

# Farmsteads and their landscapes in Bannau Brycheiniog National Park

CHARACTER STATEMENT



Bannau  
Brycheiniog



Cadw



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# Introduction and Summary

## Using this Document

This document is intended to provide an overview of the main characteristics of traditional farm buildings in Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park, to help inform and stimulate research, support community initiatives, aid decision-making in the planning process and agri-environment grant schemes. It places farmsteads in the context of their landscapes, showing how people have adapted, lived in, used and shared the resources of the National Park, and then sets out the different types of farmsteads and buildings that you are likely to find before considering how they contribute to local landscape character. It also sets out the significance of farmsteads and their buildings in the landscape of the National Park and questions to guide future research, before finally listing the sources that have been used in this document. Local placenames have been used throughout the document, except when referring to the titles of published documents, including the LCA titles. There is also an appendix with a glossary of terms and their Welsh equivalents.



View along a medieval routeway into the farmyard at Tyn-y-llwyn, Partrishow (The Black Mountains), showing on the left the stables and farmhouse, and on the right the threshing barn. Photo © Jeremy Lake

## SUMMARY

This section summarises Sections 1 to 3 of this document.

### Historic development and landscape context

Farmsteads make a fundamental contribution to the cultural landscape of the National Park, including routeways, fields, woodland and open grazing land as well as the rich information provided by place names. There are strong distinctions between the lowland valleys where estates and the largest farms have developed and the upland valleys where family farms have remained as a fundamental part of local life and culture. Many farms throughout the National Park also had access to the upland commons, which have been an important source of wealth as summer pastures and for their rich variety of resources. They have retained the best-preserved evidence in the National Park for farming and settlement dating from the prehistoric period.

The evidence in parts of the National Park for 15th to 17th century building and rebuilding testifies to the wealth that farmers and local gentry (known as *uchelwyr*) derived from the more fertile river valleys and that upland farmers obtained from the droving industry. Over the 18th century, farmers' clubs and agricultural societies played a significant role in sharing and developing ideas about new farming techniques, the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society being the earliest agricultural society in Britain. The rebuilding of farmsteads that continued into the 19th century took place alongside the reorganisation of farmland, the enclosure of open grazing land, the development of estates and the industrial development of quarrying, mining and iron production. At the end of the 19th century the proportion of land devoted to arable crops declined and, by the 1930s, it was mostly confined to the more fertile valleys. Abandoned farmsteads also bear witness to depopulation in some areas, as people moved from country to town.

In recent decades structural changes in the farming industry have required farmers to construct new buildings that economise on labour and conform to animal welfare regulations, and the future of historic farm buildings is increasingly dependent on finding a use for which they were not originally intended.

### Farmstead and building types

Farmsteads are places where the farmhouse and some or all of the working farm buildings are located. They have been shaped by the development of agricultural practices, the result being an immense range in their type, scale, form and use of materials. While surviving farmhouses often date back to the 17th century or earlier, most *traditional farm buildings* date from the 19th century. An important characteristic of farmsteads in the National Park is their rich mix of different types and sizes, from the large courtyard farms found in arable farming areas to the smallest upland farms. Some of the earliest dateable buildings are *longhouses*, which were built with a single entrance to the dwelling and the cow house at its downslope end. Surviving examples date from the 15th to the early 17th centuries, and were commonly adapted through the conversion of their cow houses to domestic use. **Linear farmsteads**, where the house and working buildings are attached and in-line, scattered groups of buildings (**dispersed plans**) and small-scale **courtyard plans** dominate the uplands and upland fringe. The largest farmsteads, including those in the arable farms of the river valleys and on the estates of the local gentry in all areas, have usually developed as **courtyard farms**.

Most farmsteads in the National Park have **barns, stables and housing for cattle** dating from the 17th century onwards: these include **threshing barns** and **combination barns**, which are partly or fully floored and have storage for grain, hay and corn set alongside or above housing for animals and sometimes carts. The largest are found on gentry and high-status farms and in the river valleys, reflecting the need for more space to process and house crops. Larger **stables** and **cart sheds** were also needed to house horses to work the land, take goods to market and cart manure from farmyards to fields. **Barns, stables and cart sheds** are typically smaller in scale in upland areas. Dairies were usually within or attached to the farmhouse, close to **pigsties** and sometimes calf houses. Surviving **bakehouses, cider houses and malthouses** are now very rare, as also are **bee boles** and **goose cots**.

### Materials and detail

The use of timber was general throughout the medieval period and into the 17th century. Locally quarried limestone and sandstone for walling and roof tiles came into more general use from the late 17th century, and in all its variety makes a critical contribution to local distinctiveness in the National Park. Other distinctive details are fittings such as stall and granary partitions and historic doors, windows, flooring and graffiti.

## The landscape setting and area variations

The farmed landscapes of the National Park comprise:

- the upland valleys where 15th-17th century longhouses and linear plans derived from them are concentrated, sometimes with additional yards and buildings which were either dispersed or set around one or more sides of a yard
- the broad river valleys of the Tywi, the Usk, the Wye and its tributaries, where the largest courtyard farms, including manorial centres and the houses of the gentry, developed
- the southern valleys and slopes, where many small farms and smallholdings were sustained by by-employment in local industries.

### *Towy Valley Foothills (Area 1)*

This area to the west of the National Park, between Mynydd Du (Area 2) and the Tywi Valley, has a high density of historic farmstead sites, many relating to field patterns established by the 17th century, but very few recorded buildings of this date. The smallest farms are clustered in areas of rural industry, such as the quarries near Dre-fach to the south of Llandeilo. The largest courtyard farms and their associated fields are found in the more open landscapes to the centre and north of the area and on the sites of high-status medieval farms.

### *The southern valleys (Areas 4, 8, 9,10 and 15)*

The southern valleys, sheltered by the uplands to the north and extending eastwards towards the Blorengel summit and slopes, have a strong physical and historic link to the industrial valleys to the south. The evidence for 17th century and earlier buildings is much less common than further north and east, although many of their surrounding fields had been enclosed by this date. Small-scale farmsteads are also clustered in areas of rural industry, and industrial wealth also funded the improvement of land and the building of new farmsteads in some areas.

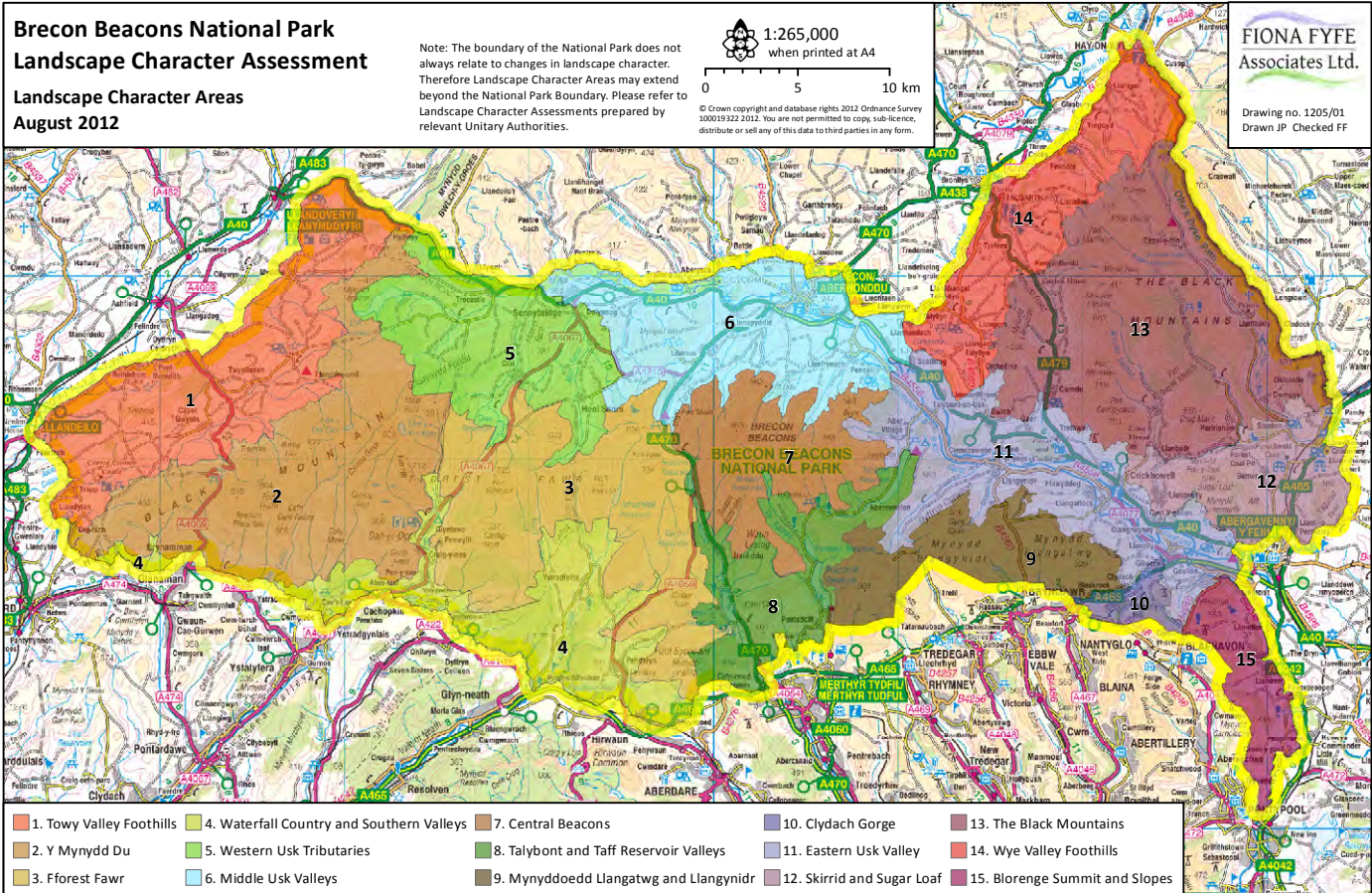
### *The Usk and Wye Valleys and their tributaries (Areas 5, 6, 11 and 14)*

This is an area of contrasts. Courtyard farms with large barns developed around manorial centres and gentry houses in the main river valleys, where estate landscapes may also have a designed appearance. Upland and upland fringe landscapes had easier access to summer pastures where the rearing of cattle was a much more important part of farming life: these have much higher densities of smaller farmsteads including 15th-17th century longhouses and linear farmsteads, set within fields mostly enclosed by the 17th century.

### *Black Mountains, Skirrid and Sugar Loaf (Areas 12 and 13)*

This area is notable in a regional and British context for the high number of 15th-17th century longhouses, houses and barns, and for its wide variety of different types of farmstead layouts and farm buildings. They are also set within irregular and sometimes semi-regular fields mostly established by the 17th century, with access to ancient woodland and mountain pastures.





Map of the Brecon Beacons showing the Landscape Character Areas into which it has been subdivided. Dominating the Brecon Beacons are the uplands that lie above the moorland line 2: Y Mynydd Du (the Black Mountain), 3: Fforest Fawr, 7: Central Beacons and 9: Mynyddoedd Llangatwg and Llangynidr. Upland valley farms are found throughout the area, dominating the valleys of the Western Usk Tributaries (5), Skirrid and Sugar Loaf(12) and that of the Black Mountains (13). The valley farms along the southern side of the National Park are closely associated with rural industrial settlements and the legacy of industries dating from the 17th century 4: Waterfall Country and Southern Valleys, 8: Tal-y-bont and Taf Reservoir Valleys, 10: Clydach Gorge and 15: Blorenge summit and slopes). The largest-scale farms have developed with access to relatively fertile cornlands and meadows in the Usk Valley (6 and 11) and around the Tywi Valley (1) to the west of the National Park, and extending along the Wye Valley (14).© Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2021. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021



# 1 Farmsteads and their landscapes





# PART 1

## Farmsteads and their landscapes

### 1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Like the landscapes in which they sit, historic farmsteads were influenced by local patterns of farming, landownership, communications, urban development and industry, as well as the nature and intensity of earlier land use

#### **Prehistory and the Romano-British period**

Evidence for settlements and their associated fields dates from the middle of the Bronze Age, in around 1,500 BC, and is concentrated in the mountains and moorland of the National Park, overlooking the settled and farmed valleys where the evidence is now far more elusive. The Roman occupation, from about AD 75, was dominated by training and marching camps, forts and roads. There is some evidence – as elsewhere in Wales – for the continuation of Romano-British elites, estates and settlements after the Roman legions left, up to and possibly even beyond the emergence of the first British kingdoms (the most significant here being Brycheiniog) in the 8th and 9th centuries (Charles-Edwards 2013).

#### **The medieval period**

As elsewhere in much of Wales and parts of England, all medieval farmers had access to ploughland and meadow, usually on a shared basis, as well as areas of rough grazing in areas of scrubby upland fringe pasture (*ffridd*) and on mountain pastures (see pages 15-16). The dominant settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads was established by the 11th century, well before the Norman conquest of Brycheiniog in 1093. Larger settlements and estate centres were by then concentrated in the river valleys of the Wye, Usk and their tributaries, together with churches and ecclesiastical sites marked by 7th- to 9th-century inscribed and decorative stones. These settlements, which were much smaller than the villages of the English Midlands with their extensive open fields, typically had a *llys* (court), a *maerdref* ('bailiff's farm') and the houses of bondsmen who undertook free labour in return for access to farmland, grazing and other means of subsistence (Britnell 2006, 22–25 and 60–64; Silvester 2019, 95). Many of the large gentry houses and farmsteads sited close to churches may have origins in this period as estate centres.

Medieval estates played a key role in agricultural development except within the Great Forest of Brecknock (Fforest Fawr), which became hunting forest after the Norman Conquest (Rees 1966, 5-11). Monastic holdings also played a leading role in the clearance of land and the creation of new farms, such as around Talgarth and Mynydd Troed, including Trewalkin, where the monks of Brecon Priory were clearing woodland in the early 1200s (Silvester and Hankinson 2013, 18; Coplestone-Crowe 1993, 43-9). Other monastic foundations with land and grange farms included Llanthony Priory (Augustinian) to the east and Abaty Talylychau (Talley Abbey, Premonstratensian) with its grange farm at Dolhywel just inside the western border of the National Park (Leighton 2012, 129). The earthwork and ruinous remains of medieval buildings at high altitudes in the National Park suggest that there was some retreat from marginal land as a result of the worsening climatic conditions and epidemics of the 14th century (Silvester 2006a, 25–6).





A view into the Vale of Ewyas with the remains of Llanthony Abbey. Photo © N Forster



An abandoned settlement at Tro'r Derlwyn to the north of Brynamman on Y Mynydd Du to the west of the park. Photo © Alice Thorne



## The late medieval and post-medieval periods

The evidence for building and rebuilding from the 15th century, first seen in the reroofing of churches and the building of manor and gentry houses (Suggett 2017, 28-33), testifies to a period of growing wealth. This was stimulated by the growth of markets, particularly Brecon but also important being Hay-on-Wye and Abergavenny to the east and Llandovery and Llandeilo to the west. Surveys in the National Park have revealed evidence, broadly from this period, for the establishment of new upland farmsteads within their own fields in valley-side positions, the shrinkage of valley settlements with bondsmen's houses, the abandonment of some farmsteads on the edges of common land and the decline of some of the summer grazing grounds (Silvester 2006, 38). This pattern has been noted in other parts of Wales (Austin 2019, 114) and fell into a period of increasing agricultural prosperity, the development of the droving industry being particularly significant in this respect (Powell 2007, 152-4).

In this period many peasant farmers were investing their surplus income in the building of longhouses (see pages 29-30) with single-bay halls and secure housing for cattle at the downslope end. These are a particularly important and distinctive type of building. Some date from the 15th century but most date from the period after the abolition of bond tenancies (where Welsh law still applied) had been sealed by the 1536 Act of Union. It has also been suggested that the stalling of cattle at the lower end of farmhouses offered some security from cattle theft which, as in other parts of Wales and the northern borders of England, was a regular occurrence into the 17th century (Suggett 2006, 187-8).



The farmhouse at Llywncelyn, sited on to the east of the National Park and restored by the Landmark Trust, was historically associated with Llanthony Abbey and became a prosperous farm in the post-medieval period. It retains an early 15th century open hall (with ceiling and fireplace inserted 1696) with a contemporary storeyed cross-wing at the upper end of the hall. The barn dates from the 17th century. Photo © Sam Hale



Tŷ Mawr, on the eastern edge of Llyn Syfaddan, is sited close to a Norman motte and became the manorial court for the local parish. The house which originates from the 15th century (this range now largely demolished) and farm buildings, including a large 17th century barn, underwent extensive remodelling in around 1800 and was further developed as a large working farm. Photo © Sam Hale

Gentry houses built or adapted from the late 16th century displayed their wealth in fine parlours and even parlour wings. From the late 17th century estates increasingly began to buy out leases, charge market rents and enlarge and rationalise farms where this was possible. Farmers in the upland valleys, however, continued to benefit from long hereditary tenancies into the 19th century (Richardson 2014, 165). Again as elsewhere, these new houses influenced the transformation of longhouses with new parlour wings or by converting the cowhouse next to the main entrance into a parlour (see pages 29-30, and also Suggett 2017 for a summary of these developments).

The rate of building the cottages (*tyddyn*) of smallholders and landless cottagers next to or within unenclosed land – including after its acquisition by the Crown in 1521 the area of Fforest Fawr – also increased from the 16th century. These houses were commonly built across the slope, in contrast to longhouses, and often had small enclosures for growing potatoes and for livestock (Britnell 2006, 23; Silvester 2006, 33; Silvester 2007, 63-66; Suggett 2005, 256–259).

### 18th and 19th century improvement

The gentry and farmers in arable areas went on to play a fundamental role in agricultural improvement, exchanging ideas and also amalgamating, enclosing and reorganising farmland and areas of rough grazing. Over most of the 18th century, and apart from the growing industrial areas and ports to the south, the main market centres for Welsh farmers and traders exporting livestock and wool continued to lie to the east in England. Some farms, and especially those in the corn-growing river valleys, became yet larger and more diverse in the way in which they used new crops and rotations; this drove the reorganisation of fields and the enclosure of more areas of long-pasture. Farmers' clubs and agricultural societies played a significant role in sharing and developing ideas about new farming techniques, such as the rotations of crops using turnips and clover and the use of fertilisers such as lime. The earliest agricultural society in Britain, the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society, was founded in Brecon in 1755: a key early figure was the famous preacher Howell Harris (1714–1773), working from his farm at Trefeca near Talgarth (Edmunds 1957, 32). Walter Davies, the author of one of the reports for the government's Board of Agriculture, described the agricultural society as a 'sociable fraternity of landed proprietors' (Davies 1815, 128): 'Their improvements gradually extended to the remotest corners of the county; even in the hundreds of Dyfynog and Bualt, we recognised the superior buildings and farm-yards of the Brecon Society.'

Davies did not paint a wholly rosy picture: he noted a need for better housing and granaries, better yard management for the collection of manure and the problems that were created by leases which left tenants to pay for essential repairs and infrastructure (Davies 1815, 130–133). By 1815 the Society had also been particularly active in introducing Hereford cattle to replace or be crossed with the native Welsh Blacks, root crops to help raise yields and feed cattle over the winter and horses to pull the new lighter ploughs. It was also active in encouraging the enclosure of common land, which saw a massive reduction in extent over the next 150 years, and the improvement of roads (Edmunds 1957, 53–55). The period between 1750 and 1880, and especially the capital-intensive 'High Farming' years of the 1840s to the 1870s, saw a particularly sharp increase in corn production. The rebuilding of farmsteads played a key role to help deliver this. The introduction of the rail network into the area from the 1860s also had a profound effect, further stimulating the growth of settlements and markets and enabling the rapid transport of dairy produce and livestock to urban markets in south Wales and England. It also hastened the end of the droving industry. The same period witnessed a rapid development of an urban and industrial economy covering much of south Wales with a focus on coal mining, iron and steel manufacture and the smelting of copper ore imported from Cornwall. There was an associated rapid population increase.



View from the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal to the farmstead at Brynhyfryd (Bloreng Summit and Slopes, LCA 15), Llanover. The 17th century house has datestones of 1762 and 1765, and was remodelled after the building of the canal in the 1790s. The farm buildings were also built at this time. Photo © Jeremy Lake



Leases show that since the 16th century landlords had required tenants to improve their houses and farm buildings, including through the replacement of timber-framed barn walls with stone (Suggett 2017, 45). By the 19th century, despite or because of criticism and a growing movement for land reform, some estates took the lead in funding the construction of new farm buildings - while sometimes requiring tenants to contribute through labour, transport or in other ways. Estates invested in the building of large farmsteads, often in a single phase, in the river valleys and in some moorland settings where enclosure and other forms of land improvement were undertaken. The estates ranged from those that in time-honoured way had been consolidating their holdings over generations through acquisition and marriage (the Morgans of Tredegar for example) to those acquired with the profits of industry, most notably the development from the 1820s - from its base near Crickhowell in the Usk Valley - of the huge Glanusk estate by the ironmaster Joseph Bailey (see Davies 2014). Estates have had a very visible impact on the landscape, including the development of farmsteads, houses and other buildings in distinctive styles, along the Usk and the other fertile river valleys including the Buckland estates of the Gwynne-Holford family and the Camden estate around Trecastle and Brecon. Some, such as the Beaufort estate, a strong supporter of the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society, laid down conditions in their leases for the repair of buildings, the planting of trees and hedges and the building and maintenance of dry-stone walls. In the upland valleys, investment by estates is harder to detect and agricultural writers were quick to comment on tough conditions for tenants due to less favourable and shorter-term leases: here farmers relied on access to extensive common land and could not do much more than grow sufficient corn to feed the family and their livestock (mostly oats and rye) and to put down as seed for the following year.

In addition to the large established estates there were numerous smaller estates often comprising a dozen or more farms amassed over time and under the ownership of the minor gentry of Brecon and surrounding communities. Some of these show long-term continuity but some changed hands multiple times in the 18th and 19th centuries.



The 18th century Priory Mill, Brecon on the river Honddu - a corn mill formerly part of the Marquis of Camden's estate. Photos © Sam Hale





Industrial lime kilns at Goytre Wharf alongside the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. Photo from Geograph, © David Martin and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence



Field kilns developed from earlier clamp kilns. Most date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Photo © Alice Thorne

## The impact of industry

Rural industries had been based since the medieval period around small-scale quarrying and mining, and particularly the use of water power to mill corn and prepare wool for making into cloth (a process known as fulling). Woollen mills developed on a larger scale in the late 18th and 19th centuries, particularly in the Tywi Valley area, taking labour away from small-scale farms and smallholders. Tramroads from the 1790s, the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal from 1812 and railways from the 1860s facilitated the import of coal, lime and other fertilisers, and opened up markets for export of meat and dairy produce (Edmunds 1957, 39). The pace of enclosure of the uplands sped up in the 1790s, with the onset of the Napoleonic Wars. Some enclosures followed encroachment on common land by squatters. Landlords often grew to tolerate the new arrivals and to draw some rent from new holdings. Mining coal and ores, iron smelting and quarrying for stone, slate and other minerals enabled small farmers working only three or four acres on the southern edges of what is now the National Park to combine farming and industry (see pages 79-91).





An abandoned farmstead on the southern edge of the Middle Usk Valleys area. Photo © Jeremy Lake



Conversion of a farmhouse to agricultural use has here left the open fireplace and a beam from the upper floor. Photo © Alice Thorne

Lime had been used as a fertiliser in Wales from the 16th century, but the quarrying of limestone and the making of slaked lime for use in improving farmland, increased markedly from the late 18th century. Many 19th century limekilns (of some significant scale) are also found along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. Scattered field lime kilns survive on farmland and across the upland commons where commoners had a right to extract and burn limestone. Also within the upland commons are industrial workings for the export of lime for use in industry and agricultural improvement, giving rise in 1821 to the Brecon Forest Tram Road from Ystradgynlais to Sennybridge (Rees 1966, 25). The tram road was instigated by John Christie from Stirling who had made his fortune in the Indian indigo trade and applied the principles of agricultural improvement to an extreme rarely matched elsewhere in the British Isles: from 1819 he enclosed a huge area of Fforest Fawr, the Great Forest (see pages 26-27).

### **The decline of small farms**

Cycles of boom and bust characterised much of the 19th century, this set against a background of rising rents for tenant farmers as old leases fell in and a general increase in agricultural productivity. The farming population declined and the abandonment of farmsteads gained pace. Small family farms in Wales, in which women played a more significant role than in England, were increasingly under pressure in the 19th century (Ashby and Evans 1944, 76; Richardson 2014). Whilst new houses were built for agricultural and other workers, industry and the attraction of urban lifestyles was also a cause of depopulation. Over the 19th century, the proportion of the population living in rural areas declined from four-fifths to one fifth, the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains being one of the areas of Wales with the highest proportion of abandoned houses in 1801 (Jenkins 2007, 175). The areas closest to the coalfields and ironworks to the south were particularly affected (Thomas 1963, 104-5). Survey work in the western part of the National Park, within the county of Carmarthenshire, has recorded many ruinous houses and farmsteads that testify to a decline in population from the second half of the 19th century (Whitcar





This photograph of the farmhouse at Blaensawdde illustrates some of the historic associations that may be discovered. It was taken during the First World War, and amongst the group are some Conscientious Objectors who amongst other tasks worked on the damming of Llyn y Fan Fach. Photo © Mary Walmsley



These buildings to the north of Brecon are rare examples of farm buildings erected under the direction of 'War Ag' committees. The pigsties were supplied with swill from Brecon Barracks. Photo © Sam Hale



Corrugated iron, the curved profile being typical of roofs from the late 19th to the mid 20th centuries. Photo © Sam Hale



A maker's plaque on a set of 1950s corrugated iron sheds. Photo © Jeremy Lake

2015). The number of woollen mills in this area testifies to the restructuring of the industry from farm-based to centralised production in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

### **The impact of the farming depression and the breaking up of estates**

Farmers weathered the impact of the farming depression of the 1870s–1930s better than many other regions, due to increased demand for meat, dairy and poultry produce and also hay and straw (Howell 1977, 12–17). The reports of the 1930s Land Utilisation Surveys testify to the expansion of the area under permanent grass as a result of these developments, buoyed up by increased demand for liquid milk and rising prices of mutton and lamb (Davies and Miller 1944, 511-17; Whyte and Howell 1943, 368 and 393).

The breaking up of the great estates, which gathered pace from the 1880s, had a massive impact on rural society. Whereas over 90% of Breconshire's land was owned by estates in 1887, by the 1970s 64% was in the hands of freeholders – many of these being the descendants of tenants who had bought their land in the decades either side of the First World War (Davies 2014, 69-70, 79-81).

As elsewhere in the country, new methods of prefabricated construction in industrial materials including corrugated iron (patented in 1836) and (to a much lesser degree) concrete were used from the late 19th century.

### **The Second World War to the present**

The Second World War also ushered in a period of change with great efforts being made to increase food production. Fields were increased in size through the use of tractors and angle dozers to remove dividing hedges, and rough pastures were drained. On some of the commons (including Llandefalle just outside the National Park), the land was cleared of bracken, ploughed with Caterpillar tractors, cultivated with disc harrows and then planted by gangs of women and schoolchildren (*The Commercial Motor* 1942, 30). Local 'War Ag' (County War Agricultural Executive) committees played a prominent role in this, alongside members of the Women's Land Army. The 'War Ags' encouraged the drainage of rough pasture and taking unproductive farms off the hands of their owners or tenants: in rare instances, they might even invest in new buildings for storing fodder and housing stock. All of this was co-ordinated out of Brecon where a central depot supplied all the machinery and employed mechanics and engineers (Moore-Colyer 2006). Later in the 1940s, teams of Italian and German prisoners of war worked on Breconshire farms, travelling from camps such as at Talgarth and Felinfach.

From the 1950s family farms have further shrunk in number, as farm sizes and the intensity of production has increased. Structural changes in the farming industry have required farmers to construct new buildings that economise on labour and conform to animal welfare regulations. The result has been the sale of many farmsteads and the redundancy of many traditional farm buildings on working farms. The future of historic farm buildings is thus increasingly dependent on finding a use for which they were not originally intended.



## 2 THE LANDSCAPE SETTING

### Introduction and place names

The scattered farmsteads of the National Park relate to a rich variety of fields (*caeau*) that extended across most the valley floors and sides by the end of the 16th century, and that later expanded further into areas of unenclosed areas of scrubby rough grazing (*ffridd*) and mountain pastures. The whole farming system depended – and still does in many areas - on co-operation, in order to ensure proper management of the *ffridd* and provide help at peak times such as the hay and corn harvest and gathering sheep for washing and shearing. The names given to farmsteads and fields are a fundamental element of their significant in the landscape, and more guidance on this is provided in Section 4.1 (see page 115).

### The upland commons

At the core of the National Park are its uplands, which have over centuries been a vital resource in terms of grazing and fuel for surrounding farms and communities. Their character as extensive open areas results in part from the clearance of the native upland forests in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. They retain extensive evidence for prehistoric ritual and burial sites, and for settlements with associated field systems from before the climate cooled between around 1000 and 500 BC. Other notable features are Roman roads and army camps, and the remains of 17th-century and later industrial activity – quarries, lime kilns and mines, tramroads and railway lines for export. Grouse shooting developed as a major activity from the early 19th century, notable in this process being the development of the former medieval hunting forest of Fforest Fawr by the Cnewr Estate and on Bloreng by the owners of the Blaenavon Ironworks. From the 19th century, reservoirs and associated water catchment systems also developed in the upland valleys.

### Farmsteads and routeways

Farmsteads are placed alongside or at the meeting point of routeways, including those providing access to upland pastures and the droveways which developed as the cattle trade grew in importance from the 15th century. Some of these remain visible as hollow ways. Straight routeways and turnpikes (dating from the 18th century to 1830s) are typically post-1750 and either cut through earlier fields or are part of late 18th- and 19th-century planned enclosure and the reorganisation of earlier farmland (Bissell 2001).



The trackway at Gorsddu which extends to Blaensawdde, the bank retained by a drystone wall. Photo © Sam Hale

One of the routeways leading down from Black Mountain to Llanddeusant. Photo © Alice Thorne





*Ffridd* at Heol Senni to the south of Defynnog, showing in the distance a farmstead sited at the junction between *ffridd* and cultivated fields extending to the valley bottom. Photo © Alice Thorne





Fields and routeways in enclosed land are typically bounded by dry-stone walls (left: as here on one of the approaches to the medieval farmstead at Llywncelyn in the Black Mountains), hedges or banks (right): which may be faced with stone or planted with hedges. Very large boulders (orthostats) may indicate the early date of walls and there is some evidence for walls and hedgerows being built over earlier clearance boundaries or banks. Photos © Sam Hale



The National Park contains miles of ancient hedgerows as well as later hedges associated with 18th and 19th century enclosures. There are different styles of hedgelaying. Each style has been developed over many years to cope with the climate of the area, different farming practices and the type of trees and shrubs that grow in the hedge. Brecon hedges are a double-brushed style and as well as using living stems, many stems are coppiced and laid in as deadwood to protect the re-growth from sheep. Photos © Jono Vernon-Powell

## Farmsteads and farmland

The National Park landscape is characterised by a dispersed pattern of settlement, with scattered farmsteads and houses. Small nucleated communities are concentrated in the broad settled valleys with their markets and transport corridors. These have always been more subject to external influences including by the early 19th century that of bilingualism in some place names and field names (Morgan and Powell 1999, 13-20).

There are many questions regarding what types of fields existed and from what period they date. The evidence for the farming practices of one period has typically overlain and obscured that of earlier periods. It is likely that the plagues and other upheavals of the 14th century and the rebuilding of farmsteads between the 15th and 17th centuries is associated with the shrinkage and desertion of some earlier settlements and the establishment of new farmsteads within their own enclosed fields. Around some villages of the river valleys, there is evidence for medieval strip fields formed by heavy ploughs, some of which may pre-date the Norman Conquest (Silvester 2006a, 25–27; Silvester and Hankinson 2013, 10, 29–31; Britnell 2006, 56). Farmsteads in the upland valleys, including those on the sites of shrunken settlements, may date from the medieval period or – as has been noted in Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire to the north (Silvester 2006a, 27–31) – date from the reorganisation of farmland between the 14th and 17th centuries (Silvester 2006a, 27–31).

Over time, fields have often been increased in size and boundaries removed, thinned or straightened as holdings were amalgamated or enlarged, plough strips were brought together and farmsteads became larger. The lowest densities of farmsteads and the largest barns and fields are found in areas where large arable-based farms developed. The highest densities and smallest fields and barns are concentrated in areas of small-scale cattle-rearing and dairying as well as in areas where settlement (often illegal encroachment) has occurred on erstwhile common land. The main broad types of fields found across the National Park are:

- *irregular and semi-regular enclosure* which can be very varied in their layouts and can date from any period, although they are most likely to predate the 17th century with some whose origins lie in assarting
- *piecemeal enclosures of strip fields*, there being some evidence for these and medieval ridge and furrow cultivation concentrated around settlements in the river valleys; they may retain distinctive dog-leg boundaries around bundles of strips and sinuous boundaries following earlier plough strips
- *regular or planned enclosure*, found associated with high-status ‘plas’ or manor farms but usually the result of a later process of formal agreement (occasionally sealed by parliamentary act) in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

Farmsteads with arable land (*cae*) and meadows (*maes*) had rights to extensive areas of *ffridd* that were sited below the high mountain (*mynydd*) pastures or could be scattered across the valleys. This way of infield-outfield farming, with a core of land harvested for hay and corn and extensive areas of grazing land, was commonly practised across most of the British Isles (Comeau 2019, 135–143). Hay and crushed gorse from the *ffridd* was cut for fodder along with leaves from trees in *ffridd*, from hedgerows and woodland (*coed*). Coppiced wood and trees supplied building, fencing and toolmaking materials, peat for heating and rushes for bedding, for making into matting, for domestic lighting and other uses. Trees and stands of gorse (also used for fuel) in *ffridd* offered valuable shelter to ewes and their lambs in the spring. Areas of *ffridd* might also be ploughed every ten years or so, after the burning and paring off (by a breast plough) of the top layer.

Veteran trees in farmland, which may show signs of having been coppiced or pollarded, are also significant. Scots Pines were also planted as waymarkers in the landscape for cattle drovers. Many farms across the National Park are named after trees or groupings of trees such as oak, alder, and holly.

Man-made ponds are another significant aspect of farmsteads and farmland, and prior to the 1940s ponds were ubiquitous on farmland. Most date from the 17th to 19th centuries. With agricultural intensification, especially during the 1950s–70s, vast numbers of ponds were filled in. Observation of the 1st and 2nd edition OS mapping for the National Park shows large number of lost ponds. The National Park also has examples of early moated sites (especially around River Llyfni area) and early fish ponds (Trefecca Fawr) as well as 18th and 19th century dew ponds for livestock, decoy ponds and cart washes for carts and cart horses with walling and sluices (Ty-Mawr, Llangasty and Carreg Cennen).



## Using historic maps: the Blaensawdde estate, Towy Valley Foothills



### Blaensawdde and Gorsddu, Towy Valley Foothills

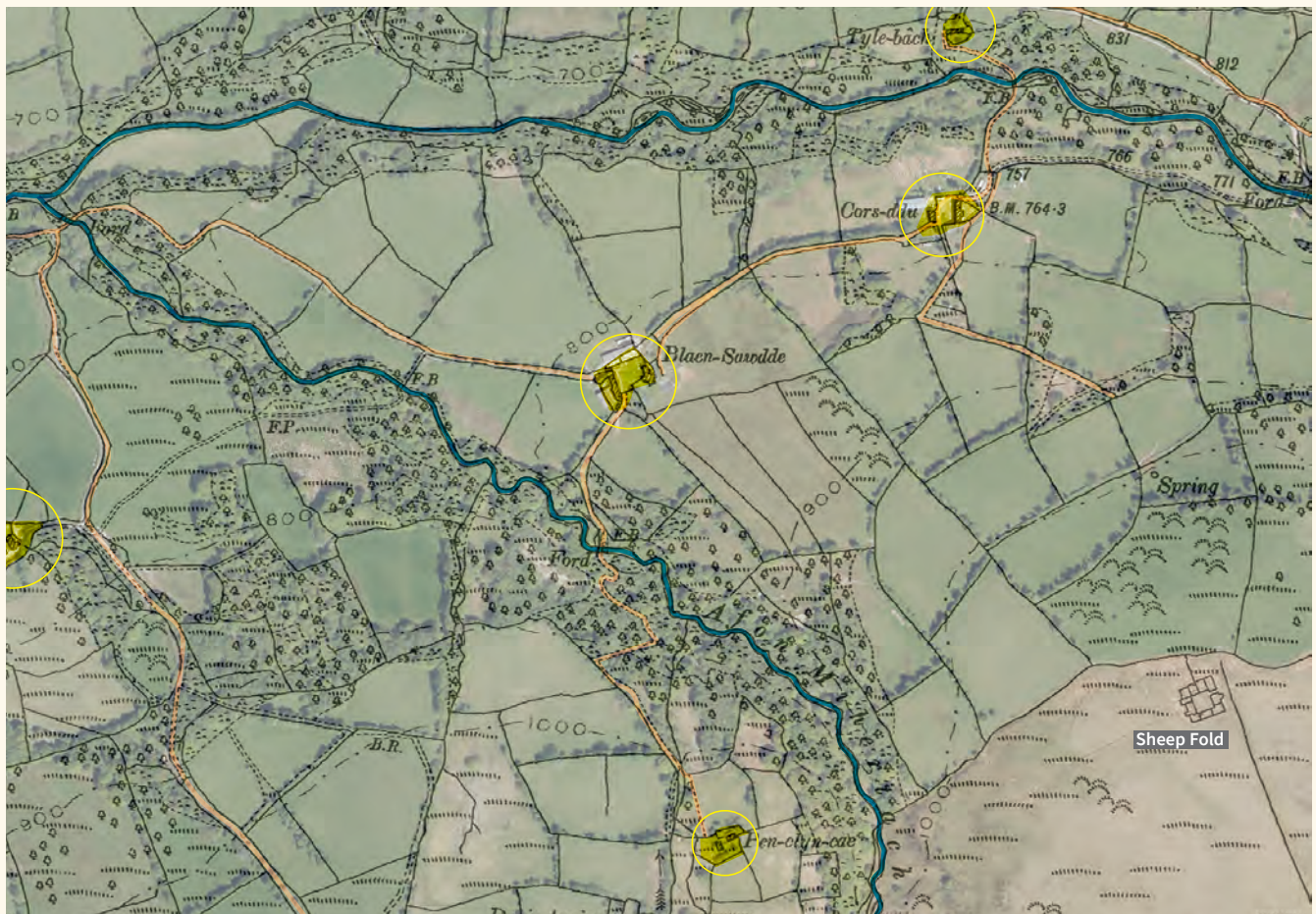
Shown here are two of a remarkable series of maps of the Blaensawdde estate, located in Llanddeusant parish to the west of Black Mountain. Note that the left-hand edges of each map are broadly north-facing. They were drawn by Meredith Jones and are dated 1744, and show two farmsteads set astride early routeways and within medieval and later enclosed fields; the maps show the mixture of arable (in light brown) and pasture (in green) that characterised this area until the late 19th century. The map of Blaensawdde (left) also shows a symmetrical early Georgian house – an extension of the earlier surviving house – and a 5-bay threshing barn, this being an early example of a courtyard group. The Georgian house depicted on the map is not readily recognisable today and either some artistic licence has been used, the Georgian house was never built or the building has undergone significant alteration, the barn was rebuilt with an integral cow house in 1834. Gorsddu (right), which has a 17th century or earlier house, is shown with its buildings set either side of a ‘fold’ opening onto a wet area (‘wern’) probably dotted with alder trees. By kind permission of the West Glamorgan Archive Service.



## Using historic maps: the Blaensawdde estate, Towy Valley Foothills



The tithe map for this part of the parish has been damaged, but this extract clearly shows Gorsddu and a linear farmstead to its north which is not shown on the earlier map. This is from the Welsh Tithe Maps collection now hosted by the National Library of Wales (<https://places.library.wales>).



The Ordnance Survey map also shows an outfarm to the south, depicted as a cluster of buildings in the enclosure ('cae') at Pen-ty'n-cae. Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2021. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021



## Using historic maps: the Blaensawdde estate, Towy Valley Foothills



Gorsddu in its landscape setting with ancient woodland below in the river valley. Some field boundaries and woodland blocks are recognisable from the 1744 estate map. Photo © Sam Hale

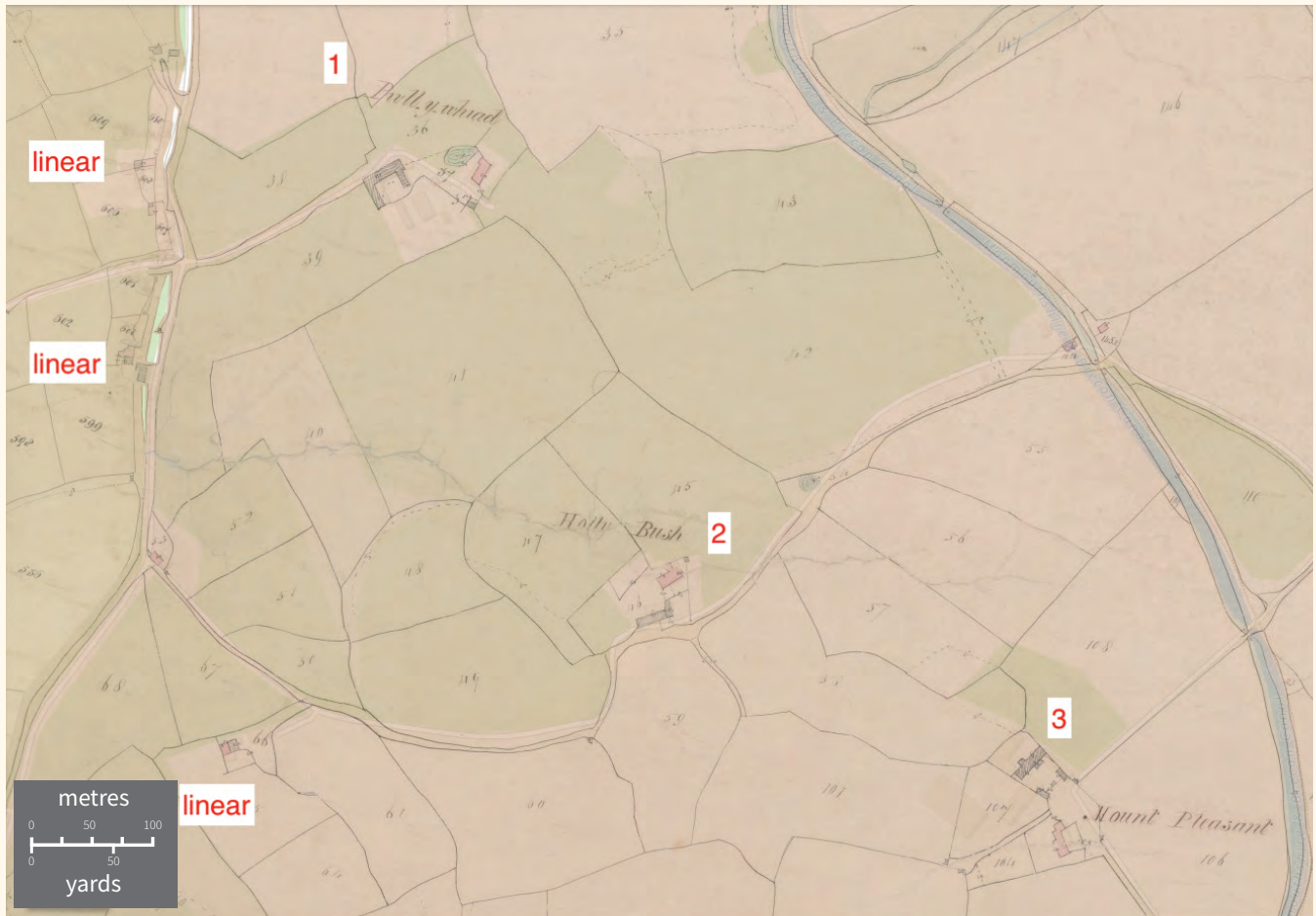


The Gorsddu linear range opposite which is a small combination barn/cow house. Photo © Sam Hale



Blaensawdde, a gentry house of the 17th century and its rebuilt barn with an integral cow house of 1834. Photos © Sam Hale

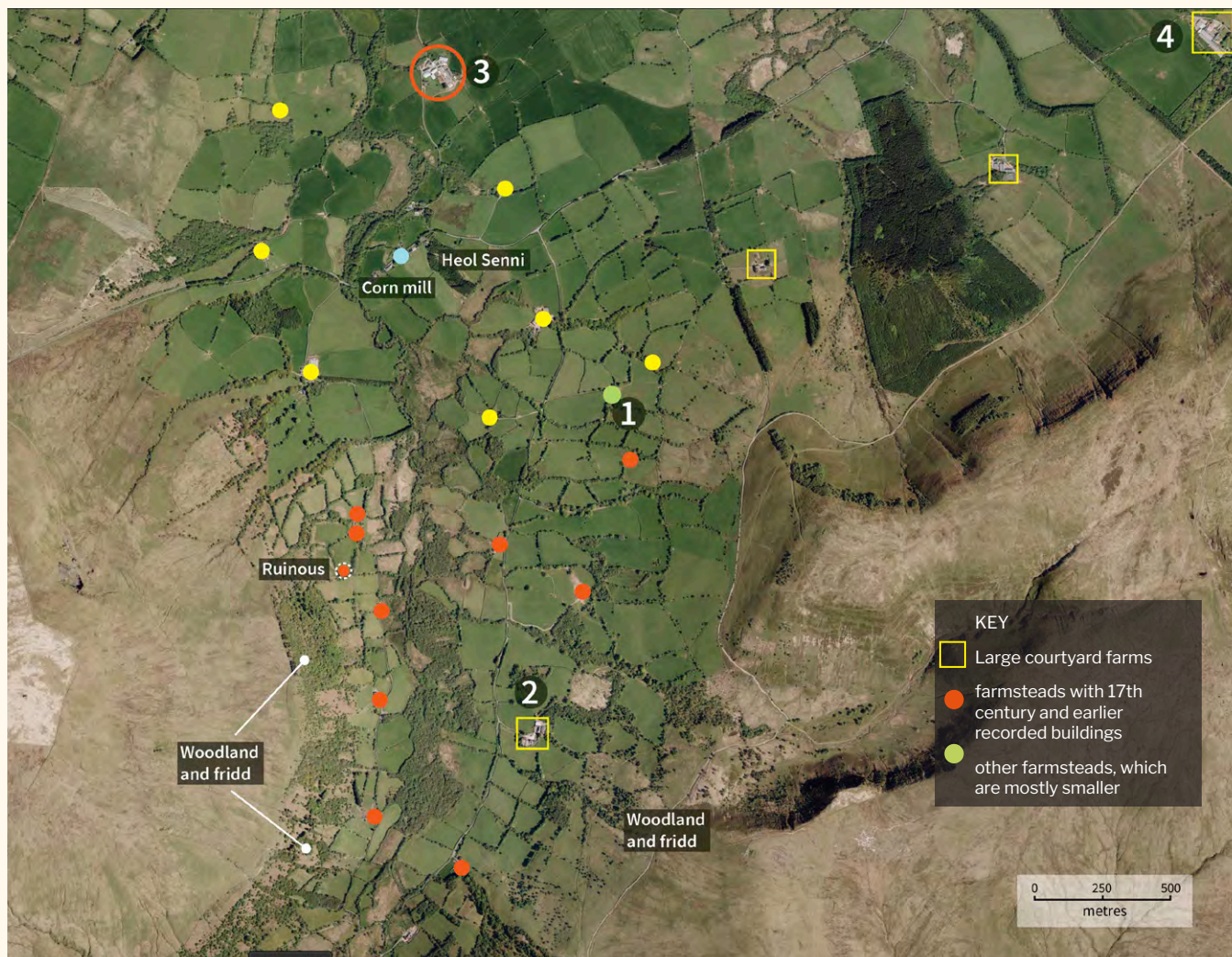
## Using historic maps: Llanover tithe maps



This extract from the tithe map from an area to the west of Llanover (Blorengel summit and slopes) shows how useful tithe maps are as a source of evidence in looking at the layouts of farmsteads in their landscape context. Houses are shown in pink, and working buildings in black. Two of the three linear farmsteads shown on the west side of the map were no longer farming by the end of the 19th century. Pwllrhwyaid (1) and Llwyncllyn(2) have changed very little. Pwllrhwyaid has a 17th century farmhouse and a fine L-shaped barn and attached cow house range which dates from the early 18th century. Llwyncllyn has a three-unit house with a cross-passage providing access to the late 16th century house and a probable lower end rebuilt as a parlour in the 17th century. The 17th century house at Brynhyfryd (3) has datestones of 1762 and 1765, and was remodelled after the building of the canal in the 1790s. The farm buildings which included a large barn range were also built at this time. This is from the Welsh Tithe Maps collection now hosted by the National Library of Wales (<https://places.library.wales>).



## Landscape patterns: upland landscapes in Heol Senni, Middle Usk Valleys

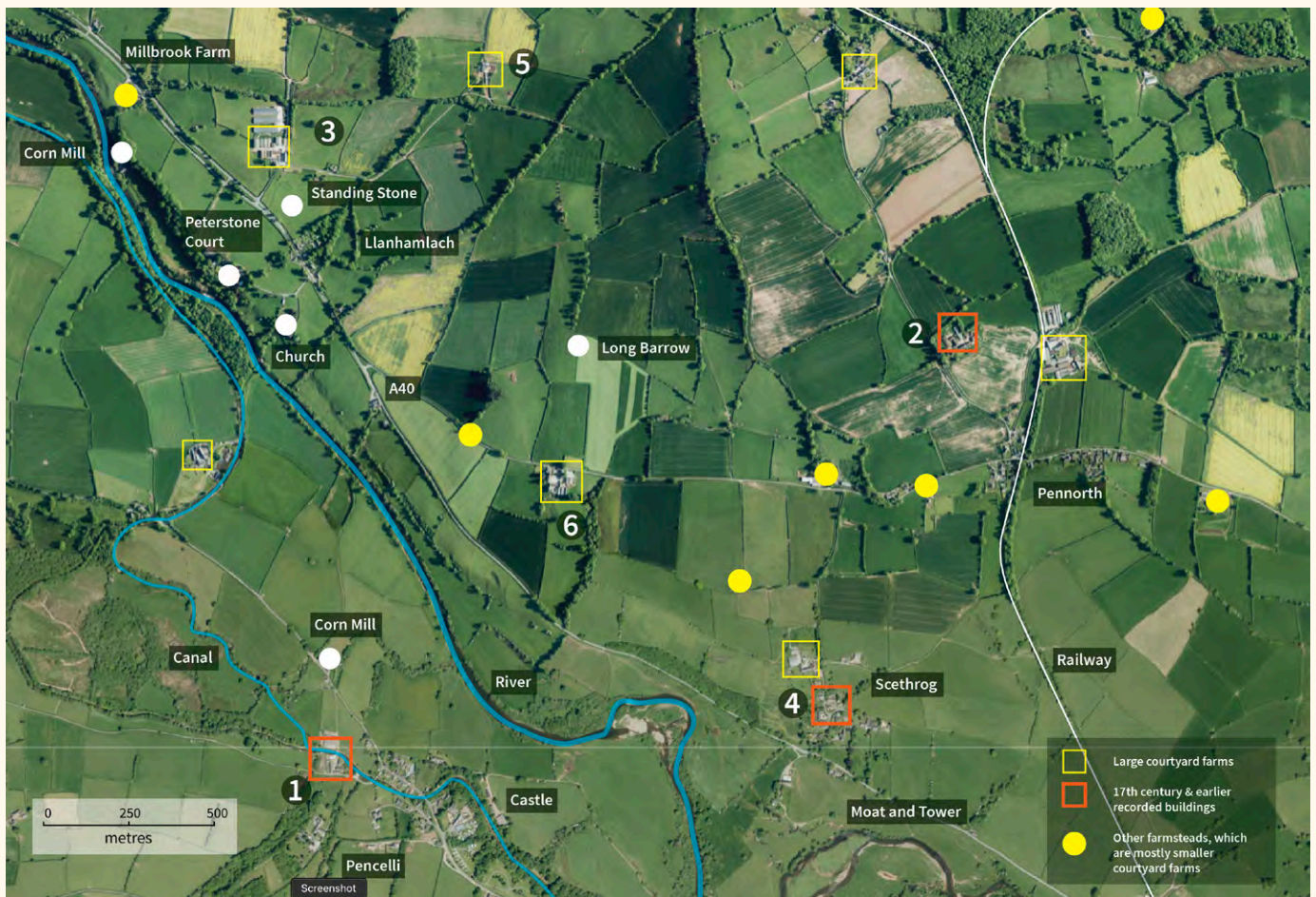


### Upland and transitional landscapes in Heol Senni, Western Usk Tributaries

This satellite image from Google Earth shows the valley of the Afon Senni south of Defynnog - to the east of which is the conjectural line of the Roman road extending north-eastwards to Y Gaer fort - and the higher density of farmsteads that is typical of the upland valleys. Most of these (shown as red dots) are recorded as 17th century linear farmsteads, including some with origins as longhouses, with one (1) dated 1709. In this area farmhouses derived from longhouses (with byres attached to the house but with no internal interconnection) seem to have persisted even into the 19th century. Some expanded into small-scale courtyard and dispersed-plan farmsteads, with one or two additional buildings. Farmsteads with green dots were present by the 19th century and are similar in their character, but there is no record for them. Standing apart from this pattern are two much larger and high-status farmsteads - Blaensenni (2) which was rebuilt in the late 18th century as a gentry house, and whose farm buildings are arranged in regular fashion around a courtyard, and Bailea Farm to the north (3) which has a large late 17th century house, rebuilt to the newly-fashionable double-pile plan and whose buildings are arranged around dispersed yards with access to larger reorganised fields. The farmsteads are sited amongst their own enclosed fields, these dating from the 17th century and earlier, and are sited so that they have access to the mountain grazing and scrubby ffridd, pockets of woodland and meadows on the valley bottom. To the north-east are two larger farmsteads which were newly-built in the early-mid 19th century, both with their buildings in regular fashion around yards, which are also set within a designed landscape including regular enclosures taken in from the moorland. One of these, Forest Lodge (4), is one of the most spectacular examples of a planned farmstead in an upland landscape in Britain; it was built in around 1860 for the Forest Lodge Estate and marks a high point of investment in improved farming in the High Farming period. Note the large field sizes and planted windbreaks (see section on Fforest Fawr and its model farms, pages 26-27). Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021. Ordnance Survey 100019322. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.



## Landscape patterns: valley landscapes



### Landscape patterns: valley landscapes

This satellite image from Google Earth shows a landscape of large fields and large farmsteads which developed in the Usk valley, mostly within the Middle Usk Valleys with Scethrog and the eastern parts of the map falling within the Eastern Usk Valley. The farmed landscape and its farmsteads illustrate the emphasis placed on arable-based farming that has characterised this area from the medieval period. The valley's importance as a transport corridor from the prehistoric period is marked by a number of of Bronze Age or earlier standing stones, the lines of the Usk itself, the Roman road linking the forts at Brecon and Abergavenny (a milestone was found in the buildings at Millbrook Farm), the A40 which was turnpiked in the 18th century, the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal and the lines of the long-closed railway lines. There has an early church site with a circular churchyard and a 10th-11th century carved stone slab at Llanhamlach. A cluster of buildings developed close to the church and the medieval manor at Peterstone Court, and also on this map are the ruins of the castle at Pencilli dating from the late 11th century Norman Conquest and the 14th century Scethrog Tower within its moat. The barn and cow house set around the courtyard at buildings at Pencelly Court (1) date from the 17th-18th centuries, and the 17th century house at Bryn-Llici (2) was retained as a barn after the fine new house was built in about 1700. Other farmsteads were rebuilt around courtyards in the late 18th and 19th centuries, and have large barns, cart sheds and stables, with cattle yards and buildings; they include a 17th century linear farmstead at Greenway Farm (3) and another probably of the same date at Scethrog (4), and well-preserved examples at Slade Farm (5) and Manest Court (6). The farmed landscape also shows how its fields were enlarged and reorganised from an earlier intermixture of enclosed fields and medieval strips and rich meadowland along the Usk. Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2021. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021



## Transhumance: hendre and hafod

As elsewhere in the British Isles, livestock were driven away from the valleys where hay and corn was being grown to summer grazing pastures on the uplands: a practice known as transhumance. Animals could be driven over long or short distances, depending upon established grazing rights. Trackways can be indicated by the name *heol-las* ('green or verdant lane or street'). In the medieval period, and continuing in parts of Wales into the 19th century, farms were divided between the lower farm (the *hendre*) where crops were grown, and the upper farm (the *hafod*, sometimes also termed a *llyest*) where cattle and sheep were moved between May and October. It is probable that this practice has early origins, as the platforms of *hafodydd* and *llyesti* can be found in close proximity to round houses and small paddocks bounded by banks dating from the first millennium AD and into the prehistoric period (Leighton and Silvester 2003, 32–3). It was in decline by the late 16th century within the area covered by the National Park but continued in other parts of Wales into the 19th century (Davies 1980, 24; Silvester 2006, 37; Sambrook 2006, 99–104). Shepherding stations with their huts and enclosures – which confusingly may also be known as *llyesti* – were typically more remote (Silvester 2013, 32–39). The keeping of sheep became more important from the 18th century (Wmffre 2009, 276–81).

Cheese and butter was often made on these sites, which needed access to water and might also have outlying buildings and fields for growing hay (Silvester 2006, 95–97). They can be found in the form of long platforms (typically four to seven metres long) or as the ruins of longhouse-type buildings with a heated domestic end and a byre for cattle. They are rare in Fforest Fawr and other areas of medieval hunting forest where more restrictions were placed on summer grazing (Leighton and Silvester 2003, 34). By at least the 16th century in the Brecon Beacons and in neighbouring Radnorshire (Suggett 2005, 249–259), some of these *hafodydd* had become farmsteads. Some retained the *hafod* name or acquired an *uchaf* name to distinguish them from lower *isaf* farms, but it was also common for farm names to move with their occupiers: the result is that some *isaf* names are higher than *uchaf* ones. The irregular patterns of fields around them typically results from a piecemeal process of enclosure, the largest intakes being for sheep associated with later phases of enclosure and a shift from cattle to sheep. 18th- and 19th-century houses are more commonly placed across rather than along the slope.



An abandoned long hut at Nant Cwmothlyn. Photo © Alice Thorne

## Transforming the commons: The development of Fforest Fawr and its model farms

In the 19th century the upland area of the Great Forest or Fforest Fawr was transformed by the sale of the Crown Allotment (to help fund the Napoleonic Wars) and the creation of the Brecon Forest Tramroad. The tram road stretched from the Upper Swansea Valley in the south to the Usk in the north; not so much a single tramway as a network of tramways, some parts of which were never completed. The tram road was instigated by John Christie from Stirling who had made his fortune in the Indian indigo trade. He purchased two-thirds of Fforest Fawr that was put up for sale by the Crown and based himself at the new GlanUsk mansion. Christie enclosed huge tracts of land and built two model farms; Plas-y-Gors (now in ruins) and Cnewr in 1821 the latter complete with lime sheds, stabling and housing for the tram road. A relief of a tram road wheel is displayed over Cnewr's main entrance. The extraction of limestone and construction of lime kilns flourished, numbering in the hundreds, with many kilns associated with the farms which they supplied.



Cnewr Farm. © Sam Hale

The sale of a large area of Fforest Fawr and the flourishing of an agricultural lime industry led to the development of improved farming in the area encouraged by John Christie's investment and his tram road. As well as Christie's model farms John Parton of Bloomsbury, London, bought 191 hectares and set up two model farms in close proximity; Cefngwaunhynog and Dolydd (now in ruins) and William Alder of Berwick-on-Tweed bought 1,775 hectares and constructed two huge new arable farms with model farmsteads; Belfont and Forest Lodge. Alder's investment in new arable farms coincided with the artificially high grain prices induced by the Napoleonic Wars (that later crashed). The model farms comprised vast barns and ancillary machinery buildings. Belfont was equipped with a horse engine house but Forest Lodge for example had threshing and corn grinding machinery powered by a watermill in what was then the largest farm in the Brecon Beacons. The investment of these three men not only resulted in the creation of model farmsteads but also had a lasting legacy on the landscape with the construction of miles of dry-stone walls and the planting of miles of windbreaks around newly-enclosed fields that can still be seen today (Hughes, 1990 39-47).



## Transforming the commons: The development of Fforest Fawr and its model farms



The extraordinary Forest Lodge was created to serve a huge arable enterprise with multiple barns and a water-wheel powering the engine house. Photo © Sam Hale



Christie's enclosing drystone walls, now collapsing. Photo © Sam Hale



John Parton's Cefn-gwaunhynog – the farmhouse and its attached farm buildings survive, the courtyard range opposite has been demolished. Photo © Jeremy Lake



The legacy of William Alder's enclosure and transformation of the land is seen in the large improved fields and their now substantial wind brakes. © Google Earth

## 3 UNDERSTANDING FARMSTEADS

### Introduction

Farmsteads provide housing for the farming family and places to process and store harvested crops, house and shelter farm animals and produce manure. Their buildings may reflect the confidence of a farmer in his future or the willingness of a landlord to invest some surplus income. Although there is documentary evidence for a wide range of farm buildings in the Welsh Laws (Roberts 2019, 86, also quoting Butler 1987), there is no evidence for any standing buildings dating from before the uprising led by Owain Glyndŵr in about 1403; the earliest recorded hall house has been dated to 1412 when the area was beginning to recover (Suggett 2006, 26). The earliest of these are longhouses, as set out below. These buildings may result from a single phase of construction, or contain evidence within them of successive phases of rebuilding and adaptation. The largest and most adaptable farm buildings, which were consistently used for the same purpose or capable of being adapted to later uses, generally have the greatest chance of survival. Landlords increasingly took the lead in funding the construction of farm buildings to improved standards in the 19th century, sometimes leaving tenants to contribute through labour, transport and other costs.

### Farmsteads and archaeology

Some farmsteads shown on detailed estate maps may have left little or no trace on the ground, whilst others have been completely rebuilt in later centuries (Silvester 2006b, 209–213). The extent to which farmsteads will retain earlier fabric and even the earthworks of earlier buildings and yards varies from site to site. Particularly important is whether the site dates from the 17th century or earlier, some farmsteads being built on new sites – often in newly-enclosed fields – in the later 18th and 19th centuries. The building of medieval to 17th-century longhouses and other buildings along slopes sometimes resulted in the scooping out of ground at the higher end and the lower end being built upon a raised stone plinth: these are known as ‘platform houses’, and may also be found on ‘long hut’ sites associated with summer farms (Silvester 2006a, 21–24; see page 25). Excavations have revealed the evidence for buildings dating from before surviving structures on some of these platform houses (Silvester 2006a, 24).

### Farmhouses and longhouses

Farmhouses to provide homes for farming families, and for preparing and storing food and drink, lie at the heart of all farmsteads. The National Park is fortunate in having some of the finest studies of farmhouses in the British Isles. For the Monmouthshire part of the National Park we have the pioneering studies of Sir Cyril Fox and Lord Raglan while for the Breconshire part, there is the classic work of Stanley Jones and John Smith (see also the resources listed in Part 5.1 on further research).

In summary the earliest type of farmhouse in the National Park, whether built for gentry or peasant, is the 15th and early 16th century hall house, often of cruck construction, with smoke from an open hearth venting through the roof. There are some fine examples of high-status hall houses in the National Park, and also of longhouses where a single entrance provided access to the hall and other rooms and also to a byre for cattle. Halls may retain evidence in the form of dowel holes and mortices for a bench fixed to the screen at the upper end of the hall, against which a table would be set for eating. By the 16th and 17th centuries, a stone chimney would typically have been inserted into the hall, and the remaining space divided into upper and lower rooms. The most common way of inserting the chimneystack, from the late 16th century, was to place it facing the hall and with its back set against or within the cross passage; those entering houses adapted in this way would thus continue to enter the hall from the former cross passage (although it may be blocked by another extension at the rear) or an internal lobby. The hall often continued in use as the main living and cooking area, separate kitchens being added from the late 17th century, although sometimes not until the 19th century. Until the widespread introduction of coal in the 19th century, large open fireplaces were required for the setting of the fire using peat, gorse, brushwood and coppiced wood. They might also have racks for placing roasting spits, hooks for hanging and smoking meat and pots, a griddle or flat stone for making flatbread from oats (particularly in this region) and sometimes bread ovens.

Gentry and other high-status houses typically have the most elaborate kitchens and services and more private parlours in additional chambers and wings. Many have fireplaces placed on the side wall of the medieval open hall, as in other parts of south Wales and south-west England (Jones and Smith 1964, 82–114, 146). These houses were the first to adopt, from early in the 17th century (Jones and Smith 1964, 100–103), house plans focused around central stair halls and with symmetrical fronts and architectural detailing inspired by Renaissance fashion: kitchens, dairies and other services – where not converted out of the lower or more rarely upper end of longhouses – were placed in lean-tos and/or wings at the rear, enabling the house to have a central front entrance and stair hall that provided access to private reception rooms and individual access to



first-floor bedchambers. These plans were very varied, becoming more standardised from the late 18th century. In the 18th and 19th centuries the most prestigious of these houses, typically on the largest and most prosperous farms, could be built or remodelled as double-depth ranges which faced away from the farmstead into their own driveways and gardens. 18th and 19th century farmhouses are more commonly placed across rather than along the slope.

## LONGHOUSES

Longhouses, where people and animals shared the same entrance at the lower end of the house, are found throughout Wales, and were formerly much more widespread along the Welsh borders, in the south-west and parts of northern England and in other parts of the western British Isles and north-west France. They were the most common type of farmstead in upland areas until the 17th century, and continued to be used by some of the Welsh gentry in remoter areas as has been noted around Builth Wells (Jones and Smith 1965, 86).

*The defining characteristics of 15th to 17th-century longhouses are:*

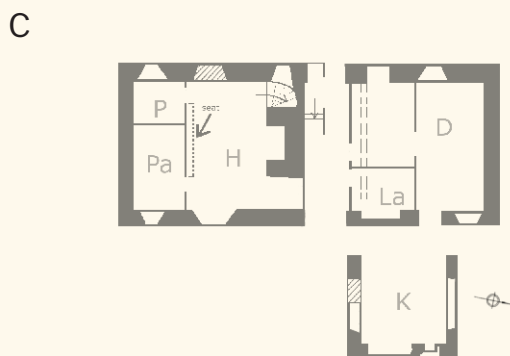
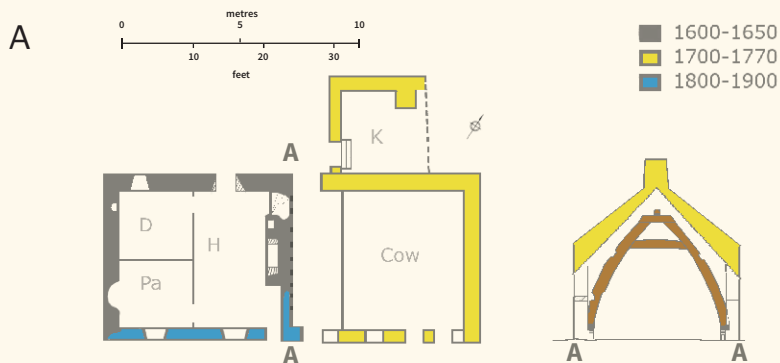
- cruck construction, with timber-framed walls built on stone foundations
- a single shared entrance for humans and cattle, usually into a cross passage, at the lower downslope end of the one or two-bay open hall; the cow house may have a central drain and a hole to eject manure at the lower gable end.

Most longhouses were rebuilt in stone and adapted in line with the desire seen in other parts of England and Wales for improved living standards from the later 15th century, and which in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park seem to have been mostly accomplished over the 17th and 18th centuries. In addition to the insertion of a chimney stack (within or backing onto the cross-passage) and upper floors, the cow house was either converted into a kitchen (so taking over the earlier role of the hall fire) or a parlour. If retained, it was commonly provided with a separate entrance, and extended with additional stalls for cattle, horses or barn room. The inner room was either left unaltered as a buttery and/or pantry or upgraded into a heated parlour or bedchamber. Sometimes in longhouses a sleeping loft was created above the cross-passage and cow house, accessed from the house stairwell. Examples survive with two doorways off the winding stairs, one into a sleeping loft above the byre, the other into the room/s above the hall and service rooms of the farmhouse.

These improvements were usually accompanied by rebuilding and heightening to two full storeys in stone, and further additions with dairies and parlour wings. Straight joints in the masonry, visible around the doorway, provide evidence for what has been termed 'alternate rebuilding' to either side of the cross passage. Cruck roof trusses are mostly likely to survive embedded in the main partition walls including that formed by the chimney stack, and their removal might also have left distinctive slots in the masonry.



The siting of this 16th century longhouse in the Black Mountains is typical, with its cattle housed in the downslope end. It was remodelled in the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when the original cross-passage doorway was made into a barn door. Photo © Sam Hale



These drawings show in simplified form longhouses illustrated in Jones and Smith's study of Breconshire houses. Alternate rebuilding of the lower end with its cowhouse and the dwelling may have left the earliest structural evidence for 15th and 16th century open halls in the survival of a cruck truss behind the chimneystack. The first phase of Y Coed, Partrishow (A), thus survives behind the chimney stack of the upper end which was first rebuilt in the early 17th century, and the line of the cross passage was also retained when the lower end was rebuilt in the 18th century. The other two plans show examples of how the lower end could be transformed and extended to provide kitchens (K), dairies (D) and larders (B: Tyn-y-llwyn, Partrishow and c: Pen-y-Bryn, Llangatwg. Plans redrawn by Mina Tahir from examples published in Jones and Smith's study of Breconshire houses.



## Farmstead layouts

The size and layout of farmsteads reflect their functions as they have developed over the years. Working areas as well as buildings were needed to store and process harvested crops, manage and house farm animals and take manure to surrounding fields. In addition farmhouses were often served by small kitchen gardens, and – especially on the most prestigious farms – their own private gardens.

The most basic type of farmstead plan, and most common in the upland areas of England and Wales, are **linear farmsteads** derived from longhouse plans. These are farmsteads which have retained their character as single ranges where the farmhouses and working buildings are attached in-line, and have not needed to develop with more buildings and yards. Most have been absorbed into and lie at the heart of larger courtyard and dispersed-plan farmsteads.

Common types of farmstead plan in the National Park are small **courtyard plans**, with farm buildings facing one or two sides of the main yard, and **dispersed plans** or groups, in which the buildings appear to be scattered, strung along a routeway or comprise several scattered yard areas. Courtyard-plan farmsteads became increasingly common, and often absorbed earlier linear farmsteads and dispersed farmstead layouts. Walter Davies referred to the rebuilding of farmsteads around yards from the 1790s in his report on south Wales (Davies 1815, 129) and they continued to be recommended by later agricultural improvers, such as John Rees in his *Hyfforddwr y Fferwr* (c.1860, see Wiliam 1982, 72). Larger-scale courtyard plans, which have buildings on three or four sides of courtyards, or even have two or more additional yards, are usually found in estate landscapes and where the largest corn-producing farms developed. These needed labour for carting, harvesting and processing the crop, and increasingly for yard and stock management (for example in strawing-down yards, lifting the heavy manure-laden straw into middens and carts and for spreading it on the fields). It remained common here – even on large courtyard farms – to attach stables, cart sheds and granaries to houses (as found at Tŷ-Mawr Llangasty, Pencelli Court and Ty-Fry Llanfrynach).

Large courtyard plans were not needed for the farming practices of the uplands where, in addition, the custom, common across Wales, of subdividing property equally between heirs, (known as *cyfran* or *gavelkind*) resulted in the appearance of more and smaller farms - sometimes with a house for the widowed mother on the same farmstead (see also Bakehouses and Brewhouses, page 53). In some cases, and especially in the 19th century as farms expanded in size and needed to retain skilled but diminished workforces, cottages for farm workers could be added to farmstead groups or – more commonly – built nearby.

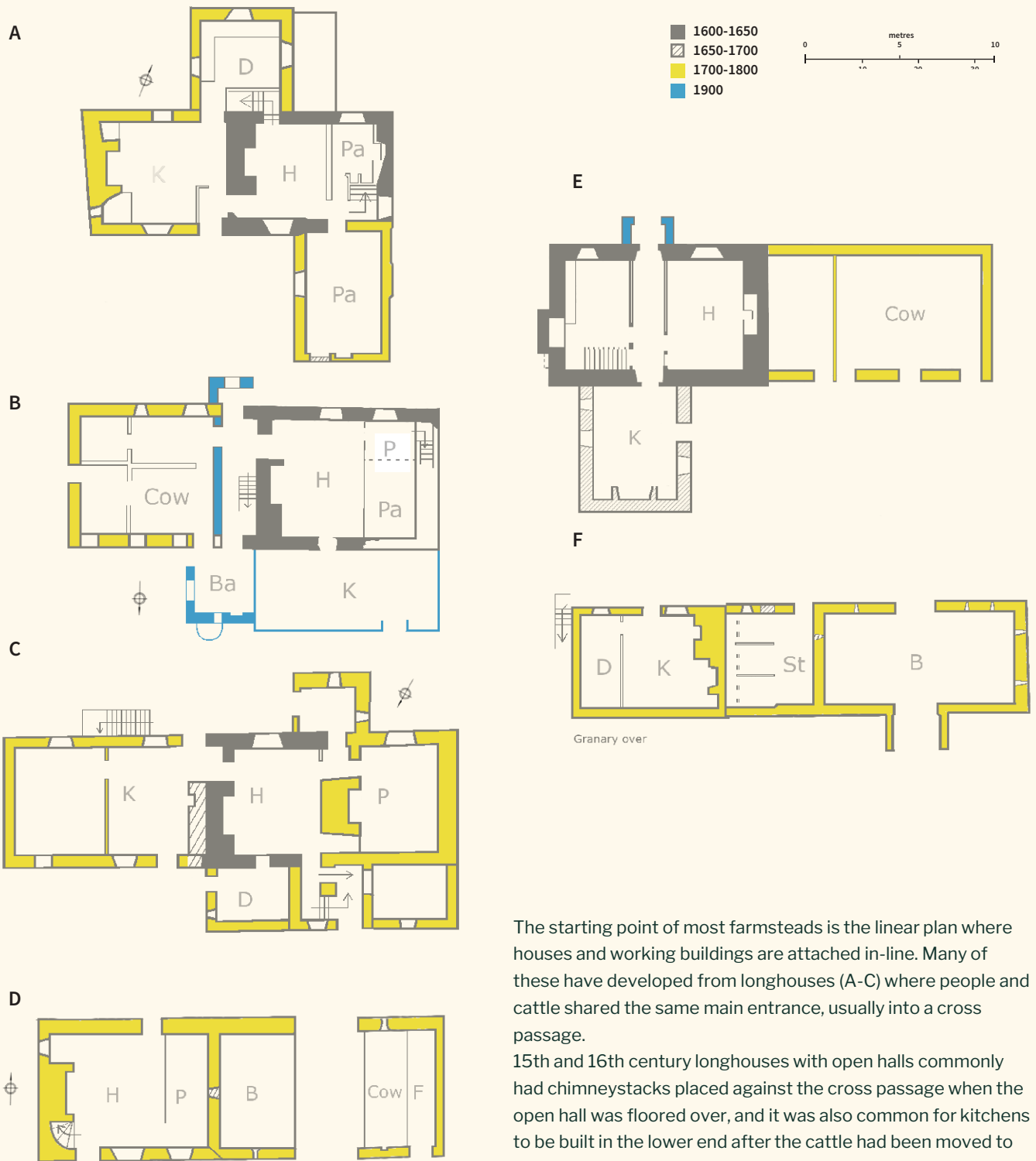


A linear farmstead at Cwm to the east of Talgarth (Wye Valley Foothills). It was remodelled early in the 19th century, with a loft above housing for cattle and horses, and additional farm buildings then made an overall U-shaped plan. Note the wide doorway placed to the right of the central chimney stack, which offers a hint that this building may have developed from a longhouse with a single entrance for people and cattle into a wide passageway. Photo © Jeremy Lake



A farmstead in the Crai area (Western Usk Tributaries) with its centrally-planned early 19th century house facing away from the farmyard. The combination barn to the rear has a stable to the left and a cow house adjoining the threshing barn with its barn doors. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Linear plans



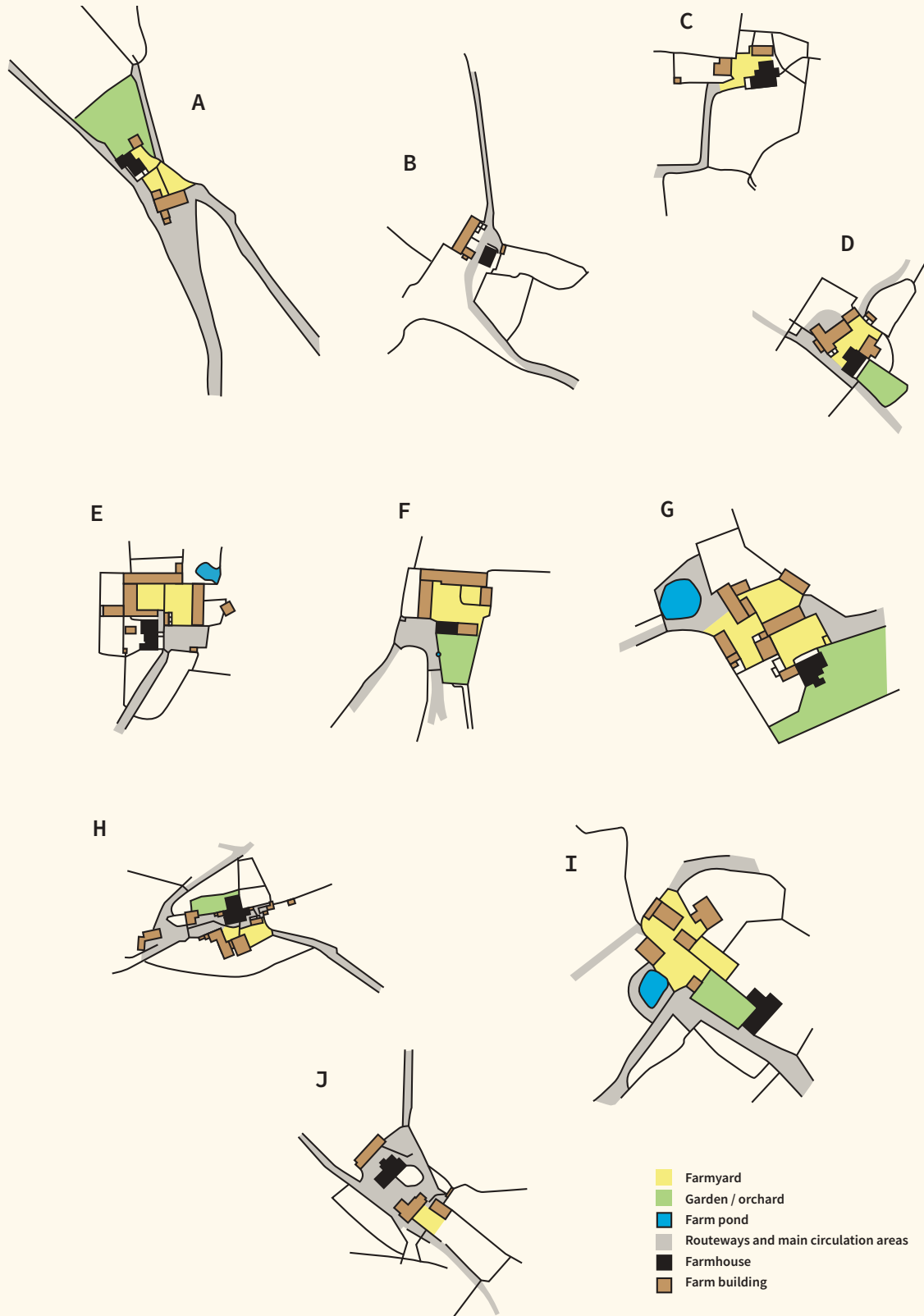
- KEY
- B barn
  - Ba bakehouse
  - Cow cowhouse
  - D dairy
  - F feeding passage
  - H hall
  - K kitchen
  - P parlour
  - St stable

The starting point of most farmsteads is the linear plan where houses and working buildings are attached in-line. Many of these have developed from longhouses (A-C) where people and cattle shared the same main entrance, usually into a cross passage.

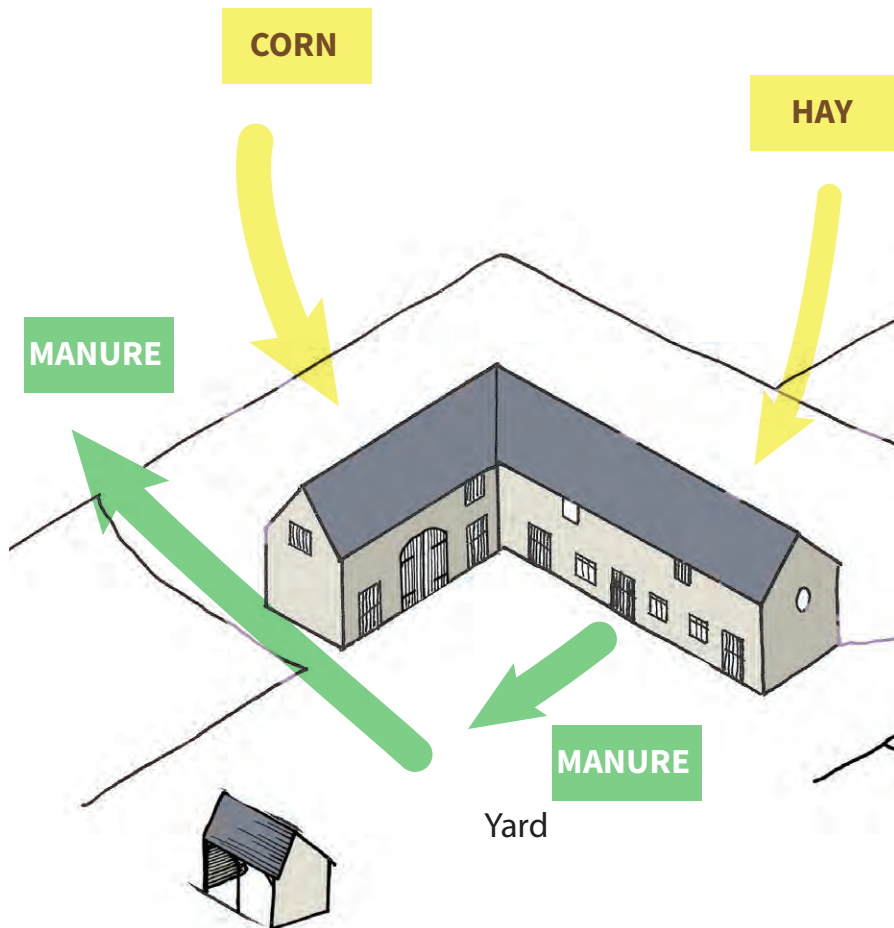
15th and 16th century longhouses with open halls commonly had chimneystacks placed against the cross passage when the open hall was floored over, and it was also common for kitchens to be built in the lower end after the cattle had been moved to an outbuilding. A (at Llanfihangel Cwm Du) was provided with a dairy and parlour, B with a bakehouse (Ba) added to its kitchen in the 19th century and C with an upper granary, dairy and cider cellar in addition to a new entrance and porch in the 18th century. The examples D to F are linear farmsteads dating from the 17th and 18th centuries which are not derived from longhouses. Plans redrawn by Mina Tahir from examples published in Jones and Smith's study of Breconshire houses.



## Courtyard and dispersed plans

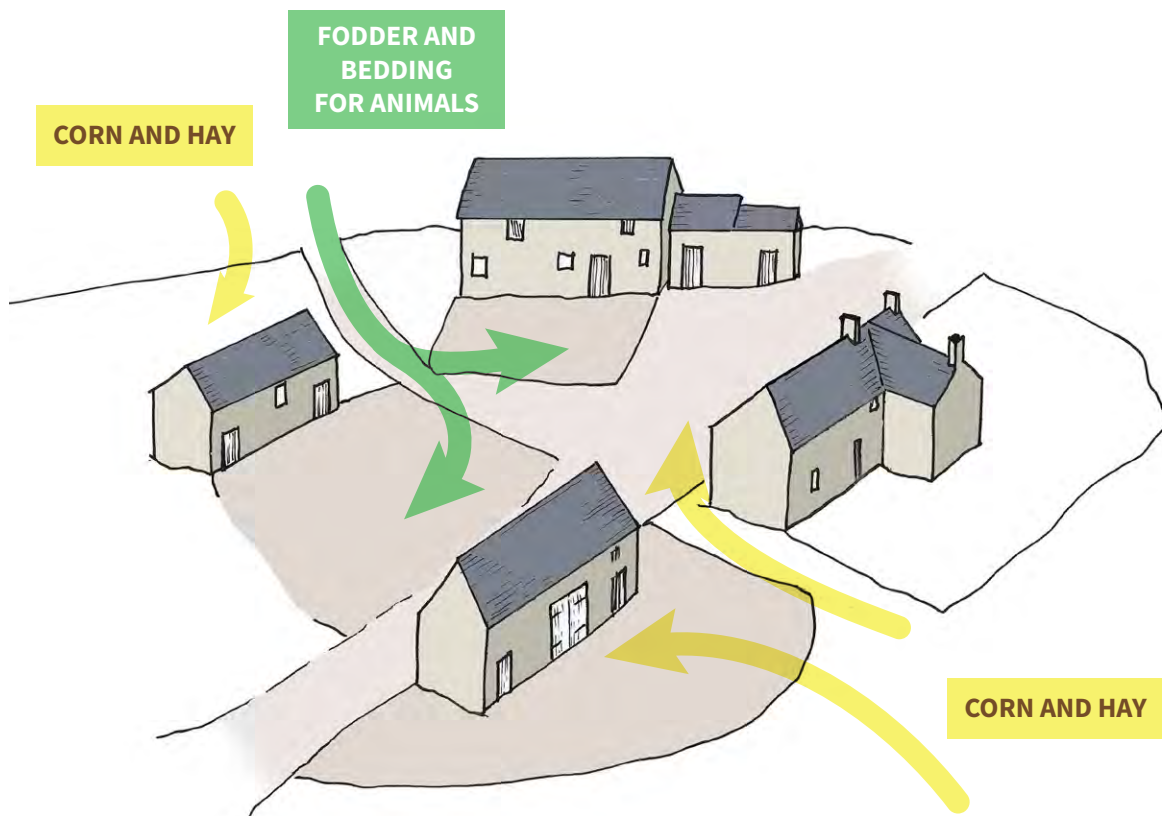


These drawings redrawn from Ordnance Survey maps of around 1900 show how courtyard and dispersed-plan farmsteads take a variety of forms. A-D show farmsteads where detached buildings developed around one or two sides of a yard, all of these having combination barns with additional stables, housing for cattle and cart bays. E-G show farmsteads which were built in the early-mid 19th centuries as regular courtyard layouts with interlinked buildings set around yards (E has a 17th century or earlier longhouse at its core) or set around regularly-laid-out multiple yards; these are all found in landscapes reorganised in the same period. H-J show dispersed layouts, H being a group of 16th-19th century buildings arranged along a driftway for moving livestock and the others at the meeting point of historic routeways: J has its house sited parallel to a 17th century combination barn to its south and a malthouse converted from a former house to its north.



**Process flows on farmsteads**

These two simple plans show the basic flow of processes on farmsteads. On courtyard-plan farmsteads (above) the farmyard served as a collection point for the manure, which would have included straw after the corn crop was threshed out. Dispersed plans (below) are far looser in their planning, and served as one or more paddocks without a yard as a focal point.





## Field barns and outfarms

As well as buildings on farmsteads, the landscape is dotted with field barns. These are far less common in the National Park than in other upland areas, such as the Yorkshire Dales and Snowdonia, where holdings were also intermixed with those of others. Walter Davies, writing in 1810, noted the presence of cribs for feeding cattle in yards and fields (Davies 1815, 156–7), and surveys have noted the presence of rough field shelters (Redwood and Barnes 1993, 85). Some field barns survive in the valley of the Afon Senni.



This farmstead near Sychnant to the south of the Western Usk Tributaries was retained after its abandonment for use as an outfarm. Photo © Jeremy Lake



An abandoned field barn at Ysgubor-uchaf, Waun Fach, The Black Mountains. Photo © Jeremy Lake



Field barns in the Afon Senni valley Photos © Sam Hale

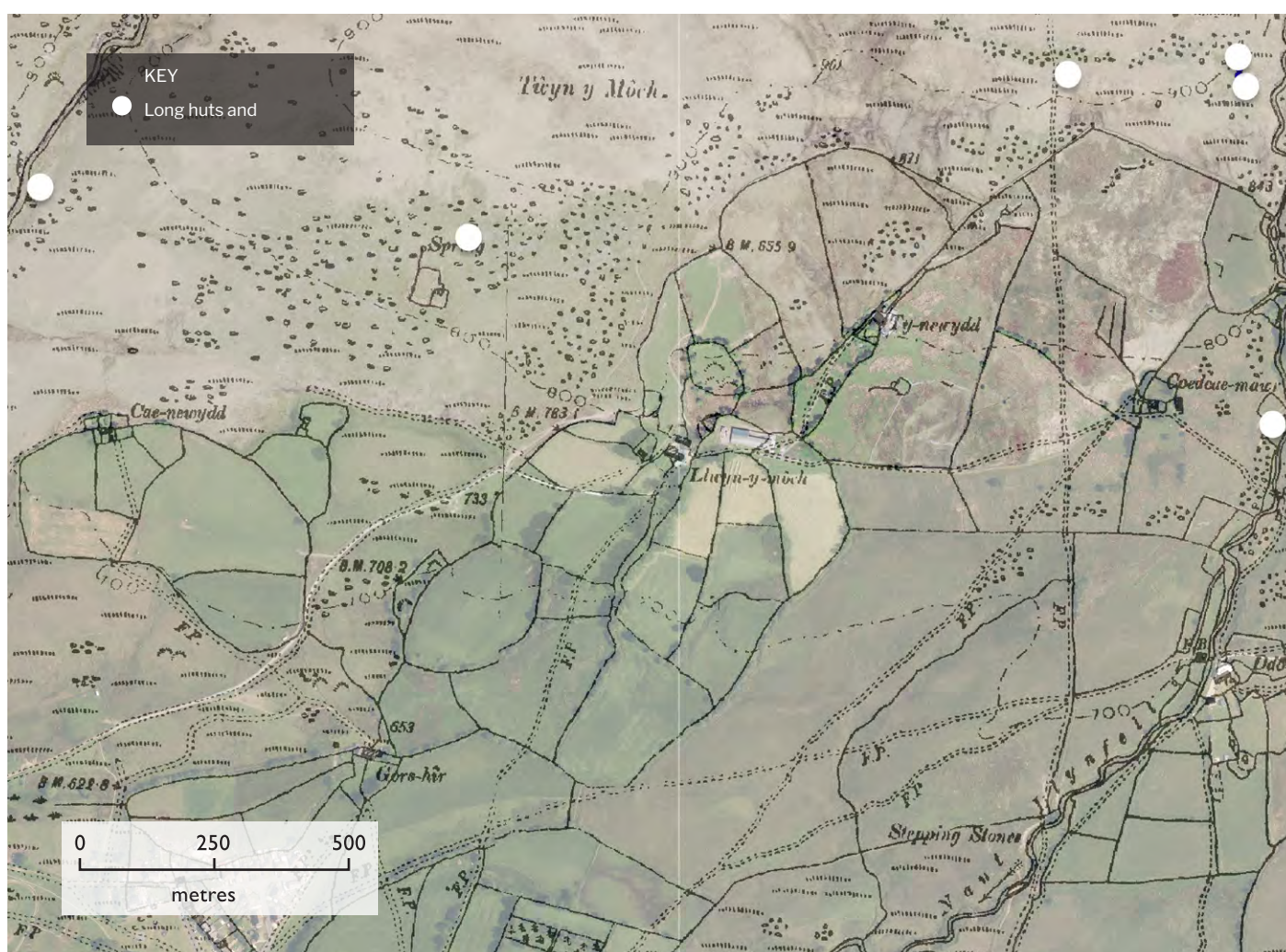




## Smallholdings

Smallholders often relied upon access to common land and woodland, usually combining farming with other activities. The agent of the Penrhyn estate in North Wales defined a smallholding as a holding of three or four acres, on which one or two cows could be looked after, whilst the husband was employed in quarrying or other forms of industry (Report of the Royal Commission, 1895, 547).

It is rare to find any evidence for smallholder cottages that date from before the 1750s, due to the widespread use of earth walling, thatch gathered from commons and other materials that have been much more prone to decay after their abandonment (Alfrey 2006a, 160 and 162–6). Smallholdings will often be identified by their location in areas of small fields close to, and indeed often on, former areas of common land. There is little surviving evidence for them on the ground even in areas colonised as late as the early 19th century (Sambrook 2006). In some areas the high point of building cottages in small areas of land taken in from unenclosed land was the mid-19th century and in others such as the Grwyne Valleys it peaked in the mid 18th century (Silvester 2006, 31 and pers. comm.).



### Small farmsteads and cottages on the southern side of Mynydd Du, Waterfall Country and Southern Valleys

This is a landscape of cottages and small farmsteads, mostly linear in form with working buildings attached to the dwelling and the occasional outbuilding. They are set within mostly ovoid and irregular fields whose form hints at a piecemeal process of enclosure that is either contemporary with or later than the long huts (one with a drain for a cowhouse) and platforms that are shown as white dots on the unenclosed uplands and along the Nant Llynfell. Sheep folds date from the late 18th and 19th centuries. Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021.



## 4 MATERIALS AND DETAIL

### Introduction

As elsewhere in Wales, the materials employed in the farmsteads of the National Park reflect differences in local geology, building traditions and wealth, estate policy, access to transport links and the management of local timber and other resources.

The current dominance of stone in farmstead buildings is the result of relatively recent rebuilding from the 17th and 18th centuries, using local quarries and an increasingly skilled labour force. There are no recorded examples of earth (*clom*) and roofing with gorse and heather in the National Park although their use continued into the 19th century in Carmarthenshire, on the commons around Builth and further west (Davies 1815, 140–145; Wiliam 2011, 109; Alfrey 2008). Although straw and reed thatch would have been relatively widespread there are no known examples of thatched farm buildings surviving in the National Park.

### The original importance of wood

Timber was the key construction material throughout the medieval period. The medieval Welsh Laws refer to the transportable nature of the roof beams, door lintels and other components of bondmen's houses and outbuildings (Roberts 2019, 85–87). The tradition of building in crucks – with curved timbers extending from ground to apex – is recorded from the 15th into the early 17th century, upper and raised crucks being also used. 'Scarfed' crucks, made from two timbers joined together, were used in parts of Carmarthenshire but there are no known examples in the National Park. Reused crucks can sometimes be found incorporated in later roof trusses. The survival of timber frame is now largely confined to the east of the area. It was increasingly used for just the upper floors of barns and other outbuildings from the 16th century, stone plinths getting ever higher, often replacing entire timber-framed walls, and the use of timber sparer.

There are differences in construction within the National Park resulting from the different geographic ranges of the Pedunculate (English) oak and the Sessile oak. Long, straight and sufficiently substantial beams were much less readily available in the west than the east and this influenced building practices, in particular the width of the houses and the barns.



Surviving timber frame is rare. This 17th century framing survives from the rebuilding in stone of a barn in the Wye Valley Foothills. Note the use of massive flagstones pinned to the timber frame. Photo © Sam Hale



Notches indicate that these roof trusses have been reused in the early 19th century from an earlier building. The lap joints of the near roof-truss are characteristic of reused crucks. The use of wooden pegs to secure ridges and collars declines over the 19th century. Photo © Jeremy Lake



The interior of an early large 18th century 9-bay threshing barn with two threshing floors at Tŷ-Mawr, Llangasty, with its purlins 'trenched' across the backs of the principal rafters, its collars halved and pegged into the principal rafters and the long tie beams made (by using broad axes or adzes) from single tree trunks. Photo © Sam Hale

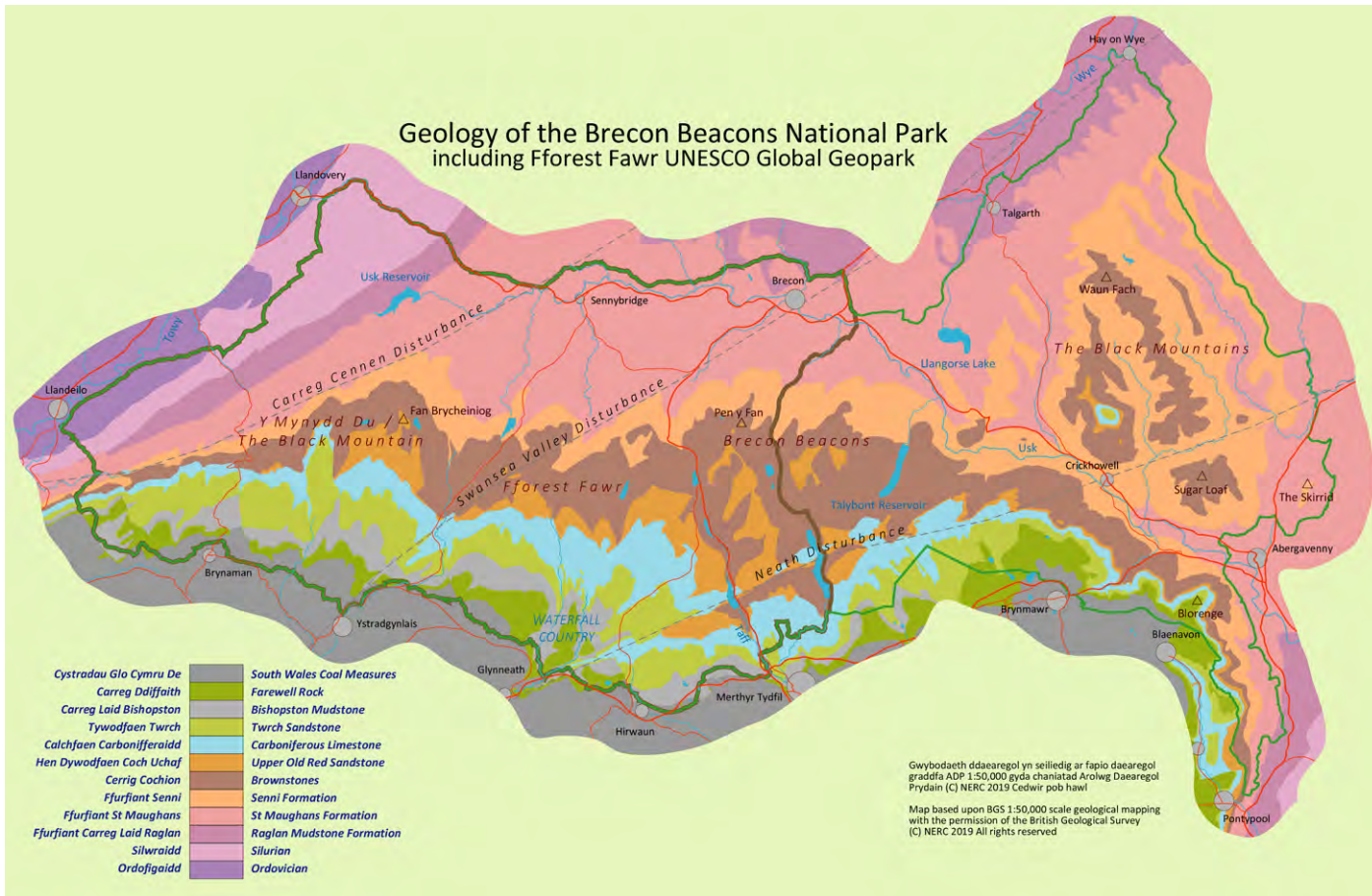


More standardised forms of construction using softwood, as here in this king-post roof truss, becomes widespread in the mid-late 19th century. Photo © Jeremy Lake



### Stone and slate

Stones could simply be taken from fields and streams to make field walls and gateposts, footings upon which the sill beams of timber buildings would rest, flags for threshing floors and the external walkways and floors leading up to and around animal stalls. Cobbles from glacial tills and rivers could simply be used as found, or simply dressed, but most stonework required the skills of quarriers and masons. Rock-faced stonework was commonly used from around the 1860s for estate buildings, which also sometimes exhibit a black ash mortar from the south Wales coalfields.



Cobbled paths provided dry access around the edges of farmyards. Photo © Sam Hale



A cobble floor to a cowhouse. Photo © Sam Hale



The great variety of stone makes a critical contribution to local distinctiveness in the National Park. Sandstone and mudstone are the most common building stones, ranging from hard and easily-split sandstones to white quartz-sandstones and pebbly sandstones in the south to soft mudstones. Limestone was available in some areas. Stone flag roofs quarried from easily-split beds of sandstone are another distinctive feature, and required strong and skilfully-made carpentry. The St Maughans and Senni Formation sandstones, for example, are seen throughout the Usk Valley. Little freestone for ashlar or mouldings was locally available, and it was recorded as being imported from Shropshire and from the Box quarries near Bath (Scourfield and Haslam 2013, 5-9). Slate from North Wales and brick from Herefordshire and elsewhere was also imported into this area by canal and rail. The brick was also used for details such as door and window surrounds, copings to roofs and chimneystacks.



Examples of rubblestone across the National Park. Clockwise are the sandstones of the Dyffryn Crawnon, multi-colours of Pontsticill, grey greens of Llanfrynach, limewash remains at Llanddeusant, mixed purple-maroon sandstones near Blwch, olive-green and pale sandstones of Ystradfellte. Photos © Sam Hale



Imported freestone used in the tooled surrounds, sills and quoins of the cow house and dairy range at Buckland Model Farm. Photo © Sam Hale



## Examples of the use of stone in the Brecon Beacons



Raglan Mudstone - silty mudstones with calcretes and sandstones occasionally mixed in with limestones laid in a hot mix earthen mortar with quicklime. There are traces of copperas or deep ochre limewash with later synthetic masonry paint over. Photo © Sam Hale



Sandstone laid in an earthen mortar comprising subsoil and quicklime hot mixed with evidence of masonry bee activity and traces of a tight lime plaster/parging coat now much weathered and lost. Photo © Sam Hale



Sandstone laid in an earthen mortar comprising subsoil and quicklime hot mixed with traces of a tight lime plaster/parging coat now much weathered and lost - formerly suggesting the elevation was rendered with a tight coat. Photo © Sam Hale



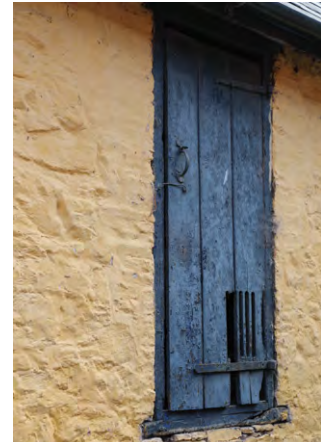
Sandstone laid in an earthen mortar comprising subsoil and quicklime hot mixed with a later 19th century/ early 20th century repair comprising re-pointing finishing mortar comprising lime and aggregate hot mix with pozzolan inclusions of red brick/tile and firing material (coke) from the kiln. Photo © Sam Hale



Sandstone laid in earthen mortar with a very lime rich parging finishing mortar for protection. Photo © Sam Hale



## Examples of limewash across the National Park





Building mortar almost exclusively consisted of earthen mortars or stabilised soils often hot-mixed with a proportion of burnt lime straight from the kiln in a rough but workable mix. Lime was commonly used from the late 18th century to make mortar and protective coverings in the form of lime plaster and limewash. Black ash mortar, a by-product from the south Wales coalfields, can also be found. Given the varied properties of the local building stone, especially the mudstones, farmhouses and farm buildings were invariably protected from weathering and water ingress by some form of render. Base coat plasters and renders were often earthen-based with additions of cattle hair, straw and bracken with top coats very lime rich, often packed with fibre, and lacking much in the way of aggregate. Lime could be simply applied as a 'bagged' or 'parged' coat tightly scoured across the face of the stones. More formal render coats, roughcast or lined out to resemble masonry, could be used to mark out farmhouses in the landscape. Limewash and lime plaster was also used as a disinfectant to animal housing and granaries and, fibred with cattle hair, bracken and straw, to seal the undersides of roofs. It reflects in its natural whites, off whites and creams the natural colours of the local limestone when burnt. Detailed inspection of limewash might also reveal deep ochres and copperas rather than the light yellow ochres often used today (see Tŷ-Mawr, Llangasty and Penpont).

Lime-ash floors are a rarity in the National Park but have been found on farms including Llwyncelyn in the first floor of the cider house. Lime-ash floors comprised a lightweight strong mixture of lime, potash, firing material/coke, bracken and straw, sometimes with additions of gypsum and laid over boards or tightly packed bundled poles or reed.



A parallel linear downslope group at Bwlch. The 17th century farmhouse originally had a beast house at the lower end, later converted to an extension of the dwelling in the early 20th century. The farm buildings are 18th century and consist of a barn at the upper end and a cow house below under a separate, lower roof. Photo © Sam Hale



Stone tiles with diminishing courses and Welsh slates to right. Photos © Jeremy Lake and Sam Hale

Double Roman Bridgewater clay tiles at Pencelli Court – possibly brought up the canal which runs alongside the farm to re-roof the barn. Photo © Sam Hale



## Openings

Traditional doors, windows and ventilation openings make an important contribution to the distinctive character of farmsteads, often with substantial pegged oak frames with chamfers to door openings. Standardised windows, either half-glazed, shuttered or with hit-and-miss ventilators, became more common from the mid 19th century. Sliding doors were also used from the 1850s.



LEFT: Wood-mullioned windows of 18th century and earlier date are very rare. Photo © Sam Hale



The use of stone tiles to form triangular vents to cattle housing and barns is a common feature. These can be called owl holes, although purpose-made holes for owls are usually set in the gable ends of buildings (usually barns) and can be square in shape. Photo © Sam Hale



Wooden shutters were commonly used, and can now be rare survivals. Photo © Sam Hale



Particular to the area is the Brecon Hopper, a local window type commonly used between around 1870 and 1940 with a side-hung casement over a multi-paned sash or fixed window. Photo © Sam Hale



A plank door with strap hinges made in the local forge, and set in a heavy pegged frame. Split level doors were commonly used. Photo © Jeremy Lake



### Interior features

The interiors of buildings may retain cobbled and stone-flag floors, and also stalls, mangers and other features. Their removal has often left holes, recesses and marks on floors and beams.

Harder to spot, but important, are historic graffiti and superstitious marks. Incised ritual (apotropaic) marks for protecting produce or livestock usually take the form of ‘daisy wheels’ or ‘Marian marks’ and burn marks made to ‘fight fire with fire’ and thus to prevent fires happening in buildings that are themselves flammable, or which store flammable materials. Some marks date from the 17th century, but many date from the revival of the tradition in the 19th century. Tally marks may be found on the door jambs of threshing barns or in granaries, and records of prize winners at shows might also be found in stables and cow houses.

Particularly good examples of apotropaic marks can be found in farmhouses, longhouses (on the byre side of the dividing chimney wall), in lofts and in threshing barns (for example the daisy wheels on the large threshing barn at Tŷ-Mawr, Llangasty).



Graffiti often records the names of farm workers, but rarely does it include drawings of ploughs and other implements as here. Photo © Sam Hale



A burn mark on a principal rafter in Lower Trewalkin longhouse, Talgarth. Photo © Sam Hale

‘Daisy wheels’ in the threshing barn of Tŷ-Mawr, Llangasty. Photo © Sam Hale



A memento from the annual show of the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society. Photo © Jeremy Lake



## 2 Buildings and structures for the farm

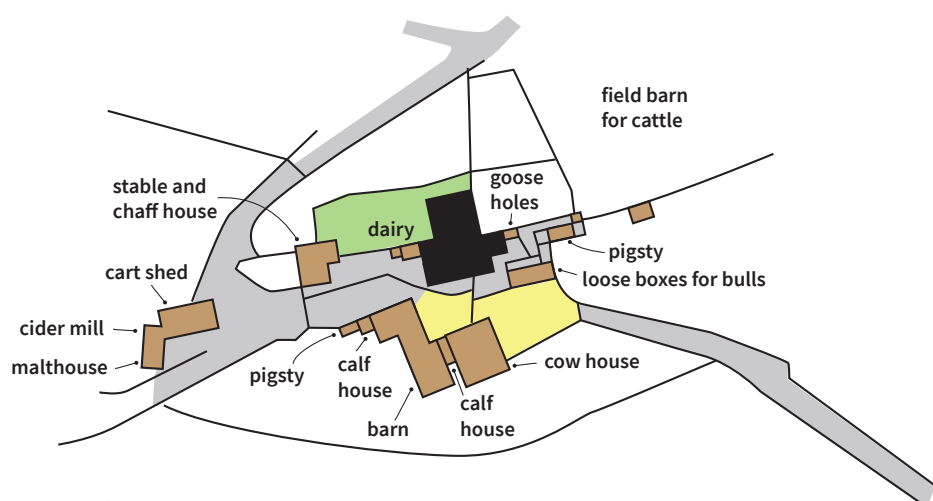




# PART 2

## Buildings and structures for the farm

Different types of structures and buildings, or spaces within building ranges with more than one function, have developed over time to serve the needs of the farm. These are set out in this section. See also Part 4 for a summary of the rarity and significance of individual building types and Appendix 1 for a Glossary of Terms and their Welsh Equivalents. **Barns** and **granaries** were needed to process and store the corn harvested from the fields, as there needed to be sufficient to feed the family and the stock kept over the winter. **Cattle housing** was required as were stables for horses. Straw was taken from barns for use as litter and bedding. Cut bracken was also used (as it is today). Hay for winter feed was kept in outside **stacks**, in **lofts** or (rarely until the late 19th century) in detached hay barns. It was sometimes supplemented with dried foliage from pollarded trees, holly and crushed gorse. **Pigs** were housed in yards or **pigsties** which were usually sited close to the house, as pigs were fed on whey (a by-product of dairying) and pomace (from apple pressing). Poultry (see Bird Houses, pages 54-55) were often sited in small lofts (marked by a small pop-door), often above the pigsty, and recesses in farmyard walls might also house geese and farm dogs. From the 17th century the dairy was commonly built as a separate room at the rear of the farmhouse, or to the rear of the parlour in the main body of the house, where milk was processed to make cheese and butter – often for export from the farm as well as domestic consumption. Cheese would be stored in a loft above the dairy or in the attic of the farmhouse. Some farmhouses or outbuildings had a **bakehouse** or **brewhouse**, sometimes converted from or doubling up as additional accommodation, for baking bread and brewing beer. There is some evidence for malthouses for malting barley on a commercial basis, and **cider houses** to press and press apples into juice. **Sheep**, although common on most farms by the 19th century, were rarely housed in buildings and commonly sheltered in sheepfolds made up of one or more walled yard areas. They could be brought in on occasion to cattle houses and combination barns if required.



### Building types on one farmstead

This plan shows a longhouse (see pages 29-30) and its associated outbuildings at Tyn-y-llwyn, Partrishow. The house was remodelled and extended in the mid-late 17th century with a kitchen replacing the byre, a dairy and an upper floor granary. The house was also recorded as having a salmon rack for smoking salmon, and in the 19th century had a larger dairy added to its west end. The large cow house to the south of the former longhouse was probably built in the late 17th century and survives as a very early example of its type with entrances in its gable end, and the barn and stables probably date from the same period. Its large scale illustrates the historic importance of arable farming in the valleys. The importance of making butter and cheese is illustrated not only in the dairies but also by the pigsties – pigs being fed on the liquid whey. Note also the cider mill and the malthouse, the latter surviving from a period until the 1930s when farmhouse maltings were replaced by larger commercial ones. Plan based on drawing in Redwood and Barnes 1993

## BARNS

The barn is a building for the storage and processing of grain crops, sometimes also combined with other functions and so giving rise to two main types of barn:

- Threshing barns – a barn containing one or more threshing floors and bays for storing the sheaves of unthreshed corn and often the straw after threshing.
- Combination barns that also housed livestock and sometimes other functions (storing grain, housing carts, etc.), at one end of the building or more rarely below a first-floor threshing and storage area. Barns built into a slope, with animals housed below, are known as bank barns. They date from the 17th century in this part of Wales but were more widely introduced from the late 18th century as in other parts of Britain.

In many areas the barn was the principal or only building on the farmstead until the 19th century, expressing the need to store and process corn for seed, domestic consumption and for livestock on most farms. Barns in the National Park could also be used for sheep shearing, for harvest suppers and other communal events, and for chapel meetings. Typical features of barns are:

- Threshing floors in the ‘threshing bay’ for beating out the harvested crop. The threshing floor can be of beaten earth, stone flags, cobbles or occasionally timber.
- Opposing doors (often orientated east-west) – either the same size, or with one much smaller – to enable the carting in of the crop for unloading and the creation of a cross-draught for winnowing the grain from the chaff. This was usually achieved by throwing the grain into the air and using the wind to blow the lighter chaff away from the grain.
- Boarded barn doors, which open outwards and are hung off pintles driven into the masonry or heavy, pegged frames; they were usually secured onto a removable central post. Slots at the bottom took removable boards, installed during threshing to keep grain from bouncing out: hence the bottoms of doors may not reach the ground.
- Other openings comprise pitching holes (termed *abwlch*) for forking the crop into storage bays, or hay for animals, ventilation openings, flight holes and doorways into animal housing or spaces which could be used for a variety of purposes (such as shearing sheep).
- Internal partitions and stalling for cattle in combination barns – see Cattle Housing, page 62. In the National Park huge stone slabs set up on end sometimes survive to one side of the threshing floor as a division.

Farming memoirs recall the exceptionally hard work that threshing entailed, often involving getting up at four or five in the morning to thresh before breakfast at seven (Williams 1961, 104). Although threshing and winnowing by machine was common by the mid 19th century, there is little evidence in the National Park of wheel houses which housed horse walks to powered threshing machines (although some wheel houses can be seen on 19th century OS maps), or of water power (requiring leats to take the water to the mill wheel), wind power, and from the 1820s steam engines. Cheaper, cast-iron horse gears were used from the 1840s, the only evidence for which may be a hole for a drive shaft. Mobile steam engines were becoming increasingly common, particularly in low-lying areas, from the 1850s. Visible traces of mechanisation may remain as belt drives and holes for drive shafts from earlier fixed or portable machinery and the raised platform bases of horse walks. Barns built with off-centre doors to allow for storing more straw, which machine threshing produced very fast, may also hint at mechanisation.

The size and number of barns on a farmstead, often prominently displayed, can provide an obvious indication of the wealth and arable acreage of a farm. Some barns in the Usk and Wye valleys were built (or later extended) with two threshing bays. Larger barns are rare and found on the largest arable farms and estates, notable examples are at Tŷ-Mawr, Llangasty and Newton, Brecon. There is a note of caution to be added here: if crops were reaped with a sickle they needed little barn room, whereas the harvesting by scythe of the whole crop including the straw destined for thatching or (more commonly) farmyards crop required more barn space. Not all of the corn was stored in the barn, Walter Davies in 1815 noting the use of mushroom-shaped staddle stones to elevate corn stacks above the damp (Davies 1815, 156).

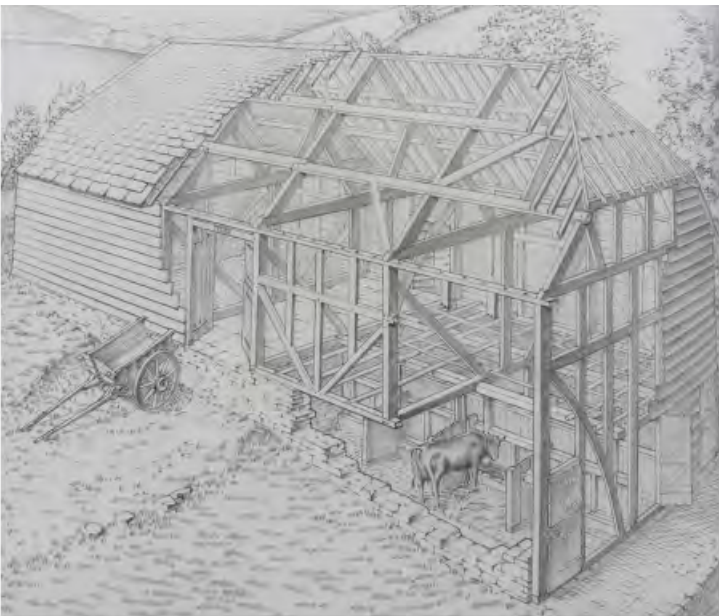




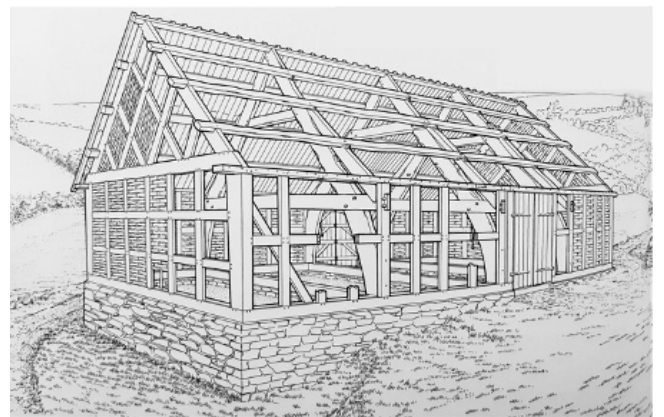
A stone-flag threshing floor. Photo © Jeremy Lake



A belt drive and line shaft. Photo © Jeremy Lake



Example of a timber-framed combination barn, with cattle stalled in one lower downslope end, from Richard Suggett's, *Houses and History in the March of Wales: Radnorshire 1400-1800*. Image courtesy of Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales.



Example of a cruck-framed threshing barn, from Richard Suggett's, *Houses and History in the March of Wales: Radnorshire 1400-1800*. Image courtesy of Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales.





The two large threshing barns at Abercynrig and as depicted on the 1749 map by Meredith Jones before the large late 18th or early 19th century lofted five-bay cartshed was constructed. Photos © Sam Hale

Map from a plan of Abercynrick demeasne / M. Jones. 1749 National Library of Wales



The large threshing barns of the Usk valley and Tal-y-bont reservoir valley. Clockwise – Tŷ- fry, Llanfrynach, Pencelli Court (of two periods 17th and 18th century – the earlier with a timber-framed elevation (not seen in the photograph), Abercynafon at the west end of the Tal-y-bont reservoir. Photos © Sam Hale





A large threshing barn with two threshing floors at Cefn Brynich, alongside the A40 in the Usk valley to the east of Brecon. Photo © Sam Hale



A five-bay threshing barn with a central threshing floor and a lofted stable to one end, Western Usk Tributaries. Photo © Sam Hale



Combination barns with a lofted cow house at one end are a common feature, some examples dating from the late 17th century. An example (shown left) at Maestorglwyd in the Black Mountains was adapted from an early 15th century hall house, the earliest dated hall house in the Brecon Beacons. Photos © Sam Hale



Combination barns with granaries at one end may date from the 17th century, as on the left on the southern fringe of the Middle Usk Valley, and also indicate the importance of arable agriculture as here on the right in the Tywi Valley Foothills. Photos © Jeremy Lake





An early 19<sup>th</sup> century bank barn, with a stable in the lower end, in the Black Mountains. Photo © Sam Hale



Lean-tos to house carts, implements and livestock are a common addition to barns, as here in the Crai area to the south of the Western Usk Tributaries. Photo © Jeremy Lake



A very large combination barn at Tre-fedw, on the eastern fringe of the Black Mountains. This may date from the early 18th century, and apart from the threshing barn with its double doors has a cow house to its lower (left-hand) end with gable-end doorways, and steps rising to a granary set above cart sheds to the right. Photo © Jeremy Lake



Combination barns at Pant-y-crafog Isaf between Trecastle and Crai. Photos © Sam Hale in the Black Mountains. Photo © Sam Hale



A rare surviving example of a horse engine house. Photo © Sam Hale



## BAKEHOUSES

These are, if not incorporated into the farmhouse, small buildings for baking bread, washing or brewing beer. With oats being the predominant grain grown in the upland valleys oat cakes were commonly produced instead of leavened (usually wheaten) bread. Projecting flat stones or iron plates for baking oatcakes were suspended over or built into kitchen fireplaces. Barley bread might also be baked using the baking stone. Baking pots or pot-ovens were also used. Bread ovens were built of stone (later ones sometimes of brick), and clay ovens imported from north Devon from the 1600s can also be found.

Bakehouses are typically small buildings with a chimneystack, and they may retain a fireplace and bread oven that often projects from the wall. They were commonly provided with a copper for heating water to wash clothes, brew beer and heat swill for calves and particularly pigs – hence the name *y geginfoch*, or pigs' kitchen, given to some. There were often different coppers for domestic use and agricultural use.

Early separate bakehouses or external kitchens are to be found in the Black Mountains and the area around Hay-on-Wye towards Talgarth and to the north of Brecon. Some provided separate accommodation for family members, especially widows. These detached ranges were associated with women's work (baking and brewing) and sometimes served as dower-houses, that is providing accommodation during widowhood. Generally, farmers in their wills commended the care of their widows to their sons but recognised that a widow might not live harmoniously with her son and daughter-in-law and offered the alternative of an annuity and independence in the bakehouse (Suggett 2007 and 2017, 46-7).

Communal bakehouses were also provided in rural as well as industrial and urban areas.



An open fireplace and the remains of a bread oven in a bakehouse. Photo © Sam Hale



Coed, Vale of Ewyas - A 17th century detached kitchen (middle) with accommodation over which became an agricultural outhouse when the longhouse (left) was improved by the Llanthony Estate in the early/mid 19th century. It had a cart shed added to the uphill end at this time. The interior of the ground floor retains its fireplace and copper, the first floor served as accommodation. Photo © Sam Hale



A bakehouse alongside the road (Black Mountains). Photo © Jeremy Lake

## BIRDS – HOUSING FOR POULTRY AND OTHER BIRDS

Poultry and other birds have been kept on farms for thousands of years for their meat, eggs and feathers.

Poultry usually ran freely about a farmyard during the daytime. They were encouraged to nest safely away from predators at night, which also enabled their eggs to be more easily collected in the morning. Where historic examples do survive they often form part of another building, such as a pig house: it was thought the chickens would keep the pigs warm and the pigs would frighten foxes away. Poultry houses usually include a small pop-hole for the hens – accessed by a removable ladder – as well as a full-sized door for human access for feeding, cleaning-out or egg-collection. The walls could be lined with nest boxes/roost holes, often with wooden stop-boards across the front and/or alighting boards. Less long-lived poultry houses were usually in the form of timber buildings and later corrugated iron, often on wheels. Occasional early to mid 20th century examples survive.

Gooseholes or goosecots for housing geese, either singly or in groups, are sometimes to be found near the back door of the farmhouse. They can also be found towards the edges of farmsteads, facing outwards as geese were often also used for security. Geese – being predators of the snails which are part of the liver-fluke cycle – were often left to wander with the sheep, and goose-passes (as distinct from ‘lunky’ for sheep) were constructed in drystone walls built after about 1750 (information from Stuart Fry). Geese were a feature of hill farms and are mentioned in several farm rental documents referring to tithing payment from the 17th and 18th centuries. During the 19th and early 20th century large flocks were kept on many upland farms for fattening and killing for local distribution. Many would have been housed in loose boxes, and combination barns, as well as timber sheds.

Pigeons and doves (the terms are interchangeable although in the British Isles the term ‘dove’ has been used for the smaller varieties) have been kept for thousands of years. Sizeable pigeon lofts have been quite commonly incorporated into the roof spaces of buildings such as stables and barns. Single nest holes and flight holes can also be found. Free-standing dovecotes are very rare in the National Park. The keeping of doves was associated with higher-status houses and farmsteads, particularly in the medieval period: early examples are found in the Vale of Glamorgan and other areas of Norman influence. Some were built with corbelled stone roofs as used elsewhere in south-west Wales and Cornwall, and also for pigsties (Davies 1815, 160). They had low doorways to discourage the birds from flying out. A potence, a central pivoted post with arms supporting a revolving ladder, provided access to the nest boxes for collection of the young birds (squabs) and eggs. Nest boxes, in the earliest examples, were formed in the thickness of the wall but usually made of stone, brick or wood. Estate examples include those at Penpont and Abercamlais.





Gooseholes are commonly placed next to the back door of the farmhouse, as here. Photo © Sam Hale



Now a rare breed, pure Brecon Buff geese were first bred by Sir Rhys Llewellyn in 1928 from some buff geese found on a Breconshire hill farm. The breed was recognized by the Poultry Club in 1934. Photo © Sam Hale



Pigeon lofts associated with high-status farms in the Usk valley at Manest Court and Talgarth. Photos © Sam Hale



An unusually fine and brick-built late 17th century dovecote, probably built at the same time (1692) as the fine house it stands next to Trewyn on the eastern edge of the Black Mountains. Photo © Jeremy Lake



The superb dovecotes at neighbouring Abercamlais and Penpont. At Abercamlais the extraordinary 18th century stone dovecote sits on a bridge over the Camlais, the base formerly a privy with effluent carried away by the brook into the Usk. At Penpont the 18th century timber-framed dovecote is raised on stone piers, with a first floor chamber and dove access through tiny openings in the glazed cupola. Photos © Sam Hale



## BEES and BEE BOLES

The keeping of bees has been documented from the time of the early medieval Welsh Laws (Walker and Linnard, 1990). Bees were most commonly found in the fruit gardens and orchards of the local gentry and more prosperous farmers. Bee skeps made of straw holding hives were placed on wooden benches or stands and could also be placed in shallow openings set into stone walls, facing away from the prevailing wind and rain. Projecting stones kept rainwater from dripping into the hives. Surviving examples are recorded at <https://www.beeboles.org.uk/>

Bees could also be kept over winter in storage houses, which had recesses for skeps set into windowless walls. These typically also had thick walls, more than 20 inches (50 cm) wide, which ensured an equable temperature so that bees remained in a cluster. There are no recorded examples of bee houses, for keeping bees over winter, in the National Park.



Examples of bee boles – a rebuilt construction at Aber-iail Llangynidr and historic bee boles at Dol-y-gaer, Crickhowell. Photos © Sam Hale



## CART SHEDS

Cart sheds are buildings, generally open-fronted, that provided covered storage for carts and implements. They often face away from the farmyard and may be found close to the stables and roadways, giving direct access to the fields or a track. There is little evidence for them until the 19th century, i.e. after the introduction of new types of hoes, light ploughs and drills in the second half of the 18th century (Edmunds 1957, 53).

In the hills, with relatively small areas of arable land, few vehicles and implements were required and so cart sheds tended to be small. On some farms, breast-ploughs continued to be used into the 19th century. A modest hill farm might only need a single-bay cart shed for a two-wheeled cart or a horse-drawn sled (*gambo*) for the transport of hay or dung. The *car-llusg* (sledge/cart without wheels) was commonly used in the upland zones of the National Park especially for movement of stone (information from Stuart Fry).

On larger lowland and valley farms, particularly those of estates, four-wheeled carts were used and the cart sheds tended to be larger and have more bays. Some had a granary or storage loft above, sometimes with hatches for dropping sacks into the carts below (See Granary). Cart sheds might also be incorporated into combination barns; if so, the entrance arch is usually lower than that for the threshing bays.



If not spanned by a lintel, cart sheds could also provide opportunities to display the craft of the stonemason. The number of blocked entrances also offer an indication of the importance of arable farming on this Usk valley farmstead. Photos © Jeremy Lake



An 18th-century cart shed, facing directly onto a routeway. Photo © Jeremy Lake





Mid to later 19th century 4-bay cart shed with hayloft and two stables fronting the road and forming part of the model farm at Buckland Hall Farm. Photo © Sam Hale



The large 5-bay lofted cart shed at Abercynrig (glimpsed behind). The cart shed contains a cider mill and press. Photo © Sam Hale



Cart shed with granary over and stabling with loft over Tŷ-Mawr Farm, Llangasty. Photo © Sam Hale



## CATTLE HOUSING

Cattle were the most important livestock on farms in the medieval period, sheep increasing in importance from the late 17th century, and were kept in increasing numbers from the late 18th century. The main breed was Welsh Black, said to be descended from cattle of pre-Roman Wales and kept for both meat and dairy products. Draught oxen were used for pulling the heavy ploughs – Walter Davies (1815, 291–2) documenting their continued use into the early 19th century. Along with milking cattle, they were most likely to be kept indoors over the winter months and so require their own stalling arrangements. When not indoors, the cattle were often kept in scattered yards where they dropped their dung which was then shovelled up and taken to fertilise the fields.

Cattle were normally brought indoors for the winter in late October or early November and, until the end of the 18th century, were mostly housed on the ground-floor of barns or in the byres of longhouses. Milking cows could also be housed in stables (Gibbs 1879, 129). Most ‘dedicated’ cattle housing dates from the 19th century and was built to help avoid damage to land in the winter, to conserve manure and to aid the production of healthy animals that put on weight, calved and produced milk more easily. In many areas, the amount of cattle housing increased further from the 1870s as the price of grain collapsed and markets for milk and meat continued to grow.

Welsh Blacks are relatively small and this is reflected in the dimensions of the byres and in the size of the doorways, which are lower than those for stables. Cow houses are typically less-well ventilated and with lower ceilings than stables, with this situation being rectified from the mid-19th century onwards through the use of windows with sliding ventilators and more rarely air ducts set on roofs. Plank doors in heavy frames are hinged to open outwards and may also be split to admit air.



Welsh Blacks. Photo © Alice Thorne





A two-storey cow house with its row of doors to stalls and hay loft, near Crai in the Western Usk Tributaries. There are timber-framed examples of these dating from the late 16th century along the Border Counties, but in the National Park these stone-built structures are all 19th century. No earlier examples have yet been identified. Photo © Jeremy Lake



The wide doorway to this early 19th century or earlier building at Ynys-fawr in the Western Usk Tributaries may be indicative of it allowing access by oxen. Photo © Jeremy Lake



The Black Mountains has some of the earliest evidence for cattle housing in Wales or England. To the top left is the late 17th or early 18th century cow house at Tyn-y-Llwyn, Partrishow (see page 30). Like other high-status examples of this date, it has outer entrances for cattle. To the right is a barn of a similar date, with beam ends indicating the presence of a loft floor. Photo © Jeremy Lake



A large early 18th century cow house attached to a large barn with granary of the same date to the east of Llanover (Bloreng Valley and Slopes). Photo © Jeremy Lake



## Cow house interiors

There were various arrangements for tethering and feeding the cattle, and for mucking out. Ceilings in cow houses were typically low and there was very little light. Loft floors could be made simply from bundled hazel poles. Cows were usually tethered in pairs, with low partitions of wood, stone, slate and – in the mid-to-late 19th century but rarely in the National Park – cast iron. Feeding arrangements can survive in the form of hayracks, water bowls and mangers for chopped roots.

Other types of cattle housing, associated with the fattening of cattle on root crops as well as hay and so concentrated in the arable farmlands of the valleys of the Usk and its tributaries, comprise loose boxes for fattening, open-fronted shelter sheds and covered yards. Feeding arrangements in shelter sheds can survive in the form of hayracks, water bowls and mangers for chopped roots. Covered yards date from the late 19th century, and follow experiments in the 1850s that showed that the nutritional value of manure would be better preserved if it were under cover, and as costly feeds produced richer manures, the incentive to protect them was great. Loose boxes for housing calves, bulls and – in the mid-to-late 19th century – fatstock, are found in the form of buildings or lean-tos which provide access to a small contained yard or pen. Bull pens may have access to an adjacent walled ‘mating pen’. They almost all date from the 19th century. Often the floor of the boxes was sunken and the manure would build up in them during the winter. They reflected a realisation that warm and dry conditions would promote weight gain (through minimising heat loss) and retain the quality of the manure. The ceilings could be lined with thatch, to minimise condensation.



Cow house with loft above. One of the bays is used as a kennel, swallows nest in the loft above, Ystradfelte. Photo © Sam Hale



The cow house/dairy at the model farm, Buckland Hall, built with a central feeding passage. It originally appears to have had a double-pile roof of different heights which was later replaced by a single-span arched roof of corrugated iron, the end walls raised and a loft inserted. The loft stored and transferred feedstuff from the adjacent mill. Photo © Sam Hale





Interior with chamfered cow ties and feed passage, Llanigon. Photos © Sam Hale



Simple single cow ties in a combination barn, Dyffryn Crawnnon – note the loft above supported with bundled poles of hazel. Photo © Sam Hale



This former open-fronted shelter shed was converted into loose boxes in the mid-late 19th century, and was used to house bulls. Photo © Jeremy Lake



An open-fronted shelter shed. Photo © Sam Hale

There are also some examples of linhays. A linhay is a two-storeyed building with open-fronted cattle shelter and hay loft, and examples in England date from the 16th century. Although it is characteristic of Devon, eastern Cornwall, west Dorset and south Somerset, there are some examples along the Welsh borders in Herefordshire and within the Black Mountains in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.

## CHEESE HOUSE See

## DAIRY



## CIDER HOUSES

A cider house is a building for the milling and pressing of cider apples to produce cider (or pears for perry) and for storing the drink in barrels. Cider and perry orchards are documented from the 17th century and, as elsewhere, probably date from much earlier. In order to make cider, apples needed to be crushed and the resulting pomace then pressed. The juice was then fermented in barrels. Local historical varieties of cider apple are mainly derived from Monmouthshire and south Wales although there are a few local Breconshire varieties including Cadwaladr and Talgarth varieties. The eastern part of the National Park area, together with Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, form one of the most significant centres of the cider industry as it developed from the late 17th century. The Wye and Eastern Usk valleys were especially notable for their apple, pear and cherry orchards, celebrated in the 17th century plasterwork at Trefecca Fawr on the western edge of the Wye Valley area.

Cider houses are frequently incorporated into other buildings ranged around the yard, and can date from the late 17th century. They could be built with a wide doorway to a cellar or room for storing barrels. Barrels of cider (and ale) were also often stored in farmhouses in a buttery. Evidence in doorways for the passage of large barrels, including those that are part of the plank and muntin screens that separated service rooms from halls, can be seen where door jambs have been cut with a semi-circular incision.

Troughs for pulping apples survived into the 20th century on some farms (Redwood and Barnes 1993, 86). Numerous examples in gardens of granite apple-crushing bases, and cider-pressing bases, prove the widespread production of cider on many farms. In some areas mobile cider presses were employed in the fields.



A late 17th century cider house at Llwyn Celyn, Eastern Usk Valley. Photo © Sam Hale



Old orchard trees at Pencelli Court. Photo © Sam Hale



Cider mill and press at Abercynrig. Photos © Sam Hale



## CORN-DRYING KILNS AND MALTHOUSES

A common requirement on upland farms was the drying of corn after it had been threshed and winnowed in the barn. The small amounts of grain intended for seed corn or domestic consumption were spread on a blanket or the floor of the farmhouse, and corn-driers can be found above fireplaces. Small field kilns, stone-lined, sunk in the ground and with a flue for taking the heated air from the stokehole to the drying chamber, were scattered over the National Park. Field kilns – including potash kilns fuelled by bracken – were not usually mapped by the Ordnance Survey and have rarely survived in a recognisable state. One surveyor who mapped them, Edward Thomas, referred to them always as oat kilns (information from Bob Silvester). They may be indicated by field names such as ‘Kiln Field’. The tithe mapping gives some indication of where field kilns were located – e.g. *cae’r o dyn* (information from Stuart Fry). Their use declined over the 18th century as well-constructed kilns with slatted floors attached to mills became more important (Silvester and Hankinson 2013, 51–59).

A malthouse is a low-ceilinged building for the malting of barley before brewing, specifically for the germination of the crop on malting floors and then drying in a kiln. Recorded malthouses, with perforated floors to assist in drying the grain, are concentrated in the Black Mountains. Small amounts of grain could be malted inside farmhouses, often in first-floor rooms heated by the chimney stack. A two-storey drying-kiln with restored pierced tile kiln floor survives at Priory Mill, Brecon.



The 19th century two-storey drying-kiln abutted to the corn mill at Priory Mill, Brecon – the buildings and kiln floor altruistically restored by owners Noel and Susie Gaskell. Photos © Sam Hale



## DAIRIES AND CHEESE ROOMS

Dairies were used for the cool storage of milk and making it into butter and/or cheese, a practice which declined over the late 19th and 20th centuries as a result of commercial cheese manufacture and the profits to be made from selling liquid milk. The roadside churn stands at farm entrances enabled the transport of liquid milk by lorry to creameries and other locations.

Dairies are usually found within or attached to the farmhouse and are easily identified by their slate shelving for cooling milk in pans when it was creaming, brick or stone floors and ventilated or shuttered windows. A separate, well-ventilated cheese room (*llofft y caws*) with shuttered and mesh windows, shelves and sometimes a hoist for storing and hauling heavy cheeses, could also be provided in a loft above the dairy or even in the attic of the farmhouse. Cheese presses can often now be found outside as garden ornaments. Changes in hygiene regulations and the centralisation of production through the 20th century had a major impact on dairies, with the majority becoming redundant to their original use.



Salting slabs in a stone-flagged dairy. Photo © Sam Hale



A late 17th century dairy (left) added to an earlier longhouse and (above) a 19th century dairy added to a 16th century house. Photos © Jeremy Lake

## FORGES (alternative name smithy)

Forges housed the ironworking processes of a blacksmith. They required wide doorways, bellows for working the forge, benches for working and access to a water supply. Most examples are within hamlets and were built to serve a rural community including farms. Some occasionally were constructed on farms, particularly estate farms, an example, just north of the National Park, is a forge at the early-mid 19th century Upper Llangoed Farmhouse. Whereas now blacksmiths and farriers are two distinct professions in the past blacksmiths often shod horses as a sideline. As well as the wide variety of practical equipment such as gates, hinges, chains, repairs to machinery and so on they also produced branding irons and pitch irons for marking sheep and cattle where they mixed on the hills. These marks are part of the rich cultural history of farms passed down the generations.



Blacksmith working in traditional forge with a modern hearth. Photo © Sam Hale

## FUEL STORES

Fires were often kept going throughout the year and were essential for heating water, heating meal for the livestock, cooking and providing warmth in the farmhouse.

There must have been a need for substantial stocks of fuel and, in addition to firewood, use will have been made of dung, peat and, in some areas close to the coalfields, culm (coal dust mixed with clay). No purpose-built stores have yet been positively identified in the National Park and it is likely that temporary shelters and other buildings on the farmstead were often used for storing the fuel. Coal was more commonly used in the 19th century.



## GRANARIES

A granary is a building, or first-floor room in a building, for the dry and secure storage of grain after it has been threshed and winnowed. Most are of 19th century date - before that, it was common for grain to be stored in the farmhouse itself (husks of grains are often found under floorboards and near fireplaces). They are most commonly found over stables or cart sheds, or on the upper floors of barns. The size of the granary provides an indication of the arable acreage of the farm.

Granaries are characterised by substantial external steps and/or a hoist for pulling up or lowering sacks of grain. They also needed suitable openings to keep the grain ventilated – either louvres, shutters, sliding vents or grilles. To prevent loss of grain, they required a strong, load-bearing floor with tight-fitting lapped boards and, to keep the grain clean and safe from rodents. The interior walls were close-boarded or plastered and lime-washed. Inside there were grain bins, or the slots in vertical timbers for horizontal planking used to make them.



A large first-floor granary at Pencelli Court, marked by shutters and with a hole for unloading grain along a chute. Photo © Sam Hale



Granary with external stone steps at Tŷ-fry Llanfrynach. Photo © Sam Hale



## HAY LOFTS and HAY BARNES

Across the National Park hay was most usually stored in lofts above the animals in both farmstead buildings and field barns. There was normally a hatch through which the hay could be pitched into the loft from a loaded cart. There were usually openings in the floor through which the hay could be shovelled down to the stock below.

Hay could also be stored in open-sided barns or in temporary thatched ricks supported by stone or timber 'staddles' to keep them dry and free of rats. They are documented in Wales from the 17th century.

At a later date, hay and sometimes straw was often kept in Dutch barns. These have corrugated iron roofs set on timber posts or sometimes iron beams. They were rarely built before the 1890s (Williams 1960, 101). Metal frames are sometimes accompanied by manufacturers' name plates or the name is cast in the iron frame.



Stone piers to a hay barn south of Sennybridge, in the Western Usk Tributaries. Photo © Jeremy Lake



Dutch barns of this type are documented as being built around the Brecon Beacons from the 1880s. Photo © Jeremy Lake

The largest hay barns are found on the large courtyard farmsteads built by estates around the Usk valley. The scale of this example is comparable to those found along the Border Counties. Photo © Jeremy Lake



Huge 12-bay hay barn on brick and stone piers, Tŷ-Mawr, Llanfrynach. Photo © Sam Hale



## LONGHOUSES

For details and images see pages 29-30.

## PIGSTIES

Pigsties were typically built as single-storey structures – large enough for a sow and her litter – with low openings. Some had small, walled-yard areas to contain the pigs, with external chutes for their feed. The main requirements for housing pigs were for farrowing, final fattening and housing the boar. Sties were often placed near the kitchen or dairy, because pigs were normally fed on kitchen scraps or whey from the dairy. On larger farms where more pigs were kept, a separate room or building with a chimney was needed to heat the swill for feed.

Circular pigsties were once common in south Wales dating from the late 18th century and early 19th century. The National Park has some very rare examples of circular ‘beehive’ pigsties with corbelled stone roofs, similar to those in Cornwall, the Channel Islands, southern Ireland and north-west France. These are recorded by Walter Davies as being whitewashed (Davies 1815, 155), and are illustrated in Eurwyn Wiliam’s book on Welsh farm buildings (Wiliam 1982, 26-29) A well-known survival is at Llanover. Similar but smaller stone corbelled structures were also erected in Wales to house geese and ducks.

By the late 18th century in Wales, pigsties were found in areas where yearling pigs were fattened for export – often along droving routes. Larger-scale piggeries were found on larger farms where commercial fattening was practised, but the industrial housing of pigs was rare before the 1950s. Many smallholdings kept a pig for fattening and small-scale stone or brick sties with one or two pens can be found in some holdings, good examples being at Priory Mill, Brecon.



A circular ‘beehive’ pigsty at Upper Llanover. Photo © Clywd and Powys Archaeological Trust 21762



This is the most common type of pigsty, with covered housing opening onto a yard. Photo © Sam Hale



During the Second World War the Breconshire War Agricultural Executive Committee invested in piggeries (such as at Cefnmachllys, Talachddu just outside the National Park boundary), served by swill from the military barracks in Brecon. Photo © Sam Hale



The restored pigsties at Priory Mill, Brecon with brick yard – note the pen divisions have been lost. The cast iron feeder in the wall was brought to site from a local reclamation yard. Photo © Sam Hale



## POULTRY See BIRDS.

## RABBIT WARRENS

Rabbits were farmed from the medieval period in warrens, initially as a luxury food and from the 16th century on a commercial scale (see Williamson 2007). Earthen pillow mounds were constructed in order to contain their burrows, and were surrounded by walled or fenced enclosures.

The National Park is one of the areas, another being Dartmoor, where commercial rabbit farming continued into the 19th and even the early 20th century, well after it had ceased to be commercially viable in many other parts of the British Isles. This followed the sale and enclosure of part of the Great Forest of Brecknock (Fforest Fawr) in 1819, after which three rabbit farms were established on moorland near Ystradfellte. Pant Mawr Rabbit Farm extended over 1,714 acres of moorland, was enclosed by a strong drystone wall, and had at least 80 pillow mounds with associated pits and pens.

Warreners reared rabbits not only for meat but also for their skins. Hay-on-Wye had a small number of factories that provided skins to the garment trade, and no doubt this ready market would have encouraged landowners and entrepreneurs to set up businesses in the district. An area just outside the town on the banks of the River Wye, named 'The Warren', is depicted on an Ordnance Survey map of 1891 (Coflein entries: NPRN 24385 (Pant Mawr), 84911 (Crai), 84384 (CefnCul)). The warrens fell out of use in the 1860s and the area reverted to rough pasture.



The pillow mounds at Pant Fawr Rabbit Farm, Ystradfellte. Image © Google Earth



## ROOT STORES AND COLD STORES

These are rooms or cellars for storing and keeping cool dairy produce, potatoes and root crops, the latter being widely introduced as part of improved crop rotations and for the feeding of cattle in farmsteads from the later 18th century. Those with corbelled stone or brick-vaulted roofs are most likely to have survived.

Root stores are most commonly found associated with farmhouses and cattle housing on farmsteads, whereas stone-lined and semi-sunken stores for the cool storage of dairy produce are a distinctive feature of hafod sites (Silvester and Hankinson 2013, 59–64). Roots could also be stored in clamps, which might simply consist of an area scooped out of the ground and covered over with branches, bracken and turf (Silvester and Hankinson 2013, 61–62).

Examples of small stone structures that were probably used as cold stores during the summer months, include a stone chamber Cwm Sere in the northern Beacons and, in Cwm Crew to the south of the main Beacons ridge, a rectangular drystone wall feature with chamfered corners. The number of cold store structures found on what are thought to have been hafod sites appear to be particularly prevalent compared to many other similar upland areas that have been studied (Silvester and Hankinson 2013, 63–64).



An example of a store associated with a summer settlement, at Cwm Sere. Photo © CPAT Photo Number: cs95-063-0031

## SILAGE CLAMPS and TOWERS

These structures comprise airtight containers for the storage of freshly-cut grass and to allow its conversion into silage. Silage was first developed in the 1880s, after its initial use elsewhere in Europe, and had the advantage over hay in affording the opportunity to cut and store grass for bulk fodder without the risk of poor weather or storage conditions spoiling the crop.

Silage clamps are brick- or concrete-walled structures, in which the cut grass is placed and then covered. They are sometimes within a roofed building but often in the open, and may be designed so that one end of the clamp can be approached from higher ground. A silage tower – in which the compression of the cut grass is caused by gravity – is recognisable as a tall structure. Tower silos were introduced from the United States in 1901, but were not in general use until after the Second World War.

## SHEEP HOUSING

There is widespread archaeological and documentary evidence for sheep houses on medieval monastic and secular estates in Wales. Whilst most structures associated with sheep appear to be from the 18th- or 19th-century, it is possible that many of earlier date have simply not been recognised.

Circular or sometimes square dry-stone-walled sheep folds are scattered on higher ground across the National Park, either as single- or multi-cell structures: the latter might, as in Snowdonia, meet the need to sort the sheep into different ownerships (Silvester and Hankinson 2013, 61–69). It is possible that the greater numbers of shelters built in the late 18th and 19th centuries reflect the need to shelter the improved breeds which were less suited to local conditions (Silvester and Hankinson 2013, 69). Holes (known locally as 'lunky') were made in stone walls to allow sheep and lambs into adjoining fields to get the best of the new grass before the cattle.

Sheep washes for cleaning the wool prior to shearing are also found across the National Park (Silvester and Hankinson 2013, 69–70). Sheep washing was often carried out in ponds or streams where the watercourse might be artificially deepened or walled or, more unusually, in specially constructed tanks. Enclosures may be funnelled towards the water's edge. Washing must be distinguished from 'dipping' which is designed to reduce pests and diseases. Prior to the use of chemical treatments, introduced from the 1830s but only becoming general in the early 20th century, sheep were protected from lice and scab through salving, which involved the application of boiled tar and tallow.

Barns, when empty, were sometimes used for shearing and sorting the wool. Fleeces were often stored in first-floor lofts, including in granaries when not in use for storing grain, and the upper floors of farmhouses (Gibbs 1879, 42-3).



Multi-cellular sheepfold at Dorwen ar Giedd (left) and Nant Coetgae. Photos © Nick Jones (left) and from Geograph, © Alan Bowring and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence



20th century sheepfolds survive in the National Park. Two large structures survive in the Fforest Fawr area between Crai, Heol Senni, and Ystradfellte. Photo © Sam Hale



## SLAUGHTERHOUSES

Slaughtering on farm was often done outside rather than using a specific building. Where such buildings do exist they do not have any characteristic external features but the interiors may well have a high ceiling, often with hooks, a wheel to raise carcasses and drainage channels in the floor surface. No specific slaughterhouses have been identified in the National Park although there are examples of historic commercial slaughterhouses in neighbouring Monmouth and Abergavenny (the latter, despite its rarity, was recently demolished). Occasional evidence associated with slaughtering can be found in the knife-sharpening marks on external stone steps/thresholds of buildings facing the farmyard. Evidence for the salting and preparation of slaughtered animals may survive in farmhouses.

## STABLES

A stable is a building, or part of a building, for housing horses and their harnessing and tackle. They can distinguished from cow houses by having tall and relatively narrow doors, and windows for better light and ventilation. They are either integrated into other working buildings, especially barns, or less commonly found as detached buildings. Single-storey stables, often with cast-iron ridge vents, were built from the later 19th century.

Horses had largely replaced oxen as draught animals by the end of the 18th century. Most farms, except for the very smallest, had horses, and the numbers increased from the late 18th century due to more widespread use of light ploughs and other horse-powered machinery for tillage, harvesting and processing crops (Edmunds 1957, 53). Except for the larger arable farmsteads in the lower valleys, most farms had only one or two horses for ploughing, carting and riding.



The finely-crafted round window indicates the use of this small early 19th century building as a riding-horse stable. Photo © Jeremy Lake



Stables with granary over attached to the house, Priory Mill Farm, Brecon. Photo © Sam Hale



A large stable range at the north end of the Wye Valley Foothills. Photo © Jeremy Lake





The very fine late 17th or early 18th century lofted stable range at Penpont with coach house, restored with colourwashed walls in c. 2000. The formal facade of the stables has two outer bays treated as pyramid roofed pavilion towers and the centre three bays pedimented and slightly projected. Photo © Sam Hale

### Stable interiors

Stalls for horses either faced the gable walls or faced one side wall, the last arrangement being found on larger farms. Stable interiors often have stone or cobble floors and were often relaid with engineering bricks sloping to a drainage channel. Stalls provided access to mangers, drinking troughs and a hayrack, set vertically so that any dust would not fall into horses' eyes. Pegs for harness and tack are another feature, and also recesses for lamps, grooming brushes, medicines etc. Loose boxes might also be provided for hackney horses, for pulling traps and for riding.



Interior of a Breconshire stable with loft supported on hazel, ash and hawthorn poles. Holes against the wall for dropping hay into the mangers (behind the hay bales). Photo © Sam Hale



Stable interior. Photo © Sam Hale



# 3 Area Summaries





# PART 3

## Area Summaries

In this section we have set out how farmsteads contribute to the character of farmed landscapes across the National Park. The framework offered by the Brecon Beacons Landscape Character Assessment has been used to inform the Area Summaries which are set out in this section. The Brecon Beacons Landscape Character Assessment draws from LANDMAP, the spatial databases used to inform sustainable decision-making and natural resource planning in Wales, in order to identify and describe variations in landscape character, and the natural and cultural processes which have influenced it. Maps and a series of profiles for each of the fifteen Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within the National Park can be found here:

<https://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/planning/draft-strategy-and-policy/landscape-character-assessment/>.

Further information on the historic character of some areas within the National Park can also be found in Historic Landscape Characterisation reports compiled for the Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales (<https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/historic-assets>):

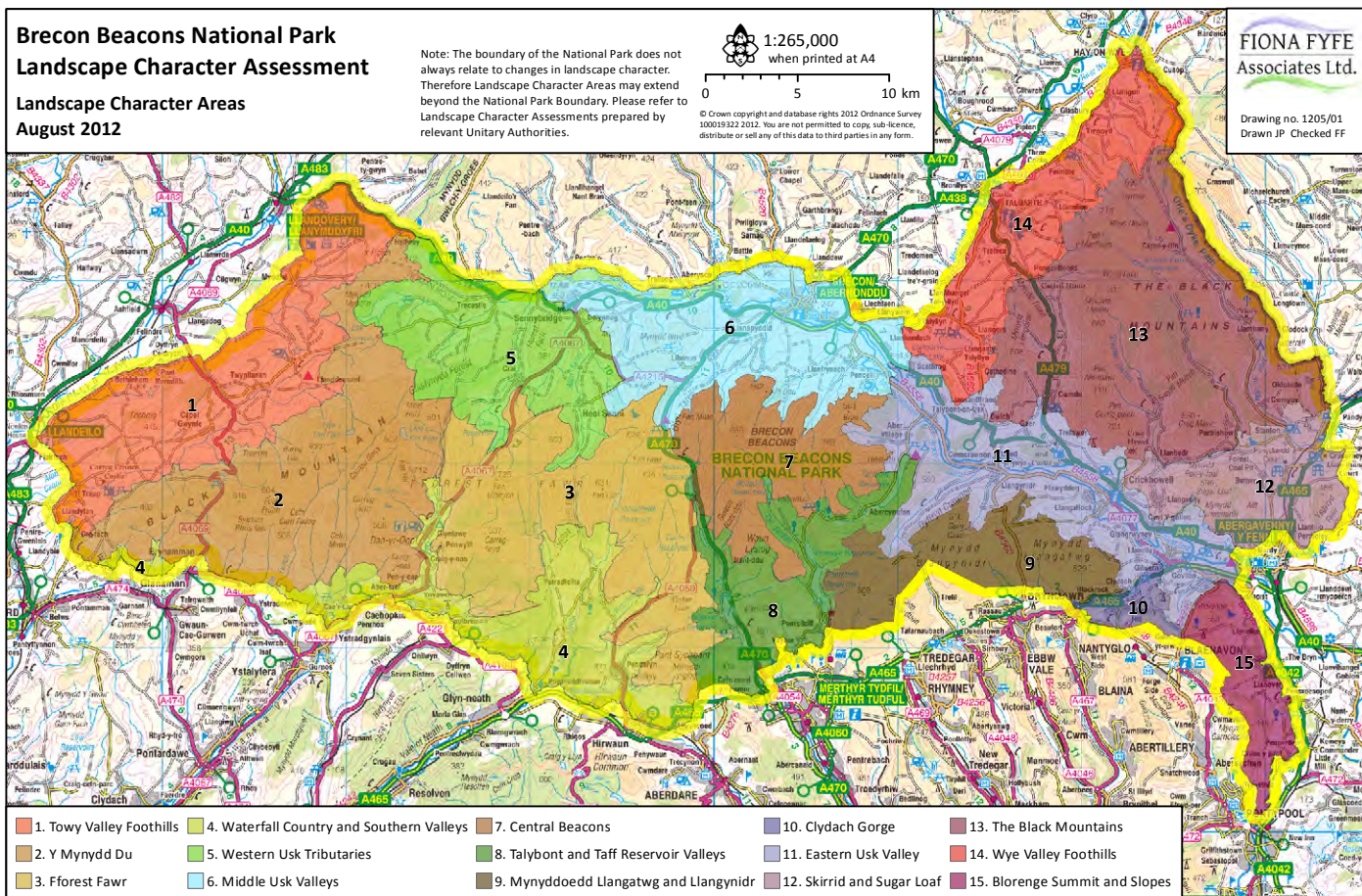
- by Clwyd and Powys Archaeological Trust for 36: The Middle Wye Valley, 48: East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y- glôg and 58: The Middle Usk Valley: Brecon and Llangorse – see <https://www.cpat.org.uk/projects/longer/histland/histland.htm>
- by Dyfed Archaeological Trust for Black Mountain and Myddfai and for the Tywi Valley which borders the western edge of the Park – see <http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk/projects/HistoricLandscapeCharacterisation.htm>
- by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust for the Glyn Clydach and Blaenavon – see [http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic\\_landscape/main/english/historical.htm](http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic_landscape/main/english/historical.htm)

Case studies in which we have taken a discrete area and analysed the nature and distribution of the farmsteads within it are presented for some of the LCAs. All simply summarise what is recorded and known about each area from Historic Environment Records and observation in the field, and so can be regarded as an invitation to more detailed research.

The areas set out in this section focus on the landscapes of the upland and upland fringe, and the settled valleys of the Usk, the Wye and its tributaries, and the Tywi to the west. Historically, and as has been shown in this document, farms benefitted from access to open moorlands which are found across the National Park and which are an integral part of the Black Mountains, Skirrid and Sugar Loaf (Areas 12 and 13) and the Bloreng Summit and Slopes (Area 15). Whilst summer farms and deserted farmsteads are encountered on the open moorlands, traditional farmsteads are almost absent from them. For this reason we have not considered as farming landscapes the areas of Mynydd Du (2), Fforest Fawr (3) and the Central Beacons (7).

- Towy Valley foothills (Area 1), which has a high density of historic farmstead sites, many relating to field patterns established by the 17th century, but very few recorded buildings of this date.
- The southern valleys (Areas 4, 8, 9, 10 and 15), which have been influenced by their proximity of these farms to the industrial valleys of south Wales.
- The Usk and Wye Valleys and their tributaries (Areas 5, 6, 11 and 14), which have higher densities of 15th-17th century farmsteads set within fields mostly enclosed by the 17th century, and which display a broad contrast between the larger farmsteads and estate landscapes of the main river valleys and the upland and upland fringe landscapes where the rearing of cattle was a much more important part of farming life.
- Black Mountains, Skirrid and Sugar Loaf (Areas 12 and 13), which is notable in a regional and British context for the high number of 15th-17th century longhouses, houses and barns, and for its wide variety of different types of farmstead layouts and farm buildings.





### The Towy Valley Foothills (LCA 1)

This area forms the western part of the National Park and comprises the land between Mynydd Du and Cwm Tywi including the villages of Myddfai and Llanddeusant. Farmland is interspersed with low ridges, formerly open commons, and ancient woodland.

This is a complex area of scattered settlement, with some areas of ancient irregular enclosures, distinctive ovoid enclosures which may be medieval or even earlier in origin and areas of regular enclosure which have replaced many areas of rough scrubby *ffridd* which are shown on historic maps. It has a far lower number of recorded pre-19th century buildings than elsewhere in the National Park. This reflects both the wholesale nature of 19th century improvement and reorganisation, and also suggests that, as in other parts of Carmarthenshire, the earlier building stock was not so adaptable to changes in use. The evidence for earlier buildings is mostly confined to some linear farmsteads (which include some longhouses), barns and the home farms of gentry estates. Small farmsteads with farm buildings to one or two sides of a yard are very common, some of these forming a regular L-plan. Farmsteads with scattered buildings and yards (dispersed plans) developed astride routeways leading to pockets of *ffridd* and to the Mynydd Du, often with several yards for gathering and managing livestock. Larger courtyard farmsteads, including some with two or more yards, are concentrated in areas with larger farms and fields, to the south, north and west fringes of the area. Barns and corn mills testify to the importance of mixed farming into the 19th century, but the downturn in corn prices and increasing demand for liquid milk exported by rail led to a massive increase from the late 1860s in cattle numbers and a decline in the making of butter and cheese – complete in the remoter areas by the 1930s (Davies and Miller 1954, 539).

The area is also scattered with the remains of many small farms and smallholdings which were abandoned in this period (Wheater 2015). Many of these had been sustained by rural industries such as farm-based cloth production (later replaced by woollen mills), quarrying and the manufacture of lime for agriculture and the iron and lead industries, especially important from the later 18th century. Small farmsteads are now clustered in areas of high land with poorer soils where rural industries also developed, such as around the mill and forge at Llandyfan and the limestone quarries near Dre-fach to the south of Llandeilo.





View towards Pen Carreg, Llanddeusant. Photo © Jeremy Lake

### Twynllanan

The Afon Sawdde flows along the southern side of this map, westwards from its source on Black Mountain, and powered two woollen mills and which as elsewhere in this area marked the rise of more centralised production and the decline of farm and cottage-based weaving. The pattern of fields, woodland, abundant watercourses and unenclosed land is typical of this area: irregular enclosures and ovoids indicate a piecemeal process of taking in farmland from the medieval period and the larger fields to meadows and arable land were further reorganised in the late 18th and 19th centuries. This is matched by the contrast between some of the dispersed groups at the meeting point of routeways and the larger courtyard groups relating to reorganised and regular enclosures. Only two sites, however, have buildings recorded as 16th-17th century – Llwyn-fon (1), a gentry house, Bedwhirion (2) which is a possible longhouse altered in 1796 and another gentry house at Pant Hywel (3). Some smallholdings developed in the 19th century (e.g. 4). Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021. Ordnance Survey 100019322. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.



## THE SOUTHERN VALLEYS

Farming on the south-facing slopes of the uplands stretching from Mynydd Du in the west to the Bloreng in the east has been influenced in one way or another by the proximity of these farms to the industrial valleys of south Wales. Older farmsteads are sited within 17th century and earlier irregular enclosures. Much rough ground was taken in for agriculture from the 18th century by farms and smallholdings, which were sustained by employment in local industries. In the 19th century the demand for produce rose dramatically in Merthyr Tydfil with the colossal increase in the population with the dramatic expansion of Iron works at Cyfarthfa and Dowlais and their associated mining activities. The works had their own vast estates. There were also 'colliery' farms, groups of small mountain farms tenanted by the colliery companies for feeding pit-ponies, sheep and cattle. The small tenants of the hill farms made cheese for sale to the colliers. The coalfield area could only produce a small fraction of the food required for the mining and ironworks population which drew the major part of its requirements from outside the area, often from the Vale of Glamorgan, but also produce such as butter from Breconshire (Howell 1986, 95-6). The heavy loss of farmsteads in this area is due to high levels of desertion in the 19th century and the 20th century clearance of land for the construction of reservoirs and the establishment of forestry plantations.

### LCA 4: Waterfall Country and Southern Valleys

Surviving traditional farmsteads are set within a pattern of irregular and semi-regular fields. These result from a piecemeal process of enclosure and colonisation from woodland, and from rough ground found on the edge of Y Mynydd Du (The Black Mountain) and scattered across the higher land around the shrunken settlement of Ystradfellte, with its church rebuilt in the 16th century. Much of this area was transformed by the impact of industry – particularly the quarrying and burning of lime for use as a flux in making iron and other processes in the industrial areas to the south -in the later 18th and 19th centuries. Many farmsteads were abandoned in the later 19th and 20th centuries.

17th century and possibly earlier houses, some derived from longhouses, are concentrated around the river valleys to the south. Farmsteads in this area, including some with longhouses and dispersed plans at the meeting point of routeways, are often set within ovoid enclosures carved out of woodland; some of these retain the outlines of medieval strip fields, with species-rich boundaries and ancient woodland. Farms were often reorganised with straight boundaries in the late 18th and 19th centuries in tandem with the development by estates of larger courtyard farms with barns, stables, granaries and cattle housing around yards.



A whitewashed group of early-mid 19th century buildings at Glyntawe. Photo from Geograph, © Gareth James and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence





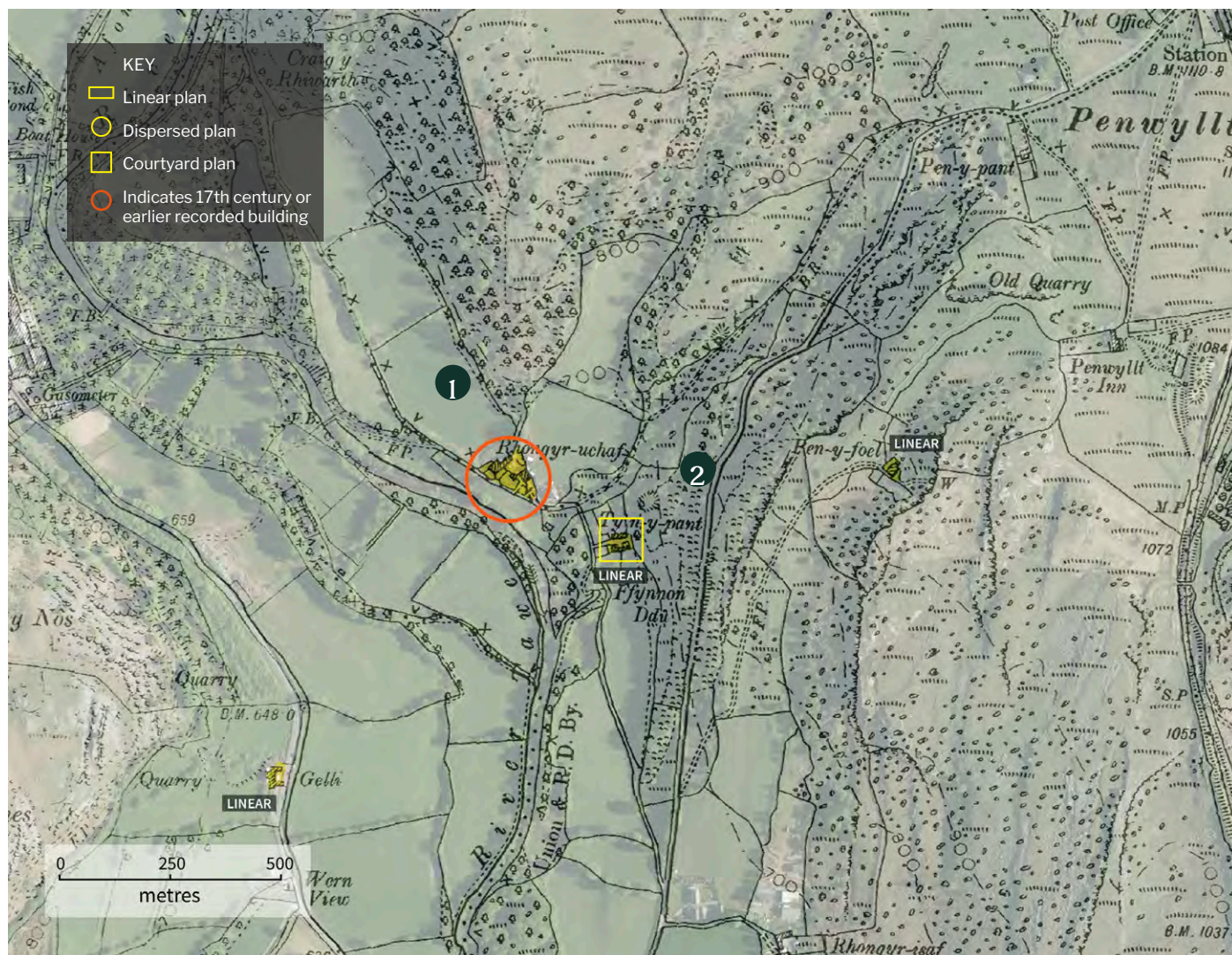
Gelli, situated south of Craig-y- Nos. A small quarry and limekiln were located just behind the farm range. The compact U plan range comprises a barn, lean-to cart house, cow house, and (just out of shot) two pigsties. Photo © Sam Hale



Pant-y-Wal, Craig-y-Nos – detached farmhouse and limewashed threshing barn set among later buildings set below Cribarth which has been extensively quarried and is criss-crossed by former tramroads. Photo © Sam Hale



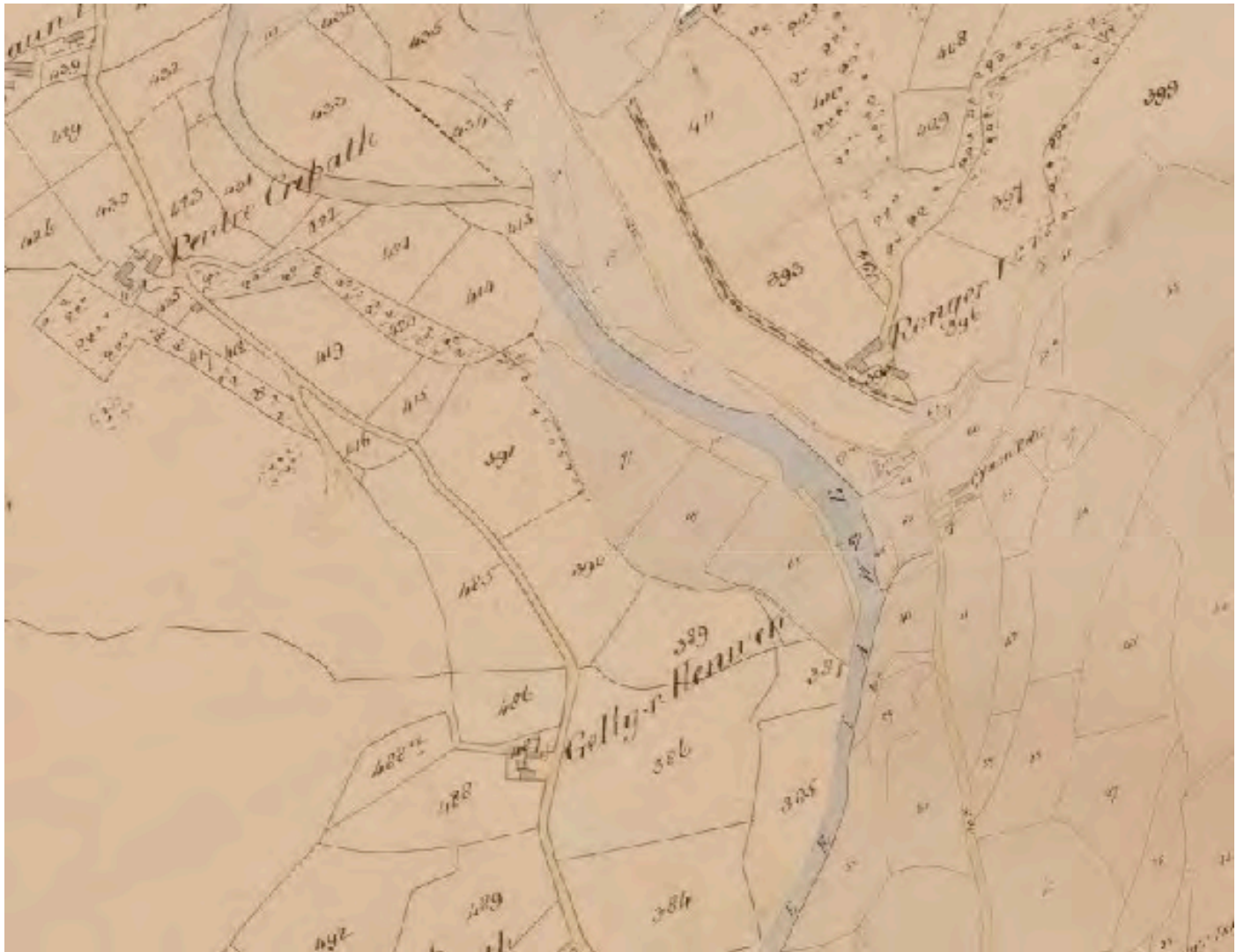
Small-scale farmsteads dominate the remainder of this area, and are associated with irregular and some reorganised enclosures, and some areas of older farmland laid out as blocks of fields. In the upper valleys these are sited between older farmland and former rough ground, but fields are also interspersed with areas of rough ground, some of which has been subject to 19th century enclosure and replanted with conifers. Whilst some of these fields may be medieval in date, it is likely that many date from the later 18th or 19th centuries, their irregular forms resulting from a piecemeal and organic process of taking in marginal land driven by smallholders and small farms whose occupants supplemented their incomes from by-employment in industry.



### Pen-wyllt, Tawe Valley, Ystradgynlais

Intensive quarrying and processing of the limestone, exported along tramroads early in the 19th century, has transformed a large area of the former mountain pastures in this area. Much of it was burned and either exported south for use in industries or used as fertiliser. These upland landscapes are also dotted with the earthwork and rubble remains of earlier field banks and the building platforms of farmsteads and hafodydd. Farmsteads were typically sited alongside routeways (those shown on the 1840s tithe maps are shown in yellow) and with easy access to riverside meadows, pasture land and arable fields. Rhongyr Uchaf (1) is probably a 16th century or earlier site, and is positioned to one side of and astride routeways. It probably originated as a longhouse and was substantially rebuilt in the early 19th century; the barn has an 1839 datestone but also has earlier footings and masonry, and the cow house and stables attached to the house was rebuilt with yellow brick used for its openings in the late 19th century. Tyn-y-pant (2) comprised a linear farmstead which had a barn range to its north side facing into a yard. The barn was converted into cottages for quarry workers in the early 1900s and the farmhouse was demolished. A section of the Neath and Brecon Railway first laid in 1862 is visible to the east. Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021. © Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2021. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021





The tithe map of 1846, showing the fields and routeways around Rhongyr Uchaf. This is from the Welsh Tithe Maps collection now hosted by the National Library of Wales (<https://places.library.wales>)



The barn at Rhongyr Uchaf, with a datestone of 1839 but with earlier footings visible in the lower courses of the masonry. Photo © Jeremy Lake





Gwernblaedda, Ystradfellte. A linear range with threshing barn behind. The building may have originated as a 17th century longhouse, the byre still remaining and the house re-built but still attached. Photo © Sam Hale



Gwaengôchdimai. This very small linear farmstead comprises a two-room house and an attached cow house or stable, now a field barn. The view shows the hay loft door and a small fire window. It was built in around the 1850s-1870s within one of the irregular field enclosures on the edge of a large area of common land crossed by the road between Ystradfellte and Pontneddfechan. Photo © Sam Hale



Gwaengôchdimai - an example of a smallholding created out of enclosed land on a common as seen on the 1st edition OS map and aerial photograph. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021. © Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2021. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021





Aber-llia, Ystradfellte – an L plan range with combination barn and cow house with loft over set on a routeway with the detached farmhouse opposite on the other side of the road. Photo © Sam Hale

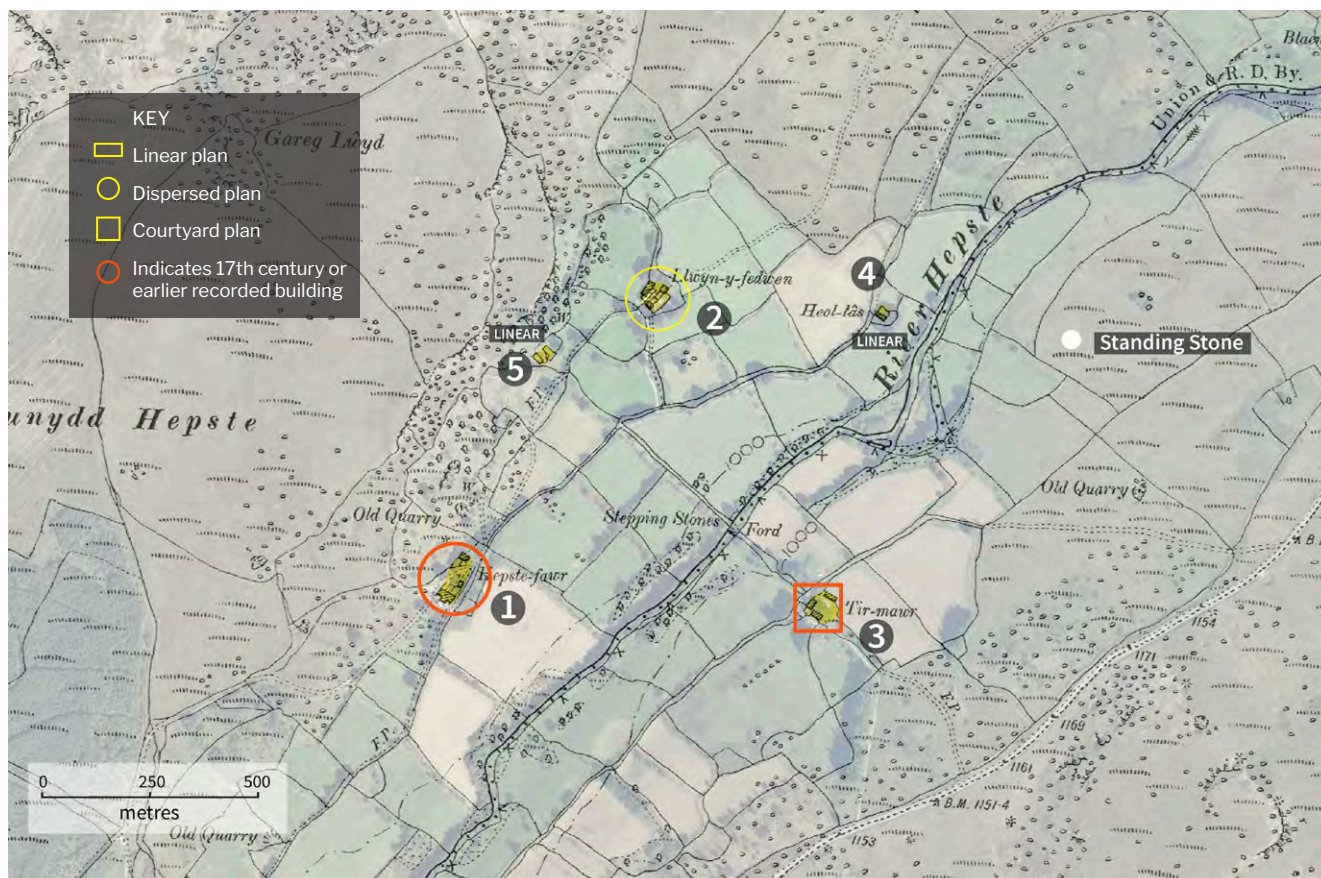


Tyle-glas in the Afon Senni valley- a loose courtyard with detached house, threshing barn and cow house, stable, granary and cart house range. There was much 19th century improvement as shown here on the east side of the valley. On the west side linear farmsteads and longhouses still abound including at Garn-lwyd and Garn-wen opposite Tyle-glas. Photo © Sam Hale



Afon Senni valley view north. Farmsteads and pasture fields among woodland cover. Photo © Sam Hale





### Dyffryn Hepste

The Hepste valley has been included in The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's report on the East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd y Glôg historic landscape area. Its poorly-drained soils are not suited to arable agriculture, the grazing of cattle being eclipsed by sheep from around 1800. The evidence for prehistoric settlement and ritual sites is best-preserved in the unenclosed land, but the presence of monuments such as the Bronze Age standing stone suggest that later changes have obscured the evidence for use of the valleys. Many fields, bounded by drystone walls and banks, had been scooped from the medieval hunting grounds of Fforest Fawr, both before and after its acquisition by the Crown estates in the 1520s. The much larger enclosures were intended to contain areas of allotted and private grazing, as elsewhere in the British uplands, and were established by the 18th century. Further upstream the remains of long huts probably survive from hafodydd or summer pastures. Some of the straighter boundaries may be linked to the drainage and reorganisation of farmland in the 19th century, matched by the surviving lime kilns in the area and the range of 19th century farm buildings including small barns and granaries present at Hepste-Fawr (1, with a longhouse) and Tir-mawr which may have an earlier longhouse at its core (2). Lazy beds for enabling the cultivation of potatoes are probably also of 19th century date. The name given to the small farmstead at Llwynyfedwen (3), which has developed as a dispersed plan at the meeting point of routeways, translates as birch grove, and so offers a hint of the importance of woodland in this valley.

Their names, from the Welsh for large or important, indicate that they were the larger farms in this part of the valley. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust have suggested that sites named Heol-las (4), meaning 'green road', are smallholdings which developed alongside routeways to mountain pastures. This small linear farmstead was abandoned at the end of the 19th century, only a barn surviving, and there is another abandoned farmstead (5). Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021. Ordnance Survey 100019322. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.



## LCA 8: Talybont and Taf Reservoir Valleys

Traditional farmsteads in this LCA have been largely swept away by the reservoirs and their associated conifer plantations, within which the ruins of farms can sometimes be encountered. Farmsteads set within 17th century and earlier enclosures (as in the southern part of Area 6) are best-retained below the reservoirs.

The agricultural economy of the area's farms into the later 19th century was based on two or three pigs, cattle for dairy products, oats, corn and potatoes with root crops in based on a three-year rotation system. Local produce included eggs, butter, cheese as well as anything in season including whinberries, dressed chickens, rhubarb, blackcurrants and swedes. Much of the higher land was rough pasture. This was a landscape of small-scale farms with cattle, sheep rearing and mountain ponies. Farmstead layouts were often small-scale courtyards or dispersed with a house, barn, stables and detached cowsheds often facing routeways. Some hill farms had detached kitchen dairies and often a field barn.

With the new water works in the 1920s farmers above the intake weir were not permitted to keep cattle, pigs, geese or ducks, and sheep washing was prohibited. An account of the processes leading to the creation of the Tal-y-bont reservoir and the demolition of its farmsteads has been provided by Tipper (1993, 29-48). An excellent description of the construction of the reservoirs in the Taf Fawr valley and the effect of this on the farming families can be found in Evans (2014).



Glyn Collwyn, the valley leading to Tal-y-bont, was an agricultural landscape of small farms straddling the areas between the southern industrial areas of Dowlais and Merthyr, known as 'the Works', and Brecon to the north. The construction of Merthyr's Taf Fechan reservoir at Pontsticill (1912-1927) resulted in the demolition of eight farmsteads. By 1924 the Newport Corporation compulsorily purchased 15 farms creating a 2600 acre estate in order to pave the way for the creation of the Tal-y-bont Reservoir in Glyn Collwyn. The Evans-Bevan's Colliery and Brewery entrepreneurs of Neath who had considerable landholdings within Breconshire (and still do) agreed to sell the Glyn Estate of 967 acres as part of the 2600 acres. Most farms were demolished in the years to come for the reservoir (Tipper 1993, 29-48). View towards a farmstead at Cwm, Pontsticill, set against a background of quarries. Photo from Geograph, © Mike Baldwin and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence





Farmsteads within the Tal-y-bont valley leading down to Pontsticill comprise courtyard and linear plans with combination barns, cow houses and stabling. Photos © Sam Hale





View north-westwards, across the valley of the Nant Sere, towards an upland fringe farmstead at Bailea in St David Without parish on the southern edge of this area. Photo © Jeremy Lake



## LCA 10: Clydach Gorge

The early industrialisation of this area, which includes part of the Blaenavon World Heritage Site, developed from the 17th century around the extraction of stone, coal, iron ore and lime: hearths for burning charcoal, used in the production of iron and for burning lime, are found in the formerly coppiced woodland. Its development is summarised by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust in its *Historic Landscape Characterisation for the Clydach Gorge and Blaenavon* [http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic\\_landscape/main/english/historical.htm](http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic_landscape/main/english/historical.htm)

Where farming has been practised in this area, the rearing of livestock has always been predominant. A limited level of arable production was maintained, chiefly oats, barley and wheat and also root crops, later supplemented by potatoes. The high plateau was seldom cultivated. There is evidence of some longhouses and 17th century farmhouses, but there are now only fragmentary traces of the scattered smallholdings and small farmsteads shown on historic Ordnance Survey maps. These were set in their own enclosures, mostly carved on a piecemeal basis out of unenclosed land by the 17th century and bounded by walls, hedged banks or hedges.

Landownership of the area was largely divided between the Dukes of Beaufort, the Capel Hanbury family of Pontypool, and the Clydach Iron Company. As well as the larger farms on the lower-lying areas at the eastern edge, a number of early farms along the periphery of the area gained large 'industrial' farm buildings during the 19th century, e.g. Pant-y-Beilau and Maesygwartha. This was accompanied by the rationalisation of the earlier irregular-field pattern of smaller fields into larger regular enclosures and holdings, where the valley broadens out into the fertile lands of the Usk Valley.

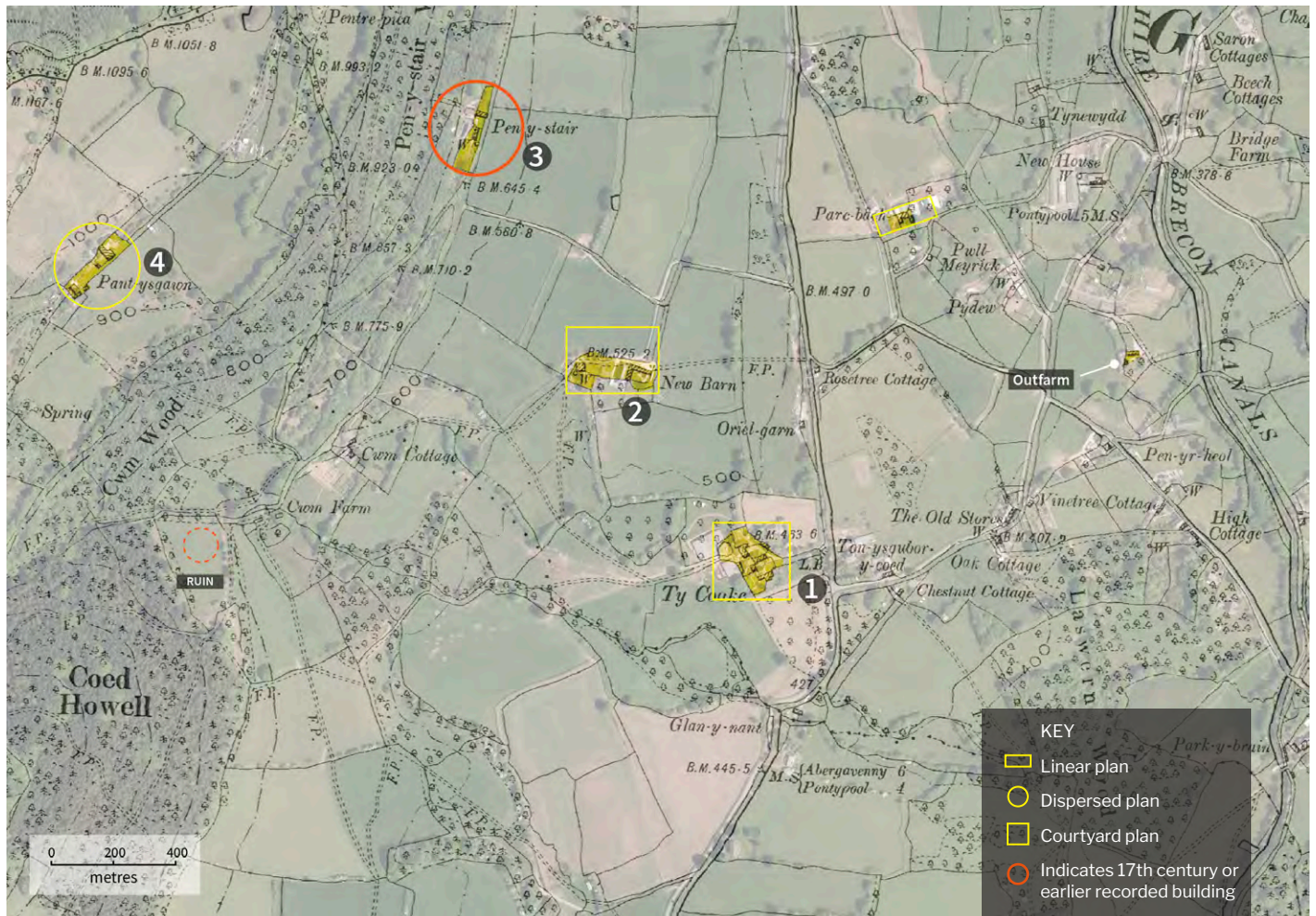


A view towards a landscape of scattered houses and former smallholdings looking north-west across Glyn Clydach. Photo from Geograph, © Alan Bowring and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence.



## LCA 15: Blorenges Summit and Slopes

This area extends from the iron-working uplands of the Blorenges (with Blaenavon World Heritage Site outside the National Park to the west) to the northern fringes of Pontypool, and slopes eastwards from the uplands towards the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal (along which the National Park boundary runs) and the meadow and arable lands of the Usk. As a consequence it has an upland fringe character, many farmsteads having longhouses at their core and set in fields enclosed by the 17th century. The largest farms either developed as dispersed-plan groups at the meeting point of old routeways or on the lower and more fertile land to the east. The influence of 19th century estate architecture is more evident to the south, one of these being centred on Ty-Cooke where the manager of the Pontypool Ironworks built a fine house in 1710 and in the process converted the earlier farmhouse into a farm building. There is evidence for some larger farms developing prior to the building of the canal in the 1790s, probably to supply the emerging industrial workforces of the area.



This map shows the east-west contrast that is found across this area. Ancient woodland on steep slopes separates upland fringe to the west from more fertile farmlands extending towards the Usk valley. 18th and 19th century improvement resulted in the rebuilding of farmyards and the enlargement of fields, but the underpinning pattern of scattered farmsteads and fields was established by the 17th century. Ty-Cooke (1), with its regular multi-yard layout, developed around a substantial house of c. 1600 which was probably converted into a farm building in the early 18th century when the present Early Georgian house was built in about 1710 for the manager of the Pontypool ironworks. New Barn (2) is notable for its regular L-plan layout and its relationship to a more regular pattern of fields. Pen-y-stair, a late medieval house remodelled in the 17th century (3), was sited so that it had access to woodland and ffridd to its west and farmland to its east, and the 17th century or earlier house at Pantysgawn (4) relates to a farmstead which developed along a routeway. Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021. Ordnance Survey 100019322. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.





Hendre-glyn, at Cwm-y-nant at the eastern head of the valley leading to Llanover probably dates from the late medieval period. Photo © Jeremy Lake



## THE USK, LLYNFI AND WYE VALLEY AREAS

Here the contrast between the larger farms of the lowlands and the smaller farms of the upland valleys is particularly stark.

The largest farms in the National Park developed along the fertile river valleys of the Usk, the Llynfi and the broadest parts of the valleys found along their tributaries. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has found evidence for house platforms and some relict ridge and furrow cultivation with dog-leg boundaries around the valley settlements and their manors, for example at Llanspyddid, indicating the presence of communities of bondsmen working strip fields (Silvester and Dorling 1993). High-status and gentry houses (including the medieval tower houses at Talgarth, Scethrog and Tretower) and parkland are also concentrated in these areas, some on the sites of earlier estate centres. Water-powered corn mills include some that may date from the medieval period, and that as at Aberyscir are associated with farmsteads. The present A40, along the Usk valley until Sennybridge, was turnpiked in the late 18th century and passed through the medieval towns of Crickhowell and Brecon, and agricultural improvement was also boosted by the construction in the 1790s of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. Nucleated settlements developed into their modern form in the 19th and 20th centuries, including in the 19th century housing for farm workers and a diversity of trades.

The cultural landscape has a more upland feel away from the river valleys, where there is a higher density of farmsteads, including 17th century and earlier longhouses, relating to both irregular and semi-regular patterns of enclosure, ancient woodland, valley meadows and rough grazing on ffridd and mountain pastures. Many farmsteads in these areas developed into small-scale courtyard and dispersed plans, with some larger gentry and other farms. Threshing and combination barns illustrate the importance of mixed farming into the 19th century, and there can also be evidence for the regular enclosure of rough grazing, the reorganisation of earlier farmland and the rebuilding of farmsteads to regular plans by estates.

### LCA 5: Western Usk Tributaries

This area of broad valleys is sited between the northern National Park boundary and the uplands of Mynydd Du (Black Mountain) and Fforest Fawr. Within the Usk valley to the north are the medieval settlements at Defynog and Trecastle, the latter then split between the Bishop of St David's and the lord of Brecon. Extending to the south is a ridge of high ground, along which a Roman road extends from Trecastle to Mynydd Bach and its military forts and camps.

Across the whole area is evidence for the 17th century and earlier farmed landscape – linear and small-scale courtyard farmsteads, some developing from longhouses, set within irregular fields with some large ovoid enclosures including pasture, arable and rough grazing. There is also a scatter of larger dispersed-plan farmsteads with scattered yards.

Some areas were also transformed by late 18th and 19th century enclosure, and the rebuilding of existing farmsteads or establishment of new farmsteads with regular L-plan and even (although rare) multi-yard layouts.



View towards whitewashed farmsteads in the Cwm Crai . Photo © Jeremy Lake





## Sychnant

All of the farmsteads on this map have developed alongside or astride routeways, and are set within a landscape where 19th century straight boundaries and rationalisation has worked its way upon an earlier landscape of 17th century and earlier fields. Linear farmsteads, none of them with buildings recorded as pre-dating the 19th century, lie at the core of four of the farmsteads shown on this map. At the centre of this map is Sychnant, where the buildings (a linear range with a house attached to a cart shed and stable, and an L-shaped range including a barn and cattle housing from around 1800. Many farmsteads in this area were rebuilt in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

To the south is a substantial boundary made up of a bank and ditch, originally intended to divide the farmland from the rough grazing to the south. The buildings at Pen-yr-allt date from the early 19th century to around 1900, and the house has been abandoned. Building platforms and banked routeways indicate that the farmstead site is much older. Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2021. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021



## LCA 6: Middle Usk Valleys

Many farmsteads, including some with longhouses at their core, were rebuilt in the late 18th and 19th centuries as large courtyard plans with large barns and other buildings to three or four sides of farmyards; the high number of regular courtyards with interlinked buildings illustrates the development of large farms and estates. These are in turn associated with patterns of fields that have also been subject to reorganisation with straight boundaries and enlargement over the same period.

The patterns of 17th century and earlier enclosure and of farmsteads derived from longhouses are best-retained in the upland valleys to the south of this area, the isolated medieval church at Llanilltyd (set within the upland commons of Mynydd Illtyd) serving a scatter of these to the south-west.



### Llanhamlach

This satellite image from Google Earth shows a landscape of large fields and large farmsteads which developed in the Usk valley, mostly within the Middle Usk Valleys with Scethrog and the eastern parts of the map falling within the Eastern Usk Valley. The farmed landscape and its farmsteads illustrate the emphasis placed on arable-based farming that has characterised this area from the medieval period, and the barrows at use of this landscape by prehistoric communities. The valley's importance as a transport corridor from the prehistoric period is marked by one of a series of Bronze Age or earlier standing stones at Llanhamlach, the A40 which was turnpiked in the 18th century, the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal and the lines of the long-closed railway lines. There is an early church site with a circular churchyard and a 10th -11th century carved stone slab at Llanhamlach, dedicated to the 5th -6th century St Illtud. A cluster of buildings developed close to the church and the medieval manor at Peterstone Court, rebuilt for a barrister in 1741, and also on this map are the ruins of the castle at Pencelli dating from the late 11th century Norman Conquest and the 14th century Scethrog Tower within its moat. There is a 17th century linear farmstead at the core of Greenway Farm (1), and the 17th century house at Bryn-Ilici (2) was retained as a barn after the fine new house was built in about 1700. The large barn and courtyard farmstead at Brynderwen (3) dates from the 18th century and the courtyard farms rebuilt in the late 18th to mid 19th centuries at Greenway, Slade Farm and Manest Court have buildings serving the requirements of substantial mixed arable farms – large barns, granaries, stables, cart sheds and cattle yards. Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021. Ordnance Survey 100019322. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.





In the Middle Usk valleys substantial courtyard farms are found across the area, often with multiple phases of improvement including these two examples at Tŷ-fry, Llanfrynach and Pencelli Court. Photos © Sam Hale



As well as the substantial courtyard farms of the valley floor the area also includes upland farms where longhouses and linear farmsteads abound. View to Pen-y-lan from Brecon town with Pen-y-fan in the distance. An 18th century linear farmstead with threshing combination barn attached to and downslope of the house. A small detached stables is lofted with a dovecote in its gable. Photo © Sam Hale



# LCA 11: Eastern Usk Valley

## Extended case study

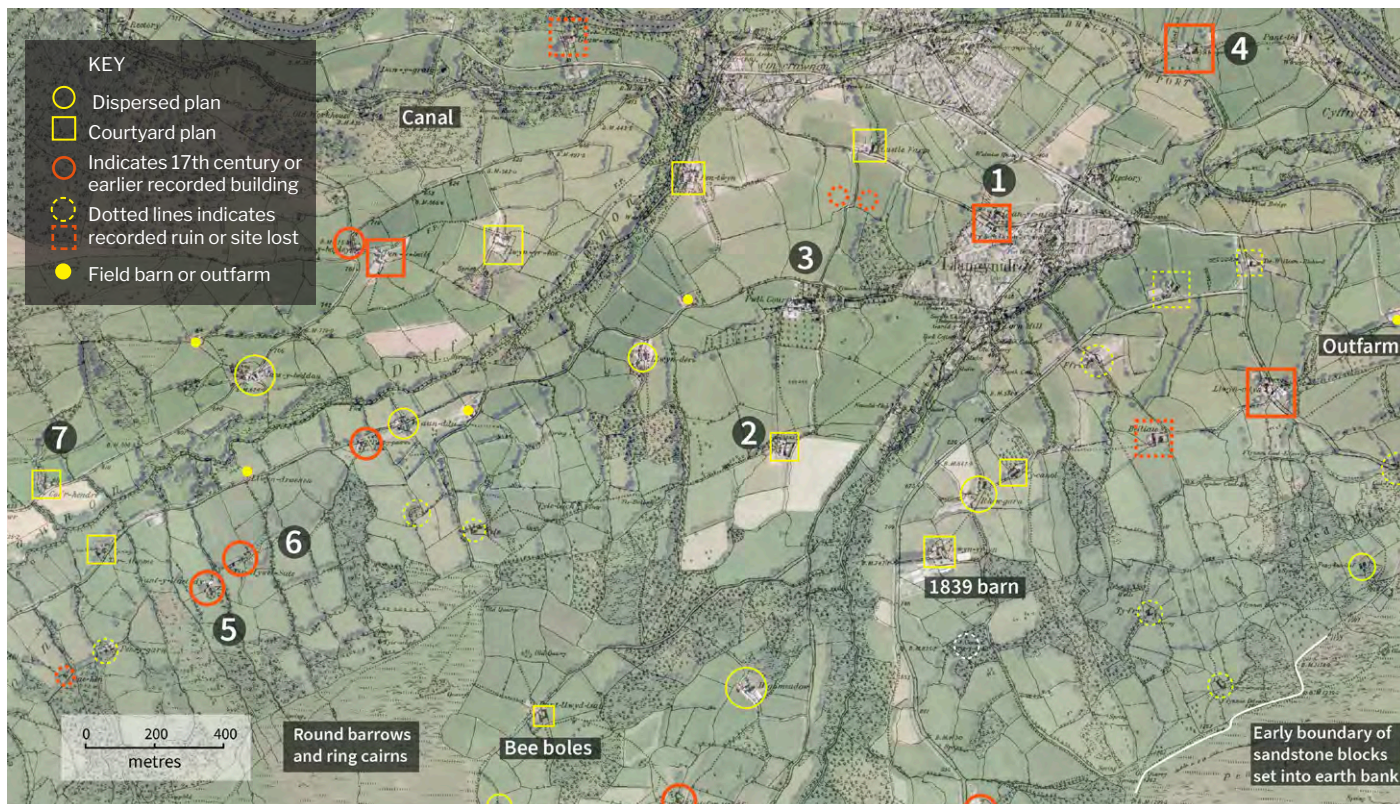


This area of lowland and upland valleys – together with the Wye Valley foothills (14) – has a higher density of farmsteads with 17th century and earlier longhouses and other buildings than in the Western Usk Tributaries and the Middle Usk Valley.

Large courtyard farmsteads, including a high number of high-status gentry farms, developed in a narrow corridor which widened out where it meets the Wye (Area 14); they were typically provided with cattle yards, large threshing barns dating from the 16th century, granaries, cart sheds and stables, and some also have large 19th century hay barns. Evidence for the enlargement and reorganisation of fields with straight boundaries is concentrated in this area.

Linear farmsteads associated with 17th century and earlier enclosures dominate the upland valleys, but there were also many on lower land which were absorbed into larger farms or lost in the 19th century. Some have clearly developed on a piecemeal basis into loose courtyard arrangements with 16th to 19th century barns and other buildings. The yard and buildings of some farmsteads developed around driftways where they emerged onto unenclosed land.





### Llangynidr & Dyffryn Crawnon

This map of the area around Llangynidr shows the much higher density of 17th century farmsteads along the eastern part of the Usk, and how it further increases towards Dyffryn Crawnon to the south-west and Mynydd Llangynidr to the south. Llangynidr itself developed around its pre-11th century church. To the south of the church are the earthworks of a shrunken medieval settlement. Almost all the farms have linear farmsteads with longhouses at their core. Some developed into dispersed and courtyard plan farmsteads, as indicated. A courtyard farm (1) on the edge of Llangynidr (its buildings now converted) had a 17th century probable longhouse and barn (the house largely re-built in the 19th century), and it may have developed as a large farm in tandem with the shrinkage of the settlement. At the centre of the map is the large later 19th century courtyard of Court Farm (2), the barns now converted. This is surrounded by large fields of the substantial Pwll Court (3), a house with gardens and orchards - the farming component of the estate sited along the same alignment as the residential quarters. Aber-y-Ail (4) situated north of the canal has its origins as a longhouse in the 16th century and was rebuilt in the 17th century, not developing into a courtyard grouping until the 19th century. It is illustrated on page 101. West of the low-lying courtyard farms of the Usk valley the surviving medieval farmsteads of the Dyffryn Crawnon, of which there are many, present an interesting contrast. Nant-y-Ilaethdy (5), is an example of a 17th century longhouse with upper crucks in its downslope end cow house. Later that century a small gabled wing was built to house a stair alongside the chimneystack. The cross passage was converted into a dairy in the 18th century. Detached and further down the slope is a small threshing barn. The farm was known as Tir Howell Sais until the late 19th century when it took the name Nant-y-Ilaethdy from the neighbouring holding on the opposite side of the stream. This practice of changing names is observed elsewhere in the valley as in other areas of the National Park. The neighbouring holding (6) is on the site of a building depicted on the 1587 on the Badminton Atlas. It is shown in subsequent maps and is named as Nant-y-Ilaethdy Issa in 1760, later named as Tir Hywel Sais on the 1887 OS map, and now Pen-y-waun (7). The surviving buildings comprise a downslope combination barn with threshing floor, flagstone partition to the upslope bay and cattle stalls to the lower bay and a cross slope tall lofted square range dated 1840.

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Nantyllaethdy longhouse and barn stepping down the hillside. Photo © Sam Hale



Pen y Waun on the opposite side of the stream to Nantyllaethdy. View north east out of the valley. It is noted through research into individual holdings that farm names can change over time and actually move with the farmer/tenant to a new holding. This holding was previously known as Nantyllaethdy before it swapped names with its neighbour and became Tir Howell Sais before its latest reincarnation as Pen y Waun. Photo © Sam Hale





The downslope Cae'r-hendre on the opposite side of the valley to Nantyllaethdy exhibiting well the siting of many of the Dyffryn Crawnon farmsteads with the former ffridd (now reverting to woodland and scrub) transitioning to the mountain above. Photo © Sam Hale





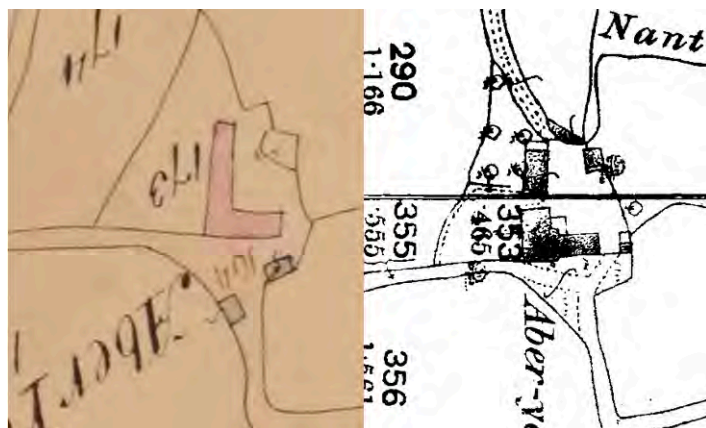
Aber-y-Ail is named after the Ail brook which flows beside the farmyard. The farmstead originated in the 16th century and the house was later re-built, presumably on a similar footprint, in c.1630-33 as a longhouse with byre (later converted into a dairy). A northern range created an 'L' plan with an addition that became a threshing barn. By 1880 the holding comprised the farmhouse with attached threshing barn, cowhouse and stable with loft over, and a cartshed and granary with a pigsty in the north corner of the yard. Photo © Sam Hale



Aber-y-Ail depicted in the Beaufort Estate Survey of the manors of Crickhowell and Tretower in 1587 – it is suggested that the house was drawn back to front.

The evolution of the farmstead – 1760 Manorial Estate Map, 1840 tithe map, 1880 1:2500 OS map (below left to right) developing from an L plan range, through a dispersed arrangement, to the small courtyard as seen today.

Map from the National Library of Wales



Aber-y-Ail illustrates the development of a linear plan which housed the farming family and their livestock in a single linear or L-shaped range developing from a longhouse into a courtyard group by the 19th century. Its location with a brook flowing past near to the River Usk, allowing the creation of water meadows, and the later introduction of the canal for trade, were key to its foundation and later development.





The 19th century additions of cow house and stables with loft over (left), and cart shed with granary over (right). Photo © Sam Hale



The single pigsty in the north east corner of the yard. Photo © Sam Hale



Aber-y-Ail in its landscape with in the foreground a depression of the ground made for the leat to supply its water meadows.



The Bezant and Llangynidr Local History Society survey (2009) recorded that the Dyffryn Crawnon valley has operated as a self-contained cultural unit since the medieval period when the population was served by a chapel of ease known as Eglwys Fesie. The Duke of Beaufort leased substantial numbers of holdings within the valley to tenants and these holdings were surveyed and maps produced in 1587. The landscape in these maps is essentially reflecting its medieval state. The prevalent feature is the farm unit. Good farmland here was at a premium and each unit is arranged in a wide strip that runs up the slope to make the most of the varying land-use types. The steepness of the slopes did not restrict settlement to a particular elevation but is based on opportunity, seeking out naturally suitable places for platforming. A feature of the farm units is the historic subdivision of larger farms into smaller, individual and intermingled fields and blocks of fields. This fragmentation may reflect an ancient tenorial system. The farms at Dyffryn Crawnon may relate to a survival of this medieval system known as gwely, whereby family units held hereditary rights over their farm unit. This meant each eligible heir received equal shares, this system ultimately failed due to the ever smaller division of land amongst extended kin. The current landholdings of many of today's farms would have derived from this system of land tenure. The history of many of the valley's farms in the 19th century is one of unsettled change. Whether the farms' relatively small acreages and the quality of the land didn't offer a profitable business (especially those with limited insolation) or whether the tenancies were short there were multiple changes in occupancy over a short period.



Two sections of the remarkable 1587 estate maps of the Dyffryn Crawnon. Some of the buildings have survived whilst others have disappeared with little if any trace. The holding at Pen-y-garn, shown on the right, extends from the valley meadows through medieval fields and ffridd to the open commons. Others are divided into smaller holdings either with access only to the commons or to the valley meadows. Note the use of chimneys to indicate the houses, and the buildings (possibly field barns) at the top; also how the farmstead at Pen-y-garn sits astride a water course leading along the ffridd and the commons. Nantyllaethdy is recorded as shown in the 1587 Survey as being the freehold of John William David Griffiths and therefore outside the Beaufort Estate. Next to Griffiths was another freeholder, William Phillip. This area is shown above in the centre of the page. Maps from National Library of Wales



## LCA 14: Wye Valley foothills

The landscape shares many characteristics with the Usk valley to its south, with meadows and arable land concentrated on the valley sides and bottom; corn mills are again a feature, as also are fulling mills which remained active until the decline of the woollen industry from the 18th century.

Most of this area is occupied by 17th century or earlier farmsteads on the higher valley sides, which either remained as linear farmsteads or developed with additional buildings around yards. The National Park also takes in a proportion of the larger gentry-status farms that came into existence in the broad valley of the Wye, namely those along the Llynfi and around Llyn Syfaddan (Llangorse Lake). They comprise 16th and 17th century houses together with some 15th to 17th century longhouses. They and other large farms, such as those in the Ffostyll area to the east of Talgarth, were marked by large threshing barns of 5 bays or more and had developed into large courtyard layouts by the 18th century. Included amongst these is the U-plan courtyard at Trefeca Fach (redeveloped and now known as Coleg Trefeca) of the Calvinist Methodist minister and agricultural improver Howell Harris (1714-1773). They are sited within fields that were enlarged and reorganised in the late 18th and 19th centuries, sometimes retaining traces of medieval strip fields, in tandem with the enclosure of patches of common land. Agricultural improvement benefitted from the turnpiking of the Crickhowell to Talgarth road in the 18th century, and the construction of the Brecon to Hay Tramroad (and its later transformation into a railway) in the early 19th century.



The regular-plan farmstead with its Late Georgian house at Maes-y-garn, to the south of Llanigon, was rebuilt in around 1850 and relates also to the reordering of its surrounding fields with straight thorn hedgerows. Photo © Sam Hale



Coleg Trefeca. In 1768 the 16th century house, previously known as Trefecca Isaf, was converted into an academy for Methodist preachers, founded by the Countess of Huntingdon. The 'U' plan farmstead is c. 18th century with later alterations. A combination of local rubblestone and timber framing originally clad with weatherboarding. Buildings include lofted cow housing, a threshing barn and cart house. Photo © Sam Hale





Penyrwylod farm on the road to Trewalkin, Talgarth. A farmstead with buildings dispersed along a route – the house a c.17th century longhouse derivative with later farm buildings including this combination barn with two threshing doors. Photo © Sam Hale



The striking architect-designed granaries and stables at Tŷ-Mawr, Llangasty on the south shore of Llyn Syfaddan. Believed to be late 18th century, possibly by William Thomas, architect of Haverfordwest. Reputedly the intention was to provide an impressive entrance to Tŷ Mawr house with the drive routed between the two buildings, but the gap between was later walled up. Tŷ Mawr and a house at Cathedine, now Treholford, were both owned in the late Philip Champion de Crespigny who was responsible for the incomplete remodelling of Tŷ Mawr farmhouse. Photo © Sam Hale



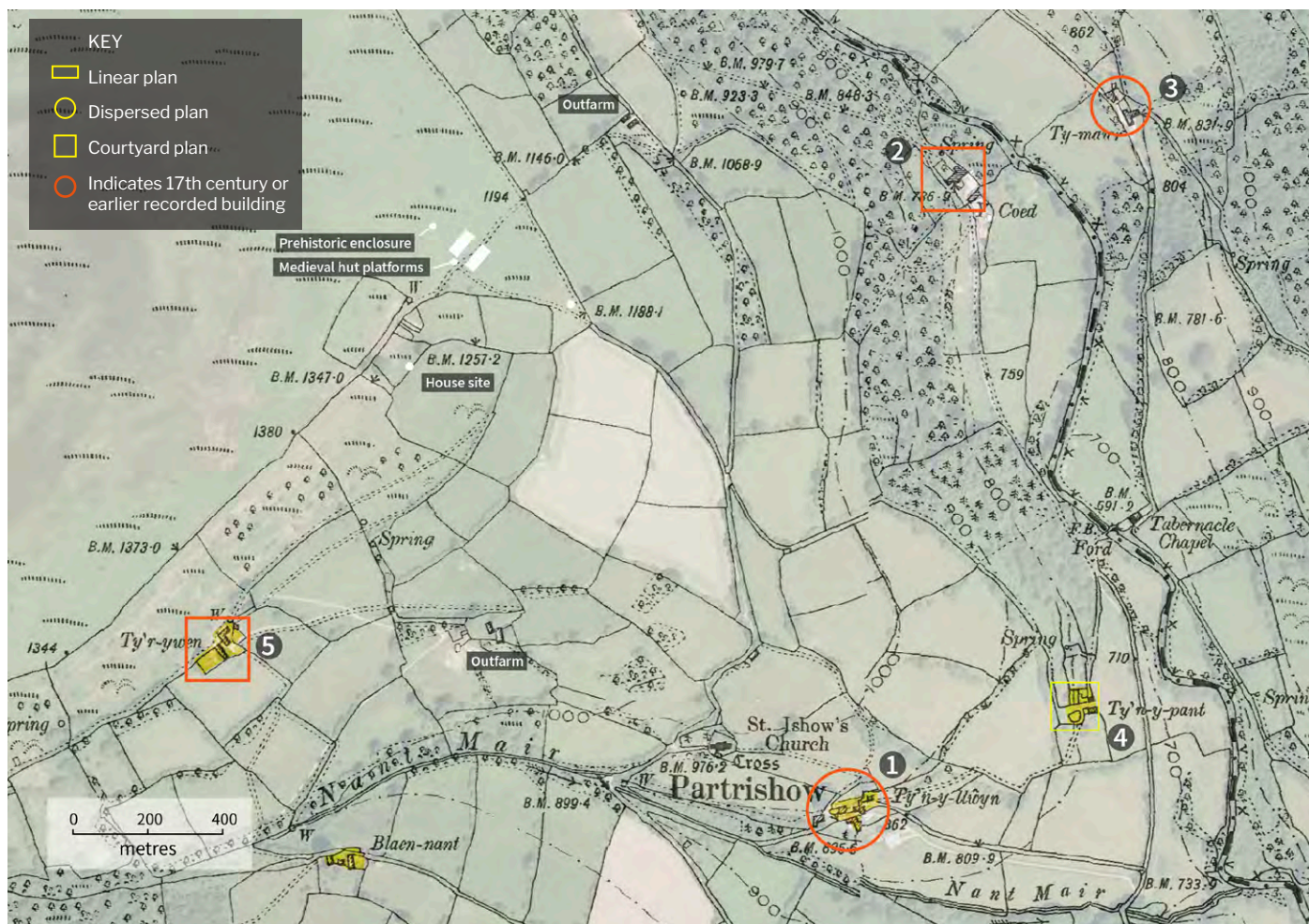


Many farmsteads in this area were reorganised in the late 18th and early 19th century as courtyard plans, to a variety of scales and arrangements but mostly with their buildings interlinked and regularly laid out. The reorganisation of field boundaries, including the enclosure of earlier large arable fields with curved boundaries indicating the line of plough strips, worked upon a landscape which has been used in a diversity of ways since the prehistoric period – note the Neolithic long cairn and the Iron Age Talgarth Camp, the latter being a visible expression of prehistoric activity across this area that has otherwise been obscured and awaits future discovery. The largest courtyard farmsteads were developed along the Llynfi around the late 16th century gentry house at College Farm (1) and at Trefecca Fawr (2), to the north of which is a medieval moated site and whose 17th century house has fine plasterwork depicting cider apples. Trefecca Fach was the home of the famous Nonconformist preacher Howell Harris (1714–1773) who founded a school for woollen manufacture and a renowned missionary college at Trefecca. He was also a key early figure in the development of the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society, the earliest agricultural society in Britain founded in 1755, whose influence spread beyond agricultural improvement to the building of turnpike roads such as the B4560 that passes through the west part of the map. Across the rest of this area, extending from the Llynfi towards the Black Mountains, is a rich mixture of linear farmsteads and courtyard farmsteads that had developed by the 17th century and have been adapted ever since. Whole House (3) is a 15th or early 16th century linear farmstead onto which another house with working buildings was added in the mid 17th century, making an overall U-plan. Gwrlodde (4) is a very early courtyard group with a 16th century longhouse at its core, and attached to it at right angles a 17th century 5-bay barn which has reused cruck timbers. It also has a detached bakehouse which as with other buildings of this type probably housed family members or farm workers. The five-bay barn at Pendre Farm (5) provides further evidence of the importance of arable farming, which extended up to the upland fringe - Rhos Farm (6) being built in around 1700 by a High Sheriff of Breconshire. Some linear farmsteads with 17th century or earlier fabric remained as the dominant building on farmsteads or – as larger farms developed – were absorbed into larger farmsteads; one such example at Upper Trewalkin (7) has been reused as a farm building. Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2021. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021



## LCA 12 And 13: Skirrid And Sugar Loaf (12) and The Black Mountains (13)

This area is notable in a regional and national context for the high number of 15th-17th century longhouses and houses at the core of a rich range of farmstead types, and its wide variety of farm buildings. They are set within irregular and sometimes semi-regular fields, interspersed by extensive areas of upland grazing, resulting from the clearance of land by the 14th century and their reorganisation from the 15th century, some clearly resulting from the clearance of woodland and also fields enclosed from strips shared between several farms. Many of the gentry farms developed from medieval manors, and others from the grange farms of Llanthony Priory which is located to the east in the Vale of Ewys. Some large farms developed on the eastern fringe of the area, again focused around prestigious houses as at Oldcastle Court and Tre-Wynn. Farms in the Black Mountains either side of the English Welsh border share characteristics defined by geology, climate, topography and Welsh custom. The area has a very high number of deserted and now ruinous farmsteads abandoned from the 19th and into the mid 20th century. There are large areas of remnant ancient wood-pasture and some survivals of traditional hay meadows.



### Partrishow

This map has a high survival of 17th century and earlier longhouses and farm buildings set in a landscape enclosed by this period, with easy access to unenclosed land which includes prehistoric enclosures and the hut platforms which remain from (probably medieval) seasonal settlements. The church dedicated to St Issio is one of the earliest and most architecturally significant in the National Park, having 11th century remains and a font, and a record of being consecrated in c.1060. Tyn-y-llwyn (1, see pages 1 and 47) was extended and remodelled in the mid-late 17th century and Y Coed (2) has retained a cruck truss behind the cross-passage wall. Y Coed developed into a parallel plan, but Tyn-y-llwyn - one of the two largest farms in the parish - has a wide range of buildings which developed in dispersed fashion along a driftway. The late 17th century buildings include a barn and a rare surviving cow house with entries in the gable end. Tŷ Mawr (3) has a 17th century

7-bay combination barn with cattle housing at one end, opposite a mid 17th century house with a largely demolished 16th century house next to it. Tyn-y-pant (4) was deserted by the time of the 1881 census, the rate of abandonment of farms increasing into the 1930s in this area. Tyrywen (5) is a late example of a hall house, built in the early 17th century and extended into an overall L-plan, with a main farm building range to one side of a yard. Ordnance Survey map of c. 1900 superimposed on a Google Earth image. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021. Ordnance Survey 100019322. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.





View of The Vision, to the east of Capel-y-Ffin. The farmhouse, rebuilt in the 19th century, is probably medieval in origin. The barn within the main range of attached buildings sited along the slope is date 1702. Historic Ordnance Survey maps show all of the land between the farmstead and the unenclosed land as ffridd. Photo © Sam Hale



# 4 Understanding Significance





# PART 4

## Understanding Significance

The farmsteads described in this document make a fundamental contribution to the cultural landscape of Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. They:

- provide evidence in their construction and detail for how farmsteads and their buildings have developed over centuries
- have historical value for telling us about the development of rural communities, estates and farming from the medieval period
- illustrate the story of farming and settlement that can be read in the landscape and in the rich evidence in the Welsh language for the names of farmsteads and the farmed landscape
- illustrate how farmers and estates worked in local traditions, exchanging ideas and responded to national developments
- provide evidence in their architectural treatment for traditions and new ways of working in timber, stone, slate and iron
- have environmental value in providing habitat for nesting birds, bats, amphibians, lichens and mosses.

Of particular interest are longhouses dating from the medieval period and later which comprise one of the most significant groupings of these buildings in the British Isles; any examples with surviving cattle housing at their downslope end are now extremely rare. 18th century and earlier housing for cattle is also highly significant in a national context.

The interest of individual farmsteads and buildings, and the all-important contribution that they make to local distinctiveness, can also be enhanced if they have one or more of the following:

- legible farmstead groups which have retained their historic plan form, where the buildings and their historic yards, gardens and other spaces can be appreciated in relationship to each other, and whose interest is enhanced by the range of building types that they may retain
- 18th century and earlier farm buildings
- groups and buildings that are associated with noted agricultural improvers, estates or architects whose interest is enhanced by extensive documentation on their historic use and development
- examples displaying the following in their construction and detail:
  - 18th century and earlier forms of construction, predating the introduction of standardised techniques over the 19th century, including the evidence for earlier cores to buildings, internal beams and roof trusses including any evidence for cruck construction
  - traditional doors and windows, different in their treatment than domestic doors and windows
  - historic floor surfaces such as flagged and cobbled floors or lime ash floors that are extremely rare
  - any evidence for historic graffiti, datestones and ritual marks

In addition to individual buildings and groupings of buildings the farmed landscape contributes to significance and forms part of the immediate or wider setting of farm buildings. This can include farm yards, gardens, medieval field shapes, boundaries such as ditches, banks, drystone walls, ancient hedgerows and estate railings, lynchets, evidence for medieval strip farming, ancient woodland and coppice, windbreaks, waymarker trees, hollow ways, and constructed or altered waterways and drains.

The names given to farmsteads, individual buildings and the farming landscape are also a fundamental aspect of their significance: further guidance on this is provided in Section 4.1 (see page 115).

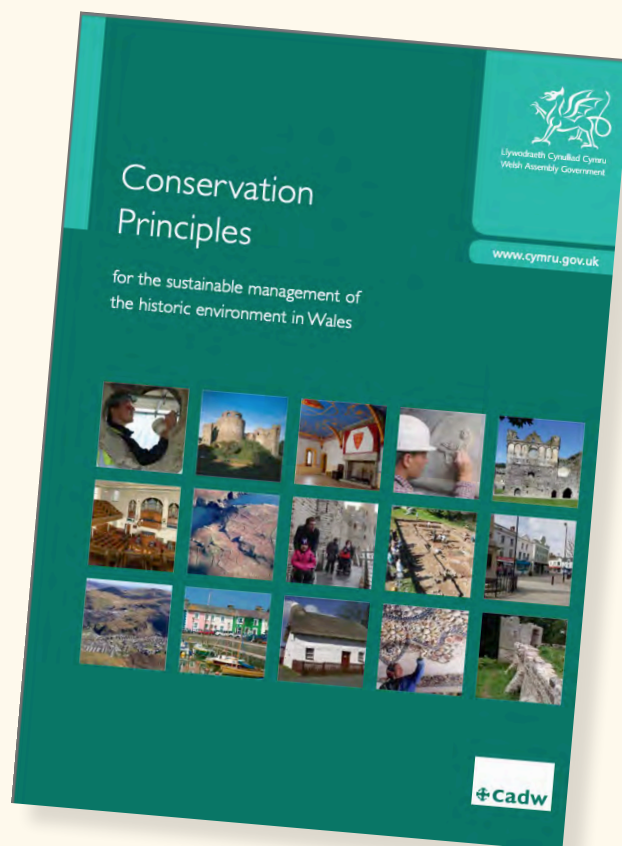


## The policy context in Wales

Planning Policy Wales and its supporting *Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017)* states that Cadw's *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Development of the Historic Environment in Wales* should be used by decision makers to assess the potential impacts of a development proposal on the significance of any historic asset(s) and to assist in the preparation of statements of significance, impact assessments and decision making. The Cadw guidance clarifies that an historic asset's significance is derived from the following values:

- *Evidential value*, which derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. Brecon farmsteads, their buildings and settings provide direct evidence of the development of farms from the medieval period, including their capacity to be adapted for later uses. They complement the evidence provided by maps, archives and survey of the landscape.
- *Historical value* derives from the ways in which places illustrate or are associated with past people, events and aspects of life. This may result from the age and history of an asset, or how it illustrates local and national historic developments - for farmsteads in the development of agriculture, rural life and society.
- *Aesthetic value* derives from how a place has been designed and has evolved, the appearance, form and use of materials being particularly important to how people experience traditional farmsteads as distinctive features in the landscape.
- *Communal value*, meaning their value to people for their relationship to local Welsh culture, including their names, and traditional patterns of land use.

Cadw has also produced guidance on how to assess the contribution that the setting of historic assets makes to their significance: see *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* (<https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support>).





Set out below are those aspects that may also give the different types of buildings described in Part 2 additional significance:

- Barns:
  - any evidence for threshing floors including the treatment of door thresholds, animal stalls and other features in combination barns including monolithic sandstone slab dividers
  - any evidence for the use of machinery in barns, including the belt drives for horse-powered and steam-powered machines for threshing, winnowing, shearing and processing feed for livestock
  - architectural evidence for their former use and development
  - horse engine houses are very rare
  - field barns are rarer in the National Park compared to many other upland areas of Britain.
- Bakehouses: intact examples are rare, those with surviving interior detail such as bread ovens, hearths and coppers being rarer still.
- Birds including housing for poultry:
  - detached poultry houses and gooseholes are very rare
  - dovecotes are rare and provide significant indication of the status of individual farms and – particularly as used from the 18th century – of how farmers saw themselves in local society.
- Bee boles and bee houses are very rare.
- Cart sheds: pre-19th century examples are rare.
- Cattle housing:
  - pre-19th century examples are rare
  - any evidence for historic stalls, floor surfaces and drainage has special significance
- Cider mills: these can be difficult to identify, and surviving cider mills or presses are rare.
- Corn-drying mills and malshouses: any surviving examples are extremely rare.
- Dairies or cheese houses, especially those with original features such as shuttered windows, cheese presses and slate or stone shelves, are very rare.
- Forges with internal fitments (bellows, hearth) are very rare, and those with internal racks for forge implements rarer still.
- Fuel stores are rare and distinctive elements of upland farms in particular.
- Granaries: evidence for grain bins and internal plastering. has special significance
- Hay barns: the ample provision for hay in lofts explains the relative rarity, compared to other upland areas, of hay barns in the National Park; there are some Dutch barns that date from the late 19th century.
- Pigsties: locally-distinctive circular pigsties are very rare.
- Rabbit warrens: these are regarded as very significant.
- Root stores and cold stores: clearly identified examples are rare.
- Silage clamps and towers: any evidence dating from the 1930s or earlier is rare.
- Sheep housing: any historic sheep housing is very rare
- Slaughter houses: these are most likely to be found on large estate farms, and are rare.
- Stables: examples retaining internal fittings including stall partitions and feed racks are rare and significant.



# 5 Further research and research questions





# PART 5

## Further research and research questions

This section offers some guidance for interested individuals, communities and groups on useful sources and also some questions to help guide further work.

### 5.1 USEFUL SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Wales has a rich and distinguished tradition in the study of vernacular architecture, including farmsteads (William 2022). This Character Statement has provided links to sources for the National Park and further afield. These include introductions to the history of farmsteads and farm buildings in Harvey 1969, Brunskill 2007, Peters 1983, Lake 1989 and Wade Martins 1991. Eurwyn Wiliam wrote a comprehensive introduction to Welsh farm buildings, published in 1986, followed in 1988 by Peter Smith's *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* - published by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), and one of the finest studies of vernacular architecture in any country. The RCAHMW, Cadw and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts continue to publish the results of national and regional surveys, examples being *Historic Settlements in the Brecon Beacons National Park and Deserted Rural Settlements in Wales* (2006) and Richard Suggett's *Houses and History in the March of Wales: Radnorshire 1400–1800*. Cadw has also produced useful summaries (<https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support>), as part of its best-practice guidance, on *Small Rural Buildings and Traditional Agricultural Buildings*. The ABC (Adfer Ban a Chwm) Grass Roots Heritage Project is a fine example of a survey involving local communities and volunteers, which has recorded many abandoned small farms and smallholdings in the Cwm Tywi, in collaboration with the Dyfed Archaeological Trust (Wheater 2015).

As mentioned in Part 1.3 there is also the work of Fox and Raglan for Monmouthshire published between 1951 and 1954, and for Breconshire that of Jones and Smith published between 1963 and 1972 – two of the most important studies of vernacular houses in Britain. The work of Stanley Jones and John Smith was stimulated and supported by Deiniol Williams, the Chief Education Officer for Breconshire, and published in *Brycheiniog* (Gibbs 2017). All except the first two volumes (for Builth and Talgarth districts) cover the National Park. In 2015-16 the RCAHMW and the Brecknock Society collaborated in obtaining some dates from tree-ring dating; the results of this important work has been reviewed and summarised in an article by Richard Suggett (Suggett 2017) and the Society is taking a leading role in investigating vernacular architecture in the county.

Neighbouring Radnorshire has also benefitted from a comprehensive survey of its 15th to 18th century houses in their historic and landscape context (Suggett 2005), with some consideration of farm buildings as well. There is not yet, however, any study of farmsteads as a whole, including the inter-relationship of houses and working buildings and their relationship to the wider landscape. Recent work in Wales, England and Scotland (e.g. Bezzant and Grant 2016, Lake and Edwards 2007 and Maudlin 2009) suggests that there is much to be gained from looking at buildings not simply in their own right but also in relationship to their landscapes and big historical themes, for example:

what can farmsteads tell us about changing farming practices, social and tenurial change and changing patterns of consumption?

what can they tell us about continuity and change in settlements and landscapes?

what can they, for example in relationship to place names and field names, tell us about local culture and its relationship with the rest of Wales and England?

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority published its park-wide Landscape Character Assessment in 2012 (<https://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/planning/draft-strategy-and-policy/landscape-character-assessment/>). Areas within and extending



beyond the National Park have also been included in Cadw's Register of Landscapes of outstanding or special historic interest (<https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/historic-assets/conservation-areas-and-other-historic-assets/other-historic-assets-0>). Within the Brecon Beacons Historic Landscape Character statements have been produced for:

- the Middle Wye Valley, East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd Y Glog, and the Middle Usk Valley, by the Clwyd and Powys Archaeological Trust (<http://www.cpat.org.uk>)
- the Tywi Valley, and Black Mountain and Myddfai, published by the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (<http://www.ggat.org.uk/>)
- Blaenavon, by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust (<http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk>).

### Archives including maps

The National Library of Wales (<https://www.library.wales>) has links in its Resources page to all archival repositories in Wales, including the Carmarthenshire and Powys Record Offices. It also has links to journals, newspaper articles, estate catalogues and historic maps including the tithe maps (<https://places.library.wales>) which were compiled after the 1836 Tithe Act and include apportionment books that list the landowner, tenant and use of every mapped parcel of land. It also has links to journals, newspaper articles, estate catalogues and historic maps including the tithe maps (<https://places.library.wales>) which were compiled after the 1836 Tithe Act and include apportionment books that list the landowner, tenant and use of every mapped parcel of land. There are local archives for Carmarthenshire, located in Carmarthen Library, for Breconshire in the Powys Archives in Llandrinod Wells and for Monmouthshire and the southern part of the National Park in the Gwent Archives in Ebbw Vale. Local libraries also have useful local history collections.

Examination of Ordnance Survey maps will also allow changes in farmsteads and their landscapes to be identified, dating from the middle of the 19th century when investment in drainage and farm building, much paid for by government loans, reached unprecedented heights. Other useful timeframes for reference will be around 1900, at the height of the post-1870s farming depression when farmstead activity was subject to very strong regional/estate variation, and the outset of the post-war drive for productivity (1950s-70s). Most detailed 25-inch maps can show horse engine houses and other features, such as dotted lines for open-fronted buildings and pens to pigsties and loose boxes.

Major to minor changes in the landscape can be identified by comparing historic maps to present-day maps. The National Library of Scotland (<https://maps.nls.uk>) has produced a free and very useful resource. Geo-referenced and Side-by-Side maps allow you to see different scales of modern maps and satellite images in relationship to historic maps dating from 1842. You can also zoom into the maps to see features in detail. Google Earth (<https://earth.google.com/web>) also provides access to aerial images dating from the 1940s.

The National Archives (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>) in Kew, London, has an on-line search facility, of particular relevance to farmsteads being:

- The 1910 Valuation Office records which followed the 1910 Land Tax and its requirement for private owners to give the government a part of the increase in land values, that had arisen because of government expenditure on roads and other infrastructure. The surveyors used Ordnance Survey maps to enter records into 'Field Books', which can include details such as the owner, occupier, value and even a description with a map of each property.
- The 1940-1943 National Farm Survey which aimed to better understand how efficiently land was being used in support of the war effort. It was at first undertaken by official inspectors, and this was supplemented by other questionnaires filled in by the farmers. These are accompanied also by maps, which number individual fields.

Also available online is the 1896 report of the Welsh Land Commission, which includes statements submitted by landowners, tenants and others to the Royal Commission on Land in Wales - <https://archive.org/details/welshlandcommiss00thom>, and accounts of farmsteads and rural houses –

Oral testimony, old photographs and film also provide valuable insights in farming life and communities, now being brought together by the People's Collection Wales (<https://www.peoplescollection.wales>). The Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates, at the University of Bangor, is researching the history of estates, their landscapes and country houses throughout Wales (<http://iswe.bangor.ac.uk>). The St Fagans National Museum of History also has manuscript archives which includes farmers' diaries and a very large photographic archive, and a library and staff with expertise not only in farming practices but also agricultural and architectural terminology.



## Place names

For place names see the Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales (Owen and Powell 2007), the website of the Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru, the Welsh Place-Name Society (<https://www.cymdeithasenwaulleoedd.cymru/en/>) and the list of Historic Welsh Place Names on the website of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (<https://historicplacenames.rcahmw.gov.uk>). The Welsh Language Commissioner also provides a List of Standardised Place Names (<https://www.welshlanguagecommissioner.wales/standardised-welsh-place-names>). The *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (Dictionary of the Welsh Language) is the only standard historical dictionary of the Welsh language and detailed surveys of place-names– down to the level of houses, farms, fields and topographical features are very uncommon. Examples of studies within the National Park are cited in the Sources section (Part 6) and also listed here:

- Blaenau Tywi 2014. *Enwau yn y tirwedd*, Names in the landscape. Grŵp Hanes Blaenau Tywi History Group
- John DM 2021 *Penderyn Place-Names*. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch: Llanrwst
- Morgan R 2005 *Place-Names of Gwent*. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch: Llanrwst
- Morgan R 2022 *Place-Names of Carmarthenshire*. Welsh Academic Press: Cardiff
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- Powell RFP 1993 *The Place-Names of Devynock Hundred Pen-pont, Brecon*
- Rackham O 2022 *The Ancient Woods of South-East Wales*. Little Toller Books and The Woodland Trust
- Wmffre I 2004 *The Place-Names of Cardiganshire* BAR British Series 379 (I)

*The Place-Names of Pembrokeshire* by Charles 1992 is not directly relevant to the National Park but it contains a place-name glossary.

## Historic Environment Records

Recording is vital in building up an understanding of historic buildings and places, rural landscapes and how they have developed over centuries. The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a statutory duty on Welsh ministers to compile and maintain a historic environment record for each local authority area in Wales. Historic Wales (<https://rcahmw.gov.uk/discover/historic-wales/>) is a web portal providing access to the online catalogue of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (<https://coflein.gov.uk>), Cadw's mapped database of designated heritage assets (<https://cadw.gov.wales>) and the Historic Environment Records for the Clwyd and Powys Archaeological Trust (<http://www.cpat.org.uk>), the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (<http://www.ggat.org.uk/>) and the Dyfed Archaeological Trust (<http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk>). Archwilio (<https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/>) provides public access to the historic environment records for each local authority area in Wales. These records all result from recording at many different levels, from external to internal survey and from rapid appraisal with photographs to detailed drawn records. The Welsh Archaeological Trusts are gradually mapping the historic character and survival of farmsteads, following the methodology adopted by Historic England.

## 5.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Every one of these records helps to build up a picture of how our rural landscapes and communities have developed over hundreds of years. In recent years, Research Frameworks have provided an overview of current understanding and identified gaps in knowledge, and have great potential to better integrate archaeology, the historic built environment and landscape. The Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales (<https://www.archaeoleg.org.uk/documents2017.html>) has brought together our understanding of Wales from prehistory to the present, of particular relevance being the chapters for:

- Early medieval Wales, c. AD 400-1070, in particular the sections on settlement and field systems
- Medieval Wales. c. 1070-1539, in particular rural settlement and field systems and the medieval house
- Early post-medieval Wales, c. 1539-1750, in particular settlement, land-use and enclosure, the growth of a consumer economy and industry
- Industrial Wales, c. 1750-1899, in particular transport, food production, the industrialisation of agriculture.



This has been difficult to achieve in the National Park, as it has such a varied landscape and straddles so many historic and modern administrative boundaries. Set out below are some questions for further research into surviving and abandoned farmsteads, highlighting the farmstead heritage of the National Park in its landscape context.

#### *A Historic development*

Buildings provide direct evidence of the development of farms from the medieval period. They complement the evidence provided by maps, archives and survey of the landscape. The density and location of farmsteads and the date and orientation of their buildings (including the farmhouse) also illustrate changing farming practices, social change, settlement patterns and landscape character. Abandoned farmsteads may also retain a rich source of undisturbed material, with often a higher archaeological potential than farmsteads in use with their improved working areas, that can tell us about farming communities.

1. How do farmsteads relate to medieval and earlier settlements and landscapes? These include patterns of fields and their date of origin and development, the development of estate centres from the first millennium AD, of Anglo-Norman control in the valleys and as hunting forest, the shrinkage of medieval settlements and the development of valley and hill farms from the 15th century.
2. What does the recorded date, plan form and development of the first main phase of surviving longhouses, farmhouses and other farm buildings tell us about social and economic change in the late medieval and early modern periods, including the end of bond tenure and changes in the land market? Do they relate to what we know about patterns of landownership and tenure?
3. What role did the rebuilding of farmsteads play in agricultural improvement?
4. How does the recorded date of buildings, and how they have been adapted over time, relate to patterns of wealth (of landlords, tenants and owner-occupiers) and investment from the 16th century?
5. How do they relate to transport networks, from droveways to canals, turnpikes, tramroads, turnpikes and railways?

#### *B Landscape and settlement*

Surviving and abandoned historic farmsteads and their buildings are an integral part of the rural landscape and how it has changed over centuries. They show how landlords, farmers and rural communities have used and adapted farmland, alongside resources such as woodland, rough ground and industrial sites such as quarries.

1. What do farmsteads in villages tell us about the changing form of village settlements and their communities?
2. How did farmsteads develop in different farming and settlement zones?
3. How and when did farmsteads develop in relationship to routeways for people, animals and vehicles?
4. What is the evidence for farmhouses and buildings being intended to be seen and appreciated in the landscape?
5. How did conditions of tenure affect investment and improvement? To what extent were landlords and larger tenant farmers, not freeholders, the driving force behind agricultural change?
6. How did high-status manorial and gentry farms groups develop as estate centres and have they always been high-status sites?
7. What is the evidence for smallholdings and their construction?
8. What can abandoned farmsteads and seasonal settlements tell us about past farming communities including the causes of abandonment and the development of transhumance?
9. How did changing patterns of farming and land management affect the environment, including habitats and biodiversity?

#### *C Farmsteads and their buildings*

Continuity or revolutions in farming practice either swept away or made use of the existing building stock. Differences in the survival of 19th century or earlier buildings provide an indication of where and when change occurred, arising from a combination of factors such as the policies of landlords and estates, types of tenancies and the distribution of wealth. Distinctive local and regional traditions of farmstead and building types illustrate the emergence of market-based and specialised regional economies, and how they relate to national trends including the increasing move towards standardisation over the 19th century.



1. What do the dates and layouts of farmsteads tell us about the pattern of investment by estates?
2. How do they relate to local patterns of land use?
3. How did they change over time?
4. To what extent do the different farmstead types present by around 1900 reflect long-term developments in farm size, already visible in the 1840s tithe maps and earlier maps, or later 19th-century change? To what extent do they result from a single or multi-period phase of construction?
5. Using census and other information, what is the relationship between the size and layout of farmsteads and the status of their occupants (gentry, farmers or those with income from other activities)?
6. What evidence is there for the development of small-scale farmers, smallholders and squatters who used common grazing in addition to small areas of enclosed land, in some cases to supplement incomes derived from other sources. The buildings of these, the smallest scale farmers, were typically small and most likely to comprise linear, the smallest loose courtyard or dispersed cluster plans. Such plans are known to have been highly susceptible to change and these, together with smallholdings, are extremely rare but are of significance. Further research is required to understand the date of development and survival of these sites within smallholding and common-edge landscapes.
7. With respect to longhouses:
  - a. How and where did the different derivative types of longhouse develop from the 15th century? Are the patterns recorded by Smith and Jones found in other areas?
  - b. How did linear farmsteads, especially those with 17th-century and earlier fabric, develop around areas of historic common land and also in relationship to deserted or shrunken medieval settlements?
  - c. Who were the occupants of linear farmsteads that survived into the 20th century, and were they working smaller farms with access to by-employment or not?
8. With respect to courtyard and dispersed plans:
  - i. What evidence do farmsteads retain for earlier houses reused as farm buildings and for the amalgamation of smaller into larger farms? When did this occur?
  - j. Do dispersed plans have any particular relationship to routeways for the movement of animals, and are those that survived into the 20th century also associated with common land?
9. What do the phases of construction for barns and other working buildings tell us about local and broader changes in agricultural practice?
  - j. What evidence is there for partitions and floors which show how barns and other buildings were subdivided?
  - k. What evidence is there for pre-19th century cattle housing and what is their distribution?

#### *D Materials and detail*

Farm buildings were frequently altered and re-roofed, and often display evidence for successive phases of rebuilding, marked by straight joints in masonry or indications of mortise holes and joints in timberwork.

1. If there was large-scale rebuilding and replacement of earlier buildings, to what extent was the fabric of the earlier buildings including stonework and timber reused?
2. What is the evidence for rebuilding in stone and earlier traditions in timber frame, earth and also temporary fabric?
3. What does the use of materials tell us about:
  - a. local supplies of building materials?
  - b. the management of timber in woods and field boundaries?
  - c. the development of transport for importing materials?
  - d. the development of prefabricated materials in the 19th century, such as softwood with iron ties and corrugated iron?
  - e. local vernacular styles of architecture?



- f. national influences in architecture?
4. What is the evidence for 18th century and earlier roofs in farm buildings including cruck construction?
  5. How did the import of materials affect farmsteads, and how did it change over time?
  6. Are there any differences over time or place in the use of limewash, and what is the evidence for the use of colour also?

#### *E The natural and cultural value of farmsteads*

Farmsteads and the spaces within and around them, being an integral part of natural and cultural landscapes, also provide a range of benefits as habitats and for people. Natural Resources Wales has produced Area Statements that set out the potential for actions to benefit natural and cultural landscapes in the next generation (<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/area-statements>).

Most obviously, farmsteads have developed over hundreds of years to provide housing, to process crops and fruit into grain and cider and manage livestock. It is also worth further exploring, because we understand these issues less well:

- *how farmsteads and their buildings support habitats:*
- as a consequence of the materials used for the construction of their walls, roofs, surfaces and boundaries
- as a consequence of their time-depth and design, the former being linked to duration of habitat and the latter affording some species habitats
- as a consequence of the boundaries and the spaces they enclose, and their connectivity to surrounding landscapes of different types
- indirectly through colonising as well as domesticated fauna and flora
- as a consequence of walls, other boundaries and gardens including orchards for pollinator species
- supporting nitrogen-rich plants and invertebrates in and around farmyards, and food sources for birds (in grain and other foodstuffs spilt from crop-processing and animal-feeding areas).
- *help regulate climate and climate change mitigation through:*
- re-use of traditional materials rather than replacement, utilising the embedded energy in the existing building stock
- their orientation and design, often intended to capture the sun's path and protect sites from the prevailing weather.
- *contribute to local culture and economies, including local communities and economies, because:*
- of their contribution to sense and place and history, part of the distinctive character that draws people to the National Park and thus benefits the local economy
- of the opportunities they present for discovery, identification, education and research
- of the opportunities they present for skills working in traditional materials
- of their continuing use and adaptation for modern farming and in helping farmers to diversify their businesses, serving to underline the critical importance of farming to local culture and economies
- of how and for what purpose (for residential use, home working and different types of commercial use) they have been adapted to non-farming uses.



# 6 Sources





# PART 6

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# Appendix 1

## Glossary of terms and their Welsh equivalents

Apple field [Dae tre](#) provided by Gwyneth Evans and William John Harris (Will Harris).  
A piece of land cultivated for the growth of crops.

Barn <a href="#">Ysgubor</a>	A building for the storage and processing of grain crops and for housing straw, farm equipment and occasionally livestock and their fodder.
Beast House <a href="#">Beudy stabal</a>	Building for cows and calves
Brewhouse/ bakehouse <a href="#">Tyffwrn</a>	Detached buildings separate but close to the farmhouse for brewing beer and baking bread, often combined into a single building and documented as used for accommodating widows.
Calf house or Calf shed <a href="#">Ty lloi</a>	A building, or part of a building, for housing calves. Resembles a cow house, usually to a smaller scale.
Cart shed <a href="#">Cartws</a>	A building for housing carts, waggons and farm implements, often open-fronted.
Cattle yard <a href="#">Ffaldyda</a>	A yard for cattle that has access to working farmstead buildings.
Cheese room or cellar <a href="#">Ty caws</a>	A room for storing cheese, in a cellar or in a loft above the dairy or in the attic of the farmhouse.
Cider house	A building, or part of a building, for the milling and pressing of cider apples to produce cider (or pears for perry) and for storing the drink in barrels.
Combination Barn <a href="#">Ty pob peth</a>	A threshing barn that was built to house farm animals and also granaries, carts and other functions.
Cow house, Byre <a href="#">Beudy</a>	A building in which cattle are normally tethered in stalls.
Dairy <a href="#">Llaethdy</a>	A detached building, or more often a room within the farmhouse, used for the cool storage of milk and its manufacture into butter and/or cheese.
Dutch Barn <a href="#">Ysgubor agored</a>	An iron-framed, open-fronted building for the shelter of hay or corn.
Enclosure <a href="#">Ffald</a>	Enclosed land. This may have happened at any time over the centuries.
Farmhouse <a href="#">Ty fferm</a>	The main dwelling house of a farm, it can be either separate from or attached to the working buildings.
Field <a href="#">Cae</a>	A piece of enclosed land.
Field barn <a href="#">Bytac</a>	An isolated barn or shelter shed, perhaps with a hayloft. Typically found in areas where farmsteads and fields were sited at a long distance from each other.
Forge <a href="#">Ty gof</a>	A building housing the ironworking processes of a blacksmith.
Goose house <a href="#">Ty gwydda</a>	A structure providing secure housing for geese.
Granary <a href="#">Dowlod (anglicised to Tollet)</a>	A building, or first-floor room in a building, for the dry and secure storage of grain after it has been threshed and winnowed.
Hay barn <a href="#">Ty gwair</a>	A well-ventilated building for the storage of hay.
Hay loft <a href="#">Lloft gwair</a>	Storage for hay above barn, cart shed, cattle housing or stables.
Hen house <a href="#">Ty ieir or Shed fowls</a>	A structure providing secure housing for hens..
Hogg house <a href="#">Cartref ir defaid</a>	A building for the winter housing of yearling sheep, which can resemble a field barn or



	shelter shed.
Kennel <a href="#">Cwtsh y cwn</a>	A cubicle for farm dogs, often housed beneath flights of steps
Kiln (Corn or Oat) <a href="#">Odyn</a>	A structure for the drying of cereals after harvesting.
Kitchen (Detached) <a href="#">y Llaithdy</a>	A separate building sited close to the house that may have originated as a dairy or – often in the 16th and 17th centuries – as a detached kitchen for brewing, baking and other purposes.
Longhouse <a href="#">Ty hir</a>	A building that housed humans and cattle under one roof, with a shared entrance providing access to the cattle housing (usually downslope) and the dwelling area.
Loose box <a href="#">Shed rhydd</a>	A separate compartment, with its own door, for fattening cattle and sometimes housing bulls.
Malthouse	A low-ceilinged building for the malting of barley before brewing, specifically for the germination of the crop on malting floors and then drying in a kiln.
Meadow <a href="#">Waun</a>	A field maintained for making hay.
Mill <a href="#">y Felin</a>	A building for the milling process. There are many types of mill including corn, flour and fulling.
Mixing house	A building where grain, cake and roots for animals would be prepared for animal feed.
Orchard <a href="#">Berllan</a>	
Outfarm <a href="#">Bytac</a>	A complex of buildings set within the fields away from the main farmstead, usually including a barn and cattle housing.
Outshot <a href="#">Twlc</a>	A building or lean-to, usually a later addition, which is constructed against the side of a larger building.
Ox house <a href="#">Stabal</a>	A building, or part of a building, for housing draught oxen.
Pasture <a href="#">Porfa</a>	Field used for grazing
Peat house	A room or more rarely detached building for keeping peat used for fuel.
Pigsty <a href="#">Twlc moch</a>	A structure providing secure housing for pigs, sometimes with an attached yard.
Poultry housing <a href="#">Twlc ffowls</a>	Structure providing secure housing for poultry.
Stable <a href="#">Stabal</a>	A building, or part of a building, for housing horses or working oxen, storing and maintaining their tackle and sometimes housing farm workers .
Stall <a href="#">Standin</a>	A standing for a cow or horse within a byre or stable. Stalls are usually divided by wooden or stone partitions to enclose animals.