



Gilfach Interpretation Strategy

Heritage Assessment



for

The Radnorshire Wildlife Trust

October 2015

1. The Physical Heritage Asset

Statement of Heritage Significance

An outstanding historical composite upland Welsh landscape which is the cumulative result of a long period of development: with likely evidence of human occupation, use and management for over 3000 years and demonstrating some of the most important periods of development and social change in Welsh history.

Radnorshire is well-known as a sparsely populated, rural county. The results of the heritage assessment of Gilfach have shown that the extent of human activity has extended beyond the limits of modern settlement and agriculture into landscapes which are now considered to be 'natural environments', but which are in reality heavily influenced by past human activity and key elements in understanding the history of the county and its communities.

There is an abundance of archaeological and historic sites within the Gilfach reserve. The majority are spread across the south facing slope to the north of the Afon (River) Marteg. Many features have been identified but not dated or there are conflicts in the official records (see Appendix A) and this provides opportunities for fieldwork and investigation, in order to unravel the story and historical development of the Marteg Valley. Many sites are also hard to recognise in the landscape but also provide opportunities for interpretation.

In general it would appear that there was substantial pre-historic human presence in this area, possibly as a ritual or funerary site. A possible road and ford between marching camps outside the area provides evidence of the Roman occupation of Wales, while in the medieval period there seems to have been substantial rural settlement of the valley slopes which was later abandoned. Post medieval there are is evidence of industrial use for quarrying and mining, while the Victorian period brought further change with the construction of the Mid Wales Railway through the valley.

There are strong links between the archaeological remains and the interpretative themes of: micro and macro; transport; land use and management; and the living working landscape. There are also opportunities for: managing the historic landscape through interpretation ('through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection'); for involving people in discovering more about the historic remains (both through fieldwork and through desk based research); and for providing interpretation for hard to identify features. Increased understanding of the historic landscape could have social, communal, economic, and management benefits in addition to widening the audience base for the site.

1.1 Bronze Age (c.2300 BC - 800 BC)

Pont Yr Marteg Cairn - (Scheduled Ancient Monument)

Cairn circle situated on a prominent S-facing terrace of Yr Wylorn, above a major bend in the Afon Marteg and commanding an excellent view to the W and the mouth of the valley. It measures about

6.5m in diameter and up to 0.5m in height. Six upright stones are visible in the kerb, all leaning outwards and measuring up to 0.7m in height. The grass-covered cairn has been disturbed in the past, leaving a large central hollow with what is probably the E side of a central cist now visible. This orthostat measures 1.8m in length from NNE to SSW. It seems likely that this is an early Bronze Age structure, as ritual monuments and burials went out of use in the later Bronze Age.

Due to a favourable climate, warmer and drier than today, the early Bronze Age was a time of major farming expansion and forest clearance, with upland areas being utilized on a much greater scale than previously. This is the period of Stonehenge and other great standing stone henges and structures. Control over land became as important as control over people.

Although disturbed this is a rare and potentially exciting monument, situated in a prominent and significant location on a rocky outcrop at the upper edge of the useable farmland landscape. This could be evidence of early Bronze Age settlement of the area or simply the creation of a sacred landscape, some distance away from the occupied area.

When first built it would have been visible as an important relic of a prehistoric funerary and ritual landscape and retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of both intact burial or ritual deposits and environmental and structural evidence, including a buried prehistoric land surface. The importance of the monument is further enhanced by its identification as a likely cairn circle, a particularly rare element within the surviving prehistoric ritual landscape.

Afon Marteg Cairn

A small cairn of river-worn pebbles on top of a natural outcrop. It measures 4.2m x 3.4m. The date of this structure is unknown.

Pont Marteg Standing Stone

Possibly a bronze age standing stone comprising a large stone block almost vertical. 1.8 x 0.75 x 1.5m. Classified as a religious, ritual or funerary structure.

Pont Marteg Mounds

A group of five mounds or cairns, with unknown date. They may be associated with the bronze age settlement of the area or with later industrial activity.

2.1 Roman Period (AD 43 – AD 410)

Roman Road and Ford

Possible route of roman road and ford crossing the Afon Marteg. The remains have been identified just south of the western railway tunnel entrance on the river and also where the road up to the farmhouse crosses the river, close to the otter hide. This presumably joined the St Harmon Roman Road which runs from Llandrindod Wells almost to Newtown. Temporary Roman marching camps have been identified to the west side of the Wye Valley near Esgair Perfedd and in the next valley to the east, near Cwm Is-y-rhiw, St Harmon – the road may well have joined the two?

3.1 Medieval Period (The Middle Ages) (c.1066 – c.1400)

Longhouses / long huts, platforms and enclosures

Aerial photography by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments Wales (RCAHMW) and fieldwork conducted by the Clywd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) has discovered a dispersed pattern of longhouses, platforms and enclosures along the Marteg Valley. The current Historic Environment Record shows at least four longhouses / huts and several building platforms with associated enclosures and trackways. Four additional long huts / platforms were also identified on the next ridge to the north.

The orientation and location of these sites depends on the topography of the immediate landscape and would have been chosen to provide shelter, ease of build and in some cases proximity to a watercourse.

Longhouses, huts and building platforms where there has not been a continuous or on-going development of the site are commonly categorised as deserted rural settlements. Nearly 300 such features have been identified in Radnorshire, with Gilfach and its' surrounding area having a particularly rich resource. Deserted rural settlements are commonly associated with the medieval agricultural economy and often demonstrate the change in the C12th and C13th from building in wood to building in stone, at least for the lower parts of the walls. This increased the longevity of the building and may have been a reaction to the declining availability of timber as fields were enlarged at the expense of woods. The enclosures demonstrate a trend towards delineating the boundaries of properties. Much like today, the population growth of the C12th and C13th saw the subdivision of individual properties, as sons could not afford their own properties or holdings or for the accommodation of retired parents.

Enclosures are generally associated with settlements and early land enclosures, identifying ownership and providing safety for livestock. They are often found around the building platforms and longhuts at Gilfach. Banks and enclosures may also be associated with monastic lands or granges, such as the medieval grange of Dolhelfa, which was located to the north of the Marteg Valley.

Transport systems were not necessarily the oft thought of mud filled ruts during this period but well-built routes, with, for example, Edward I's household averaging 32km a day and transportation of goods via watercourse being preferred, with rivers and minor waterways being utilized far more than in later periods.

Pont Marteg (Marteg Bridge) Longhouse I

The Pont Marteg Longhouse I is an example of a platform with evidence of a building totalling over 35m in length, representing two buildings end to end. It is possible that this may have been a roofed sheepcote, possibly of monastic origin. Located on a terrace south of the road which runs through the site, near to the entrance and 450m east from Longhouse II. Possibly a medieval homestead.

Pont Marteg Longhouse II

Located immediately to the north of the road that runs through the site, close to the entrance across the road from the car park. The Pont Marteg Longhouse II is the largest

known example of a long hut in Radnorshire with external measurements of 27.4m x 6.4m and possibly four compartments. Stone walls survive to 0.8m wide and 0.5m high, with a cross wall and two definite entrances in the south wall.

Rhiw Riad (Hill Road) Longhouse

Foundations of a medieval longhouse (17.3m x 7.4m) with associated field / animal enclosures and banks. The longhouse is situated on a terrace along the contours of the hill to the north side of the road which passes through the site. Stone availability here was good and the remains survive as 2m wide stone walls approx. 0.8m high and show a two room dwelling with a stone slab on the south side at the west end possibly indicating the doorway and a return in the central cross wall perhaps the sign of a chimney breast. The enclosures (one to the west and north of the longhouse and one on the opposite side of the road) are delineated by orthostatic walling (upright stones on edge), banks and terracing and can clearly be seen (see below). This longhouse with enclosures is a typical feature of the upland landscape.

Yr Wylorn Longhouse

Located close to Rhiw Riad Longhouse, the building foundations measure 16.5m x 3.7m with a possible chimney breast at the S end. The entrance was probably on the W. The house appears to have been built on a terraced platform but this has been much altered by the encroachment of the modern road to the S. Dating unsure.

Yr Wylorn Hut

Undated but possibly medieval, this is a small sub rectangular enclosure 3.9m x 2.8m internally, bounded by outcrop on the W, on the other sides by a bank up to 2m wide and 0.2m high. There is a possible entrance 0.9m wide, towards the S end of the E side.

Yr Wylorn Platform

A building platform built on an E-facing slope, 33m x 8m at the S end, 5m at the N end, bounded on uphill side by a vague wall and on the N & S sides by banks. A vague E-W bank subdivides the structure to form a compartment at the end measuring 9m internally.

Yr Wylorn Enclosure x 5

Five sites are identified as Yr Wylorn enclosures. Going from west to east, the first shows three sides consisting of banks, a low narrow terrace, and an associated ditch. The second is a small enclosure formed by a low crescent-shaped bank set against a field hedge bank, measuring 8m x 2.8m. These features are undated but may date from the medieval or post-medieval periods. The third is a much more impressive feature of 23m x 13m at the N end, 8m at the S end, bounded on the S and W by a bank with orthostats and a substantial ditch to the W. There is a probable entrance at E end and is located next to the Yr Wylorn / Rhiw Riad Longhouse, with which it may be contemporary. The fourth enclosure is smaller and adjacent to the third and is surrounded by banks. The fifth is just across the modern road from the Yr Wylorn / Rhiw Riad longhouse and the third and fourth enclosures. It is bounded on the N, W and S sides by an earth bank with stone core and measures 15m x 12m.

Afon Marteg Enclosure

A small enclosure about 30m x 28m, bounded on the S by the river, on the E, N and W by a ditched bank.

Gilfach Farmhouse – Listed Building, Grade II*

Late medieval farmhouse of c.1550. A significant example of a Welsh longhouse, revealing several phases in conversion from stone walled peasant hall house to longhouse and being converted to a storeyed house c.1600. On the left side of the entrance is the medieval hall with flagstone floor and fireplace. There is evidence of three cruck trusses and a C17 parlour wing extension. The ornate timberwork in the room above the parlour may indicate a dower residence. Downhill is the cow byre with pigeon or dove holes in the loft gable.

Gilfach Barn Complex and Farmyard

The farmyard stands between the longhouse and the barn, which dates from the C19th, with a cowhouse under the upper end and stable under the lower end. There is also a central threshing floor with double door on the S and small high winnowing door on the N. A stone well stands in the farmyard close to the farmhouse.

The Monks Trod

An ancient road across the Cambrian Mountains linking the C12 Cistercian religious centres of Abbey Cwmhir in Radnorshire to the east to Strata Florida Abbey in the west. Its course runs generally west from Abbey Cwmhir, crossing Moel Hywel and descending to St Harmon, before crossing the River Wye at Pont Marteg and rising up towards Pont ar Elan, north of the Elan Valley Reservoirs. At this point it routes south-west, passing north of the western point of the Claerwen Reservoir, before passing the Teifi Pools and descending through Troed y Rhiw to Strata Florida. In many places the Monks' Trod survives as a well-built, terraced road, the product of a 'cut and fill' method of construction producing long stretches which run around or along hillsides or breast steep slopes at 45° to the contour. Some sections at least were evidently paved or metalled. In sectors where the going for horses was easy, the road was not constructed. In the Trod's central zone, extra width suggests that provision was made for droving.

4.1 Post Medieval (1400 – 1837)

This period covers a number of features, most of which are difficult to date, but have been identified as post medieval. Many of these are industrial in nature showing a vibrant working landscape during this period. Dating of these structures / features would greatly assist with understanding the overall use and historic development of the valley.

Rhiw Riad Quarry

Small quarry in an area of good stone availability with two levelled platform areas which are possibly connected with the building of the railway.

Pont Marteg Quarry

Quarry.

Yr Wylorn Quarry x 4

Four sites are identified by this name stretching along the north side of the road across the site before reaching the railway tunnel. The first is a scooped platform, 5m x by 2.7m and 0.8m deep

with upcast to SE. The second is a larger roadside stone quarry with smaller bay to W. It measures about 30m x 17m; a large spoil tip lies on the other side of the road. The third is a small roadside quarry about 11m x 6m. The fourth was originally identified as two houses platforms but it is now thought unlikely. It is now suggested that one area is a construction shaft for the tunnel and the other is a small stone quarry.

Pont Marteg Quarry Scoops

A group of five scoops probably demonstrating small scale stone quarrying.

Turnpike Road

The creation of turnpike trusts in the C17th and C18th was mostly due to the increasing complaints regarding the state of the road systems, which had been built by unskilled and forced labour workforces. Legislation was introduced which allowed trusts to collect taxes from road travellers and employ more skilled labourers to provide well drained and maintained roads. The route of the old turnpike road dating from c.1830 roughly follows that of the modern A470 between Rhayader and Llangurig and passed either very close to or through the Gilfach reserve.

Other Paths / Routeways

Across the reserve are a number of identified historic routes and paths. Many of these are undated but show the rise and decline of routeways through this area. There is evidence of a terraced path along the steep hillside in the north west of the reserve. Further to the SE there is an identified hollow way and also a terraced and partially metalled trackway, a grassed over trackway (truncated by the railway cutting demonstrating it is earlier in date) and evidence of another to the other side of the railway line which may have been a continuation of this trackway. The Afon Marteg ditch and boundary is situated where the road through the site first turns to the north. It is a substantial ditch 2m wide and 0.5m deep running parallel to and on the W side of a field wall. In places it is almost a hollow way. Yet another terraced path runs along the edge of enclosed valley land close to the east end of the railway tunnel which may join up with further evidence of a terraced track to the north close to the Yr Wylorn longhouse and enclosure group. A further partially metalled track crosses the Afon Marteg at a ford close to the track which leads up to Gilfach farmhouse.

Pont Marteg Lead Mining Level

Industrial archaeology feature, with a pit about 5m in diameter, 1.3m deep, with a large upcast mound to the SW and another to the SE - access into the pit from the S, partially blocked by the spoil heaps. This pit is probably an open cast lead mine. There are many abandoned lead mines in the Cambrian mountains and several in the St Harmon area.

Yr Wylorn Sheepfold

A small sub circular enclosure formed by a low narrow bank against the E side of rock outcrop, with a possible entrance at the N end. It is close to the Yr Wylorn Hut.

Yr Wylorn Dam

A low earthen dam bank at the mouth of a natural run-off channel, probably creating a small pond behind. The dam is convex in plan, 9m across, 2m wide, 0.7m high. The purpose is unknown.

5.1 Victorian period (1837 – 1901)

Mid Wales Railway

Tunnel

A tunnel carrying the former Mid-Wales Railway, noted in 1992 as blocked by modern steel gates. The south end is stone-lined and the south facade made of engineering brick. A spoil heap presumably originating from the tunnel and cutting construction lies to the east end of the tunnel.

Skew Bridge

A skew-arched bridge, carrying the former Mid-Wales Railway formation across the Afon Marteg. Constructed of coursed stone blocks with brick barrel-vault, the bridge is some 18m long and the span is about 9m (see Appendix B).

Railway Bridge

Close to the track which leads from the modern road up to Gilfach farmhouse is a former railway bridge. This is a single span, girder well type bridge, carrying the former Mid-Wales Railway across the Afon Marteg.

Railway Track

To the east of Abermarteg, from west to east, the former Mid-Wales Railway crosses the Afon Marteg by a bridge, then a high embankment, passes through a rock cutting before entering a tunnel. In 1992, it was noted that the trackbed was used as a path and where it runs over the embankment is fenced on both sides by a modern wooden post-and-wire fence. The former railway line leaves a tunnel, passes through a rock cutting and over a former occupation level crossing, to cross another bridge over the Afon Marteg.

Construction Camp

An artificial levelling of the flood plain and scarping of the river bank, 50m x 7m with a bank across the E end. Possibly the site of a railway construction camp.

Pont Marteg Old Bridge

Just to the west of the entrance to the Gilfach site across the road is the old bridge, dating from 1864. An arched stone bridge, it is thought to have been close to the fording/bridging point of the Monk's Trod on its east-west course linking the abbeys at Strata Florida and Abbey Cwmhir.

2. Other features and matters of interest

Field Boundaries

There are no records of field systems surviving from the pre-historic period, although survey on the ground may discover new information. Enclosures relating to the medieval longhouses and building platforms have been mentioned above and aerial photographs may help identify any distinctive ploughing patterns.

At some point prior to the General Inclosure Act of 1801 (see below), probably in the early C18th, a number of pieces of land around the valleys in this area were enclosed. These included the land

along the north slope of the Marteg Valley, east of the spur later pierced by the railway tunnel and up the valley of the Marcheini Fawr. Existing field boundaries on the Reserve often still follow these enclosure patterns, which were shown on the Tithe Survey of 1839 (see below).

A number of pollarded or hedge laid boundaries were identified on site but there has been no recording or dating of these features.

Historic Maps and Land Enclosure

The Inclosure Acts (or 'Enclosure Acts') were a series of Acts of Parliament which enclosed open fields and common land in the country, creating legal property rights to land that was previously considered common.

A report by the RCAHMW identifies that sometime before the General Inclosure Act of 1801 some of the land at Gilfach was enclosed. No record of any relevant Act or enclosure agreement exists but it is speculated that this land was enclosed probably well before the mid-eighteenth century. The land at Gilfach was on the north slope of the Marteg Valley, east of the spur on which is located the Bronze Age cairn. The fields in this area are registered as being held by two holdings: Lechan and Rhiwrhiad, part of the Glanrafon estate. Lechan was probably worked as part of Gilfach Farm as it had no separate homestead. It is possible that this was the first area to be enclosed as the boundaries of the holding are banks with hedging and revetted by orthostats with internal boundaries of banks and hedging alone. Rhiwrhiad had its own homestead and is identified on later maps as Rhiwrhudd. Most of the holding of Rhiwrhiad has bank and ditch enclosure with only rare use of orthostats. The present cottage of Rhiw Riad is in the same location but only dates to the late C18th or early C19.

Tithe maps were produced between 1838 and 1850 following the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 as a part of the process to ensure that all tithes were paid with money rather than produce. They are the most detailed maps of their period and there are over a thousand of them covering more than 95% of Wales. The maps vary in detail and many of them do not have place names on them, but they all have associated apportionment documents which indicate how much tithe was due by the affected residents.

The Tithe map of this area dates from 1839 and provides some useful information regarding the land ownership and tenure of the enclosed land as well as field names indicating the use of the land (see Appendix C). Only the already enclosed useful agricultural land to the far east of the Gilfach site was enclosed leaving the majority of the site as common land.

The first and second edition Ordnance survey maps have very little to add to understanding the historic development of the Gilfach area apart from showing the line of the railway.

3. Issues and opportunities

There are a number of areas where there are opportunities for the interpretation plan to assist with managing and interpreting the historic landscape and its development, providing opportunities for community engagement and for undertaking further research.

3.1 The Research Agenda for Wales

The Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales identifies the following research questions, which future work at Gilfach could help to address:

Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age Wales (4000BC – 1500BC)

Understanding Monuments - Following recent field assessment and cataloguing, the different types of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments need to be understood through topographical analysis, environmental sampling, dating and re-examining material from past excavations.

Where were the settlements? - Few settlements of the Neolithic or earlier Bronze Age monument builders are known, creating a need to review cropmarks and artefact distributions, and consider targeted surface collection and sample excavation.

How did the prehistoric population use the landscape? – There is a need to examine the vicinities of monuments to identify field systems, seek evidence from natural channels and bogs, and examine the sources and uses of raw materials.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age Wales (1500BC – AD43)

Settlement and land use – we need to identify undefended settlements, understand their relationship with defended sites and study land use and agricultural practices.

The Environment in Wales – environmental analysis is needed to establish the impact of climate deterioration on agriculture and society in the later Bronze Age.

Ritual and burial – it is important to identify sites that can tell us about ritual and burial, and provide human remains for study.

Roman Wales (AD43 – AD410)

Archaeology of the early campaign years – new site evidence has begun to question previous interpretations.

Early Medieval Wales (410 – 1100)

Settlement and society – fundamental work is needed to establish the hierarchy of secular settlement types and analyse regional and chronological differences.

Economy – greater understanding is needed of the exploitation of land and resources, climate change, crafts and mechanisms of exchange.

The early medieval church – more needs to be known of the process of Christian conversion, the evolution of religious sites and the broader impact of the church.

Medieval Wales (1100 – 1539)

Settlement – deeper, more intensive studies of secular settlement sites of different status together with their landscapes are needed, including excavations and environmental work.

Land use – there is need for better identification of land use in the Middle Ages, including the testing of current assumptions about function and date.

Industry – There is a lack of coherent knowledge of the locations, products and markets of medieval industries in Wales.

Post Medieval Wales (1539 – 1750)

Quantification – the rate of survival in this period creates opportunities to study regional patterns and changes over time, but this requires systematic assessment of the resource.

Settlement – changes in rural settlement and vernacular housing between the medieval and post-medieval periods should be better understood.

Economic change – changing agricultural, horticultural and industrial practices on the lands lost by the monasteries should be studied.

Land boundaries – interdisciplinary studies of parkland and field boundaries are needed to identify their value as ecological and archaeological resources.

Industrial and modern Wales (1750 – present)

Transport corridors – further study is needed to establish the significance of the canals, roads, railways and ports of Wales.

The Palaeoenvironment in Wales

Did Neolithic populations become more sedentary with the development of agriculture?

How did practices in animal and plant husbandry change?

In what periods is it possible to recognise seasonal exploitation or transhumance?

3.2 Specific Opportunities and Issues at Gilfach

- Opportunity for increasing visitor understanding / providing interpretation for archaeological features
- Many opportunities for archaeological research, fieldwork and survey
- Desire lines may be causing damage to features, interpretation could help to manage this sensitive landscape
- Maintain grass and heather cover but manage bracken, gorse and woody plants
- Restrict grazing
- Opportunity to date features
- Lack of knowledge of some features – opportunities for research, fieldwork and survey
- Sites not well identified or known
- Possible opportunities to understand more regarding the Roman occupation of Mid Wales
- Lack of correlation between different reliable historical sources, e.g. Coflein and Historic Environment Record - need for research and fieldwork to clarify
- Explore the connection to Monks Trod and monastic expansion
- Links with long distance historic walking trails
- Several other ‘Monk’s Trod’ walks in the UK, especially in Yorkshire, Cumbria...
- Gilfach farmhouse is a tenanted property which will need careful management
- Byre available for interpretation / shelter
- Some lack of maintenance of Gilfach farmhouse
- Physical access across much of the reserve is restricted for those less mobile

- Installation of some (e.g. permanent) interpretation may need Listed Building Consent – opportunity for freestanding or movable media or live interpretation
- Research Glanrafon estate links

3.3 Reading Gilfach's Landscape: Community Archaeology Project

The rich diversity of features and periods, the lack of existing field work and research, and the possibility of helping to answer questions for Wales' archaeological research framework make Gilfach an ideal site for a community archaeology project.

Project aims: to record and further understand the archaeology of the Gilfach Reserve in order to address questions raised by the archaeological research agenda for Wales and to help understand the historic development of the Cambrians, The Wye Valley, Radnorshire and Mid Wales. To involve local communities with researching, understanding and learning about their heritage. To train local communities and staff at the reserve in researching, identifying and managing archaeological landscapes. To disseminate information about the heritage at Gilfach. To mitigate negative impacts on the archaeological resource at Gilfach.

Possible partners: Cadw, RCAHMW, Clywd Powys Archaeological Trust, Rhayader Museum, The Radnorshire Museum, Powys County Council, Cambrian Archaeological Association, The Council for British Archaeology, Young Archaeologists Club, the Radnorshire Society, St Harmon Community Council, Rhayader Town Council, Welsh Water and Elan Valley Visitor Centre, Rhayader by Nature, Universities, local schools, community groups and individuals.

Project activity ideas:

- Archaeological fieldwork – survey, recording, field walking, accurate mapping of archaeological features and possible sample excavation or environmental sampling
- Identification and mapping of historic field boundaries
- Fieldwork addressing specific research questions
- Creation of an Ysbyty Field
- Talks, training events and workshops
- Guided walks / tours – e.g. meet the archaeologist
- Food from the landscape – historical food / cooking events, oat field etc
- Archival and historic research, including aerial photography, historic maps and documents etc
- Development of interpretation, e.g. talks, trails, exhibitions, leaflets, website, interpretative art, experimental archaeology (e.g. bronze age round house, shepherd's hut etc), costumed interpretation, historical treasure hunts etc
- Development of a 'Reading Gilfach's Landscape' field guide or toolkit which can be used by visitors, schools, community groups and by other communities for researching their areas
- Medieval Fair
- Creation of a high quality academic Gilfach Historic Landscape book (with RCAHMW etc)
- Historic craft days
- Historic Agricultural Fete / Festival with demonstrations and exhibits of historic machinery and tools, horticultural competition for historic varieties of vegetables, flower / plant arrangements with hedgerow plants, historic cookery

- Links with the Council for British Archaeology's Festival of Archaeology

4. Glossary

Cairn: an intentionally-laid pile or collection of stones, stacked without mortar. Thought to have meanings associated with marking property ownership or control, such as a landmark, a territorial marker, or a grave marker. The word is occasionally used to mean a specific type of rock-covered burial.

Cruck truss: two blades or curved timbers forming a triangular frame, several of which would form the substantial frame of a building.

Hall house: a vernacular building of timber frame or stone with the majority of the building consisting of a large hall or open area with an open or chimney hearth for living, eating, cooking etc. Private rooms such as parlours, butteries or pantries often existed at either end of the building with the hall in the centre.

Henge: A prehistoric monument consisting of a circle of stone or wooden uprights.

Hollow way: A course of a former road, likely to be hollowed or worn into the countryside producing a flat-bottomed trough. The depth of incision depends on the underlying geology, the amount and type of road traffic and the length of time the road was in use. Hollow ways are often found near deserted settlements.

Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM): Monuments and / or archaeological remains of national importance protected through legislation. More complete structures are usually protected as Listed Buildings.

Longhouse / long hut: a free standing hut / long dwelling not on a constructed platform. One room depth with the length divided into at least two parts under the same roof with human living accommodation at one end and accommodation for livestock in the byre / barn at the other. Quintessential upland Welsh vernacular dwelling.

Orthostat: an upright stone forming part of a structure or monument, often set into the ground.

Platform: artificially constructed bases on which long huts or possibly other structures were built. Rarely with any evidence of the structure remaining. The relative rarity of surviving evidence of buildings on these platforms means that it is likely they were mostly built of degradable materials. An obvious indicator of a deserted settlement.

Upland: Land over 250m AOD. Wales has over 40% of its total land mass above 250m with almost 70% of NW Wales over this height.

Appendix A: Mapping and Identifying Heritage Assets at Gilfach

As noted above, there are some discrepancies between the two main official sources (Coflein and the Historic Environment Record) for identifying the location and type of heritage asset in a particular area. This is not uncommon and this issue is known and being looked into by the various bodies involved. Most of the discrepancies occur between the naming of the assets but it is often possible to identify them from their descriptions. Where possible this has been undertaken above in the heritage audit. This appendix shows how to access the information from both sources to assist with further work, possibly a community archaeology project as stated above, which would hope to conclusively identify location and feature and accurately map and record this.

Coflein (<http://www.coflein.gov.uk/>)

Coflein is the online database for the National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW), the national collection of information about the historic environment of Wales. Coflein allows access to details of many thousands of archaeological sites, monuments, buildings and maritime sites in Wales, together with an index to the drawings, manuscripts and photographs held in the NMRW archive collections. The search for the Gilfach site returned 48 results. The site provides a map and database with links to various records in the NMRW (This cannot be reproduced here due to copyright issues).

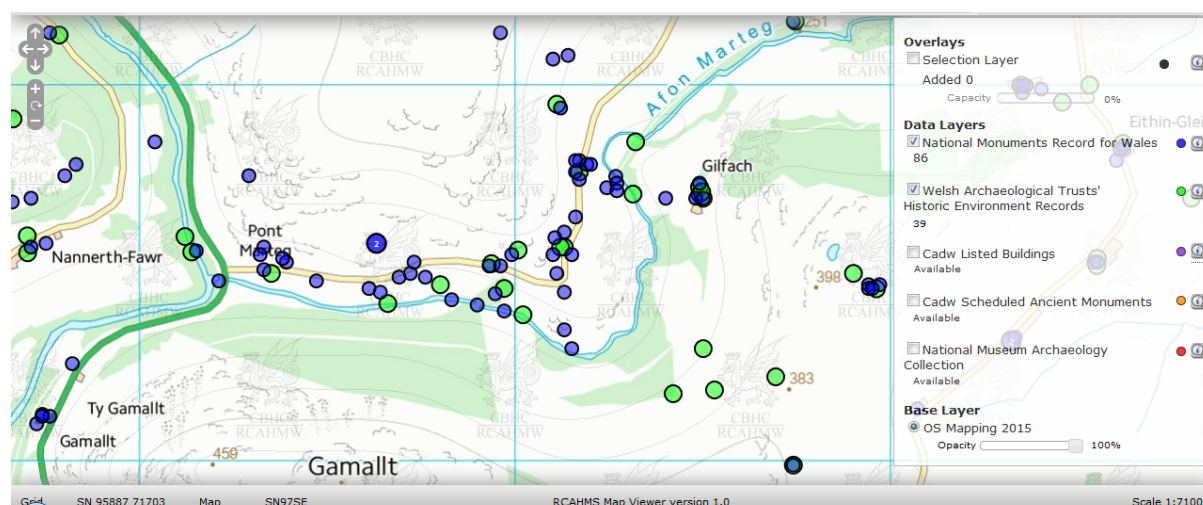
Historic Environment Records (Archwilio)

(<http://www.cofiadurcahcymru.org.uk/arch/index.html>)

Archwilio is the online access system to the Historic Environment Records (HERs) of Wales. The system has been developed through a partnership of the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts to provide wider public access to this resource. The four regional historic environment records compiled and maintained by the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts aim to provide a comprehensive catalogue of archaeological and historical sites and finds of all periods throughout Wales. The search through Archwilio returned 38 results. The site provides a map and database with links to various records in the NMRW (This cannot be reproduced here due to copyright issues).

Historic Wales (<http://historicwales.gov.uk>)

The recently developed Historic Wales portal allows you to view the records held by each organisation on the same map. The map below shows the overlaps and discrepancies between these two datasets.



Appendix B: Gilfach Railway Bridge

Information relating to consideration for inclusion of the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest.



“A skew-arched bridge, carrying the former Mid-Wales Railway formation (nprn 303234) across the Afon Marteg some 700m east of Abermarteg. Constructed of coursed stone blocks with brick barrel-vault, the bridge is some 18m long and the span is about 9m.”¹

Grid Reference: SN9589871416

This structure is located on the Gilfach Reserve, Radnorshire, Powys and is a stone built bridge / tunnel with skewed brick arch over the River Marteg. The construction date appears to have been between 1859 and 1863 with the Mid- Wales line formally opening in 1864. The engineer on this line was Benjamin Piercy, a local man from Montgomeryshire, with international credentials for railway construction and notable for being involved with virtually every engineering project that brought railways into Wales.

¹ RCAHMW. 2011. Coflein Entry for Abermarteg, Railway Bridge

The Mid Wales Railway was unlike the railway lines which survive today in Wales as it was designed to link several quite significant rural centres and the key regional towns in central Wales (primarily Llanidloes, Rhayader, Builth Wells and Brecon). It ran through some of the most picturesque and rural parts of the country and was part of the through route from South Wales to Cheshire, providing an alternative to the mainline Hereford / Shrewsbury route. It ran from Llanidloes to Talylyn, near Brecon. In 1854 the map of Welsh railways showed absolutely nothing in central or western Wales, the vast majority of the country having no rail connection. The northern Welsh line ran from Chester across to Caenarvon and Holyhead and the southern connected Cardiff (and routes into England) with Swansea and Carmarthen, both with some minor branch lines. Along the English border, ran the Cardiff, Hereford, Shrewsbury to Chester line. The railway lines which survive today, now (as then), in essence, connect Welsh communities with England rather than linking Welsh places together. The North, Mid, and South Wales rail networks all remain distinct entities today, without the connecting north-south link. The Mid Wales railway is interesting in that it faced some extremely challenging geographic obstacles and to succeed politically where other proposals had failed. In addition to the challenges of the gradient, 20 crossings of the Dulas, Marteg, Ithon and Wye rivers were needed. The Mid Wales Railway can be seen as a relic of a unique achievement in Welsh history.

Mid Wales Railway River Bridges

<i>River</i>	<i>Location</i>
Dulas	1/2 mile south of Penpontbren
Dulas	North of Tylwch
Dulas	North of Tylwch
Dulas	North of Tylwch
Dulas	South of Tylwch
Dulas	North of Glan-yr-Afon
Dulas	South of Glan-yr-Afon
Dulas	South of Glan-yr-Afon
Marteg	Pantydawr
Marteg	St Harmon
Marteg	East of Marteg tunnel
Marteg	East of Marteg tunnel
Wye (Gilfach bridge)	at Aber Marteg
Wye	South of Rhayader
Wye	Doldowlod
Wye	Newbridge
Ithon	at confluence with Wye
Iboway	1 mile north of Llanstephan
Wye	Boughrood
Llynfi	Trefeinon

The Mid Wales Railway company was formed in 1859 and parliamentary approval was received on 1 August for the northern section of the line.

Approval for the southern section was received on 3 July 1860. The formal opening ceremony was held on 23rd August 1864. The physical remains of the Mid Wales Railway line lie in their entirety within today's county of Powys, as the southernmost section from Builth to Llandovery was never constructed.

The constructed line was 46.7 miles long and carried both goods and passenger trains, although the size and therefore the weight of engine was restricted due to the gradients and many bridges.

In 1904 the Mid Wales Railway company was merged into Cambrian Railways. During World War I, passenger trains were withdrawn to allow the north-south link to provide a key role in allowing Welsh coal to be moved to Warrington and onto Scarpa Flow for use by the Royal Navy. The withdrawal of passenger trains allowed the maximum number of 'Jellicoe Specials' to run both day and night to feed the war machine. At this period signal boxes were manned 24 hours a day. The amount of coal required by the navy was phenomenal and the line became a key component in the supply chain for the armed forces. The task of taking essential Welsh coal to the north was a major headache for the Government, as on other lines the coal trains had to compete with troop and munitions trains.

Another key event on the Mid Wales Railway in this period was the journey of King George V to Bronllys to open the Welsh National Memorial Hospital in July 1920. In 1921 the railway was released from Government control and in 1922 it became part of the famed Great Western Railway. Nationalisation occurred in 1948 but brought little change. The line was finally closed as part of the Beeching cuts in 1962. The Stevenson Locomotive Society ran the last train on the line on December 30th 1962 with the journey being undertaken in heavy snow during one of Wales' worst winters. The objectors at the time highlighted the importance of the line as a through line rather than a branch line of just local importance². Nevertheless, after a century of service the all Welsh Mid Wales line, as many others, closed, never to re-open.

The structure was purchased in the late 1960s by Mr H Lewis, owner of Gilfach Farm and the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust purchased the farm from his estate in 1987. It remains today in the ownership of the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust. The Gilfach bridge survives as a remnant of Welsh social history, publically accessible on the Wye Valley Walk, within the Gilfach Nature reserve: an outstanding landscape location with excellent public access.

Historic interest: illustrates an important aspect of the Nation's social history: i.e. the coming of the railways and importantly a north-south link through the country.

Historical association: *with events of importance to Wales:* i.e. the coming of the railways, the importance of the line during World War I and the association with the opening of the National Memorial Hospital. *With people of importance to Wales:* i.e. with engineer Benjamin Piercy.

Group value: It is considered that this structure has group value with the tunnel, embankment and trackbed in the Marteg Valley and with all other surviving structures along the length of the now defunct Mid-Wales Railway, which was an important and unrepeated innovation to introduce rail communications across the most rural areas of Mid-Wales and join up important rural centres. The

² Kidner, R.W. 2003. *The Mid-Wales Railway*. P149

Gilfach Railway Bridge along with Marteg tunnel, halt and railway cutting in the Marteg Valley, survive as examples of structures on this rural line that exemplify the character of the line and the quality of work which went into these structures.

Supporting comment by Mark Walters, CPAT: “The bridge is certainly interesting and the skewed brickwork in the arch is particularly impressive and quite an engineering achievement...”

Other Structures on the Mid Wales Railway line

As far as can be ascertained no other structures connected with this railway line have been Listed except for the former railway station at Llanidloes. This is perhaps an oversight considering the historic importance of this railway, the well preserved remains and the retention of the greater part of its line as a landscape feature across Powys.

Other surviving buildings and structures of interest along the line include the preserved signal box, at Erwood Craft Centre, now housing a Radnorshire Wildlife Trust information centre and bird viewing hide. This signal box was relocated from Newbridge-on-Wye in 2004. Erwood station is now the craft centre and also provides interpretation about the Mid Wales Railway. The station building at Twylch has been converted into residential accommodation, ‘Twylch Halt’, and the former station buildings at Rhayader now serve as a depot for the County Council. At Three Cocks a concrete memorial commemorates the date of the station closure. There are also a number of other bridges surviving, some of which have been reworked to carry farm roads while only the piers survive of others.

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http://www.archiveswales.org.uk/anw/get_collection.php?inst_id=1&coll_id=39_6&expand=

(Summary of the archival holding GB 0210 PIERCY Administrative and biographical history: Benjamin Piercy (1827-1888), National Library of Wales)

<http://www.erwood-station.co.uk/about-us/history-of-erwood-a-local-area.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mid_Wales_Railway

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambrian_Railways

RCAHMW. 2011. Coflein Entry for Abermarteg, Railway Bridge

Appendix C: 1839 Tithe Map



Fields: 252 – 257

Holding name: Lechan

Landowner: Oliver David

Occupier: Meredith Powell

Field Names: 252 Lower pasture, 253 Square piece, 254 Cae Bach (Little field), 255 Cae Bach, 256 Upper pasture, 257 Upper pasture

Fields: 258 – 272

Holding Name: Rhiwrhudd

Landowner: Oliver David

Occupier: Edward Powell

Field names: 258 Lone pasture, 259 New piece, 260 Cae Bach, 261 Homestead, 262 -264 Plock, 265 – 266 Not described, 267 piece below the house, 268 Y Ddol (The meadow), 270 Y Ddol, 271 Llayn?, 272 Middle meadow

Field 269

Holding name: Gilfach

Landowner: Oliver David?

Occupier: Meredith Powell?

Filed Name: 269 piece beyond river

Appendix D: Resources

Primary resources

1836 Tithe map

1st and 2nd Ed. Ordnance Survey maps

Clywd Powys Archaeological Trust: Historic Environment Record (Archwilio)

Cadw. Scheduled Ancient Monument Report RD204

Cadw, Listed Building Description 8732

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW): National Monuments Record of Wales (Coflein)

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Tir Gofal Archaeological Report (2000): Radnor Wildlife Trust, Gilfach, St Harmon, Rhayader

Secondary resources

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