

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Coed y Foel, Llandysul
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT



CPAT REPORT 300

CPAT Report No 300

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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December 1998

Report for the Woodland Trust

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Cover Illustrations, from top;

Coed y Foel View
Oak Woodland, Coed y Foel
Coppiced Oak, Coed y Foel

Introduction

The Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was commissioned in July 1998 by the Woodland Trust to undertake an archaeological and historical assessment of Coed y Foel (centred on SN 42864270; Figure 1). The wood lies to the north of Llandysul in Ceredigion, and covers an area of approximately 23ha.

The woodland was acquired by the Woodland Trust to enhance its wildlife, recreational and landscape value. The archaeological assessment aims to place the woodland within its historical context and to identify sites of archaeological interest for management purposes. Any specific management advice should be sought from the relevant archaeological curator, in this case the curatorial section of Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology.

Sources and Methods

The National Monuments Record held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in Aberystwyth was consulted for sites which lay within the woodland or in its vicinity. A search was also made of the regional Sites and Monuments Record held by Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology in their offices in Llandeilo. No archaeological features within the wood were identified from either source, though useful information was forthcoming for nearby sites.

The collections of the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth and the Ceredigion Record Office, both in Aberystwyth were searched for readily available documentary and cartographic sources including estate maps and documents, the tithe map and apportionment (Fig 2), and early editions of the Ordnance Survey. The earliest meaningful cartographic depiction of the wood is on the first edition of the One Inch Ordnance Survey map published in 1831 but surveyed in 1811 while the earliest detailed descriptions of the wood are on the tithe map and apportionment of the Llandysul parish which date to 1838. The woodland appears on the first and second edition of the Ordnance Survey Six Inch maps which date to 1881 and 1906 respectively (Figure 3; first edition). It does not appear on any estate maps or documents in the National Library of Wales or in the Ceredigion Record Office.

Useful information was supplied by the Woodland Trust, including a census of woodland carried out in 1942 and 1947-8 and a letter from the former owner of the wood, Mr Harwood-Grayson of Faerdre Fawr, recording his knowledge of the wood.

A rapid field assessment was carried out to record the condition of sites identified during the desk-top study and to search for previously unidentified ones. A systematic transect approach to the fieldwork was not adopted due to the density of the woodland and in places the steepness of the topography. Consequently, it is likely that there are further archaeological sites within the woodland which have yet to be identified.

The cartographic sources were digitised and rectified to modern grid co-ordinates using AutoCAD software. The Woodland Trust stockmap was also digitized so that sites identified could be recorded in relation to modern management plans. The digital maps were converted into MapInfo tables and site records were then produced in FoxPro through MapInfo. The digital results of the project will be made available to the Woodland Trust.

Topography

The main part of Coed y Foel lies on a south-east facing slope overlooking Afon Teifi between the 80m and 200m OD contours to the north of Llandysul, adjacent to agricultural land on its south-eastern and north-western sides. To the north-east and south-west woodland in a separate holding extends along the slope. The northern part of Coed y Foel is separated from the main part of the wood by a small stream and lies on a south-facing slope at the same elevation. The solid geology of the area is represented by the Caradoc and Ashgill series of Ordovician rock.

Archaeological and Historical Background

There are no previously known sites in Coed y Foel, but there are two major monuments close to the wood. These are the Pen Coed y Foel camp, an Iron Age camp which lies on the crown of the hill above the wood to the north-west, and Castell Gwynionydd, a medieval stronghold, which lies in the Teifi valley to the south of the wood.

The woodland was part of the holding of the Faerdre Fawr Farm from at least the middle of the nineteenth century until its purchase by the Woodland Trust in 1991. As it was not part of a large, wealthy estate no estate maps or records exist for the wood.

The Woodland History and Archaeology of Pen y Coed (Figure 4)

There is no direct evidence for the date of major woodland clearance in the area around Coed y Foel, although pollen evidence from sites throughout Wales suggests that much of the country had lost its woodland cover by the end of the Iron Age. The remaining woodland was generally located on land not suitable for agricultural activity, such as the steep slope on which Coed y Foel lies. Much of Coed y Foel therefore may never have been cleared for agricultural use. All the available cartographic sources record Coed y Foel, apart from a small area on its eastern side, as consistently wooded throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This woodland was depicted as deciduous, apart from an area to the south-west which was marked as coniferous, on the second edition of the Six Inch map. A woodland census of 1942 records the woodland as being almost exclusively oak coppice, as does a re-survey of the wood in 1947-8. The last major cutting of the coppice appears to have been during the 1920s according to the 1942 census and information from the current owner of Faerdre Fawr.

The long woodland history of Coed y Foel is reflected by the presence of woodland indicator species within the wood, which is predominantly oak coppice. Oak coppice was the most valuable of all woodland until the introduction of commercial plantations in the nineteenth century. They provided firewood and timber for the local community, as at Coed y Foel where it is believed that the timber used in the construction of Faerdre Fawr farmhouse was obtained from the wood. Increasing demand for oak coppice from further afield came during the seventeenth and eighteenth century when massive quantities of bark were required by the tanning industry and pit-props were required by the booming mining industry in south Wales. As the demand for oak products was so high woodland needed careful management and it is possible that the present composition of Coed y Foel as predominantly oak coppice is a product of the past 300 years as the oak was promoted above other species such as hazel and holly.

Deliberate selection of tree species by woodland management is also evident on the boundaries of Coed y Foel. On the northern edge of the northern part of the wood the boundary is marked by a number of blackthorn trees (site 1). The distribution of this species along the boundary probably represents deliberate management to form an effective barrier to prevent stock entering the wood. On the north-eastern boundary beech trees have been planted on the boundary bank (sites 2-5). They were probably introduced to act as shelter to aid the growth of coppice within the wood, as beech is a fast growing tree. The boundary bank on which the beech is planted is a substantial feature. Its dimensions do not differ whether the boundary separates the woodland from agricultural land or from other wooded areas. It is a reflection of the importance of the woodland resource to its owners and the need to exclude stock.

The only parts of the wood which have not had a consistent woodland cover over the past two hundred years are a narrow part of the northern side of the wood which represents a recent extension of the property boundary and a part on the eastern side which was recorded on cartographic sources as open ground. The area of open ground may have been a small intake from the wood for use as agricultural land. Its boundary is marked by a substantial

bank within the present wood (site 6). The composition of the wood is different in this area as there is little oak coppice and a greater proportion of invasive species such as birch and ash.

The current rides within the woodland generally follow those marked on the nineteenth century maps. They follow the contours and were probably used for woodland management. The uppermost ride may have been used for its aesthetic value because of its views over the Teifi and the town of Llandysul. The presence of large mature larch trees at the south-western end of the ride, closest to Faerdre Fach, could reflect an attempt to enhance these aesthetics.

Conclusions

Coed y Foel is a fine example of an oak coppice woodland which has been consistently wooded since at least the beginning of the nineteenth century according to cartographic sources. The location of the wood on steeply sloping ground and the absence of any archaeological features relating to previous land-use suggest that the wood is considerably older than this and indeed it is possible that the woodland cover has never been removed.

The existence of established oak coppice suggests a long history of management and the use of species such as blackthorn on its boundary suggest that this management was quite sophisticated.

Acknowledgements

CPAT Contracts wishes to thank Jerry Langford of the Woodland Trust for his help during the project. Thanks also to the staff of the National Library of Wales for their permission to reproduce Figs 2, 3 and 4. Assistance was also given by the staff of the National Monument Record at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in Aberystwyth, the staff of the curatorial section of Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology in Llandeilo, and the Ceredigion Record Office in Aberystwyth.

8 References

Published Sources

Bowen, D.Q. 1980. Geology. In Carter (ed), *National Atlas of Wales*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Linnard, W. 1982. *Welsh Woods and Forests: History and Utilization*. Cardiff: National Museum of Wales.

Rackham, Oliver. 1990. *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape* (Revised Edition). London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Published Cartographic Sources

1831 Ordnance Survey One Inch Map Sheet XLI (National Library of Wales).

1891 Ordnance Survey Six Inch Map (first edition) Cardiganshire Sheet XLSE (National Library of Wales).

1906 Ordnance Survey Six Inch Map (second edition) Cardiganshire Sheet XLSE (National Library of Wales).

Unpublished Map Sources

1838 Tithe Map of Llandysul Parish (National Library of Wales).

Manuscript Sources

1942 Census of Woodland (provided by Jerry Langford of the Woodland Trust)

1947-8 Census of Woodland (provided by Jerry Langford of the Woodland Trust)

1991 Letter from Mr Harwood-Grayson of Faerdre Fawr (provided by Jerry Langford of the Woodland Trust).

APPENDIX I

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE CATEGORIES

The following categories are based on those established for defining archaeological significance of sites during survey work on the Forest Enterprise (Wales) estate (Thomas 1997). They are intended only as a guide to the relative importance of the archaeological sites identified during this assessment.

Category A

Archaeological monuments of national importance

This category may include any site, whatever its form, which might meet the criteria for scheduling. It will by definition include all Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) and listed buildings. Some, though not all, of the sites in this category may be recommended for scheduling if they are not already scheduled.

The main criteria for selection will usually be the rarity, condition and potential of the site. Typically, sites such as barrows, hillforts, linear earthworks or significant (ruined) buildings might fall in this category, although significant find scatters might equally well qualify on potential or relatively modern farmsteads on group value.

Category B

Archaeological monuments and landscape features of regional or local importance.

This category may include any site, whatever its form, which while not meeting the criteria for scheduling may still be seen as of regional or local importance. For example, a type of site unique to a particular locality but common elsewhere, or severely degraded examples of commonly occurring types.

Category C

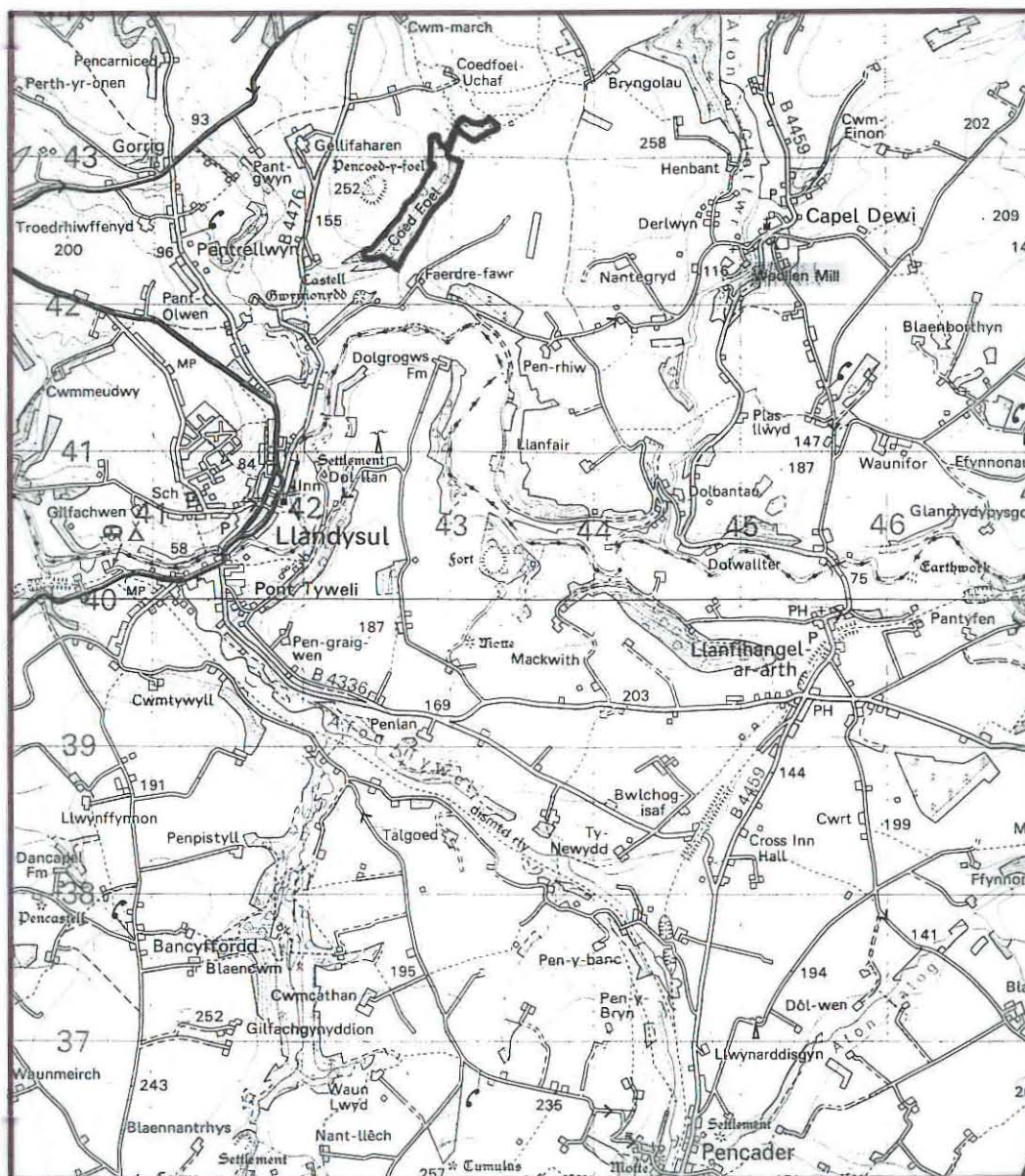
Archaeological monuments of lesser significance.

This category comprises sites which while being of archaeological or historical interest are not worthy of conservation or active protection.

Category D

Sites with no defined physical presence

This category comprises findspots, sites noted but not accurately located in antiquarian references, sites known only from placename evidence and other reported sites whose authenticity is in doubt (e.g. certain sites which have not been verified by recent archaeological fieldwork). No sites from this category were identified during the present assessment



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Figure 1: Location of Coed y Foel

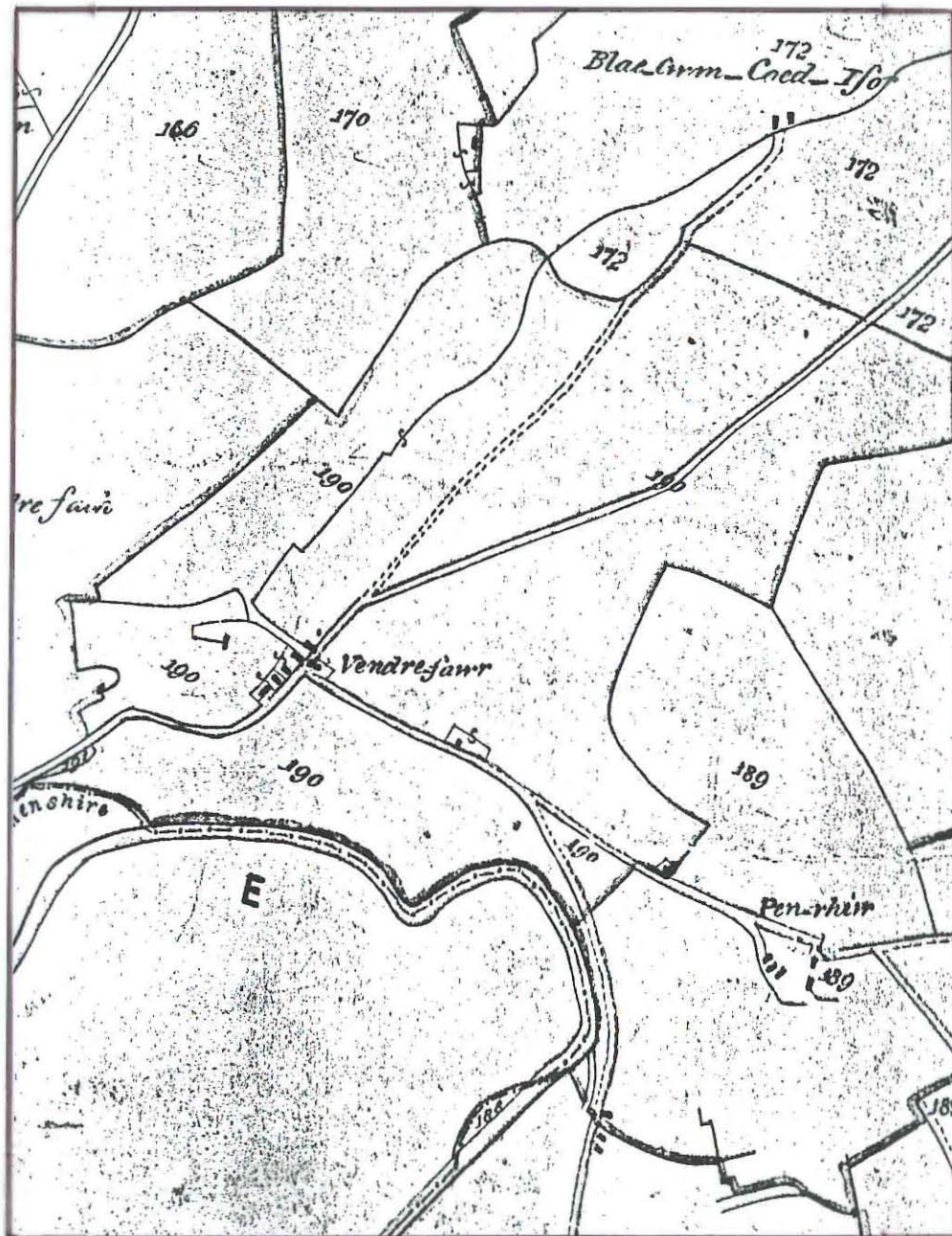


Figure 2: Extract of the Llandysul Tithe Map (1838)
(Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Wales)

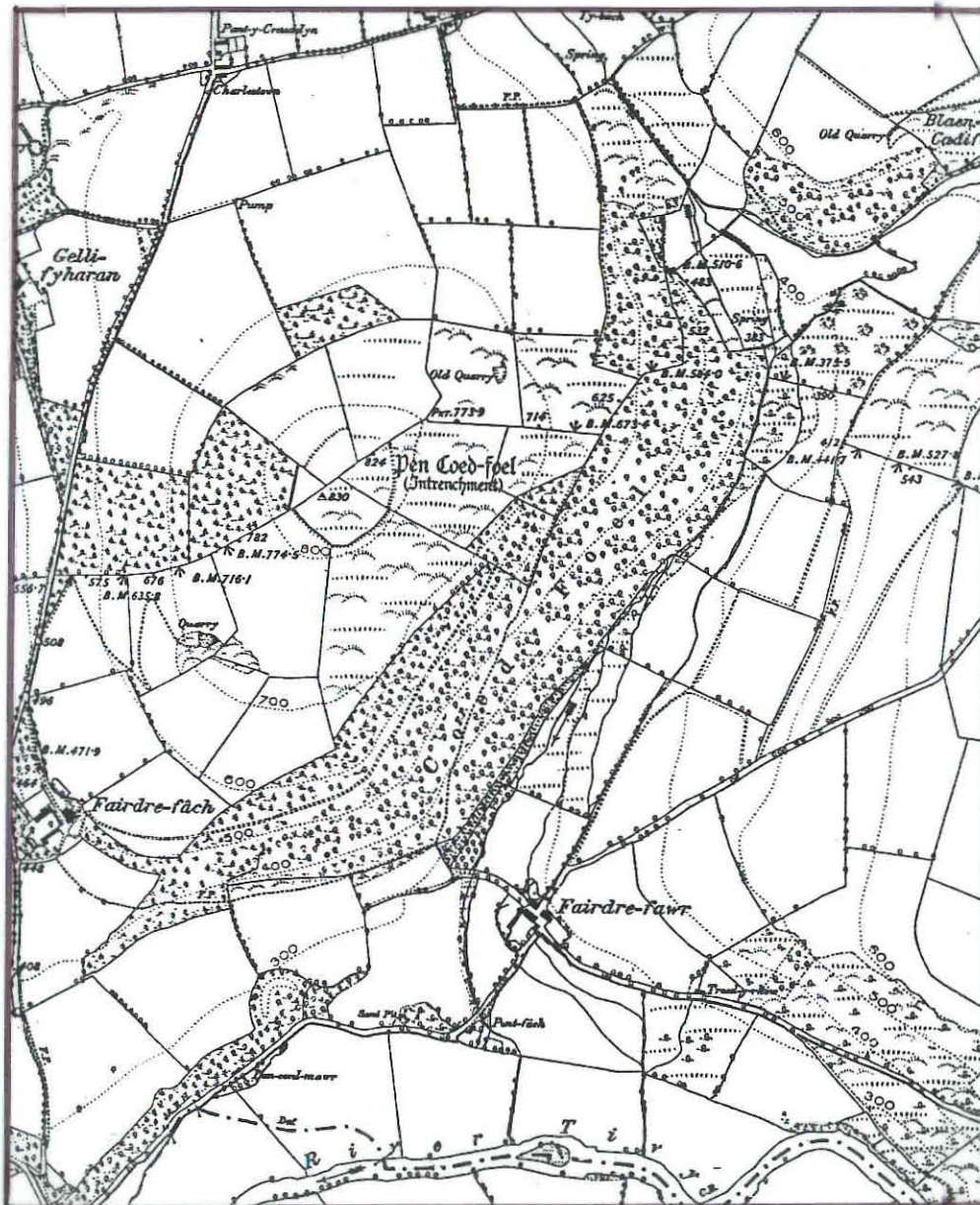
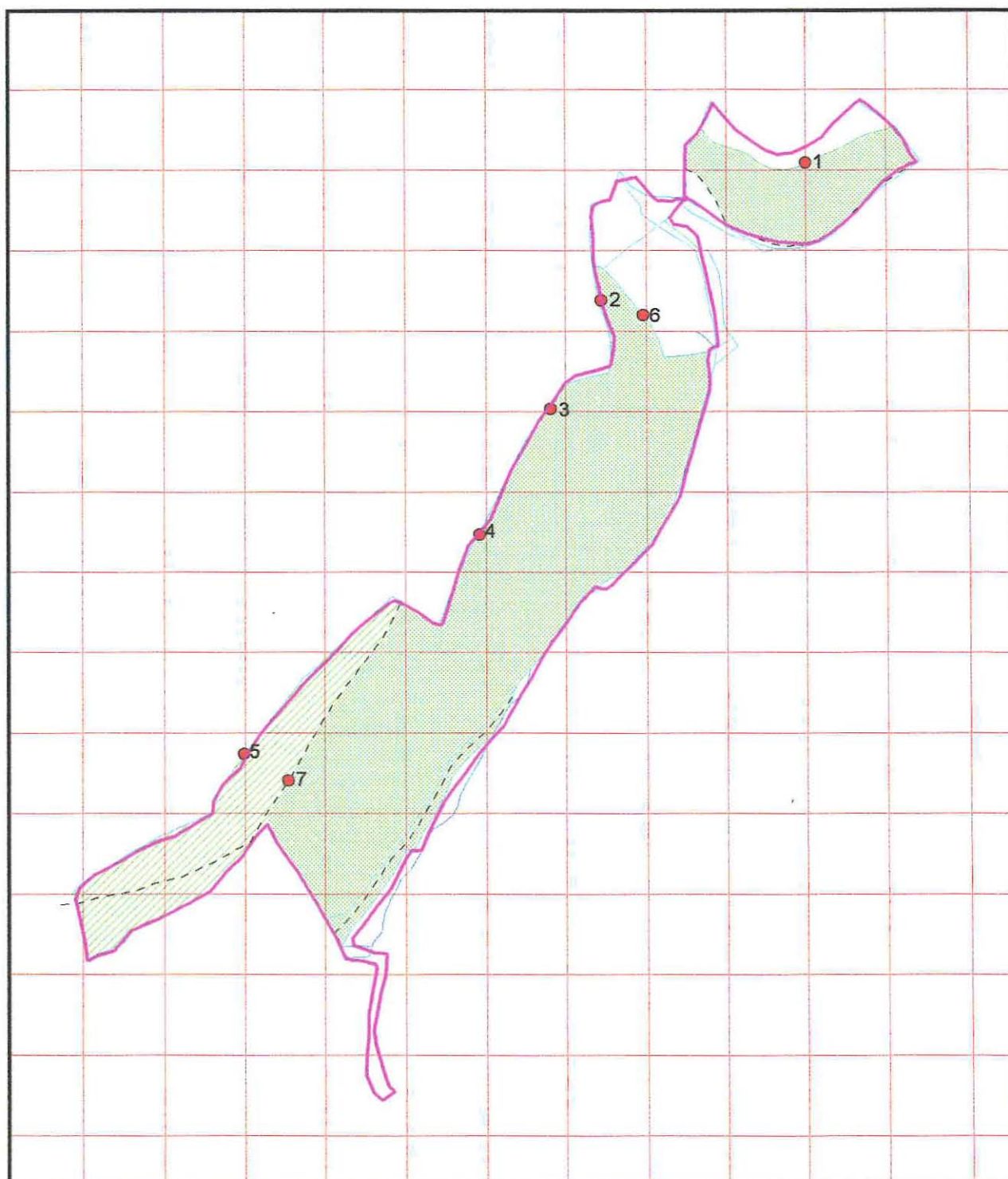
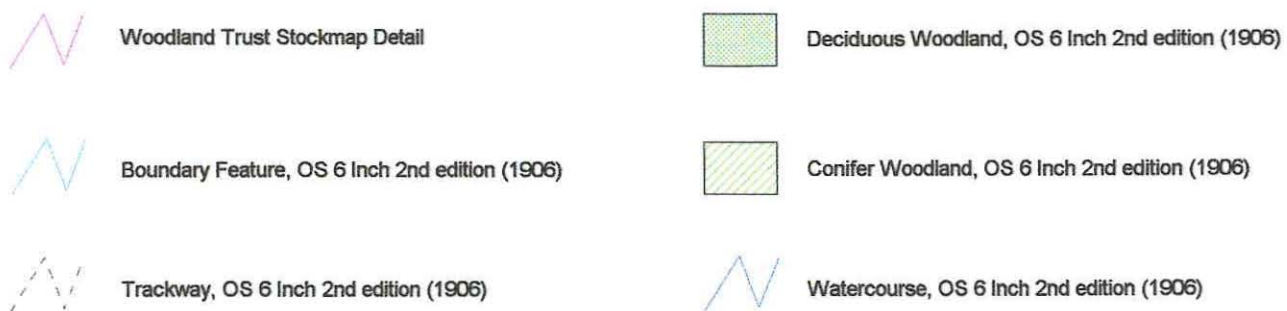


Figure 3: Extract of the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 6 inch map, Carmarthenshire Sheet XLSE.

(Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Wales)

Figure 4: Location of Archaeological Sites in Coed y Foel



Site No 1 **SN43204320**

Coed y Foel Northern Boundary

Period Post medieval

Site Type Boundary

Northern boundary of Coed y Foel. Marked as dotted line on OS maps. Visible on the ground as a hedge of blackthorn.

Lies within current boundary. No immediate threat although blackthorn is becoming old and straggly.

Management Category C

Site No 2 **SN42944303**

Coed y Foel Western Boundary I

Period Post medieval

Site Type Boundary Bank

Boundary of Coed y Foel marked on OS maps. To the west there is further woodland. A substantial earth and stone bank up to 1m high with trees, including mature beech, growing on top.

In good condition with no immediate threat.

Management Category C

Site No 3 **SN42884290**

Coed y Foel Western Boundary II

Period Post medieval

Site Type Boundary Bank

Boundary of Coed y Foel marked on OS maps. To the west there is agricultural land. A substantial earth and stone bank up to 1m high with trees, including mature beech, growing on top.

In good condition with no immediate threat.

Management Category C

Site No 4 **SN42794274**

Coed y Foel Western Boundary III

Period Post medieval

Site Type Boundary Bank

Boundary of Coed y Foel marked on OS maps. To the west is further woodland. A substantial earth and stone bank up to 1m high with trees, including beech, on top.

In good condition with no immediate threat.

Management Category C

Management Category C

Management Category C

Management Category C

SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF COED Y FOEL, LLANDYSSUL.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Woodland Trust have requested that an archaeological assessment be carried out at the above property (centered on c.SN427425). The assessment is required to aid the proper management of the archaeological resource of the woodland and to place the woodland within its historical context.
- 1.2 The woodland covers 21.8ha and lies to the north of Llandyssil. No archaeological sites have previously been identified in the woodland, but to the north-west lies Pen Coed y Foel fort. Other archaeological assessments within woodlands in Wales have demonstrated the survival of a wide range of unrecorded archaeological sites including charcoal burning hearths, deeply incised holloways and surrounding earthworks (Thomas 1996; 1997). The surveys have also demonstrated the range of documentary and cartographic sources available for the placing of the sites within their historic context.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the assessment are:
- 2.2 to reveal by means of desktop survey and limited fieldwork the nature of the archaeological resource and historic context of the woodland.
- 2.2 to prepare a series of digital maps recording the development of the woodland as recorded on historic maps and related to the modern stock map.
- 2.3 to prepare a database of archaeological sites including site descriptions, location and assessment of their importance.
- 2.4 to prepare a report including an account of the historic context of the woodland along with a gazetteer of identified sites and maps of their location.

3 Methods

- 3.1 Desktop Survey
 - 3.1.1 A search of the archives held by the National Library in Aberystwyth, the National Monument Record based at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in Aberystwyth, the Carmarthenshire County Record Office in Carmarthen and the Sites and Monuments Record for the area held by Cambria Archaeology (formerly the Dyfed Archaeological Trust) will be conducted for material relevant to the property. This material may include estate maps, tithe maps and apportionments, early editions of the Ordnance Survey, manuscript documents and aerial photographs. Published sources relevant to the property will also be consulted.
 - 3.1.2 Digital maps will be created by rectifying cartographic material to modern grid co-ordinates under AutoCAD. The Woodland Trust stock map will also be digitised allowing the overlay of the historic map data.

3.2 Fieldwork

- 3.2.1 Fieldwork will be carried out after the completion of the desktop assessment. The fieldwork will record the condition of sites identified during the desktop assessment and will record previously unrecorded sites. The transect approach to fieldwork will not be adopted as it is unsuitable for wooded areas.

3.3 Data Creation

- 3.3.1 A database will be compiled in FoxPro recording the location, condition and nature of specific archaeological features. The sites will be categorised according to their archaeological importance.
- 3.3.2 MapInfo tables will be created from the digital map data. Co-ordinates recorded in the FoxPro database will enable the sites to be viewed against the map tables.

3.4 Reporting

- 3.4.1 A report on the results of the survey will be prepared following the desktop survey, fieldwork and data creation. This will take the form of a typed and bound A4 document with sections on the historic context of the site, a gazetteer of sites and reference maps.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The assessment will be undertaken by 2 skilled archaeologists, one of whom has previous experience of carrying out assessments in wooded areas. Overall supervision will be by R.J. Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by one of the two archaeologists who conducted the assessment.
- 4.3 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.4 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employers Liability insurance.

References

- Thomas, D. 1996. *Priory Grove, Monmouthshire. Archaeological Assessment*. CPAT Report 211.
- Thomas, D. 1997. *Cwm George Woods, Vale of Glamorgan. Archaeological Assessment*. CPAT Report 256.

David Thomas
Project Officer

STANDARD NOTES AND CONDITIONS

- 1 The quotation has been prepared using the appropriate rates of pay, travelling costs and other expenses normally used for archaeological fieldwork by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (henceforward termed CPAT). It is subject to revision for work done after 31 March 1999.
- 2 An invoice will be issued for payment on submission of a report on 30-day settlement terms.
- 3 On acceptance of the tender, the client should provide a written order for the work. CPAT will not otherwise be able to commence work.
- 4 This estimate covers only the completion of the archaeological evaluation and the preparation of the commissioned report. The curatorial staff of Cambria Archaeology (formerly the Dyfed Archaeological Trust) in their role as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority will be solely responsible for determining any recommendations for further action arising from the proposed assessment. There is no commitment on the part of those CPAT staff involved in contracting to provide services or advice to the client in any form subsequent to the submission of the project report.
- 5 Where CPAT is contracting to undertake a particular piece of work, it recognises that those intending to commission such work may wish to engage an independent archaeological consultant to assess the specification of works intended to satisfy the archaeological brief, to monitor the progress of the work or to advise on the recommendations for any further action.
- 6 Whilst CPAT will make every effort to ensure that its work is both thorough and accurate, it cannot be held responsible for any omission or misinterpretation arising from the limitations of the procedures as laid down in the project brief/specification.
- 7 CPAT cannot be held responsible for any alteration or modification to the results or conclusions in the report, made by the client or a third party.
- 8 It is understood that the client will arrange for access for CPAT and its agents to the areas involved in the examination, and that, if appropriate, landowners will be notified by the client before work commences
- 9 It is understood that the client will be responsible of the payment of any compensation to the occupier and/or owner as a consequence of the archaeological works.
- 10 CPAT will not be liable to indemnify the client against compensation resulting from unavoidable damage to crops, structures or services during on-site operations.
- 11 Work undertaken during the project will be covered by CPAT's existing Public Liability and Employer's Liability indemnities.
- 12 CPAT and/or its sub-contractors will make every effort to ensure that its works do not constitute a hazard to members of the public or persons authorised by the owner to be on the land.
- 13 CPAT will endeavour to keep the results of client's assessment work confidential for an agreed period of time after completion of the project. Thereafter CPAT's results and conclusions will be considered in the public domain, and CPAT reserves the right to publish reports on the work undertaken, with all due acknowledgement to the client.

- 14 CPAT undertakes not to give information to the media without the prior agreement of the client (or his agent).
- 15 CPAT will retain possession of copyright on all survey records and commissioned reports, and it retains the right to assign these to a another body of its choosing in due course. It will provide an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report and its contents in all matters relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.
- 16 Finds, artefacts and samples will remain in the temporary possession of CPAT until fully studied and reported on. Subsequently, the client/landowner will nominate an appropriate local or regional public museum to which these will be donated.
- 17 It is CPAT's policy to adhere to the *Code of Practice* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and other current recognised Codes of Practice etc. specifically dealing with archaeological work.
- 18 CPAT's work will be monitored by the relevant regional curatorial body. CPAT should be informed in writing, if the client wishes to institute his own monitoring system.