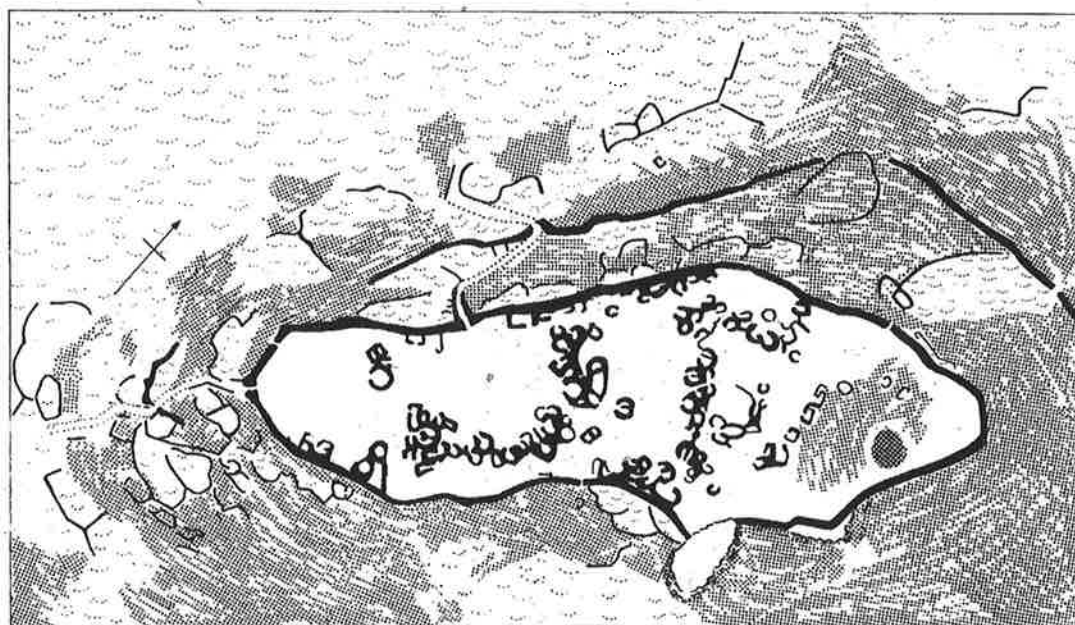


# TRE'R CEIRI MONITORING VISIT

December 2004

Report number : 557



Prepared for

**GWYNEDD COUNCIL**

December 2004

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

# TRE'R CEIRI MONITORING VISIT

December 2004

Report number : 557

*Event PRN 54785*

Prepared for

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

By

D Hopewell

December 2004

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

## **Introduction**

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

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

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

It was therefore agreed that two monitoring visits should be carried out per annum. These visits would allow minor stabilisation work such as the backfilling of metal detector holes and the replacement of occasional stones to be carried out. A contingency budget was also put in place allowing a team of 3 stonemasons to be contracted for three days per annum to allow for the conservation of any more serious problems. Regular monitoring visits have been carried out by G.A.T. since the end of the conservation project and all damage has been stabilised as part of this process. The second monitoring visit of 2004 was carried out on 7th December. Weather conditions were good with clear skies and low winds.

## **Results of the monitoring visit**

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

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

### *The Ramparts*

Only one area of instability was identified.

1. A large thick header had been levered up from the top of the inner face and was standing upright on the wall top. This was replaced in its original position. The core was repacked thus stabilising the facing.

It was noted that the wall core was loose in several places around the circuit of the rampart. This is not currently threatening the stability of the rampart facing. It should however be monitored and stabilised where necessary in future monitoring visits.

### *The Cairn*

2. Two small 'sub-cairns' had been built using material from the body of the main cairn. These were demolished and the stone used to backfill the slight hollows from where the material had originated. It is hoped that the regular back-filling of any excavations into the core of the cairn will prevent the formation of the large pits that are commonly found in the centre of Bronze age burial cairns.

### *The Huts*

3. Hut 41. A small hole had been dug in the floor of the hut. This was at the base of a stable collapse that had been left *in situ* during the conservation project. The hole was carefully back-filled using weathered stones on the surface. No further instability had occurred in the stable collapse.

4-5. Hut 19 Stones had been removed from the wall core in two places forming voids behind the facing. The upper part of the hut wall was fragile but stable. The wall core was repacked behind the facing thus ensuring the integrity of the wall

### *The notice boards*

The information boards by the cairn and south-west entrance were vandalised earlier in the year. These await repair. The frames and legs are undamaged but the information panels of all three boards require replacement.

## **Discussion**

The level of damage recorded during this monitoring visit was low but generally deliberate as opposed to being a result of general erosion. The general condition and stability of the monument is however, very good. The regular monitoring of the site and repair of any damage is clearly continuing to be a successful conservation strategy. It should be noted that the masonry conserved during the main stabilisation project is now blending in with the original masonry due to fast lichen growth in the mild damp weather of the last few years.

## **References**

- Cambrian Archaeological Association 1895, 'Report of Carnarvon Meeting, July 1894.' *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 5th series XII, 146-148.
- Boyle S D. *Tre'r Ceiri Conservation Project 1989-90*
- Hopewell D. 1997, *Report on the Ninth Season of the Tre'r Ceiri Conservation Project*
- Hopewell D. 1999, *Tre'r Ceiri Management Plan*.
- Hopewell D. 2001, *Tre'r Ceiri monitoring visit: June 2001*
- Hopewell D. 2002, *Tre'r Ceiri monitoring visit: May 2002*
- Hopewell D. 2002, *Tre'r Ceiri monitoring visit: December 2002*
- Hopewell D. 2003, *Tre'r Ceiri monitoring visit: June 2003*
- Hopewell D. 2004, *Tre'r Ceiri monitoring visit: June 2004*
- R.C.A.H.M.W. 1960, *Caernarvonshire Inventory. Volume II: Central*.

