

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y-glog*  
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERIZATION



Llwyn-y-fedwen in the Hepste Valley in the middle distance with Gwaun Cefnygarreg and Mynydd y Garn beyond.  
*Photo CPAT 2509-102*

**CPAT Report No 912**

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HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERIZATION

by **W J Britnell**  
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## Preface

Natural forces and human activity acting together over the last six thousand years have contributed to produce a landscape of great beauty and variety in Wales, a national asset that is essential both to our national identity and to our individual 'sense of place' and well-being. The diversity and imprint of human activity on the landscape is everywhere to be seen, from the enigmatic stone monuments of the prehistoric period and the magnificent castles and abbeys of the medieval period, to quite commonplace and typical features like field boundaries that can often be of great age. But the landscape is more than just attractive scenery or a record of the past; it also provides a place for us to live, work and sustain ourselves, through farming, forestry, tourism and so on, processes that all shape, and will continue to shape, the landscape.

Recognising and raising awareness of the importance and wealth of the historic fabric of the landscape has been the central theme and message of the non-statutory, *Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales*, the first part of which, covering thirty-six 'outstanding' landscapes, was published in January 1998. This is being compiled as a joint initiative between Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), working in collaboration with the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and the Welsh unitary authorities.

The *Historic Landscapes Register* provides a first step, a 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, the CCW and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts. This involves the identification of geographically definable and mappable areas of historic character, as determined by the range and distribution of surviving archaeological and historical

## Rhagair

*Mae'r grymoedd nuturiol 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 henedlaethol 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 hyfyd yn darparu lle i ni fyw, gweithio a chynnal ein hunain ynddo, drwy gyfrwng amaeth, coedwigaeth, twristiaeth ac ati, oll yn broseau sy'n llunio, ac a fydd yn yn parhau i lunio'r tirwedd.*

*Bu cydnabod a chodi ymwybyddiaeth o bwysigrwydd a chyfoeth ffariog hanesyddol y tirwedd yn thema ac yn neges ganolog y gofrestr anstatudol, Cofrestr o Dirweddau o Ddiddordeb Hanesyddol Eithriadol Yng Nghymru, y cynoeddwyd y rhan gyntaf ohoni, sy'n cwmaus 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 â phedair Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Cymru, y Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru ac awdurdodau unedol Cymru.*

*Cofrestr 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 â chymeriad y tirwedd hwn ar lefel fwy lleol. Cyflawnir hyn drwy broses a elwir yn nodweddiad tirweddau hanesyddol y gellir eu diffinio a'u mapio'n ddaearyddol, yn ôl 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 'themâe' hanesyddol*

features and the main types of historical 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 of a series of landscape characterisation exercises being undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts with grant-aid from Cadw. These studies will initially concentrate on those areas identified on the *Historic Landscapes Register*, although it is accepted that the whole of the Welsh landscape can be said to be, in one way or another, historic. Information is being prepared in a form which is compatible to the 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.

*sydd wedi llunio'r ardal. Nodir nodweddion hanesyddol allweddol yr ardal felly ynghyd ag argymhellion ar gyfer eu rheli'n gadarnhaol.*

*Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn un o gyfres o ymarfeirion nodweddiad tirweddau hanesyddol yr ymngmeirir ag ef gan Ymddiriedolaethau Archaeolegol Cymru gyda chymorth grant gan Cadw. Bydd yr astudiaethau hyn yn canolbwyntio yn y lle cyntaf ar yr ardaloedd hynny a nodwyd yn y Gofestr o Ddiddordeb Hanessyddol, er y caiff ei dderbyn bod modd disgrifio tirwedd Cymru gyfan, mewn un ffordd neu'r llall, fel yn hanesyddol. Mae gwybodaeth yn cael ei pharatoi ar ffurf sy'n cydweddau â 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 Gofestr o Dirweddau o Ddiddordeb Hanessyddol a'r ymarfeirion 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 abethu tirweddau gorau'r gorffennol.*

*Richard Avent*

Cadw

*Richard Kelly*

Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru/Countryside Council for Wales

## *Introduction*

### **THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

This study is a contribution to the overall historic landscape initiative currently being funded by Cadw, the Countryside Council for Wales and ICOMOS UK. Its principal aim is to provide information to aid the management of the historic landscape. The following uses of historic landscape characterization were identified by Cadw:

- Planning, including large-scale intrusions such as roads, windfarms, mineral extraction, large-scale landfill/waste disposal, reclamation, water schemes, major settlement schemes, and major industrial developments
- Landscape management by large corporate landowners, farmers, industrial companies, water and electricity companies, the forestry industry, and the National Trust
- Advice to conservation bodies such as Cadw, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency, local authorities, national parks
- Local landscape conservation initiatives and management agreements by Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales, local authorities
- To enhance our understanding of the historic aspects of landscape, stimulating further research, raising public perception of the landscape, and the preparation of policy statements by public bodies

### **EVOLVING HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERIZATION METHODOLOGY**

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

Historical landscape characteristics are the tangible evidence of the activities and habits of the people who occupied, developed, used and shaped the land to serve human needs in the past; they reflect the beliefs, attitudes, traditions and values of these people. They include the physical remains of all aspects of human activities and the exploitation in the past (above and below ground, known and potential), and our understanding, interpretation and even perception of those remains. They may reflect a variety of activities occurring at one time, or evolving functions in different periods of time.

The Countryside Commission (in its document *Views from the Past*, 1996) states that as managers we should be concerned with the historic character of the present landscape, and not with the study of the past for its own sake. It places the idea of 'historic landscape character' at the centre of these ideas. Characterization is defined as the process of identifying and defining the particular characteristics which make each area distinctive, and is rapidly emerging as the basis for describing and understanding the environment. Historic landscape characterization is one dimension of this approach: it sets out to identify the principal historic components within the current landscape. It is the great depth of human activity which underpins much of that which we feel is important and helps to give an idea of its local distinctiveness.

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 characterization of landscape, but work on Llyn and elsewhere in Wales has suggested a practical approach based on considering the evidence as a series of themes which may provide an answer. At a landscape level, what is significant in historical terms includes field boundary patterns (whether they are irregular or regular, their size, their date etc); settlement patterns (whether they are scattered, nucleated, their 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 characterization adopted here can be summarised as follows:

one or more <u>dominant patterns</u>	→	<u>coherent character</u>
<u>coherent character</u> with definable limits	→	<u>character area</u>
one or more <u>character areas</u>	→	<u>historic landscape area</u>

Characterization 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’ (ie the evidence for historical processes and periods in the present landscape). It is essential, therefore, that the key historic landscape characteristics are features and/or patterns to which can be applied management prescriptions whose success or otherwise can be measured for monitoring purposes.

The reports emanating from this work contain a number of elements: the description of each character area split into three parts — historical background, key historic landscape characteristics, and key historic landscape management priorities — accompanied by a map and a photograph. The historical background provides a straightforward description of the archaeological and historical development of the area. The section on key historic landscape characteristics lists the principal characteristics which make that area distinctive and which future management should therefore concentrate on. The section on key historic landscape management priorities begins to define the scope for creative action within a number of initiatives (including LANDMAP, Unitary Development Plans, and Tir Gofal, the all-Wales agri-environment scheme) which can sustain or even enhance elements considered essential to the historic character of the areas.

## MANAGING HISTORIC CHARACTER

### 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 maximization 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 overproduction and a general greater awareness of and concern for the quality and protection of the rural environment, the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy provides a number of incentives to farmers and landowners to manage their land in an environmentally sensitive manner. The all-Wales Tir Gofal scheme includes provision for the conservation of certain habitats as well as sites and features of archaeological and historic landscape interest.

However, of the estimated 27,000 farms in Wales, only about 600 farms per year are currently entering into such agreements, which leaves the vast majority outside any formal management scheme, and so many important archaeological sites and landscape features continue to be lost. The challenge therefore is to identify historic landscape priorities for conservation, protection, enhancement or even restoration both within the scheme and without it.

Three of the principal advantages of an approach using character areas are that (a) it is able to identify and map both local distinctiveness and national importance; (b) by identifying physical features which can be managed it can feed directly into land management and development planning strategies; and (c) it sets the management of individual features within their local landscape context, allowing emphasis to be placed on those features which best define local landscape character. It can assist in management plans by setting priorities for management and enhancement, highlighting intrinsic values, and encouraging links to multi-purpose management.

Characterization 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 (ie 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).

### **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 that is even 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 past evolution of the landscape: to do this we must first identify what is important and significant in historic landscape terms. It is the overall historic character of the present landscape (as evidenced in important and significant groupings and patterns) which we should aim to retain, but in order to do this we must concentrate management actions at the level of individual components. We must identify, conserve and enhance the local and regional historic diversity of our landscapes.

Agri-environment and other rural initiatives offer the opportunity to integrate the needs of the historic environment with modern land-use requirements to produce a workable, effective management system. More importantly, they should result in a working, viable landscape, which should provide ways and means for the various human activities in an area to be integrated with each other and with conservation, at the same time providing opportunities for study, research, education, interpretation and quiet enjoyment.



This means that sites and features of historic landscape interest are positively managed for their own sake, rather than just left unimproved. It is important that the management of such features is integral to the management of the farm, or the scheme, 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 → retain character → conserve diversity  
 boundaries, buildings, and character areas  
 archaeological sites etc

A management plan should specify conservation objectives for a site/area and how they will be monitored: it should identify points at which some response will be made if monitoring shows that a feature is changing: it should establish what activities/processes will be the subject of monitoring: it should establish what management of on-going activities is required; and identify the types of development or activities which might adversely affect the site.

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.

### General mechanisms

It is envisaged that characterization has many potential applications to management including the following:

- assisting in developing landscape conservation and enhancement projects, by identifying elements and patterns of the historic environment which are considered either typical of a local area (provide local distinctiveness) or are of particular importance (rare at a national level)
- targeting resources within grant-aid by government and other organisations towards conserving elements and patterns of the historic environment in the same way
- developing policies for unitary development plans
- assisting in determining planning applications, especially large-scale developments such as roads, windfarms, mineral extraction, large-scale landfill, waste disposal, reclamation, water schemes, major settlement and major industrial development
- aiding the management of land by farmers, and large corporate landowners such as industrial companies, water or electricity companies, the forestry industry and the National Trust
- providing baseline information for local areas against which future change can be monitored, for example as part of the Tir Gofal scheme
- providing general information not already on the SMR which can be used to inform advice given as part of a number of rural initiatives such as Tir Gofal, Woodland Grant Schemes etc
- providing advice in a rural framework to conservation agencies including Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales, 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

### Specific mechanisms

*Tir Gofal* is open to applications from farmers throughout Wales. Within the scheme, payments will be made to farmers for observing ‘codes of good environmental practice’, one of which is care and enhancement of the historic environment. As the scheme is a ‘whole farm’ scheme, it will allow archaeological management strategies sensitive to the character of the landscape as a whole to be integrated with farming practices. Characterization 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.

*Unitary Development Plans* address ‘land use’ issues and are currently being compiled by unitary authorities in Wales and England.

*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, of implementing development plan policies. In Wales, such strategies are supported by the Countryside Council for Wales and in England by the Countryside Agency.

*Local authorities* have a number of powers which have implications for the management of the historic environment including the power to establish Country Parks (section 7 of the Countryside Act 1968); the ability to declare Local Nature Reserves (section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949); the ability to enter into access agreements with landowners (section 64 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949); the ability to buy derelict land (often of industrial archaeological interest) for reclamation purposes (section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949); the duty to make Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate (section 198 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990); and the duty to apply The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 which controls the removal of certain important hedgerows (from section 97 of the Environment Act 1995). Other powers are treated separately below.

*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 archaeological features not individual sites which give landscape 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 characterization work of the kind being carried out by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts provides historic environment audits, from which decisions of this kind can be made.

**Biodiversity Action Plans** Local Biodiversity Action Plans (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 characterization projects will be able to feed into such plans.

At a general level, archaeology is of relevance to LBAPs because it raises awareness of the historical origins of the contemporary environment. There are no purely 'natural' environments in Britain; the landscape is the product of millennia of human activity. Our knowledge of the changing relationship between people and their environment through history allows us to understand the land-use activities which have led to the creation of contemporary landscapes, and comment from an informed historical perspective on those practices which could be encouraged in order to protect and conserve particular landscapes and ecosystems.

**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, a bill has recently been passed by Parliament with proposals to provide greater public access to open areas of countryside. As many of the best-preserved and most fragile palimpsest archaeological sites and landscapes lie within open areas of countryside, this has potential implications for archaeological management.

Historic landscape characterization can identify these areas (ie where there are well-preserved yet fragile archaeological remains) and thus highlight the potential management problems if the areas are 'opened up' to public access. It may even be that such areas could be excluded from unfettered access under new legislation, either permanently or on a temporary basis.

Characterization also has the potential to inform leaflets, trails and other interpretative material.

**Leisure strategy** Historic landscape characterization may have a bearing on local authority leisure strategies.

**Tourism** The Tourist Boards for Wales and England have the strategic responsibility for encouraging people to visit the borderlands 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 characterization has a part to play in sustainable 'green tourism' in that it can help identify local distinctiveness which can be used both to attract visitors (by way of advertising), create atmosphere and to inform quality initiatives such as local walks, guides and other recreational activities. It can also direct visitors to areas with a robust historic environment, and away from those which are particularly fragile.

**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, highways maintenance, environmental education and coastal protection. These would all benefit from the information which is being compiled through the characterization 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 characterization data. In fact, information at this broad level would probably be more useful than detailed, site-specific SMR data.

**Forestry Commission** Information from characterization projects will be invaluable in contributing to national and regional indicative forestry strategies, indicating where new proposals for planting are likely to be acceptable (or unacceptable) from an historic environment perspective. On a day to day basis, it can provide information at a landscape level which can inform proposals for new planting. It will be particularly useful when considering proposals under any of the challenge schemes.

**Environment Agency** is responsible for producing Local Environment Action Plans (LEAPs) and Catchment Management Plans (CMPs). The historic environment does not have a high profile in either of these, and both could therefore benefit from information which characterization can provide.

**Other bodies** Historic landscape characterization information can be used to educate and inform a wide range of organisations and individuals including statutory agencies, voluntary bodies (RSPB, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts, 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 characterization, 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 characterization cannot be emphasised too strongly.

*David Thompson and Dafydd Gwyn*  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

## *The East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y-glog historic landscape area*

*East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y-glog* represents a diverse and well-preserved historic landscape. The following description, taken from the *Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales* (Cadw 2001, 45-8), defines the essential historic landscape themes in the historic character area that are considered in greater detail in the sections which follow.

### **Landscape description**

The visually imposing northwards-facing escarpments and adjoining dramatic mountain masses of the Black Mountains, the Brecon Beacons, Fforest Fawr and the Black Mountain together form a vast natural ridge and physical barrier that divides South from Mid-Wales. Fforest Fawr forms the central part of this barrier with the area identified here comprising its eastern side situated between the valleys of the Mellte in the west and the Taf Fawr in the east. This natural block of land extends from Fan Fawr and Mynydd y Garn in the north, to Cadair Fawr, Cefn Sychbant and Mynydd-y-glôg in the south which lay outside the historical extent of the forest. The block comprises dissected upland plateaux which dip gradually southwards from 734m at the distinctive tabletop summit of Fan Fawr, to between 250m and 300m in the Hepste and Cwm Cadlan-Pant Sychbant valleys that penetrate the middle and include the only extents of enclosed land in an otherwise noticeably bleak and remote area of moorland.



An intensive archaeological and historic landscape field survey undertaken in the Black Mountain and Fforest Fawr in the mid-1980s revealed the widespread survival of archaeological remains representing the recurrent, and at times intense, occupation and exploitation of this area and its natural resources from the prehistoric period to the recent past. These remains include prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments, evidence of early agriculture and land allotment, and a range of settlements from the prehistoric and the medieval periods, the whole superimposed in parts by more recent remains of quarries, lime works and workings, and abandoned land intakes.

The earliest occupation of the area probably occurred in the Mesolithic period with an excavated assemblage of flings from Pant Sychbant having produced a tool type considered to be of late Mesolithic date. However, intensive and sustained land use probably did not occur in the area until the Bronze Age, when a proliferation of burial cairns was reiad on the slopes of Mynydd-y-glog, Cefn Sychbant, Penmoelallt, Cefn Esgair-caerau, Waun Tincer and in Pant Sychbant. Most of the sites comprise quite simple, round heaps of stone, but some have more regular structures indicating reuse and adaptation, and a different status possibly, although very few sites have been excavated.

The ring cairn which, as the name implies, is essentially a ring of heaped stone, is another type of Bronze Age sepulchral monument represented in the area, although occurring in fewer numbers than round cairns. From excavated evidence elsewhere, ring cairns have a broader range of ritual functions than round cairns which were more likely to be used for the straightforward burial of the dead. The large ring cairn in Cwm Cadan is a particularly fine example of the type.

Undated, but presumed to be of broadly prehistoric date on the basis of similarities with sites dated by excavation elsewhere, are concentrations of remains representing early settlement and agriculture. The evidence includes hut circles or the stone foundations of round houses, artificial platforms or scooped hollows possibly intended for wooden structures, enclosures, field systems and groups of small clearance cairns, and occasionally, mounds of burnt stone which have been interpreted as the debris from cooking food in water heated in a pit or trough by hot stones. There are notable and extensive concentrations of these features in Pant Sychbant, Cwm Cadlan, and in the Hepste valley. It has even been argued that the patterns of limestone sink holes in this area probably relate to prehistoric human activity,

Medieval settlement generally favoured similar locations to the prehistoric period but overall there appears to have been greater settlement dispersal, with more isolated sites occurring in the area. Clusters of characteristic medieval rectangular stone building foundations and house platforms occur in Pant Sychbant, Pant y Gadair and in the Hepste valley. The Pant Sychbant sites are in close proximity to earlier, prehistoric structures. There is less evidence for associated cultivation in the medieval period and the sites are conventionally regarded as having been predominantly pastoral, although none within the area has been excavated. Excavation would provide a more accurate indication of date and evidence of whether the sites were permanent, or seasonal hafod settlements in a transhumance regime.

Historically, after the Norman conquest, the northern part of the area now lying within Powys, became part of Fforest Fawr which was set aside for hunting as a Forest of the Lordship of Brecon by Bernard de Neufmarche in the late 11th century. In 1521, however, Fforest Fawr passed into Crown ownership and thereafter it steadily declined in size as landowners bought immunity from the restrictions of forest law, or through assarting and enclosure as, for example, in the Hepste valley. In 1819, Fforest Fawr was sold and the central part, or Crown Allotment, was enclosed by Parliamentary Enclosure, with the part included here remaining open moorland as the Commoners' Allotment. The abandoned land intakes found on the margins between the enclosed land and open moor date to about this time: there is a good example in Cwm Cadlan. Curiously, Hepste-fechan, a holding in the upper Hepste valley had been enclosed out of the open moorland at some stage prior to the sale, and the holding remains a highly visible 'island' of improved pasture within the Commoners' Allotment.

There is evidence of past industrial activity, mainly from the last two centuries, on Cadair Fawr and Mynydd-y-glog, including quarrying and the burning of limestone. Lime working occurred in Fforest Fawr in the medieval period as documentary sources attest to the rights of commoners to quarry, burn and sell lime, but the surviving concentrations of remains in the areas noted here, which lay outside Fforest Fawr, probably belong to the main period of lime production in the 18th and 19th centuries when the demand – for agriculture, and to a lesser extent, for building work – rose. Silica sand used for making refractory fire bricks was recently worked at the Cwm Cadlan quarry, but has now ceased to be extracted. The growing importance of sheep farming during the post-medieval period is attested by the numerous sheepfolds and pens in the area.

The richness, variety and remarkable extent of the surviving archaeological resources in this area, which is in many ways typical of upland Wales, demonstrates the vigour with which human populations recurrently, and at times continuously, exploited these zones in the past. The scale and intensity of human activity is remarkable. The results of recent historic landscape survey, using modern mapping, surveying and aerial photographic plotting techniques over very wide and representative areas, successfully brings that intensity of activity to life, in what appears today to be an essentially deserted and desolate area of moorland.

**Summary**

<i>Reference number</i>	Ref number HLW (MGI/P) 3
<i>Index map number</i>	48
<i>OS Map</i>	Landranger 160
<i>Former county</i>	Mid Glamorgan, Powys
<i>Unitary authority</i>	Rhondda Cynon Taff, Powys
<i>Principal area designations</i>	The area is entirely within the Brecon Beacons National Park. It includes Cwm Cadlan and parts of the Blaenau Nedd and Mellte and Hepste-Mellte Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
<i>Criteria</i>	2, 3
<i>Contents and significance</i>	The narrow, but distinctive natural block of upland comprising eastern Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y-glôg which lies astride the boundary between the former counties of Brecknock and Glamorgan, contains widespread and diverse, well-preserved archaeological evidence for recurrent, and at times intense, occupation and land use from the prehistoric period to the recent past. The area includes: several important groups of prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments; significant relict evidence of early agriculture and land allotment including a range of prehistoric and medieval settlements, the whole superimposed in parts by more recent remains of quarries, lime working and abandoned land intakes.





## Historic Landscape Themes

### THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Various aspects of the natural environment of Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y-glog are considered in some detail in the Royal Commissions's *Mynydd Du and Fforest Fawr: The Evolution of an Upland Landscape in South Wales* (1989), which are summarized here.

At the north the area rises to the summit of Fan Fawr at a height of about 734 metres above sea level, the second highest peak of the Brecon Beacons after Fan Brycheiniog which lies about 14 kilometres to the west. Southwards the bleak upland gradually drops to a height of about 300 metres, dissected by the narrow, steep-sided, rejuvenated stream channels of the Afon Hepste and its tributaries, gradually merging at about 350 metres into the enclosed, lower-lying parts of Dyffryn Hepste, Cwm Cadlan and Pant Sychbant valleys which continue to fall to about 250-300 metres. To either side the land drops much more abruptly, into the more steep-sided valleys of the Mellte to the west and the Taf Fawr to the east.

The underlying solid geology of the area is varied and includes Old Red Sandstone to the north which forms the north-facing escarpment of the Brecon Beacons, to the south of which is a belt of Carboniferous limestone and Millstone Grit. During the last ice age the landscape was affected by glaciers and ice sheets, ice flowing out radially from the summit of the Beacons, deepening the pre-existing south-draining river valleys of the Mellte, Hepste and Taf Fawr and depositing glacial drift deposits within them. The resistant outcrop of Millstone Grit on Mynydd-y-glog deflected the passage of the ice to the east and west, creating Pant Sychbant, a dry valley which cuts across the landscape at a different angle to the river valleys. A distinctive characteristic of the Carboniferous limestone is the formation of numerous smaller shake holes and a some larger swallow holes, generally between 5-100 metres across, formed by the solution of limestone along joints in the rock, which join underground streams and watercourses.

In the moorland area to the north the soils mostly overlie Old Red Sandstone or sandstone drift deposits and are predominantly seasonally waterlogged, acidic, and with a peaty surface horizon, supporting wet moorland of poor grazing quality. Towards the west are smaller areas of better-drained land overlying sandstone in the Gwaun Cefnygarreg area and of better-drained land supporting moorland pasture of better grazing quality overlying limestone in the Garn Ganol area. Likewise, to the south, there are some areas of better-drained land overlying sandstone and limestone in the Cefn Cadlan and Mynydd-y-glog areas. In the lower-lying parts of Hepste and Cadlan valleys the soils are mostly derived from sandstone drift deposits and are generally slow draining and seasonally waterlogged loams.

A broad outline of the environmental and vegetational history of the historic landscape area since the last glaciation is indicated by a number of palaeoenvironmental studies that have been undertaken in the region, including pollen analysis of peat deposits on the south side of Pant Sychbant and buried soils near Nant-maden in Cwm Cadlan as well as a number of other sites in the Brecon Beacons and Fforest Fawr. The late-glacial and early post-glacial period between about 12000-6000 BC is marked by a sequence which saw the appearance of juniper scrub subsequently dominated by birch and then hazel-dominated woodland. The establishment of temperate woodland between about 6000-5000 BC also saw the arrival of oak and elm, of which oak became dominant on the lower-lying ground and pine and birch on higher more exposed elevations. It appears that post-glacial tree cover probably became patchy over a height of about 500-600 metres though some woodland would evidently have extended to over 800 metres, taking in the summit of Fan Fawr at the northern tip of the historic landscape area.

The first clear impact of human activity in the natural vegetation sequence in Fforest Fawr appears at a date of about 6000 BC during this warmer phase in the later Mesolithic, when it has been suggested that upland clearings were being created and kept open in birch woodland by burning and animal grazing. At about this time some areas of heather heathland and hazel scrub were also beginning to appear in areas that had once been wooded, probably at least in part due to human activity. Increased waterlogging in some areas also initiated peat formation and the rise of alder.

The period up to about 4000 BC, during the earlier Neolithic, saw a slight fall in elm and some other tree species with corresponding increases in grasses and herbs, and possibly an expansion of heathland. Intensified pressure on woodland is evident in the later Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age periods, between about 3500-1500 BC, with evidence for further increases in grassland, some ground disturbance, the continuing expansion of heather moorland but probably also the survival of some oak and hazel woodland at relatively high altitude. The continuing relatively mild climatic conditions during this period seem likely to have given greater potential for agriculture at higher levels than in the recent past and appear to coincide with the appearance of the early settlement and land use activity in parts of the historic landscape area.

This more favourable climatic phase began to deteriorate at about 1500 BC, during the middle Bronze Age, ending with cooler and wetter conditions which came into being in the period between about 1000-500 BC, loosely corresponding to the period of transition between the late Bronze Age and the early Iron Age. A shortened growing season and greater rainfall during this less favourable climatic phase probably led to the abandonment of early settlements and fields in some of the higher and more exposed parts of the area, which have since reverted to moorland. Wetter climatic conditions generally, however, appear to have led to increased waterlogging and a decline in soil fertility which inhibited woodland regeneration, though no doubt settlement and cultivation continued on more lower-lying and sheltered sites within the valleys.

A number of subsequent climatic fluctuations also seem likely to have had a direct impact upon the settlement and land use history of the area, such as a slight warming during the later Iron Age and Roman period, between about AD 0-400 AD and again in the Middle Ages between about AD 1150-1250, during which it is possible that some of the more marginal areas of settlement and land use that had been abandoned during the Bronze Age again became permanently settled for periods of several centuries at a time, only to be finally abandoned with the advent of worsening conditions during the 'Little Ice Age', between about AD 1300-1850, when cooler and wetter summers again imposed limitations particularly upon arable farming.

It has been suggested that the widespread acidic grassland which today dominates the unenclosed uplands of the historic landscape area were the result of relatively recent changes in grazing practice, replacing the heather moorland that had gradually spread and grown to dominance since the early prehistoric period. In medieval and earlier times it seems likely that the moorland was less intensively grazed, perhaps largely by cattle. Since about the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, however, intensive sheep farming has become dominant and is thought to have contributed to the vegetation change.

## **BOUNDARIES AND DESIGNATIONS**

By the early medieval period the area formed part of the *cantref* (hundred) of Cantref Mawr in the kingdom of *Brycheiniog* which had emerged as one of the early British kingdoms in Wales by the 7th to 8th century AD. The kingdom was conquered by the Norman baron, Bernard de Neufmarché, in the late 12th century and continued to be administered as a marcher lordship until the 16th century.

The greater part, if not the whole of the historic landscape area formed part of one of the largest hunting preserves in Wales, belonging to the lords of Brecknock known as Fforest Fawr or the Great Forest of Brecknock stretching

for about 20 kilometres from east to west and 12 kilometres from north to south (about 12 miles by 8 miles), called the *forestya de Brechonie* ('Forest of Brecon') by the 1160s and 1170s. In documents of the early 17th century it is named as *Forest y Brenin* ('King's Forest'), the area having been forfeited to Henry VIII by the Duke of Buckingham in 1521.

At the Act of Union of 1536 Cantref Mawr came to form the hundred of Defynnog (Devynock) in the newly-created county of Brecknock (Breconshire)

During the Middle Ages most of the historic landscape area fell within the ecclesiastical parish of Penderyn in the archdeaconry of Brecknock, in the diocese of St David's. The ecclesiastical parish of Hirwaun was created in 1886 from the civil parishes of Aberdare in Glamorgan and Penderyn in the county of Brecon.

By the 19th century the area formed parts of the Brecknockshire civil parishes of Penderyn, Ystradfellte, Glyn and Cantref. Following local government reorganisation in 1974 Penderyn, making up most of the southern part of the area, was transferred to the new county of Mid Glamorganshire, and the northern communities were transferred to Brecknock District Council in the new county of Powys. In the local government reorganisation of 1996 the northern part of the area was subdivided between the communities of Ystradfellte and Llanfrynach within the unitary authority of Powys and the southern part of the area became part of the community of Hirwaun in the new unitary authority of Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Fforest Fawr remained Crown property until the sale of the central part of the area in 1819. The unenclosed moorland within the historic landscape area was unaffected by this sale, however, and is still mostly Common Land.

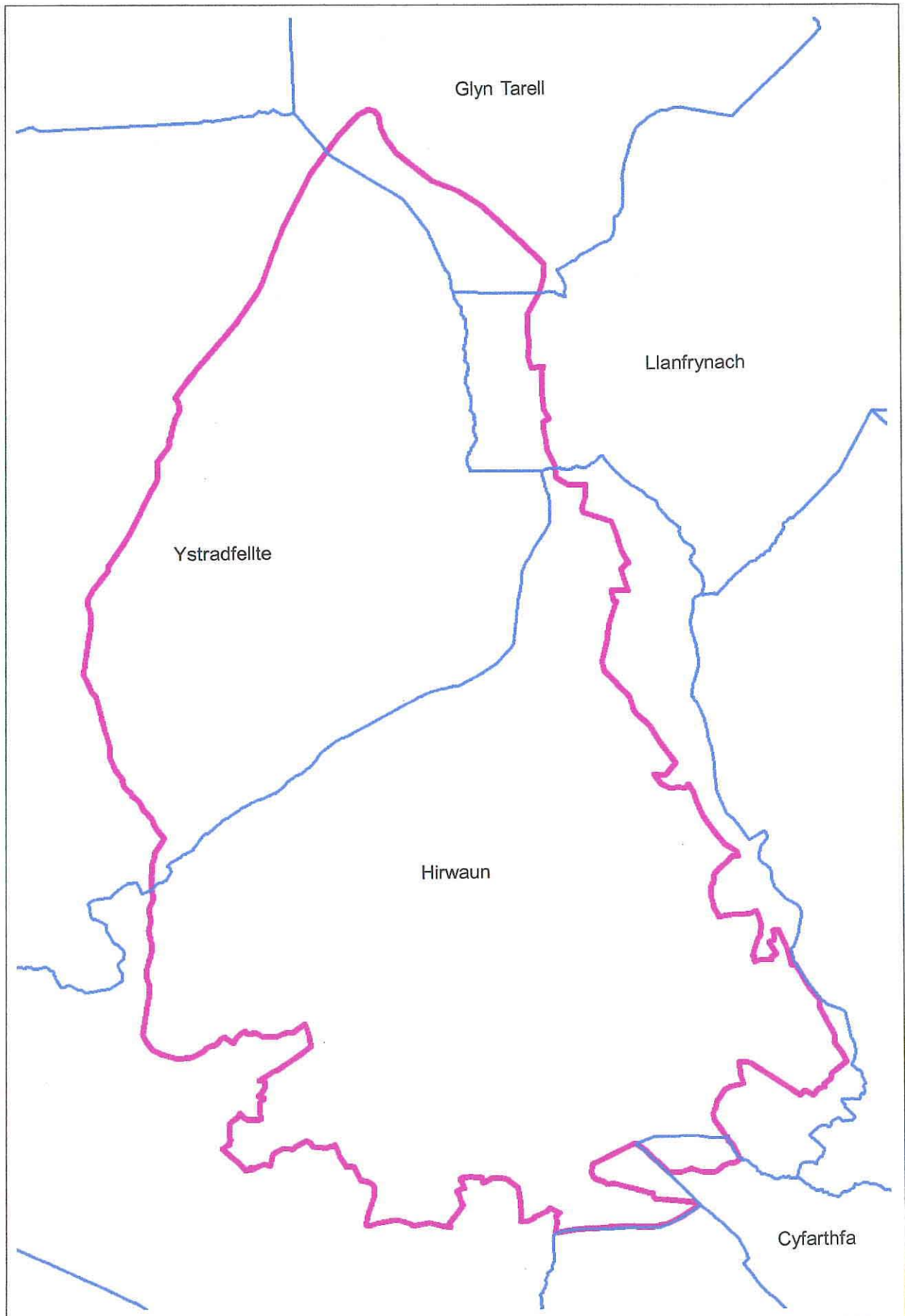
The historic landscape area falls wholly within the Brecon Beacons National Park, created in 1957 for the purpose of protecting the natural beauty of the area, to help visitors enjoy and understand it, and to foster the well-being of local people.

The historical significance of Fforest Fawr was highlighted in the early years of the 20th century with the publication of John Lloyd's *The Great Forest of Brecknock* published in 1905 and later by William Rees's similarly named book published in 1966. The archaeological importance of the area, in terms of the surviving prehistoric, medieval and industrial remains was highlighted by the fieldwork and publications of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales during the 1990s, notably Stephen Hughes's *The Brecon Forest Tramroads* (1990), David Leighton's *Mynydd Du and Fforest Fawr: The Evolution of an Upland Landscape in South Wales* (1997), and the *Brecknock Inventory, Prehistoric Burial and Ritual Monuments and Settlement to A. D. 1000* (1997).

Greater awareness of the surviving archaeological remains was a major factor in the inclusion of the *East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y-glog* historic landscape area in the *Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Significance in Wales*, published under the auspices of Cadw, the Countryside Council for Wales and ICOMOS UK in 2001, Historic Landscape Register.

The historic landscape area now also falls within the Fforest Fawr Geopark, established to promote both the geological heritage and economic development of the area and granted recognition by the UNESCO Global Geopark Network in 2005.

# East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y-glog Community Councils



## SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE

### Prehistoric and Roman periods

The earliest settlement and land use in the area is suggested by the chance find of a Neolithic polished stone axe in the now wooded area near Cefn-y-maes, overlooking the Taf Fawr valley on the eastern side of the historic landscape area. Finds of this kind suggest the beginnings of forest clearance around the margins of the uplands by early farming communities, though it is not improbable that both the lowland valleys and the uplands of Fforest Fawr were also exploited by nomadic hunter-gatherer groups during the preceding Mesolithic period.

A number of important complexes of early land use and settlement have also been identified within the historic landscape area including huts, abandoned field walls and clearance cairns and although none of these have so far been closely dated it seems likely that at least some of these remains date broadly to the period between the Bronze Age and the Roman periods, though some are also likely to be of early medieval and medieval date.

Initially, settlement and land use required the clearance of woodland and scrub, no doubt as part of a gradual process which began in the potentially more fertile and sheltered areas. The stone footings of circular round huts suggest a date within the Bronze or Iron Ages, though the presence of some rectangular buildings suggests either continuity into the Roman and early medieval periods or re-use of earlier sites in the early medieval, medieval or early post-medieval periods. In the absence of excavation the interpretation of these settlement and land use remains is uncertain. The huts appear either singly or in small clusters and may either indicate seasonal or all-year settlement. These are sometimes associated with small stone-banked enclosures where possibly animals were herded. Clearance cairns, which often occur in extensive but loose clusters or cairnfields, represent the collection of surface stone either for pasture improvement or to improve cultivated land. Low walls and field banks might again be associated with field clearance or pasture improvement as well as controlling stock from straying.

The distribution of the surviving remains is likely to be strongly influenced by later land use. The remains have largely been found on the lower fringes of the unenclosed moorland areas, between a height of about 300-480 metres above sea level. It is likely that the traces of earlier settlement and land use on lower-lying ground, now mostly within present-day enclosed farmland within Mellte, Hepste and Cadlan valleys, have been obscured, overlain or removed by subsequent agricultural activity, during the period between the medieval period and the present day. The upper contour of about 480 metres is likely, however, to provide a reasonably accurate upper limit of past settlement activity.

Larger and more significant areas of surviving early settlement and land use are known in the northern part of the historic landscape area in the sheltered upper valley of the river Hepste, extending into the tributary stream valleys of the Nant Hepste-fechan and Afon y Waun and onto the sheltered east-facing slopes of Mynydd y Garn and Waun Tincer. An isolated group of round-huts of possible prehistoric date is also recorded at Carn Caniedydd, towards the eastern side of the area, at about 400 metres. In the eastern and southern parts of the historic landscape area there are significant and extensive remains of early settlement and land use surviving on the sheltered, east-facing slopes of Cadair Fawr, at the head of the Gawnant and Nant Ffynnonelin streams, overlooking Pant y Gadair and the Taf Fawr valley, on the more sheltered southern slopes of Cefn Cadlan and the northern slopes of the col extending beyond the limits of the enclosed farmland at the head of Cwm Cadlan, and on the southern side of Cwm Cadlan and extending onto the more exposed northern slopes of Mynydd-y-glog.

As noted in a following section about Bronze Age prehistoric burial and ritual monuments there are clear indications that at an early period the landscape was already segregated for different clearly-defined purposes. Clusters of probably Bronze Age burial cairns and ritual ring cairns often appear to lie on the upper fringes of

the areas where there are the surviving remains of early settlement and land use with which they are most probably at least in part contemporary, and often sited on local hill crests and summits from which they would have been visible from lower ground.

Another facet of early settlement and land use is the presence of a number of burnt mounds of which a handful of examples have been identified mostly in unenclosed moorland areas, below Cefn Esgair-carnau overlooking the Taf Fawr valley, next to the Afon-y-waun towards the head of the Hepste valley, and on the western edge of Cefn Sychbant, overlooking the Cadlan valley. These sites, which evidence elsewhere suggests are likely to be Bronze Age in date, are represented by accumulations of burnt stones, ash and charcoal, usually sited next to a stream. They are most convincingly interpreted as a kind of sauna bath, though some may have been used as cooking sites. Like the distribution of prehistoric burial and ritual sites these monuments appear to avoid areas of contemporary settlement and land use which again suggests significant functional division of landscape in the early prehistoric period.

Traces of early settlement avoid the more exposed and less hospitable land which in the historic landscape area extends up to about 730 metres above sea level, and generally peter out and become much more sparse at heights of between about 400-480 metres. Several small clusters of probably prehistoric round huts are known at these heights, as for example on Cors y Beddau — on the spur between the Nant Ganol and Nant Mawr streams, close to the Nant Llywarch stream, on Waun Llywarch — between the Nant Llywarch and Afon y Waun streams, and also at several locations next to the Afon y Waun stream, though they are only infrequently associated with traces of cultivation in the form of field banks or clearance cairns and are sometimes found in association with rectangular structures which seem more likely to represent medieval to early post-medieval *hafodydd* ('summer houses') inhabited by family groups and associated with the seasonal exploitation of upland pastures during the summer months, particularly for cattle rearing. This association raises the question of whether transhumance in the region had its origins in the prehistoric period.

#### **Early medieval to early post-medieval periods**

Clearance of woodland and scrub within the area no doubt continued on a piecemeal basis up to and beyond the beginning of the early medieval period. By this time it is likely that a system of land use and settlement had emerged adopting a mixed arable and pastoral economy exploiting both lowland and upland resources. Initially, it seems probable that there was an emphasis upon cattle rearing and dairying but later on, the emphasis was on sheep herding. Detailed evidence of the forms of settlement, the size and extent of holdings and the nature of the economy during is largely lacking until the later 18th and early 19th centuries, when the first estate maps and the tithe surveys were drawn. However, it was probably during this period that settlement was based upon a pattern of small and dispersed holdings with all-year-round habitations or *hendrefydd* ('permanent residences, winter dwellings') associated with enclosed meadow, pasture and arable on the more fertile and productive land in the lower-lying, sheltered valleys with grazing of the extensive moorland pastures during the summer months which in some instances or during some periods involved the use of *hafodydd* ('summer houses') temporary upland habitations particularly to be associated with cattle grazing. The place-name elements *hendre* and *hafod* are in fact unknown within the historic landscape area but since the way of life that these represented had all but disappeared by the time many of the earliest farm names were being recorded, in the second half of the 18th century, this is probably of little significance.

The emergence of permanent lowland farms or *hendrefydd* during the Middle Ages is suggested by the survival of a number of early farmhouses of longhouse form, such as Hepste-fawr in the *Dyffryn Hepste* historic landscape character area, discussed in a following section upon buildings, which at this period were probably mostly held by freehold farmers. This form of building was multi-functional, often accommodating both humans and animals, fodder and grain storage under a single roof. As at the present day, early farms were probably dispersed and set amongst their own fields. Though specific evidence is lacking, it also seems likely that much of the general

pattern of small irregular fields had gradually evolved by at least the later medieval and early post-medieval periods, probably clearing away in the process any earlier traces of settlement and land use, though some fluctuation probably continued around the margins of the surrounding unenclosed moorland, depending upon climatic conditions or the tenacity of their occupants. The detached and isolated moorland encroachment at Hepste-fechan, for example, between a height of 330-70 metres is first documented in the 1780s but probably represents the partial survival and enhancement of a much earlier period of land use activity, with fields as elsewhere lower down in the Hepste and Cadlan valleys defined by drystone walls and clearance banks.

Much of the modern pattern of lanes, trackways and fords probably also emerged during this period, providing access to individual farms, with green lanes between the fields enabling livestock to be driven up to the mountain pastures in the spring and returned to the home farm in the autumn. Specialised uses for different fields had probably already emerged by this period, depending upon fertility, aspect and natural drainage. Drier fields would be better suited to cultivation, less freely draining fields to permanent pasture, and damper lower-lying to hay meadows.

As noted above, temporary summer dwellings or *hafodydd* which were no doubt linked with these lowland farms are known in the higher, unenclosed moorland areas, often seeking out more sheltered spots adjacent to streams providing water for household purposes and for watering stock. In the northern part of the historic landscape area, below Fan Fawr, groups of rectangular building platforms with the remains of stone-built long huts which appear to represent *hafodydd* have been recorded along the Afon Hepste stream below the 380-metre contour. Several small clusters of rectangular huts probably of medieval date are at heights of between 430-80 metres on Cors y Beddau, on Waun Llywarch. These higher settlements are sometimes associated with small embanked enclosures which may have been used for controlling stock, but are rarely if ever associated with evidence of cultivation. In the eastern and southern part of the area significant clusters of similar rectangular house platforms and stone footings are also known between about 380-420 metres on the sheltered, east-facing slopes of Cadair Fawr, at the head of the Gawnant and Nant Ffynnonelin streams, overlooking Pant y Gadair and the Taf Fawr valley, between about 350-450 metres on the more sheltered southern slopes of Cefn Cadlan and the northern slopes of the col extending beyond the limits of the enclosed farmland at the head of Cwm Cadlan, and hugging the southern boundary of the enclosed land in Cwm Cadlan, to the east of the Cae'r Aglwydd, Wern-las and Beili-helig farms and extending onto the more exposed northern slopes of Mynydd-y-glog, between a height of about 300-380 metres above sea level. Few if any of these more remote upland dwellings within the historic landscape area seem to have ever evolved into permanently occupied dairy farms of the kind which emerged other areas of upland Wales.

The hunting of wild game and fowl for subsistence will have continued to be practiced at this period, though as noted above, in the section on boundaries, by the end of the 11th century, following the Anglo-Norman conquest of the kingdom of Brycheiniog, the greater part of the historic landscape area formed part of the extensive hunting preserve of Fforest Fawr or Great Forest of Brecknock belonging to marcher lordship of Brecknock, possibly assuming more ancient rights previously held by native princes of the kingdom.

The extent of the medieval forest is only loosely defined and remained unmapped until the early 19th century, the forest being essentially an area of unenclosed ground over which rights of the chase were reserved. In time other smaller preserves were identified within the broader mantle of Fforest Fawr, such as Cadlan Forest, to the north of Mynydd-y-glog. The boundaries of Fforest Fawr are likely to have fluctuated from early times, however, gradually diminishing as licensed or illicit encroachments of potentially better farmland nibbled away at its outer rim.

Management and administration of the forest by the lordship is poorly documented, though it is likely that as in the case of other similar medieval forests and chases in Britain it was governed by forest law, a body of local

rights, customs and regulations governing the activities of those who lived near or within it, such as grazing rights, rights to gather fuel, to dig for stone and burn limestone. It has been suggested that the medieval stone castle at Castell Coch at the southern foot of Fforest Fawr, just outside the historic landscape area at the head of the valley of the Afon Mellte, might have been used as temporary accommodation during hunting expeditions to the vast Fforest Fawr by the medieval lords of Brecknock.

Due to expense and the difficulties maintaining game stocks open forests of this kind tended to decline in significance towards the end of the Middle Ages, to be replaced by enclosed deer parks. Fforest Fawr passed to the Crown in 1521, which retained ownership until the early 19th century, a period during which the present-day rights of commoning were established.

### **Later post-medieval and modern periods**

As noted above, it is likely that throughout Fforest Fawr much of the boundary between the unenclosed moorland and the enclosed farmland around the mountain edge had become reasonably well established by the early post-medieval period, represented by a pattern of generally small irregular fields in the valleys. However, a distinctive feature of post-medieval farming, probably during the course of the 17th to early 19th centuries, was the enclosure of significant areas of mountain pasture around the fringes of the moorland which continued to observe pre-existing rights of way. These larger enclosures were typically between 10-20 hectares but occasionally 70-80 hectares in extent, and were carved out of the common moorland, often with characteristically curving upper boundaries. In parts of Wales enclosed but uncultivated moorland grazing around the mountain edge is sometimes called *ffridd* ('moorland, rough mountain pasture'), though in parts of south Wales the term *coedcae* or *coetgae* appears to be more common. In this context it is probable that the name of the farm Coed Cae Du close to the moorland edge on the northern side of Cwm Cadlan is probably significant.

Areas of enclosed moorland grazing are evident high on the eastern side of the Mellte valley north-east of Goitre farm, on Gwaun Cefnygarreg, on the more sheltered northern side of the Hepste valley, around the margins of Cwm Cadlan and on the southern fringes of Mynydd-y-glog. The precise dating of some of these boundaries is uncertain, but 18th-century estate maps denote 'old banks' on the moorland edge near Pen-fathor in the Mellte valley and at the eastern end of Cwm Cadlan, suggesting that some of these boundaries are at least 17th-century in origin. These later boundaries, whose length extends to tens of kilometres, show a variety of construction methods, including banks, revetted banks, freestanding drystone walls, and walls accompanied by ditches. In some instances a sequence of construction is evident, with drystone walls in some cases evidently lying on top of earlier earthen banks. The purpose of these new mountain enclosures was probably to secure the private use of the better areas of moorland grazing, to prevent stock from straying across the mountain, and perhaps also to control breeding.

The general shift towards sheep farming in Wales in the later middle ages and post-medieval periods is to some extent reflected in the archaeological record of the area, most notably in the appearance of drystone sheepfolds strategically sited at convenient points for gathering flocks being brought down from the hill. The less demanding day-to-day requirements of managing sheep led to end of transhumance and the abandonment of the *hafodydd* though smaller shelters might occasionally be needed by lone shepherds.

The first comprehensive evidence of settlement and land use in the historic landscape area is provided by estate maps which began to appear in the second half of the 18th century and the tithe maps and schedules of the 1840s which show most of the existing farms and cottages on the eastern rim of the Mellte valley, Dyffryn Hepste and Cwm Cadlan though some buildings have clearly disappeared since that time. By the mid 19th century most of the farms are shown as holdings of between 15-60 hectares (40-140 acres) and were mostly tenanted. Many of them had been acquired by estates such as the Tredegar, Penmailard and Bodwigiad estates, which had begun to emerge in the area from about the later 17th century onwards.



Place-name evidence from estate and tithe maps gives a number of hints about the former independence and social status of some of the farms that had probably originated during the later medieval and early post-medieval periods. In the Hepste valley, some of the older and possibly originally higher-status houses are suggested by the element *mawr* ('large, important') in the names Ty-mawr and Hepste-fawr, and Neuadd ('hall') in the lower part of the valley, the latter first appearing in the form 'Tyr y noyadd' in 1618, though in many cases it is evident that the place-name elements were used to distinguish dwellings that might only be a little larger than average. The use of the element *neuadd* is perhaps ironic in the case of Gelli-neuadd applied to the pair of 19th-century roadside workers' cottages on the lane along the Cadlan valley north of Penderyn. The place-name element *tir* 'land, ground' also occurs in a significant proportion of other farm names in the valley, including Tirmawr, Tir-dyweynydd, Tir-yr-onen and Tir-Shencyn-Llewelyn (renamed Llwyn-celyn), the last of which is first recorded in 1819. These farms, like the suggested originally higher-status dwellings, are normally set within their own fields. By contrast a number of cottages and smallholdings may represent later encroachments set alongside lanes and trackways, single examples of which in the Hepste and Cadlan valleys are significantly called Heollas, meaning 'green lane', and others are indicated by the element *tyle* ('steep path') in the name Gawr-dyle on the southern edge of the Cadlan valley.

Place-name and field-name evidence, from the tithe survey in particular, also provides some evidence about former vegetation and land use which in some respects is similar though in other respects is in marked contrast to the present day. Names referring to trees are predictably quite frequent in the sheltered valleys of Dyffryn Hepste and Cwm Cadlan, with names such as Llwyn-y-fedwen ('birch, birch grove'), Tir-yr-onen (from *onn*, 'ash, ash wood'), Gelli-ffynonau-isaf and Gelli-ffynonau-uchaf (from *celli*, 'grove, copse, woodland'), and Beili-Helyg (from *helyg*, 'willow'). Little indication of former land use is provided by place-name evidence, though the area name Gweunydd (or Gwaunydd) Hepste, the enclosed area on the moorland edge on the south-west side of the area and the farm name Tir-dyweynydd both includes the plural of *gwaun* ('moor, mountain pasture'), with better quality grassland indicated by the field-name element *gweirglodd* ('hay-field, meadow') and its various spellings and by names such as 'Cae Clover'. Limitations upon land use of some of the enclosed valley land due to poor drainage, is indicated by the element *gwern* ('swamp') in the farm names Gwern-pawl and Wernlas and the stream name Gwern Nant-ddu, and also by the element *garw* ('rough') in the farm names Pant-garw and Garw-dyle (formerly Garw-dylau) and *brwyn* ('rushes') in some field names. Even so, unlike today, it is clear from the tithe survey that in the 19th century, and presumably in earlier periods, there was a much greater emphasis upon arable farming, reflected in occasional occurrence of the element *haidd* ('barley') in the fields such as 'Caer Haidd' on Coed Cae Ddu farm.

The former emphasis on a mixed arable and pastoral economy is also strongly reflected in the surviving farm buildings, as noted in the following section on vernacular buildings. It is again evident from the surviving buildings that significant investments were made in new farm buildings and in new and renovated farmhouses in the later 18th and 19th centuries, possibly under the influence of the local estates and bodies such as the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society, founded in 1755. A number of other improvements in farming methods that were taking place in the later 18th and 19th centuries are also reflected in the archaeological record. Clusters of more regularly-shaped fields close to the farms at Tirmawr, Tir-dyweynydd, Llwyn-celyn and Hepste-fawr in Dyffryn Hepste and close to the farms at Glyn-perfedd, Garw-dyle, Gelli-dafolog, Wern-las and Nant-maden, including some with straight-sided boundaries, suggest small-scale reorganisation of field boundaries, probably during the 19th century. Improved drainage of enclosed fields was also attempted in some areas with open ditches, underground drainage and by the construction of cultivation ridges (sometimes called 'lazy beds') which are visible in some areas. As noted in the section of industry below, limekilns were set up in a number of areas which provided agricultural lime to improve soil fertility.

Parts of Fforest Fawr were sold by the Crown in 1819, due to the cost of the Napoleonic Wars, becoming the

largest single enclosure in either England or Wales. The immediate impact upon the historic landscape area was muted however, since due to the objections of commoners and others only the middle portion of the Forest was sold, the unenclosed land within the area under study being retained as one of a number of substantial blocks of common.

The later 19th and 20th centuries saw a general decline in the profitability of farming, the introduction of mechanisation as well as the industrialisation of south Wales which drew people away from the land, resulting in farm amalgamation and the abandonment of some farms and cottages which have likewise left their mark upon the landscape. In Dyffryn Hepste, for example, a house between Tirmawr and Tir-yr-onen and a possible smallholding on moorland edge west of Llwyn-y-fedwen, were abandoned or in a ruinous condition by the 1880s. The isolated barn at Heol-las, is possibly all that now survives of a former farm complex abandoned in the 19th century. Other farms, such as Blaen Hepste, were abandoned for similar reasons in the 1920s. In Cwm Cadlan the farmsteads and cottages at Gwern-pawl, Blaen-cadlan-isaf were already ruinous in the 1880s, whilst those at Cae'r Arglwydd, Gelli-ffynonau-isaf, Blaen-cadlan-uchaf all appear to have been abandoned from the early in the 20th century onwards.

Arising from the depressed state of agriculture in the early 20th century, proposals had been made to implement various kinds of agricultural improvements within the Welsh uplands with a view to increasing agricultural prosperity and arresting the process of rural depopulation that was affecting these areas. Few changes were made to upland farming, however, until the second world war when these areas were said by the recently established Welsh Agricultural Land Sub-Commission to be in an 'advanced state of dereliction'. With the declaration of war all British agriculture came under the direct control of the County War Agricultural Executive who were charged with the responsibility of increasing agricultural productivity. Based upon aerial photographic evidence, the exigencies of wartime agriculture seems to be reflected in the significant attempts at pasture improvement that were made to extensive areas of moorland within the historic landscape area at this time, with the appearance of extensive systems of drainage gullies or grips dug, probably by machine, at the heads of the Afon y Waun, Nant Llywarch, Nant Iwrch and Nant yr Ychen, tributaries of the Afon Hepste in the moorland below Fan Fawr. Modern air photograph coverage shows patterns of parallel drainage trenches, up to 400 metres long and spaced between about 8-18 metres apart, were dug covering almost 200 hectares of waterlogged areas at the heads of the streams between a height of about 400-600 metres above sea level, in an attempt to drain waterlogged areas. Today, most of the drainage trenches have largely silted up and have eroded into more regular courses to the extent that on the ground they often have the appearance of natural watercourses, but are shown in a pristine condition on RAF air photographs taken in 1945 and 1946, just after the second world war, evidently soon after these works were carried out.

Otherwise, by contrast with the later 18th and 19th centuries, little significant investment was made in the farming which has left a mark on the landscape since about the beginning of the 20th century apart from the appearance of a number of steel-framed agricultural buildings. The loss of necessary skills and the relatively labour-intensive nature of maintaining drystone field walls and traditional hedge laying has resulted in the increasing decay of ancient and traditional field boundaries and a growing dependence on post-and-wire fencing probably from a date early in the 20th-century.

Some changes in land use during this period resulting from a decline in profitability are also evident, including the reversion of some areas of enclosed improved pasture to rough grazing and, from about the mid 20th century, the overplanting of some areas of former fields with conifer woodland by the Forestry Commission, notably on the western side of the area at Gweunydd Hepste and on the eastern side of the area at Penmailard and Cefn-y-maes. The latter woodland, overlooking the valley of the Taf Fawr, forms part of a large estate of over 2,30 acres of land in the upper Taf Fawr valley purchased by the Forestry Commission in 1946. In more recent years the amenity value of these wooded areas has been promoted by the creation by the Forestry Commission of a number of woodland walks and picnic areas and also by the Taff Trail, a long-distance footpath and cycle trail

running between Brecon and Cardiff.

The creation of the Brecon Beacons National Park in 1957 together with more recent conservation and recreational initiatives from about the 1990s up to the present day are beginning to have a muted visible impact upon the historic landscape. Conservation measures have included the creation of a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) including the nature reserve focusing on an area of wet meadow in Cwm Cadlan which is also designated as a Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the European Habitats Directive, pioneered by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), and a number of farms which have joined the Welsh Assembly's Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme.

### **BUILDINGS IN THE LANDSCAPE**

Standing buildings are present in just half of the historic landscape character areas, the valleys of the Mellte, Hepste and Cadlan, characteristic of the kind of farming communities that have survived around the fringes of the extensive moorland of Fforest Fawr. Hepste-fawr is the single designated Listed Building, though the general form and character of the surviving buildings in the absence of surviving documentary evidence represent a vital and coherent expression of the social and economic history of the areas of enclosed farmland which fall within the historic landscape from at least the later medieval period up to the present day.

The majority of the surviving buildings are farmhouses and farm outbuildings. Some surviving buildings are likely to be of 17th- and 18th-century origin, but a number of these as well as some of the farmhouses rebuilt in the 19th-century appear from their orientation across the slope and the arrangement of outbuildings in line, to be derived from medieval or early post-medieval longhouses which provided for human accommodation at the upper end and animal accommodation at the lower end. Buildings of this form in the Hepste valley, generally associated with early cattle husbandry, include Hepste-fawr, mentioned in Iorworth Peate's *The Welsh House* (1940), and the farmhouse at Neuadd. The farmhouses of 17th- to 18th-century date in the Cadlan valley at Nant-maden, Coed Cae Ddu and formerly at Gelli-ffynonau-isaf, were aligned across the slope, suggesting the rebuilding of structures of medieval or early post-medieval origin.

In some instances there are suggestions that entirely new farmhouses were erected in the 18th and 19th centuries, replacing earlier structures. These later farmhouses, by contrast, followed the general custom of being built along the contour, such as the farmhouse at Llwyn-celyn whose plan and a large chimney suggests an origin in the 18th century. A good number of the farmhouses associated with farms of potentially medieval or early post-medieval origin appear to have been substantially rebuilt or replaced during the 19th century, however. The 19th-century farmhouse at Tirmawr lies along the contour but most probably replaced an earlier building of medieval origin represented by an abandoned house platform. The 19th-century farmhouse at Tir-dyweunydd is associated with a range of buildings arranged across the slope, suggesting that it may possibly include an earlier house. Likewise, the layout of farm-buildings at Beili-helyg, with 19th-century farmhouse, corn barn and cowhouse in line, also appears to represent the rebuilding of an earlier complex. Other farm complexes adopted a simple arrangement of outbuildings parallel with or at right-angles to the farmhouse. The later 19th-century farmhouses and outbuildings at Tai-hirion and Gelliffynhonnau-uchaf, both with details in yellow brick, are again probably both at farms of earlier origin.

Many of the surviving farm buildings are later 18th to 19th-century in date, illustrating the typically mixed farming economy of that period. A majority of farms in the area were tenanted at this period and it is therefore probable that many of these improvements, perhaps carried out hand in hand with the small-scale reorganisation of field boundaries, suggested above, were influenced by some of the estates with holdings in the area. Characteristic farm buildings include small corn barns with ventilation slits and central doors, stables, cowhouses and granaries, sometimes combined into a single structure, of which examples survive at a number of farms,

including Hepste-fawr, Tirmawr and Neuadd in the Hepste valley and at Beili-helyg, Garw-dyle and Coed Cae Ddu in the Cadlan valley. More extensive building work is evident at Wern-las where the farm layout suggests the influence of the 19th-century model farm. Here and elsewhere in the area the improving influence of the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society, established in the mid 18th century, is perhaps evident. Walter Davies in his *General View of the Agriculture and Domestic Economy of South Wales*, published in 1814, notes the improvements in both farming practice and buildings inspired by the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society, founded in 1755: 'Their improvements gradually extended to the remotest corners of the county; even in the hundreds of Dyfynog and Buallt, we recognise the superior buildings and farm-yards of the Brecon Society'. In particular he notes the characteristic form of corn barn in Brecknock with 'double folding-doors on each side of the barn floor, for convenience, especially during precarious harvests, of driving in a load of grain under cover'.

Many of the former cottages and smallholdings in the area have not survived, a rare example of workers' housing being the pair of later 19th-century roadside cottages called Gelli-neuadd, on the lane north of Penderyn, which probably housed either agricultural or quarry workers.

Apart from a number of farmhouse and cottage renovations, much less investment in building was made during the 20th century, except in the case of rare dutch barns and recent steel-framed buildings for the storage of hay and straw and for lambing and occasional temporary or movable structures in non-traditional materials.

#### **PREHISTORIC BURIAL AND RITUAL**

The historic landscape area includes quite a number of prehistoric burial and ritual monuments, most notably circular cairns and ring cairns, which are important indicators of early land use and settlement. Few sites have been excavated in modern times though by analogy with sites elsewhere both monument types are most likely to belong to the Early Bronze Age and Middle Bronze Age, the circular cairns representing burial monuments and the ring cairns having possibly been used for both ritual activity and burial. The only finds associated with the monuments is a sandstone disc found at a cairn in the col above Cwm Cadlan and fragments of Early Bronze Age pottery found during the excavation of the large cairn near Nant-maden farm in Cwm Cadlan. The monuments are generally between 6-20 metres across and up to about a metre in height, though the Nant-maden cairn is exceptionally up to 1.8 metres in height. In some instances there are possible traces of a circular kerb and indications of a central burial cist. Most of the sites appear to be generally well preserved although small intrusions have been dug into some monuments and others have been adapted to form sheep shelters.

These monument types are generally readily distinguished from clearance cairns because of their greater size, or because they occur singly rather than in cairnfields, or because they possess structural detail characteristic of early burial and ritual monuments. The association of some of the monuments in the Cwm Cadlan area with a much later, medieval battle, as suggested by the Brecknockshire historian Theophilus Jones on the basis of the placename Cadlan ('battlefield, battle'), is now considered improbable. A suggested association of some ring-cairns in this area with goose rearing is also unlikely.

Few of the monuments appear to have any specific names of any great age, two exceptions being Carn Caniedydd ('singer's, song-writer's cairn') and Garn Wen ('white cairn') where the element appears to apply to prehistoric burial cairns. Caniedydd possibly refers to the whistling of the wind in this exposed location, or is derived from a personal name, or may have folkloric or legendary associations. The significance of some of these monuments as landmarks within otherwise featureless moorland is emphasised by the frequency of the place-name element *carn* (plural *carnau*, 'cairn, mound, rock, heap') in the area, in such names as Mynydd y Garn, Cefn Esgair-carnau, though in some, and perhaps a majority of instances, the word appears to refer to naturally-occurring rock outcrops rather than artificial mounds.

Most of the known monuments lie within the present-day unenclosed upland areas (*Mynydd y Garn*, and *Cefn Cadlan*, *Cefn Sychbant* and *Mynydd-y-glog* historic landscape character areas). The presence of a number of monuments in enclosed landscapes, as for example in the case of the partially-excavated circular cairn near Nant-maden (*Cwm Cadlan* historic landscape character area), hints at the possibility that the visual, above-ground elements of other similar monuments on the lower-lying areas of Dyffryn Hepste and Cwm Cadlan were cleared away or obscured during the course of later clearance, enclosure and agriculture. The present-day distribution of these monument types is therefore likely to be skewed towards more marginal and less intensively farmed areas.

In both the *Mynydd y Garn*, and *Cefn Cadlan*, *Cefn Sychbant* and *Mynydd-y-glog* historic landscape character areas the monuments occur either singly or pairs or in larger clusters and generally appear to be deliberately sited on hill-slope or hill-crest location from which they would perhaps have been visible from contemporary settlements on lower ground. In the regional context there is a notable concentration of sites in the northern part of the historic landscape area, on the upland plateaux of Mynydd y Garn, Waun Tincer and Cefn Esgair-carnau. The cairns generally avoid the highest and most remote moorland areas above about 450 metres above sea level in the northern part of the historic landscape area, below Fan Fawr. It appears significant that the surviving distribution of these monument types tend to be on slightly higher ground and to complement rather than overlap the traces of early settlement and land use with which they are likely to be at least in part contemporary, suggesting a fairly rigorous functional segregation of the landscape in the earlier prehistoric period, with some areas set aside for settlement and more intensive land use and others for burial, ritual and more extensive land use.

### LIMEKILNS AND QUARRIES

Probably from the Middle Ages those with commoners' rights in Fforest Fawr were able to exploit the natural resources within the historic landscape area. There is no explicit surviving evidence of peat cutting in the area, most probably due to the scarcity of suitable deposits, but there are widespread surviving remains of extraction industries associated with the stone and lime production which are of significance to the settlement and land use history of the area even though they are often on a smaller scale than those to be found in adjacent areas of south Wales. All rights to quarrying in Fforest Fawr passed to the entrepreneur John Christie when he purchased the mineral rights in the early 1820s, rights which following his bankruptcy were soon transferred to others.

Limekilns, many of which are not closely dated, have been identified either singly or in clusters in each of the character areas, generally close to the margins of the unenclosed moorland in places where limestone occurs naturally. It is possible that some lime production was carried out in the area during the Middle Ages but as yet there is no clear archaeological for production at that period. Most of the surviving remains of the lime industry within the area were probably for the production of agricultural lime between the later 18th and earlier 19th centuries, and mostly going out of use when more commercial limekilns were established elsewhere in the later 19th century. Amongst the earliest known kilns in the area are ones towards the south-eastern corner of the area which are represented on a map of the Penmailard estate dated 1749. Many known kilns are represented on Ordnance Survey maps published in the 1880s, some of which are already shown to be out of use by that date. A kiln on Tirmawr Farm in the Hepste valley is said to have been still working up to the 1920s or 1930s.

The kilns are associated with often small-scale quarrying activity which for the sake of economy was generally focused on natural outcrops and rock faces. The kilns sometimes occur singly though are more often in pairs or clusters up to ten or more in number. Many of the kilns are visible only as grassed-over mounds with a hollow at the centre, though in some cases structural details of drystone walling and the presence of one or more flues are visible. Some kilns are associated with platforms or ramps by which they were loaded with limestone, and with waste heaps. The kilns often lie along paths or tracks for carts which carried the coal needed for firing the kilns and for carrying away the finished lime. Some of the kilns at least are likely to represent a seasonal activity

undertaken by workers who were otherwise employed on farms and smallholdings in the area.

Many other small limestone and sandstone quarries are known in the area and are likely to have provided material for the construction of houses and farm buildings, field walls and roads, perhaps mostly in the period between the 17th century and mid 19th century, before the establishment of large-scale commercial stone quarries in the region. A small number of disused sandstone quarries appear to be later in date, cartographic evidence for those on Garn Ddu and the western side of Cefn Cadlan, for example, suggesting that the quarries originated during the first half of the 20th century. Deposits of silica sand for the manufacture of refractory bricks used in smelting furnaces in south Wales were also once worked at the Cefn Cadlan quarry.

### **TRACKS, ROADS, RAILWAYS AND PIPELINES**

The anciently enclosed landscapes of the Dyffryn Hepste and Cwm Cadlan character areas preserve a pattern of lanes running along the valleys, giving access to farms and cottages and from early times providing a means of moving herds of animals through the enclosed fields to and from the surrounding upland pastures. Some of the lanes have now been metalled but others survive as unmetalled green lanes which were sometimes walled to either side to prevent stock from straying. Farms on opposite sides of the valley were sometimes also linked by green lanes which cross streams by means of fords and stepping stones. Earlier routes of this kind are indicated by several occurrences of the place-name *Heol-las* ('green lane').

A number of these ancient routeways continue across the moorland to communicate with places in the neighbouring valleys of the Taf Fawr to the east and the Afon Mellte to the west, the place-name element *cwrier* ('courier') in Nant y Cwrier, the name of the stream running northwards from the Hepste valley and more or less parallel for part of its course with the A4059, suggesting the course of an earlier footpath across the mountains in the direction of Brecon. Many of these early routeways, some of which are likely to be of medieval or earlier origin, survive as part of a network of public footpaths and permissive paths now managed by the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Other shorter trackways in the enclosed landscapes of Dyffryn Hepste, Cwm Cadlan and the eastern fringe of the Mellte valley give access to quarries and limekilns largely of later 18th- and earlier 19th-century date. In addition a network of amenity footpaths has been created by the Forestry Commission in recent years in the wooded Coed Penmailard and Cefn y maes character areas.

The historic landscape area is crossed by only two modern roads. The first is the A4059 between Hirwaun to Brecon which appears, despite more recent upgrading, to have been newly constructed throughout more or less its entire length within the historic landscape area as a turnpike road in the early 19th century, abandoning the more ancient route along the Hepste valley for the higher ground to the south. As a consequence, entrances to several of the farms on the southern side of the valley, notably Llwyn-celyn, Neuadd and Tirmawr, were reorientated to give direct access to the turnpike road. The turnpike road is associated with a number of surviving contemporary milestones and small roadside quarries from which it was probably built. The second road is the modern unclassified road from the head of Cwm Cadlan to the Llwyn-on Reservoir in the valley of the Taf Fawr which was probably first metalled in the later 19th or earlier 20th centuries but based upon a more ancient routeway linking Cwm Cadlan and the valley of the Taf Fawr.

The course of a former railway forms a distinctive landscape feature running along part of the western boundary of the area. It formed part of the railway running southwards to Penderyn, built to transport materials used for the construction of the Ystradfellte Reservoir as a water supply for Neath between 1907 and 1914.

The Taff Trail, a long-distance footpath and cycle route from Brecon to Cardiff, runs through woodland

towards the south-east corner of the characterised area

The southern part of the area is crossed for a distance of about 2 kilometres by the route of a modern gas pipeline whose 20m-wide wayleave can still be traced to the point it joins the Bryn Du gas works which lie just outside the characterised area.

## **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS**

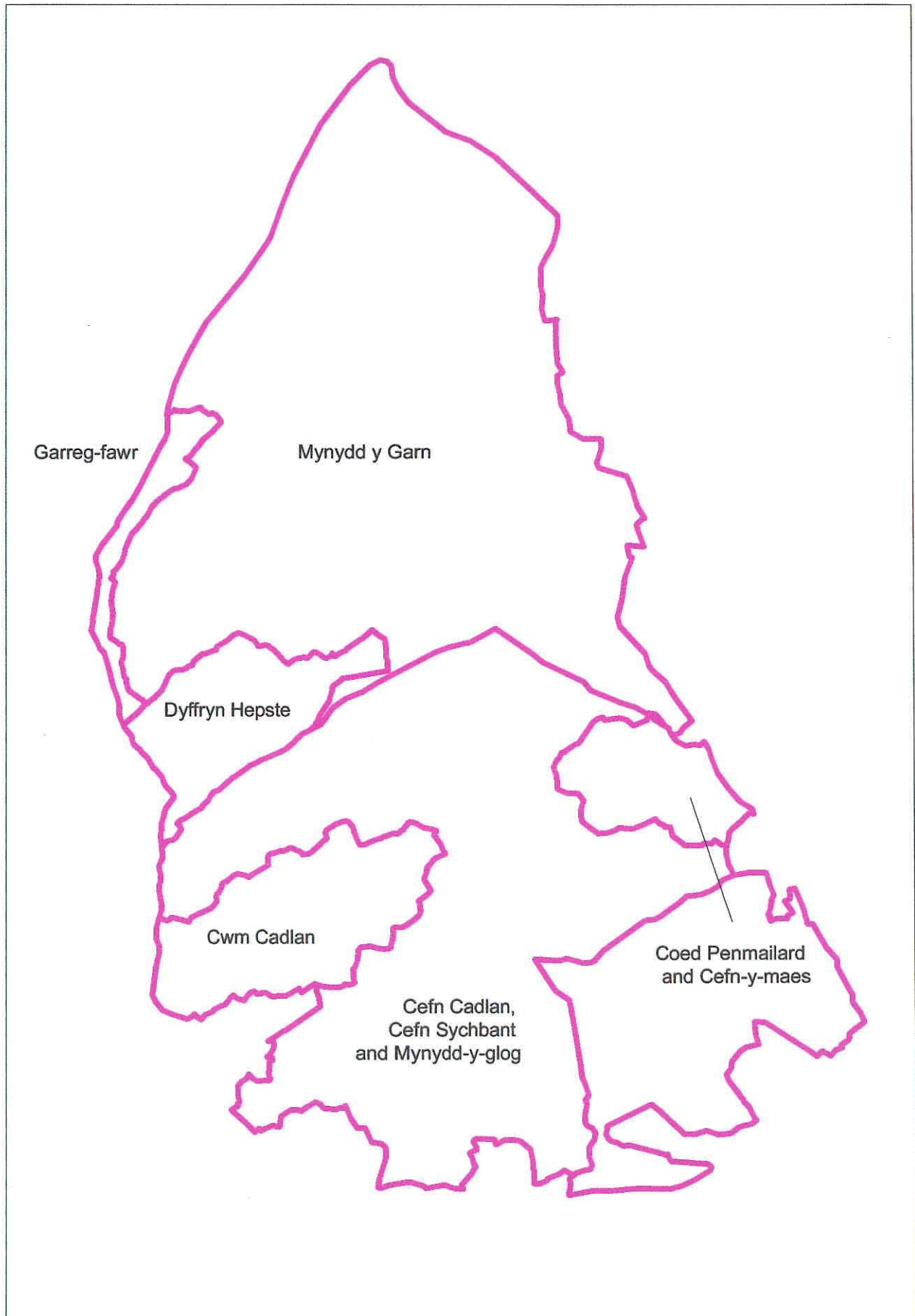
The historic landscape area is remote from centres of population and consequently has few significant historical or cultural associations.

A number of early antiquaries, including Theophilus Jones, the Breconshire historian, associated Cwm Cadlan with a battle between the forces of Iestyn ab Gwrgan and Rhys ab Tewdwr in the 11th century. The association is most probably mythical, however, and no doubt a speculation based on the second element of its name, the Welsh *cadlan* meaning ‘battlefield, battle’, and the presence of numerous *carneddau* or burial mounds in this area, which today are considered to be most probably of early prehistoric date.

Cwm Cadlan is more reliably thought to have associations with the notorious Lewis Lewis, a figure of some significance to the social and history of south Wales in the early 19th century. Lewis, also known as ‘Lewsyn yr Heliwr’ and ‘Lewsyn Shanco Lewis’ was the son of Jenkin, butcher, and Margaret Lewis of ‘Blaencadlan’, Penderyn, born in 1793. He took a leading role in the Merthyr Rising in 1831, a popular protest brought about by rising prices, hardship and poor working conditions. ‘Blaencadlan’ is possibly to be identified with the farm Beili-helig (which though shown by this name on the Penderyn tithe map of 1840, is named as ‘Blaen Cadlan’ on the accompanying schedule) rather than the now-derelict cottages on the moorland edge at Blaen-cadlan-uchaf and Blaen-cadlan-isaf. At the time of the riots Lewis was employed in carting coal from the pits at Llwydcoed to the limekilns at Penderyn, hence the origin of his soubriquet ‘Lewsyn yr Heliwr’ (‘Lewis the haulier’). At the subsequent Cardiff assizes he was charged with instigating the attack on the house of Joseph Coffin, the clerk to the Court of Requests on 2 June, and inciting the crowd to seize the arms of the soldiers of the 93rd (Highland) Regiment of Foot outside the Castle Inn in Merthyr on the next day. He was seized in the Penderyn district a few days later, and alongside Richard Lewis (‘Dic Penderyn’) was condemned to death for riotous assembly and the destruction of the house and property of Joseph Coffin. In Lewis Lewis’s case the sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

# East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y-glog

Historic Landscape Character Areas





## ***Mynydd y Garn***

Historic Landscape Character Area 1198

Ystradfellte, Glyn Tarrell and Llanfrynach communities, Powys

*Extensive moorland area with important traces of prehistoric settlement, land use and and burial, together with evidence of medieval and later seasonal settlements and sheepfolds.*

### **Environmental and historical background**

An extensive area of just under 2,500 hectares of predominantly unimproved and unenclosed moorland on the southern scarp of Fforest Fawr, dropping from over 730 metres above sea level on the summit of Fan Fawr to the north to about 300 metres along the margins of the enclosed land further to the south. The moorland is dissected by the small but deep stream valleys of the Afon Hepste draining to the south, the tributaries of the Afon Mellte to the west, and of the Afon Taf Fawr to the east. To the south the area broadens out into a shallow basin above the head of the enclosed ground within the lower Hepste valley. On the west the area is defined by steep, rocky scarps overlooking the valley of the Afon Mellte. On the east the land drops steeply into the valley of the Taf Fawr. There are extensive waterlogged areas around the headwaters of the streams and lower down towards the head of the Hepste valley, with exposed rock outcrops and screes on more exposed slopes to the east and on the more rugged terrain of Mynydd y Garn, Gwaun Cefnygarreg and Carn y Goetre to the west.

The solid geology in the northern part of the area up to Fan Fawr and the eastern edge from Pant Brwynog to Pant y Waun is predominantly of Old Red Sandstone. The lower watershed of the Hepste is largely of Carboniferous Limestone with numerous shake holes, with the exception of the Gwaun Cefnygarreg and the Cefn Cadlan and Garn Du areas which are predominantly of sandstone but with some shake holes. Soils mostly overlying Old Red Sandstone or sandstone drift deposits, are predominantly seasonally waterlogged and acidic, and with a peaty surface horizon, which supports wet moorland of poor grazing quality. Towards the west smaller areas of better-drained land overlying sandstone in the Gwaun Cefnygarreg area, with better-drained land supporting moorland pasture of better grazing quality overlying limestone and in the Garn Ganol area.

The boundaries of the characterised area largely follow those indicated in the historic landscapes register, which are defined topographically along the scarp defining the Mellte and Taf Fawr valleys to the west and east respectively, with the exception that for convenience the boundary to the east has been extended to the edge of the modern woodland plantations around the head of the Taf Fawr valley. A fairly arbitrary boundary has been drawn to the south dividing it from the Cefn Cadlan – Cefn Sychbant character area, along the line of the A4059 trunk road and a footpath across the moorland.

In terms of the historic landscape characteristics of the area a subdivision could have been made about on the 400 metre contour since below this height there is a greater density of sites which appear to represent the maximum extent of all-year-round settlement at an earlier period, whilst above this level evidence of settlement and land use is much more slender and appears to have been largely of a seasonal nature. The absence of any physical divisions, however, makes it difficult to define a precise boundary.

Most of the area is registered Common Land, with the exception of part of Gwaun Cefnygarreg. The northern and western part of the area, west of the Afon Hepste and Nant y Cwrier and north of the Nant yr Eira fell within the Brecknock Forest (Fforest Fawr) enclosure acquired by Christie in 1818. Until local government reorganisation in 1974 the area fell within the Breconshire civil parishes of Glyn, Ystradfellte, Cantref and Penderyn.

### Key historic landscape characteristics

Extensive area which today is largely of unimproved moorland with a single, isolated encroachment of about 6 hectares in extent of small irregular fields at Hepste-fechan which is possibly of later medieval or earlier origin. Modern post and wire fencing has been recently erected alongside the Nant yr Eira towards the north-eastern side of the area by the Commoners to prevent animals straying from one side of the mountain to the other. The enclosed portion of Gwaun Cefnygarreg included in this character area forms an area of moorland grazing enclosed by drystone walls.

There is some uncertainty about the antiquity of the place name Fan Fawr, second highest peak in the Beacons, a name derived from the elements *ban* ('summit, crest') and *mawr* ('large'). The name only appears to be recorded after 1900 and is seemingly referred to in early 19th-century sources as 'y-Fan-dringarth' after the Afon Dringarth river, a name which modern maps place over 2 kilometres further to the west.

Some indication of former land use is provided by place-name evidence but there is relatively little evidence relating to either settlement or industry, suggesting perhaps that much of this evidence relates to an earlier period than the mid 19th century onwards when most of the earliest maps of the area were being drawn. Boggy land is indicated by a number of place-names which include the elements *cors* ('swamp, bog'), *brwyn* ('rushes') and *mawn* ('peat'), in Cors y Beddau, Pant Brwynog, and Nant Mawn respectively.

*Gwaun* ('moor, mountain pasture') is predictably, one of the most frequent place-name elements, as in Afon y Waun, Waun Llywarch, Pant y Waun, Waun Tincer, Waun Dywarch, Llynnau'r Waun, and Gwaun Cefnygarreg, emphasising that in economic terms the area has historically been mostly exploited for rough grazing though perhaps with islands of better grass in some lower-lying areas. The historical gathering of thin mountain hay on an area of Mynydd y Garn is possibly indicated by the element *botel* ('bottle, bundle of hay or straw') in the place-name Carn y Botel. An area of historically better grazing is perhaps indicated by the name Ton Teg ('pleasant pasture') given to the hillslope north of Hepste-fechan. Animal husbandry is only alluded to in a small number of place-names, including the element *ychen* ('oxen') in the stream name Nant yr Ychen and the element *ffald* ('fold, pound') in Ffald Newydd, a name first shown on Ordnance Survey maps published in 1890, in an area where several stone enclosures and a sheepfold are known on the banks of the Afon y Waun to the north-east of Hepste-fechan.

Unless derived from *garw* meaning 'rough, uncultivated', the place-name element in the stream names Garwnant Fawr and Garwnant Fach, Nant Carw (an earlier name given for Nant Sychbant) may be derived from *carw* 'deer'. This, and the occurrence of the element *iwrch* ('roe-deer, roe-buck') in the stream name Nant Iwrch is of interest given that the character area fell within and on the margins of the former medieval hunting forest of Fforest Fawr.

The place-name element *carn* (plural *carnau*, 'cairn, mound, rock, heap') occurs frequently throughout the area, as in Carn y Goetre, Carn Ganol, Carn y Botel, Talcen y Garn, Cefn Esgair-carnau, Cefn Nantygeugarn, Mynydd y Garn, Garn Ddu, Carn, Nant y Gougarn, but generally appears to denote natural rock outcrops, particularly in the limestone area north of the Hepste valley, in the Mynydd y Garn area. The element *bedd* (plural *beddau*, 'grave, resting place') in Bedd Llywarch and Cors y Beddau may either refer to grave sites or possibly to a form of ancient Welsh family landholdings.

Surprisingly few place-name records relate to extraction and processing sites within the character area. Of those which are recorded by the Ordnance Survey, the name of the craggy outcrops at Twyn yr Odynau contains the element *odynau* ('kilns') and not surprisingly a couple of limekilns recorded on the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map published in 1886 lie close by. The name Cwar Llwyd, which contains the element *cwar* ('quarry'), refers to a small disused stone quarry in an area of Old Red Sandstone, unusually high up on the hill above Waun Llywarch.

Routes of communication are indicated by the element *rhyd* ('ford') which appears in the names Rhyd Uchaf and Rhyd ap Sion, by the possible element *rhiw* ('slope, mountain track') in Cefn yr Henriw (? 'ridge of the old track'),

leading up to Fan Fawr.

The character area includes a number of significant areas of ancient settlement and land use at different elevations dating from the prehistoric period up to medieval times and beyond.

An important area of early abandoned settlement and land use extends to an area of about 70 hectares in the upper valley of the river Hepste between a height of between 320-400 metres above sea level, extending into the tributary stream valleys of the Nant Hepste-fechan and Afon y Waun and onto the sheltered east-facing slopes of Mynydd y Garn and Waun Tincer. These lower-lying traces of land use and settlement appear to represent all-year-round settlement and agricultural activity during favourable climatic periods probably during the prehistoric and medieval periods just beyond the modern limits of enclosure. Visible remains include numerous prehistoric drystone round huts some of which are associated with irregular linear drystone walls and banks some forming irregular curvilinear enclosures of 0.4-3 hectares in extent and clusters of clearance cairns which appear to denote cultivation. In addition there are groups of rectangular building platforms with the remains of stone-built long huts, clustered especially along the Afon Hepste stream below the 380-metre contour which probably represent settlement and land use in the medieval to earlier post-medieval period. The round huts are generally between 4.5-10 metres in diameter and the majority of the clearance cairns are between 2-10 metres in diameter. An isolated group of round-huts of possible prehistoric date is also recorded at Carn Caniedydd, towards the eastern side of the area, at between 400-410 metres. There is a detached moorland encroachment of about 6 hectares in extent at Hepste-fechan, between a height of 330-370 metres. The encroachment, subdivided into a number of smaller walled fields, is first represented on a map of the Tredegar Estate dated 1780-81 but probably represents the partial survival and enhancement of a much earlier period of land use activity.

Traces of settlement become more sparse at higher elevations. Several small clusters of round huts probably of prehistoric date, rectangular huts probably of medieval date and occasional small embanked enclosures are known at heights of between 430-80 metres on Cors y Beddau — on the spur between the Nant Ganol and Nant Mawr streams, close to the Nant Llywarch stream, on Waun Llywarch — between the Nant Llywarch and Afon y Waun streams, and also at several locations next to the Afon y Waun stream. These higher traces of early settlement are less often associated with traces of cultivation in the form of field banks or clearance cairns and generally seem more likely from the medieval period at least to represent *hafodydd* ('summer houses') associated with transhumance and the seasonal exploitation of upland pastures during the summer months. Past animal herding up until the recent past is probably also represented by a scattering of crude stone shelters on the higher slopes of the mountain.

Personal names occur in a number of place-names including *ap Sion* in Rhyd ap Sion, *Llywarch* in Waun Llywarch and Nant Llywarch, and *Gwriad* in Nant y Cwrier.

Several burnt mounds have been recorded in the character area. These are characteristically horseshoe-shaped mounds of burnt stones of a kind which are best interpreted as middle to later Bronze Age sauna baths of some kind, though some may have been used as cooking sites. The known examples in the area characteristically lie adjacent to streams and on the periphery of or isolated from evidence of possibly contemporary land use and settlement. One site is known on the bank of a small tributary of the Garwnant Fawr stream on the eastern side of Cefn Esgair-carnau, overlooking the valley of the Taf Fawr. Another has been identified on the bank of a tributary of the Afon y Waun stream, on the edge of known settlement activity.

An important component of the evidence for early land use and activity in the character area is provided by round cairns of loose stone between about 6-18 metres in diameter and generally less than 1 metre high which represent burial monuments of early Bronze Age date, none of which have been excavated in modern times. Few of the monuments appear to have any specific names of any antiquity though as noted above they have given rise to the place-name elements *carn* and *carnau* which are met with frequently in the area. The only two exceptions are Carn

Caniedydd ('singer's, song-writer's cairn') and Garn Wen ('white cairn') where the element appears to apply to prehistoric burial cairns, which in the first instance possibly refers to the whistling of the wind in this exposed location, or to be derived from a personal name, or to have folkloric or legendary associations. The monuments generally lie between a height of 350-450 metres, avoiding both the higher and lower ground, and their distribution is largely complementary rather than overlaps the traces of early settlement and land use with which they are likely to be in part contemporary.

The monuments appear singly, or pairs or in larger clusters and generally appear to be deliberately sited on hill-slope or hill-crest location in which they are visible from lower ground. The majority of sites in the character area occur loosely around the fringes of the upper Hepste valley and its tributaries – on the east-facing slopes of Mynydd y Garn, the south-facing slopes of Ton Teg, and the west-facing slopes of the significantly named Cefn Esgair-carnau. Other smaller groups occur on the west-facing slopes overlooking Pen-fathor in the Afon Dringarth valley, and the east-facing slopes above Pant y Gadair and Twyn Garreg-wen, overlooking the valley of the Taf Fawr. A majority of the monuments appear to be well-preserved although small intrusions have been dug into some and others have been adapted to form sheep shelters.

A handful of sheepfolds are known in the area sited either around the margins of the moorland area such as above Pen-fathor-uchaf and Garreg-fawr on the west, or at other convenient points for gathering sheep from the hills, such as on the eastern edge of Mynydd y Garn and along the Afon y Waun stream, many of which have now gone out of use. These structures, though some are possibly based upon the sites of earlier *hafodydd* ('summer houses'), probably largely represent a phase of intensive sheep farming following the eclipse of the medieval system of transhumance based upon cattle ranching and dairying, and also probably in some instances stemming from the agricultural improvements of the later 18th and early 19th centuries. There is documentary evidence for some of the sheepfolds near Pen-y-fathor in the 1770s. Further indications of dating are given by the two sheepfolds on Glog-las which are both described as 'Old Sheepfold' on Ordnance Survey maps of the 1880s, and by Ffald-newydd ('new fold'), close to the Afon y Waun, which appears on an Ordnance Survey map of 1890.

An extensive area of up to about 200 hectares at the headwaters of the Afon Hepste and its tributaries appears to have been drained perhaps during the latter stages of or just after the second world war by a network of straight drainage channels up to 400 metres long and spaced at intervals of 8-18 metres most clearly visible from the air, presumably in an attempt to improve the grazing potential of the moorland pasture below Fan Fawr. Most of the drainage trenches have now largely silted up and eroded into more irregular courses and often have the appearance of natural watercourses.

There is a small amount of former industrial activity in the area of limestone outcrops close to the western boundary of the character area represented by groups of limekilns and small quarries close to the moorland edge which no doubt were used to produce agricultural lime. One bank of kilns on Carn y Goetre is linked by former tracks with Garreg-fawr and Llwyn-on farms. In at least one instance there is a double kiln. Another group of kilns lie close to the significantly named Twyn y Odynau, containing the place-name element *odynau* ('kilns'), to the north of the former farm at Pen-y-fathor-uchaf. In some instances the limekilns are relatively well-preserved with standing masonry whilst in others they are represented by grassed-over mounds. Some of the kilns are shown on Ordnance Survey maps of the 1880s, though in at least one instance the structure is described as an 'Old Limekiln'.

Part of the southern boundary of the area is drawn along the line of the earlier 19th-century Hirwaun-Brecon turnpike road (the modern A4059), the surviving remains of which include several small roadside quarries and milestones.

Peaty areas, buried soils and other sediments in the area have a considerable potential for reconstructing past land use and environmental change.

**Sources**

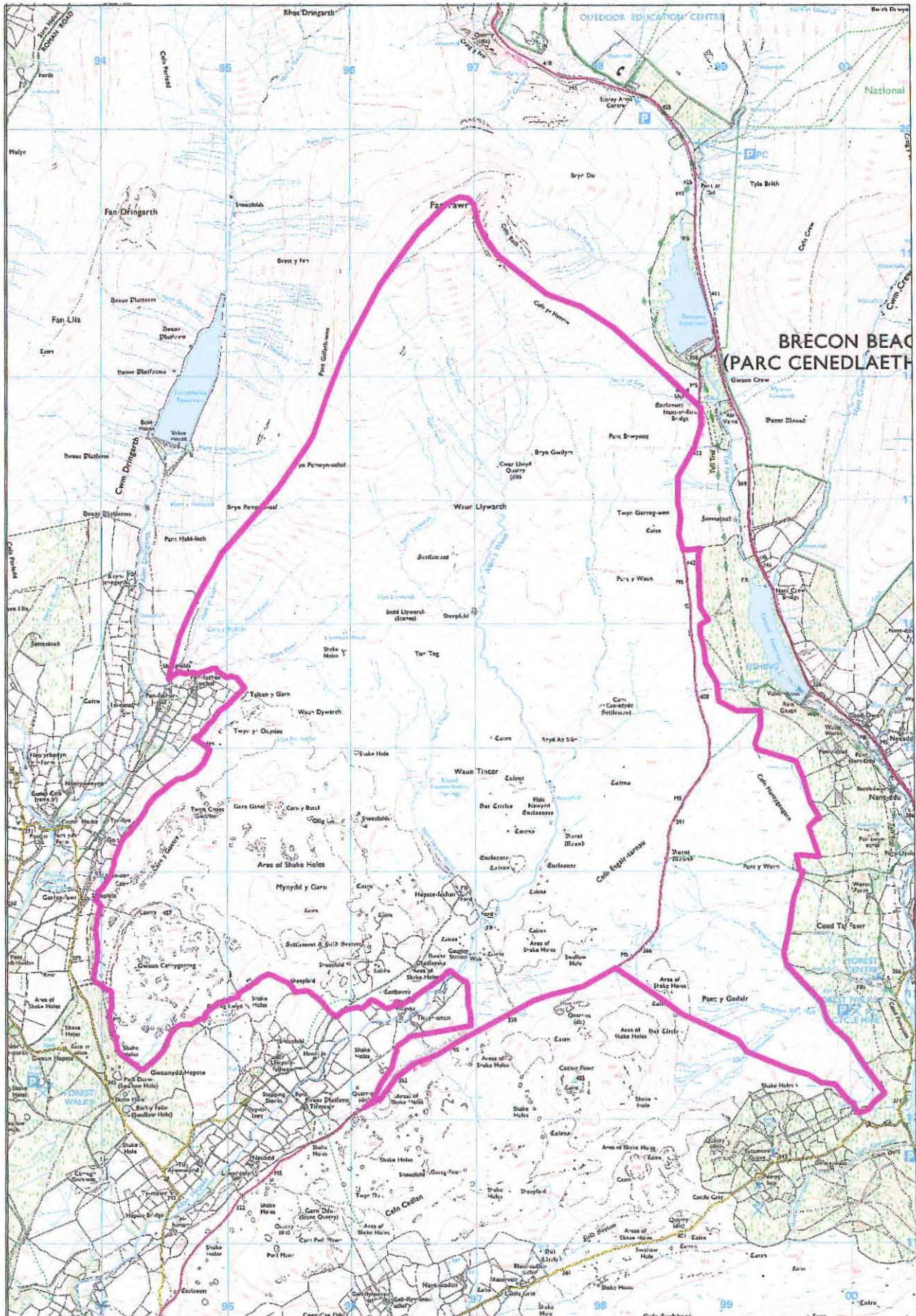
Historic Environment Record; Ordnance Survey 1st edn 1:2,500; Leighton 1997; Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983; Kain and Chapman 2004; Chapman 1991; RAF vertical air photography dated November 1945 and May 1946; Powell 1998/99.

***Key historic landscape management issues***

- *Management of isolated and clustered prehistoric burial and ritual monuments.*
- *Management of important remains of prehistoric and later settlement and land use, including abandoned dwellings, boundaries, burnt mounds, clearance cairns, and sheepfolds.*
- *Management and conservation of early industrial remains, including 18-19th-century limekilns and associated structures.*
- *Management and conservation of structures and deposits associated with transport history, including the former, earlier 19th-century Hirwaun-Brecon turnpike road (the modern A4059).*
- *Management of boggy areas and other deposits of potential importance to the palaeoenvironmental history of the region.*

# Mynydd y Garn

## Historic Landscape Character Area 1198



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## ***Cefn Cadlan – Cefn Sychbant – Mynydd-y-glog*** Historic Landscape Character Area 1199 Hirwaun community, Rhondda, Cynon, Taff

*Extensive moorland area with important traces of prehistoric settlement, land use and burial together with a scattering of post-medieval and recent sheepfolds and small disused quarries and associated limekilns.*

### **Environmental and historical background**

Extensive area of just under 1,800 hectares of mostly unenclosed moorland generally above 300 metres above sea level which topographically can be broken down into three upland blocks which gradually diminish in height to the south. To the north is the roughly east-west ridge of Cefn Cadlan which rises to a height of 480 metres and is drained to the north by streams running westwards to join the Afon Hepste and eastwards to the Garwnant and other tributaries of the Taf Fawr. To the south is a shallow col with streams running westwards to join the Nant Cadlan and eastwards to join the Nant Aber-nant and other tributaries again of the Taf Fawr beyond which is the east-west ridge of Cefn Sychbant which rises to just under 420 metres. At the southern end of the area is the plateau of Mynydd-y-glog which rises to about 390 metres beyond which streams drain southwards to join the Afon Cynon. Mynydd-y-glog is separated from Cefn Sychbant by another shallow col occupied by streams running westwards to join the Nant Cadlan and eastwards to the Nant Sychbant and again other tributaries of the Taf Fawr.

The area is crossed by a band of Old Red Sandstone running across Cefn Sychbant, to the south of which is a band of Carboniferous Limestone on Mynydd-y-glog, with sandstone and millstone grit forming the predominant solid geology of the southern end of the area. Soils mostly overlying Old Red Sandstone or sandstone drift deposits, predominantly seasonally waterlogged and acidic, with a peaty surface horizon. They supporting wet moorland of poor grazing quality with towards the west smaller areas of better-drained land overlying sandstone and limestone in the Cefn Cadlan and Mynydd-y-glog areas. In terms of agricultural production the area has been largely used for cattle and sheep grazing during the summer months though there is also a record of managed goose grazing at least in the col at the head of Cwm Cadlan.

The boundaries of the characterised area largely follow those indicated in the historic landscapes register, though they have been drawn to match more explicitly the boundaries of the unenclosed and unforested moorland and also exclude the Penderyn quarry to the south-west. For convenience a fairly arbitrary boundary has been drawn to the north dividing the characterised area from the *Mynydd y Garn* character area, along the line of the A4059 trunk road and a footpath across the moorland.

Most of the area is registered Common Land, with the exception of parts of Mynydd-y-glog at the southern end of the area, part of Cefn Cadlan north of Nant-maden. Until local government reorganisation in 1974 the area fell within the Breconshire civil parishes of Cantref and Penderyn.

### **Key historic landscape characteristics**

Extensive area of largely unimproved moorland though some areas of rough grazing at the southern end of the area, on the southern and western flanks of Mynydd-y-glog, are subdivided into generally large irregularly-shaped enclosures defined by drystone walls, mostly over about 8 hectares in extent, which appears to have been the subject of legal disputes about the right of Common of part of Mynydd-y-glog in the first half of the 19th century. Some of these have been further subdivided by straighter stone walls and by post-and-wire fences which appear to be of 19th- and 20th-century date. Some relict boundaries are also evident in this area, including an un-named encroachment with associated ruined buildings, perhaps of post-medieval origin, at a height of about 320 on a tributary of the Nant Melyn stream, whose fields extend to an area of about 8 hectares.

The place-name element *carn* (plural *carnau*, 'cairn, mound, rock, heap') occurs in the name Garn Ddu and Carn Pwll Mawr, but often appears to denote natural rock outcrops, particularly in limestone areas.

The element *sych* ('dry, dried up'), which occurs in the stream name Nant Sychbant may indicate the periodic drying up of this stream where it runs along the porous Carboniferous limestone past various swallow holes to join the Afon Taf Fawr towards the south-eastern side of the character area.

The character area includes a number of important areas of ancient settlement and land use dating from the prehistoric period up to medieval times and beyond.

On the sheltered, east-facing slopes of Cadair Fawr, at the head of the Gawnant and Nant Ffymnonelin streams, overlooking Pant y Gadair and the Taf Fawr valley is a significant cluster of prehistoric hut circles and later house platforms and relict rectangular stone-built buildings. The settlement evidence here is associated with few traces of agricultural activity and may therefore represent temporary upland habitations between about 380-420 metres above sea level relating to the exploitation of upland pastures during the summer months between the earlier prehistoric period and the Middle Ages and possibly relating to more permanent settlements in the Taf Fawr valley.

A second important area of ancient settlement and land use, lying between a height of 350-450 metres, is to be found occupying the more sheltered southern slopes of Cefn Cadlan and the northern slopes of the col extending beyond the limits of the enclosed farmland at the head of Cwm Cadlan to the west and the now afforested but formerly enclosed farmland at the head of the Nant Aber-nant stream and its tributaries to the east. Here, there is evidence of land use represented by cairnfields (clusters of field clearance cairns) and by relict drystone boundaries, often concentrated in areas of between about a half and two hectares which appear to represent upland cultivation or pasture improvement. This activity is largely undated, but is most probably associated with settlement evidence, perhaps of an all-year-round nature, represented by hut circles and by rectangular building forms which again seem likely to mostly date to the period between the earlier prehistoric period and the Middle Ages.

A third significant area of ancient settlement and land use hugs the southern boundary of the enclosed land in Cwm Cadlan, to the east of the Cae'r Aglwydd, Wern-las and Beili-helig farms and extending onto the more exposed northern slopes of Mynydd-y-glog, between a height of about 300-380 metres above sea level. Sites to be found here again include clearance cairns, occasional relict drystone boundaries, and dispersed hut circles and rectangular buildings.

Other small clusters of clearance cairns have been identified in the moorland on the southern and western sides of Mynydd-y-glog, at heights of up to about 320 metres above sea level.

A single burnt mound is recorded on the southern flanks of Cefn Sychbant comprising a characteristic horseshoe-shaped mound of burnt stones, adjacent to a marshy area. Mounds of this kind are best interpreted as middle to later Bronze Age sauna baths of some kind, though some may have been used as cooking sites.

The area also includes a number of important clusters of earlier prehistoric burial and ritual monuments, notably including burial cairns which can be distinguished from the clearance cairns by virtue of their larger size and also including a number of ring cairns of a kind which appear to have had both funerary and ritual functions during the early Bronze Age date, though none have been excavated in modern times. The association of some of these monuments with a medieval battle, suggested by the Breconshire historian Theophilus Jones on the basis of the placename Cadlan ('battlefield, battle'), is now considered improbable. The monuments are generally between 6-20 metres across, and mostly lack distinctive features though one round cairn in the col above Cwm Cadlan shows possible traces of an inner kerb of stones and a central burial cist. The only find associated with the monuments is a sandstone disk found at this site. Some sites have been disturbed or damaged in recent centuries, sometimes for the construction of sheep shelters, but generally the sites are reasonably well preserved.



The monuments lie mostly above about 400 metres and appear in most cases to be prominently sited on either hill-crests or summits where they could be seen from a distance from a particular direction. Though no doubt further sites await discovery by more intensive field survey the known distribution suggests a number of meaningful clusters which appear to have significance in terms of early settlement and land use. The monuments in individual clusters sometimes appears to occur in pairs, spaced up to 40-50 metres apart, but are generally more widely spaced, at distances of 100-200 metres or more. Clusters can be identified on the west-facing slopes of Cadair Fawr overlooking the upper Hepste valley, on the west-facing slopes of the col at the head of Cwm Cadlan, on the south and south-east facing slopes of Cefn Sychbant and north-facing slopes of Mynydd-y-glog overlooking Pant Sychbant and the Taf Fawr valley, and on the south and west-facing slopes of Mynydd-y-glog overlooking the Cynon valley. Their general distribution complements rather than overlaps that of the traces of early agriculture and settlement noted above with which they are likely to be at least in part contemporary. None of the monuments appear to have recorded names of any antiquity.

Isolated, curvilinear or rectangular drystone sheepfolds, as for example on the eastern side of Mynydd-y-glog and on Cefn Cadlan, are probably of post-medieval date. Many of them are first depicted on Ordnance Survey maps of the 1880s.

Numerous disused limekilns and small quarries for extracting limestone are found on several of the limestone outcrops in the character area, notably on Cadair Fawr, the north side of Cefn Cadlan and the north side of Mynydd-y-glog. The kilns sometimes occur singly though are more often in pairs or clusters up to ten or more in number. Many of the kilns are visible only as grassed-over mounds, 1-3 metres high and 3-4 metres across, with a hollow at the centre, though in some cases structural details of drystone walling and the presence of one or more flues can be determined. Some kilns are associated with platforms or ramps by which they were loaded with limestone and with waste heaps. In most cases it is likely that the kilns produced lime for agricultural and building purposes. They are mostly undated but many are represented being out of use on Ordnance Survey maps of the 1880s and are likely to mostly date to the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century and to be associated with the other evidence for agricultural improvements that were carried out on farm on the adjacent lower ground during this period.

The area also includes a number of disused sandstone quarries on Garn Ddu and the western side of Cefn Cadlan which from cartographic evidence appears to have originated during the first half of the 20th century. Deposits of silica sand were also once worked at the Cefn Cadlan quarry.

The area is crossed by the line of the earlier 19th-century Hirwaun-Brecon turnpike road (the modern A4059), the surviving remains of which include several small roadside quarries and milestones. The western end of the area is clipped by the course of the former railway used in the construction of the Ystradfellte Reservoir in the early 20th century. The southern part of the area is crossed for a distance of about 2 kilometres by the route of a modern gas pipeline whose 20m-wide wayleave can still be traced to the point it joins the Bryn Du gas works just to the south-east of the character area.

Peaty areas, buried soils and other sediments in the area have a considerable potential for reconstructing past land use and environmental change.

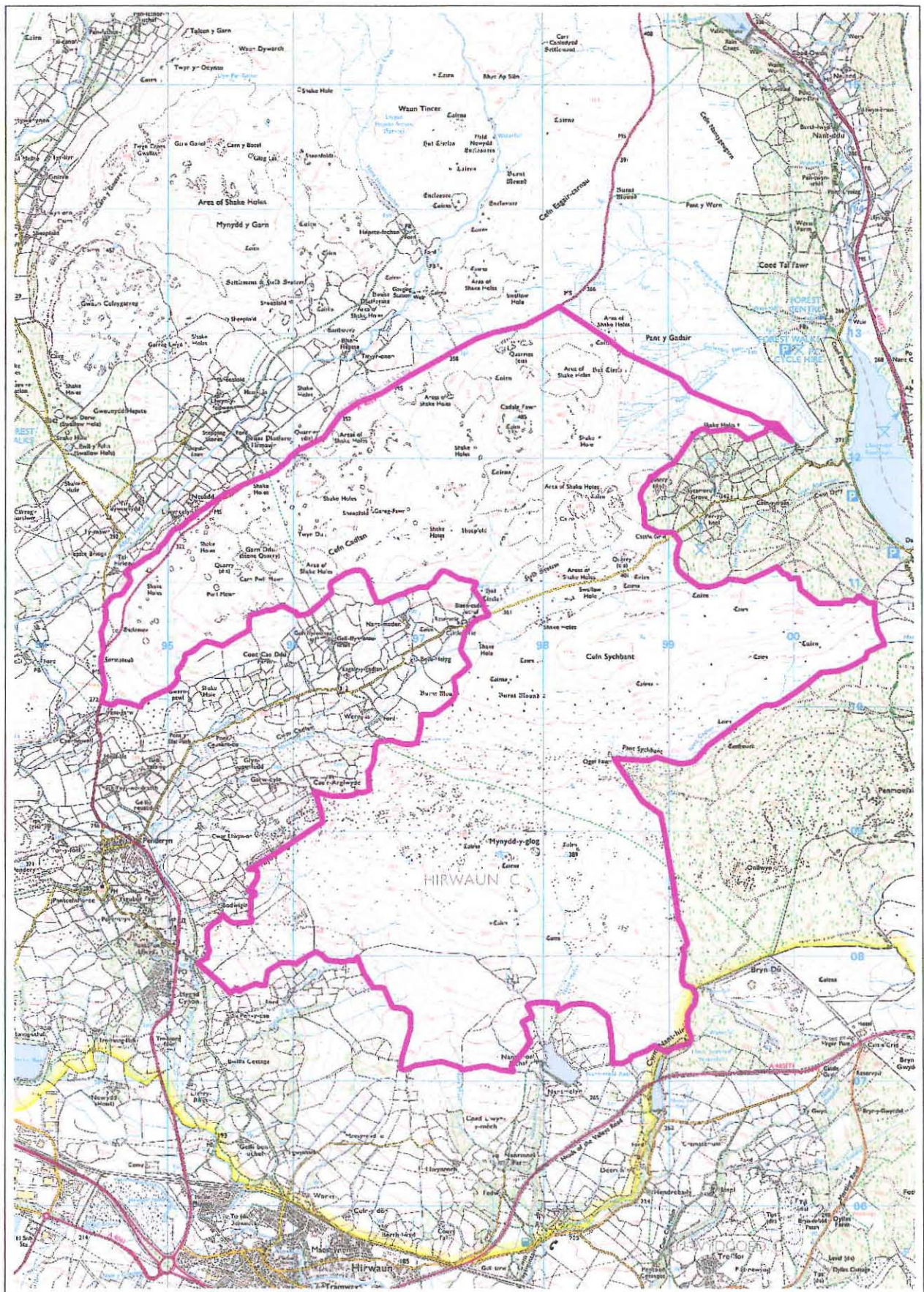
### Sources

Historic Environment Record; Ordnance Survey 1st edn 1:2,500; Jones 1930; Leighton 1997; Morgan and Powell 1999; Selwood 2000; Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983; RCAHMW 1997; Webley 1954

***Key historic landscape management issues***

- *Management of isolated and clustered prehistoric burial and ritual monuments.*
- *Management of important traces of prehistoric and later settlement and land use, including abandoned dwellings, boundaries, burnt mounds, clearance cairns, and sheepfolds.*
- *Management and conservation of early industrial remains, including 18-19th-century limekilns and associated structures.*
- *Management and conservation of structures and deposits associated with transport history, including the earlier 19th-century Hirwaun-Brecon turnpike road (A4059).*
- *Management of boggy areas and other deposits of potential importance to the palaeoenvironmental history of the region.*

# Cefn Cadlan – Cefn Sychbant – Mynydd-y-glog Historic Landscape Character Area 1199



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## ***Garreg-fawr*** Historic Landscape Character Area 1200 Ystradfellte Community, Powys

*Fieldsapes and farmsteads probably of later medieval and post-medieval origin high on the eastern edge of the Mellte valley, just below the moorland edge.*

### **Environmental and historical background**

Narrow strip of about 95 hectares of fieldsapes on the western boundary of the historic landscape area. The eastern boundary of the characterised area is drawn to mark the edge of the unenclosed moorland. The somewhat arbitrary western boundary of the characterised area largely follows that indicated in the historic landscapes register, though for convenience it has been drawn to match more explicitly modern roads and property boundaries. Topographically, the area forms part of the west-facing, upper, eastern edge of the valley of the Afon Mellte.

The underlying solid geology is predominantly Carboniferous Limestone, with some shake holes and a large swallow holes named Pwll Derw into which a stream drains. The soils are predominantly seasonally waterlogged loamy soils of a kind which historically have been best suited to stock rearing on short-term grassland and some cereals in drier areas.

Some of the farms and boundaries near Pen-fathor are shown on an estate map of the Hon. George Venables Vernon, dated 1776. Many other properties and boundaries are first shown on the Ystradfellte tithe map of 1840. Most of the area had already been enclosed at the time of the Brecknock Forest (Fforest Fawr) enclosure acquired by Christie in 1818, part of which lay immediately to the north and east. Until local government reorganisation in 1974 the area fell within the Breconshire civil parish of Ystradfellte.

### **Key historic landscape characteristics**

There are few place-names that are of significance to the settlement or land use history of this small character area. Tyr-llyn is derived from the place-name element *tir* 'land, territory' or possibly *ty* ('house') but is of modern origin. The former building at Cae'r-prydydd contains the element *cae* ('hedge, fence, field, enclosure') and the proper name Prydydd.

The lower-lying parts of the area are mostly occupied by a pattern of small irregular fields probably largely of later medieval to early post-medieval origin and also includes some enclosed fields which have now reverted to moorland. Some of these boundaries are shown on an estate map of the 1770s as 'old banks'. The southern end historically formed by part of an area of enclosed upland pasture subdivided from the moorland of Gwaun Cefnygarreg by a post-medieval drystone wall which had subsequently formed part of a more extensive 20th-century conifer plantation, which has recently (2007) been felled. Other boundaries are mostly drystone walls though field banks and hedges also occur. Agricultural land use is also indicated by existing sheepfolds near Pen-fathor-uchaf, some of which are shown on an estate map of the 1770s. Present-day land use is predominantly pasture.

The farms and former farm complexes at Garreg-fawr, Goitre, Llwyn-onn and Pen-fathor were all in existence by at least the later 19th century. Pen-fathor-uchaf and Pen-fathor-isaf farms are shown on an estate map of the 1770s and the sites of former buildings possibly of earlier farms, then in a ruinous condition, are shown at Goitre and Llwyn-onn on Ordnance Survey maps of the 1880s. Investment in farming during the 19th century is illustrated by the existing 19th-century houses and some outbuildings at Goitre and Garreg-fawr.

The area includes a number of significant industrial and transport remains. These includes scattered, probably 19th-

century limekilns and small quarries near Llwyn-onn, between Tyr-llyn and Pen-fathor-uchaf, and towards the southern end of the area, and part of the course of the former railway running southwards to Penderyn, built to transport materials used for the construction of the Ystradfellte Reservoir as a water supply for Neath between 1907 and 1914. The former railway, which survives partly as an embankment and partly as a trackway along part of the western boundary of the area, forms a distinctive landscape feature which is partly lined with mature conifers.

### Sources

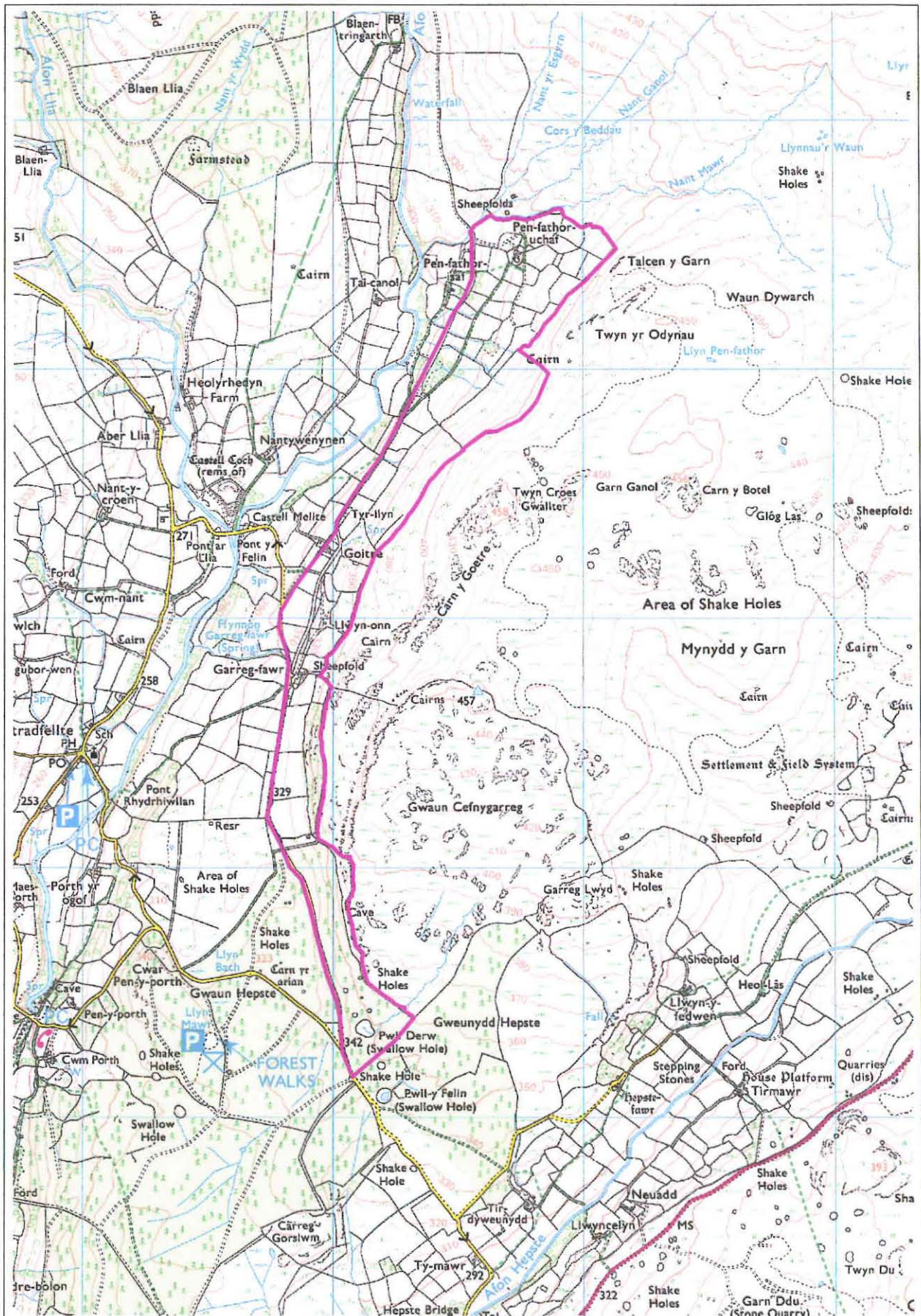
Historic Environment Record; Ordnance Survey 1st edn 1:2,500; Leighton 1997; Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983; <http://www.breconbeacons.org/content/geopark/understanding/archaeology-industrial-heritage/reservoir-of-fforest-fawr-geopark> (accessed on 29-11-07); Glamorgan Record Office WGRO D/D BF E/164 (map of the estate of the Hon. George Venables Vernon, 1776); Jones and Smith 1972a; Thomas 1992; Kain and Chapman 2004; Chapman 1991

### *Key historic landscape management issues*

- *Management of traces of earlier settlement and land use including medieval and later abandoned dwellings and sheepfolds.*
- *Management and conservation of ancient land boundaries, including hedges and drystone walls of medieval and later origin.*
- *Management and conservation of farmhouses and farm buildings of medieval and later origin..*
- *Management and conservation of early industrial remains, including 18-19th-century limekilns and associated structures.*
- *Management and conservation of structures and deposits associated with transport history, including the course of the former 20th-century railway used in the construction of the Ystradfellte Reservoir.*
- *Management of boggy areas and other deposits of potential importance to the palaeoenvironmental history of the region.*

# Garreg-fawr

## Historic Landscape Character Area 1200



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## ***Dyffryn Hepste*** Historic Landscape Character Area 1201 Ystradfellte community, Powys

*Upland valley with a coherent and well-preserved pattern of dispersed farms and generally small irregular fields of medieval and earlier origin with boundaries formed by drystone walls and hedges, together with some larger areas of enclosed grazing on the moorland edge.*

### **Environmental and historical background**

The character area occupies the broad, shallow, upland valley of the Afon Hepste and covers an area of about 280 hectares. The boundaries of the characterised area are largely drawn to include the enclosed farmland within the valley, which is mostly between a height of 290-340 metres above sea level, but has been extended to include historically enclosed upland pasture, most notably to the west which extend up to about 410 metres. The somewhat arbitrary south-western boundary generally follows that indicated in the historic landscapes register, though for convenience it has been drawn to match more explicitly the line of modern roads and property boundaries.

The underlying solid geology is predominantly Carboniferous Limestone, with some sandstone in the western part of the area on Gweunydd Hepste. There is a large swallow hole called Pwll y Felin into which a stream drains on the south-western side of the area. In the lower-lying parts of the area bordering the Afon Hepste soils are mostly slow draining and seasonally waterlogged loams of a kind which have historically been best suited to dairying and stock rearing on permanent or short-term grassland with some cereal growing in drier areas. On the higher ground to the west and northern side of the area the soils are a combination of seasonally waterlogged and drier loams which have historically provided moorland grazing of only moderate or poor value.

Practically the whole of the area was already enclosed at the time of the Brecknock Forest (Fforest Fawr) enclosure acquired by Christie in 1818, part of which lay immediately to the north and east. The properties at Tir-yr-onen are shown on maps of the Tredegar Estate dated 1780-81. Many other properties and boundaries are first shown on the Penderyn tithe map and schedule of 1840. Until local government reorganisation in 1974 the area fell within the Breconshire civil parishes of Ystradfellte and Cantref.

### **Key historic landscape characteristics**

Limited evidence of the settlement and land use history of Dyffryn Hepste is provided by place-name evidence. The name Dyffryn Hepste ('Hepste valley') is first documented in 1503. The river name is thought to derive from the elements *hesp* ('dried up') and *te(u)* ('darkness') possibly due to the fact that the river is periodically dry because it flows over porous limestone. Older, possibly originally higher-status houses are suggested by the names Ty-mawr ('large house') and Neuadd ('hall') in the lower part of the valley, the latter first appearing in the form 'Tyr y noyadd' in 1618, though in many cases it is evident that the place-name elements were used to distinguish dwellings that might only be a little larger than average. The place-name element *tyr*, *tir* ('land, territory') also occurs in a significant proportion of other farm names in the valley, including Tirmawr, Tir-dywenydd, Tir-yr-onen and Tir-Shencyn-Llewelyn (renamed Llwyn-celyn), the last of which is first recorded in 1819. Vegetation is indicated in the names Llwyn-y-fedwen ('birch, birch grove') (first recorded in 1650) and Tir-yr-onen, the latter including the element *onn* ('ash, ash wood'). As noted above, the probable former farmstead at Heol-las ('green lane') derives its name from the trackway which provides access for the valley-bottom farms to the mountain pastures beyond the head to the valley. Little indication of former land use is provided by place-name evidence, though the area name Gweunydd (or Gwaunydd) Hepste, the enclosed area on the moorland edge on the south-west side of the area and the farm name Tir-dyweynydd both includes the plural of *gwaun* ('moor, mountain pasture').

Prehistoric settlement is suggested by the presence of two hut circles in an area of enclosed moorland pasture north of Heol-las farm. These form part of the extensive evidence land use and settlement in the unenclosed moorland to the north and north-east which is likely to have been obscured during the course of later clearance and enclosure in the lower-lying parts of the valley.

The lower-lying parts of the area are characterized by a pattern of small irregular fields generally under 3 hectares in extent which appear to represent a gradual process of clearance and enclosure probably from at least medieval times. The concentric field patterns around Llwyn-y-fedwen and Blaen-hepste suggests that these and possibly other farms close to the moorland edge may have originated as isolated encroachments like Hepste-fechan which lies in the moorland to the north-east, perhaps in the later medieval to early post-medieval period. Clusters of more regularly-shaped fields close to the farms at Tirmawr, Tir-dyweunydd, Llwyncelyn and Hepste-fawr suggest some reorganisation of field boundaries, probably during the 19th century. Beyond this is a pattern of much larger irregular enclosures along the margin of the unenclosed moorland probably dating to the late medieval to early post-medieval periods. These are generally over 8 hectares in extent and enclose areas of rough pasture some of which has now reverted to moorland. Part of these moorland enclosures on Gweunydd Hepste, on the western side of the character area, now forms part of a more extensive area of conifer woodland, first planted in the second half of the 20th century.

Ancient routeways within the valley are represented by the modern lane along the valley and by a partially surviving pattern of green lanes used for communication and for herding animals, including one running along the western side of the Hepste past Hepste-fawr and the significantly named Heol-las ('green lane') giving access to the moorland pastures of Fforest Fawr to the north. Another lane can be traced on the eastern side of the Hepste, running from Llwyncelyn past Neuadd, Tirmawr and again out onto the moorland to the north. Communications from one side of the valley to the other were by means of green lanes with fords or stepping stones across the Afon Hepste between Tirmawr and Llwyn-y-fedwen and between Llwyncelyn and Tir-dyweunydd. It seems likely that in the late 18th or early 19th century the farms Tirmawr, Neuadd and Llwyncelyn on the eastern side of the valley reorientated their principal access to take advantage of the newly constructed turnpike road from Hirwaun to Brecon (A4059). Prior to this it seems likely that the only means of accessing these farms was by means of the green lanes and fords crossing the Afon Hepste joining the route on the western side of the valley.

Most field boundaries and green lanes are represented by drystone walls which are now often supplemented by post-and-wire fences though some of the later reorganised boundaries are hedges. Some of the probably earlier drystone boundaries are largely composed of field clearance material including a high proportion of rounded boulders of Old Red Sandstone probably derived from glacial drift. Some probably later boundaries, especially those defining the boundaries of the areas of enclosed rough pasture along the moorland edge, are made of quarried sandstone or limestone.

Present-day settlement is characterized by a coherent pattern of small dispersed upland farms of medieval and later origin, generally 200-800 metres apart, characteristic of a mixed farming economy. Earlier farms are indicated by the form or arrangement of buildings. In the case of the stone-built longhouse at Hepste-fawr, the ground plan indicates that the farming family and their animals were housed beneath a single roof and is likely to be of medieval or late medieval in origin. The building, referred to in Iorworth Peate's *The Welsh House* (1940), was set across the slope and formerly had direct communication between the living quarters with its open fireplace and provision for cattle accommodation. The farmhouse at Neuadd is similarly set across the slope and possibly had a similar origin. The farmhouse at Tirmawr, by contrast lies along the contour but most probably replaced an earlier building of medieval origin represented by an abandoned house platform. Other abandoned habitations of medieval or post-medieval origin are known on moorland edge east of Tirmawr, represented by house platform, an enclosure, and by clearance cairns.

Many of the farmhouses appear to have been substantially rebuilt or replaced before the end of the 19th century, however, as in the case of the farmhouse at Llwyn-celyn which is probably 18th-century, though this and a number of others are likely to have had earlier origins. The 19th-century farmhouse at Tir-dyweunydd is associated with a range



of buildings further down slope which may possibly include an earlier house. The later 19th-century farmhouse and outbuildings at Tai-hirion, close to the valley entrance, are of stone with brick details, but the farm name is first recorded in the early 19th century, indicating an earlier foundation. Further investment in agriculture during the later 18th and 19th centuries is indicated by characteristically small corn barns with ventilation slits and central cart doors, stables, cowhouses and granaries, sometimes combined into a single structure, of which examples survive at Hepste-fawr, Tirmawr and Neuadd.

A number of small farms were evidently abandoned during the course of the later 19th century, possibly as a consequence of the amalgamation of smallholdings into more viable economic units. Examples include a house between between Tirmawr and Tir-yr-onen and a possible smallholding on moorland edge west of Llwyn-y-fedwen, abandoned or in a ruinous condition by the 1880s. The isolated barn at Heol-las, is possibly all that now survives of an former farm complex abandoned in the 19th century. Other farms, such as Blaen Hepste, were abandoned for similar reasons in the 1920s.

The area contains a number of industrial remains of probably the late 18th to early 20th century, including two limekilns near Neuadd Farm which were in operation by the 1880s and single limekilns west of Blaen Hepste, and east of Tirmawr Farm which were also in operation by the 1880s, the latter is said to have been still working up to the 1920s or 1930s. Small undated stone quarries, north of Tir-dyweunydd farm and north of Hepste-fawr farms are shown as old quarries in the 1880s and were possibly used as a source of stone for buildings or field walls or for limeworkings.

The area includes a number of deposits of palaeoenvironmental potential including for example a peat bog shown on earlier editions of the OS bordering watercourse leading to Pwll y Felin.

### Sources

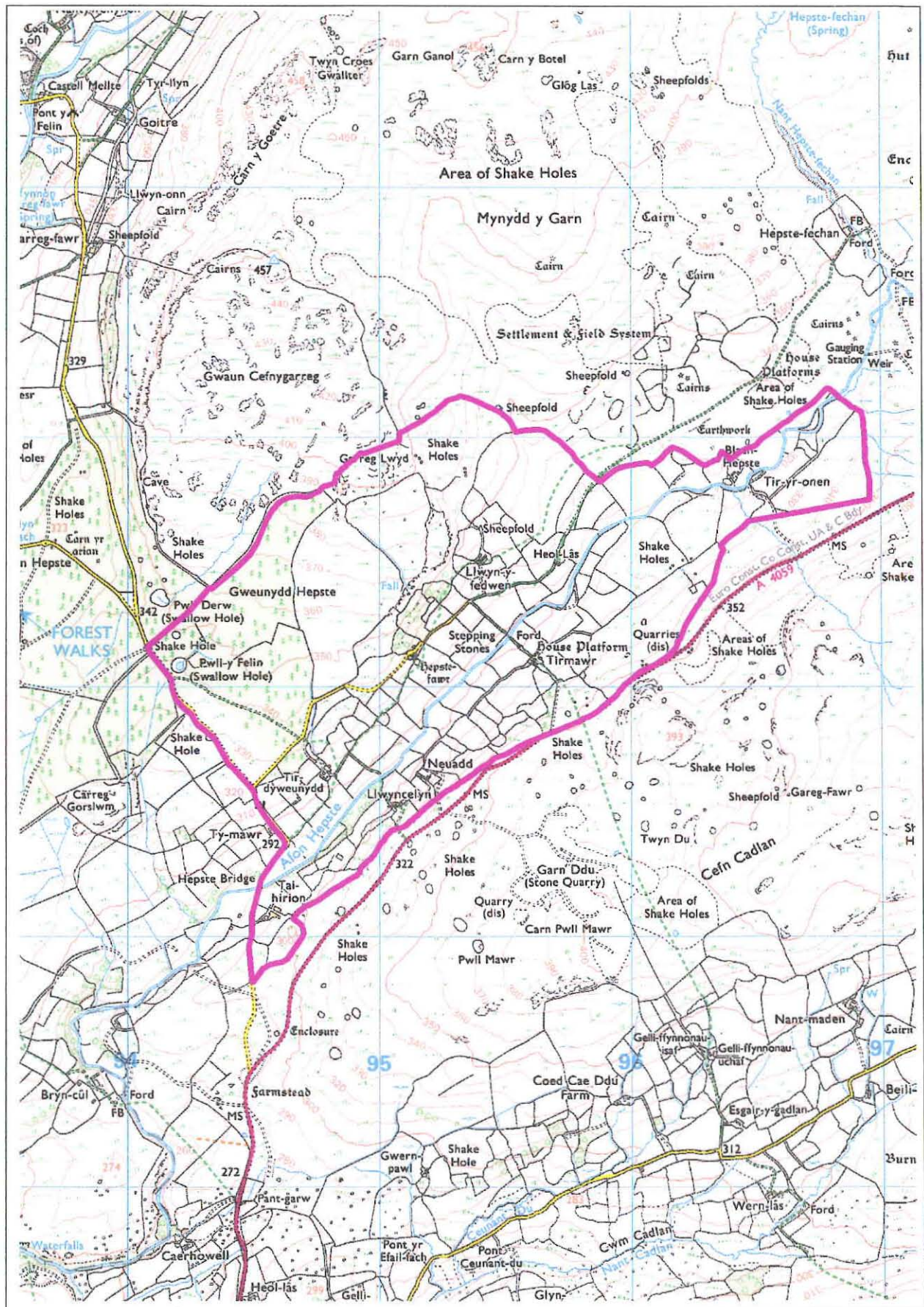
Historic Environment Record; Ordnance Survey 1st edn 1:2,500; Cadw Listed Buildings Lists; Haslam 1979; Jones and Smith 1972a; Leighton 1997; Morgan and Powell 1999; Peate 1944; RCAHMW 1997; National Library of Wales, Tredegar Estate, Brecon Estate Vol. 2, 1780-81; Kain and Chapman 2004; Chapman 1991; Owen and Morgan 2007; Peate 1944; Peate 1963; Powell 1988/89; Smith, J. T., 1963; Smith, P. 1975.

### *Key historic landscape management issues*

- *Management of traces of earlier settlement and land use including probable prehistoric hut circles and abandoned dwellings and sheepfolds of medieval and later origin.*
- *Management and conservation of ancient land boundaries, green lanes and fords, including hedges, drystone walls of medieval and later origin.*
- *Management and conservation of traditional farmhouses and farm buildings of medieval and later origin.*
- *Management and conservation of early industrial remains, including 18-19th-century limekilns and associated structures.*
- *Management of boggy areas and other deposits of potential importance to the palaeoenvironmental history of the region.*

# Dyffryn Hepste

## Historic Landscape Character Area 1201



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## ***Cwm Cadlan***

### Historic Landscape Character Area 1202

#### Hirwaun community, Rhondda, Cynon, Taff

*Upland valley with a diffuse and dispersed pattern of farms and abandoned farms and generally small irregular fields of medieval and earlier origin together with some larger areas of enclosed grazing on the moorland edge; field boundaries formed by drystone walls and hedges.*

#### **Environmental and historical background**

The character area occupies the broad, shallow, upland valley of the Nant Cadlan and Ceunant Du streams, tributaries of the Afon Cynon, covering an area of over 380 hectares. The boundaries of the characterised area are largely drawn to include the enclosed farmland within the valley, which is mostly between a height of 250-350 metres above sea level, but have been extended to include historically enclosed upland pasture, around the fringes of the upland which extend up to about 400 metres in some more sheltered areas. The somewhat arbitrary south-western boundary generally follows that indicated in the historic landscapes register, though for convenience it has been drawn to match more explicitly the line of modern roads and property boundaries.

Much of the underlying solid geology is of sandstone, with a band of Carboniferous Limestone along the southern edge of the area and a small area of Old Red Sandstone south of Beili-Helyg on the eastern side. On the higher ground around the margins of the enclosed land the soils are slow draining and seasonally waterlogged loams which have historically provided moorland grazing of moderate to poor value. In the lower-lying parts of the valley along the Nant Cadlan soils are mostly slow draining and seasonally waterlogged loams of a kind which have historically been best suited to dairying and stock rearing on permanent or short-term grassland with some cereal growing in drier areas.

Until local government reorganisation in 1974 the area fell within the Breconshire civil parish of Penderyn. At least one property in the valley, Gelli-ffynonau (Gelly Funnonanna), is shown on a map of the estate of the Hon. George Venables Vernon dated 1776. Most other properties are first mapped and named on the Penderyn tithe map and schedule of 1840. Some other farms belonged to the Bodwigiad estate, passing through various hands of a number of substantial Breconshire landowners including the Games family, Lord Venables estate passing to Lord Jersey, owner of the Margam and Briton Ferry estates and thence in 1815 to the Revd Reynold Davies a well-known figure in London literary circles and then to Morgan Morgan. On the tithe map of 1840 most of the farms are shown as holdings of between about 15-40 hectares (40-100 acres) with a mixture of fields used for arable, pasture and meadow.

Cwm Cadlan is associated with the notorious Lewis Lewis, the son of Jenkin, butcher, and Margaret Lewis of 'Blaencadlan', Penderyn, possibly to be identified with the Beili-helig farm. Lewis, who took a leading role in the Merthyr Rising in 1831, is a figure of some significance to the social and history of south Wales in the early 19th century.

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

Limited evidence of historic patterns of settlement and land use is provided by place-names. Unlike the Hepste valley, the elements *ty* ('house') and *tir* ('land, territory') are much less frequent. Tree and woodland names abound. The element *celli* ('grove, copse, woodland') appears in Gelli-ffynonau-isaf and Gelli-ffynonau-uchaf, the pairing of these two neighbouring farmsteads distinguished by *isaf* ('lower') and *uchaf* ('upper') suggests the subdivision of an earlier family holding resulting from traditional Welsh inheritance patterns. Woodland is again referred to by the *celli* element in Gelli-dafolog and Gelli-neuadd and by the element *coed* ('forest, wood, trees') in the name Coed Cae Ddu. The latter name is probably based on the place-name element *coedcae/coetgae* which has a wide range of potential meaning including 'land enclosed by a hedge, field, enclosure', 'land taken out of wood' or 'land fenced with pails'. The term was also sometimes used as the equivalent of *ffridd* in the sense of 'enclosed mountain pasture' and the

location of the farm close to the 330 metre contour and the margin between the smaller and more lower-lying enclosed fields in the valley and the larger enclosed mountain pastures higher on the moorland edge is probably therefore significant. Fields and enclosures are referred to by the element *cae* in Cae'r-Arglwydd and by the element *beili* ('bailey, back-yard') in Beili-Helyg which also includes the element *helyg* ('willow'). Historic limitations upon land-use is indicated by the element *gwern* ('swamp') in the farm names Gwern-pawl and Wernlas and the stream name Gwern Nant-ddu and also by the element *garw* ('rough') in the farm names Pant-garw and Garw-dyle (formerly Garw-dylau). Trackways are indicated in the farm names Heol-las ('green lane') next to the modern A4059 north of Penderyn and by the element *tyle* in the name Gawr-dyle ('steep path') on the line of the steep trackway up to the former farm at Cae'r Arglwydd.

Prehistoric activity in the area, during the early to middle Bronze Age, is indicated by the partially excavated Bronze Age burial cairn south-east of Nant-maden and by the characteristically crescent-shaped burnt mound on western end of Cefn Sychbant, though as yet there is no explicit evidence of settlement and land use. The marginal siting of the burnt mound, close to the moorland edge, and the large dimensions of the Nant-maden cairn, originally about 20 metres in diameter and 1.8 metres high, may explain the unusual survival of these monument types within this essentially enclosed landscape, other slighter monuments of these types having possibly been cleared away during the course of later clearance and enclosure.

The lower-lying parts of the area are characterised by a pattern of small irregular fields generally under 3 hectares in extent representing a gradual process of clearance and enclosure probably from at least medieval times onwards. The concentric field patterns around Gelli-ffynnonau-isaf and uchaf suggest these and possibly other farms close to the moorland edge may have originated as isolated encroachments. Areas of more regularly-shaped fields close to the farms at Glyn-perfedd, Garw-dyle, Gelli-dafolog, Wern-las and Nant-maden suggest small-scale reorganisation of field boundaries, probably during the 19th century. Beyond this is a pattern of much larger irregular enclosures along the margin of the unenclosed moorland probably dating to the late medieval to early post-medieval periods. These are generally over about 6 hectares in extent and enclose areas of rough pasture some of which has now reverted to moorland. A significant area on the southern side of the area is designated as the Cwm Cadlan Nature Reserve.

Field boundaries are predominantly drystone walls, but with some hedges and post and wire fencing. As in the case of Dyffryn Hepste many of the probably earlier drystone boundaries are largely composed of field clearance material including a high proportion of rounded boulders of Old Red Sandstone probably derived from glacial drift. Some probably later boundaries, especially those defining the boundaries of the areas of enclosed rough pasture along the moorland edge, are made of quarried sandstone or limestone.

The present-day settlement pattern is characterized by small dispersed upland farms of medieval and later origin, generally 300-500 metres apart, and often established next to streams or springs. The settlement pattern appears more haphazard and diffuse than in the neighbouring Dyffryn Hepste valley, probably due to significant number of farm abandonments during the 19th and 20th centuries. Surviving farm buildings, often combining small corn barns with vertical ventilation slits, cowhouses and stables, are characteristic of a mixed farming economy in more marginal areas. Farmsteads and cottages at Gwern-pawl and Blaen-cadlan-isaf were already ruinous in the 1880s, those at Cae'r Arglwydd, Gelli-ffynnonau-isaf and Blaen-cadlan-uchaf appear to have been abandoned since early in the 20th century. The isolated barn at Esgair-y-gadlan is all that now survives of a former farm complex. The stone-built farmhouses of 17th- to 18th-century date at Nant-maden, Coed Cae Ddu and formerly at Gelli-ffynnonau-isaf, were aligned across the slope, suggesting the rebuilding of structures of medieval or early post-medieval origin. The layout of farm-buildings at Beili-helyg, with 19th-century farmhouse, corn barn and cowhouse in line, also appears to represent the rebuilding of an earlier complex. Investment in farming during the 19th century is indicated by ranges of stone-built buildings combining corn barns with either stables or cowhouses both here and at Garw-dyle and Coed Cae Ddu and by the barn at Esgair-y-gadlan, the later buildings in some instances being detached and set along the contour. More extensive building work is evident Wern-las where the farm layout suggests a 19th-century model farm, probably

to be associated with the rationalisation of field boundaries mentioned above and the farmhouse at Gelliffynhonnau-uachaf where the present farmhouse, possibly of 19th-century date, has some details in yellow brick.

The modern road in the valley probably forms part of an ancient routeway linking farms along the valley and thence across the moorland to other communities in the Taf Fawr valley further east. Other early routeways are indicated by patterns of trackways, green lanes and fords linking Cae'r Arglwydd, Garw-dyle and Glyn-perfedd, and Gelli-ffynnonau-uachaf, Egair-y-gadlan and Wern-las, some of which once gave access to moorland pastures on the surrounding hills.

Industrial remains probably mostly of 19th-century date are represented by a group of three limekilns west of Coed Cae Farm and by single kilns near Heol-las, Gelli-dafolog, and Cae'r Arglwydd. The western end of the area is clipped by the course of the former railway used in the construction of the Ystradfellte Reservoir in the early 20th century.

### Sources

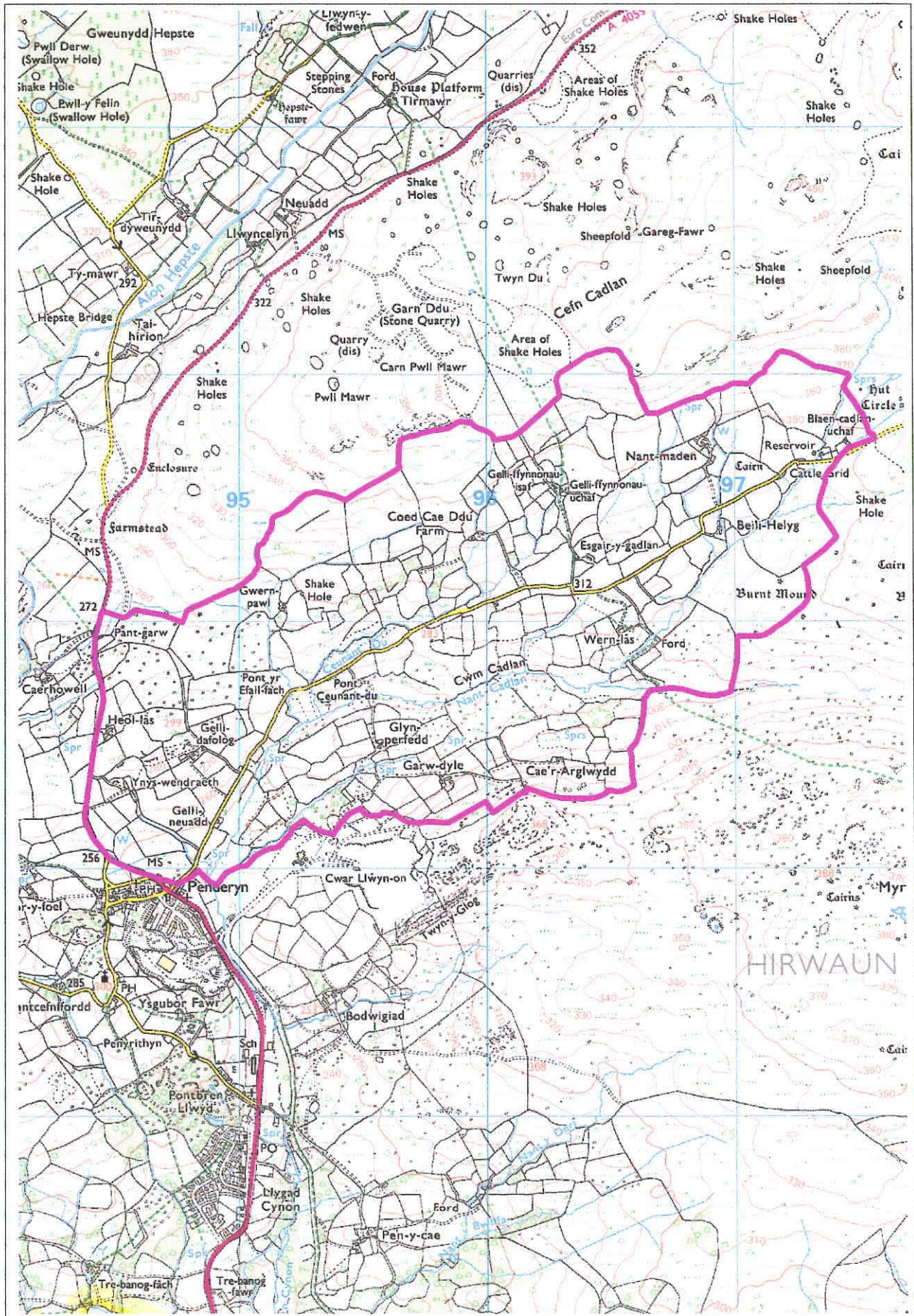
Historic Environment Record; Ordnance Survey 1st edn 1:2,500; RCAHMW 1997; Crampton and Webley 1964; Stephens 1998; Glamorgan Record Office WGRO D/D BF E/164 (map of the estate of the Hon. George Venables Vernon, 1776); Jones and Smith 1972a; Thomas 1992; Crampton and Webley 1964; Lloyd, Davies and Davies 1959; Penderyn tithe map and schedule, 1840

### *Key historic landscape management issues*

- *Management of traces of former settlement and land use including abandoned dwellings and sheepfolds of medieval and post-medieval origin.*
- *Management and conservation of ancient land boundaries, green lanes and fords, including hedges, drystone walls of medieval and later origin.*
- *Management and conservation of the farmhouses and farm buildings and the sites of former buildings of medieval and later origin.*
- *Management and conservation of early industrial remains, including 18-19th-century limekilns and associated structures.*

# Cwm Cadlan

## Historic Landscape Character Area 1202



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## ***Coed Penmailard – Coed Cefn-y-maes***

Historic Landscape Character Area 1203

Hirwaun community, Rhondda, Cynon, Taff

*Modern conifer woodland partly superimposed upon medieval and early post-medieval landscape of dispersed farms, irregular fields and scattered limeworkings.*

### **Environmental and historical background**

The character area is made up of two non-joining areas of modern, predominantly conifer plantation covering an area of almost 830 hectares and lying between a height of about 230-400 metres above sea level on the eastern and southern shoulders of the mountain and extending onto the western slopes of the valley of the Taf Fawr. The eastern and southern boundaries of the characterized area are largely drawn along the line between the forestry and the unenclosed moorland. To the east and south the boundaries reflect those defined in the historic landscapes register but have been drawn more explicitly along the upper margin of the enclosed land in the valley of the Taf Fawr and on the hillside west of Cefn-coed-y-cymmer and around the boundaries of the Bryn Du gas works to the south-east.

The solid geology in the northern part of the area now covered by Coed Cefn-y-maes, north of the Nant Aber-nant, is predominantly Carboniferous Limestone, whilst that to the south is largely Old Red Sandstone. The underlying solid geology in the northern part and along the much of the eastern edge of area covered by Coed Penmailard is of Carboniferous Limestone. To the south of Penmoelallt and Onllwyn the solid geology changes to sandstone and millstone grit. Soils are mostly slow draining and seasonally waterlogged loams which have supported wet moorland grazing of moderate or poor grazing value.

Up until local government reorganisation in 1974 the area fell within the Breconshire civil parish of Penderyn.

The former farm at Cefn-y-maes is mentioned in documents dating from the early 17th century. Farms at Penmailard, Sychpant-uchaf and Sychpant-isaf are represented on an estate map of the Penmailard estate belonging to the Williams family and others, dated 1749. Most other former boundaries and properties are first shown on the Penderyn title map of 1840.

The woodland forms part of a much more extensive afforested area in an around the upper Taf Fawr valley. Significant land use changes were taking place in the area with the construction of the three reservoirs constructed in the valley of the Taf Fawr by Cardiff Corporation in the later 19th and earlier 20th century, the Cantref Reservoir completed in 1892, the Beacons Reservoir completed in 1897 and the Llwyn-on Reservoir completed in 1926. In 1946 the Forestry Commission purchased over 2,300 acres of land in the upper Taf Fawr, now focused on the Garwnant Centre. A number of facilities for visitors have recently been provided within the area, including woodland walks, picnic areas and a woodland stretch of the long distance Taff Trail.

### **Key historic landscape characteristics**

There are relatively few place-names that are of significance to the settlement or land use history of this small character area. The area includes the sites of four former upland farms or farmsteads lying above 300 metres formerly associated with enclosed fields, their height emphasised by the element *pen* ('top, summit') in the names Pen-yr-heol, Pen-y-glog-fan-ddu. The element *heol* in Pen-yr-heol might have the meaning of 'fold, enclosure' but its position on the modern minor road across the mountain to Cwm Cadlan suggests that it means 'road, path'. Of the two remaining farm names, Llwyn has the meaning 'grove' and the element *maes* in Cefn-y-maes probably refers to an open area or enclosed field. Coed Penmailard is the name of the more ancient strip of broadleaved woodland and scrub which still survives on the steep valley slopes on the eastern side of the area, overlooking Afon Taf Fawr. The name is composed

of the elements *coed* ('wood') and a corruption of *pen + moel + allt* ('top' + 'bald hill' + 'hillside'), the central element of which describes the former state of the hilltop before afforestation in the 20th century. Onllwyn is one of the few other names within the area describing historic vegetation within the area now covered by conifer plantation, being derived from *onn* ('ash') and *llwyn* ('grove').

Early prehistoric clearance, land use and settlement is suggested by the chance find of a Neolithic polished stone axe near Cefn-y-maes. Early settlement may also be indicated by an undated small enclosure towards northern side of the area on the edge of Pant Sychbant valley, in an area which is now afforested.

In the northern area and the eastern part of the southern area the modern woodland overlies relict fieldscapes belonging to the earlier farms in the area, on slopes overlooking the valley of the Taf Fawr. On the tithe map of 1840 these farms are mostly shown as holdings of between about 15-60 hectares (40-140 acres) with a mixture of fields used for arable, pasture and meadow, some of the farms already having been amalgamated. Penmailard is exceptional in forming the centre of a small estate of about 480 hectares (1200 acres) extending down to the bottom of the Taf Fawr valley. Many of these holdings can still be traced and are represented either as earthen banks or as drystone walls now often obscured by vegetation. Earlier Ordnance Survey maps suggest that the fieldscapes in these areas represent a mixture of small irregular fields, generally less than 3 hectares in extent around the former farmsteads, representing a gradual process of clearance and enclosure, probably from medieval times onwards, together with a pattern of larger enclosures, often over 10 hectares in extent, around the boundary with the encircling unenclosed moorland. In the case of the northern area of woodland the plantation is largely enclosed by drystone walling of probably 18th-century or earlier origin which defines the boundary between these farms and the surrounding moorland, the line of which is mostly shown on a map of the Penmailard estate dated 1749 which also shows other 'old banks' in this area. The western side of the southern area had been part of the extensive unenclosed moorland area to the west.

The area includes a number of former farmsteads, at Penmailard (later transferred to a farm further downhill to the south formerly called Frwyd Ucha Fach), Sych-pant-isaf, Pen-yr-heol, Pen-y-glog-fan-ddu (in the area now called Sycamore Grove), Cefn-y-maes and Llwyn. Former farm buildings or the levelled sites of former buildings are identifiable in some places.

Agricultural activity is also represented by clusters of clearance cairns associated with former farms and fields on the eastern edge of the area, on slopes overlooking the Taf Fawr and by several sheepfolds including one near Penmailard and two on northern edge of area close to the Nant Sychbant stream, some which are shown on a map of the Penmailard estate dated 1749.

Industrial activity of probably the later 18th and 19th centuries is represented by a group of two limekilns and quarry on the western side of Coed Cefn-y-maes, towards the moorland edge, at a height of about 400 metres. In Coed Penmailard are a number of small quarries and groups of limekilns, one near Onllwyn and perhaps six or more on the eastern edge of the area, associated with trackways (some now forming part of the Taff Trail between Brecon and Cardiff). An old mining level or adit is recorded at Ty-gwyn towards southern end of the area.

### **Sources**

Historic Environment Record; Ordnance Survey 1st edn 1:2,500; Clough & Cummins 1988; Leighton 1997; West Glamorgan Record Office, Penmailard estate GRO D/D La 58, 1749; Thomas 1992; Penderyn tithe map and schedule, 1840

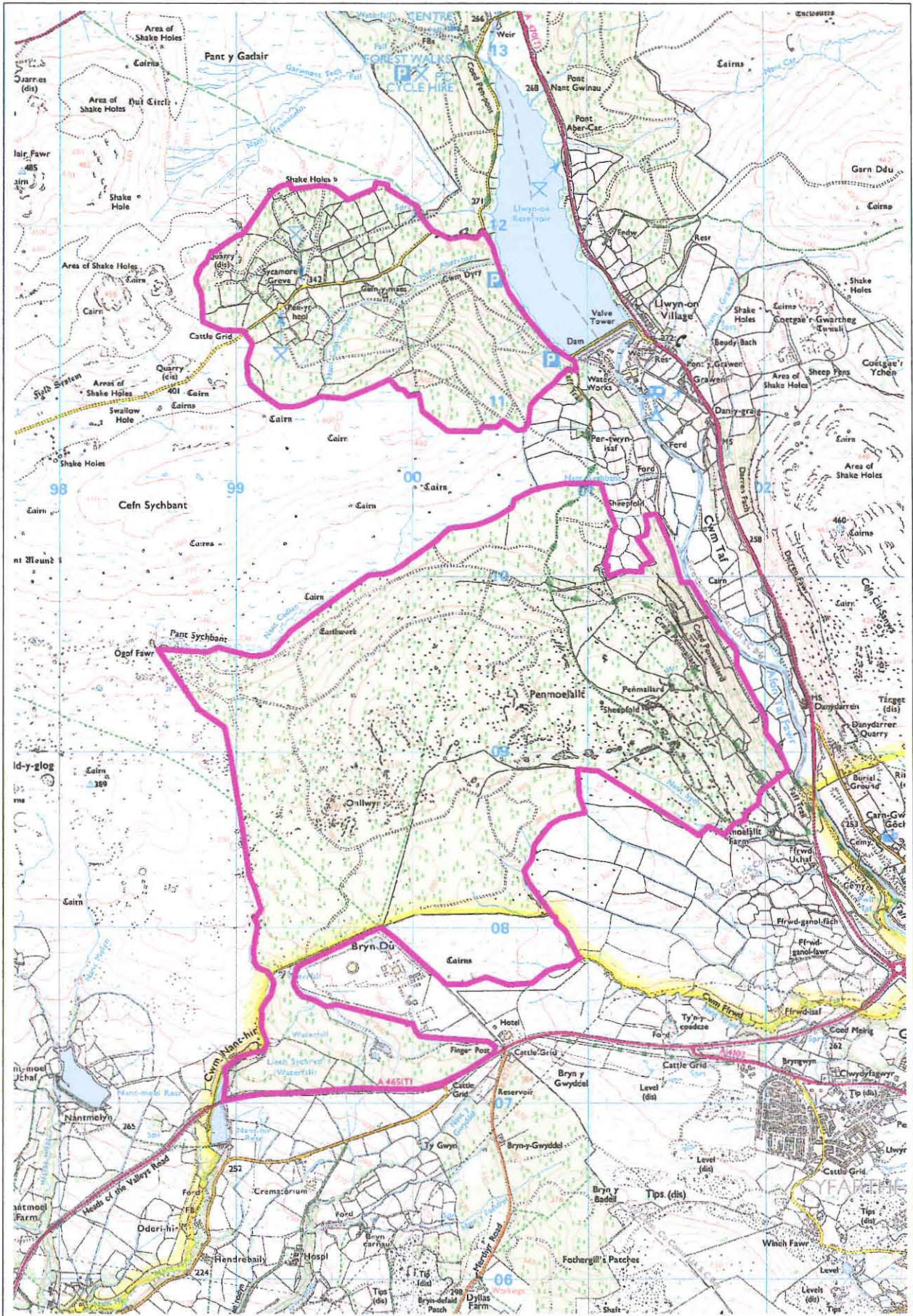


***Key historic landscape management issues***

- *Management of traces of earlier settlement enclosure sites, the sites of former farmhouses and farm buildings.*
- *Management traces of earlier land use including relict field boundaries and green lanes, sheepfolds and clearance cairns.*
- *Management of early industrial remains, including 18-19th-century limekilns and associated structures*
- *Management of boggy areas and other deposits of potential importance to the palaeoenvironmental history of the region.*

# Coed Penmailard – Coed Cefn-y-maes

## Historic Landscape Character Area 1203



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## Appendix 1: Chronological Guide

The following chronological guide is adapted from that given in the Council for British Archaeology's online British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography, available at <<http://www.biab.ac.uk/chronology.asp>>. This provides an indication of the approximate span of each period in calendar years. These dates should not be taken as definitive or absolute and may well be debated.

<b>Earlier Prehistoric</b>	<b>Palaeolithic 500,000-10,000 BC</b>
	Lower Palaeolithic 500,000-70,000 BC
	Middle Palaeolithic 70,000-35,000 BC
	Upper Palaeolithic 35,000-10,000 BC
	Early Upper Palaeolithic 35,000-20,000 BC
	Last Glacial 23,000-15,000 BC
	Late Upper Palaeolithic 15,000-10,000 BC
	<b>Mesolithic 10,000-4000 BC</b>
	Earlier Mesolithic 10,000-8000 BC
	Later Mesolithic 8,000-4000 BC
	<b>Neolithic 4000-2300 BC</b>
	Early Neolithic 4000-3400 BC
	Later Neolithic 3400-2300 BC
	<b>Bronze Age 2300-700 BC</b>
	Early Bronze Age 2300-1500 BC
	Middle Bronze Age 1500-1200 BC
<b>Later Prehistoric</b>	<b>Late Bronze Age 1200-700 BC</b>
	<b>Iron Age 700 BC - AD 43</b>
	Early Iron Age 700 BC – 400 BC
	Middle Iron Age 400 BC – 100 BC
	Late Iron Age 100 BC – AD 43
<b>Roman, Romano-British</b>	AD 43-450
<b>Early Medieval</b>	AD 450-1066
<b>Medieval, Middle Ages</b>	AD 1066-1547
<b>Post-medieval</b>	AD 1547-1900
<b>Industrial</b>	AD 1700-1900
<b>Modern</b>	AD 1901 to present

## ***Mynydd y Garn***

### Historic Landscape Character Area 1198



Stone banked enclosure in the moorland area towards the head of Dyffryn Hepste, looking south-eastward to fields belonging to the isolated Hepste-fechan encroachment in the middle distance and Cefn Cadlan on the horizon. *Photo: CPAT 2509-86*



The deeply incised stream valley of the Afon y Waun in the moorland below Fan Fawr, looking southwards towards Dyffryn Hepste and Cwm Cadlan. *Photo: CPAT 2509-11*

## ***Mynydd y Garn*** Historic Landscape Character Area 1198



Aerial view of Fan Fawr, the second highest peak of the Brecon Beacons, viewed from the south. In the foreground are the Nant Llywarch and Afon y Waun streams, tributaries of the Afon Hepste. Part of the extensive network of drainage channels cut in the 1940s around the headwaters of the Afon Hepste are visible in the left foreground. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-82*



Aerial view of limestone outcrops on Carn y Goetre and Twyn Croes Gwallter, viewed from the south-west. Just visible in the right foreground is a cluster of small quarry workings and limekilns near Llwyn-onn. Visible in the background are some of the numerous shakeholes on Mynydd y Garn. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-21*

**Cefn Cadlan – Cefn Sychbant – Mynydd-y-glog**  
Historic Landscape Character Area 1199



Cefn Cadlan viewed from the north-west with an isolated Bronze Age burial cairn in the Hepste valley in the foreground. *Photo: CPAT 2509-32*



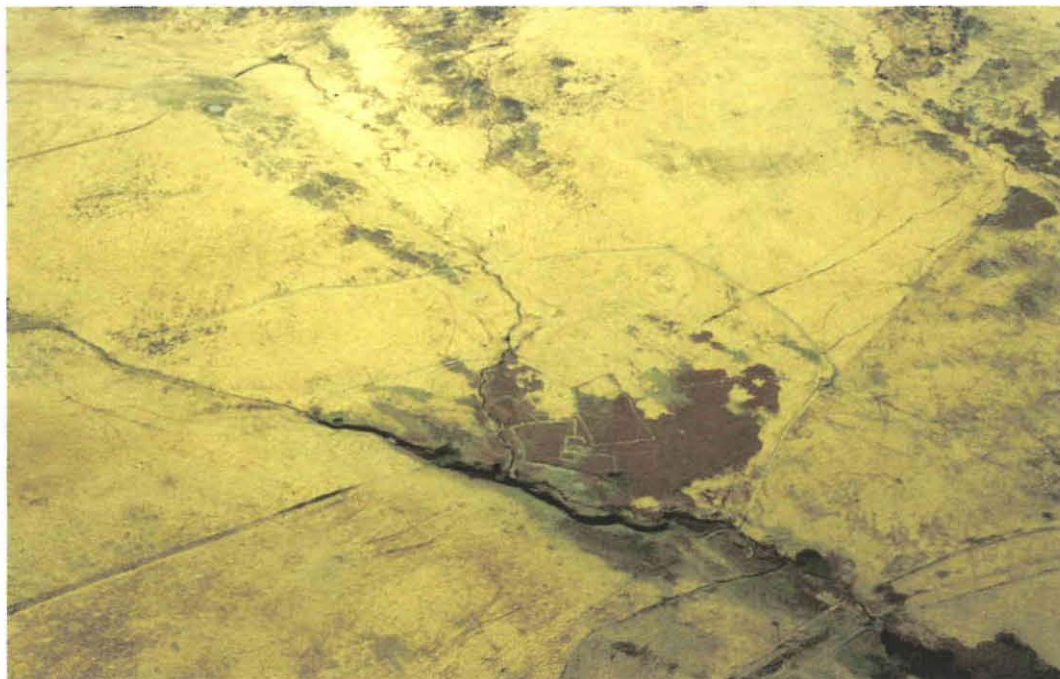
Relict field wall in left middle distance on southern slopes of Cefn Cadlan viewed from the south. *Photo: CPAT CS07060029*



## ***Cefn Cadlan – Cefn Sychbant – Mynydd-y-glog*** Historic Landscape Character Area 1199



Aerial view of disused limestone quarry workings and limekilns just to the north of Cadair Fawr, viewed from the west in a landscape pitted with shake holes. In the right background is the main road (A4059) between Penderyn and Brecon, which originated as a turnpike road in the early 19th century. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-71*



Aerial view of a small farmstead on the edge of a stream valley north of Nant-moel-Uchaf, on the south side of Mynydd-y-glog, viewed from the south. The farmstead, perhaps originating in the later medieval or early post-medieval period, is already shown as having been abandoned on an Ordnance Survey map of 1885. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-63*

## ***Garreg-fawr***

### Historic Landscape Character Area 1200



Enclosed fields of possibly later medieval and early post-medieval date defined by clearance banks and modern post-and-wire fences on the upper, eastern flanks of the Mellte valley, below Gwaun Cefnygarreg, looking northwards. *Photo: CPAT 2509-106*



Drystone wall of probably later 18th- to earlier 19th-century date along the boundary of the fields on the upper, eastern flanks of the Mellte valley and the enclosed upland pastures on Gwaun Cefnygarreg, with an area of recently-felled conifer woodland in the left foreground. *Photo: CPAT 2509-111*

**Garreg-fawr**

## Historic Landscape Character Area 1200



Aerial view of fields and farms dating from the later medieval and early post-medieval period at Pen-fathor, high on the western margins of the Mellte valley, with the unenclosed moorland of Mynydd y Garn beyond, viewed from the west. Some of the farms and field boundaries are shown on an estate map of the Hon. George Venables Vernon, dated 1776. The streams to the left are tributaries of the Afon Dringarth, at the head of which is the Ystradfellte Reservoir, built as a water supply for Neath between 1907 and 1914. The trackway running between the two farms in the middle distance lies on the course of the now-disused railway which supplied building materials during the construction of the reservoir. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-19*



Fields near Garreg-fawr Farm, to the left, on the northern edge of the Mellte valley, viewed from the south-west, with the steep scarp and screes along the western edge of the sandstone outcrop of Gwaun Cefnygarreg in right background. A cluster of small quarries and limekilns probably of late 18th- or early 19th-century date are just visible on the hillslope behind Garreg-fawr farm. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-26*

## ***Dyffryn Hepste*** Historic Landscape Character Area 1201



Enclosed fields of probably medieval or earlier origin in the Hepste valley defined by drystone walls and clearance banks, looking north-eastwards towards Llyn-y-fedwen, with the rocky outcrops of Garreg Lwyd on the horizon. *Photo: CPAT 2509-65*



Green lane probably of probably medieval or earlier origin near the appropriately named Heol-Las ('Green Lane'), bounded by now dilapidated drystone walls and clearance banks. *Photo: CPAT 2509-76*

***Dyffryn Hepste***

## Historic Landscape Character Area 1201



Aerial view of a mature landscape of fields and farms towards the head of the Hepste valley, with the wooded banks of the Afon Hepste at the centre. Many of the fields are irregular in shape, illustrating a long and gradual evolution. Judging by the surviving remains in the moorland in the background it is likely that many of the fields here owe their origin to a process of clearance and enclosure which first began during the Bronze Age. The square fields towards the centre probably represent a reorganisation of some of the field boundaries in the 19th century, when it is clear that some investment in farming was being made. The present farmhouse at Hepste Fawr, in the left foreground, had its origins as a medieval longhouse. The farms in the valley are linked by a network of roads, tracks and green lanes which allowed animals to be herded from the farms up to the mountain pastures.

*Photo: CPAT 08-C-29*



Abandoned farms, cottages and ancient fields of probably medieval origin on the banks of the Afon Hepste near Blaen-Hepste and Tir-yr-onen. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-40*

## ***Cwm Cadlan***

### Historic Landscape Character Area 1202



Small irregular fields of probably medieval or earlier origin near Esgair-y-gadlan defined by now dilapidated drystone walls, looking north-westwards towards the unenclosed moorland of Cefn Cadlan on the horizon. The probably 19th-century barn in the middle distance is all that survives of a former farm complex. *Photo: CPAT 2509-45*



Damp lowland meadows with irregular boundaries defined by hedges of probably medieval or earlier origin bordering the Nant Cadlan stream, looking south-eastwards towards Mynydd-y-glog on the horizon. Landscape reorganisation in the later 18th to earlier 19th century is suggested by the pattern of straighter-sided fields around Garw-dyle farm in the middle distance. *Photo: CPAT 2509-120*

## ***Cwm Cadlan***

### Historic Landscape Character Area 1202



Aerial view of farms and fields towards the head of the Cwm Cadlan, near Wernlas and Esgair-y-gadlan, viewed from the east. Many of the smaller irregular fields are of ancient origin but some reorganisation of field boundaries during the 19th century is suggested by the more regular pattern of fields beyond Wernlas farm, visible in the left foreground, which itself appears to have been built or remodelled at that date. The barn at Esgair-y-gadlan, in the right middle distance, is probably all that survives of a former farmstead that had already been abandoned by the 1880s, possibly due to farm amalgamations. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-55*



Aerial view of ancient irregular fields in Cwm Cadlan with the abandoned farmstead of Gwernpawl visible on the extreme left. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-52*

## ***Coed Penmailard – Coed Cefn-y-maes*** Historic Landscape Character Area 1203



20th-century conifer plantation around the headwaters of the Nant Aber-nant and its tributaries. The plantation overlies a number of earlier now abandoned farms of probably medieval or early post-medieval date. The boundary between these farms and the unenclosed moorland beyond is marked by drystone walls probably dating from at least the 17th and 18th centuries. *Photo: CPAT 2509-123*



20th-century conifer plantation in the area of Onllwyn and Penmoelallt, viewed from the northwest. *Photo: CPAT 2509-123*



## ***Coed Penmailard – Coed Cefn-y-maes*** Historic Landscape Character Area 1203



Aerial view of modern conifer plantations on the eastern margins of the historic landscape area overlooking the valley of the Taf Fawr to the right, with the 20th-century Llwyn-onn Reservoir visible in the right background. *Photo: CPAT 08-C-68*