to America at the end of the 18th century/early 19th centuries, the Quaker cause declined in and around the area and the Quakers themselves have all but disappeared from the landscape they inhabited.

### *8.6.8 Patagonia*

Michael Daniel Jones (1822-98), a staunch Liberal and Welsh nationalist of Bala (his family home was Weirglodd Wen (area 15), succeeded his father as Principal of Y Bala College (area 03), and was one of the prime movers in the negotiations with the Argentine government which finally resulted in the founding of the Welsh settlement in the Chubut valley in Patagonia in 1865. This was intended to be a pure homeland (a *gwladfa*), and many of the original settlers came from the Bala area (Williams, 1985; Harris, 1980). The settlers' descendants still maintain strong ties with Wales and many still speak Welsh.

### *8.6.9 Other*

The actor Christopher Timothy (best-known for his lead role as vet James Herriott in *All Creatures Great & Small*, a role which he apparently 'researched' amongst farming friends in the Bala area) was born in Bryn Tegid (built 1849 as a Victorian 'gentleman's residence'), on the northern side of Llyn Tegid (area 16), and lived there until he was five years old. One of his favourite memories is of walking down Bala High Street on a Sunday morning and hearing the sound of male voice choirs coming out of the many chapels - 'one would segue into another, the music would never fade'.

# 9 Historic landscape character areas

The study area has been divided into 18 separate historic character areas as follows:

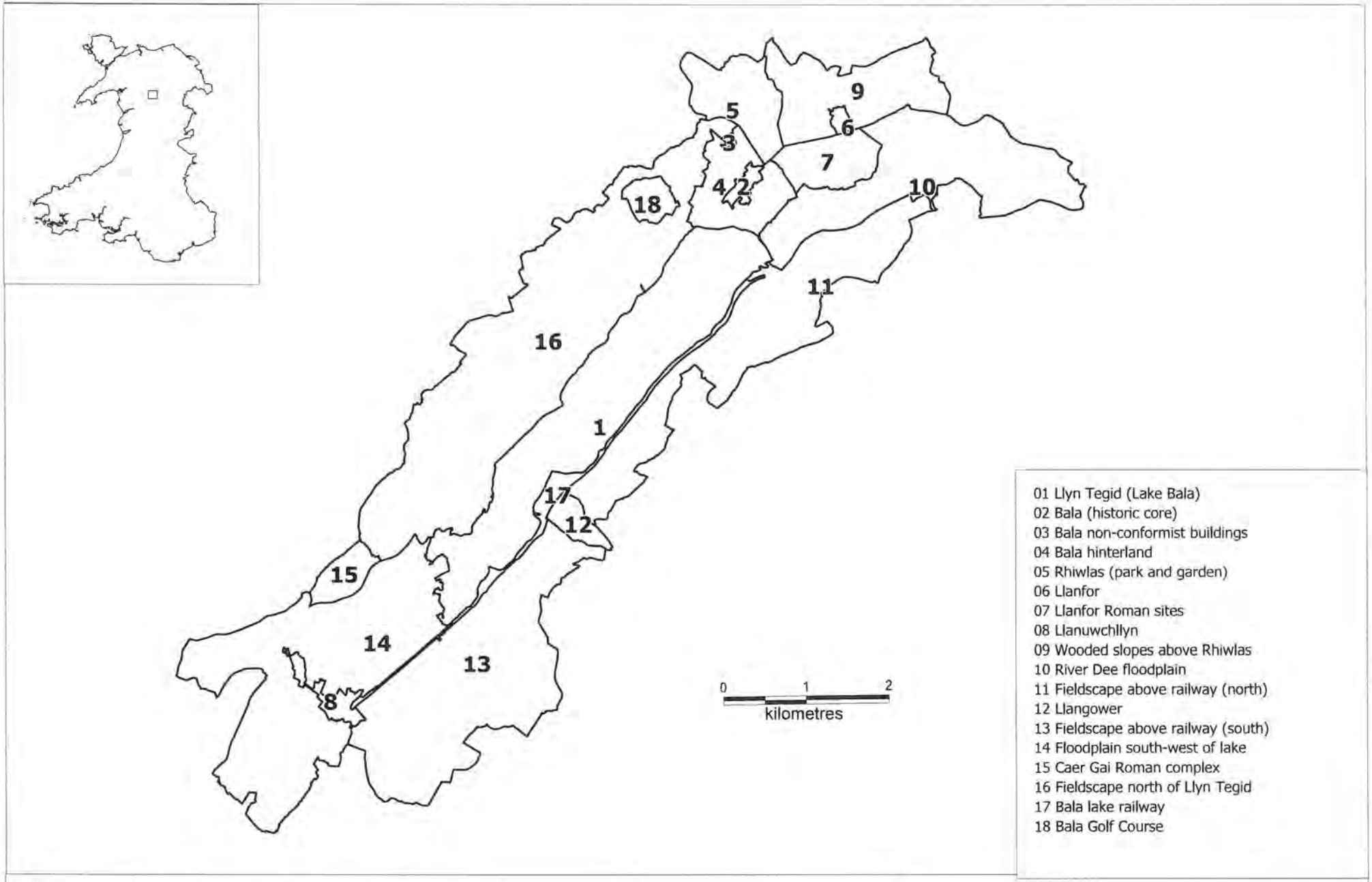
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 01 | Llyn Tegid (Lake Bala) | (PRN 24701) |
| 02 | Bala (historic core) | (PRN 24702) |
| 03 | Bala (Nonconformist buildings) | (PRN 24703) |
| 04 | Bala hinterland | (PRN 24704) |
| 05 | Rhiwlas (park & garden) | (PRN 24705) |
| 06 | Llanfor | (PRN 24706) |
| 07 | Llanfor Roman fort & environs | (PRN 24707) |
| 08 | Llanuwchllyn | (PRN 24708) |
| 09 | Wooded slopes above Rhiwlas | (PRN 24709) |
| 10 | River Dee floodplain | (PRN 24710) |
| 11 | Fieldscape above railway (north) | (PRN 24711) |
| 12 | Llangower | (PRN 24712) |
| 13 | Fieldscape above railway (south) | (PRN 24713) |
| 14 | Floodplain south-west of lake | (PRN 24714) |
| 15 | Caer Gai Roman complex | (PRN 24715) |
| 16 | Fieldscape north of Llyn Tegid | (PRN 24716) |
| 17 | Bala Lake Railway | (PRN 24717) |
| 18 | Bala golf course | (PRN 24718) |

An overall location map (map 5) showing the position of these areas in relation to each other is included at the beginning of this section.

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

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

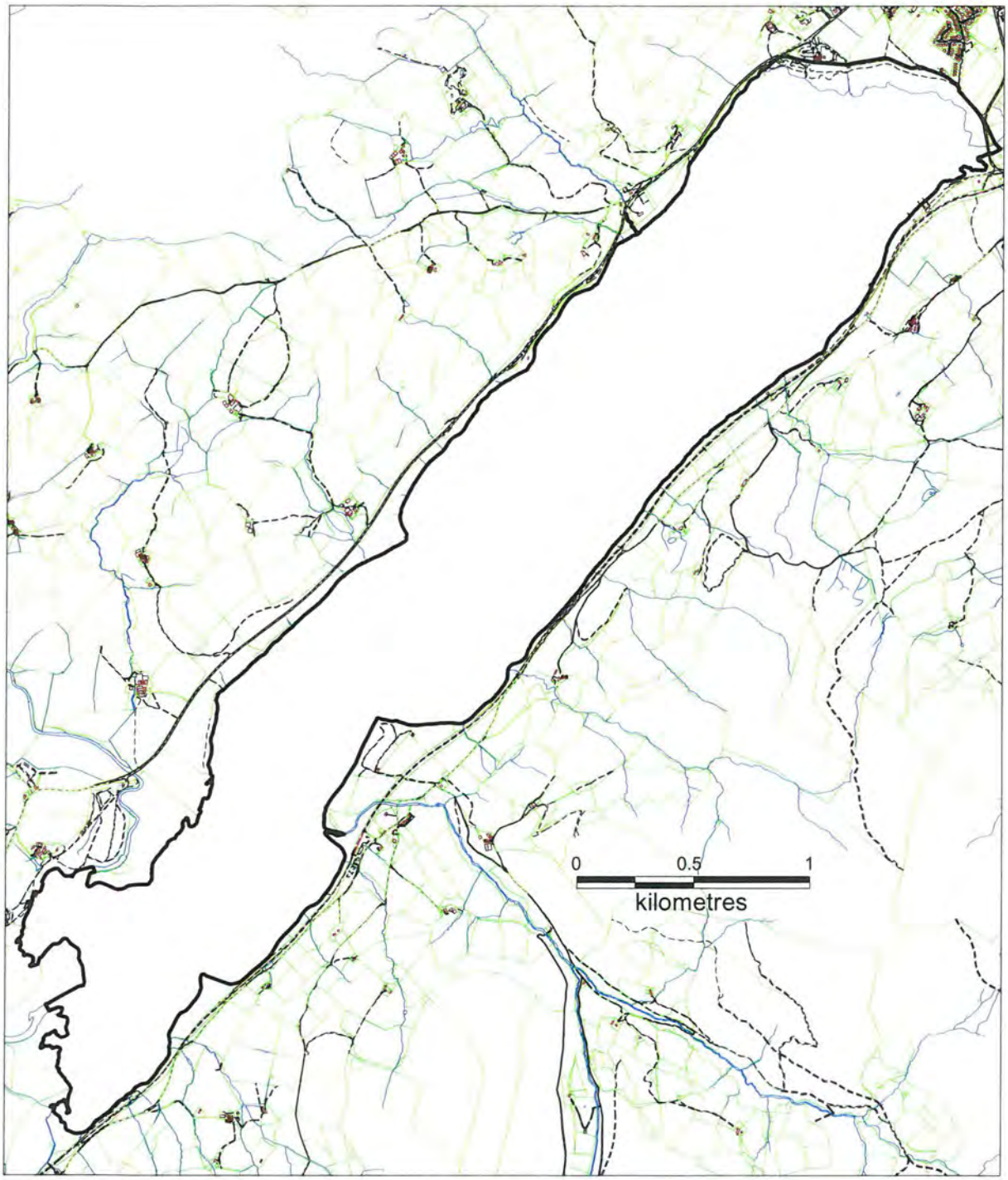
Colour plates which give an impression of the overall texture and character of each area are also included following the area description: some of these are aerial photographs, but sometimes a ground level view has been more appropriate.




01 Llyn Tegid (Lake Bala)
02 Bala (historic core)
03 Bala non-conformist buildings
04 Bala hinterland
05 Rhiwlas (park and garden)
06 Llanfor
07 Llanfor Roman sites
08 Llanuwchllyn
09 Wooded slopes above Rhiwlas
10 River Dee floodplain
11 Fieldscape above railway (north)
12 Llangower
13 Fieldscape above railway (south)
14 Floodplain south-west of lake
15 Caer Gai Roman complex
16 Fieldscape north of Llyn Tegid
17 Bala lake railway
18 Bala Golf Course

**Historic Landscape Characterisation - G1904 Bala**

**Map 5 - Location of the numbered character areas**




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 01 - Llyn Tegid (Lake Bala)

N

## 01 Llyn Tegid (Lake Bala) (PRN 24701)

### *Historic background*

In the 1813 Cambrian Travellers' Guide, Llyn Tegid (Wales' largest natural lake (see above)) is also referred to as 'Pimble-mere', probably a corruption of 'Pymplwy meer', referring to the surrounding five parishes of Llandderfel, Llanfawr, Llanycil, Llanuwchllyn and Llangower. It goes on to add that in the 13th century the fishing here belonged to the abbey of Basingwerk, but was by the 19th century 'properly vested' in W W Wynn, Bart. Angling was freely permitted (but not the use of nets) and gentlemen came from as far as London specifically for this purpose. Y Fachddeiniog on the south side of the lake (area 11 - now Bala Lake Hotel) was the seat of Richard Colt Hoare and Sir John Lister, a joint establishment for the purpose of fishing. It is advantageously situated on the southern bank, sheltered with a view commanding the lake (but omitting both ends!). Several similar houses lie along the same hillside.

Even in comparatively recent times Llyn Tegid has flooded dangerously, whipped up by a south-westerly wind. The 18th century traveller Reverend W Bingley noted that the lake was subject to 'dreadful' overflowings, while other sources record a massive torrent in the early 1780s, when the floods rushed over the Vale of Edeirnion to the south, killing several people. The Welsh lawyer Richard Fenton described the catastrophe in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1813):

'The Lake of Bala was covered with the wreck of different houses, and one person recovered two feather beds floating on the lake, and one with a looking glass on it as she had left it when she left her house'.

Sir W W Wynn was the lake's owner in the late 18th/early 19th centuries, and it was to him that the canal builder Thomas Telford had to apply when seeking to regulate the flow of the River Dee, the source of water for his Ellesmere Canal project.

The RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1468 2472 etc), show that the north-east end of the lake is largely unchanged since 1946.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Open water*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Water & wetland*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Natural lakes and watercourses*

The lake, with its vast 1,195 acre surface, maximum depth of 150 feet (established by a hydrographic survey in the fifties), and underlying acidic rocks lining a glacially cut basin on a geological fault line, has long been a focus of scientific study. Its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest by the former Nature Conservancy Council (now CCW) owes much to the existence of the *gwyniad,* but there are other factors. The remarkably soft water plays host to vertebrate fauna largely typical of similar lakes but including *myxas glutinosa,* which is rare. Sheltered parts of the shore support the unusual floating water plantain. In recognition of Llyn Tegid's complex ecology, it has been put forward as a freshwater wetland site of international note under the 1971 Wetlands Convention.

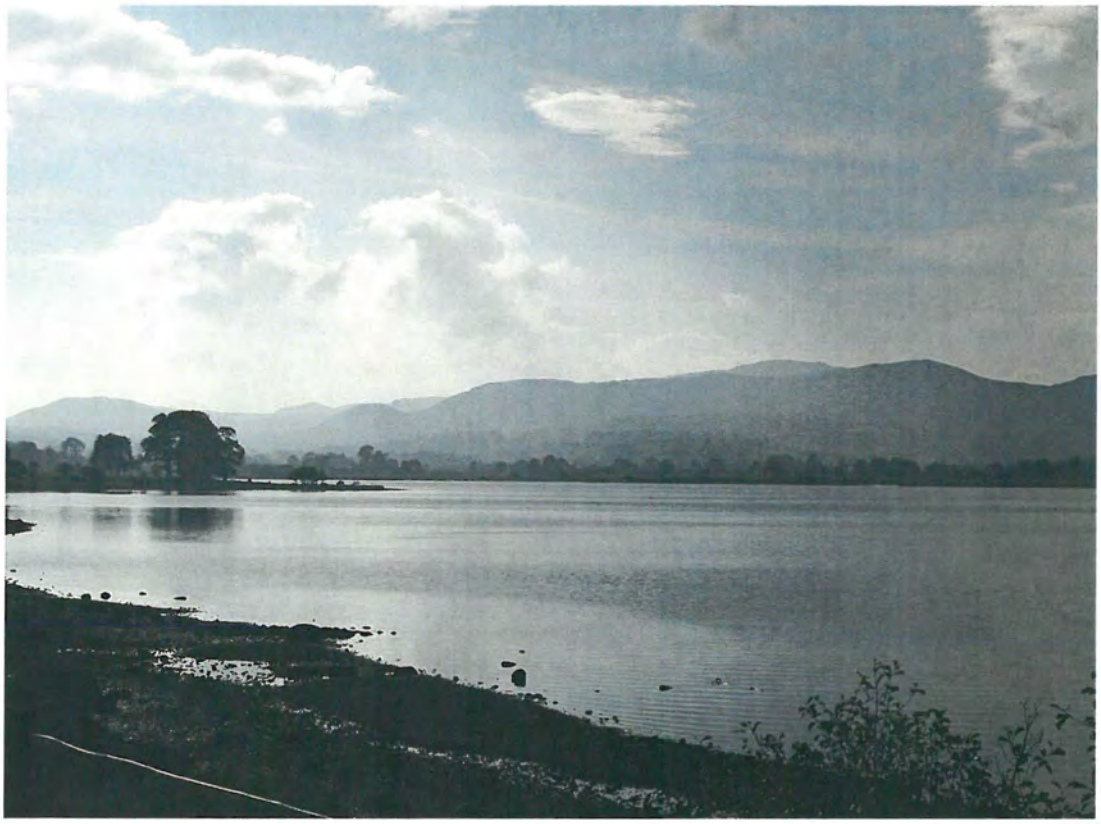
Merioneth County Council, helped with funding from the Countryside Commission, bought the lake in 1965, and now, under the ownership of Gwynedd County Council, it is managed by the Snowdonia National Park Authority. This body has made special efforts to safeguard the lake's beauty and its wildlife. A ban on shooting has encouraged the bird population with cormorants, grebe, coot, herons,

six species of duck and Bewick swans often visible. A sanctuary at the southern end has been established: here shallow waters and marshy ground favour breeding by wildfowl and waders. Sometimes bird watchers are likely to catch sight of the rare green sandpiper, notable for its steep – almost vertical – take-off from marshy pools, and for its green legs (the rest of the body is grey and white). The unusual black-throated diver also visits, with its haunting, wailing cry and striking plumage of black and white patterns. New birds are encouraged by artificial nesting platforms and perching posts which have been placed round the shore. There are plans to develop a secondary stock of *gwyniad* in a nearby lake, and an otter holt has been built on the lake side. The lake warden oversees continual upkeep of habitats round the lake, controlling invading willow herb, willow and alder, and maintaining the special lake access points.

Lake management of another kind takes place as part of the River Dee Regulation Scheme whereby the levels of the lake are artificially controlled. By building new sluice gates not far from where the Dee leaves the lake, the river authorities are able to use the lake to store great quantities of floodwater from the catchment upstream. Not only does this make it easier to abstract drinking water from the Dee, but is also greatly reduces flooding in the Dee valley near Llanuwchllyn. In the summer months, Llyn Tegid acts as a balancing reservoir for the Dee system; as a side effect of the level being kept artificially high in this period, there is always enough water to satisfy the growing hordes of sailing enthusiasts. If the level threatens to drop below the maximum 0.4 metre fluctuation limit, extra water is channelled in, via the Afon Tryweryn tributary, from nearby Llyn Celyn. All the necessary calculations are done by computer at the Bala control centre, and samples of Llyn Tegid's Class One quality water are tested at frequent intervals (Quenby, 1992).

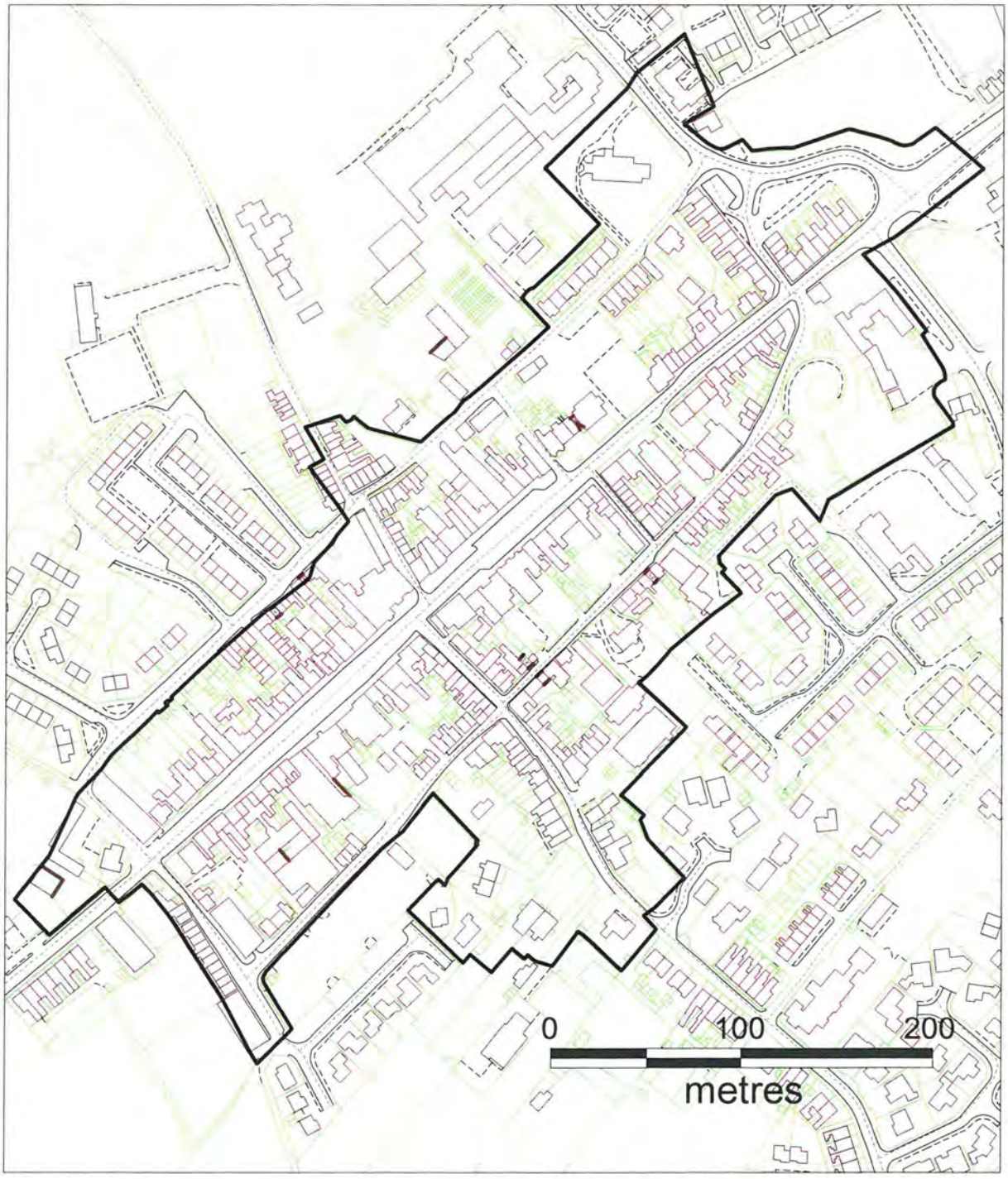
### *Conservation priorities and management*

- The area lies wholly within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the SSSI.
- Conservation of the piscine and bird interests.
- Protection of the tourist-related interests.



**01 Llyn Tegid (Lake Bala)** **PRN 24701**

Water and wetland




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 02 - Bala (historic core)

N

## 02 Bala (historic core) (PRN 24702)

### *Historic background*

The name 'Y Bala' probably signifies an outlet, a name given due to the fact that the town is situated where the River Dee flows out of the lake. Bala lies along the course of the main road from Shrewsbury to Dolgellau and the town is situated at the northern end of Bala Lake (Llyn Tegid), where the rivers Dee and Tryweryn meet. It represents the finest example of a planned English borough in Meirionnydd and the circumstances of its creation are recited in the foundation charter.

The Roman road from Chester to Caer Gai and Brithdir must have passed through the area of modern Bala, and presumably close to Llanfor. It is thought then to run along the north-western shore of Llyn Tegid.

The presence of a Norman motte at Bala is a fairly certain indication of the existence of a Welsh lordship, perhaps the *maerdref* of Uwch Tryweryn in the cantref of Penllyn. The timber buildings of a royal *llys* and possibly the nucleated structures of a dependent bond township might be expected in the immediate vicinity of the motte. Once again the identification and elucidation of the character of a Welsh administrative focus and its relationship to a Norman earthwork castle and (in this case 14th century) planted borough become the key archaeological questions.

Tomen y Bala appears briefly in Welsh history; it was held by Elise ap Madog, Lord of Penllyn, who refused to back Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in his struggle against his kinsman Gwenwynwyn. His reward for this disloyalty was that in 1202 Llywelyn drove him from the site and destroyed the castle. It does not appear to have been re-fortified. When Roger Mortimer laid out the borough it was undoubtedly his intention to defend it with a wall and ditch incorporating this existing fortification. Indeed, the 1324 charter makes special provision for such work, but there is nothing to suggest that his instructions were ever carried out. An earthen bank may have been thrown up at the top of the town, however, parallel to the Afon Tryweryn, but the area has recently been developed and no sections are visible.

A further earthwork, Castell Gronw on the Dee at the point where it leaves the lake, must have been erected for the purpose of controlling the lake and commanding the crossing of the Dee, which was probably effected a short distance above the site of the castle. The mound is about 108 ft in circumference, 15 ft high from ground level, and 6 ft above the bailey; its summit is flat, and its slopes are covered with trees. The bailey lies to the southwest and was protected on two sides by a small stream. There is no historical information about the castle, but it may have been founded by the Goronwy family of Whittington in Shropshire.

During the later years of Edward II's reign the surrounding commote of Penllyn was in a state of disorder and virtually in the hands of marauding bands of thieves and robbers. In or about 1310, therefore, Roger Mortimer set about the foundation of the town in an attempt to bring stability to the area and so that the town could serve as an administrative centre for the district. The borough was accordingly laid out with 53 burgage (house and garden) plots, each 200 ft by 26 ft (= 3,200 sq ft each), and within a year all but nine had been taken up by new citizens or burgesses.

The medieval town was small and its total area did not exceed one square mile. Burgage plots were laid out along one principal street, with two back lanes running parallel to it, now represented by Arenig and Plassey/Mount Streets. Subsequent development, however, has destroyed most of the original plots. The markets and fairs previously held at nearby Llanfor were transferred to the new settlement, which received its formal grant of privileges in 1324.

Penrhyn MS 408 in the Library of University College, Bangor, is a deed of sale, executed at Bala, by which, in consideration of 'a sum of money' and subject to the usual conditions and guarantees, one William de Preston, baker, of that town, sells in perpetuity to John de la Hyde, 'forester of North Wales' all his half-burgage in Bala with its buildings and appurtenances. This half-burgage lay between the burgage of Thomas de Piuelesdon and the half-burgage of 'Johannes *fil* Jonckyn'; it fronted the High Street (*via capitalis*) and ran back '*ad viam que ducit ad capellam*' ('to the road leading to the chapel'). The witnesses named are: David 'Camerarius'; Roger de Badeley; Robert le Tipper; Griffin ab Akyn; Robert Barnesmill. The date is 'the Friday next before the feast of St. Michael-on-the-Mount, in the eighth year of Edward son of King Edward the Third after the Conquest', *i.e.* Oct 15, 1350. Contemporary references to some of the persons named can be found. Howel Goch, mentioned in the document as 'mayor', represented the '*burgenses anglici*' of Bala at the *quo warranto* proceedings of 1348 (Record of Caernarfon pp 176, 210); John de la Hyde appears therein (*ibid.* p 152) as attorney general of one Thomas Cary, and a Thomas de Piuelesdon figures in the Extent of 1353 in Anglesey (Record of Caernarfon p 106 and *c. f.* 226). This document is interesting for various reasons, not least that it reveals that although the borough charter (1324) was granted exclusively to '*burgenses anglici*', there were by 1350 Welshmen in the borough, and that a Welshman was then mayor and representative of the burgesses.

From the outset Bala was a small settlement, with the burgesses dependent solely on agriculture or trade, and within the two centuries following its foundation many of the original burgages fell into decay. John Leland (1532-4) described Bala as 'a little poor market' and a decade later only 13 taxpayers were recorded in the town, a situation confirmed by Camden, who added that it was 'peopled with few inhabitants'.

A feature of the medieval town was the small chapel which stood near the town cross in High Street. There was no church at Bala until the building of Christ Church in 1811, the town being part of Llanycil parish, but the provision of the chapel appears to have been contemporary with the foundation of the borough. It continued to serve the community until the early 18th century, when it was finally demolished and its site, together with that of the attached graveyard, was built over.

The later history of Bala is uneventful and in the absence of any maintained castle the town does not figure large in the Glyndŵr revolt, although a small garrison place consisting of six timber houses was temporarily established.

During the 18th century, the beginnings of a hosiery industry appeared in the town, which came to assume important proportions and led to much rebuilding. By the time of the 1842 tithe map the medieval area was again built up, and more recent development has enabled Bala to recapture its position as the market centre of Penllyn. The present day built-up area extends beyond the medieval borough to the north and west.

The 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1468 2472 *etc*) show that the extent of Bala at that time was largely restricted to the medieval town, with no spread to the south-west (area 04).

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture, nucleated settlement, medieval street pattern*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Nucleated settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Planned settlement - medieval*

Black's *Picturesque Guide to North Wales* (1865) describes Bala as 'a clean and neat town'. The town's layout today certainly adheres to the standard form of a planned township and could therefore be described as neat.

The linear street plan of the historic town centre conforms to the archetype of the medieval market town, although the motte itself has also significantly influenced its character. The massive earthwork predates the medieval layout and consequently interrupts the standard format of parallel streets with neatly arranged burgages. The Borough charter of Bala allowed it to be a defended settlement but no walls or defences were ever constructed to compliment the existing motte. This is partly because in the period after *c.*1100 the advantages of market-street frontages were superseding defensive considerations (Aston & Bond, 2000).

The entirety of the modern town lies to the west of the river and it has never extended past Pont Tryweryn. The wide High Street, designed to facilitate market-trading, runs through the centre of the town to the bridge that gives the only access to the east and the main route towards Shrewsbury. This sort of restricted access is a distinctive feature of the medieval market town and could be used as a means of regulating traders and taxation (Aston & Bond, *ibid*).

Although the medieval burgage plots are no longer distinct entities the plot widths can still be seen in the street-front architecture and many of the plot boundaries still run from the High Street through to their respective back lanes and have not been subdivided or amalgamated. This is particularly evident in the row of terraces to the south of the High Street around Berwyn Street and up to the Mount.

Whilst the medieval settlement plan is still evident and gives the historic core its structure, much of the town's built environment is post-medieval in date. The character of the urban building stock encompasses a mixture of architectural styles and materials along with buildings of varying scale and size that reflect the different functions, traditions and styles of the locality. With some 60+ listed buildings in the town and few undeveloped open spaces, the built environment forms an important part of the character of the area.

Local stone, generally dressed in large blocks, is the dominant building material across much of the town, but the High Street frontages are also formed from rough-cut natural stone, white-washed stone, facades and cladding, coloured render, and red and yellow bricks, both glazed and unglazed. Although the majority of these buildings are terraced, or at least linked, most are of individual design and the roof heights vary from low two-storey cottages to tall three-storey town house designs. This mixture of styles and materials is partly attributed to the excellent communication and distribution networks in Bala. In particular the railway must have facilitated trade and enabled the exchange of materials and ideas across a broad geographical area. However, the urban architecture also reflects the intellectual and cultural freedoms that many of the residents of Bala enjoyed throughout the 18$^{th}$ and 19$^{th}$ centuries and the enabling wealth that led to much of the necessary investment in the town.

Many of the more significant buildings in the town centre are public buildings, the most numerous building types being chapels and inns, with few private dwellings fronting the High Street. RCAHMW records 11 religious buildings in the town, and these can in large part be attributed to the town's close historical links with Methodism (see above), while the many fine examples of the traditional inn show the significant role Bala played as an important stop-off on this historic route during the 18$^{th}$ and 19$^{th}$ centuries: for example, the White Lion Royal Hotel dates to *c.*1700 and retains its eighteenth century stable block.

One of the most significant public buildings in the town is the former workhouse. Unlike other examples at Conwy, Bangor and Caernarfon, the workhouse at Bala is located in the town centre, set back from the main road. It served as a home for relatively few of the 1030 paupers within the five parishes of Penllyn because of its unpopular location, and by 1869 it was being used as a militia barracks while a new workhouse was sited outside the town off Mount Lane. The original workhouse is today known as the Aran (Pyjama) Factory and continues the textile traditions of the town by manufacturing clothing.

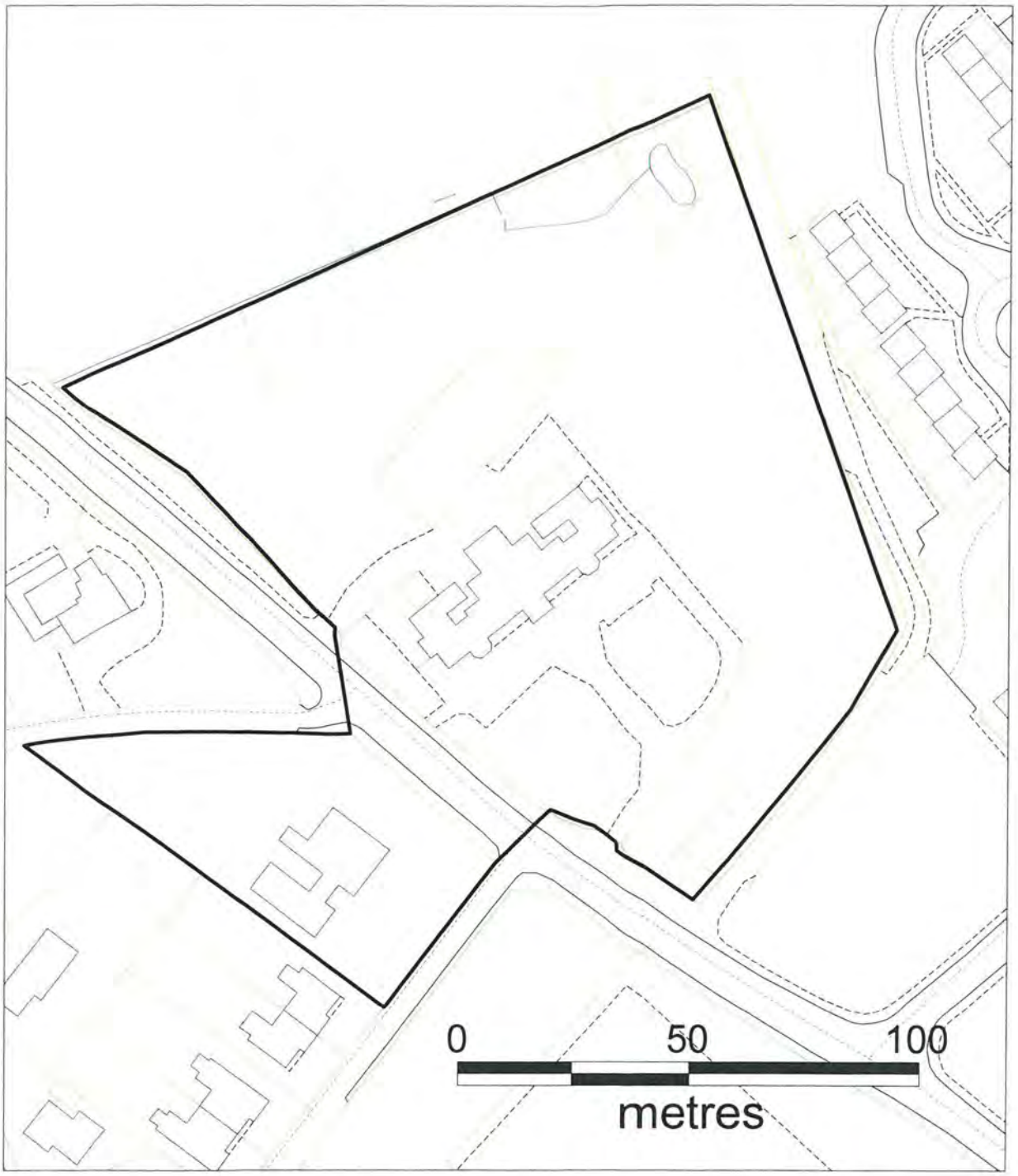
The character of the back streets of Bala, in contrast with the very public space along the High Street boulevard, is formed in part by the low buildings and narrow lanes which make up the more private areas of the town. Small, stone-built terraced cottages with slate roofs are the most common form of dwelling while some large-scale stone buildings with bay windows survive on Tegid Street. Some of the more obvious planned terraced housing is as architecturally distinct as the more public buildings of the High Street, with numbers 48-52 Mount Street retaining good vernacular gothic character. The terraces, on the whole, were not constructed as planned developments, with the result that odd designs, shapes and sizes exist within the same adjoined row. Large windows are a recurring design in many of the cottages and are a reflection of the highly successful textile trade in the town. Much of the knitting and hand weaving was undertaken as a cottage industry in the home and good light would have been essential. Some of the outbuildings that back onto Mount Street from the High Street have the hallmarks of being light industrial units also built for this purpose.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the listed buildings and overall architectural character of the town, including the distinctive street pattern and plot boundaries.
- While much of the medieval borough is identified as a conservation area, the Local Plan has scheduled certain areas on the High Street for commercial and community redevelopment.

**02 Bala (historic core)** **RN 24702**

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture, nucleated settlement, medieval street pattern




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 03 - Bala nonconformist buildings

N

## 03 Bala Nonconformist buildings (PRN 24703)

### *Historic background*

Bala became well-known through-out Wales from a religious point of view during the evangelical revival of the first half of the 18th century. The Calvanist Methodists founded their first church in 1745, and from the 1760s onwards the annual s*assiwn* was held here for the transaction of the business of the new denomination in north Wales, and for the preaching of the Gospel to the multitudes who crowded into the town from all parts of Wales.

The 'Green y Bala' (later covered by the railway station (area 04)) was famous throughout Wales for its moving assemblies, and ever since Bala has held an important place in the history of the Welsh Calvinist Methodist church. Two facts may account for this. Bala was associated with Thomas Charles, who settled here in 1783. He was the founder of the Welsh Sunday School, and was associated with the British and Foreign Bible Society. Also, Dr Lewis Edwards, who had married a grand-daughter of Thomas Charles, started an academy for young preachers and others which in time became a Theological College (area 03), which possesed one of the finest theological libraries in Wales. The building, which included a tower and had commanding views, became a preparatory college for students hoping to enter the Ministry in the Presbyterian Church of Wales.

On the other side of the road is Bodiwan, formerly a college belonging to the Welsh Congregationalists. Michael Jones was a minister near Bala, but following a quarrel with part of the congregation, he moved out of the chapel house to Weirglodd Wen (at the southern end of the lake (area 15)), where he founded a Nonconformist academy. He then established it in Y Bala as an Independent College and served as its Principal. His son, Michael D. Jones, (1822-98), who also lived in Weirglodd Wen, succeeded his father as Principal and master-minded the new Welsh colony in Patagonia (see above). The college's functions have since been transferred to Bangor.

Dr Lewis Edwards (1809-87) oversaw the growth of the Methodist academy from its origins by Thomas Charles' house, next to the present Capel Tegid (area 02), to its second home between y Plas and the High Street, to the substantial building erected in 1867 on a site overlooking the town (now Coleg y Bala), whose library he built into a cultural institution of significance. In 1845, he began to publish *Y Traethodydd* (The Essayist), a quarterly of genuine intellectual distinction (Williams, 1985, 203).

The 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1455 3171-6 2 May 1946) clearly show the pocket of development comprising this character area (and an area immediately surrounding it) as very definitely set apart from the rest of Bala (area 02, and area 04 yet to be developed). There was, as yet, no infill next to the line of the railway or modern housing to the west of the minor road.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Nineteenth-century architecture and associations, non-nucleated settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Other settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Other settlement*

This particular character area is small, consisting of only a few buildings. Coleg y Bala was built in 1867 as an educational academy and became a Theological College in 1891. Since 1969 it has been run as a youth centre by the Presbyterian Church of Wales, offering Christian education courses, and is apparently prospering. Across the road is Bodiwan,the former home of Michael D Jones (built 1898/9). The stone buildings are confident and imposing, situated in an elevated position above the

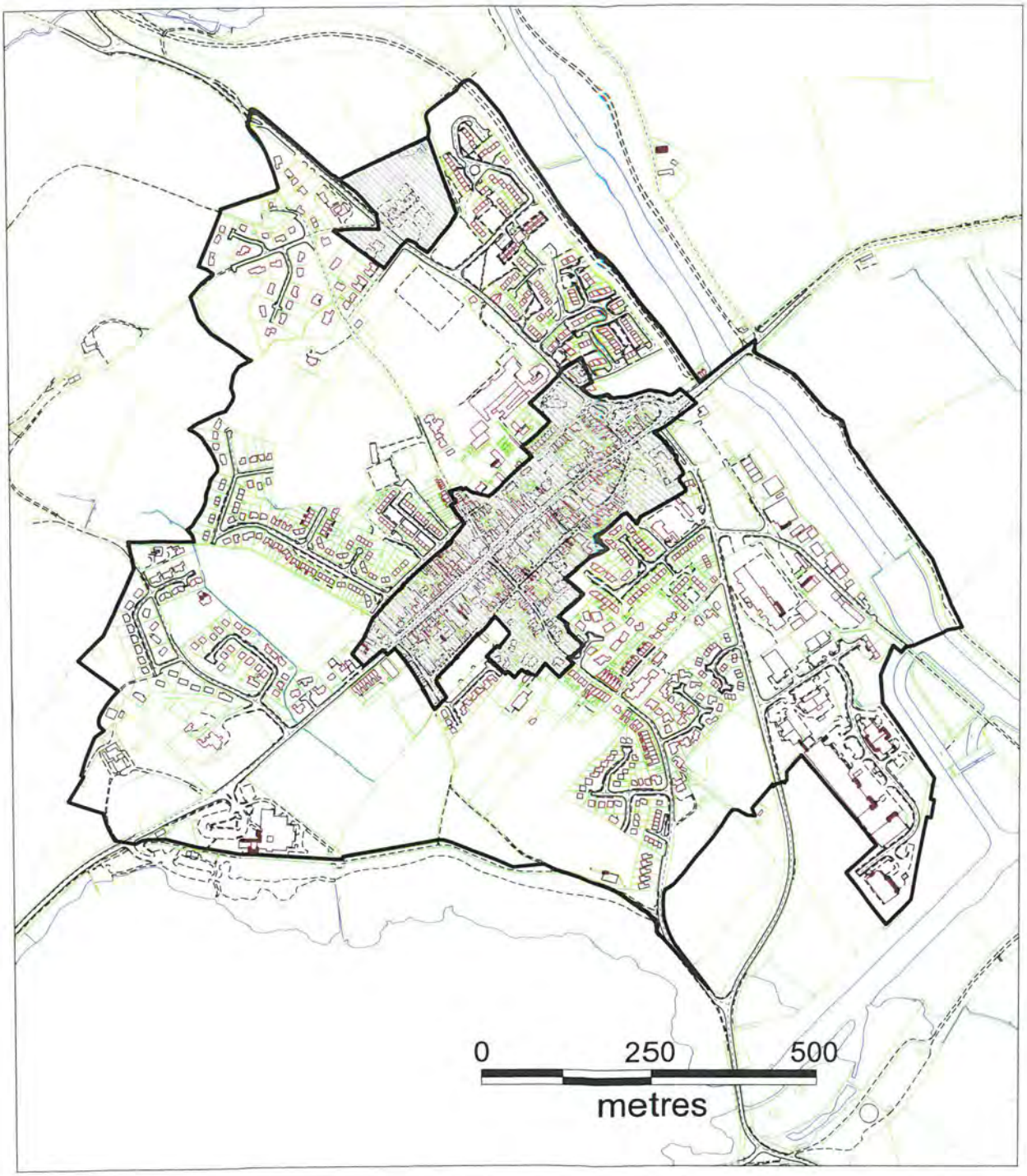
north side of Bala, with commanding views across the valley.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the architectural integrity of the buildings.
- Conservation of the cultural, associative aspects.

**03 Bala non-conformist buildings** **PRN 24703**

Nineteenth-century architecture and cultural associations




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 04 - Bala hinterland

N

## 04 Bala hinterland (PRN 24704)

### *Historic background*

There is little evidence to suggest that the nearby Roman (area 07) and adjacent medieval (area 02) settlements had a great impact on this area, and the main growth occurred during the post-medieval period, alongside Afon Tryweryn and at the point where this watercourse meets the River Dee. The construction of the Bala & Ffestiniog railway in 1882 had a marked impact on this locality, bringing industrial development and commerce to what had previously been an undeveloped floodplain.

In 1952 a waterworks scheme diverted the course of both rivers, truncating a large section of the River Tryweryn. The flood detention and compensation storage works were designed to pump 50,000,000 gallons of water per day to West Cheshire, Wrexham and the atomic energy developments in Wirral.

The 1957 RAF erial photographs (58/2122/45-53 (Flight 22) 12/03/1957) show a fairly dramatic increase in the size of the historic core of Bala, into area 04. It has become much more built-up now, with the housing estate on the western edge of town, although there is still no connection between the nucleation (centred on area 03) on the hilltop and the rest of the town, or any infill between the main road out in this direction and the railway (obviously still shown). However, the town has reached its current extent on the road out to the south-west. There has been a slight expansion to the east, although there is no 'new' B4391 and no industrial estate yet. The present footpath which runs south-east from the southern end of the High Street across the top of the lake appears to be the line of the original road out towards Dinas Mawddwy, and interestingly there are the relict remains of possible quillet strips here which appear to be bounded on the south by this track.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Nineteenth- and twentieth-century suburban character, open spaces*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Other settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Other settlement*

During the 19th -century, the Bala hinterland area consisted mostly of enclosed field systems with large tracts of the suburban land given over to allotments for urban tenants. Although these field patterns have been respected by the modern expansion of the town, the character is defined largely by the built environment and open spaces rather than by its historic agricultural context.

The largely undeveloped floodplains that lie to the south of the town and skirt around the east end of the lake preserve some well-defined earthworks that relate to the Bala & Ffestiniog railway.

The northernmost extent of the town is defined by a small enclave of large late Victorian and Edwardian dwellings that hug the hillside to the west of the road out to Tryweryn. However, in contrast to the urban centre of Bala, the landscape of the hinterland is almost completely modern, and has developed through 20th century town and country planning. In the southern half of the character area, an inter-war housing estate reflects the political and socio-economic changes of the early 20th century. The latter half of the century is represented by modern and early modern housing estates to the north-west and south-east of the town.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of open spaces bordering Llyn Tegid.
- Conservation of infrastructure, allotments and industrial earthworks.

**04 Bala hinterland** **PRN 24704**

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century suburban character, open spaces


Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 05 - Rhiwlas (park and garden)

N

## 05 Rhiwlas (park and garden) (PRN 24705)

### *Historic background*

Rhiwlas has belonged to one family, the Prices, for several centuries, and is still in their hands. The house has, however, been comprehensively rebuilt twice in the last two centuries, the first time on the grand scale, with the main gateway and stables to match, and the second time more modestly, resulting in a house practical to live in and keep up.

The house is sited at the south-west corner of the relatively level north-eastern quadrant of the demesne, slightly off-centre to the whole. Most of the rest of this quadrant is taken up with gardens. The house is modern, replacing an enormous rambling nineteenth-century mansion which was demolished in the early 1950s. This was three-storeyed and castellated with turrets, built in 1809 on the same site as previous houses. The present house was designed by Clough Williams-Ellis and built in 1954.

Although much smaller than the house it replaces, and of such a recent date, the house fits perfectly with its surrounding and has obviously been designed to blend in with the older outbuildings. It is more or less square, two-storeyed, of grey stone with a low-pitched slate roof. The Georgian-style windows have small panes in white frames; most are sashes, but a high proportion are French windows.

All the existing outbuildings, together with some that have gone, are shown on the 25 in. Ordnance Survey map of 1901. Those near the house may be considerably older, predating the large farm building and stable complexes elsewhere. The park at Rhiwlas pre-dates the present house and almost certainly the last one, though to what extent the present layout is the result of modifications made at the time that the last house was built is difficult to say. The house was extravagant to a fault and it is unlikely that the park and garden would have been neglected; indeed, the main drive gateway was clearly contemporary with the house. However, the park had probably already been improved not long before, as a late 18$^{th}$ -century tourist noted that it was at that time being laid out 'under the auspices of Mr Emes', and it may therefore have escaped much modification.

The park lies mainly to the south, west and north-west of the house. The main drive leads off from the south-east corner, and the strip of woodland along this drive, although narrow, also covers a significant area, because of the length of the drive (almost 1km).

The park falls into two main areas, to the south/south-west and north-west of the house. The Afon Tryweryn defines the west and south sides of the park, and runs all along the west side of the main drive. The part of the park south of the house falls gently towards the river, and the house, which faces south, thus looks out over the sloping pastureland, dotted with trees, to the river. The trees are mostly deciduous and include oak, beech, sycamore and lime.

The area of parkland to the north-west is completely different in character, and not visible from the house, being above it. It is steep, with rocky outcrops, and was formerly wooded; so many trees remain that although there is some poor-quality pasture it still has much of the character of open woodland. Trees are mainly oak, with a few sycamore and some conifers near the highest point. This area is shown as woodland on the 25 in. Ordnance Survey map of 1901 and is still known as Coed Mawr. There are a couple of small quarries here as well, doubtless used to supply stone for estate use. The remaining small areas of park, north of the gardens, seems never to have had any trees and is simply a field, containing a small reservoir. The wooded hill, Coed Mawr, had, in 1901, paths leading to a footbridge over the river to the west, out of the park to the north, and in a loop along part of the west side, presumably a pleasure walk.

The long main drive is a feature of the park, being flanked by superb, mainly deciduous trees, notably beech and oak and including some fern-leaved beeches planted in the 1860s. At the south end there are some horse and sweet chestnuts. The grand, castellated, Gothic gateway at the end (see photograph) is a landmark on entering or leaving Bala at the north-east end, and there is also a Gothic lodge.

The garden is basically in two parts, the steep rockery, lawn and shrubbery to the west and the woodland walk and semi-formal gardens tot he east. The latter area is 19th -century in style and some of the trees which help to define it are known to have been planted in the 1860s; the western area contains some more recent planting and a probably late 19th- or early 20th -century rockery, but has some earlier elements, notably a wall thought to date from the 16th -century.

The two main areas of the garden contrast rather sharply geographically, that to the west being on a steep slope and that to the east being on fairly level ground. Both, however, are irregularly-shaped areas (roughly triangular) and have been treated predominantly informally. Almost half of the flatter area on the east is taken up by the kitchen gardens. Most of the rest is given over to a typical nineteenth-century shrubbery or woodland walk, which has become rather overgrown and is in the process of being opened up again. The shrubbery, and the area north of the east drive, is probably on the site of natural oak woodland, and some old oaks have been left in place.

The grassy strip north of the east drive contains some oaks which probably remain from the original natural woodland. To these have been added other trees, including birch, beech, pines and other conifers but most notably a magnificent group of giant sequoias or Wellingtonias (Sequoiadendron giganteum), which sweeps across the east drive to the south side, continuing south until it meets the top of the plantation alongside the old main drive to the south-east. These trees are not planted as a formal avenue, but in unusual numbers, and they include some superb specimens. With the big firs in the shrubbery and some others of the older conifers, they were planted in 1860s by the present owner's great-grandfather.

There are two kitchen gardens, the eastern being the larger, and rectangular, with its long axis east-west. It was divided into four parts by paths, the two northern areas being smaller as there were several large glasshouses along and in front of the north wall. The smaller western garden is an irregular shape and contained only one glasshouse. Both are walled all round with brick and stone walls, and are likely to be contemporary with the early nineteenth-century house, although as the brick is handmade an earlier date is possible.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*Park and garden*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Designed*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Designed parkland/garden*

The wider area retains it strong parkland character (see above, section 7.5), consisting of fairly flat open pasture, punctuated by mature estate trees, grazed by cattle, subdivided into large, irregular parcels by hedges and hedgebanks, many with trees (although some have fallen into disrepair and have been functionally replaced by post-and-wire fences). However, there are by contrast huge boulder field boundaries by the road, presumably the result of past field clearance. The architectural character of the Rhiwlas estate is dominated by the surviving range of stone buildings, mainly agricultural in nature. In particular, there is a substantial architectural complex which includes a hay barn and dovecote, and possibly a vented game larder; although the layout is not a standard one it is meant to impress. The estate cottages are of a particular style, with distinctive hipped roofs, as are the iron gate-posts. A terrace of red-brick estate workers' houses lies alongside the road.

The 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1455 3171-6 2 May 1946) clearly show the area south of Lovers' Walk as having the same field enclosures, with 'park' trees in most of them, although the modern plantations are not present.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies almost entirely outside Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of garden and parkland character.
- Conservation of estate architecture.

**05 Rhiwlas (park and garden)** **PRN 24705**

Park and garden included in Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales (Cadw & ICOMOS 1998)


Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 06 - Llanfor

N

## 06 Llanfor (PRN 24706)

### *Historic background*

Llanfor's proximity to the extensive Roman remains of Llanfor fort and marching camp (area 07) show that this locality has long been a significant location in terms of settlement. Archaeological evidence at Llanfor village suggests that there may have also been prehistoric ritual activity in the area. A circle of standing stones, now destroyed, is thought to have been located in this area. It was recorded as Pabell Llywarch Hen in the 17th century and was reputedly the place where Llywarch Hen camped after a battle against the Saxons nearby. By the end of the 19th century it was recorded as being located in the farm yard of Pen Isa'r-Llan but this is known not to have been its original location.

The beginnings of a settlement at Llanfor village can be identified by the early ringwork monument that dominates the northern half of the modern village. It is thought to date to the medieval period and would in part have been used for defence. Today, it is a tree- and pasture-covered earthwork and although its ramparts have been significantly eroded, the quality of its defences is still apparent.

Llanfor remained a significant settlement throughout the medieval period. It held the local markets and fairs up until the 14th -century when such events were relocated to Bala (see area 02). The position of Llanfor within the area of influence of the Rhiwlas Estate (area 05) must have reinforced its position as a farming community.

Llanfor is shown as a small, nucleated settlement on the 1849 tithe map, with the church at the centre, surrounded by a near-circular churchyard and various buildings to the south-west. The present church was built in 1875 by the architect E B Ferrey, but it stands on the site of the oldest church in Merioneth which once served this large parish. The earlier church consisted of a continuous nave and chancel with an unusual west tower and a later north chapel and south porch. The north chapel of the Rhiwlas family was dated to the 16th -century and a 19th -century description of the site suggests the presence of a 12th century tower. The lych gate and revetment wall at the entrance to the churchyard relate to the earlier church and are of early 18th -century date.

The earliest gravestone visible today at Llanfor church is dated 1646, but the irregular boundary wall appears originally to have been curvilinear, indicating that burials from the early medieval period may exist here. Among the intricately-carved headstones is the grave of a man who survived 27 battles, including Waterloo. The unusual large stone building at the top of the churchyard has a tale to tell which is recorded in section 7.5 above.

The line of the modern road (A494(T)) is obviously not shown on the 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1455 3171-6 2 May 1946), which instead show it following a line along the south side of the settlement. Interestingly, this road shows a diversion from a (previously) obviously straight road, and a number of buildings along the line of what is now the main road have since been demolished.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Semi-nucleated settlement, 18th - and 19th -century architecture*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Non-nucleated settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Dense scattered settlement - 19th/20th century*

The high status of Llanfor as a medieval settlement is not evident in the character, form or layout of the modern village. It does not have a market place or any particular central focus. The collection of

older stone buildings is not positioned to follow a single street frontage, and the village has a haphazard layout reflecting its organic development. The village layout is loosely based around the church, with housing on the west side of the churchyard encroaching on its boundary. The road that runs north-south through the village centre curves around the churchyard with small cottages lining it. Apart from a modern housing estate attached to the west side of the village, the layout remains largely unchanged from that shown on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map (1888).

The settlement is compact and appears as a nucleated group of farmsteads in the centre of the fertile, managed arable farmland associated with the Rhiwlas estate. It is a leafy village where most of the buildings date to the 18th and 19th centuries. The dominant building style is small one- or two-storey dwellings built from large blocks of local stone, with slate roofs. Some of the buildings use dressed stone but most are built from rubble and/or boulders, many of which are water-worn and rounded. Pen Isa'r-Llan, the farm that borders the southern extent of the village, has a different character from the rest of the settlement. It includes an early 17th-century barn but is enclosed within a formal courtyard that has the appearance of an estate holding. 'Garth' row is a designed terrace, probably originally four houses, formerly part of the estate. The house adjacent to the main road has a substantial hay/corn barn in the courtyard behind, which itself was carefully laid out and implies the farm was originally stock-orientated.

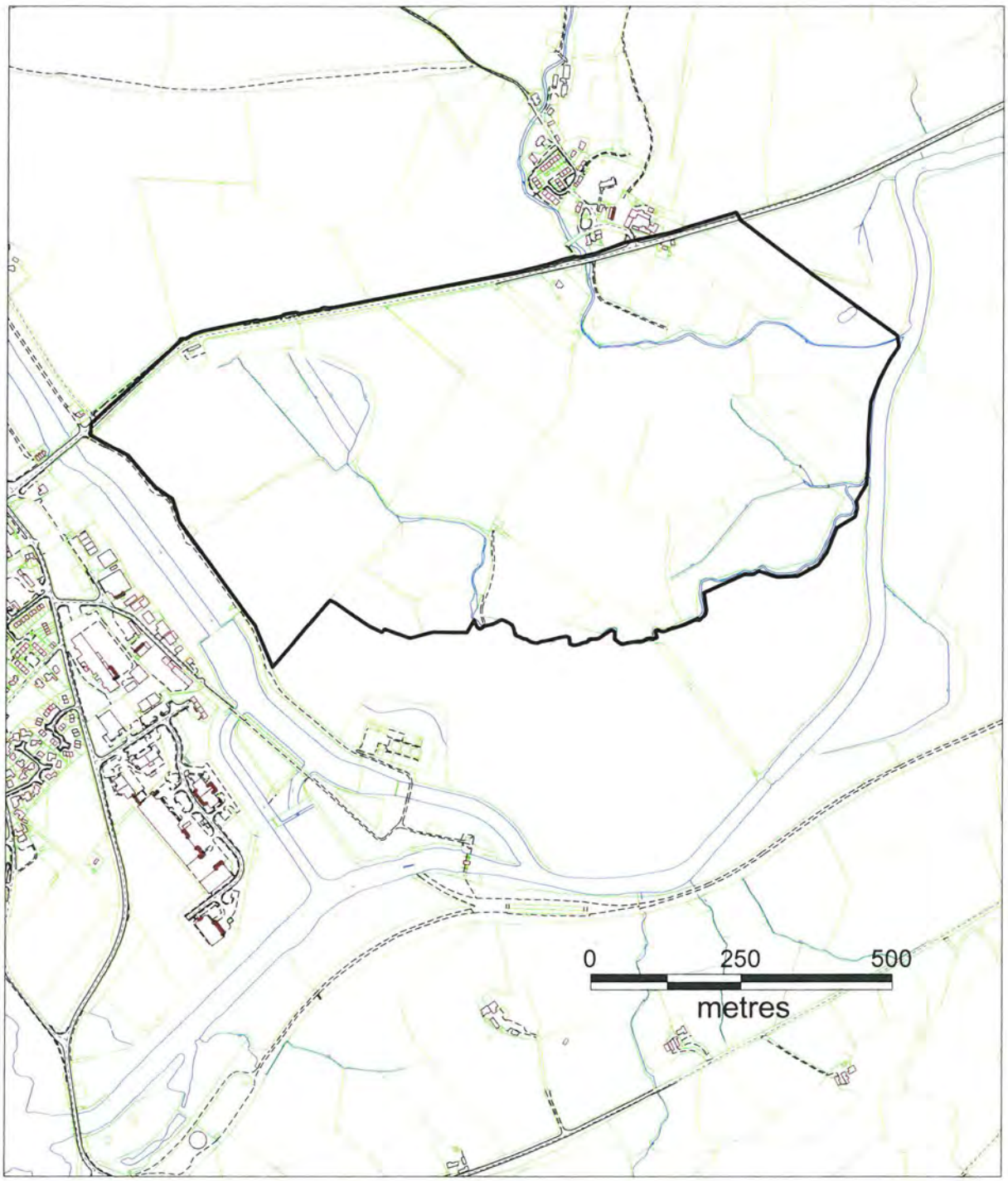
The scheduled earthwork ringwork, on the edge of the settlement, probably of early medieval date, is covered in trees and suffers from some active animal damage.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies entirely outside Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the group of vernacular buildings adjacent to the church.

**06 Llanfor** **PRN 24706**

Semi-nucleated settlement, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 07 - Llanfor Roman sites

N

## 07 Llanfor Roman sites (PRN 24707)

### *Historic background*

In the dry summers of 1975 and 1976, a series of parch-marks in permanent pasture revealed a previously unknown Roman military complex (Frere and St Joseph, 1983). The siting of the 1997 National Eisteddfod on the site prompted further study of the aerial photographs and a programme of geophysical survey (Crew 1997). The geophysical survey confirmed and added to the already detailed crop-mark evidence over much of the site and also revealed several new sites unrelated to the Roman remains; these included three circular ditched sites thought to be bronze age barrows. During 2002/2003 further geophysical survey work was undertaken over a larger area which incorporated a detailed study of the fort itself (Hopewell, 2003).

Roman features in the area comprise a 3.8 hectare fort and polygonal enclosure and a large (11 hectare) temporary camp, with a smaller camp overlapping its north-west corner. The fort is thought to predate the camp but phasing and dating of any part of the site has proven difficult. A series of rectangular anomalies containing possible hearths has been identified alongside the road leading from the north gate of the fort. These features are thought to represent a timber-built *vicus*. There is further evidence for settlement structures alongside another possible road running north-east from the fort.

The fort itself is almost square, with dimensions of 202m x 184m including the ramparts. The outer defences consist of three ditches on all sides apart from the northern part of the western defences where a steep banked stream may have acted as a natural defence. The inner ditch can be traced across the *porta decumana* and the *porta principalis dextra*, where it is presumed bridges would have been used to access the fort. The ramparts are thought to have been of simple turf construction, although it is possible that some timber facing could have been used.

Within the fort the layout is similar to other local examples, although Llanfor is twice the size of any of the auxiliary forts that characterise the Flavian garrisoning of Wales and displays some unusual features. Two colonnaded courtyard buildings are centrally located, thought to be the *principia* and the *praetorium,* and are reminiscent of designs at Pen Llystyn to the north. A series of subdivided buildings has been interpreted as barrack blocks (*centuriae*). Each single barrack has dimensions of 60m x 10m. This is a little larger than the typical 45 to 50m long auxiliary barracks found elsewhere in Wales (Nash Williams, 1969), and smaller than the usual 75m long examples from legionary forts. A large granary (48m x 16m), defined by parallel slots for the floor supports, stands to the south of the *via praetoria*. Geophysical evidence suggests that this may have been possibly destroyed by fire. Another unusually-shaped structure could be a *fabrica*, the hearth-type anomalies on the geophysical survey representing some sort of metalworking activity. Speculative interpretations also identify a possible yard and bathhouse. The fort seems to have been built entirely from wood and constructed in a single phase.

The 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1455 3171-6 2 May 1946) show a few parkland trees in the north-west corner of the area near the road and along one boundary, with the majority of the enclosures remaining the same.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Buried Roman archaeological remains*
*Level 3 Military*

*Level 4 Roman military*

This landscape area, at the confluence of two rivers, but not within the flood plain of either, is a typical location for a Roman settlement. The low-lying defensible location has good access, is sheltered and yet commands the whole valley floor for a mile downstream.

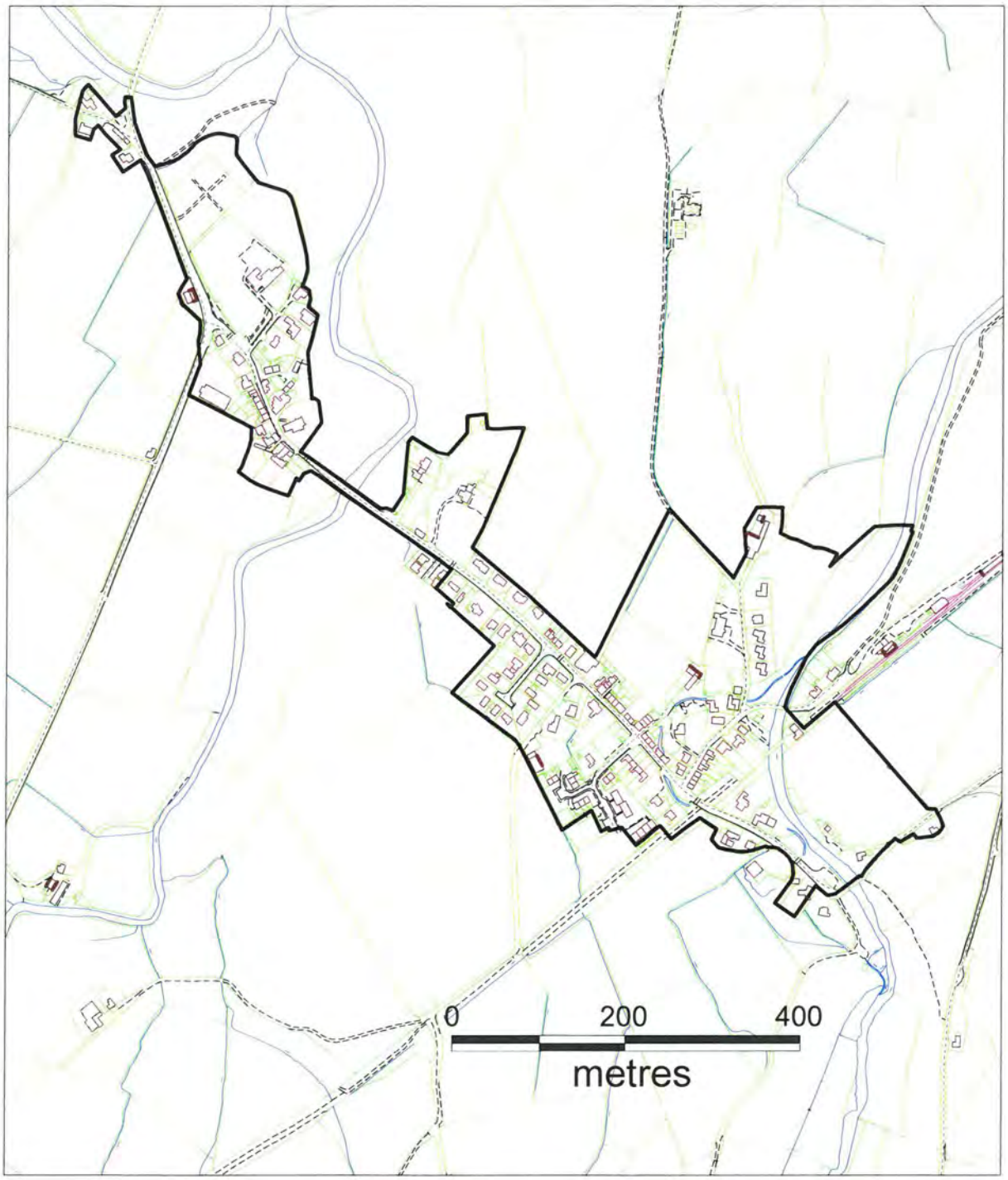
The 60ha area within the flat river valley floor consists of enclosed pasture land with occasional wooded areas. This planned farmland is part of the extended agricultural landscape associated with the Rhiwlas Estate. Although some low scarps are visible on the ground there are no earthworks or ramparts. The extensive archaeological remains survive for the most part only as buried features (see photograph).

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies almost entirely outside Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation and investigation of buried archaeological remains.
- Protection of nationally important monument: the fort and its environs are legally protected through designation as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Me092)

**07 Llanfor Roman sites** **PRN 24707**

Buried Roman archaeological remains




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 08 - Llanuwchllyn

N

## 08 Llanuwchllyn (PRN 24708)

### *Historic background*

The first Nonconformist place of worship here was built in 1743 by the Independents on the site of the building then known as Hen Gapel. The Calvinist Methodists built their first chapel in 1802 at Pandy, now a dwelling, and its successor, known as Capel Glan Aber, in 1872 (Hughes, c.1900).

Llanuwchllyn is shown on the tithe map of 1849 (DRO), when much of the parish was owned by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, 6th baronet, of Denbighshire. Few buildings are shown, even in the main settlement, and these include the church (one of the four medieval churches in the study area - see above, section 6.6), Ty'n Llan (to the north-west), Plasdeon (to the south-east, over the river) and on opposite sides of the road (modern B4403), also to the east, 'Plasdeon homestead' and 'Factory homestead', both of which were owned by a certain John Jones. The road layout as shown on the map in and around the village remains the same as that of today.

Llanuwchllyn was the birthplace of two prominent Welshmen, whose statues stand at the entrance to the village: the background of the Edwards monument symbolises the youth of Wales tending the culture of Wales, and is characteristic of the Bala region. Sir O M Edwards, educator and writer, was born at Coed-y-pry, Llanuwchllyn, Merioneth, on 26 December 1858. (For a brief summary of his life, see Bowen, 1972, 161.) He attended the old schoolhouse built by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn in 1841 (which stands about 100 yards from the statues, by an old cast iron water pump made to celebrate the birth of one of the Williams Wynns), where he was regularly punished for speaking Welsh whilst at school. He went on the University College of Wales and Oxford University. He wrote or edited 90 books, and after a time as MP for Merioneth, he devoted the last 15 years of his life to the community of Llanuwchllyn, as chairman of the parish council and Sunday school teacher, before dying in Llanuwchllyn in 1920.

His son, Sir Ifan ab Owen Edwards (1895-1970), founded the Urdd Gobaith Cymru (The Welsh League of Youth), and Glanllyn, a nearby 19th -century mansion (area 14), ironically built by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn as a shooting lodge, is now used by the Urdd as a centre for its activities.

The prodigious flood of 1781 (see area 14) swept away the greater part of the village, and the replacement houses and a large meeting house were built of stones brought down by the flood, after they had been blasted and broken. The lake (area 01) was covered by the debris of the earlier village which took 3 years to clear away.

The 1947 RAF vertical aerial photographs (CPE UK1492/4100) show Llanuwchllyn as a very small ribbon settlement, with a concentration at the north-west end and a few more houses just along the road to the south-east, with a small cluster to the north of this.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Semi-nucleated settlement, 18th - and 19th -century architecture*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Nucleated settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Clustered settlement - 19th/20th century*

Llanuwchllyn has the appearance of a mid-19th -century workers' settlement, dominated by terraced rows. Unlike Llanfor, the majority of the tightly-packed housing is located on the main street that runs roughly north-south through the centre of the village, and reflects a tradition of planned development of non-agricultural dwellings during that period. Otherwise, the only other main

concentrations are an irregular but tight cluster around the church and a later one around the station to the south-east.

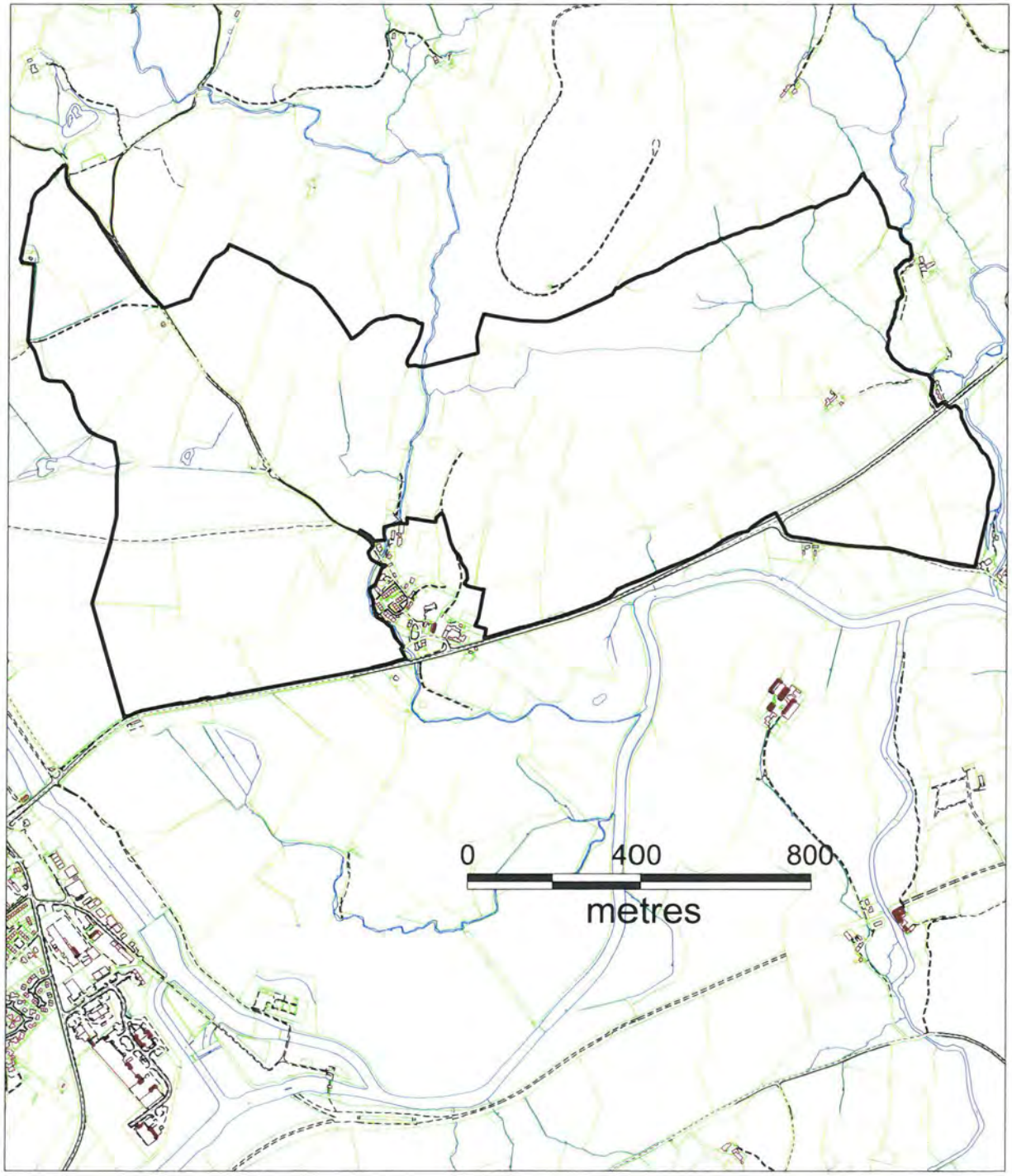
The stone building style is, in the main, quite traditional, and in the vernacular tradition: some buildings have windows and doors which retain an aura of the Gothic, and some have yellow brick lintels which are particularly distinctive. The surrounding village landscape consists of large, detached dwellings (some almost with the appearance of villas), dating to the later 19th - and 20th - centuries and including some significant properties, belonging to the tail-end of the gentry tradition, although there are also many modern houses. Little of the sub-medieval character suggested by the tithe map (centred both on the church and to the south of the river) remains in the village today. The small estates with attached plantations are no longer evident.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the vernacular architectural character of the 'older' parts of the village.
- Conservation of outward signs of the cultural associations of the village.
- Conservation of the associations with the lake railway (area 17).

**08 Llanuwchllyn** **PRN 24708**

Semi-nucleated settlement, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 09 - Wooded slopes above Rhiwlas

N

## 09 Wooded slopes above Rhiwlas (PRN 24709)

### *Historic background*

This area is poorly recorded on early maps, although sources and fieldwork suggest that it was probably formerly a part of the Rhiwlas estate (area 05). The Llanfor tithe map (1849 - see above, section 6.6) covers the northern part of the study area, and examination of recent aerial photographs seems to show that little change has since taken place in the field pattern depicted then.

The 1948 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1455 3174-8 2 May 1946) show a field pattern much the same as exists today, interspersed with similar areas of woodland, with uninmproved fields at the top of the hillslope below the forestry.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Irregular fieldscapes, woodland*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Irregular fieldscapes*

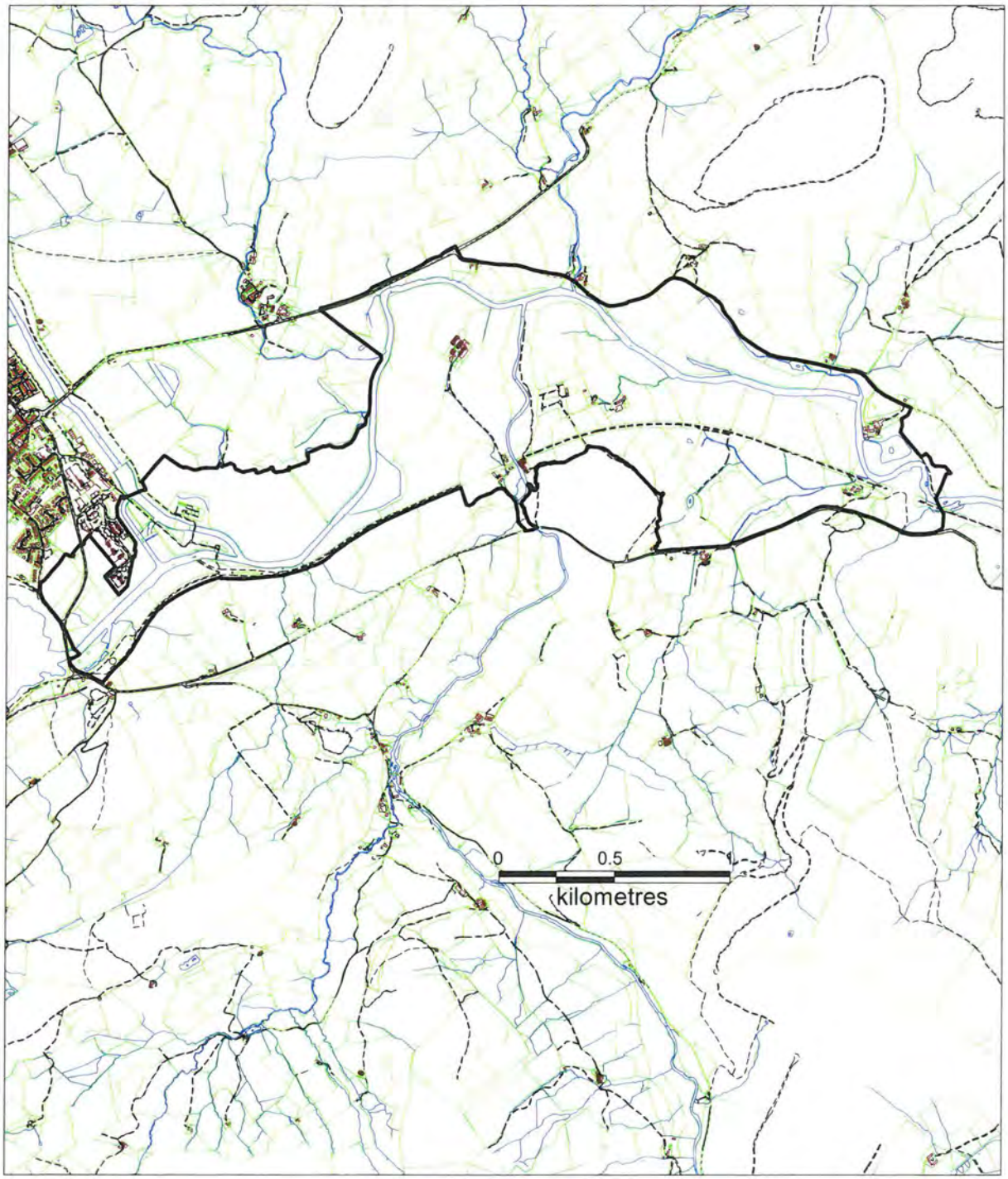
The character of this area is fairly uniform, largely comprising steep, wooded hill slopes of pasture grassland dominated by parkland trees with a few hedgerows (many now disused), forming no obvious pattern, although the fields are smaller and more irregular on the hillslopes here than in the valley bottom below (area 10). The area appears to be grazed by cattle.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

- The area lies entirely outside Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the 'parkland-type' trees and open pasture.

**09 Wooded slopes above Rhiwlas** **PRN 24709**

Irregular fieldscapes, dispersed woodland




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 10 - River Dee floodplain

N

## 10 River Dee floodplain (PRN 24710)

### *Historic background*

The infant River Dee is swelled by the rivers Lliw and Twrch near Llanuwchllyn (area 14) before flowing through the lake to become a sizeable river near Bala, where it is joined by another tributary, the Tryweryn. Beyond this it continues to flow east and out of the study area. The 1km wide, flat valley floor is at 160m above OD, while the surrounding sides rise fairly steeply to between 250m and 500m above OD, where there is a series of rounded hills, ridges and upland plateaux. The valley provides a natural route corridor across north Wales, and its strategic importance in the past explains the succession and concentration of defensive sites and settlements located in the area.

There are no prehistoric monuments within this character area but evidence for prehistoric activity has been discovered hereabouts, along the north east shore of Lake Bala (area 01 – see above, section 6.3). In the 18th century, Reverend John Peter discovered several pieces of mesolithic flint work including a knife, several scrapers and some cores and flakes, the bi-products of flint working. He postulated that a lost settlement must lie beneath the waters of Lake Bala. However for the nomadic people of the mesolithic, it is more likely that this waterside location with gentle breezes and plentiful fish stocks would have been the ideal location for a seasonal, lowland hunting camp.

The biggest impacts on this landscape probably occurred during the post-medieval period, alongside Afon Tryweryn and at the point where this watercourse meets the River Dee (Afon Dyfrdwy). The Llanfor tithe map (1849), which covers the area, certainly implies that the river has changed course since then. However, the field pattern depicted large, fairly regular enclosures, showing that little change has taken place since.

The construction of the Bala & Ffestiniog railway in 1882 had a marked impact locally, bringing industrial development and commerce (area 04) to what had previously been an undeveloped floodplain. According to Berry (2004, 15), in the 1890s, engineers from London came to survey the possibility of making a dam by Bodweni, where the Dee valley is narrow. The resulting lake would have drowned Y Bala. According to the plan, Y Bala would have been rebuilt between Cefn-ddwysarn and Llandderfel.

The 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1468 2473), show that the meander of the river here to the north of Bala was still evident (see below), although the majority of the fields were the same as they are today. Further east, the line of the modern road (B4391) is obviously slightly different to that shown on the 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1455 3171-6 2 May 1946), particularly in that it has been straightened to avoid the southern kink towards Rhos-y-gwaliau, although generally-speaking the fieldscape has remained unchanged (although the large pool to the south of Bodwen did not exist then).

In 1952, a water works scheme diverted the course of both rivers, truncating a large section of the river Tryweryn. The flood detention and compensation storage works were designed to pump 50,000,000 gallons of water per day to West Cheshire, Wrexham and atomic energy developments in Wirral.

The 1957 RAF vertical aerial photographs (58/2122/48 (Flight 21), 12/03/1957) show the recent canalisation work on the Dee and Trweryn at the top of the lake. The railway station and railway are still intact.

***Key historic landscape characteristics***

*Water and wetland, irregular fieldscape, river valley*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Water & wetland - Irregular fieldscape*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Natural lakes & watercourses - Evolved/mixed*

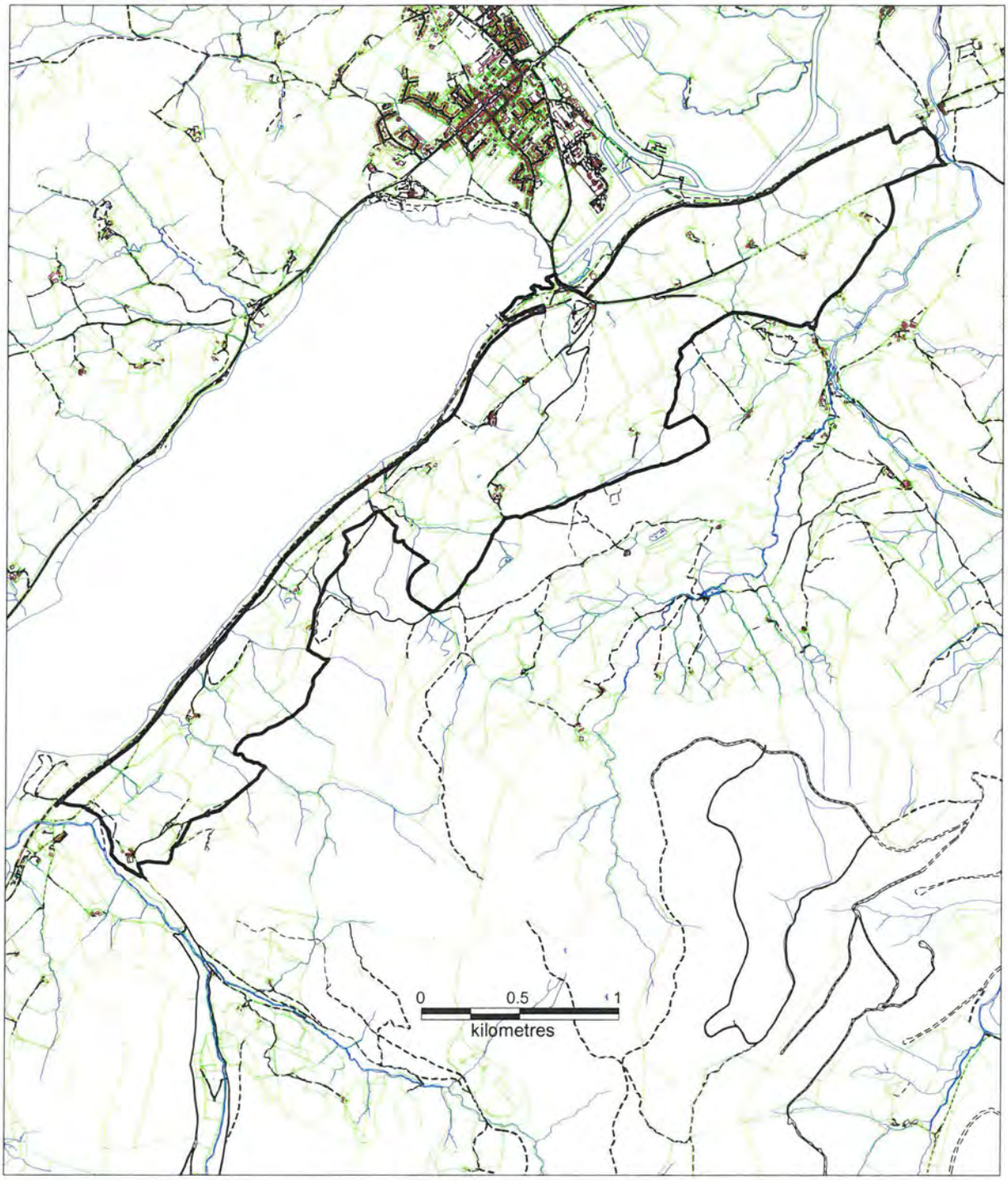
The area, a large, flat river valley bottom, characterised by open pasture, grazed by cattle and punctuated by mature trees. The boundaries that do exist, dividing the floodplain into irregular fields, are mainly earthen banks, some topped by trees and hedgerows, all giving the appearance of improved estate land. There are two substantial farm residences in the centre of the area. The railway that runs along the edge of the area is now derelict.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies almost entirely (except for its western end) outside Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of peaceful, rural nature of the area.

**10 River Dee floodplain** **PRN 24710**

Irregular fieldscape, water & wetland, river valley




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 11 - Fieldscape above railway (north)

N

## 11 Fieldscape above railway (north) (PRN 24711)

### *Historic background*

The nature of the land and settlement here adds to the overwhelming impression of a picturesque landscape around Bala. The rural nature of the area has changed little since the 1840s tithe maps which show large, irregular parcels of land, interspersed with areas of woodland. Most of the houses in existence today are also shown then, and are probably early 19th -century in date. There is no (archaeological) evidence for earlier settlement or land use.

The field pattern depicted on the 1844 tithe map shows larger enclosures than in area 13 (on the same hill slopes but further to the south-west), and much of it is shown as being fairly heavily wooded. In the south of the area, Pant-yr-onen, for example, is an interesting building surrounded on its uphill side by woodland (an important feature of this area in general), with a smaller plot below; while the woodland (and drive) shown north of Bryn Hynod still exists. Several cowhouses are also shown in the area. The holdings adjoining the lakeside are fairly uniform in appearance, with some having the appearance of having been amalgamated ahead of the construction of the railway.

The northern part of the area is covered by the Llanfor tithe map (1849), which shows a series of small, irregular fields around the farms of Garth-lwyd and Y Garnedd towards the eastern edge of the area, much as they are now. As with area 13, the upper edge of the area follows the line of the former unenclosed (now designated 'Access') land.

The 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1468 2475), show that the northern part of this character area, particularly the fields below Fridd Fach-ddeiniog, were exactly as they are today, with few trees and possibly crops of grass being cut. However, they do show the woodland around Ffridd Fach-ddeiniog as loosely planted , especially towards east end and southwards towards Graienyn. Also at this end, the area between the road and the railway remains unchanged since then, with smaller fields in the road junction, and the open area with trees around Bryn-y-aber.

Further south, the photographs (106G/UK 1468 4363), show that the main road has altered its line slightly, while the extent of trees is much the same and the fields between Tan y bryn and Wenallt are open and unchanged, as is the land around Ffridd Uchaf. The tree-dominated landscape remains around Bryntirion, and Coed Bryn Hynod is much the same as now, only more sparsely planted (it has since also spread south uphill). The fields to the east are much the same.

The 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1455 3171-6 2 May 1946) clearly show the very noticeable difference between this area (south of the railway) and area 10, whose dividing line follows the bottom contour of the hill slope.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Steep hill slope pastures, irregular fieldscape, Picturesque landscape and houses*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Irregular fieldscape*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Evolved/mixed*

There are indications that the eastern part of this area was owned and heavily influenced by the Rhiwlas estate. Pen y Garth is a classic example of an estate-built house, and there are also signs of the influence of the estate in the buildings at Bryn yr Aber (below the road – SH936355). In this area (just to the north of the road) there are several examples of an interesting form of field boundary which resemble a ha-ha, presumably intended so that one could look out from the house at Rhiwlas

and have an uninterrupted view of the estate land to the top of the hill opposite. Ty'n y Wern on the edge of the area in the east is a good surviving example of a modest early farm with outbuildings.

Moving west, the remainder of the area is characterised by steep pasture slopes, with a considerable number of trees and woodland and some rocky outcrops. It is a classic example of an early, working landscape, altered in the 19th century for more aesthetic purposes. The fields here, being rich in lime, support a number of rare flowers, including marsh hawksbeard, upright vetch, marsh orchid and, rarest of all, the frog orchid.

Y Fachddeiniog is an early 19th-century house, probably built under the influence of Sir Richard Colt-Hoare, and is a classic example of an early villa, or holiday home, again linked to the Picturesque: it was specifically designed for its views, being only one room deep so that one could see across the lake from every room (although not actually either end of it): interestingly, it has an outside kitchen. Other houses along this hill slope (for example Bryntirion and Bryn Hynod) may date from the same period (and have originally served a similar function). Pant-yr-onen, slightly higher up and on the edge of the area, is a squat, stone-built structure, decorative rather than practical in design and intent. They are all gentry enclosures, rather than working farms, surrounded by plantations of mature trees.

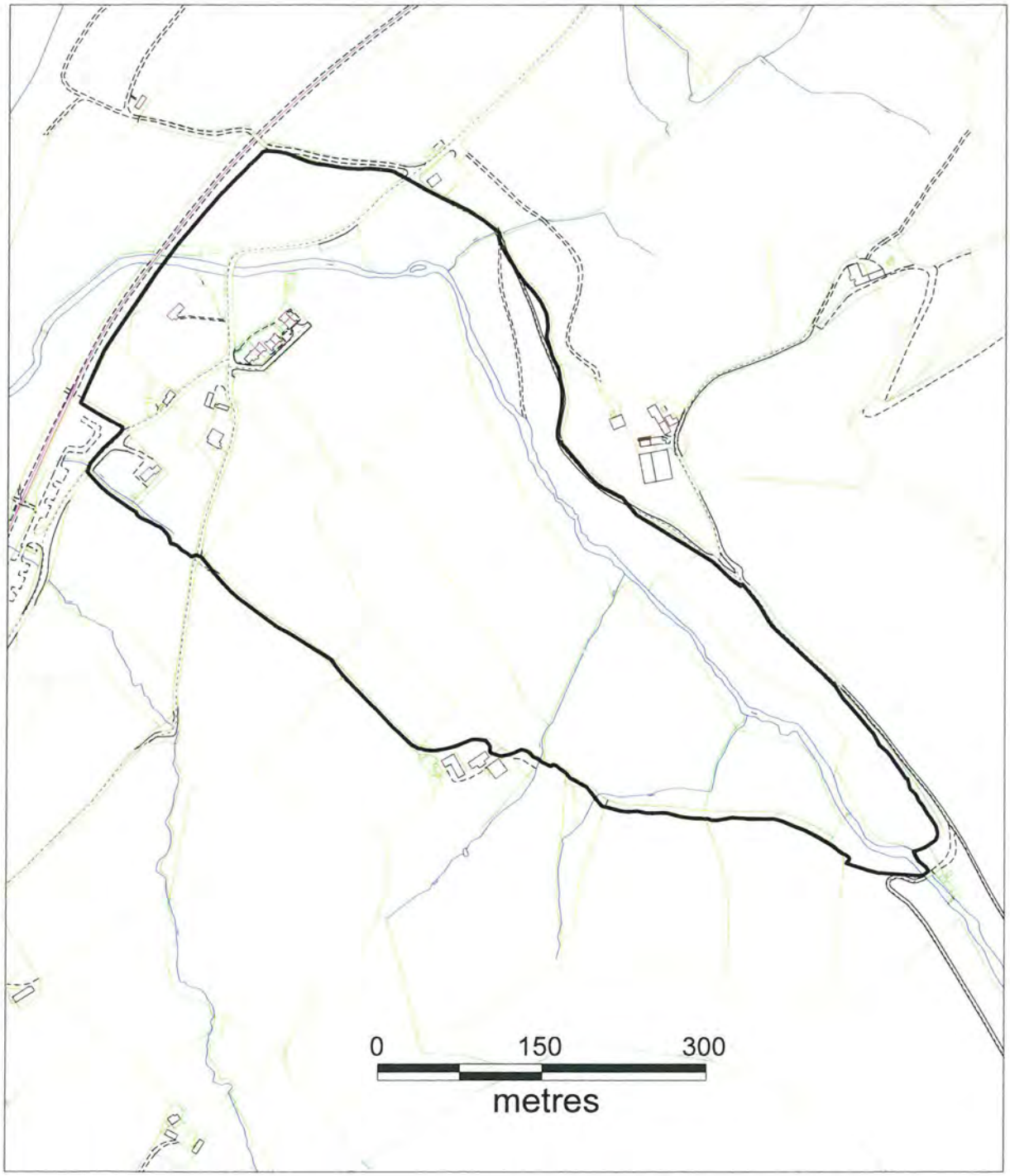
The field boundaries are largely well-tended hedgerows, many with trees. Where the traditional boundaries have fallen into disrepair they have been replaced by post-and-wire fences. Coed Graienyn is owned by the National Trust. There are also several trackways in the area, which are now public footpaths.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The southern part of the area lies within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the rural character of the area.
- Conservation of the dispersed settlement pattern.
- Conservation of the architectural character of the area.
- Conservation of the rare floral interest.

**11 Fieldscape above railway (north)** **PRN 24711**

Steep hill slope pastures, irregular fieldscape, scattered woodland & historic plantations




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 12 - Llangower

N

## 12 Llangower (PRN 24712)

### *Historic background*

Llangower is depicted on the 1844 tithe map as a very small, nucleated settlement, strategically placed at the end of a narrow defile running back into the hills, on flat land above the southern side of the lake, astride the former turnpike road from Dinas Mawddwy to Y Bala/Corwen. The settlement then simply comprised a churchyard and rectory with garden (as today), with the road following the same route (the railway was obviously not then in existence). The small, single-cell church, dedicated to St Cywair, was rebuilt in 1780-82 and restored in 1871. It contains one of the last horse biers to be in use (reputedly until the late 19th century) in north Wales. The churchyard is roughly square and is cut into the natural slope. There is a large yew tree on a mound in the east section, and a low mound on the south side with older gravestones on and around it.

The 1948 RAF vertical aerial photographs (CPE/UK/2492 4072-6 11th March 1948) show Llangower as simply comprising the churchyard, the rectory and another house to the west of that. However, the strip of land running up alongside the Afon Glyn above appears much more heavily wooded than it is today.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Loosely nucleated settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Non-nucleated settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Clustered settlement - 19th/20th century*

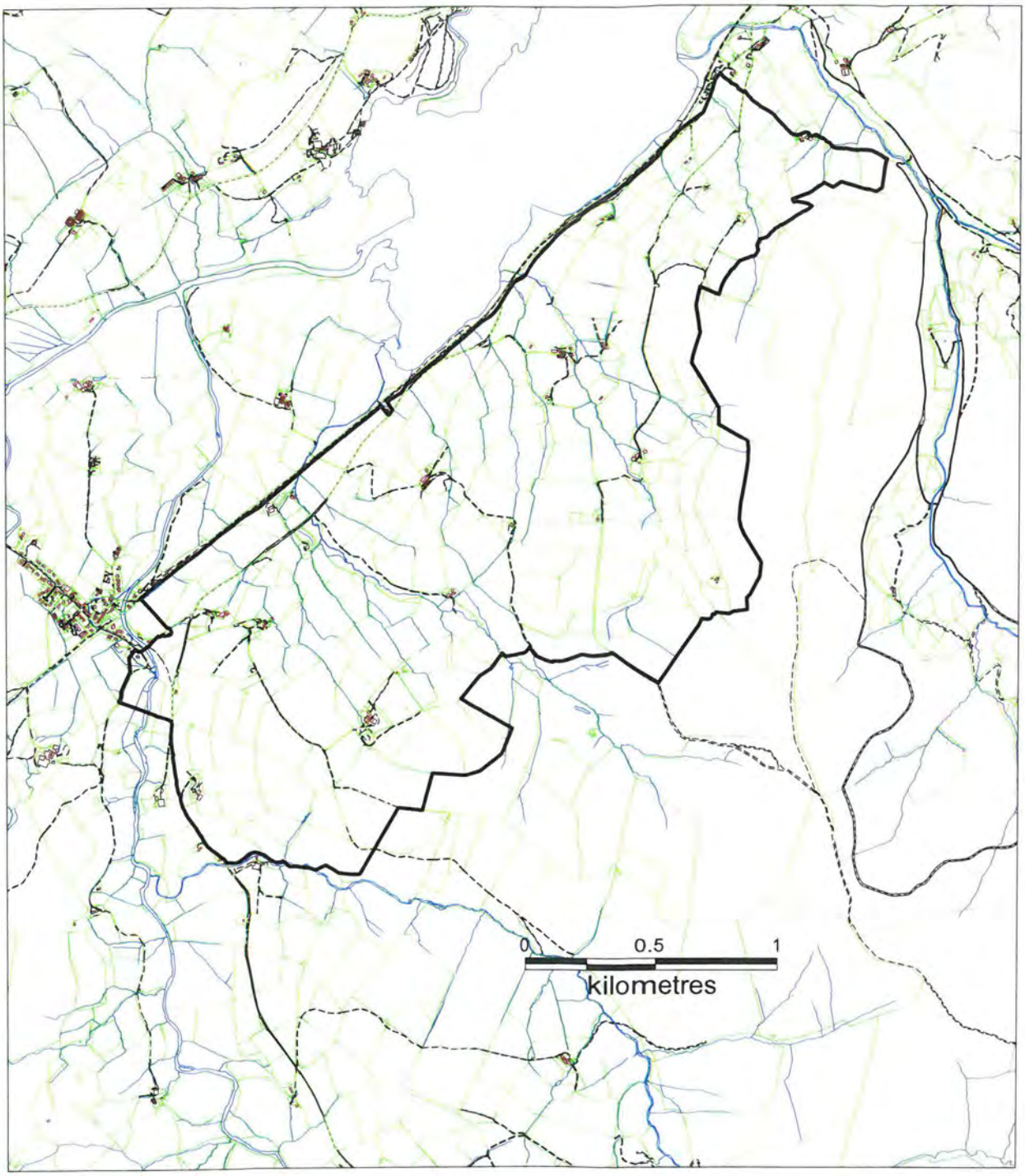
The architectural character of this small, disparate settlement is fairly anonymous, with a scatter of 19th - and 20th -century buildings. There is actually very little to the village itself.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the character of the church and settlement.

**12 Llangower** **PRN 24712**

Loosely nucleated settlement, medieval foundation




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 13 - Fieldscape above railway (south)

N

## 13 Fieldscape above railway (south) (PRN 24713)

### *Historic background*

Little is known about the historical development of this area. The south-west part of the study area (including this character area) is covered by the tithe map for Llanuwchllyn (1849), when much of the parish was owned by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn who had a shooting lodge built at Glanllyn (area 14).

Although it shares the same steep slopes above the river and lake basin as area 11 (to the north-east), this is a distinctively separate character area, occupying an area leading up to the house at Gyrn. Many of the houses here, scattered farmsteads and other houses, including Felindre, Bryncocyn, Pantymarch, Llechweddystrad and Gyrn, are recorded on the tithe map. Almost all of the settlements remain as shown on the 1840s tithe map, and appear to be early 19th-century houses well-sited on natural prominent hills: all are referred to simply as 'house' (although Felindre is surrounded by an interesting, small enclosure, which might be a garden), and the settlement pattern appears to be much the same as today.

The 1948 RAF vertical aerial photographs (CPE/UK/2492 4072-6 11th March 1948) show the area much the same as today, much less wooded than area 11, but with trees on several of the boundaries. The fields are the same, while the woodland on the southern extent of the area had just been planted in part, part under way. Interestingly a couple of enclosures (possibly prehistoric in date/character) are visible here (probably the best potential evidence for prehistoric settlement in the study area). The group of six regular fields to the north of Pentre-cogwrn were, as now, distinct from the remainder of the irregular enclosures in the rest of the area.

The best potential for prehistoric settlement outside area 07 is the southern (upper) end of area 13. Obvious enclosures on the 1957 aerial photographs (58/2122/145-53 (Flight 22) 12/03/1957), confirmed by more recent maps, show two or three small sub-circular enclosures preserved by later field walls immediately south of Llechweddystrad, near Bryn Hynod and around the other farms here.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Irregular fieldscape, scattered settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Irregular fieldscape*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Irregular fieldscape - evolved/mixed*

The fieldscape within the area is dominated by a sweeping (sometimes steep) pasture landscape, divided into large, irregular enclosures by hedgebanks with trees. It is a more open landscape than that of area 11, with fewer trees and boundaries.

The field pattern is also largely unchanged, comprising a series of irregular enclosures divided up amongst the houses already mentioned. A couple of probable cow-houses are recorded in the vicinity of Llechweddystrad, otherwise no details of the agricultural regime are recorded.

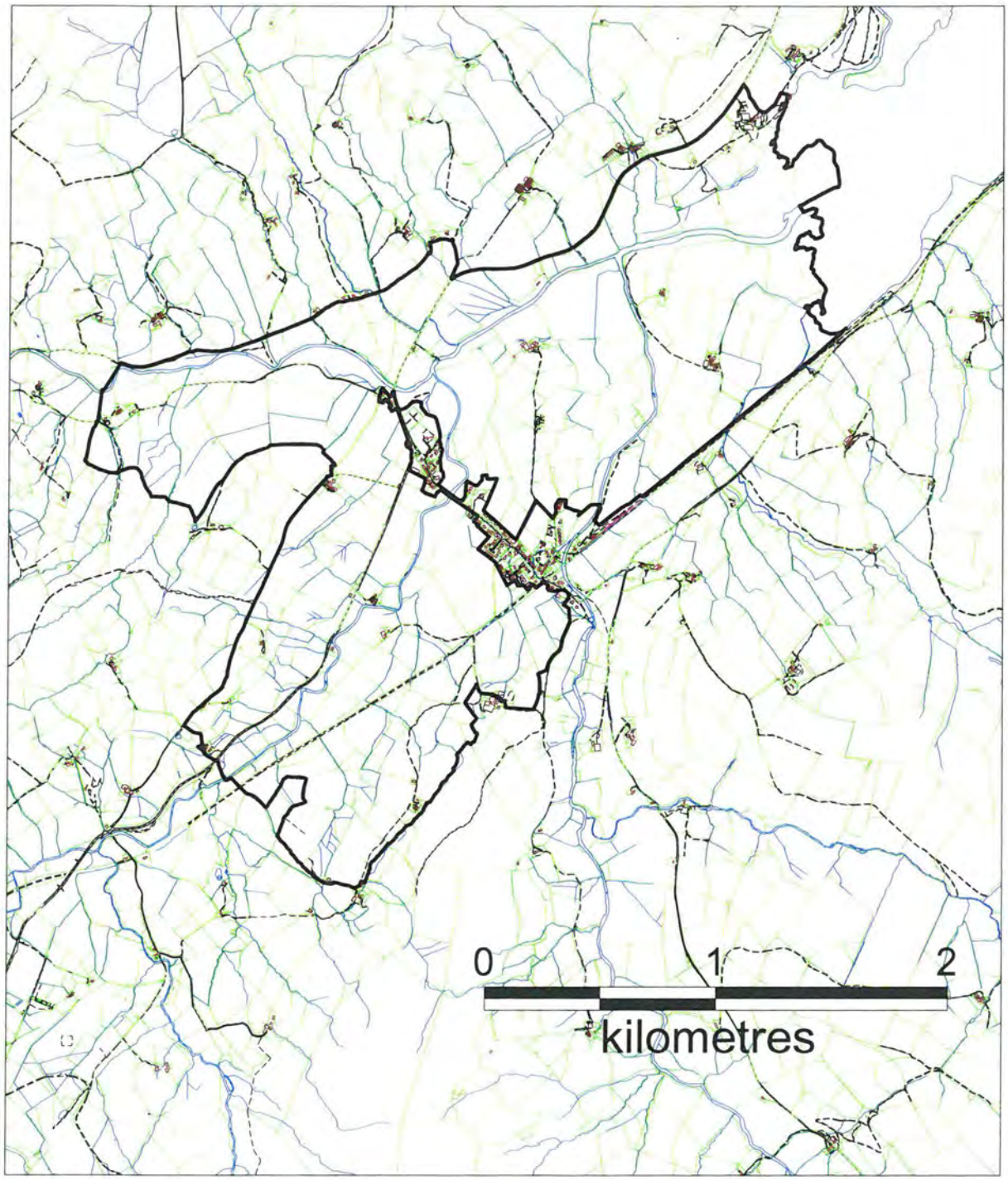
The area higher up the slopes to the south (*e.g.* above Bwlch-y-fwlet) is recorded as 'Common', a fact retained in its current status as CRoW-designated 'Access' land. This seemed to form a logical edge to the project area, and in particular character areas 11, 13 and 16.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the open nature of the semi-improved pasture.
- Conservation of the architectural character of the area.

**13 Fieldscape above railway (south)** **PRN 24713**

Irregular fieldscape, scattered settlement




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 14 - Floodplain south-west of lake

N

## 14 Floodplain south-west of lake (PRN 24714)

### *Historic background*

The low-lying area to the south-west of Llyn Tegid (area 01), physically centred on the house of Dolfawr (SH886307) and surrounding the village of Llanuwchllyn (area 08), is a distinctive character area. The 1849 tithe map for Llanuwchllyn, when much of the parish, including almost all the holdings around Llanuwchllyn, was owned by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn (6th baronet), as part of the Glanllyn estate, does not contain much detail, but shows an area characterised by largish irregular enclosures, as well as a series of small islands at the end of the lake (which are now a breeding ground for wild birds). Dolfawr and Madog are both recorded on the tithe map as house and garden, but no details of the agricultural regime are recorded.

The 18th -century traveller, Reverend W. Bingley, noted that Llyn Tegid was subject to 'dreadful' overflowings, while other sources record a massive torrent in June 1781 when the Twrch overflowed its banks and the floods rushed over the Vale of Edeirnion to the south, killing several people and animals, destroying 17 houses and 5 bridges and inundating acres of meadows and cornfields. This resulted in the land being covered by so many stones that it was not considered worthwhile clearing them away. The Welsh lawyer Richard Fenton described the catastrophe in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1813).

Glanllyn, a 19th-century mansion built on an earlier foundation on the north side of the lake and at the heart of the eponymous estate, was largely used by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn during the shooting season. Fenton (1804-13) describes the 'new house at the end of the lake', as a 'heavy and gloomy building'. Apparently, nothing came of it! Glanllyn, originally Ty'n y Wern, was visited by Queen Victoria and Princess Beatrice in August 1889, while they were staying at nearby Pale (Hughes, 1900). During the First World War, seals were kept in the outbuildings here as part of an experiment to see whether they could detect submarines. It is now used by the Urdd (see area 08) as a centre for its outdoor activities (Berry, 2004, 18).

The 1948 RAF vertical aerial photographs (CPE/UK/2492 4072-6 11th March 1948) very clearly show silting where the Afon Dyfrdwy enters the lake. The large fields around Madog and Dolfawr remain unchanged as far west as Dol-fach. Some of the boundaries have trees.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Irregular fieldscape, water and wetland*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Irregular fieldscape*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Irregular fieldscape - evolved/mixed*

This low-lying floodplain at the south-western end of Llyn Tegid is divided up by the Afon Dyfrdwy and Afon Twrch, which flow into the lake. The rural area is characterised by a series of irregular fields, delineated by earthen banks, with little settlement. The marshy land and islands adjacent to the lake itself constitute a bird sanctuary where shallow waters and marshy ground favour breeding by wildfowl and waders (incorporated in the Llyn Tegid SSSI). The simple road layout as shown on the tithe map in and around Llanuwchllyn remains the same today.

Gwersyll yr Urdd Glanllyn is a multi-activity centre situated on the shores of Llyn Tegid, a mile from the village of Llanuwchllyn (see above). It was established as an outdoor activity centre in 1950 around the 'Old Mansion House', and is part of the Urdd, the largest youth movement in Wales. Over

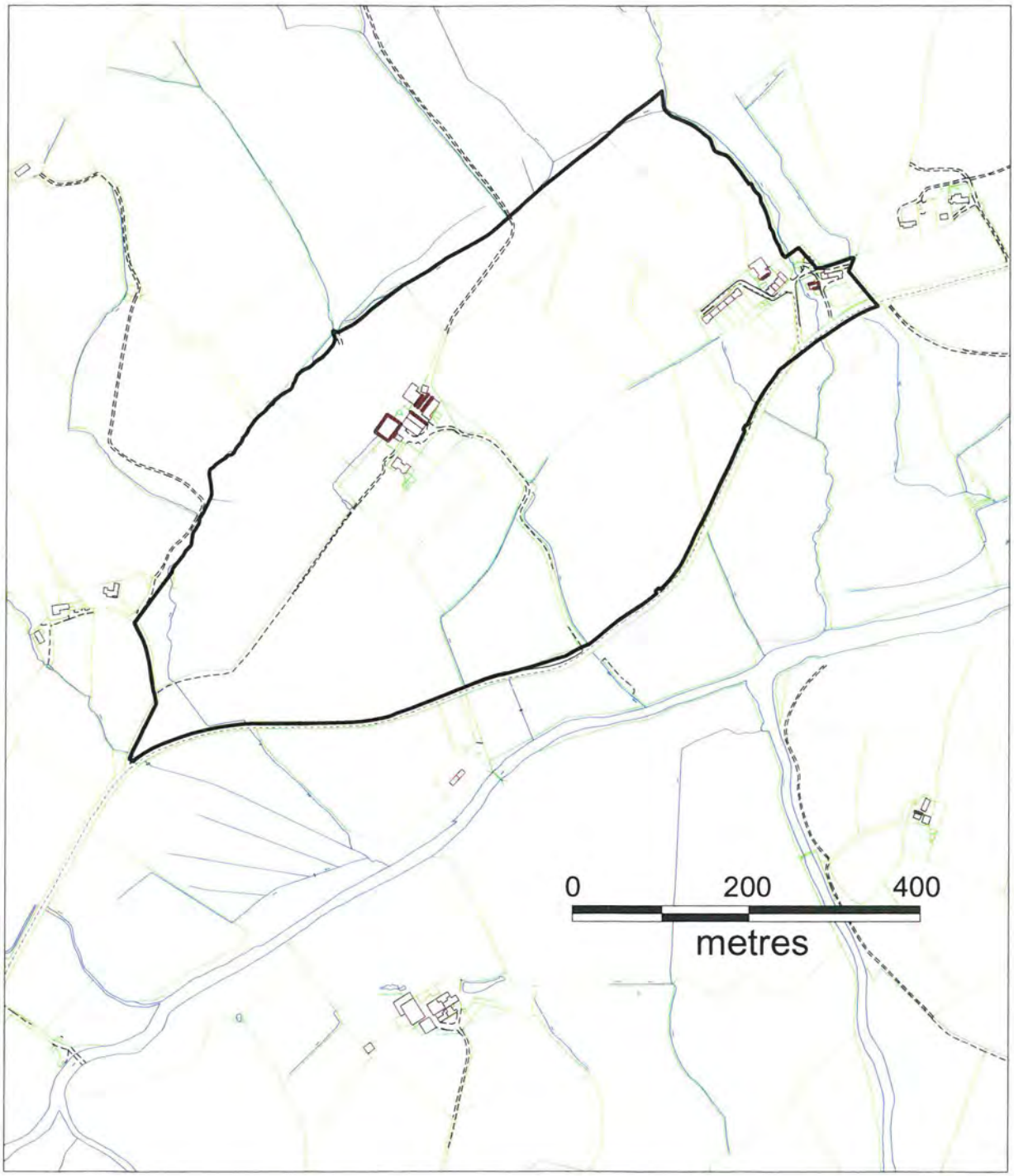
the years, accommodation has changed from old wooden huts and tents to *en-suite* facilities. It organises activity courses, and can cater for 230 residents.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the bird sanctuary (incorporated in the Llyn Tegid SSSI).
- Conservation of rural, open nature of the area.

**14 Floodplain south-west of lake** **PRN 24714**

Irregular fieldscape, water and wetland




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 15 - Caer Gai Roman complex

N

## 15 Caer Gai Roman complex (PRN 24715)

### *Historic background*

Caer Gai is a Roman auxiliary fort, garrisoned c. AD 75-80 to 130, that stands on a rounded spur on the left bank of the River Dee close to the south-west end of Llyn Tegid. The name is Welsh and taken from the legend of the giant Cai Hir: the Roman name is unknown.

The earliest part of the fort is a rectangular turf rampart that has been dated to AD 70-85. The rampart is best-preserved on the south-west side where it stands almost complete in the form of a bank 8m wide. Both the south and south-west corners are excellently preserved with the ditch curved around them. The bank is surmounted by a modern field wall, probably partly overlying the foundations of the original Roman stone wall that surrounded the whole area, and incorporates a few of its squared stones. The original south-west gateway is in the centre of this side below the disused avenue, which leads up to the enclosure. It is marked by a rampart about 4m wide. Round the west corner the rampart and ditch are well-preserved and on the north side there is a low bank on the outside edge of the ditch. The existing wall on the south-east side is certainly of Roman workmanship but may have been incorporated into a stone retaining wall.

Excavations in the southern part of the fort in 1965 revealed three additional phases of activity within the main visible rampart. Two phases of wooden barracks were identified, with a later anomalous phase of building on a different axis. Investigations on the north-west rampart of the fort revealed three phases of defences; the turf rampart identified in 1965, a mid 2nd -century stone rampart cut into the original rampart and a massive, possibly post-Roman, earth rampart (White, 1985).

A description of the fort in the Report of the Annual Meeting of the Cambrian Archaeological Association in 1884 has been interpreted as suggesting the presence of a post-Roman citadel that extends outside the ramparts visible on the ground today. The report states that 'At a little distance [from the *vallum*] an outer dyke encloses a considerable circuit, probably 6 or 8 acres; and on the north-western side are large quantities of boulders, some standing as if they formed a scarp or *chevaux-de-frise*, and others dispersed as if they had been the foundations of some primitive buildings'. The boulders mentioned are thought to be associated with the field name Wern Dwyndir (rough or hummocky land).

A wide range of extramural activity has been identified at this site. Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (1592-1666) recorded the discovery of a coin of Domitian and an early Christian stone with the inscription HEC [sic] IACET SALVIANVS BVRS (? or G) OCAVI(s) FILIUS CVPETIAN[I] (Nash-Williams 1950). Edward Lhuyd recorded in *Parochialia* (*c.*1665) that 'There was a chapel formerly in the field known as Kae'r Kapele, where there is a pavement when dug up'. In 1885 D R Thomas records that 'Bones have been dug up lately in this plot of ground, near the traces of the foundations of a building about 15 feet square, near the centre of the field. The outlines of the building are visible on the surface when the grass is scorched. This field is also called "Y Fonwent" or the graveyard'. A shrine consisting of a burnt square structure and part of an inscription in the name of the First Cohort of the Nervii, possibly dating from the early to mid 2nd -century was discovered to the north-east of the fort in 1885 (Thomas 1885). Flavian burials were also found to the north-east of the fort (Nash-Williams 1950).

Aerial photography has revealed evidence of road systems running from the south-east and north-west gates, along with a road running diagonally from the north-east gate. The outline of a building at the south-west end of Cae Capel could also be seen in enough detail to interpret it as a bathhouse (St Joseph, 1977). Recent geophysical survey work by the GAT (Hopewell, 2003) has provided further

evidence of the roads running from the fort and has shown ribbon development in the form of a possible *vicus*, or settlement, running alongside the road to the north-east. The *vicus* appears to include a shrine and an extensive complex of buildings of unknown date and function. A variety of specifically military features are also clustered around the fort and include a bathhouse, a parade ground and a possible *mansio*.

The northern quarter of the fort is covered by farm buildings and a sub-medieval manor house. This gentry house is the former seat of the Vaughan family of Caer Gai, one of the principal families of the county during the 17th -century. The earliest recorded occupant was Tudor Penllyn, a poet and drover, who wrote a famous poem about Ty Gwyn. Members of the family served as High Sheriffs of Meirionnydd in 1613, 1620, 1642, 1669, 1680 and 1708.

Captain Rowland Vaughan, MP (*c.*1590-1667), who was a notable poet and translator (he translated Latin and English books/hymns into Welsh) as well as a staunch Royalist, originally built the house in the late 16th -century, though the present structure is largely a product of post-Civil War rebuilding. In 1645 Vaughan and his company fought at the battle of Naseby and in August of the same year Caer Gai was sacked and burned by General Myddleton's Roundhead troops. In March 1650 Vaughan was captured and imprisoned in Chester Castle for three years, during which time the house was burned down. Vaughan rebuilt the present house on his release (Berry, 2004, 28); a recorded exterior date of 1650 clearly relates to this rebuilding.

Below the fort, to the south west, is Weirglodd Wen, the home of Michael Jones, a minister, and founder of Y Bala College, and his son, Michael D. Jones (1822-98), who succeeded his father as Principal and is known for his association with the Welsh colonisation of Patagonia, South America.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Roman remains, 17th-century manor & estate with cultural associations*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Military*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Roman military*

The distinct earthworks of the Roman fort at Caer Gai, along with the imposing manor house, are the two most significant features in this area. The influence of these two structures over the surrounding landscape is wide-reaching.

The visible remains of the Roman bank and ditch defences are obvious, while the upstanding remains are also extensive, with over 300m of fort walls. Roman fabric can be seen woven into features from many periods throughout the locality. The distinctive square Roman masonry blocks are visible in many of the post-medieval field boundaries within the character area, and one brown sandstone block, thought to be reused Roman material, is extant above the entrance to the main house as an inset plaque. Elsewhere in the property, between the floors of the left-hand wing of the house, can be seen inscriptions in Latin and in Welsh.

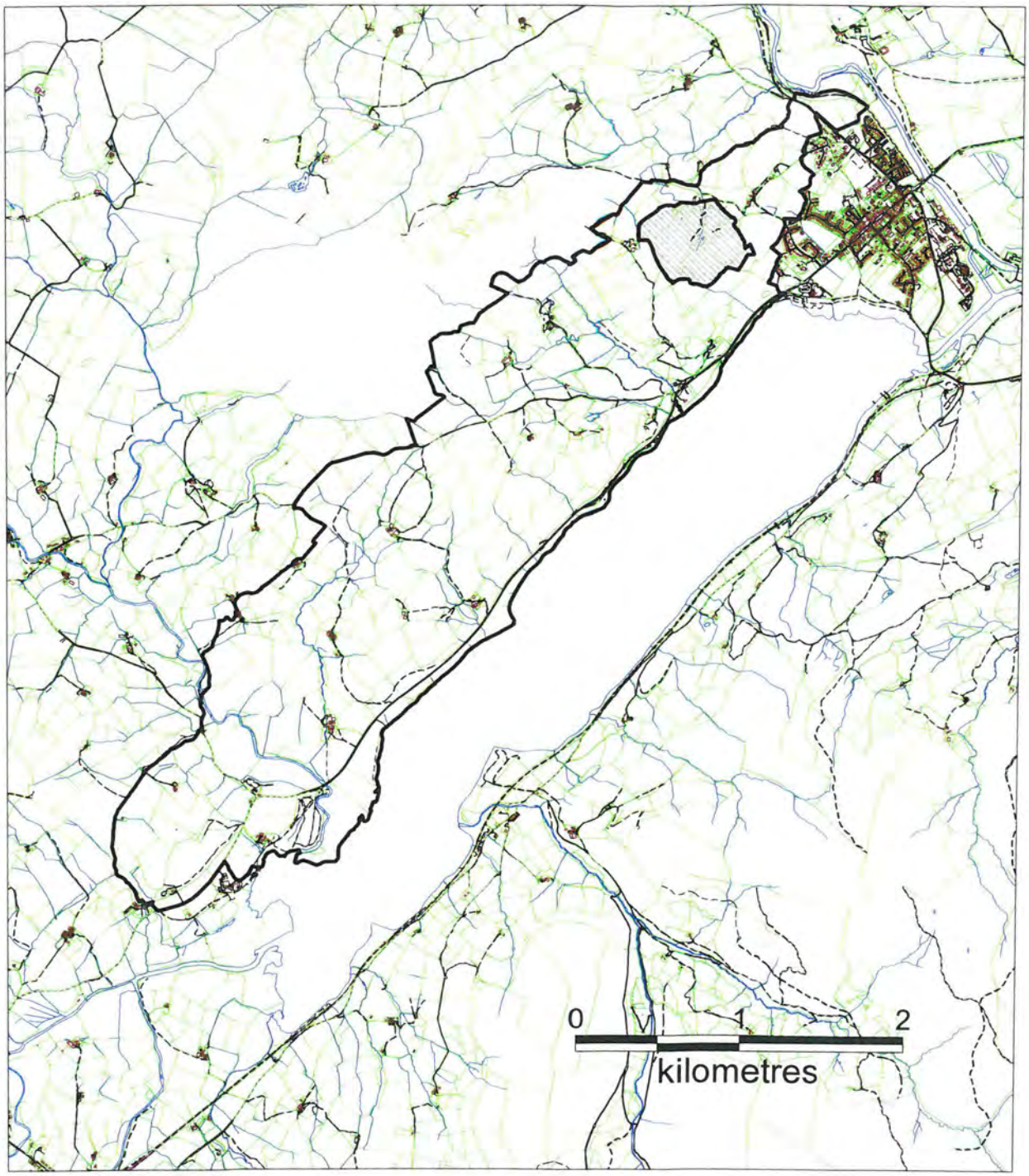
The re-use of local materials is an important theme at Caer Gai, as is the continuity in use of the site. The close geographical relationship between the house and the fort shows some significance despite the two sites being separated temporally by over 1500 years. The imposing position makes good use of the strategic advantages afforded by this south-facing hillside landscape overlooking the lake and main road. However, the positioning of such an historically important house on the site of a Roman fort cannot be seen as coincidence and must have also held some historical, social or cultural associations. Indeed, according to legend, during the early medieval period, following the abandonment of the fort, the site became the seat of Cai Hir ap Cymyr, the Romano-British chieftain named Timon by Edmund Spenser, the 16th -century poet. Cai Hir ap Cymyr is thought to have been the foster father of King Arthur, who is said to have been educated here.

***Conservation priorities and management***

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the extensive Roman remains and historic structures.
- Protection of all nationally important monuments. The fort and its environs are legally protected through designation as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Me018) and Caer Gai house along with its adjoining forecourt walls is a listed building, registered grade II*.
- Conservation of field boundaries.

**15 Caer Gai Roman complex** **PRN 24715**

Roman remains and seventeenth-century manor




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 16 - Fieldscape north of Llyn Tegid

N

## 16 Fieldscape north of Llyn Tegid (PRN 24716)

### *Historic background*

Details relating to the history of this extensive area are few. Fenton (1804) reports on the view across the lake from Fachddeiliog: the first ridge of hills bounding the lake is not very high, and is composed of fields, meadows, pasture and cornfields.

Llanycil tithe map (1842) covers the area north of the lake, including Bala itself (area 02). It is fairly detailed and shows a more intricate pattern of small fields around Llanycil church (with its rectangular churchyard) than survives today, while the field pattern to the south-west (towards area 15), which comprised larger fields, remains largely unchanged. There is very little settlement, and that is also largely as shown on the tithe map, except for a cluster of *c.* 4 houses around the small crossroads at Llanycil (where a lodge, apparently pre-dating Bryntegid (built in 1849 as Victorian gentleman's residence), is dated 1838).

On Craig y Fron are the remains of impressive caverns with stone pillar supports (SH919365). Stone was quarried here for the construction of Capel Tegid and other prominent buildings in Y Bala (Berry, 2004, 2).

The character of the area remains larglely unchanged from the picture presented by the 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1468 2472, 4363): the lower part of the area was characterised by trees and small pockets of woodland (by the lake and up to the road from Llanycil to Cyffty, and around Cerrig-lwydion and especially to the south-west including Nurse Cae Seren and around Coed Cerrig-lwydion), while above that line is treeless. The fields around Moel-y-garnedd uchaf are unchanged, as are those in the area down to Cefn Bodig (large irregular fields). The character in the south-west part of the area is more 'remote': here, there is no settlement and no trees, just bare fields. The land appears to be pasture. Plas Moel y Garnedd stands out, while Eryl Aran seems to be surrounded by trees and garden: Fronfeuno also appears to be significant. All of these houses are early 19$^{th}$-century 'gentleman's estates' (E Thomas, *pers comm*). Further south, Gwernhefin is instantly recognisable, and the fields to north-west (large and irregular) retain the same character. This area, devoid of other settlement, might represent the extent of the former monastic lands.

The 1957 RAF vertical aerial photographs (58/2122/145-53 (Flight 22) 12/03/1957) show a very definite appearance of former estate land in the area between Llanycil church, Bryn-du and Plas Moel-y-garnedd, while one photograph (58/2122/145 (Flight 21) 12/03/1957) shows a field east of Lon as having small strips which could be horticultural allotments.

The monastic mill recorded here (see above) is likely to have been situated under the modern farm (Gwernhefin) rather than on the Afon Llafar itself, as the water course leading to it is very straight and comes directly down across the contour just north of the farm.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Eighteenth- and 19$^{th}$ -century fieldscapes, scattered settlement*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Irregular fieldscapes*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Evolved/mixed*

The irregular fieldscapes here are largely unchanged since the 1840s tithe map. The fields are all down to pasture and are situated on a sloping, south-facing hillside with numerous clumps of trees

redolent of former parkland. As with other areas hereabouts, the boundaries that exist comprise hedges and trees (where they have not been replaced by modern post-and-wire fences).

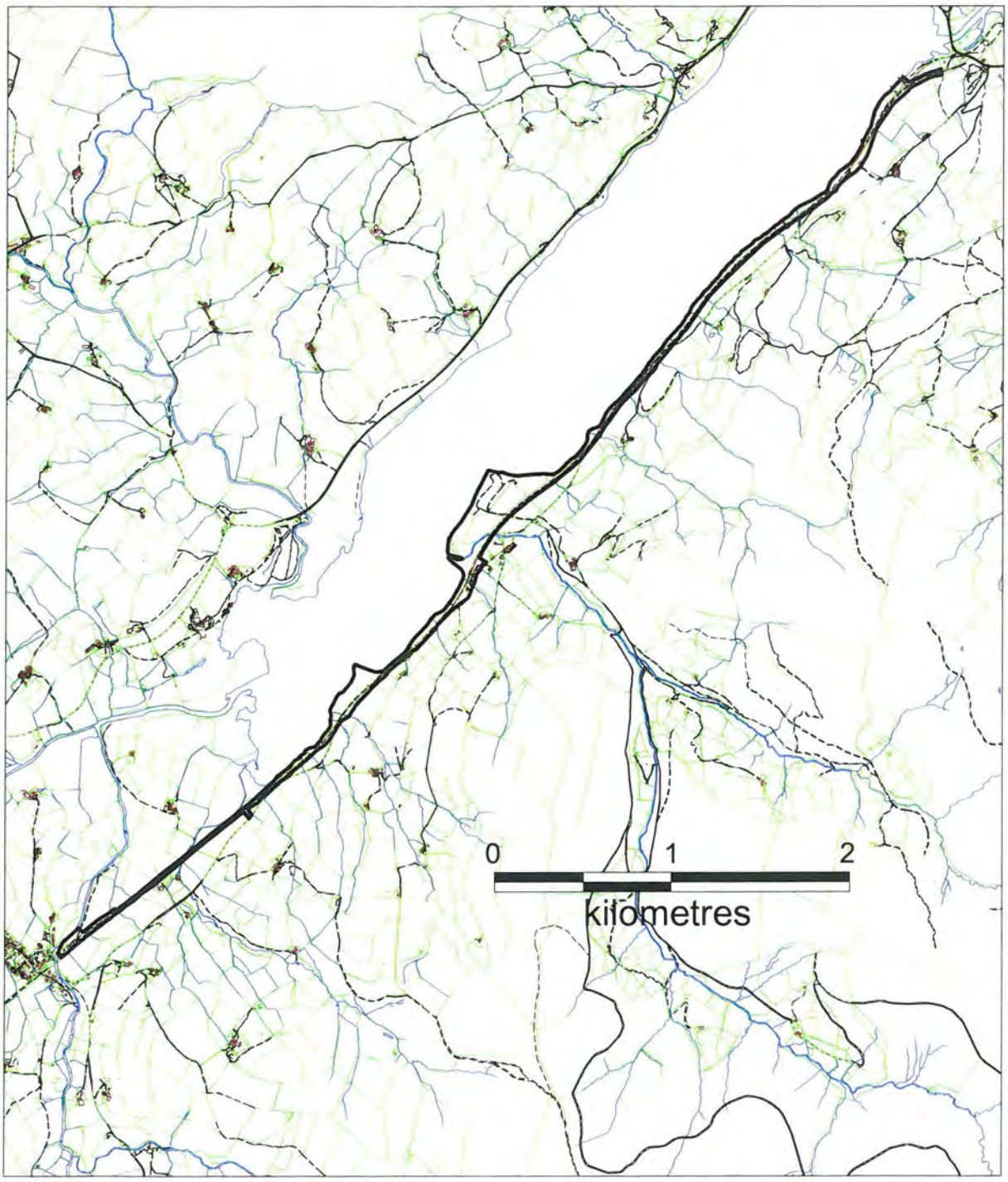
Gwernhefyn is a Regency/gentry farm, but one of the more interesting features is the 1950s' terrace of south-facing houses (probably built by Sidney Colwyn Foulkes) in the small clustered hamlet of Lon, with their unusual rear porches. A sheet-metal outbuilding among the few farmshere is also worthy of note.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the unspoiled rural fieldscapes and buildings.

**16 Fieldscape north of Llyn Tegid** **PRN 24716**

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fieldscapes, scattered settlement




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 17 - Bala Lake Railway

N

## 17 Bala lake railway (PRN 24717)

### *Historic background*

The standard gauge railway between Bala and Dolgellau was built by the Bala & Dolgelley Railway Company (which used the English spelling for the latter place), and opened in 1868 (see section 8.4 above).

Glanllyn Flag station was first opened in 1868 as a private halt for Sir W W Wynne, and not made available to the public until 1931 (Horton, 1989). It was re-named Glan Llyn Halt in 1950. The Flag reference is to the fact that when its original owner, Sir W W Wynne arrived by train, a flag was hoisted and a boat sent across from his residence opposite to collect him. Llangower Halt was opened, with minimal facilities in 1929. In 1934, a halt was opened on the site of the old Bala station and known as Bala Lake Halt (now demolished).

Although originally earmarked for dieselisation by the Western Region of British Railways in the early 1960s, the Ruabon to Bala/Barmouth line was eventually included in the infamous Beeching Report in 1963, and threafter the line was gradually run down, Goods traffic finally ceased running on 1st January 1968, when the Pontcysyllte branch was closed.

However, rebirth came in 1971 as the railway was opened as a narrow gauge. A local engineer, George Barnes, saw the potential of the lakeside section for both local and tourist traffic. With the help of the late Tom Jones CBE, then Chairman of Merioneth County Council's Finance Committee, *Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid* Ltd (Bala Lake Railway Ltd) became the first company to be registered in the Welsh language and they started to rebuild it as a 2-ft-gauge line, aiming to make use of the mass of equipment that had become available from numerous slate quarries in north Wales that had abandoned steam and railway operations in favour of machines and road transport.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Narrow gauge railway, associated infrastructure*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Communications*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Passenger railway (including infrastructure)*

The narrow-gauge steam railway runs for 4½ miles between Llanuwchllyn and Y Bala along the southern side of Llyn Tegid, on the trackbed of the former Great Western Ruabon – Barmouth Railway line, which closed in 1965. *Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid* became fully operational in 1976.

Bala junction station has been obliterated and the line now terminates at the site of the former Bala Lake Halt. It was unusual in that it was inaccessible by road and merely served as an interchange station for the Bala-Blaenau Ffestiniog line.

Llanuwchllyn station (Horton, 1989 – see photograph) is a typical GWR station with a signal box and semaphore signals, the latter of Lancashire and Yorkshire origin. The station buildings still survive, the buffet being the former waiting room and the seating section was once a waiting room at Morfa Mawddach (Barmouth Junction). The main building has been extended on the site of the old toilets to provide a booking office and store room. The canopy supports were built for the Cambrian Railways station at Pwllheli, but were taken down when the station was moved in 1907. They were then used at Aberdyfi until 1979 when they were moved to Llanuwchllyn. The former cattle dock is now the picnic area, the stone goods shed a woodwork shop, and the waiting room on platform two an office. The ex-GWR euipment survives intact with its original lever frame. Every effort is made to ensure

visitors are made welcome, and where possible visitors are allowed to visit the signal box and locomotive shed/workshop.

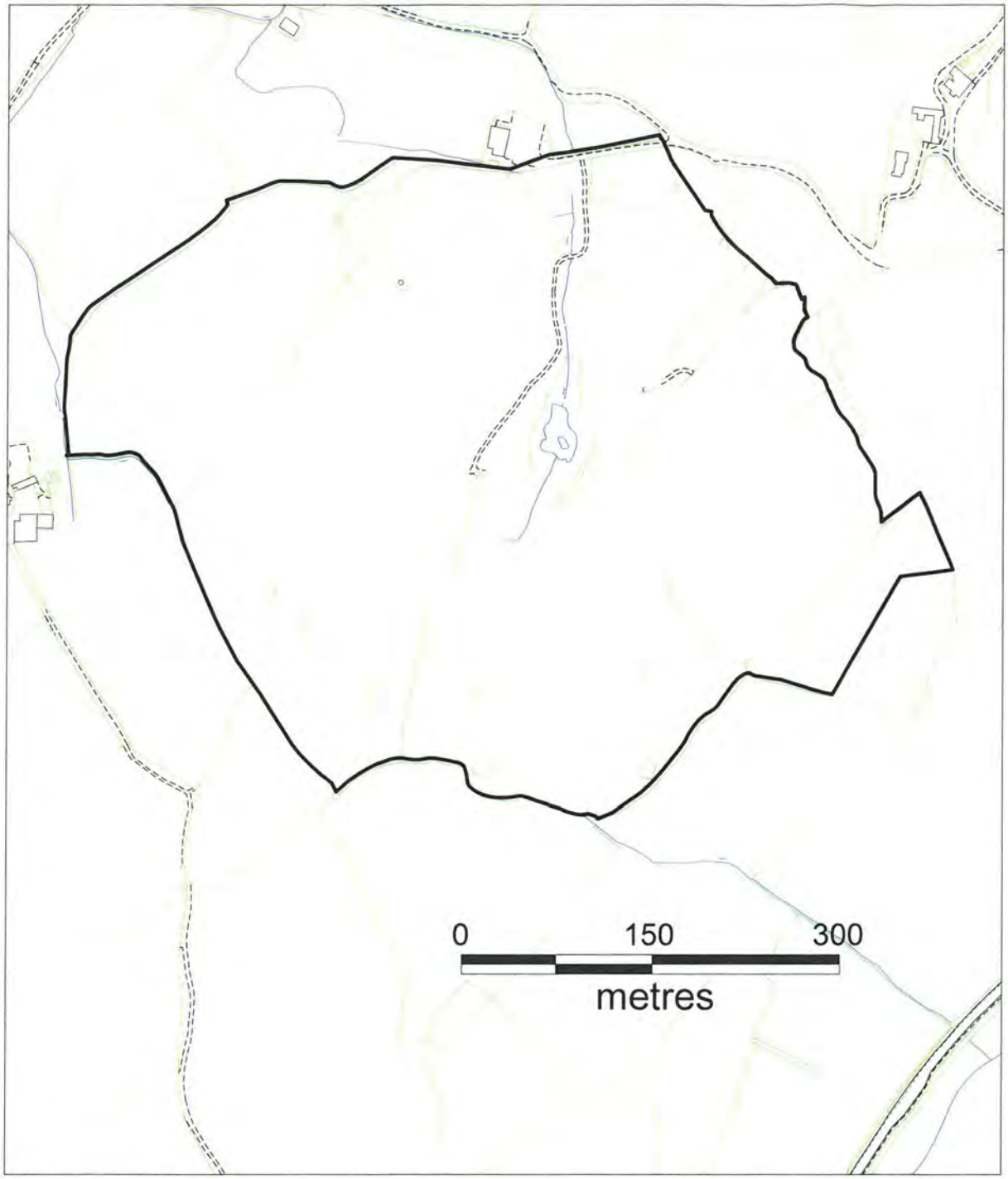
### *Conservation priorities and management*

The railway today is supported by the Bala Lake Railway Society (*Cymdeithas Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid*), whose volunteer members provide many of the train crews and carry out much of the maintenance of the line's infrastructure. New members are always welcome, and the Society can be contacted *via* their website.

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the overall character and detail of the railway as a working entity.

**17 Bala lake railway** **PRN 24717**

Narrow gauge railway, associated infrastructure




Historic Landscape Characteriation - G1904 Bala

Landscape Character Area 18 - Bala golf course

N

## 18 Bala golf course (PRN 24718)

### *Historic background*

Llanycil tithe map (1842) covers the area north of the lake, including this area. It is reasonably detailed and shows a more intricate of small fields, particularly here, than survives today. The Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map (1888) shows this area to be predominantly rock and scrub with scattered patches of woodland. In contrast, the surrounding landscape at this time existed much as it does today, made up of neatly arranged agricultural holdings, enclosed fields and farmsteads.

Bala Golf Club was relocated at Penlan in 1928 from the banks of the River Dee, where flooding made playing practically impossible during the winter months. The present clubhouse was built in 1973 as part of improvement works. The current course is 9 holes and nearly 5000 yards in length.

The 1946 RAF vertical aerial photographs (106G/UK 1468 2472) show the golf course distinct from unimproved waste scrub with bushes, mountain terrain with few large enclosures and fewer trees.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

*Golf course, leisure, scattered woods and rocky outcrops*
*LANDMAP Level 3 Recreational*
*LANDMAP Level 4 Golf course/links*

Bala golf course covers the ground around the top of Bronydd Fron-Feuno at the north end of the lake, just to the west of Bala town. Rising to around 300m OD, the course enjoys spectacular views and makes use of the natural landscape to provide golfers with the necessary hazards and difficulties of a more varied kind than the usual man-made hazards. Consequently a good proportion of the historic landscape features such as rock outcrops, moorland vegetation and broad-leaved trees have been retained in the rough ground between the manicured greens.

### *Conservation priorities and management*

- The area lies entirely within Snowdonia National Park.
- Conservation of the nature of the course, with its open spaces with scattered broad-leaveed trees.

**18 Bala Golf Course** **PRN 24718**

Golf course, scattered woods and rocky outcrops

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