

UPLANDS INITIATIVE FIELD PROJECTS 2004-2005

Eastern Snowdonia (Central) Survey Area (Tal-y-bont uplands)

North Wales

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SUMMARY

An archaeological identification survey of the Eastern Snowdonia (Central) area of North Wales (SH 730 685 centred) was undertaken in June and July 2004 (Fig 1). The work was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) on behalf of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) as part of the Uplands Initiative. The fieldwork consisted of an identification survey to identify, locate and describe archaeological and historical features within the defined survey area.

The survey area of Eastern Snowdonia (Central) is located on the northern edge of the Snowdonia range within the old county of Caernarvonshire, on open crags forming the flanks of the Carneddau ridge and moorland plateaux overlooking the Conwy valley to the east. The study area incorporates part of the Lower Conwy Valley (Gw)4 Historic Landscape within the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales. The area of Eastern Snowdonia to the north of the present study area was previously surveyed by OA North (2004b), and an extensive area of Eastern Snowdonia to the south of the study area has been previously surveyed by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. The OA North 2004-2005 survey area comprised c9.5 sqkm, encompassing enclosed and improved agricultural land, as well as large open tracts of heath and grassed moorland.

In total, the survey identified 155 new sites, but also involved the enhancement of 63 previously identified sites, giving a total of 218 sites overall from within the study area. The new sites included a funerary cairn, a stone row, 26 field boundaries and field-systems, three hut circles, 12 farmsteads and farmhouses, 28 longhouses and deserted rural settlements, nine quarries, two trackways, five areas of peat cutting and 54 stock management features.

The number of prehistoric sites is in marked contrast to the earlier survey area to the north which had a very rich archaeological resource within the immediate hinterland of the coast near Penmaenmawr. The present study area is a more remote area and does not have the same level of resource, but does have four previously discovered funerary cairns, two overlooking the Conwy valley (NMR 302055-6), and two on the northern edge of the Afon Dulyn (NMR 308030 and 270098).

In the Iron Age/Romano-British periods there is a clear weighting of monuments to the eastern edge of the study area. The most impressive site being the hillfort of Pen-y-gaer which has an upstanding chevaux-de-frise and within it are twelve hut circles. Iron Age/Romano-British settlement is mostly located on the top break of slope on the fringe of cultivated fields in a band ranging from 200m to 400m OD in the east of the study area, and this band continues along the Conwy valley to the north where settlement was identified in the previous season's Snowdonia survey (OA North 2004b). Within the present study area there are numerous examples of hut circles with apparently related field systems, although the area has been overlain by medieval and later settlement, along with agriculture and more dispersed settlement within the rest of the study area.

Medieval sites in the form of long huts, field-systems and potential shielings are well represented throughout the area, and, as for previous periods, are concentrated on the

marginal land extending out from the Conwy. The more short-lived settlement extends higher and further away from the valley, while the more permanent settlement and field-systems are generally located within the lower fringes of the later enclosed lands. Much of the enclosure and settlement is potentially of Late Medieval date and the progressive encroachments further up onto the moorland plateau apparently occurred in the post-medieval period, although it is difficult to reliably date the sites. Potentially transhumant deserted rural settlement, consisting of single and multiple longhouses, many with associated stock enclosures, is located in more elevated positions; examples typically are found on the hills running down from the Carneddau ridge and above the 400m OD contour.

Post-medieval settlement and stock management features cover the majority of the study area and much of the settlement and irregular field-systems in the centre of the study area may have an earlier post-medieval origin. There are farmsteads with regular enclosure walls that extend along the contours on either side of a later reservoir leat that cuts across the study area, and includes farmsteads at Hafodygors-wen, Bwlch-y-gaer, Tan-y-bwlch, Ffrith-y-bont and, potentially, other previously unmapped farmsteads. Other post-medieval features are limited to modest-sized localised extractive industries, which includes peat cuttings on elevated land above, and adjacent, to the post-medieval farmsteads and also small-scale quarrying (with some possible trial mines). In the late nineteenth century the land to the south of the study area saw the construction of reservoirs with two associated water leats running through the study area.

The survey has highlighted a very significant multi-period resource of field-systems and settlement and there is a need for selective intensive survey, sampling, excavation and dating to clarify the chronological relationships of this landscape.

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The field survey was undertaken by Peter Schofield, assisted by Andy Lane. The report was written by Peter Schofield, and the illustrations were by Peter Schofield. The report was edited by Jamie Quartermaine and Alan Lupton. The project was managed by Jamie Quartermaine.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was invited to undertake an archaeological identification survey of the central portion of the Eastern Snowdonia survey area (SH 730 685 centred) of North Wales on behalf of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) as part of the Uplands Initiative.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1.2.1 The objectives of the project were:
- to promote a wider and deeper understanding of upland areas and their role in Welsh history, in accordance with the aims of the Uplands Initiative
 - to provide an accurate Level 1 survey of all identified monuments (OA North 2002).
- 1.2.2 To achieve these objectives the study area was subject to a desk-based assessment and walk-over survey. The desk-based study, carried out in May 2004, consisted of a search of both published and unpublished records held by the National Monuments Record of Wales, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) and the library and archives at OA North's offices in Lancaster. The field work was carried out to fit in with access availability and weather conditions; and it was undertaken in June and July 2004.
- 1.2.3 This report sets out the results of the work, accompanied by a summary gazetteer of new sites (*Appendix I*).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design (OA North 2004a) was submitted by OA North in response to a request for archaeological surveys of extensive areas of the Welsh Uplands; it was designed to meet the requirements of a brief by RCAHMW (2004b). OA North was commissioned to undertake an initial archaeological desk-based study, followed by a field identification survey for three survey areas: Mynydd Hiraethog, Eastern Snowdonia and North Berwyn. The present report relates to the Eastern Snowdonia (Central) area only (Figs 1 and 2). In all respects the work has been carried out in accordance with the project design (OA North 2004a).

2.2 DESK-BASED SURVEY

- 2.2.1 **National Monuments Record (NMR):** an assessment was made of data held by the RCAHMW, Aberystwyth, which was overlain onto digital 1:10,000 mapping for the study area.
- 2.2.2 **Sites and Monuments Record (SMR):** an assessment was made of data held by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT), which was also overlain onto the digital base map for the area.
- 2.2.3 **Aerial Photographs:** aerial photography from the NMR office was also consulted along with RCAHMW aerial photographic interpretation of the study area. Information relating to possible new sites was annotated onto the field walking maps in GIS format.
- 2.2.4 **Ordnance Survey Mapping:** first and/or second edition mapping was available for the entire survey area, and was examined for indications of historic sites not previously represented in the NMR and SMR databases.
- 2.2.5 **World Wide Web:** historic landscape characterisation, parish records, census data and transcripts of some public records were obtained from archives and local histories on the internet. More modern data on the parish was also gleaned, which provided information about recent developments in the area.

2.3 IDENTIFICATION SURVEY

- 2.3.1 An identification survey to Level 1 (OA North 2002) was undertaken across the Eastern Snowdonia (Central) study area. The identification survey represents the minimum standard of record for field investigation, and is aimed at the discovery of previously unrecorded sites. Its objective is to record the existence, location, and extent of any archaeological site. The emphasis of the record lies on the written description, which, in this instance, includes comments on character and condition, and sites have been graded in terms of condition and archaeological significance. Sites already identified within the study area by the NMR and SMR were checked

- and recorded at the same level of consistency as the newly discovered sites. The whole survey area, including both the unenclosed commons and surrounding improved and enclosed fringes, was examined. The survey aimed to identify, locate and record archaeological sites and features on the ground and involved four elements: reconnaissance, mapping, description and photography. This generated core information for entry into the NMR and additional archive information, in accordance with the RCAHMW Data Standard for Upland Survey (RCAHMW 2004a).
- 2.3.2 Each area was walked in transects of between 20m and 50m, depending on local topography and ground cover. The archaeological detail was mapped using Leica differential GPS equipment, which used post-processed corrections from a base station to achieve an accuracy of $\pm 0.25\text{m}$. The digital survey data was transferred, via DXF file format, into a CAD system (AutoCAD14), and was then superimposed onto the digital base map (Fig 3). The descriptive records were input on-site into a database on a Psion portable palm computer; the more complex sites were also sketched onto paper *pro-forma* sheets. A photographic record of the sites was maintained in 35mm black and white print format, colour slides, and also using digital colour photography; the digital photographs were used to accompany the present report.

2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (1991) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The archive is provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, both as a printed document and digitally. A synopsis, including the index to the archive and a copy of the report, will be placed in the National Monuments Record, RCAHMW at Aberystwyth and the Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record, GAT, Bangor.

3. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1.1 The survey area of Eastern Snowdonia (Central) (SH 730 685 centred) is located on the northern edge of the Snowdonia range within the old county of Caenarvonshire and within Snowdonia National Park, on open crags descending from the flanks of the Carneddau ridge down onto an enclosed moorland plateau overlooking the Conwy valley to the east (Fig 1). The area extends from the steeply-peaked ridgeline of the Carneddau ridge from Garnedd Uchaf and Foel Fras in the west, to the fringes of the enclosed lands beneath Pen-y-gaer hillfort overlooking the Conwy valley to the east. To the south the area is bounded by the course of the Afon Dulyn with the land beyond rising towards steep-sided reservoir-filled valleys, and to the north the land descends towards the Afon Tafolog and the mountain pass of Bwlch y Ddeufaen.
- 3.1.2 The majority of the study area lies along the sloping plateau which rises from approximately 280m to 400m before rising more steeply to the north and west up to the summits of the hills and up to a maximum of 942m on Foel Fras on the Carneddau Ridge. The study area is edged to the west by the Carneddau ridge and a smaller ridge of hills along Pen y Castell and Penygadair to the north, and from here descends down to the Afon Dulyn which marks the southern boundary of the study area. The area is broadly characterised as mostly enclosed grass moorland and pasture but with open moorland running up to the Carneddau ridge; much of the enclosure was once cultivated or pasture but has now lapsed back to moorland. The surviving enclosure includes a mixture of piecemeal enclosure of the moorland in the Late Medieval to post-medieval periods with surviving remnants of small permanently occupied farmsteads. The rest of the enclosure relates to the late nineteenth century rationalisation of the landscape with straight-edged fenced enclosure boundaries. The landscape of the study lies on the south-western fringe of the Lower Conwy Valley Historic Landscape, designated (Gw)4 within the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales (Cadw 1988a).

3.2 GEOLOGY

- 3.2.1 The solid geology of the study area consists mainly of Ordovician slates, shales and tuffs with intrusions of igneous microdiorite rock. The soils are predominantly peats overlying Cambic stagnohumic gleys, which are waterlogged reduced mineral soils (Neville George and Smith 1961; Soil Survey 1983)

3.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.3.1 **Prehistoric:** there has been some previously discovered evidence of human activity within the study area relating to prehistoric activity; with the utilisation of the

- moorland landscape seemingly having its origins in the upland economies of the Bronze Age period.
- 3.3.2 Bronze Age activity consisted of four cairns, including two closely associated funerary round cairns on the east edge of the study area and to the north-west of the outcrop forming Pen-y-gaer hillfort in a prominent topographical setting overlooking the Conwy valley (NMR 302055 and 302056). The cairns were excavated in 1905 with the southern cairn (NMR 302055) being totally excavated whilst the northernmost (NMR 302056) was trenched; funerary pyre charcoal, fragments of calcinated bones and small fragments of bronze were discovered from both (Hughes 1906, 247). There are two further cairns identified to the south of the study area on the southern edge of the plateau overlooking the Afon Dulyn (NMR 308030 and 279098). The first consists of a cairn circle with four prominent orthostats set against the internal edge of the ring (Plate 2). The second cairn lies approximately 190m to the north of the ring cairn, and is not recorded within either the NMR or SMR and is only identified through the modern OS mapping as a cairn (OS 2002).
- 3.3.3 There is potential for prehistoric settlement in the area and much of the complex palimpsest of cultivation and settlement features surrounding Pen-y-gaer hillfort have been loosely dated in the NMR to the prehistoric period (eg NMR 302043); although there is some degree of superimposition by later settlement on these early remains. There is a distinct lack of burnt mounds in the study area which contrasts with the numerous examples on land to the north (OA North 2004b, 22).
- 3.3.4 **Iron Age and Roman:** there is significant evidence for Iron Age activity within the study area with the most important of the sites being the hillfort at Pen-y-gaer (NMR 95289, Plate 1), which is one of many such structures and defended hilltop enclosures overlooking the Conwy Valley. The hillfort exploited a natural promontory and was defended with a slight external ditch, behind which survives the extant remains of a chevaux-de-frise (the only surviving example in North Wales), behind which are three intermittent but successive large ramparts and ditches. There is occupation evidence within the hillfort comprising twelve hut circles, ten of which have been excavated (Hughes 1906), although this only revealed slight evidence of metalworking and were undated.
- 3.3.5 Settlement that has generally been ascribed to the Roman period consists of enclosed and unenclosed hut circles that are widely distributed in many areas within the study area; the vast majority fall within the fringes of the study area in a band of land ranging in height from 200m-400m OD. The hut circles, however, do not have a diagnostic chronology and could potentially date from the Late Bronze Age through to the Roman period. Immediately adjacent to Pen-y-gaer hillfort to the north and south are the extant remains of a palimpsest of cultivation features and settlement which were primarily identified by the RCAHMW inventory survey (RCAHMW 1956). The settlement features to the north include a group of three hut circles, located to the west of Waun Fechan (NMR 302057) and a singular hut circle located amongst multi-period cultivation features on the northern slope of Penygadair (NMR 303063). To the south of the hillfort are two areas of hut circle settlements (NMR 302042 and 302044); the former is located just outside the study

- area and consists of a group of three hut circles and adjoining walls cut into the hillslope. The latter site consists of a hut circle with three adjoining, probably later, longhouses surrounding it (Plate 3).
- 3.3.6 The most impressive vestiges of remains of this type lie to the north and outside the study area at Maen-y-Bardd, which is associated with the route of the Roman road over the Bwylch y Ddeufaen pass (OA North 2004b, 13); however, complex field systems with both hut circle and longhouse settlement survive in the land to the east of the study area. There is also the site of a single hut circle within the central plateau of the study area, just above the Afon Dulyn (NMR 279001), which has potentially been destroyed by the construction of a leat.
- 3.3.7 **Medieval:** medieval settlement is particularly well represented within the study area although only one site is described as being early medieval within the NMR/SMR; this is a platform settlement on the south side of Penygadair (NMR 303063), just east of the centre of the study area. Evidence for cultivation and settlement from the medieval, and possibly early medieval, periods is found at the edges of the study area in the form of deserted rural settlements with surrounding field-systems within the fringes of the present day enclosed lands. For the most part, these are in the same locations as the hut circle settlements on the east of the study area, and probably reflects the re-use of favoured places. There were 31 previously recorded medieval sites and represented the majority of all sites previously recorded from the study area. There has been recording of different types of deserted rural settlement ranging from clustered groups to single examples of house platforms and longhouses extending over the eastern and southern edges of the study area. Earlier survey has concentrated on the extensive multi-period field-systems and settlement on the eastern edge of the survey area (*see Section 3.3.5* and RCAHMW 1956 Figs 50 and 101) and more dispersed elements of settlement concentrated above the Afon Dulyn on the edge of the sloping plateau to the south. More isolated and elevated examples of probable medieval settlements (some with cultivation) were recorded on the better drained slopes and sheltered edges of tributary streams. These are located on the spine of hills rising from east to west towards the Carneddau ridge, with structures located on the flanks of Penygadair and Craig Cefn Coch. One particular longhouse is potentially of some antiquity as the mountain track rising up the elevated valley kinks around its northern edge and clearly post-dates it (NMR 15088).
- 3.3.8 **Post-Medieval:** surprisingly few pre-survey sites were recorded in the NMR/SMR from this period, but again this is a symptom of differing survey priorities in the past. The remains from this period are dominated by eighteenth / nineteenth century farmhouse cottages which are located on the fringes and just outside the south and east edges of the study area at Maenira (NMR 16490), Onen-ebryd (NMR 16632), Rowlyn Uchaf (NMR 16814), Bodlondeb (NMR 26055) and Hafod Fach (NMR 26570); this reflects the obvious cultivation and permanent settlement on lower land adjacent to the study area. There are, however, two sites in the north-east of the study area comprising a cottage and sheepfold to the north of Bron-y-Gadair (NMR 15056 and NMR 26085), which overly the earlier multi-period settlement and cultivation in this location.

- 3.3.9 Work by Charles Withers and Della Hooke on the landscape history of the immediate area within Llanber-y-cennin and Caerhun parishes has asserted that much of the enclosure and permanent settlement on the fringes of the study area is of Late Medieval to early post-medieval date with in particular progressive encroachments extending up onto the unimproved moorland plateau occurring in the sixteenth century; there are three extensive piecemeal enclosures located in the south of the study area near Hafod-y-gorswen, in the east near Pen-y-gaer and in the north-east near Bron-y-gadair (Hooke 1997, 41/Fig 2).
- 3.3.10 By the nineteenth century much of the land around the study area was owned by several prominent families who had increased their landholdings by appropriating enclosing the upland wastes (Withers 1995, 90), including the Lords Newborough of Glynllifon, the Assheton-Smiths of Faenol, the Williams-Wynns of Wynnstay and the Bulkeleys of Beaumaris (GAT nd, *Area 2008: Enclosed Uplands*, 2). The upland commons were finally enclosed by parliamentary enclosure in 1858, and in so doing joining up the islands of earlier encroachment on the sloping moorland plateau (Hooke 1997, 42/Fig 3).

4. RESULTS OF THE DESK-BASED STUDY

4.1 DESK-BASED STUDY SUMMARY

- 4.1.1 ***Cartographic Evidence:*** examination of the historic maps, and the Ordnance Survey first and subsequent editions of 6" to 1 mile map provide an insight into the development of the enclosed lands, although there is little difference between the first edition mapping (1889) and that of today, as it post-dates the parliamentary enclosure, which is the final large-scale re-arrangement of boundaries within the area. The study area comprises elevated land above the enclosed lands of the Conwy valley, with piecemeal enclosure in the form of irregular field boundaries which have encroached onto the moorland waste in the east and south of the area in locations above the Afon Dilyn. Around the hillfort of Pen-y-gaer, these enclosures are associated with farmhouses at Bron-y-gadair, Rowlyn Uchaf and Onen-ebryd. There are also relatively late enclosures in the form of small fields around post-medieval farmsteads at Ffrith-y-bont, Hafodygors-wen, Tan-y-bwlch and Bwlch-y-gaer. The rest of what once was rough grazing commons had been subject to parliamentary enclosure by 1889 (OS first edition map) and included the elevated land in the west of the study area around the Carneddau ridge, along the hills of the northern edge of the area along Pen y Castell, Craig Cefn Coch and Penygadair, and down onto the land just to the west of Pen-y-gaer hillfort. Sheepfolds and stock management features have survived extensively within the upper reaches of the improved intakes and also near to the post-medieval farmsteads in the lower parts of the study area.
- 4.1.2 The only other sites of interest shown are the defensive earthworks that make up Pen-y-gaer hillfort (NMR 95289) and the longhouse in the centre of the study area below Craig Cefn Coch (NMR 15088).
- 4.1.3 The management of water from the upland lakes of Snowdonia at the turn of the twentieth century, to supply the surrounding lowland communities and industry, is well represented to the south of the present study area (Scott Jones 2003, 13). Within the study area are two leats running from Afon Dilyn, which is itself fed by the Dilyn and Melynnllyn reservoirs; these leats extend through the study area in a south-west to north-east direction (OS third edition mapping (1937-39 onwards)).
- 4.1.4 ***Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), National Monuments Record of Wales (NMR):*** in total, 63 unduplicated sites were identified from the SMR and NMR, ten Prehistoric, three Bronze Age, one Iron Age, two Roman, one Early Medieval, 31 Medieval, seven post-medieval, one multi-period and seven of unknown date (Table 1, Fig 3). Digital air photo mapping was supplied by the RCAHMW under the auspices of the Uplands Initiative, and any information relating to potential archaeological sites was transcribed onto the field walking maplets.

5. SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 The study area incorporated approximately 9.5 sqkm of enclosed and unenclosed land and the survey examined both known and previously unknown sites which ranged in date from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods. Some of these were individual monuments, such as a single cairn or sheepfold, but many were part of larger groups, particularly field-systems, which have been combined into a single record because of obvious relationships between them. All the sites identified by the documentary study were examined, their locations and extent were updated where required on the mapping and the site descriptions were enhanced. Both new and old sites are indicated on Figure 3.
- 5.1.2 **Previously Recorded Sites:** the desk-based study identified 63 pre-survey sites, which comprised 47 NMR sites, of which eight were updated with additional information, and 16 unduplicated SMR sites that were also updated and given NMR numbers. The greater majority of the known sites were confirmed by the identification survey but a small number, despite extensive searching, could not be located.
- 5.1.3 **New Sites:** in total, 155 new sites were identified and are summarised according to their broad date below in Table 1 showing substantial numerical increases in the sites within the study area.

Period	Pre-Survey Number	Post-Survey Number	Numerical Increase
Prehistoric	10	13	3
Neolithic	0	0	0
Bronze Age	3	3	0
Iron Age	1	1	0
Roman	2	3	1
Early Medieval	1	1	0
Medieval	31	68	37
Post-Medieval	7	119	112
Multi-Period	1	1	0
Unknown	7	9	2
Total	63	218	155

Table 1: Pre- and Post-Survey Site Numbers

- 5.1.4 **Altitude range of sites:** the overall site density was 23 sites per sqkm, which was spread according to altitude as shown in Table 2. The greatest density of sites occurred within the 350-374m OD range.

Height Range	Existing Sites	New Sites	Total
225-249m	1	3	4
250-274m	10	7	17
275-299m	9	7	16
300-324m	7	17	24
325-349m	10	8	18
350-374m	12	19	31
375-399m	3	14	17
400-424m	6	16	22
425-449m	2	11	13
450-474m	1	12	13
475-499m	0	11	11
500-524m	0	13	13
525-549m	0	5	5
550-574m	0	4	4
575-599m	0	2	2
600-624m	2	0	2
625-649m	0	0	0
650-674m	0	1	1
675-699m	0	1	1
700-724m	0	1	1
725-749m	0	2	2
750-774m	0	0	0
775-799m	0	0	0
800-824m	0	0	0
825-849m	0	0	0
850-874m	0	0	0
875-899m	0	0	0
900-924m	0	1	1
Total	63	155	218

Table 2: Pre- and Post-survey site numbers with respect to altitude

5.1.5 **Range of site types:** the sites identified from the present survey, and previously identified within the record fall into 19 general types, which are defined as shown in Table 3.

Type	Existing Sites	New Sites	Total
Barn, Building	0	3	3
Boundary Bank, Cultivation Terrace/Marks, Enclosure, Field Boundary/System, Wall	10	26	36
Building, Building Platform, House Platform, Platform, Platform House	6	3	9
Cairn, Round Barrow	3	1	4
Clearance Cairns	0	3	3
Cottage, Dwelling, House	5	4	9
Deserted Rural Settlement, Hafod, Longhouse	21	28	49
Earthwork	0	1	1
Farmhouse, Farmstead	1	12	13
Hillfort	1	0	1
Homestead, Settlement	5	0	5
Hut Circle	4	3	7
Landscape	1	0	1
Natural Feature	1	0	1
Peat Cutting/Stack	0	5	5
Quarry	0	9	9
Sheepfold, Sheepshelter, Shelter, Stock Enclosure	3	54	57
Stone Row	0	1	1
Trackway	2	2	4
Total	63	155	218

Table 3: Range of Site Types

5.2 PREHISTORIC

- 5.2.1 There was a little evidence of prehistoric activity from within the environs of the study area which is in marked contrast to the earlier survey area completed to the north on the immediate hinterland of the coast near Penmaenmawr (OA North 2004b) where a very rich prehistoric resource is recorded. The present study area is more remote and the only prehistoric sites identified and comprise the four previously discovered funerary cairns. The cairns are split into two geographical areas, the first of which has two excavated examples (NMR 302055 and NMR 302056) located on the eastern edge of the study area adjacent to the Pen-y-Gaer hillfort and overlooking the Conwy valley, the other two are located in the south of the study area on the edge of the moorland plateau and the northern edge of Afon Dulyn. The latter consist firstly of a cairn circle at Hafod y Gors Wen (NMR 308030, Plate 2), measuring 7m in diameter and having four protruding earthfast

stones. It is essentially a filled ring cairn with some massive upstanding kerb stones on the inside of the ring bank. The second cairn (NMR 279098) is located approximately 180m north of the cairn circle and is shown on the current OS mapping but is not recorded within the NMR/SMR. Its cairn survives as a kidney-shaped grass-covered mound, measuring approximately 9m long by 2.5m wide and could either be a much mutilated funerary cairn or, possibly, the only example of a burnt mound from within the study area. The limited evidence for potential burnt mounds from within the study area is in marked contrast to the survey area to the north (OA North 2004b), where they were well represented along the streams on the boggy plateaux.

5.3 IRON AGE/ROMAN

- 5.3.1 Evidence for settlement and exploitation in these periods is well represented although it is mostly weighted to the eastern edge of the study area with the most obvious surviving site being the Pen-y-gaer hillfort, which has a broad vista overlooking the Conwy Valley above Llanbedr-y-cennin (NMR 95289, Plate 1). Hut circle settlements are mostly located on the top break of slope on the fringe of cultivated fields in a band ranging from 200m to 400m OD in the east of the study area; this band continues along the Conwy valley to the north where settlement was identified in the previous season's survey of Eastern Snowdonia (North) (OA North 2004b) at Maen y Bardd (NMR 278685, 278686) on the upper valley slope to the south of Caer Bach hillfort. Within the present study area there are numerous examples of hut circles with potentially contemporaneous field systems although the area has been overlain by medieval and later settlement and agriculture. The most obvious example being the extensive field systems and settlement just to the south of Pen-y-gaer hillfort, where one settlement (NMR 302044, Plate 3) was previously recorded as having four long houses but on inspection consisted of two long houses and an earlier hut circle and a scooped sub-oval enclosure. More dispersed settlement in the form of single hut circles were found away from the main settlement area in the east. There is a single hut circle recorded in the NMR just above the Afon Dilyn (NMR 279001/NMR 279075) in the south-east of the study area, which was recorded as having been destroyed by the construction of a leat in the SMR. However, upon inspection a hut circle was discovered a little distance away to the north which may potentially have been this previously discovered site. A further newly discovered site (NMR 279037) was discovered in a more elevated and isolated position in the west of the study area on the edge of the Afon Garreg-wen and at a height of 570m OD.

5.4 MEDIEVAL

- 5.4.1 Medieval sites in the form of long huts, field-systems and potential shielings are well represented throughout the area, and, as for the previous period, settlement

dating to the medieval period is concentrated on the marginal lands extending out from the Conwy Valley, at the east side of the study area. The more temporal settlement extends higher and further away from the valley, while the more permanent settlement and field systems are generally located within the lower fringes of the enclosed lands, in the same general areas as the Iron-Age/Romano-British settlement.

- 5.4.2 While it has been difficult to date the settlement and field-systems in the centre of the study area in the course of the present fieldwork, there has been a significant increase of irregularly-shaped enclosure associated with longhouse settlement identified and the number of recognised medieval sites has more than doubled. The evidence ranges from single longhouses, house platforms and shielings up to complex field-systems containing multiple settlement elements. However, many of these may potentially have either been established or re-occupied in the post-medieval period, as there was a marked increase in the number of upland sites associated with post-medieval activity which often masks earlier land-use. What is clearly evident is that there are many sites and areas displaying evidence of multi-phased occupation and exploitation, which would suggest that the earliest phases extend back at least to the medieval period. Where small irregular-shaped fields enclose areas around the farmsteads, it has been shown that often a late medieval origin may be likely (Withers 1995, 35). The process of piecemeal enclosure of hafoddau/sheilings on the slopes (not *ffridd* enclosure) is a reflection of permanence being afforded to what was once a temporary settlement at these altitudes.
- 5.4.3 For the most part, the examples of putative permanent settlement with field systems that potentially date to this period are limited to the east and southern-central portions of the study area on the lower ground. The eastern examples have been surveyed in some detail previously by the RCAHMW (1956), and the evidence for the southern-central examples are mostly shown on the aerial photographic interpretation although other previously unmapped examples of settlement and field-systems have been discovered. The limit of permanent settlement with field-systems seems to be around the 400m OD contour which is marked by the course of a leat and the edge of post-medieval farmstead enclosures (Fig 2). Some examples of sites include settlement remains located around the later post-medieval farmstead enclosure at Tan-y-bwlch. To the south are three deserted rural settlements with associated field banks (NMR 279046, NMR 279047 and NMR 279049) that follow the line of a small tributary stream running downslope into the Afon Dulyn. To the east of Tan-y-bwlch is an additional settlement which includes a longhouse with fragmentary field banks and stock management structures (NMR 279164 - NMR 279166).
- 5.4.4 There are many further examples of deserted rural settlement with stock management features located in more elevated positions on the open common and within areas of parliamentary enclosure within the study area. They are found on the hills running down from the Carneddau ridge and above the 400m OD contour. The elevated settlement consists of single and multiple longhouses for example on Penygadair (NMR 279161, Plate 4) and many are associated with

stock enclosures, for example the settlement around the crags at Cefn Coch (NMR 279029) but rarely with associated field-systems. The sites are apparently of some antiquity with some associated with a trackway ascending up Penygadair and Craig Cefn Coch and one particular single longhouse predates the mountain trackway as the trackway diverts around it (NMR 15088).

5.5 POST-MEDIEVAL

- 5.5.1 ***Agricultural Exploitation:*** in total, 119 sites have been ascribed to the post-medieval period, and form the majority of the total number of sites identified; only seven previously identified sites were of this period thus showing the inherent bias of earlier field investigation. There is some uncertainty in determining dates for the settlements, between later medieval and the post-medieval periods, purely on the basis of the physical evidence, particularly when later agricultural settlement and field systems overlay earlier phases. Some sites may have an earlier origin and re-use previously favourable sheltered locations, sometimes upon earlier platforms and foundations. There is also a documented history of late medieval to early post-medieval settlement on the eastern fringes of the study area with later settlement encroaching to higher altitudes (Hooke 1997).
- 5.5.2 Definite post-medieval settlement and a profusion of stock management features cover the majority of the study area, and much of the settlement and irregular field-systems in the centre of the study area are to some extent shown on OS mapping, while sites identified by aerial photographic interpretation may have either a medieval or an early post-medieval designation (Fig 3). Within the irregular fields of the sixteenth century encroachment are surviving examples of later farmsteads and cottages which must overlie the earliest occupation in these intakes, they include Bron-y-Gadair and Onen-ebryd (NMR 16632) in the eastern fringe of the study area and numerous sites along the edge of the Afon Dulyn around Rowlyn Uchaf in the south (NMR 279073, 279078, 279085, 279170 and 279171). Beyond the upper edge of the early intakes are some distinct derelict post-medieval farmsteads which have regular enclosure walls that follow the contours along either side of the later reservoir leat that extends across the study area (Fig 2). There are derelict farmstead ranges at Hafodygors-wen (NMR 279053, Plate 6), Bwlch-y-gaer (NMR 279082), Tan-y-bwlch (NMR 279163) and Ffrith-y-bont (NMR 279146, Plate 5), which are all still shown on the current OS mapping. More interestingly, the westernmost farmstead within this area is derelict, un-named and only partially shown on the mapping of the First Edition OS onwards (NMR 279028) indicating that it had developed but was not in subsequent use.
- 5.5.3 Definite post-medieval stock management features extend over the majority of the study area in association with both permanent and temporal settlement and also occur on crags and elevated exposed areas. There is a dramatic increase in the number of features associated with the controlling of stock, predominantly sheep, on both the unimproved enclosed lands and upland commons rationalised by parliamentary enclosure. One potentially interesting site is a row of narrow upright

stones (NMR 279061, Plate 7) located in the centre of the study area within the enclosure surrounding Ffrith-y-bont farmstead. The three upright stones, each measuring up to 1.75m in height and with a broken recumbent stone on the eastern end, were in a line parallel to a post-medieval enclosure wall and were potentially the uprights of a structure set against the wall. An example of a further 'stone row' was discovered in the survey area to the south (Scott Jones 2003, 23/NMR 276661) which was also thought to be of post-medieval date.

- 5.5.4 **Industrial Exploitation:** it does not seem that industry was a major concern in the area and the identified sites are limited to modest-sized, localised extractive industries, which comprise small-scale quarrying for field walls. They also include peat cuttings on elevated land above and adjacent to the post-medieval farmsteads and associated with the trackway rising up Craig Cefn Coch and towards the Carneddau Ridge (NMR 279143). Some of the quarrying sites have been identified on the eastern side of Penygadair in the north-east of the study area (NMR 279019, 279020 and 279167), although there is a possibility that some of these may be trial mines. In the late nineteenth century the land to the south of the study area saw the construction of reservoirs with two associated water leats running through the centre and eastern ends of the current study area which has impacted upon some of the clusters of archaeological sites.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 DISCUSSION

- 6.1.1 The survey has identified a moderately dense scatter of sites within the centre and east of the study area with more sparsely spaced sites on the higher summits to the west. Previous surveys had highlighted a number of site clusters predominantly in the east of the study area, but the central sloping plateau has provided further evidence of successive periods of settlement and stock management with the survey increasing the number of identified monuments by 346%.
- 6.1.2 In terms of prehistoric sites the survey has mostly enhanced previous records and confirmed the existence of a number of funerary monuments. Settlement within the study area is demonstrated from the Iron-Age onwards with hut circle settlements on the eastern edge of the survey area overlooking the Conwy valley, to the north and south of Pen-y-gaer hillfort, and to a lesser extent there are isolated hut circles extending further into the hills. The earlier settlement has been overlain by succeeding medieval and post-medieval occupation and cultivation, which over time has encroached further and further up into the hills and along the moorland to the west. There is evidence of deserted rural settlement and stock management features in elevated positions away from the lower farmsteads and localised extraction of resources through quarrying and peat cutting can be seen around and above the post-medieval farms.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

- 7.1.1 The often extensive multi-phased field-systems and settlement on the fringes of the eastern end of the study area and upon the moorland plateau require further intensive survey to enhance previous fieldwork (including RCAHMW 1956) and to elucidate the documentary evidence of successive waves of moorland encroachment (Hooke 1997 and Withers 1995) through investigation of the component parts of the field-systems and settlement. This would identify key areas where detailed keyhole excavation and environmental sampling, in conjunction with absolute dating techniques, may clarify the phasing relationships between monuments of different date within the field-systems. Survey could elucidate the form of archaeological features, their inter-relationships with other monuments and landscapes, both on the nearby uplands but also the adjacent lowlands.

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NMR/CA/Earthworks/SH76NW/

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8.2 PUBLISHED CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

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APPENDIX 1

GAZETTEER OF NEW SITES

NPRN	NGR	TYPE	PERIOD	ALTITUDE
279001	SH74356816	HUT CIRCLE	Roman	280
279002	SH73876909	HOUSE PLATFORM	Unknown	410
279003	SH73856908	HOUSE PLATFORM	Unknown	410
279004	SH73826910	LONGHOUSE	Unknown	420
279005	SH73736909	LONGHOUSE	Unknown	435
279006	SH72106880	TRACKWAY	Medieval	600
279007	SH72306880	NATURAL FEATURE	Unknown	605
279008	SH73446992	D R SETTLEMENT	Medieval	395
279009	SH73526991	D R SETTLEMENT	Medieval	390
279010	SH73456770	WALL	Medieval	340
279011	SH73096742	TRACKWAY	Medieval	355
279012	SH73616740	BUILDING	Medieval	315
279013	SH73026737	BOUNDARY BANK	Medieval	350
279014	SH73106733	SHEEP FOLD	Medieval	340
279015	SH73316739	BOUNDARY BANK	Medieval	335
279016	SH73306870	LANDSCAPE	Multi-period	410
279017	SH74916987	FIELD BOUNDARY	Post-Medieval	245
279018	SH74906991	FIELD BOUNDARY	Post-Medieval	245
279019	SH74276961	QUARRY	Post-Medieval	330
279020	SH74276956	QUARRY	Post-Medieval	350
279021	SH71406795	SHEEP SHELTER	Post-Medieval	520
279022	SH71726815	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	480
279023	SH71496785	PEAT CUTTING	Post-Medieval	510
279024	SH71436768	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	510
279025	SH71706797	STOCK ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	480
279026	SH71806803	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	470
279027	SH72266766	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	400
279028	SH72586773	FARMSTEAD	Post-Medieval	395
279029	SH72406800	FARMSTEAD	Post-Medieval	440
279030	SH72426801	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	440
279031	SH72446802	BUILDING PLATFORM	Medieval	435
279032	SH72486804	FIELD BOUNDARY	Post-Medieval	435
279033	SH72476814	HAFOD	Medieval	455
279034	SH72416812	HAFOD	Medieval	460
279035	SH72506817	FARMSTEAD	Post-Medieval	455
279036	SH71396779	PEAT STACK	Post-Medieval	520
279037	SH71026779	HUT CIRCLE	Roman	570
279038	SH69816818	SHELTER	Post-Medieval	910
279039	SH70596872	PEAT CUTTING	Post-Medieval	740
279040	SH70486805	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	700

279041	SH70256785	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	735
279042	SH70426789	SHELTER	Post-Medieval	690
279043	SH70636799	HAFOD	Medieval	660
279044	SH71366850	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	520
279045	SH71386852	HAFOD	Medieval	520
279046	SH73426857	FARMSTEAD	Medieval	385
279047	SH73486848	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	370
279048	SH73476850	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	370
279049	SH73506848	FARMSTEAD	Post-Medieval	370
279050	SH73536834	SHELTER	Post-Medieval	355
279051	SH73256797	SHELTER	Post-Medieval	360
279052	SH73196771	PEAT CUTTING	Post-Medieval	355
279053	SH73376799	FARMSTEAD	Post-Medieval	350
279054	SH74006841	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	320
279055	SH74136857	SHEEP SHELTER	Post-Medieval	310
279056	SH72776792	WALL	Post-Medieval	395
279057	SH72796798	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	395
279058	SH72786844	STOCK ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	490
279059	SH72866828	HOUSE PLATFORM	Medieval	425
279060	SH73046822	FIELD BOUNDARY	Post-Medieval	390
279061	SH72946819	STONE ROW	Prehistoric	400
279062	SH74136903	BARN	Post-Medieval	370
279063	SH73926887	CLEARANCE CAIRN	Post-Medieval	370
279064	SH74076878	CLEARANCE CAIRN	Post-Medieval	340
279065	SH74206894	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	340
279066	SH7426689	WALL	Post-Medieval	340
279067	SH74346886	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	320
279068	SH74486889	WALL	Post-Medieval	310
279069	SH74646870	QUARRY	Post-Medieval	290
279070	SH74516859	FIELD SYSTEM	Post-Medieval	290
279071	SH74566856	QUARRY	Post-Medieval	285
279072	SH74366868	WALL	Post-Medieval	305
279073	SH74396843	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	285
279074	SH74286829	FIELD SYSTEM	Post-Medieval	285
279075	SH74336819	HUT CIRCLE	Prehistoric	285
279076	SH74616832	FIELD BOUNDARY	Post-Medieval	270
279077	SH74436815	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	270
279078	SH74606814	FARMSTEAD	Post-Medieval	260
279079	SH74766830	FARMSTEAD	Post-Medieval	260
279080	SH74796831	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	260
279081	SH74316931	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	360
279082	SH74286908	FARMSTEAD	Post-Medieval	350
279083	SH73946826	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	315
279084	SH74156837	WALL	Post-Medieval	300

279085	SH74174814	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	290
279086	SH74086818	WALL	Post-Medieval	300
279087	SH73876821	ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	320
279088	SH73606770	STOCK ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	330
279089	SH73706754	ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	310
279090	SH73666751	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	310
279091	SH74036836	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	310
279092	SH73866790	STOCK ENCLOSURE	Medieval	315
279093	SH73826791	HAFOD	Medieval	320
279094	SH73846792	CLEARANCE CAIRN	Medieval	320
279095	SH73836787	WALL	Medieval	315
279096	SH73496794	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	340
279097	SH73446783	STOCK ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	340
279098	SH73326760	CAIRN	Unknown	350
279099	SH73496806	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	345
279100	SH72876860	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	500
279101	SH72296848	QUARRY	Post-Medieval	550
279102	SH72236840	QUARRY	Post-Medieval	540
279103	SH72256838	HAFOD	Medieval	535
279104	SH72106823	SHEEP SHELTER	Post-Medieval	510
279105	SH72086812	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	480
279106	SH71986841	SHELTER	Post-Medieval	530
279107	SH72186859	SHELTER	Post-Medieval	580
279108	SH72776941	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	470
279109	SH74276937	QUARRY	Post-Medieval	380
279110	SH74216942	TRACKWAY	Medieval	380
279111	SH74226945	CULTIVATION TERRACE	Unknown	380
279112	SH74186948	SHEEP SHELTER	Post-Medieval	380
279113	SH73866972	FIELD BOUNDARY	Post-Medieval	370
279114	SH73806972	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	390
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279116	SH73766975	ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	400
279117	SH73786976	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	390
279118	SH73916982	BARN	Post-Medieval	360
279119	SH73926981	EARTHWORK	Post-Medieval	360
279120	SH72866878	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	520
279121	SH72846876	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	520
279122	SH72826871	HAFOD	Medieval	520
279123	SH72706868	WALL	Post-Medieval	545
279124	SH72586867	WALL	Post-Medieval	565
279125	SH72556867	SHELTER	Post-Medieval	565
279126	SH72596876	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	580
279127	SH72796915	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	530
279128	SH72996938	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	460

279129	SH72996926	WALL	Post-Medieval	480
279130	SH72956913	HAFOD	Medieval	500
279131	SH72966910	SHEEP SHELTER	Post-Medieval	500
279132	SH73636941	HAFOD	Medieval	480
279133	SH73656939	HAFOD	Medieval	480
279134	SH73676936	ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	480
279135	SH73666945	WALL	Post-Medieval	470
279136	SH73886920	QUARRY	Post-Medieval	440
279137	SH73846917	BOUNDARY BANK	Post-Medieval	435
279138	SH73706911	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	445
279139	SH73646920	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	465
279140	SH73656924	SHEEP SHELTER	Post-Medieval	480
279141	SH73626916	HAFOD	Medieval	460
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279143	SH73396901	TRACKWAY	Medieval	445
279144	SH72926848	HAFOD	Medieval	450
279145	SH72976838	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	420
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279153	SH72736760	STOCK ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	370
279154	SH72936732	HUT CIRCLE	Prehistoric	350
279155	SH73716990	SHEEP SHELTER	Post-Medieval	385
279156	SH73766996	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	375
279157	SH73296952	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	495
279158	SH72826939	FIELD SYSTEM	Post-Medieval	480
279159	SH72736948	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	460
279160	SH72976973	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	410
279161	SH73316977	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	440
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279163	SH73216861	FARMSTEAD	Post-Medieval	410
279164	SH73586881	LONGHOUSE	Medieval	400
279165	SH73596882	HOUSE	Post-Medieval	400
279166	SH73616882	STOCK ENCLOSURE	Post-Medieval	400
279167	SH74376941	QUARRY	Post-Medieval	350
279168	SH74146980	HOUSE	Post-Medieval	320
279169	SH75346862	SHEEP FOLD	Post-Medieval	270
279170	SH75176828	COTTAGE	Post-Medieval	260
279171	SH74996871	COTTAGE	Post-Medieval	240

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Eastern Snowdonia (Central) Study Area

Figure 3: Site Distribution showing both pre- and post-survey sites



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Scale 1: 250,000 at A4

0 5km



Figure 1: Location map

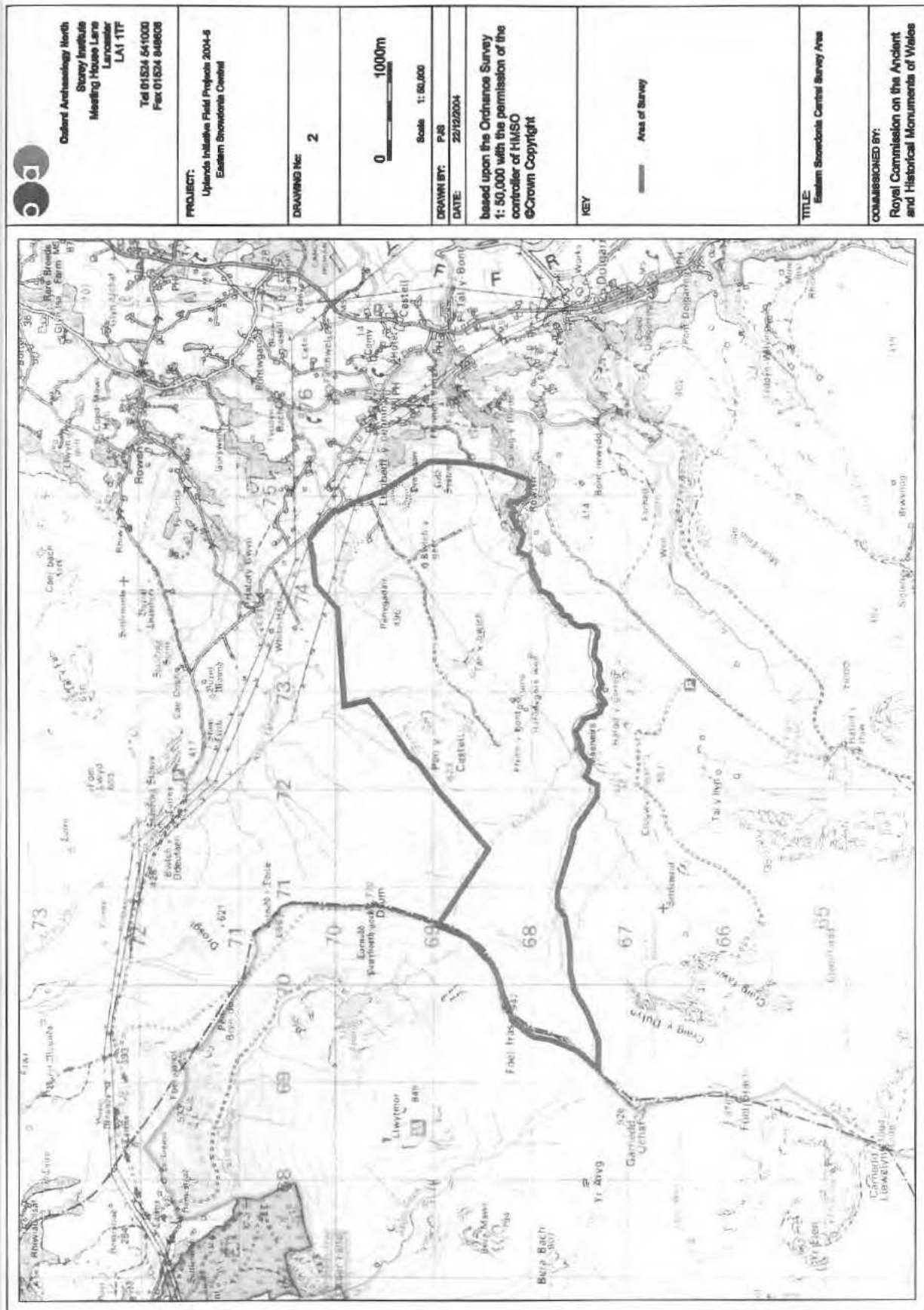
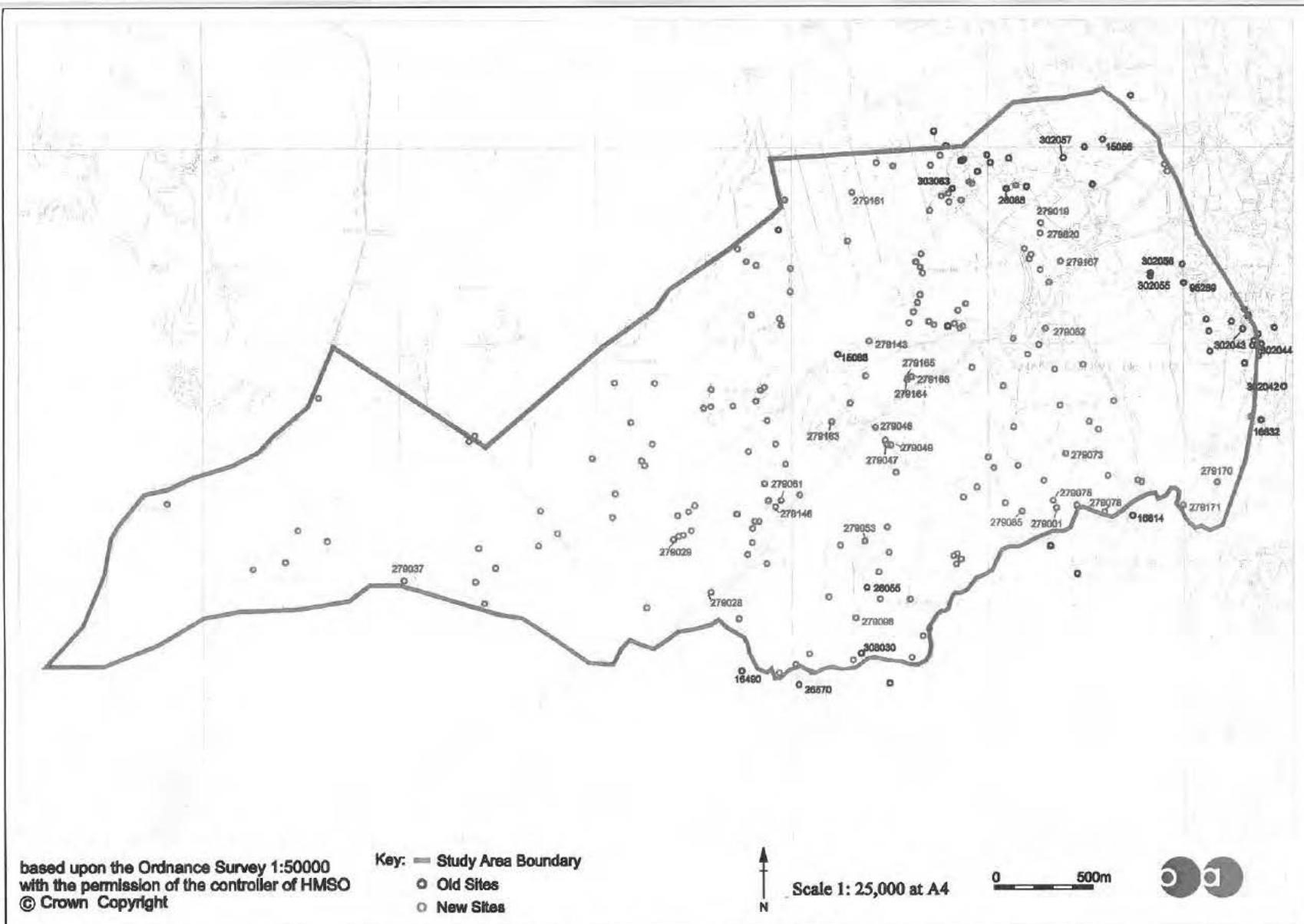


Figure 2 : Eastern Snowdonia (Central) Study Area



PLATES

- Plate 1: Pen-y-gaer Hillfort, overlooking the Conwy valley (NMR 95289)
- Plate 2: Ring Cairn located to the south of Hafodygors-wen (NMR 308030)
- Plate 3: Longhouse settlement south of Pen-y-Gaer (NMR 302044))
- Plate 4: Longhouse on northern slope of Penygadair (NMR 279161)
- Plate 5: Farmstead at Ffrith-y-Bont (NMR 279146)
- Plate 6: Farmstead at Hafodygors-wen (NMR 279053)
- Plate 7: Upright orthostatic stone structure at Ffrith-y-bont (NMR 279061)



Plate 1: Pen-y-gaer hillfort overlooking the Conwy valley (NPRN 95289)



Plate 2: Ring Cairn located to the south of Hafodygors-wen (NPRN 308030)



Plate 3: Longhouse settlement south of Pen-y-gaer (NPRN 302044)



Plate 4: Longhouse on northern slope of Penygadair (NPRN 279161)



Plate 5: Farmstead at Ffrith-y-Bont (NPRN 279146)



Plate 6: Farmstead at Hafodygors-wen (NPRN 279053)



Plate 7: Upright orthostatic stone structure at Ffrith-y-bont (NPRN 279061)