

CPAT Report No 1109

Bwlch y Ddau Faen Standing Stones, Llanwrthwl

SURVEY 2011



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Report for Cadw

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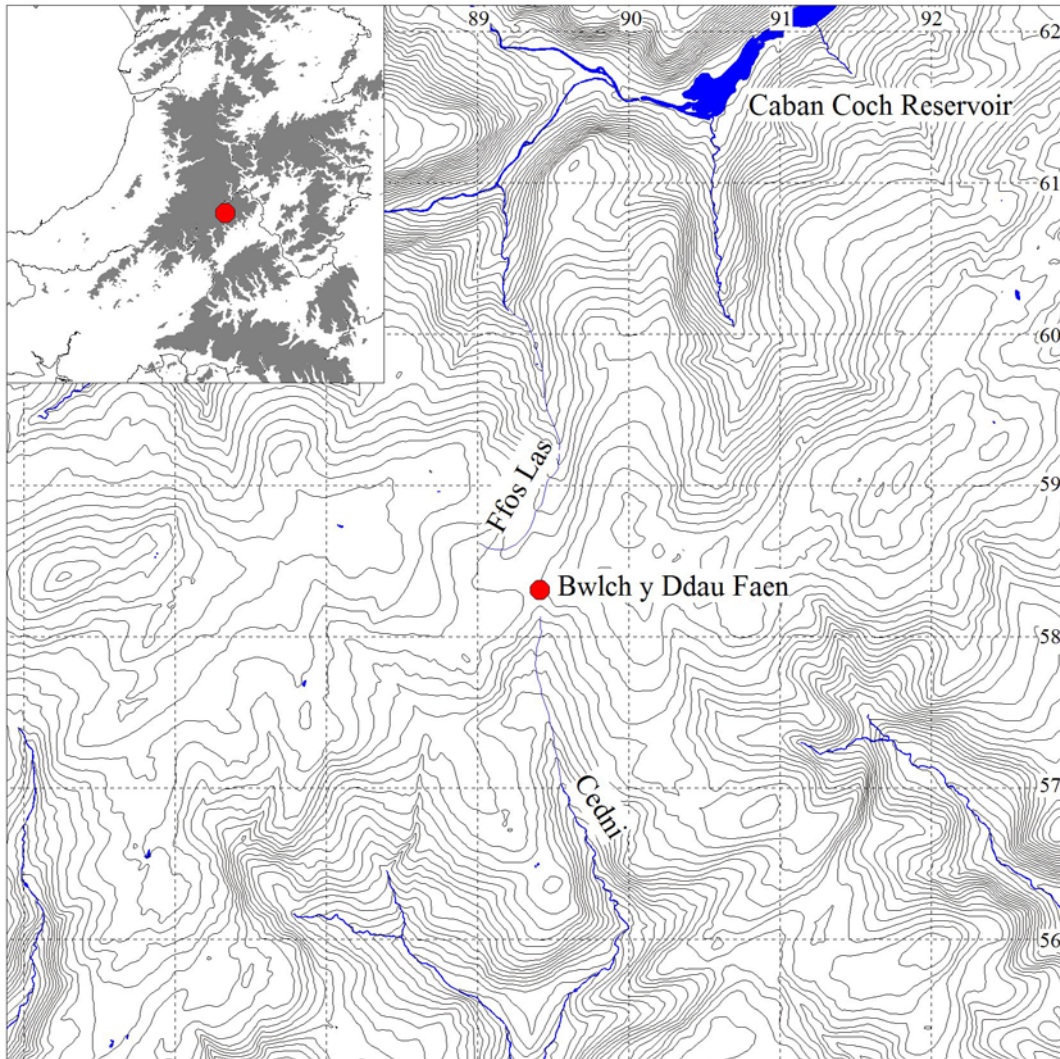
cover: Bwlch y Ddau Faen standing stones viewed from the south-west. Photo CPAT 3300-0009

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A detailed survey was undertaken to investigate a possible stone circle (PRN 4175) at Bwlch y Ddau Faen, near Llanwrthwl in southern Powys (SN89415831). The work was funded by Cadw as part of the continuing study into prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments in mid and north-east Wales.



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Fig. 1 Location of Bwlch y Ddau Faen

- 1.2 The site lies on the south side of a col between two stream valleys, Ffos Las to the north and Cedni to the south. The col also forms the boundary between the Elan Estate to the north and the National Trust's Abergwesyn estate to the south and one of the concrete boundary markers for the former lies immediately to the west of the site.
- 1.3 Previous descriptions of the site, including that of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW), had identified four upright stones which might conjecturally have been part of a circle around 23m in diameter. However, for the compiler of the *Inventory* this was not considered a convincing interpretation, and it was argued that these stones mark a cattle route through the mountains (RCAHMW 1997, 161; RSC 4).

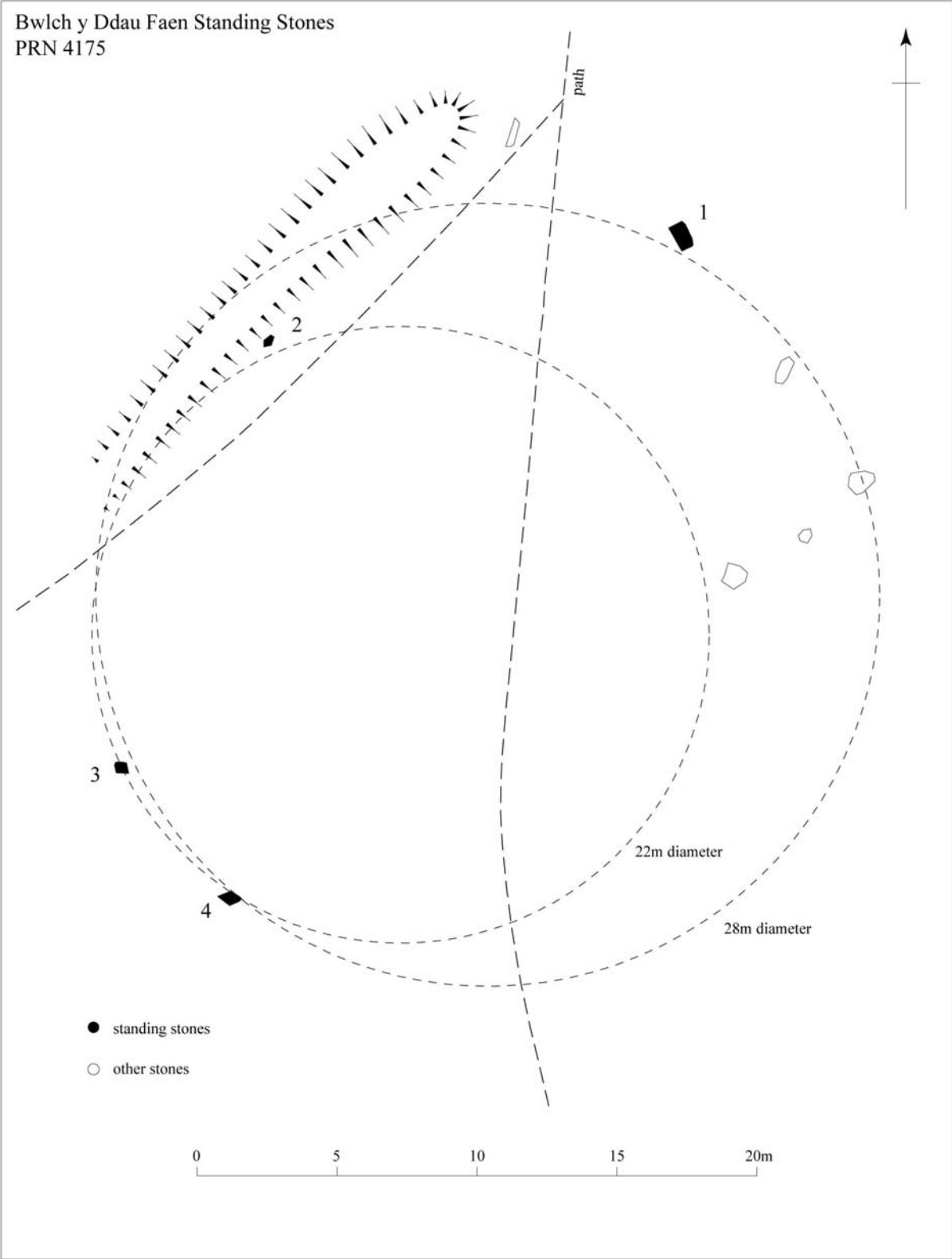


Fig. 2 Plan of the standing stones at Bwlch y Ddau Faen.

2 SURVEY

- 2.1 A detailed total station survey was conducted in May 2011 to record accurately the position of those stones which were already known, together with any evidence for further stones or other features which might be associated. The survey identified the four upright stones which had been recorded previously, as well as a number of others which were not upright and appeared never to have been so. These were included in the survey, however, in order to demonstrate clearly any potential association with those which were upright.
- 2.2 The results of the survey are presented in Fig. 2, which identifies the upright stones as numbers 1 to 4, as described below:

Stone 1: A large upright slab aligned on a bearing of 330° and now leaning to the east. The stone is around 0.8m long, 1m high and 0.18m thick.

Stone 2: A small upright stone aligned on a bearing of 50° and measuring 0.45m long, 0.45 high and 0.28m thick.



Fig. 3 Stone 1 from the west-south-west.
Photo CPAT 3300-0014



Fig. 4 Stone 2 from the east-south-east.
Photo CPAT 3300-0015

Stone 3: An upright stone aligned on a bearing of 90° and measuring 0.45m long, 0.75 high and 0.3m thick.



Fig. 5 Stone 3 from the east-south-east.
Photo CPAT 3300-0007

Stone 4: A small upright slab aligned on a bearing of 60° and measuring 0.7m long, 0.6 high and 0.35m thick.



Fig. 6 Stone 4 from the south-west.
Photo CPAT 3300-0010

- 2.3 The survey also identified a broad, low bank aligned north-east to south-west in close proximity to stone 2. The bank was up to 19m long, 3m wide and 0.4m high and could be artificial, although there is no suggestion that it is associated with any of the stones and does not appear to be part of any enclosure.

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The survey has confirmed the presence of four upright stones, although these do not appear to be the remains of a stone circle. This was also the conclusion of RCAHMW (1997) who suggested that any three of the stones might be made to fit a circle, but not the fourth. The recent survey has confirmed this and Fig. 2 shows the projection of two circles, one with a diameter of 22m and the other 28m, both of which might encompass three stones. Although the wider circle might also include two of the other stones in the area neither of these are upright and both have the appearance of being no more than naturally occurring slabs.
- 3.2 The question therefore arises as to the nature and dating of the upright stones. The name Bwlch y Ddau Faen implies the presence of only two stones, perhaps indicating that the other two are of no great antiquity, possibly acting as post-medieval boundary markers. This may be particularly relevant given that the site does lie exactly on boundary between two estates. As to which two might be of more recent origin it is not possible to determine. Certainly stone 1 is of a rather different character, being a large erect slab, although this does not preclude its antiquity. It may also be significant that stone 3 and 4 are in close proximity and may have originally been erected as a pair. Alternatively, however, it may be that only the two more prominent stones (stones 1 and 3) were attributed any significance and that these account for the placename even though all four might be roughly contemporary and potentially prehistoric.

4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 4.1 The writer would like to thank Wendy Owen for assisting with the survey.

5 REFERENCES

RCAHMW, 1997. *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Brecknock (Brycheiniog). The Prehistoric and Roman Monuments: Part 1, Later Prehistoric Monuments and Unenclosed Settlements to 1000 AD.* Aberystwyth: RCAHMW.