

# A SURVEY OF DEFENDED ENCLOSURES IN CARMARTHENSHIRE, 2007-08: GAZETTEER OF ORDNANCE SURVEY GRID SQUARES SN51, SN52 & SN54



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Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust  
For Cadw



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## DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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### A SURVEY OF DEFENDED ENCLOSURES IN CARMARTHENSHIRE, 2007-08: GAZETTEER OF ORDNANCE SURVEY GRID SQUARES SN51, SN52 & SN54

Gan / By

**F Murphy, R Ramsey, M Page and K Murphy**

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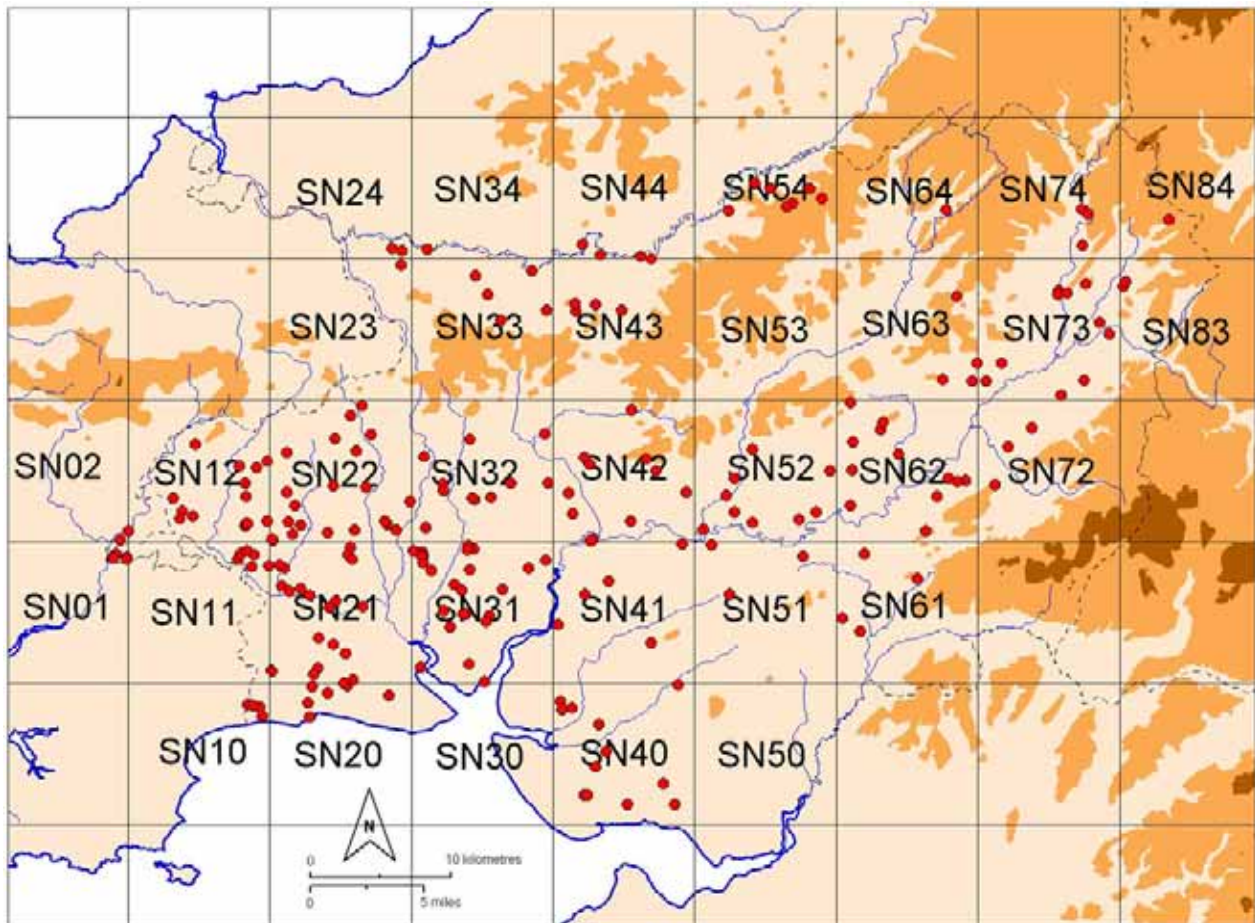
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## SITE GAZETTEER OF 10KM GRID SQUARES SN51, SN52, SN53 & SN54

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; where available a ground photograph and an aerial photograph; and a 1:5000 map.

Some 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 ©.



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



Map based on the Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 map showing the distribution of sites in 10 km grid square SN51.

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# 641 Pen-y-Garn

PRN 641 NGR SN57641898

SITE NAME PEN-Y-GARN MAPSHEET SN51NE

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION B

SITE STATUS SAM

## DESCRIPTION

The site lies at the eastern end of a small hilltop ridge or promontory within a valley at 210m above sea level, and was recorded by the RCAHM (1917) as a circular earthwork about 100 feet in diameter, formed by surrounding the summit of Pen y Garn hill with an earthen bank. It was then so thickly overgrown that a detailed examination proved impossible, and this has hampered visitors ever since. In 1968 the Ordnance Survey described the earthwork as a strong bank, up to 1.3m high that lies across the neck of the promontory and a scarped slope up to 1.3m high on the north, east, and south sides. There are two entrances, one in the west, and another in the south. Faint traces of a terrace were visible leading to the latter entrance from the southwest.

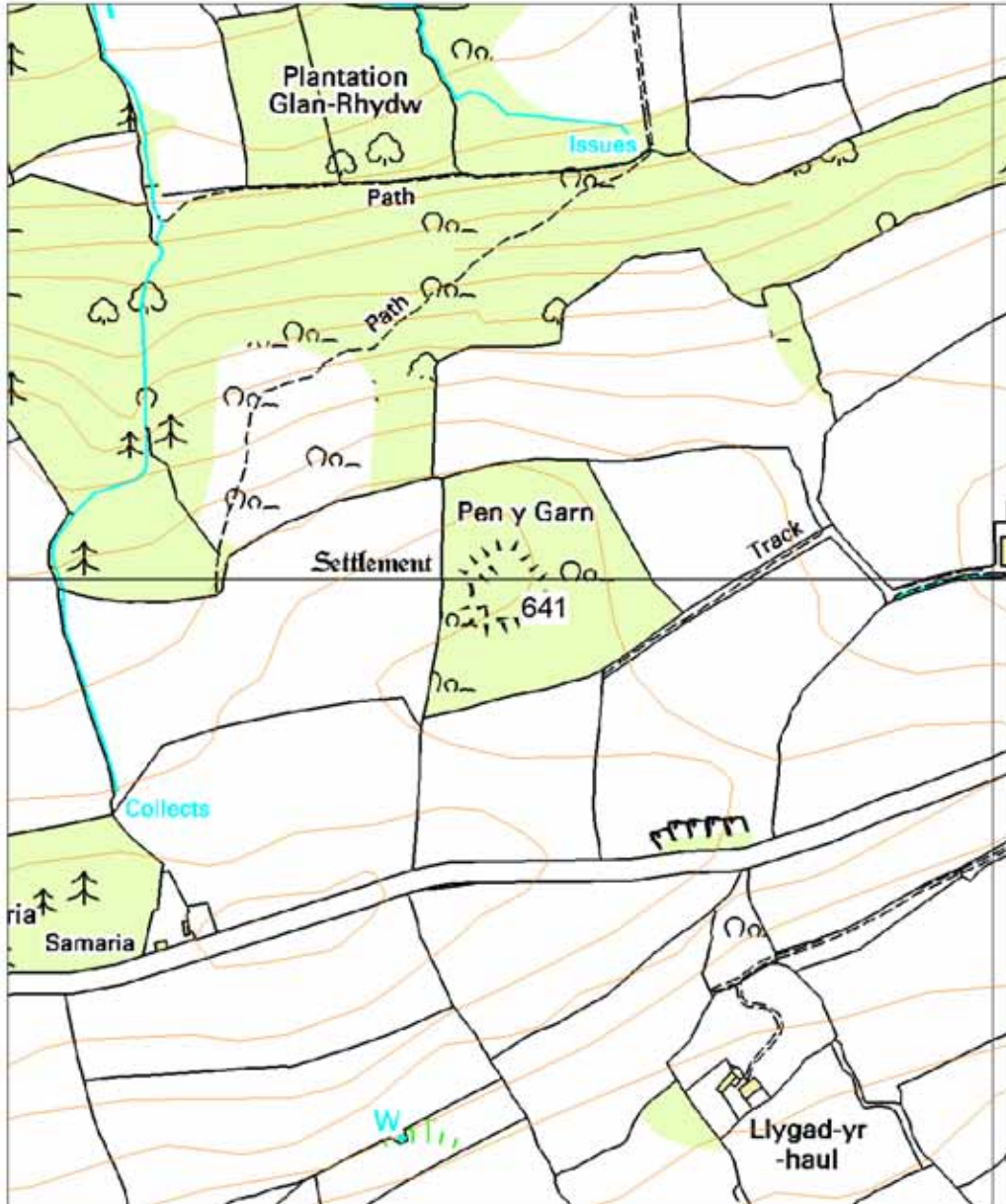
By 1994 the Cadw field monument warden reported that the site appeared much as that recorded by the Ordnance Survey, with rather an undulating upstanding bank on the southwest, west and northwest, and a pronounced scarp on the north and northeast. The western entrance was identifiable, but there was little evidence for any entrance on the south. No internal features were visible.

The enclosure lies in a small wood and is very overgrown with trees, bracken, brambles and scrub. The woodland makes the available views from the site difficult to assess.

F Murphy 27 February 2008 - compiled from several sources



Aerial photograph of 641. RCAHMW Crown Copyright © reference DI2007\_1712.



1:5000

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# 644 Cae'r Castell

PRN 644 NGR SN51161982

SITE NAME CAE'R CASTELL MAPSHEET SN51NW

SITE TYPE PROMONTORY FORT FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION C

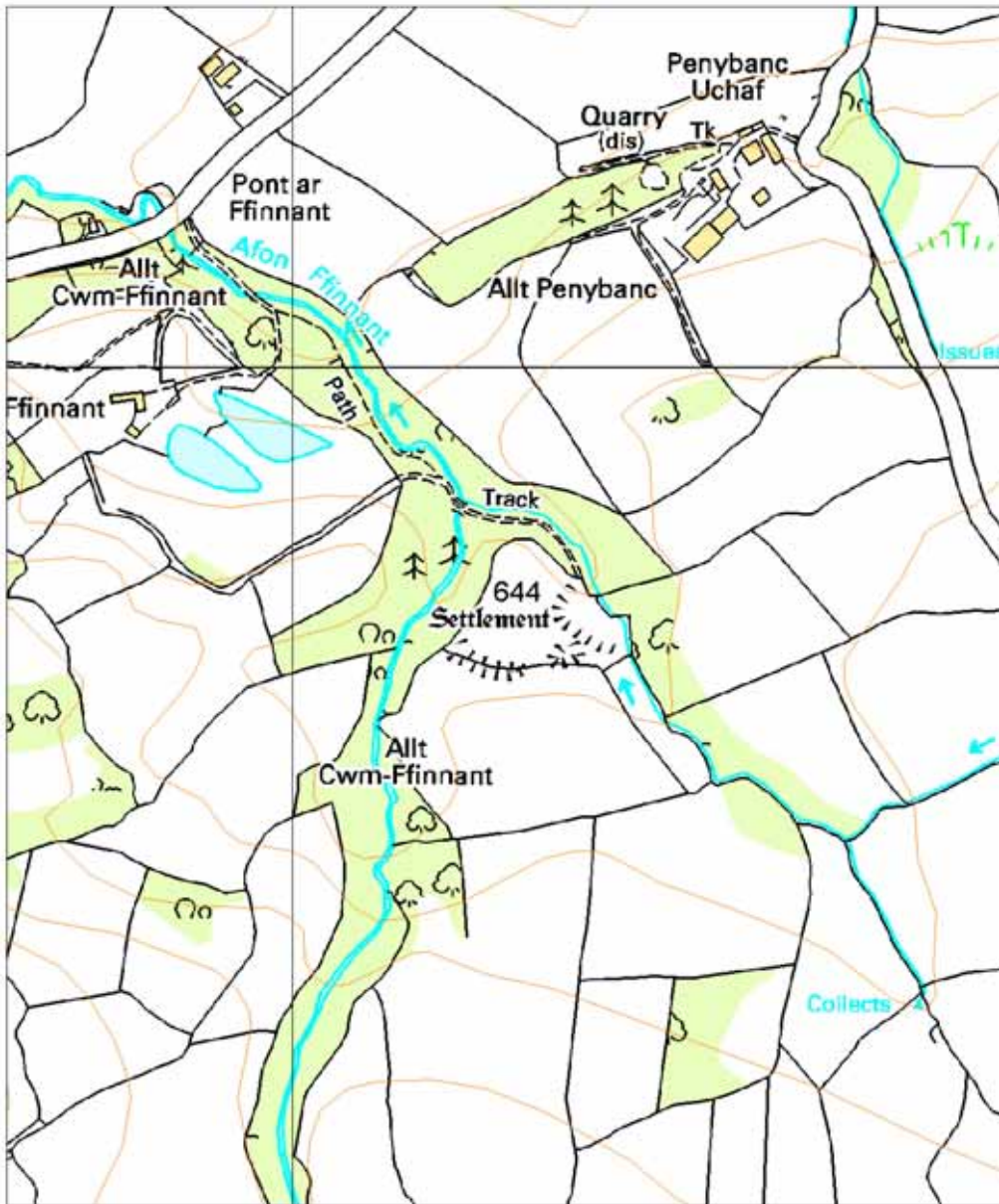
## SITE STATUS

## DESCRIPTION

HN Savory (1954) described the earthwork as 'probably a natural feature' but it is definitely a north facing inland promontory fort; triangular in shape, defended on the south by a single bank and ditch, and on the east and west sides by steep slopes that drop down to streams below, and form a natural defence. It is situated in a field with the name Cae'r Castell. The RCAHM (1917) record the earthwork as a defended promontory, and the Ordnance Survey in 1968 describe the ditch as approximately 100m long and 1.4m deep, but do not describe the bank. They note that the entrance is 40m from the east end of the ditch. In 1983 a site visit by Dyfed Archaeological Trust found the ditch and part of the bank still traceable on the ground. The simple entrance on the east side of the enclosure was being used as a trackway into the internal area. Unfortunately site access was not gained in 2007/8.

The site is located at 50m above sea level, within a field of pasture. A sculptured and inscribed stone of 11th-12th century date, is said to have stood slightly within the western end of the bank before being removed in the 1800's and placed in the parish church of Llanarthney, where it still remains (RCHAM 1917).

F Murphy and R Ramsey March 2008



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# 645 Cae Gaer

PRN 645 NGR SN52481627

SITE NAME CAE GAER MAPSHEET SN51NW

SITE TYPE DEFNDED ENCLOSURE? FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Prehistoric?;Iron Age? CONDITION D

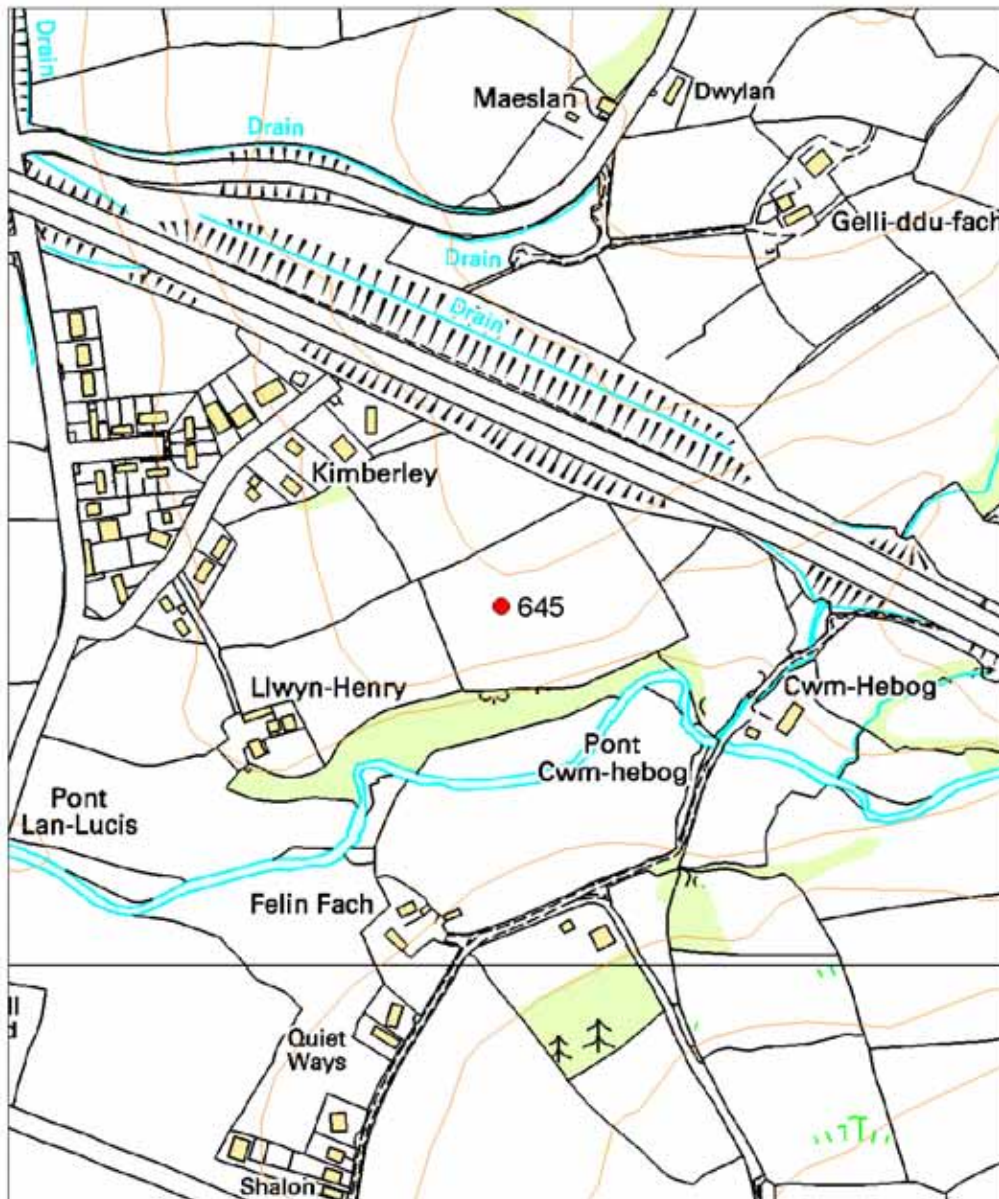
## SITE STATUS

### DESCRIPTION

In 1917 the RCAHM identified a roughly circular enclosure approximately 55m in diameter, almost obliterated by cultivation, in a field called Cae Gaer. HN Savory (1954) lists it as a single banked hill slope enclosure. By 1968 the Ordnance Survey recorded that although there were one or two ground swellings that may be part of an enclosure, they did not form any regular pattern. A site visit by Dyfed Archaeological Trust in 1983 found no trace of any earthwork on the ground. Unfortunately site access was not gained in 2007/8.

The site is situated on a southwest facing slope at 85m above sea level. It lies within a field under improved pasture.

F Murphy and R Ramsey March 2008



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Map based on the Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 map showing the distribution of sites in 10 km grid square SN52.

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# 652 Banc y Rhyfel

PRN 652 NGR SN54072656

SITE NAME BANC Y RHYFEL;DYFFRYN CAMP MAPSHEET SN52NW

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION B

SITE STATUS SAM

## DESCRIPTION

A small, oval, univallate enclosure, situated on an east-west running ridge at approximately 230m above sea level, that commands far ranging views across the valleys to the north and south. It is defended to the north, east and west by a single bank and ditch, and to the south by a naturally steep slope. In 1983, and subsequently reported in later visits, the Cadw field monument warden reports that the east and west ditches survive to an interior height of up to 1m, with an exterior height of up to 2m, and that the ditch is just traceable as a slight dip 0.15m deep on the east, 0.60m deep on the west. On the north there is a scarp giving a bank 2m high externally. The south slopes do not appear to have been artificially reinforced.

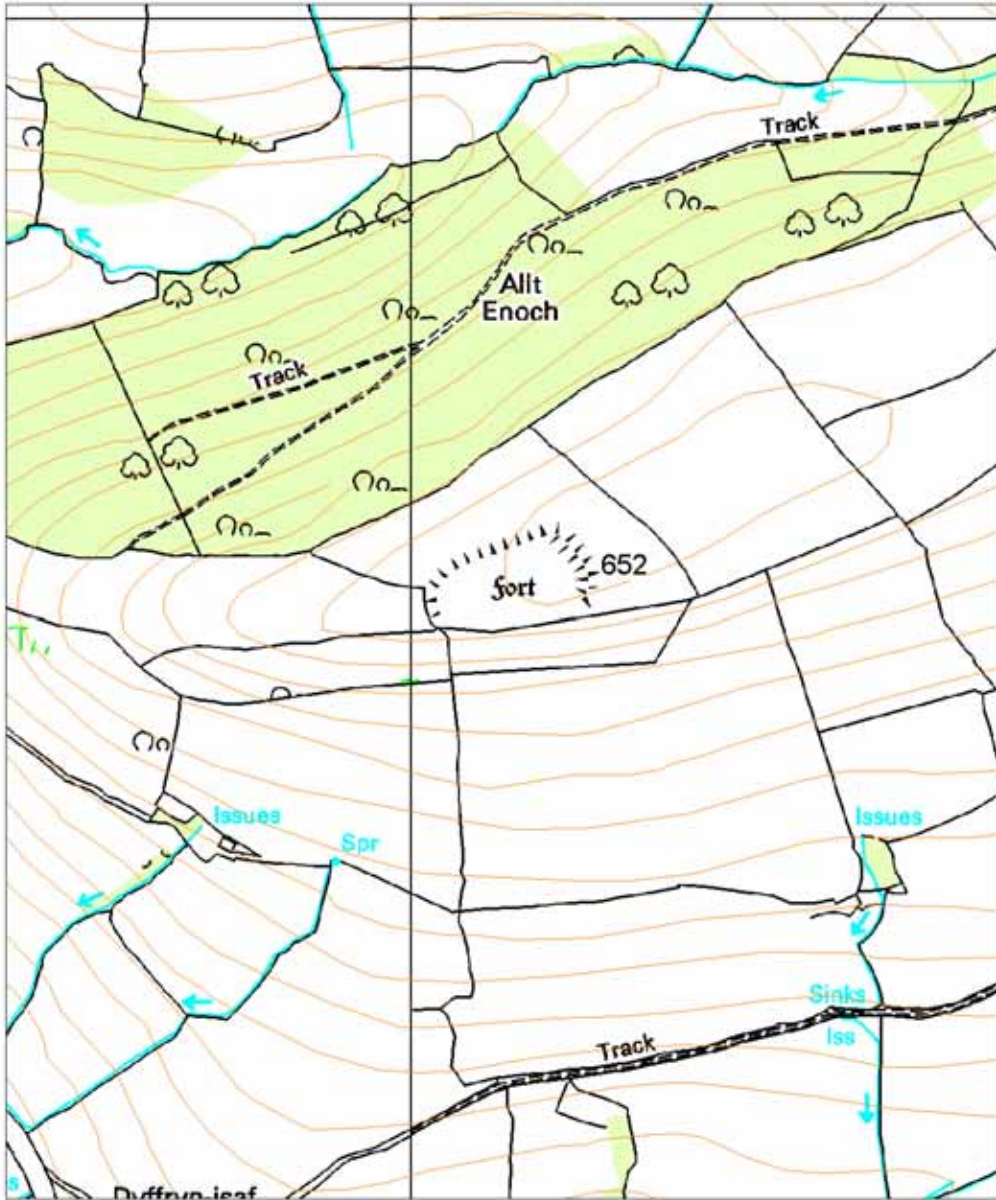
The simple entrance appears to have been in the southeast, between the bank and the natural slopes. No interior features are visible.

The interior and the northern scarp have been quite heavily ploughed in the past, and the whole site is now within improved pasture, with some areas of gorse.

F Murphy 27 February 2008 - compiled from several sources



Aerial photograph of 652. Reference DAT AP91-26.15.



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# 687 Allt y Ferin

PRN 687 NGR SN52212328

SITE NAME ALLT Y FERIN MAPSHEET SN52SW

SITE TYPE PROMONTORY FORT FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION B

SITE STATUS SAM

## DESCRIPTION

Allt y Ferin promontory fort is situated on a wooded promontory at some 80m above sea level with steep slopes on the east, west and south sides. On the north a well-preserved bank and ditch have been constructed across the neck of the promontory. The bank measures 3m high on the exterior, 1m high on the interior, and the ditch is approximately 1.4m in depth. HN Savory (1954) suggests a lateral entrance for the fort but no evidence appears to exist for this.

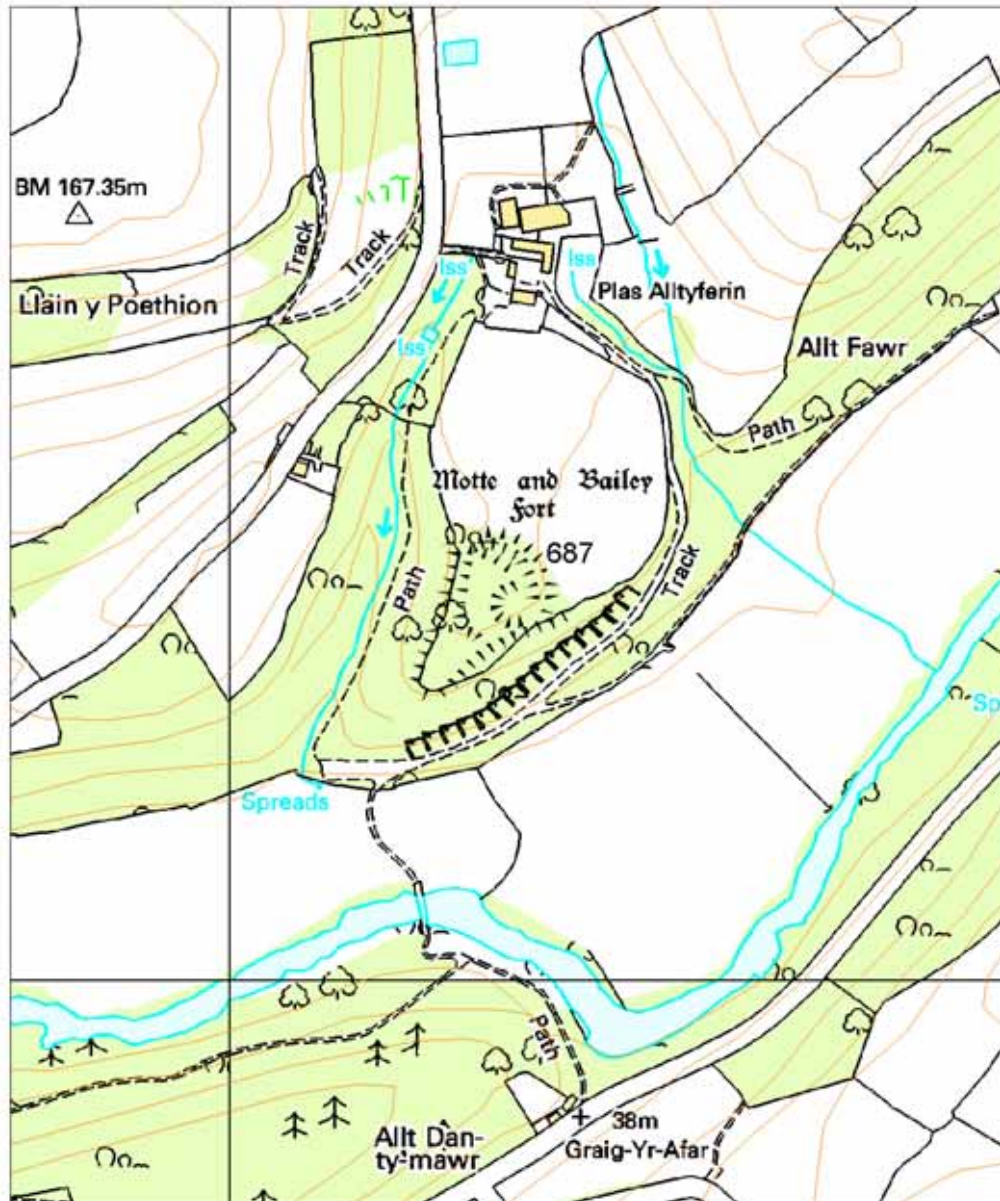
Some 800 years later the fort was re-used and adapted as a motte and bailey castle. The motte, 8m high, 12m diameter across the top, lies on the east side of the promontory and is surrounded by a narrow ditch with a 2m counterscarp. A bailey has been formed using the fort earthwork as a north boundary. A second slighter ditch and bank cuts off the tip of the promontory. It is uncertain whether this belongs to the Iron Age settlement or the later castle.

The whole scheduled area has in recent years been cleared of trees and scrub, and is now under improved pasture.

F Murphy 27 February 2008 - compiled from several sources



Aerial photograph of 687. Reference DAT AP93-65.17.



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# 704 Grongaer

PRN 704 NGR SN57342160

SITE NAME GRONGAER MAPSHEET SN52SE

SITE TYPE HILLFORT FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION B

SITE STATUS SAM;ACK

## DESCRIPTION

On the summit of a hill, at approximately 140m above sea level, with fine views in all directions lies the roughly rectangular, univallate hillfort of Grongaer. It is defended by a bank that measures 1.1m high internally and 5m high externally, with a slight berm visible outside the bank indicating the probable position of the ditch. There are no other traces of a ditch. Two simple entrances are present: one on the southwest and another on the northeast.

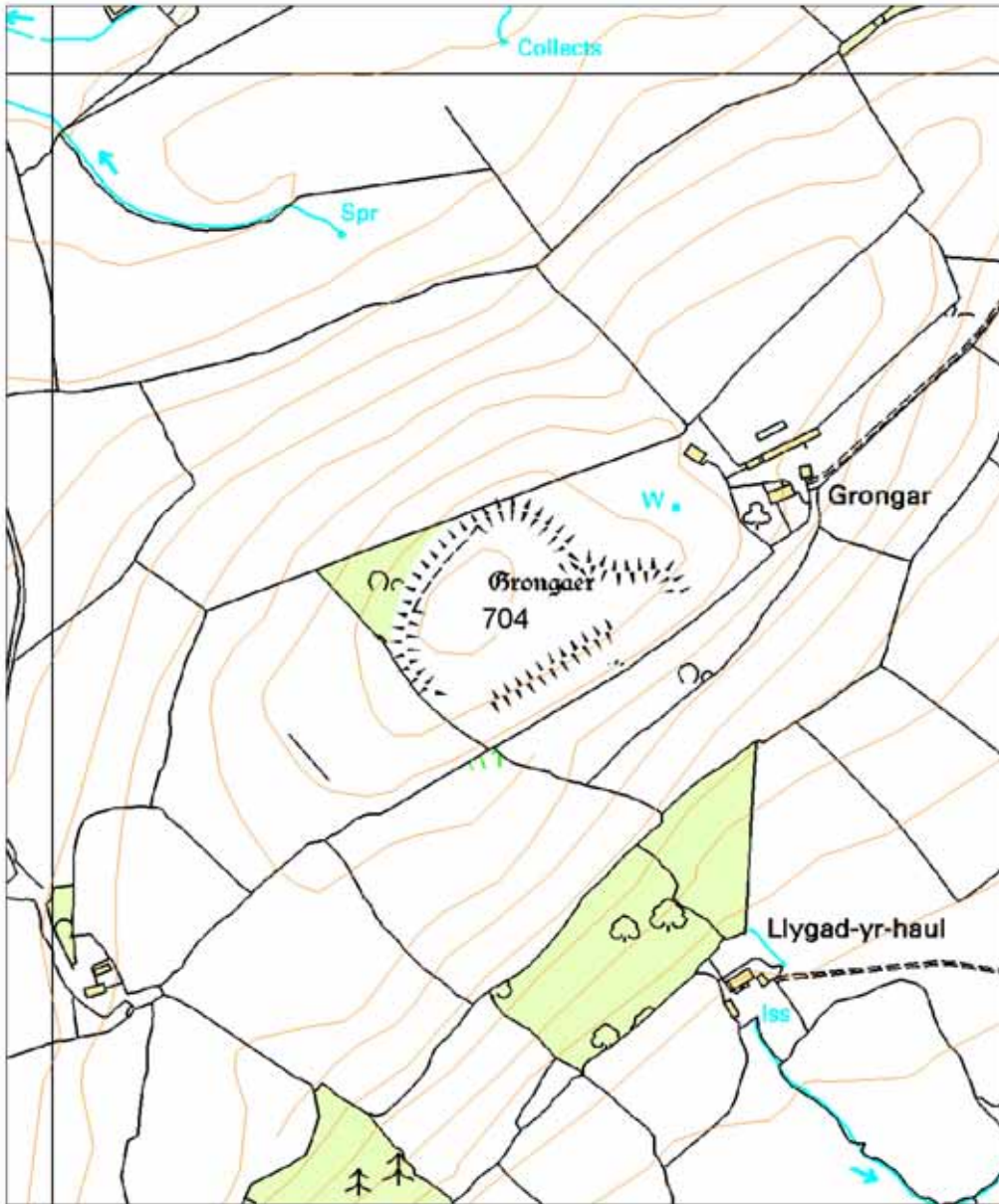
The bank is best preserved on the short northeast and southwest sides. The natural steep slopes that exist to the northwest and the southeast defend the long sides of the enclosure, and here the bank is not so pronounced. The surface of the interior is irregular, and occasionally broken by outcrops of rocks, but there are no signs of internal features.

The interior of the fort is covered with short grass and is used as rough grazing; the banks are covered with grass with some gorse.

F Murphy 27 February 2008 - compiled from several sources



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# 4743 Cae Castell

PRN 4743 NGR SN59522501

SITE NAME CAE CASTELL MAPSHEET SN52NE

SITE TYPE PROMONTORY FORT FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION C

## SITE STATUS

### DESCRIPTION

The RCAHM (1917) noted the field name of Cae Castell at this location but reported that it 'is not explained by any visible object and is now forgotten'. In 2008 the site visit discovered earthworks on the ground that established that this site was a southeast facing, triangular shaped, inland promontory fort, situated on a promontory created by the confluence of two streams. Ground to the east and south drops steeply to the streams below, and drawn across the level approach of the northwest side are two lines of defensive bank and ditch, that enclose an area of approximately 0.44ha.

The earthworks have been much reduced by ploughing. However, the curving inner bank and ditch are best preserved, and were traced for a length of approximately 86m. The inner bank has an internal height of c.0.3m and an external height of c.1.5m. The outer bank and ditch are visible, particularly on the west, but only as a slight earthwork. It was not possible to discern the position of the entrance.

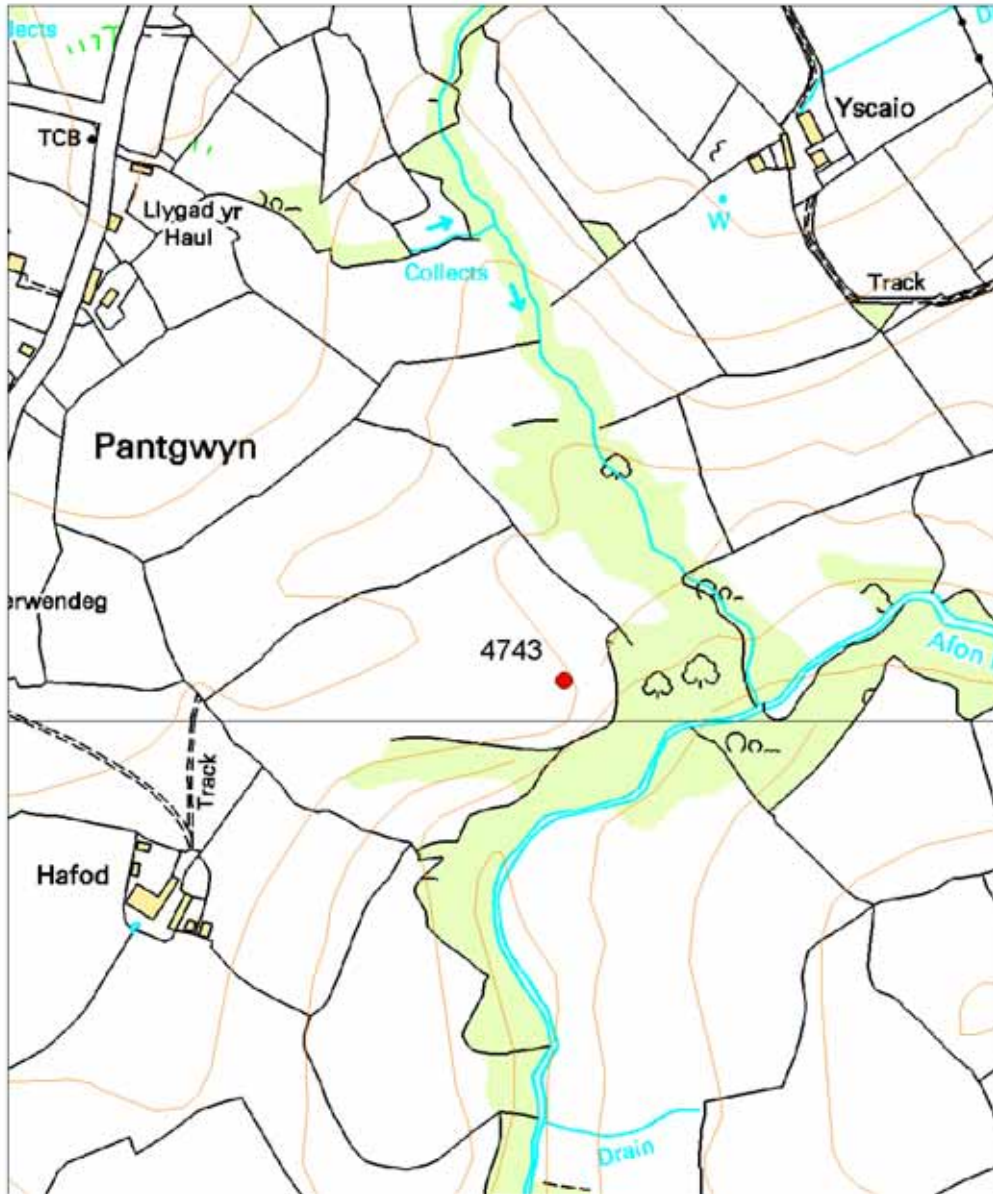
A past owner discovered a Bronze Age socketed axe (PRN 63964) whilst ploughing within the area of the inland promontory, and this was photographed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust during the site visit in 2008.

The site is situated at 100m above sea level within an area of rough pasture.

F Murphy and R Ramsey March 2008



1946 aerial photograph of 4743. Reference – RAF 106G UK 1625 5101.



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# 11168 Ynyswen

PRN 11168 NGR SN52822448

SITE NAME YNISWEN MAPSHEET SN52SW

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION E

## SITE STATUS

### DESCRIPTION

In a field south of Ynyswen House there was a southwest facing spur of land measuring 90m by 50m with natural steep sloping sides, especially at its southwest tip, and at the northeast end where the land dropped to the stream below. This spur of land appeared to have been adapted into a defended settlement. In 1985 Dyfed Archaeological Trust recorded it as a bivallate enclosure, with identifiable banks and ditches on the west and east slopes of the earthwork. No evidence of an entrance was noted.

In 2007 it was discovered that the site had been destroyed. The spur of land had been quarried for shale to construct trackways. There is now no trace of the earthwork on the ground.

The site is located at 50m above sea level.

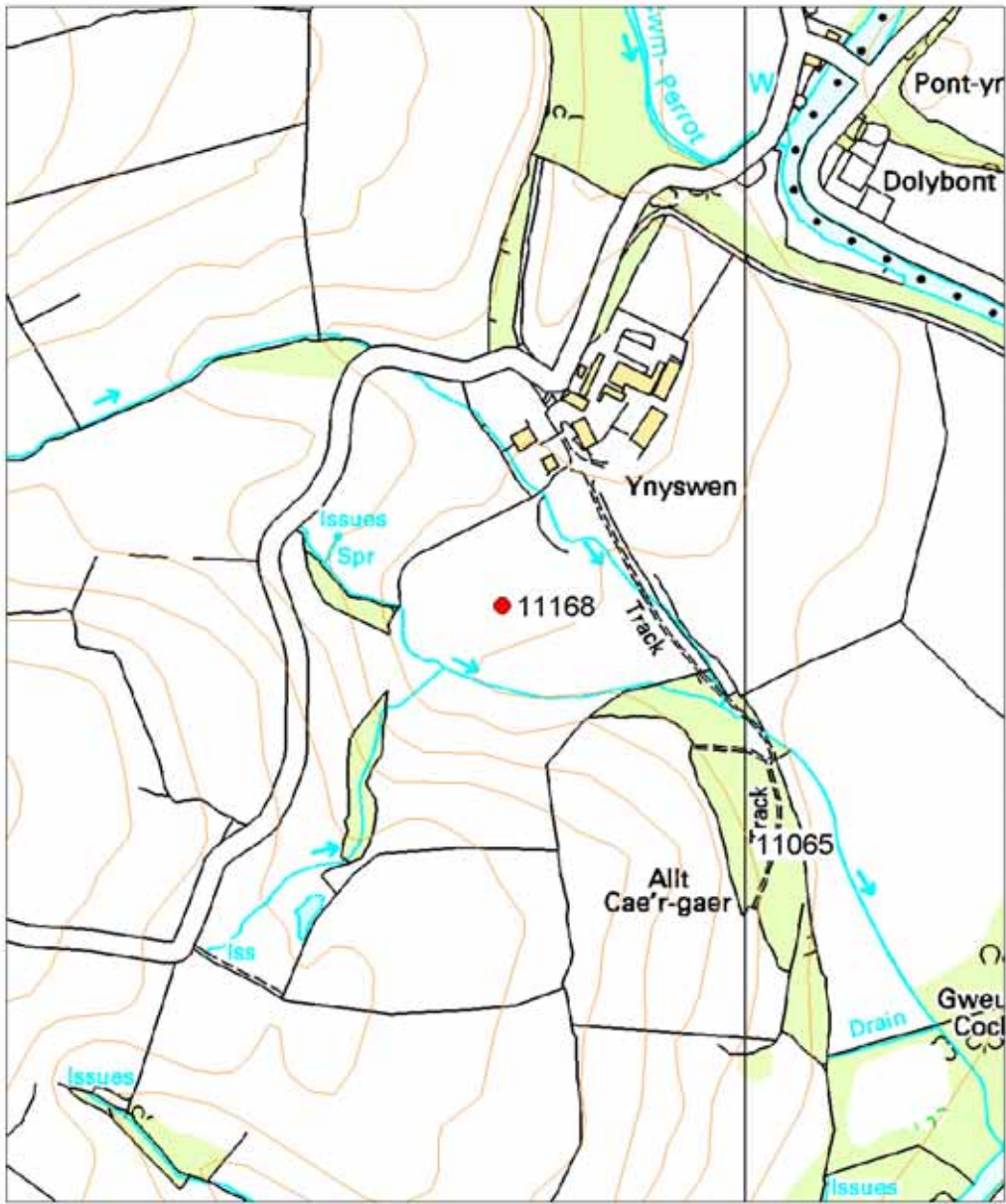
F Murphy October 2007



Looking NE across area of site now destroyed by quarrying



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# 11816 Llwyn-fortune

PRN 11816 NGR SN52802212

SITE NAME LLWYN-FORTUNE MAPSHEET SN52SW

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE FORM Cropmark

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION D

## SITE STATUS

### DESCRIPTION

A curving section of what appears to be a large bivallate enclosure or an enclosure with a concentric annex was noted during aerial survey in 1984. The whole circuit of the defences was not visible but it is probably circular in shape with two concentric ditches showing as dark cropmarks, but no sign of parching for the ramparts. The distance between the two ditches is about 30 metres.

Nothing was visible on the ground in 2007. The site is within a field under arable; currently maize, and is regularly ploughed. It lies at 60m above sea level on a gentle southeast facing hillslope.

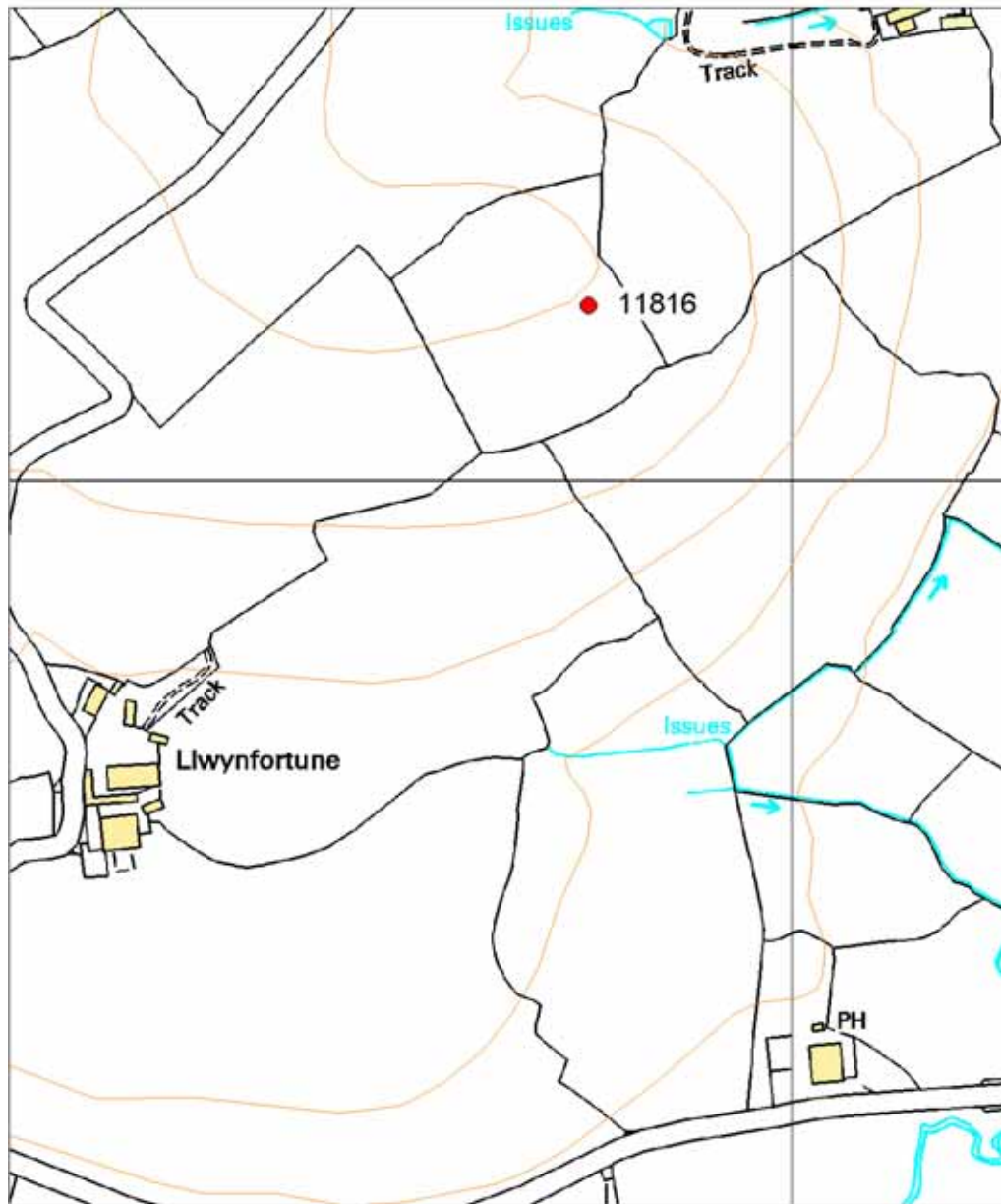
F Murphy October 2007



Facing NNW across area of cropmark site



Aerial photograph of 11816. Reference DAT AP84-104.3.



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# 16417 Pont ar Gothi

PRN 16417 NGR SN50632092

SITE NAME ALLT ABERCOTHI MAPSHEET SN52SW

SITE TYPE PROMONTORY FORT FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION C

## SITE STATUS

## DESCRIPTION

Dyfed Archaeological Trust first identified this site from aerial survey in 1993.

The 2008 site visit was the first to this site and established that it was an inland promontory fort, situated on a south facing end of a narrow ridge of land at 60m above sea level. Steep slopes to the southwest and southeast naturally defended the enclosure, and to the north two lines of curving defensive bank had been drawn across the ridge of land to enclose an area of roughly 0.5 hectare. The outer bank had a maximum height of c.1.2m. The inner bank was c.1m high and had a visible outer ditch. There was c.27m between the two banks. Within the internal area of the promontory fort a telephone mast had been erected, and it had also been damaged by a small quarry; now extinct. The position of an entrance was not discernable.

The earthwork lies within a field of pasture, with woodland on the steep slopes.

F Murphy and R Ramsey March 2008



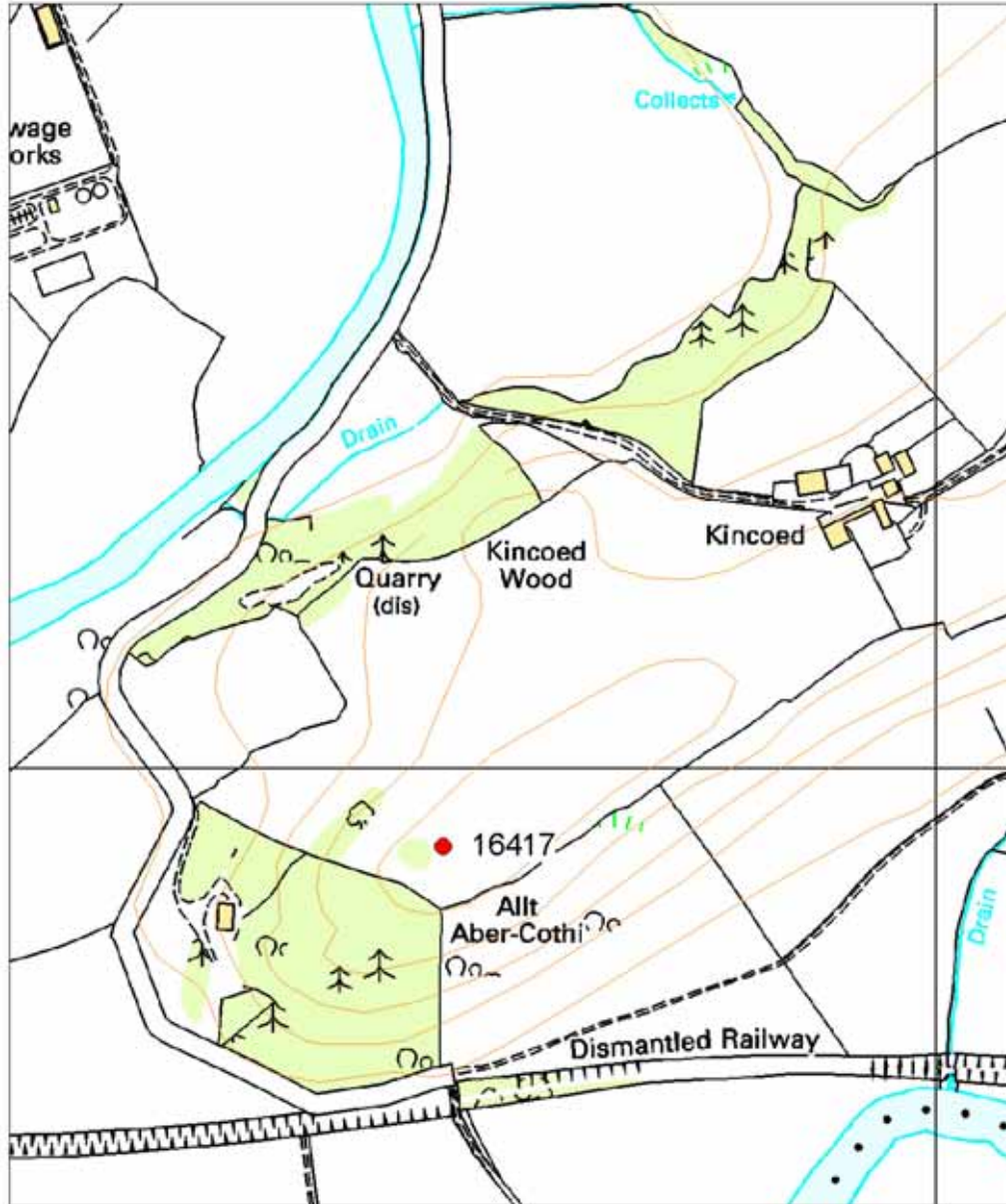
SN5021

16,417.

ALT 1064007H.

AP93-64-12

Aerial photograph of 16417. Reference DAT AP93-64.12.



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# 49278 Cefn HERNIN

PRN 49278 NGR SN54082138

SITE NAME CEFN HERNIN;LLANYHIRNIN? MAPSHEET SN52SW

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE?;ECCLESIASTICAL FORM Cropmark  
ESTABLISHMENT?

PERIOD Iron Age?;Early Medieval? CONDITION D

## SITE STATUS

## DESCRIPTION

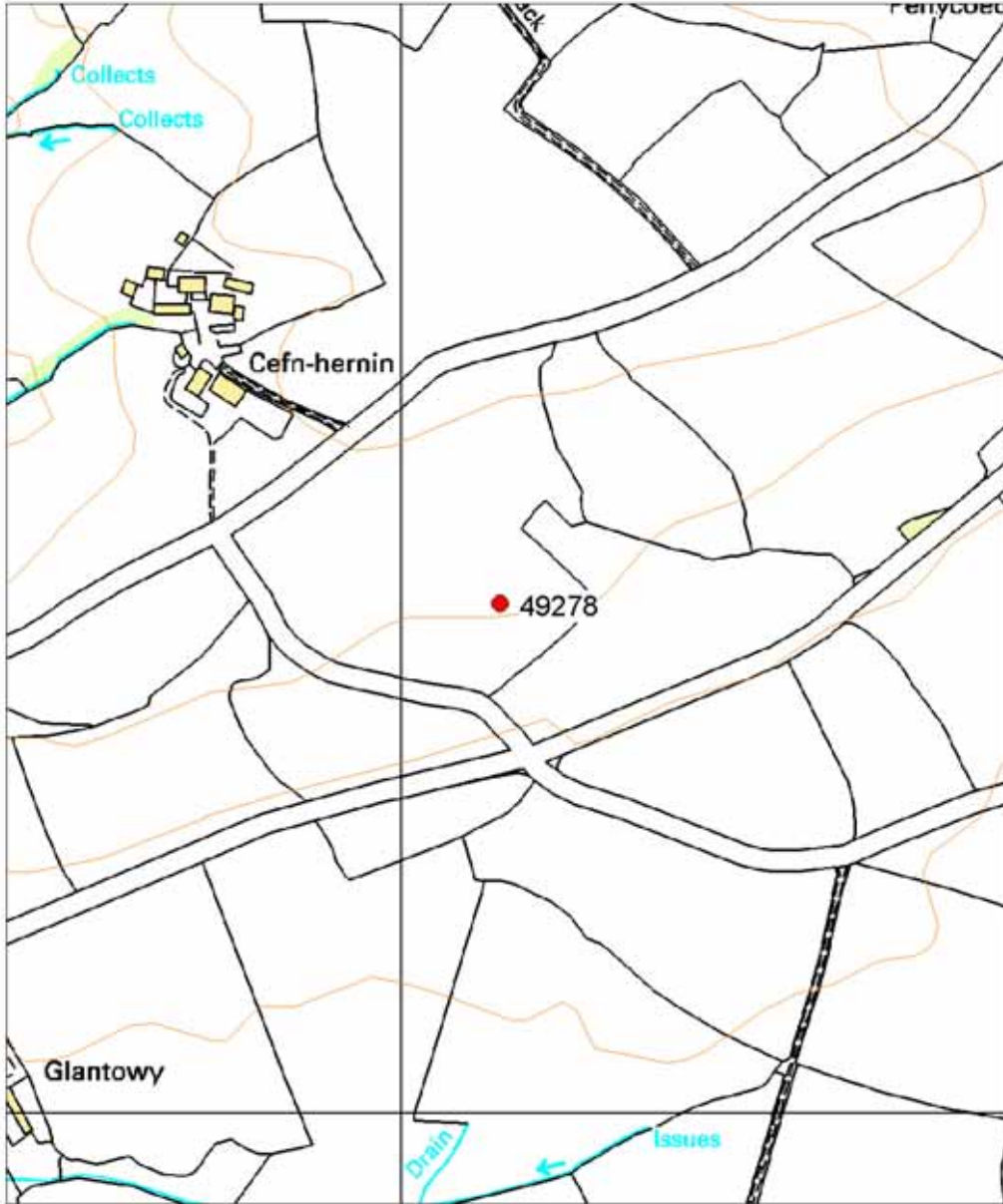
A possible Iron Age enclosure site identified as a cropmark on aerial photographs of the 1950's. The shape of the enclosure is not at all clear but it could be a remnant of a bivallate circular enclosure, or possibly a circular enclosure with a concentric annex. Other features visible as cropmarks overlie the enclosure, including two smaller rectangular cropmarks that may have an Early-Medieval ecclesiastical origin.

Nothing was visible on the ground in 2007. The site lies within a field of improved pasture at 40m above sea level, on a gentle southeast facing hillslope.

F Murphy October 2007



Looking NE across area of cropmark site



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# 741 Pen y Gaer

PRN 741 NGR SN52394342

SITE NAME PEN Y GAER MAPSHEET SN54SW

SITE TYPE HILLFORT FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION C

SITE STATUS SAM

## DESCRIPTION

This is a fine example of a circular hillfort that crowns the summit of a hill reaching some 190m above sea level, to the south of Llanybyther. The enclosure has an approximate diameter of 110m, and is defended on the northeast by a double bank and ditch and by a single bank alone on all other sides. Incurved banks protected the entrance facing east, but in 1911 the RCHAM (1917) record that one of the banks together with a length of the continuing rampart were removed. Two parallel walls of upright stone slabs are said to have been found beneath the soil.

The fort is divided into quadrants by modern hedges, different owners and land use.

Impressive double banks and ditches are found in the northeast quadrant, although the outer ditch only survives in places. The ditch between the two banks is irregular and would appear to have been disturbed in the past. The northern half of the east entrance is well preserved. This part of the scheduled area is under rough pasture.

The northwestern quadrant is also well preserved. The single rampart here is 0.8 - 1m high internally and 1.3 - 1.6m high externally, with no trace of the ditch surviving. Much of the area is covered in bracken and the rampart is largely covered with laurels.

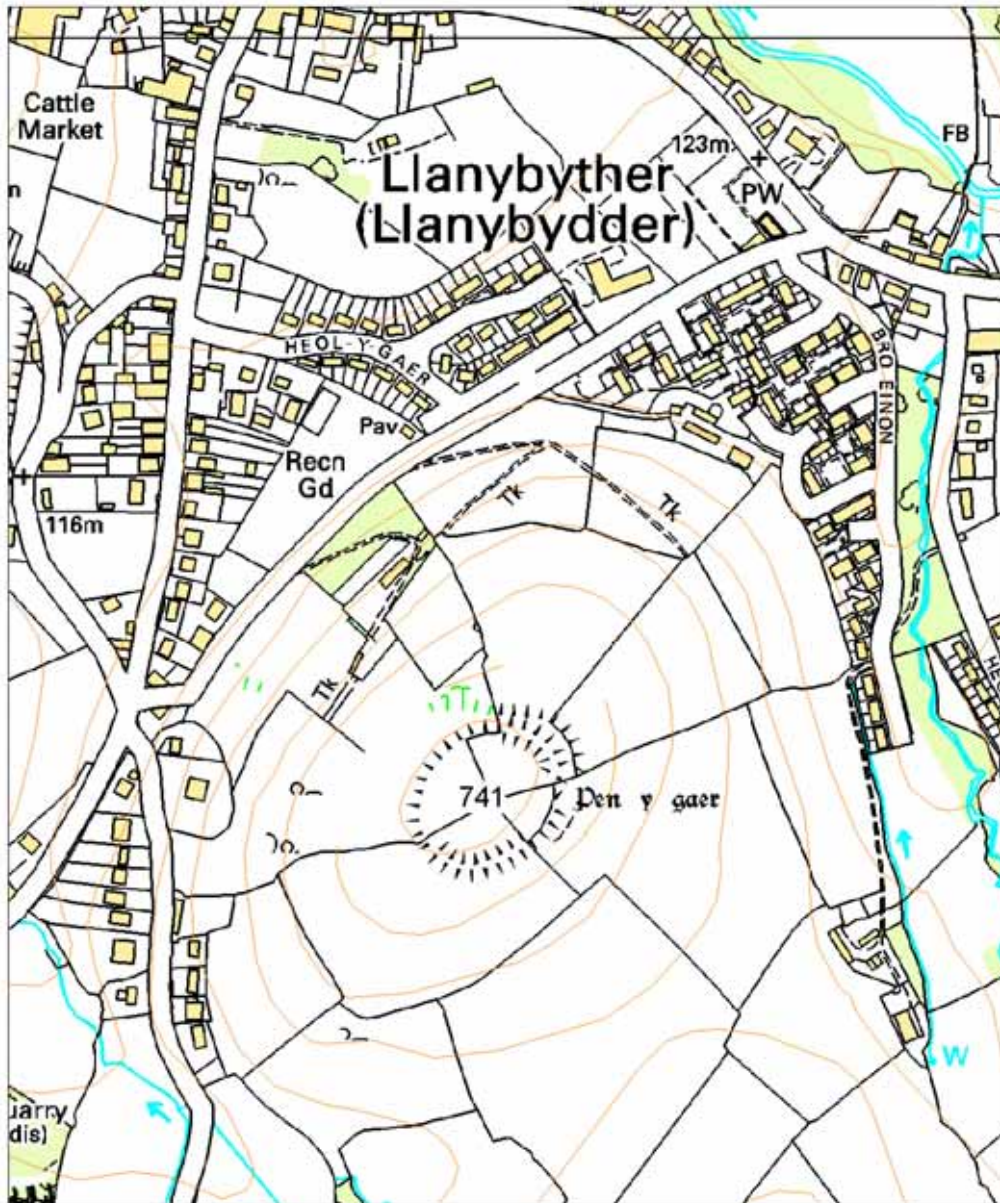
The dimensions of the bank in the southwestern section are similar to that of the northwestern section, with no trace of outer ditch. This quadrant has suffered from erosion by livestock over the years.

Within the southeast quadrant is where the bank, and half of the inturned entrance were removed. The bank is ploughed and very denuded. This area is under improved pasture.

F Murphy 27 February 2008 - compiled from several sources



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# 787 Y Gaer

PRN 787 NGR SN58954425

SITE NAME GAER Y;GELLIMAPSHEET SN54SE

SITE TYPE HILLFORT FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Prehistoric;Iron Age CONDITION B

SITE STATUS SAM

## DESCRIPTION

A very fine hilltop enclosure of approximately 1.2 hectares. It is sub-circular in shape, approximately 100m in diameter and defended by a single bank and ditch, with a simple entrance on the southeast. It is sited on the summit of a small knoll on Mynydd Pencarreg at 344m above sea level, and has commanding views of the surrounding area.

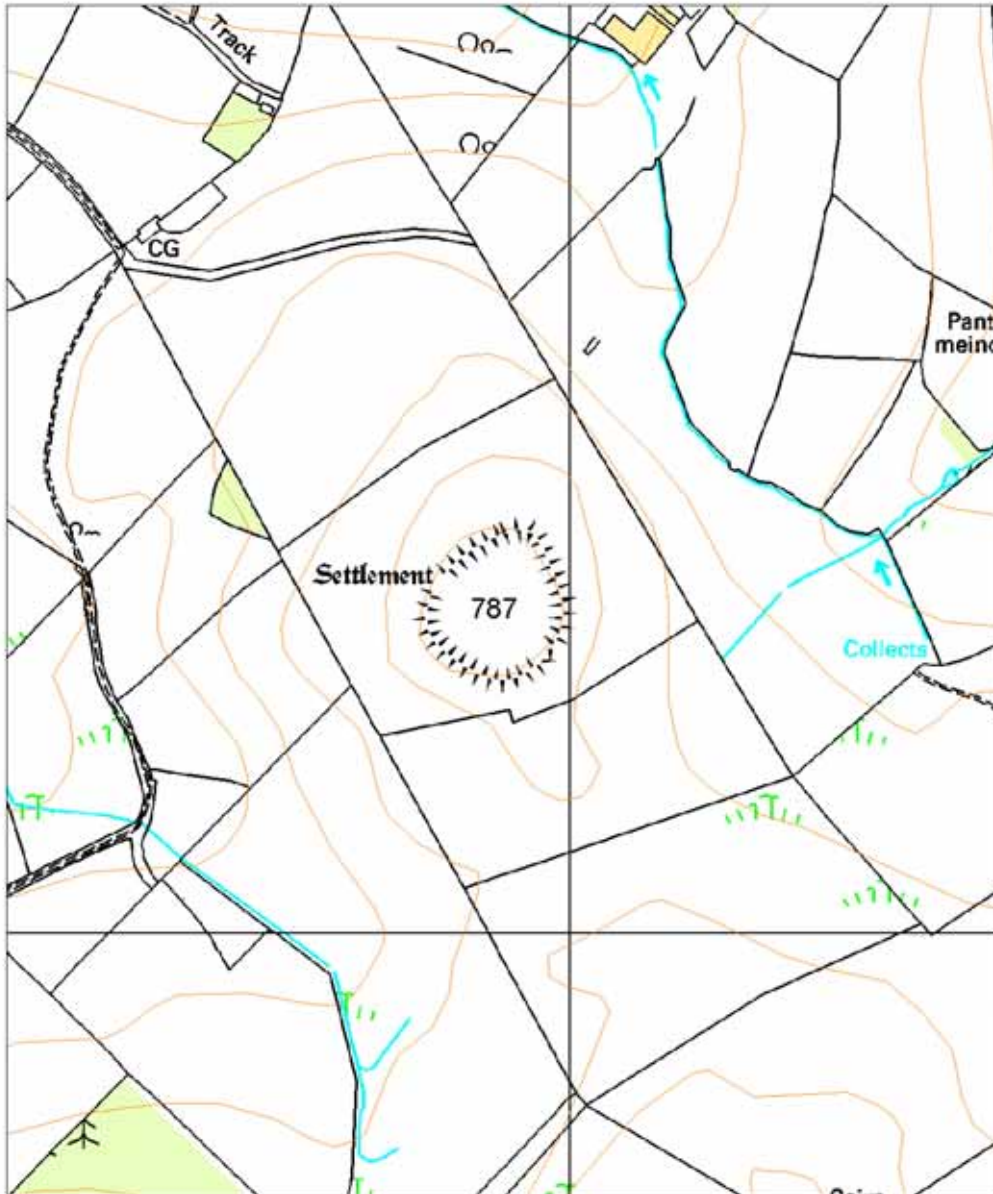
According to recent Cadw reports the bank has an external height of 1.8 - 2m, and an internal height of 0.7 - 1m. There are traces of the ditch in places. The Ordnance Survey reported in 1969 that plenty of stone was visible in the bank and within the enclosure, but no internal structures were apparent. More recently, erosion caused by livestock has revealed a rampart structure of soil and stones, and a possible stretch of rear rampart facing was visible on the north.

The whole site is covered in short grass and is used for the grazing of sheep.

F Murphy 27 February 2008 - compiled from several sources



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# 789 Castell Elwyn

PRN 789 NGR SN56484368

SITE NAME CASTELL ELWYN MAPSHEET SN54SE

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION C

## SITE STATUS

## DESCRIPTION

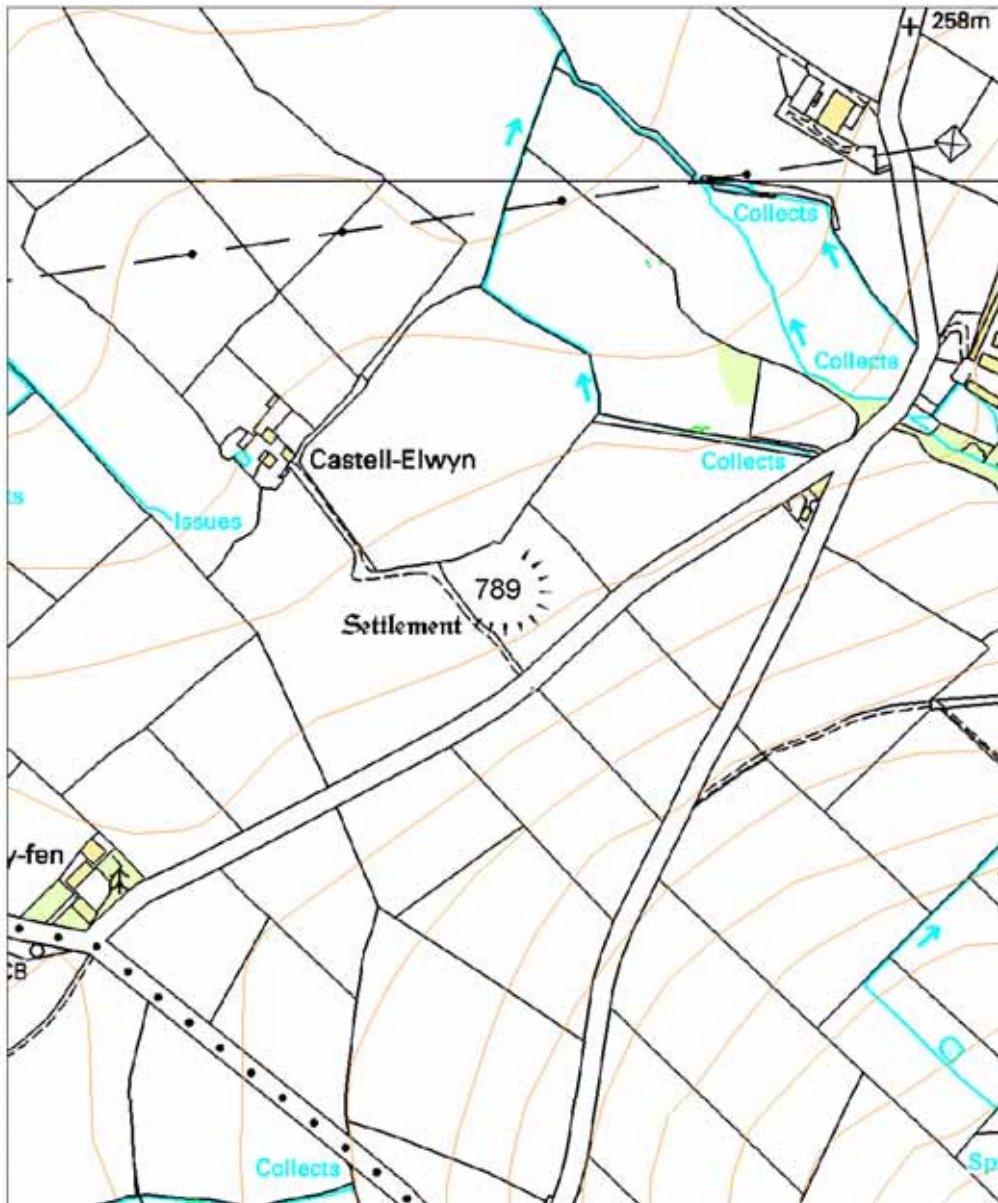
Castell Elwyn is a sub-circular enclosure situated on the western slopes of Mynydd Pencarreg, within a field called Cae Gaer, commanding extensive views to the north and south. It has a single bank that has been considerably spread by ploughing but survives as a visible earthwork, c.10m wide by 0.7m high, to the south and east, and as a slight change of slope to the north and west. The bank encloses an area approximately 50m by 40m. There was no evidence of an outer ditch or of any internal features nor of an entrance.

The site lies within a field under pasture at 280m above sea level, on a northwest facing hillslope.

F Murphy November 2007



Looking N across circular earthwork of defended enclosure



1:5000

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# 807 Y Gaer

PRN 807 NGR SN569439

SITE NAME GAER Y MAPSHEET SN54SE

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE? FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Prehistoric?;Iron Age? CONDITION U

## SITE STATUS

### DESCRIPTION

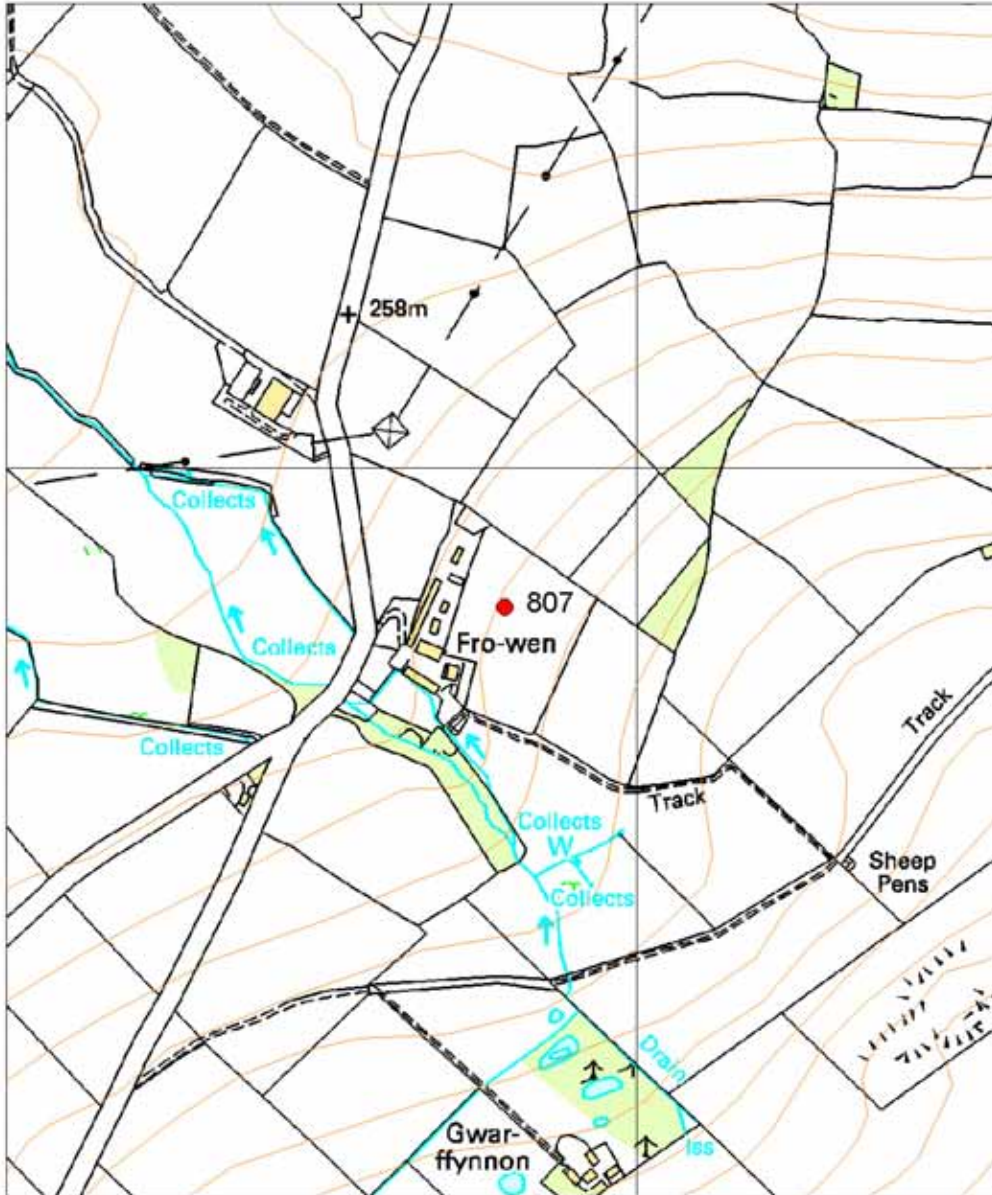
The RCAHM (1917) recorded that a single-banked circular earthwork is said to have stood in this location, and that it was similar in form to that of nearby Castell Elwyn (PRN 789). Nothing is visible on aerial photographs at this location. No trace of the earthwork survives, but the name of 'Y Gaer' by which the field is known, points to an earthwork having existed in the past.

The site lies within a field under pasture at 290m above sea level, on a moderate northwest facing slope.

F Murphy November 2007



Looking S across area of site - nothing seen on ground



1:5000

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# 809 Dolgwnm Isaf

PRN 809 NGR SN55344497

SITE NAME DOLGWM ISAF MAPSHEET SN54SE

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION C

## SITE STATUS

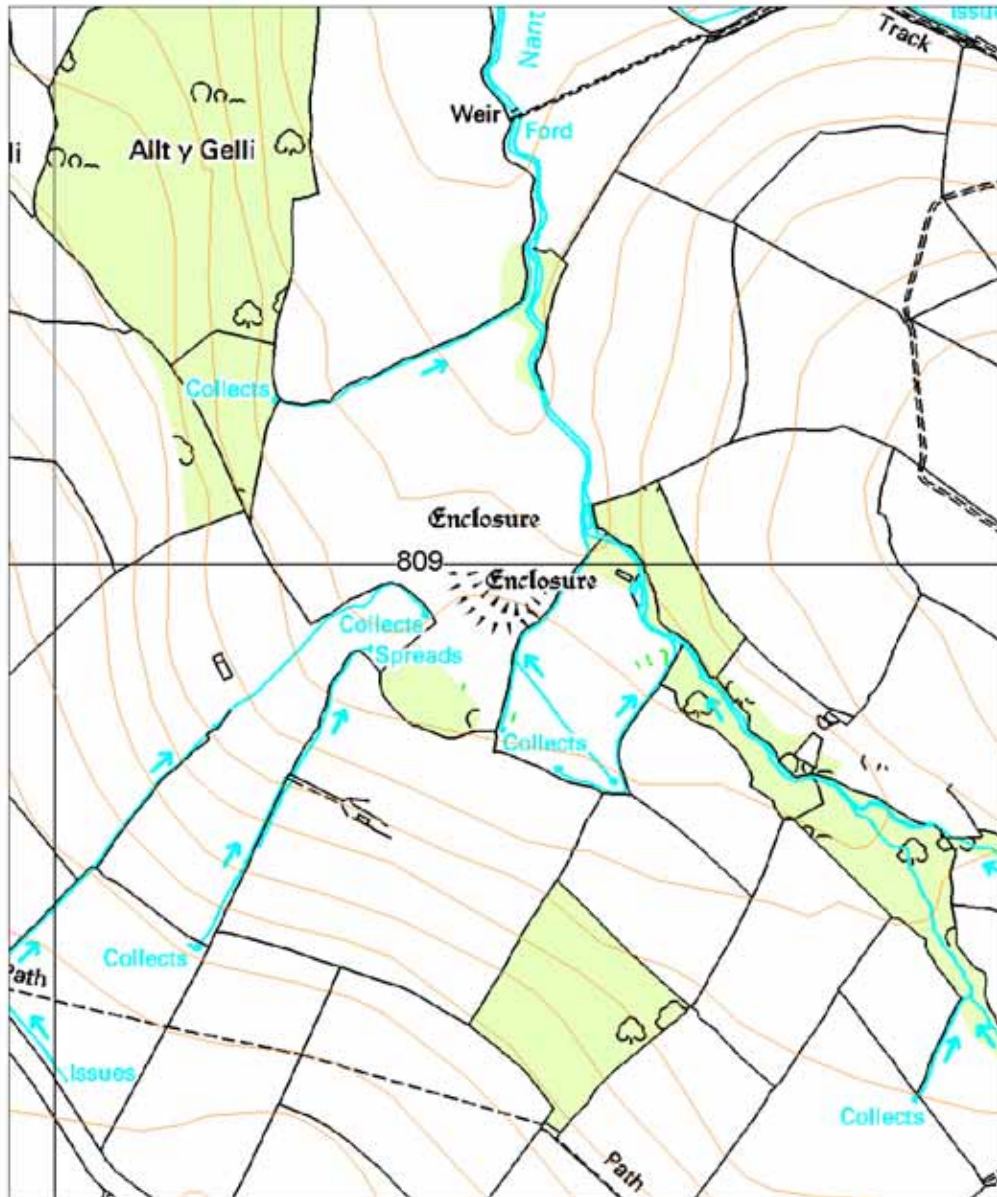
## DESCRIPTION

A sub-circular univallate enclosure located in a field of pasture at 170m above sea level. The site is on a gentle northeast hillslope, with a ploughed out bank that stands up to a height of c.1m and an outer ditch c.0.5m deep that tapers out on the downward slope. The bank encloses an area approximately 70m by 50m. The Ordnance Survey in 1968 recorded a simple entrance on the downhill north side, but this is not clear on the ground in 2007. The eastern side of the enclosure has been damaged by a modern field boundary. A depression in the interior is reputed to have been a cock-pit.

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Facing approximately E across ploughed out enclosure earthworks



1:5000

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# 819 Gelli Dewi Uchaf

PRN 819 NGR SN58094494

SITE NAME GELLIDEWI UCHAF;PEN GAER WEN MAPSHEET SN54SE

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION D

## SITE STATUS

### DESCRIPTION

In 1972 the Ordnance Survey recorded this circular enclosure as a recognisable univallate earthwork. Situated on a steep west facing slope at 260m above sea level, it was 43m in diameter with a bank up to 1.9m high internally and 3.1m externally. A simple entrance was observed on the west side of the enclosure. A modern wall had damaged the enclosure on the eastern side. There was no evidence of any internal occupation.

A site visit by Dyfed Archaeological Trust in 1985 recorded that the site was still in a very good state of preservation with an impressive single bank enclosing it.

The 2007 visit revealed that the earthwork had been completely destroyed prior to ploughing and re-seeding in 1999. There is a slight trace of the position of the former bank on the ground but essentially it has been reduced to a cropmark

The site is located within a field under pasture.

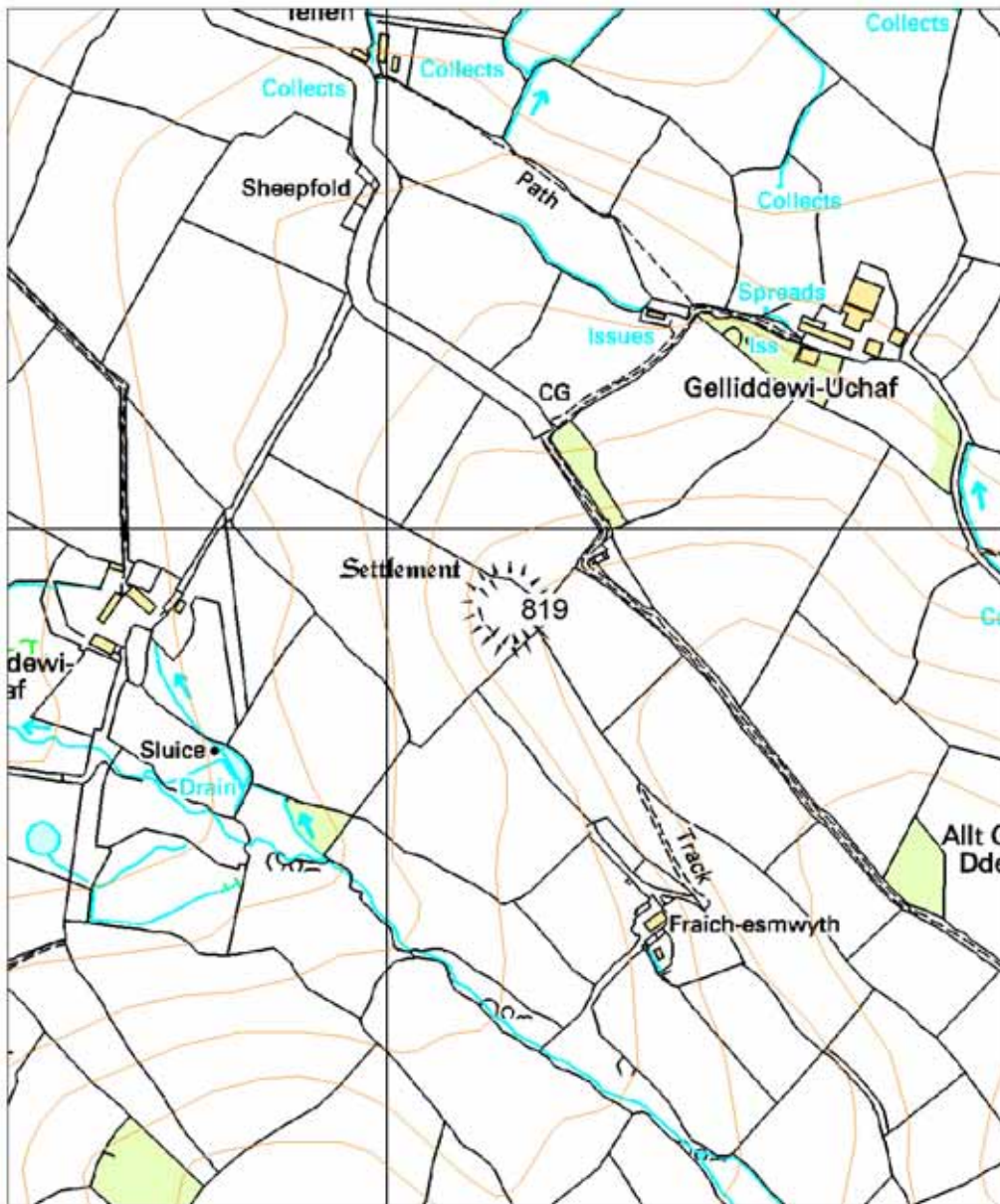
F Murphy November 2007



Taken on summit of hill looking approx. NW across earthwork site- bulldozed flat in 1999



1946 aerial photograph of 819. Reference RAF 106G 1471 6046.



1:5000

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# 9913 Blaen-maes

PRN 9913 NGR SN54254530

SITE NAME BLAEN-MAES MAPSHEET SN54NW

SITE TYPE DEFENDED ENCLOSURE FORM Earthwork

PERIOD Iron Age CONDITION C

## SITE STATUS

### DESCRIPTION

An unusually large defended enclosure that occupies the summit of a hill at 200m above sea level, overlooking the Teifi valley near Pencarreg. The enclosure is oval in shape and measures 220m east-west and encloses an area of approximately 2.5 hectares.

To the north, south and west the ground drops steeply away but on the east side the land begins to rise again. The outer defences consist of a single bank and ditch that roughly follow the 200m contour line. They are most pronounced on the east where the bank reaches a height of c.1m, and a width of 3m, and the outer ditch is c.4m wide. It is possible that the outer earthwork defences have been scarped on the north and west sides to enhance the defensive possibilities of the hillslope. The line of the defences on the west is perpetuated by the present hedge boundary. On the south in the next field there were traces of what appeared to be another possible outer defensive bank.

Aerial photographs of the 1940's show what appears to be a much smaller internal enclosure c.90m east-west enclosed by the outer defensive bank and ditch. However, in 2007 although there were a number of undulations in the field, none could be directly attributed to this inner enclosure.

The site lies within a field of pasture used for the grazing of sheep.

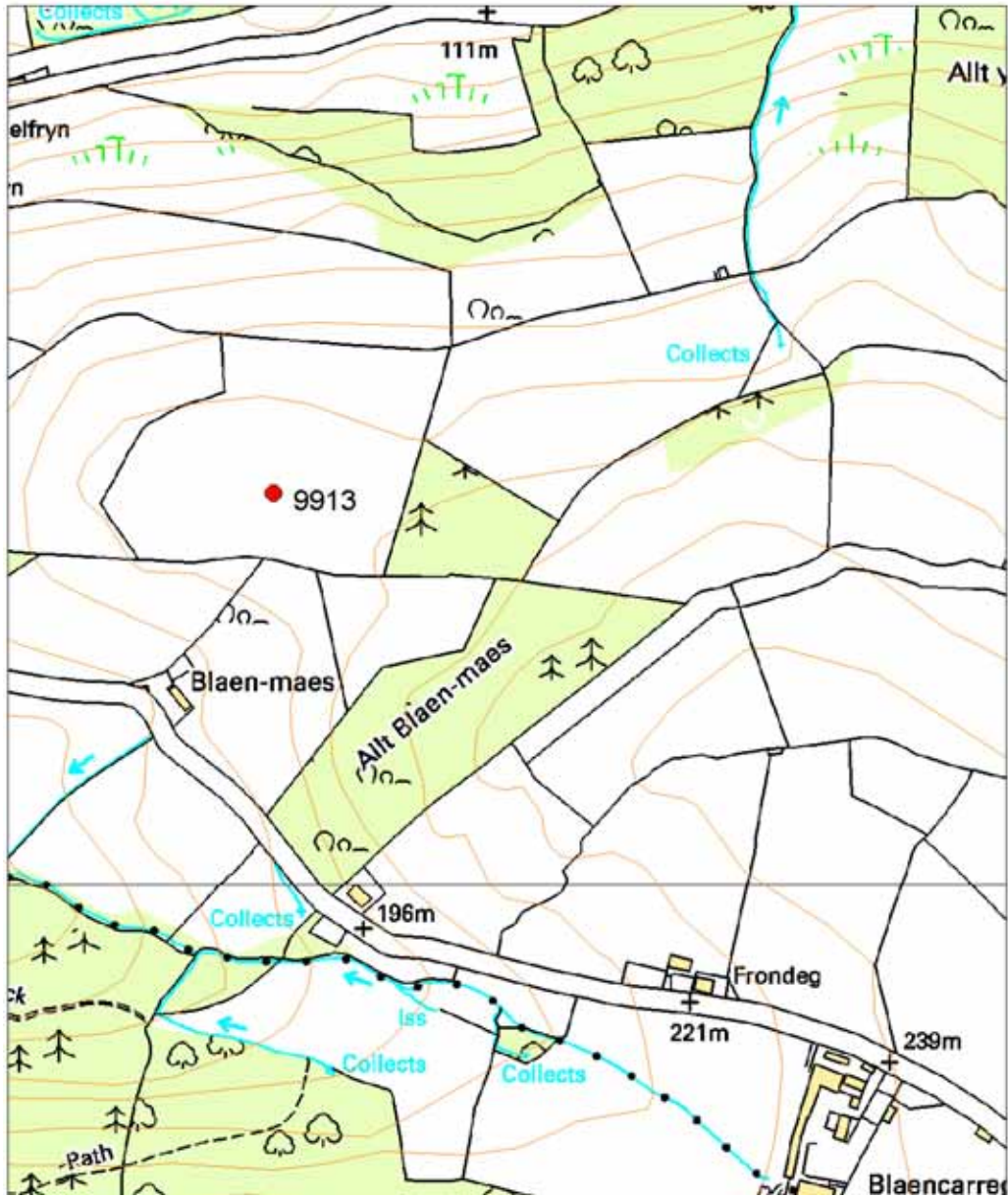
F Murphy November 2007



Looking W across internal area of enclosure earthwork



Aerial photograph of 9913. RCAHMW Crown Copyright © reference 2002\_cs\_1606.



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