

Sites at Melincourt, Glamorgan

Possible platform house site, east of Glyn-Gwilym Isaf (SN 8300 0138)

On enclosed pasture land on ground falling gently to the NW, are the vestiges of what appears to be a much ploughed-down platform, currently free from undergrowth. No accurate dimensions were taken at the time, but it measures around 10m by 6m.

Blaenycwm farm (SN 8382 0035)

Still marked on large-scale OS maps and located across the stream from the above site. A ruinous rectangular stone building lying within a polygonal drystone enclosure on what is now swampy land bordering the Melincourt brook. The building measures about 6 by 8 m and is divided into two rooms by a collapsed wall that may contain a fireplace. There is no clear sign of an entrance in the rubble. Although very ruined, some of the surviving walls faces are reasonably well built; it could therefore be relatively recent, although it is clearly older than the many ruined mine buildings scattered about the upper reaches of the valley.

Although it looks like a typical upland *hafod*, the Llantwit-Juxta-Neath Tithe map identifies this remote site as Blaenycwm farm. The adjacent field was known as *Waun y Castell*, a probable reference to either the Roman camp or the Iron Age enclosure on the nearby ridge. The map also marks another small building ('croftan') in a field just to the north-west, but this can no longer be detected.

Long-hut at Blaenycwm (SN 8382 0045)

Tucked into a level shelf between sloping ground and the Melincourt brook, and marked by a solitary tree, are the foundations of a rectangular drystone building. The site was not inspected close up and the dimensions are approximately 4 by 6 m. Ruined wall faces are exposed in places, but are mostly covered in earth and grass. It is presumably associated with nearby Blaenycwm farm, although appears to be older and lies in the adjacent parish of Resolven.

Caner farmstead, Blackmill (NPRN 91921)

In addition to D Leighton's notes, there are actually two 'cairns' here (probably clearance mounds), located just outside the boundary of the farmstead, and just visible in photo no 1.

There is an additional area of plough-marks, aligned down-slope, and just visible in photo no 2 as a faint corduroy pattern in the upper RH side. Some tractor damage has recently been caused to the enclosure bank, revealing it to be composed predominately of earth and small stones.

In the field immediately uphill of the platforms there is an obvious scoop and terrace. Although it superficially looks like a platform house, the hood is far too deep. It is probably a trial level or quarry scoop, but if so then the resultant spoil heap has been pushed to the side, rather than being dumped as usual immediately in front of the excavation.