

A SURVEY OF DEFENDED ENCLOSURES IN CARMARTHENSHIRE 2007-08



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Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For Cadw



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A SURVEY OF DEFENDED ENCLOSURES IN CARMARTHENSHIRE, 2007-08

Gan / By

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Paratowyd yr adroddiad yma at ddefnydd y cwsmer yn unig. Ni dderbynnir cyfrifoldeb gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed am ei ddefnyddio gan unrhyw berson na phersonau eraill a fydd yn ei ddarllen neu ddibynnu ar y gwybodaeth y mae'n ei gynnwys

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SUMMARY

In 2003, Cadw commissioned Gwynedd Archaeological Trust to undertake a scoping study of prehistoric defended enclosures in Wales. Dyfed Archaeological Trust built on this initial study by carrying out a desktop assessment of these types of site in southwest Wales, again grant-aided by Cadw. In 2005-06 Dyfed Archaeological Trust, with the benefit of Cadw grant-aid, surveyed sites in Ceredigion, visiting all known non-scheduled sites and to 1 in 10 of the scheduled sites. In 2006-07 a similar survey was undertaken of sites in Pembrokeshire, and in 2007-08 this survey was extended to cover Carmarthenshire.

There are 214 defended enclosures and related sites in Carmarthenshire broken down into the following site types: Hillfort 15, Promontory Fort 32, possible Promontory Fort 1, Defended Enclosure 116, possible Defended Enclosure 36, Enclosure 4, possible Enclosure 10. Of these, 46 are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. During the course of the survey it was discovered that most of the larger earthwork monuments, such as hillforts and promontory forts are in a good and stable condition. However, some of the smaller earthwork sites have degraded over the past 30 - 40 years. Some of the smaller defended enclosures are cropmark sites - a project in Ceredigion is currently assessing this type of site.

INTRODUCTION

In 2003, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust produced for Cadw *Prehistoric Defended Enclosures: Scoping for pan-Wales Assessment* (Smith 2003), which assessed our current knowledge of hillforts and defended enclosures in Wales. It also indicated directions in which future studies might take, suggested recording methodologies and proposed management criteria. On the basis of Smith's report, three of the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts (Gwynedd, Glamorgan-Gwent and Dyfed Archaeological Trust) successfully applied to Cadw for grant-aid to further the study of defended enclosures in their areas for 2004-05. The fourth Trust, Clwyd-Powys, were unable run a defended enclosure project owing to competing claims from their other Cadw grant-aided projects. Their defended enclosure project started in 2005-06.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust's 2004-05 study was desk-based covering the counties of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire (Murphy and Manwaring 2004). In 2005-06 Dyfed Archaeological Trust's study concentrated on the county of Ceredigion (Murphy, Ramsey and Page 2006) and included site visits as well as more in-depth documentary research than was possible in the desk-based study. In 2006-07 sites in Pembrokeshire were targeted (Murphy, Ramsey, Poucher and Page 2007).

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall project objectives are:

- The classification, quantification and distribution of defended enclosures in southwest Wales.
- Assessment of the archaeological significance of these sites in both a regional and national perspective.
- Assessment of the vulnerability of this element of the archaeological resource, reviewing of scheduling criteria that might be appropriate regionally, and recommendations for future management strategies.

- Enhancement of the regional Historic Environment Record and END.

The objectives for the 2005-06 Ceredigion, the 2006-7 Pembrokeshire survey and the 2007-8 Carmarthenshire survey are essentially the same as those identified by G Smith in his survey of enclosures in northwest Wales in 2004-05:

- To collate existing documentary evidence about defended enclosures.
- To carry out a field assessment of the value of all sites without statutory protection to identify those that may be of national value.
- To assess the condition and threats to all sites.
- To identify and describe new features on visited sites.
- To incorporate all the information into a commonly agreed pan-Wales database and enhance the regional Historic Environment Record.
- To advise Cadw on those sites which are of national value and currently without statutory protection

METHODOLOGY

Dyfed Archaeological Trust's 2004-05 study identified 257 probable and possible defended enclosure and related sites in Carmarthenshire, of which 38 were identified as Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Initial project tasks consisted of compiling a dossier of each site. This included: a printout of the relevant entry from the Historic Environment Record, a copy of the Ordnance Survey Record Card (if one exists), a copy of first edition Ordnance Survey map (if relevant), a copy of the modern large scale Ordnance Survey map (with plotted cropmark data supplied by RCAHMW superimposed), other easily obtainable documentary material, and one or more aerial photographs (where available). The aerial photographs were supplied in digital form by RCAHMW or were scanned from Dyfed Archaeological Trust's own collection. The site dossiers were arranged into Ordnance Survey 10km squares.

Following collation of the site dossiers, a site visit was made to all the non-scheduled sites and to about 10% of the scheduled sites in order to assess their current form and condition. In practice, mainly owing to difficulties in tracing landowners, it was not possible to visit every non-scheduled site - approximately 2% of non-scheduled sites remain unvisited. An information sheet explaining the project was given to each landowner.

Information on site type, the form of the site, their condition and an assessment of their value was recorded on pro-forma recording sheets (these forms are being used by all four Welsh Trusts - see Appendix 1). Where no site visit was made, the recording sheets were completed using readily available information, such as the Cadw field monument warden reports and published data.

All the information recorded during the course of the survey has been incorporated into the Historic Environment Record database, either as part of the core record, or as stand-alone databases. In addition, digital photographs recorded the current condition of the site. These photographs have been incorporated into the Historic Environment Record.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THE DATABASE

Site Definitions

As there is an absence of agreed site definitions the following was used in this study:

Hillfort: a hilltop enclosure heavily defended by one or more lines of rampart.

Promontory fort: an inland or coastal promontory defended on at least one side by one or more lines of rampart.

Defended Enclosure: an area defended by one or more lines of rampart. The defences are generally smaller and less well-defined than those sites defined as hillforts.

Enclosure: an area surrounded by a bank, ditch, wall or some other form of barrier, but not necessarily a defensive barrier.

Condition of site

The letters A, B, C, D, E, etc used in the gazetteer refer to the following condition descriptions:

- A** - Intact
- B** - Substantially Intact
- C** - Damaged
- D** - Substantial destruction
- E** - Destroyed - when the site has been completely removed for example by quarrying or opencast and excavation would not be able to reveal below ground remains
- M** - Moved
- R** - Restored or Reconstructed
- U** - Unknown
- V** - Various - for complexes and linear features where the condition varies from one part of the feature to another

RESULTS

The main results of the survey are shown in separately bound gazetteers, divided for ease of use into Ordnance Survey 10km grid squares. Only a brief summary of these results is included here.

Following collation of the site dossiers and field visits the total number of defended enclosures and related sites in Carmarthenshire now stands at 214. Fifty-three sites included in the original scoping study were rejected, but 10 sites were added to the study dossiers, including six newly created records. The 214 sites are broken down as follows:

Hillfort	15
Hillfort?	0
Promontory Fort	32
Promontory Fort?	1
Defended Enclosure	116
Defended Enclosure?	36
Enclosure	4
Enclosure?	10
TOTAL	214

Of these sites 169 are earthworks, 43 cropmarks, and 2 known only through documentary sources or as place-names. Nine sites are destroyed.

Forty-six of the 214 sites are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

The above totals are simplified versions of the main database (see site gazetteers). Sites recorded as, for instance, Hillfort;Castle (meaning the site is an iron age hillfort later reused as a medieval castle) are included just as hillfort.

Site typology indicates that most of the sites included in this study originated and were used in the Iron Age. This is supported by excavation on sites such as the Llawhaden group of enclosures (Williams and Mytum 1998), the coastal promontory forts of Porth y Rhaw (Crane forthcoming) and Great Castle Head (Crane 1999), and extensive work at Castell Henllys (knowledge gained from over 13 years working on the site by the principal author), all in Pembrokeshire.

It is currently difficult to assess if there is an overall degradation of the defended enclosures in Carmarthenshire owing to the lack of baseline information. Some general comments can usefully be made. According to historic records and maps the larger monuments with upstanding earthworks do not seem to have degraded greatly over the past 100 years. Smaller earthwork enclosures are, in contrast, vulnerable to constant degradation and several sites recorded by the Royal Commission in 1925 and later by the Ordnance Survey have been reduced by agriculture practices.

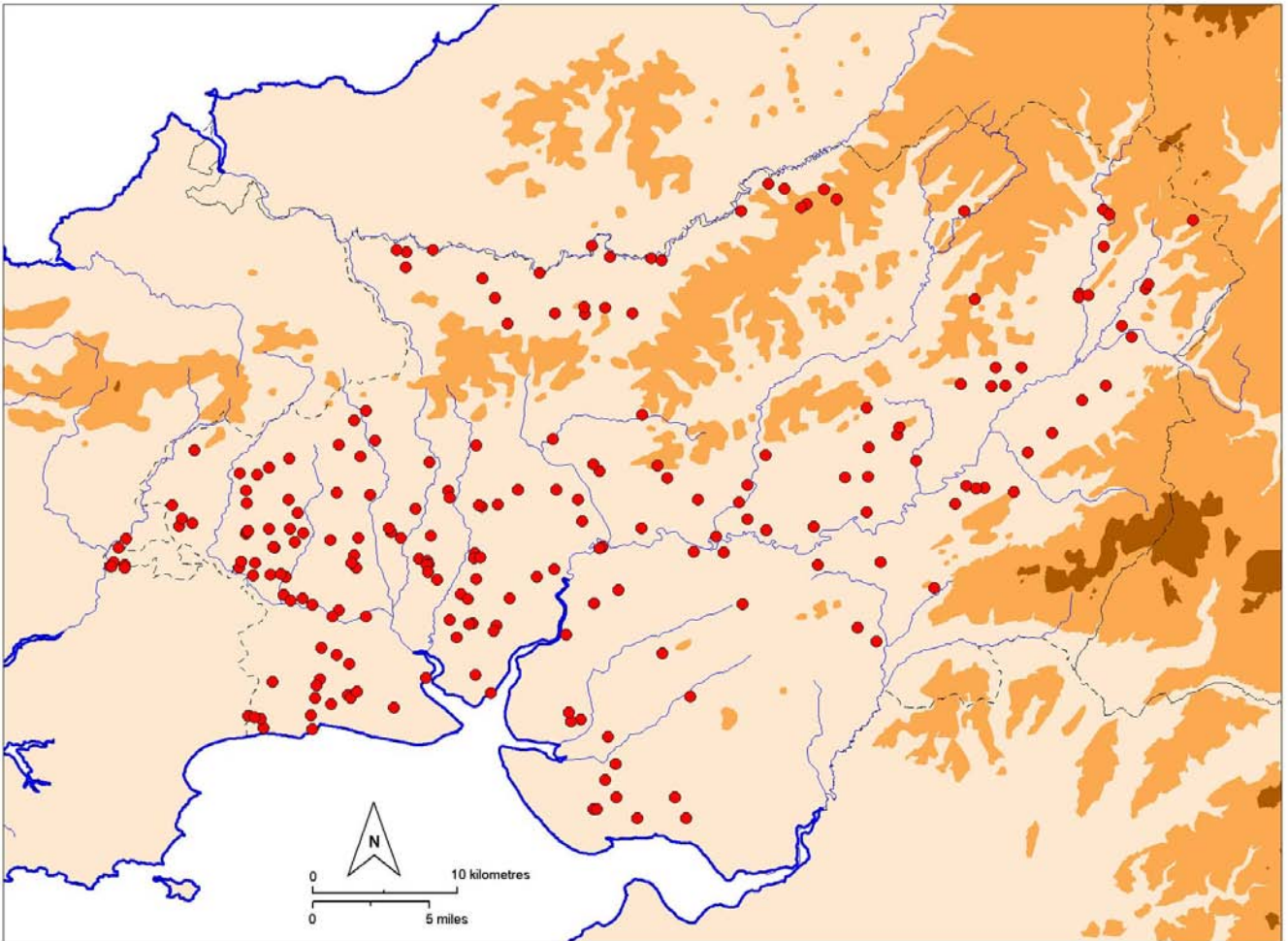


Figure 1. Distribution of defended enclosures and related sites in Carmarthenshire. Land over 250m and 500m is shown shaded.

SITE ASSESSMENT

The following criteria were used to assess the value of sites. The criteria are weighted in favour of preservation, with good upstanding earthworks and an undisturbed enclosure interior scoring highly.

SURVIVAL - DEFENCES

Over 66% of upstanding defences present	Score 6
33 to 66% present	Score 4
Less than 33% present or reduced to cropmark	Score 2
Defences destroyed	Score 0

SURVIVAL - INTERIOR

Over 66% of interior present and largely undisturbed	Score 6
33 to 66% present	Score 4
Less than 33% present and/or evidence of heavy ploughing	Score 2
Interior destroyed or heavily damaged	Score 0

GROUP VALUE

Three or more possibly associated sites/features within 1km (e.g. other fort, enclosures, huts, fields)	Score 3
Two possibly associated sites/features within 1km	Score 2
One possibly associated sites/features within 1km	Score 1
None	Score 0

POTENTIAL

Three or more of: rare type/rare in area/buried features/significant finds/multiple period/annexes or nearby associated enclosures present	Score 3
Two of: ...	Score 2
One of: ...	Score 1
None	Score 0

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DOCUMENTATION

Medium to large scale excavation and report	Score 3
Small scale excavation or survey/description and report	Score 2
Noted only	Score 1
None	Score 0

AMENITY VALUE

Good site visibility with open and public access	Score 3
Medium site visibility with open public access	Score 2
Medium to poor site visibility and restricted public access	Score 1
Poor site visibility and/or no public access	Score 0

EVALUATION SCORES

10 - 18	National Importance
7 - 9	Regional importance
4 - 8	Local Importance
<3	Minor Importance or needs further investigation

SITE GAZETTEERS

For ease of handling the site gazetteers have been arranged into Ordnance Survey 10km grid squares. Each gazetteer consists of one or more 1:50,000 maps showing the overall location of each site followed by the individual entries for each site. Each entry comprises: a printout from the Historic Environment Record, including a site description; a 1:500 map; and where available a ground photograph and an aerial photograph.

Many of the 1:5000 maps show details of the site plotted from cropmarks shown on aerial photographs. These plots are supplied by RCAHMW Crown Copyright ©.

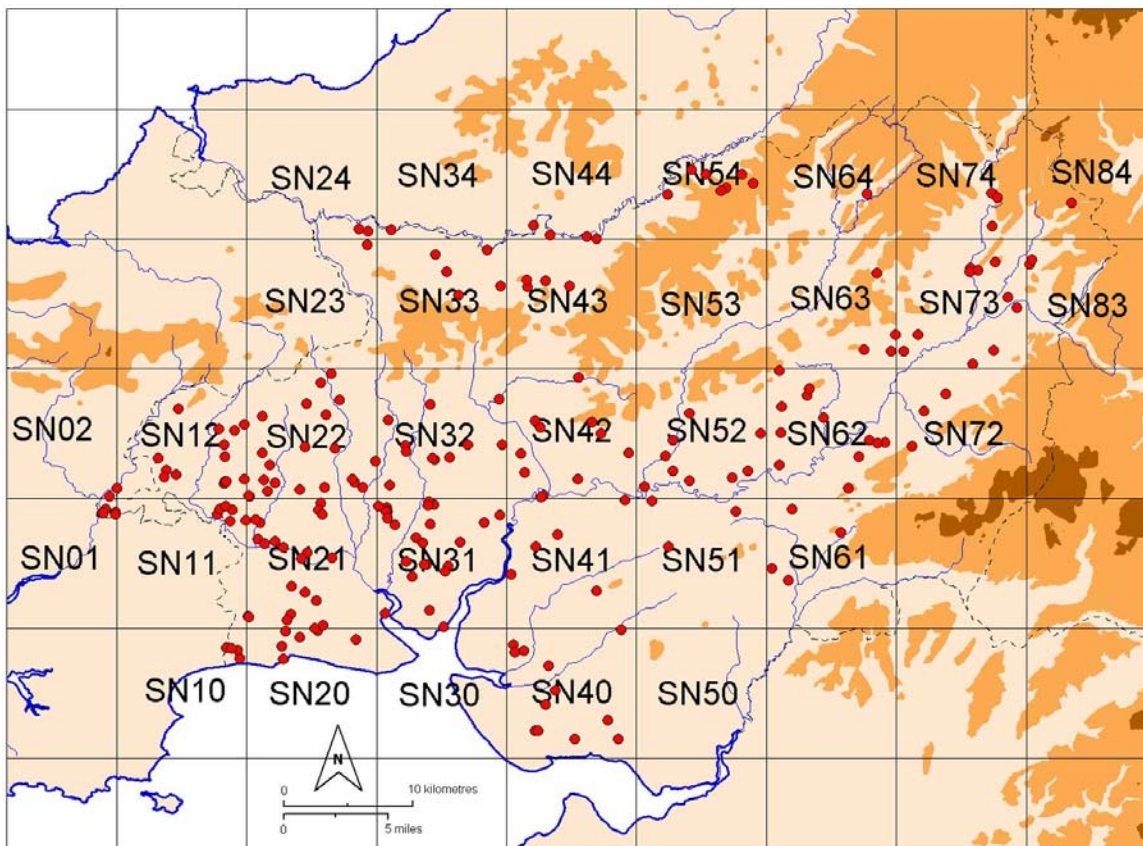


Figure 2. Index to the gazetteers of defended enclosures and related sites. Gazetteers are arranged by 10km grid squares.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are due to the many landowners who granted us access to view the monuments on their land. We are also very grateful to Toby Driver of the RCAHMW who assisted in gathering the aerial photographs for this survey. Ken Murphy supervised the project, and wrote some of the individual site descriptions. Richard Ramsey undertook most of the site visits in conjunction with Frances Murphy. Frances Murphy wrote most of the site descriptions, compiled the database and put together the report. Marion Page extracted site data from the Historic Environment Record and verified new data gathered during the survey.

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APPENDIX 1**PREHISTORIC DEFENDED SETTLEMENTS
SITE ASSESSMENT FORM
PRN****ORGANISATION
PROJECT No****SITE NAME****GRID REF****KM MAP SQUARE****SITE TYPE**Hillfort Defended Enclosure Promontory Fort **FORM OF SITE**Buried feature (excavation or geophysics) Earthwork Cropmark Documents
Place-name **AREA OF SITE (in hectares)**Internal area of main enclosure..... Area to furthest extent of enclosure/annexe
ditches.....**SITE HISTORY**Full excavation Partial excavation Topographic survey Geophysical survey
Other None **CONDITION**A – Undamaged earthwork B – Good earthwork C – Slight earthwork
D – Cropmark E – Destroyed U – Unknown **PHASING AND PERIODS OF USE**Unfinished Single phase Single phase but possibly long occupation Two phases (revised
defence layout/ rampart design or excavation evidence) Three of more phases (revised defence
layout/ rampart design or excavation evidence)
Main period of occupation (artefactual evidence or scientific dating) – specifyPre-defensive use of site (eg Bronze Age round barrow, structural or artefactual evidence
Romano-British reuse Early Medieval reuse Medieval reuse Other
None **GENERAL LOCATION****ALTITUDE (in metres)...****TOPOGRAPHY**Coastal cliff Coastal promontory Summit Hilltop Ridge Inland Promontory High plateau

Spur False crest Hillslope Scarp edge Saddle Col Level Natural terrace River
terrace Valley base Valley floor Flood plain Other - specify**DEFENSIVE POSITION**Good defensive location (hilltop/cliff-top) Semi defensive location (inland
promontory etc)
Non defensive location (gentle hillslope/valley floor) Overlooked **LAND USE**Arable Built over Derelict Dune Forestry Garden Heath Marsh Mineral Extraction

Moorland Other Pasture Public Open Spaces Quarry Rough pasture Scrub Urban
 Wasteland Woodland **LAND STATUS**National Park Common land Registered Historic Landscape Tir Gofal NNR SSSI
AONB cSAC GCR RAMSAR RIGS Other - specify**PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL POTENTIAL**High – peat >0.5m on site or within immediate vicinity
Medium - peat >0.5m within 500m
Low - no obvious peat within 500m
High - on-site calcareous soils
Other possible high scores - on-site wet areas, colluvial deposits, buried soils etc
Description – extent, depth and locations of peat + other deposits

INTERNAL AREA

GENERAL SHAPE

Circular Sub-circular Rectangular Sub-rectangular Polygonal Triangular Irregular
Complex (more than on main enclosure)

PRESENCE OF HOUSES/BUILDING PLATFORMS

Stone circular Timber circular (excavated) Platform – circular Cropmark circular Stone rectangular

Timber rectangular Rectangular platform Other - specify None

Number of houses

VEGETATION

Specify -

THREATS

Type of threat

Agriculture – ploughing Agriculture – stock Burrowing Development Erosion Extraction
Forestry Robbing Vehicle Visitor Other None

Time scale of threat

Active Extinct (ie old quarry) None

Extent of threat - specify percentage

Significance of threat

High Low Medium

DEFENCES

TYPE

Univallate Bivallate close set ramparts Bivallate widely spaced ramparts
Multivallate close set ramparts Multivallate widely spaced ramparts

MATERIALS

Earth Stone Earth and Stone Stone faced earth rampart Unknown

VEGETATION

Specify -

THREATS

Type of threat

Agriculture – ploughing Agriculture – stock Burrowing Development Erosion Extraction
Forestry Robbing Vehicle Visitor Other None

Time scale of threat

Active Extinct (ie old quarry) None

Extent of threat - specify percentage

Significance of threat

High Low Medium

ENTRANCES**NUMBER OF ENTRANCES DIRECTION FACING (N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, SW)**

1 2 3 4 Unknown
TYPE

Simple Entrance passageway Entrance passageway and guard chambers Approaching ditched/banked track Barbican/hornwork Annex Bastion Complex

MATERIALS

Earth Stone Earth and Stone Stone faced earth rampart Unknown

VEGETATION

Specify -

THREATS

Type of threat

Agriculture – ploughing Agriculture – stock Burrowing Development Erosion Extraction Forestry Robbing Vehicle Visitor Other None

Time scale of threat

Active Extinct (ie old quarry) None

Extent of threat - *specify percentage*

Significance of threat

High Low Medium

ENCLOSURES/ANNEXES**FORM**

Concentric annexe enclosure Lobate enclosure Cross ridge earthwork Outlying

AREA OF ANNEXES (in hectares)....**PRESENCE OF HOUSES/BUILDING PLATFORMS**

Stone circular Timber circular (excavated) Platform – circular Cropmark circular Stone rectangular

Timber rectangular Rectangular platform Other

Number of houses

VEGETATION

Specify -

THREATS

Type of threat

Agriculture – ploughing Agriculture – stock Burrowing Development Erosion Extraction Forestry Robbing Vehicle Visitor Other

Time scale of threat

Active Extinct (ie old quarry) None None

Extent of threat - *specify percentage*

Significance of threat

High Low Medium

EXTERNAL AREAS

PRESENCE OF HOUSES

Stone circular Stone rectangular Platform – circular Timber circular (excavated)
Timber rectangular (excavated) Cropmark circular Other

CONTEMPORARY FIELDS

Stone boundaries Earth boundaries Cropmark boundaries

VEGETATION

Specify -

THREATS

Type of threat

Agriculture – ploughing Agriculture – stock Burrowing Development Erosion Extraction
Forestry Robbing Vehicle Visitor Other

Time scale of threat

Active Extinct (ie old quarry) None None

Extent of threat - *specify percentage*

Significance of threat

High Low Medium

OWNERSHIP

ACCESS

Unlimited public access Access limited: open to public at specific periods/part of site open to public

Access prohibited: access only gained by special permission Access denied

OWNERSHIP TYPE

Private MoD Forestry Commission Forest Enterprise National Trust National Park

Other – specify

OWNERS' NAME AND ADDRESS AND PHONE NO

TENANT'S NAME AND ADDRESS AND PHONE NO

SITE VISIT

DATE OF VISIT

VISIT BY

COLOUR SLIDE REF

B/W and/or COLOUR NEGATIVE REF

DIGITAL

REF

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**Mawrth 2008
March 2008**

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by F Murphy

Swydd / Position: Archaeologist

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by K Murphy

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Director

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

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comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report