

**Proposed extension at  
Gelli Fechan, Rhandirmwyn,  
Carmarthenshire SA20 0PF  
Impact on Setting (Historic Environment)  
Planning Application:  
PL/03166 (Carmarthenshire)**



Report by: Trysor

For: Vian Davys and Donna Udall

March 2022



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By

Jenny Hall, MCIfA & Paul Sambrook, MCIfA  
Trysor

Trysor Project No. 2022/829

HER Event Record PRN – DAT 126550

For: Vian Davys and Donna Udall

March 2022

38, New Road  
Gwaun-cae-Gurwen  
Ammanford  
Carmarthenshire  
SA18 1UN  
[www.trysor.net](http://www.trysor.net)  
enquiries@trysor.net



*Cover photograph: Gelli burial cairn, CM177, on the edge of a scarp of a river terrace, looking southwest down the Tywi valley.*

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**RHIF YR ADRODDIAD - REPORT NUMBER:** Trysor 2022/829

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**DYDDIAD** Mawrth 24<sup>ain</sup> 2022      **DATE**      March 24<sup>th</sup> 2022

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan bartneriad Trysor. Mae wedi ei gael yn gywir ac yn derbyn ein sêl bendith.

This report was prepared by the Trysor partners. It has been checked and received our approval.

**JENNY HALL MCIFA**      *Jenny Hall*

**PAUL SAMBROOK MCIFA**      *Paul Sambrook*

***Croesawn unrhyw sylwadau ar gynnwys neu  
strwythur yr adroddiad yma.***

***We welcome any comments on the content  
or structure of this report.***

*38, New Road,  
Gwaun-cae-Gurwen  
Ammanford  
Carmarthenshire  
SA18 1UN  
01269 826397*

*82, Henfaes Road  
Tonna  
Neath  
SA11 3EX  
01639 412708*

[www.trysor.net](http://www.trysor.net)

[enquiries@trysor.net](mailto:enquiries@trysor.net)

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Jenny Hall (BSc Joint Hons., Geology and Archaeology, MCIfA) had 12 years excavation experience, which included undertaking watching briefs prior to becoming the Sites and Monuments Record Manager for a Welsh Archaeological Trust for 10 years. She has been an independent archaeologist since 2004 undertaking a variety of work that includes upland survey, desk-based appraisals and assessments, and watching briefs.

Paul Sambrook (BA Joint Hons., Archaeology and Welsh, MCIfA, PGCE) has extensive experience as a fieldworker in Wales. He was involved with Cadw's pan-Wales Deserted Rural Settlements Project for 7 years. He has been an independent archaeologist since 2004 undertaking a variety of work including upland survey, desk-based appraisals and assessments, and watching briefs.



## Event Record PRN – DAT HER

PRN	DAT 126550
Name	Proposed extension at Gelli Fechan, Rhandirmwyn, Carmarthenshire SA20 0PF Impact on Setting (Historic Environment) Planning Application: PL/03166 (Carmarthenshire)
Type	VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
NGR	SN7704045865
Easting	277040
Northing	245865
Summary (English)	During February and March 2022 Trysor carried out an assessment of the impact of a proposed extension and modernisation of the farmhouse at Gelli Fechan, Rhandirmwyn, Carmarthenshire SA20 0PF on the setting and significance of Gelli Neolithic chambered cairn (CM177), which stands close to the house © Trysor 2022
Crynodeb (Cymraeg)	Yn ystod Chwefror a Mawrth 2022, fe gariwyd allan asesiad gan Trysor ar effaith cynllun i ehangu ac adnewyddu ffermdy Gelli Fechan, Rhandirmwyn, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA20 0PF ar leoliad a phwysigrwydd carnedd siambr Neolithig y Gelli (CM177) sy'n sefyll yn ymyl y ty. © Trysor 2022
Description	During February and March 2022 Trysor carried out an assessment of the impact of a proposed extension and modernisation of the farmhouse at Gelli Fechan, Rhandirmwyn, Carmarthenshire SA20 0PF on the setting and significance of Gelli Neolithic chambered cairn (CM177), which stands close to the house © Trysor 2022
Sources	Trysor, 2022, <i>Proposed extension at Gelli Fechan, Rhandirmwyn, Carmarthenshire SA20 0PF Impact on Setting (Historic Environment) Planning Application: PL/03166 (Carmarthenshire)</i>
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## **Summary**

*This report was prepared by Trysor for Donna Udal and Via Davys in March 2022. It assesses the impact of alterations to the former farmhouse at Gelli Fechan, Rhandirmwyn Llandovery, Carmarthenshire SA20 0PF, on the scheduled monument known as the Gelli Burial Chamber (CM177), following the relevant Cadw guidance.*

*The scheduled monument is located immediately adjacent to the farmhouse at Gelli Fechan. This assessment has found that there would be no significant adverse impacts on the setting or significance of Gelli Burial Chamber. No mitigations are therefore proposed in association with the development.*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document has been prepared by Trysor at the request of Donna Udal and Via Davys, to assess the impact on the setting of the scheduled CM177 Gelli Burial Chamber from the proposed extension of the nearby farmhouse of Gelli Fechan, Rhandirmwyn, Llandovery, SA20 0PF at NGR SN7704045865, (see Figures 1 and 2). A planning application has been submitted, PL/03166 (Carmarthenshire).
- 1.2 The proposed development would include improvements to the existing dwelling house, including the conversion of attached ancillary storage barn to domestic accommodation, alterations to the house and the addition of an extension to its west-northwest gable end.
- 1.3 A site visit was made by Trysor on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to examine the proposed development site and its environs.



Figure 1: Location of the proposed development and the scheduled Gelli burial chamber (CM177).





Figure 2: A detailed location map showing Gelli Fechan alongside Gelli Burial Chamber and its scheduled area.

## **2. The Proposed Development Site**

- 2.1 The proposed development is focused on the existing farmhouse at Gelli Fechan at SN7704045865, which is situated at approximately 135m AOD in the upper Tywi Valley, to the north-northwest of the village of Rhandirmwyn, in northeastern Carmarthenshire.
- 2.2 Gelli Fechan stands in a sheltered position, within the post-medieval field system which extends along the floor and lower slopes of the valley. The river passes within 150 metres to the northwest of the farmhouse.
- 2.3 The proposed development is focused on the farmhouse itself and would not impact on the surrounding fields, which are laid out across a series of natural terraces rising southeastwards from the river Tywi.
- 2.4 The underlying geology is made up of rocks of the Derwenlas Formation, deposited in deep seas between 433 and 444 million years ago during the Silurian period. To the northwest of the farmhouse the bedrock is covered by Quaternary river terrace deposits, laid down during the last 3 million years along the Tywi valley. To the southeast the land rises where a series of terraces created from glaciofluvial sands and gravels, deposited by meltwater washing down the valley during warmer periods at the end of the last Ice Age.
- 2.5 The soils here are categorised as freely draining slightly acid loamy soils on the LandIS soil map (Cranfield University, 2019). Soils of this type are of low fertility and typically associated with arable and grass pasture lands.

## **3. Gelli Burial Chamber (CM177): Historical & Archaeological overview**

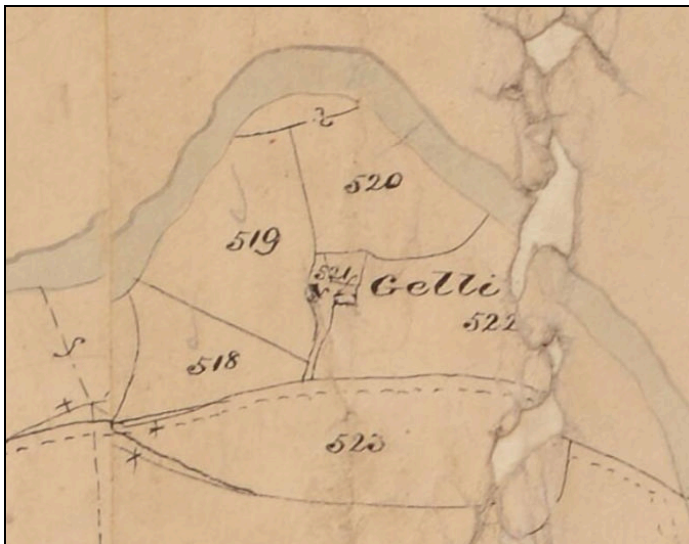
- 3.1 The proposed development site is situated adjacent to the scheduled Neolithic monument known as the Gelli Burial Chamber (CM177).
  - 3.1.1 The Gelli Burial Chamber has been damaged in the past. It has also never been subject to archaeological excavation, but the surface evidence suggests that it is probably a Neolithic chambered cairn, which consisted of stone-lined burial cists covered by large stone slabs or "capstones". One such cist is visible on the surface and at least two large capstones are seen partly buried in the top of the mound, having been dragged from their original position covering a cist (see Plates 18 & 19).

- 3.2 Gelli Fechan farm is shown on the earliest available Ordnance Survey map, the original surveyors' drawings of 1819, see Figure 3. This map shows the farmhouse in its present position and the existence of a trackway linking the farmyard with the road to the east. The map does not show the Gelli Burial Chamber.



*Figure 3: An excerpt of the 1819 OS Original Surveyors Drawings showing the house at Gelli Fechan although the burial chamber is not shown.*

- 3.3 At the time of the 1841 tithe survey of Llanfair ar y Bryn parish, Gelli Fechan farm was a 107-acre holding, owned by the Earl of Cawdor and occupied by one John Jenkins. The chambered cairn is not shown. It would be in field number 519 which is named *Cae Glas*, which does not reference the monument, see Figure 4.



*Figure 4: An excerpt of the Llanfair ar y Bryn parish tithe map dating to 1841. Gelli farmhouse and its access trackway appear to be in the same position as at present. The burial chamber is not shown.*

- 3.4 The 1887 1:10560 Ordnance Survey map, see Figure 5, shows Gelli Fechan farm in clear detail. The farmhouse is shown, along with a small outbuilding to the east, which still stands today. At this time, the byre now attached to the southeastern end of the farmhouse does not appear to have existed. It was not added until the 20<sup>th</sup> century and likewise, the Gelli Burial Chamber had not been recognised as a monument.

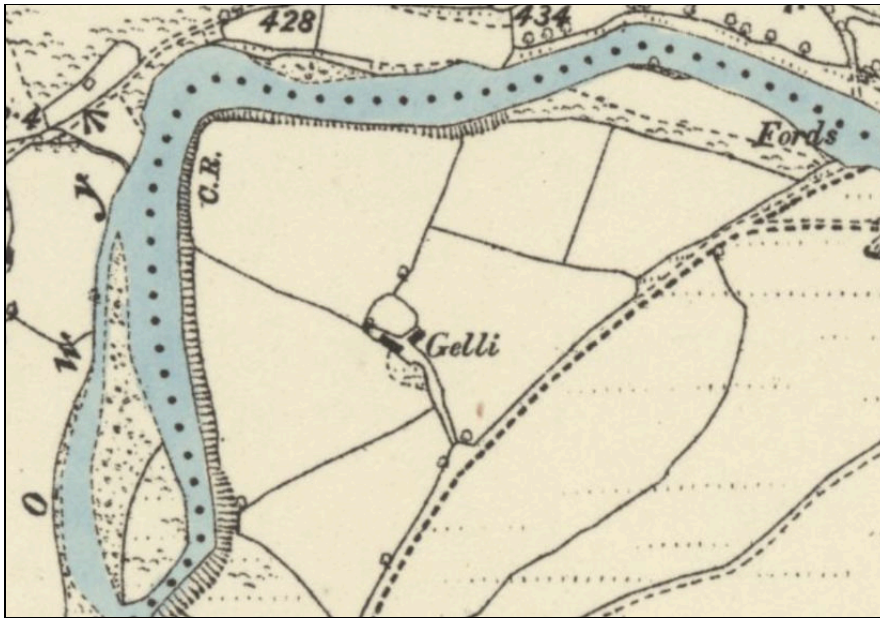


Figure 5: An excerpt from the 1887 1:10560 scale Ordnance Survey map.



Figure 6: A closer view of Gelli Fechan as depicted on the 1887 1:10560 scale Ordnance Survey map (left) and the 1906 Second Edition version of the map (right). These show that the farmhouse had been extended with the addition of the byre at its southeastern end by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Note also that the 1887 map appears to show the eastern side of the chambered cairn in the edge of the access trackway.

- 3.5 The Gelli Burial Chamber remained unnoticed until the late 1930s. The monument was first noticed by a local man, Mr Myrddin Price of Derwendeg, Rhandirmwyn and in 1938 the discovery was reported to the archaeologist W.F. Grimes (*Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1940, p.80).
- 3.5.1 In 1940, Grimes visited Gelli Fechan and produced the first plan and description of the monument (*Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1940, p.81). He described it as a "ruined burial chamber" which was "contained in a much-denuded mound or cairn originally oval in plan." Grimes noted that the tomb was in the megalithic tradition, rather than a later Bronze Age cist type burial site.
- 3.5.2 Grimes' interpretation of the site shows a chamber at the northern side of the mound, defined by four surviving, edge set, stones. Two other stone slabs to the south of the chamber were thought to be remnants of the capstones which covered the chamber. The mound was believed to be composed of cairn material, as erosion had exposed patches of small stones at several points. This interpretation appears reasonable, but without archaeological excavation little further can be added in terms of understanding the plan of the monument.
- 3.5.3 Grimes also suggested that the mound originally may have extended further to the east and that the farm trackway had cut through its eastern side. This seems unlikely based on the material now exposed at the eastern side of the mound, which appears to be composed soils, gravel and pebbles of fluvio-glacial origin, dissimilar to the stony material exposed on top of the mound. Again, the absence of excavation evidence does not allow for a full understanding of the extent of the mound into which the tomb was set.
- 3.5.4 Interestingly, Grimes also suggested that the "kidney-shaped" plan of the mound today, as well as its scarp-edge situation, may relate to the existence of an entrance into the tomb on its northern side, postulating that the chambered tomb may have been entered upslope from that side. No archaeological or surface evidence supports this suggestion at present. Only future archaeological evaluation could confirm the presence of such an entrance.
- 3.6 The Gelli Burial Chamber was shown as a monument on Ordnance Survey maps by the 1950s, and in 1957 was granted Scheduled Monument status. The scheduling description of the monument describes it as "a chambered round cairn" of Neolithic or Bronze Age date (c 4,200BC - 800BC).



- 3.7 The site was revisited in 2002 by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT) as part of the Cadw grant-aided Prehistoric Funerary and Ritual Sites project. This re-evaluation of the monument stated that the site was the “only convincing chambered tomb in east Carmarthenshire”. The site is recorded in the Carmarthenshire Historic Environment Record as a Neolithic Chambered Tomb (PRN4104). Interestingly, the DAT interpretation of the site bases its description of the cist or chamber on the embedded long slabs at the north and west sides of the cist and views the large slab along its southern side as a capstone which has been moved out of position, which is at variance with Grimes’ original interpretation.
- 3.8 There is some degree of continuing uncertainty about the date and character of the monument as a result of a lack of archaeological excavation evidence. This is reflected in the record of the monument in the National Monuments Record for Wales, held by the RCAHMW. The monument is recorded as NPRN 304521 “Gelli, Chambered Cairn” under the site type “Chambered Tomb” and ascribed a Neolithic date. The RCAHMW record also appears to agree with the DAT interpretation that the large slab to the southern side of the cist is a capstone, not part of the cist or chamber.

## **4. Methodology**

4.1 The process outlined in "Setting of Historic Assets in Wales" (Cadw, 2017) has been followed in order to assess impacts on the setting of the historic asset and any impacts on its significance.

4.1.1 This process has four stages;

Stage 1: Identify the historic assets that might be affected by a proposed change or development.

Stage 2: Define and analyse the settings to understand how they contribute to the significance of the historic assets and in particular the ways in which the assets are understood, appreciated and experienced.

Stage 3: Evaluate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.

Stage 4: If necessary, consider options to mitigate or improve the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.

**5. Impacts on Setting Stage 1:** *Identify the historic assets that might be affected by a proposed change or development.*

- 5.1 The development is focused on the farmhouse and byre at Gelli Fechan, which stand immediately adjacent to the scheduled Gelli Burial Chamber (CM177).
- 5.2 The assessment considers the impact on the setting of the Scheduled Monument.
  - 5.2.1 Detailed notes on the setting of this historic asset and impacts on its setting and significance are found in Appendix B of this report.

**5.2.2 Gelli Burial Chamber (Scheduled Monument CM177) (see Appendix B)**

This burial chamber was first reported in 1938 and first described in 1940, when it was visited by the archaeologist W.F. Grimes. Grimes recognised that the monument belonged to the megalithic tomb building tradition and therefore identified it as a Neolithic burial chamber. It was scheduled in 1957 and in modern times has been confirmed by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust to be the only credible Neolithic chambered tomb in east Carmarthenshire. The site had been damaged long before it was identified, but is still likely to contain important, buried archaeological evidence relating to its origin and function.

**6. Impacts on Setting Stage 2:** Define and analyse the settings to understand how they contribute to the significance of the historic assets and, in particular, the ways in which the assets are understood, appreciated and experienced.

6.1 The significance of an historic asset is derived from the sum of four heritage values according to *Conservation Principles (Cadw, 2011, p.10)*. These four values are:

- Evidential value
- Historical value
- Aesthetic value
- Communal value

6.1.1 Conservation principles outlines that setting is part of the Aesthetic Value (Cadw, 2011, p.10, section 2.3 and p.17 Aesthetic Value).

6.1.2 Guidance on assessing the setting of historic assets was introduced in 2017 (Cadw, 2017). Cadw states that: *Setting is not itself a historic asset, though land within a setting may contain other historic assets. The importance of setting lies in what it contributes to the significance of a historic asset.* (Cadw, 2017, p.2, Section 1, second para).

6.1.3 In sections 6.2 to 6.4 below, the setting and significance of each of the historic assets listed in 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 will be outlined.

## **6.2 Gelli Burial Chamber (Scheduled Monument CM177) (see Appendix B)**

### **Historic Setting**

6.2.1 Little is known about the circumstances of the construction of the Gelli Burial Chamber. There is no information available pertaining to the nature of the surrounding landscape at the time the burial chamber was built. Its location was undoubtedly carefully chosen, on a river terrace close to the upper Tywi river, in a sheltered valley floor position. The large stone slabs exposed in the top of the mound are evidently of local origin and match the stone outcropping on the hill which rises to the southeast.

6.2.2 The burial chamber appears to have been purposely sited on the edge of a steep scarp to overlook a broad, flat river terrace to the northwest and the Tywi river beyond. There are no good long views from the monument in any direction due to the steep and high hills which rise above this part of the Tywi Valley. It appears likely that the immediate landscape was of importance to those who built and used the Gelli Burial Chamber. It is possible that it was associated with a contemporary settlement in the area or was close to an important communications route through the hills of the district.

6.2.3 In 1940, W.F. Grimes suggested that the scarp-top location of the burial chamber may have been chosen to allow access into the monument upslope from the northwest. There is currently no archaeological evidence to support this theory.

### **Modern Setting**

6.2.4 The burial chamber would have been abandoned and forgotten in prehistoric times and was not recognised as a monument until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, consequently it has no historic record.

6.2.5 The landscape around the monument was improved and enclosed in post-medieval times, producing the modern fieldscape and scattered settlement pattern of farms and cottages. One of these settlements, Gelli Fechan farmstead, was established immediately adjacent to the monument in post-medieval times.

6.2.6 In modern times, tourism and leisure have become more important to this remote, rural area, especially since the nearby reservoir of Llyn Brienne was created in the early 1970s, which saw improvements made to the main road along the valley as the area achieved some popularity with day-trippers visiting the reservoir and dam. There is also some tourism here, and a small caravan park has existed at Gelli Fechan farm itself for many years.



6.2.7 The **significance of the scheduled monument** is drawn from each of the four heritage values.

- a) The evidential value of the Gelli Burial Chamber is considered to be High as it is in a relatively good state of preservation, despite suffering some damage to its above-ground structure and the changes which have occurred to the surrounding landscape.
- b) The historical value of the Gelli Burial Chamber is High in view of its rarity as the only credible Neolithic burial chamber in the wider region. Its existence points to the presence of a settled Neolithic community in the area.
- c) The aesthetic value of Gelli Burial Chamber is High due to its survival as an earthwork monument, with important elements still visible, such as the stones of the cairn body, some edging stones defining the chamber still visible in situ and some capstones, now out of position, exposed on top of the mound. Its position in the landscape is quite evocative also as it is possible to stand on the monument and appreciate the surrounding, dramatic, landscape and the relationship of the burial chamber with its natural surroundings.
- d) The communal value of the monument is Low as it is privately owned and not accessible to the public without permission. It is visible from the adjacent road, however. Visitors staying at the Gelli Fechan caravan park may have access to the monument in future, which would elevate the communal value of the monument to Moderate.

**7. Impacts on Setting Stage 3: Evaluate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.**

7.1 The surrounding landscape of the proposed development site is that of a small but well-established farmstead with a farmhouse and byre and one stone outbuilding at its core.

7.1.1 The land to the northeast of the farmyard area has been used seasonally as a small caravan park.

7.1.2 The proposed development is modest in scale and will not add any unusual smells or noises to the local environment.

7.1.3 The proposed development would be within the farmed landscape and would not be in a remote or wild situation.

7.1.4 Any additional artificial lighting would not represent a significant change to the local landscape where the existing farmhouse and farmyard already have lighting and where a small caravan park is also sited nearby.

7.1.5 The development would be expected to be in permanent use, as an enhancement to the existing farmhouse.

7.1.6 The development would not remove any existing historic environment features such as field boundaries. The existing access trackway and farmyard would be used.

**7.2 Gelli Burial Chamber (Scheduled Monument CM177) (see Appendix B)**

7.2.1 The proposed development would be focused on the existing farmhouse. Most of the modifications would be internal and not materially change the outward appearance of the building when viewed looking from, or towards, the scheduled monument.

7.2.2 A modern extension will be added to the northwest gable end of the farmhouse, the gable farthest away from the monument. This extension would not be visible from the monument as the existing farmhouse would block views and it will not be wider or higher than the existing building. It would be a modest, two-storey extension, and would cause a modest change in the appearance of the farmhouse when viewed from the west, including an arc from the south to the north. This change would not detract from views of the scheduled monument however and would not impact on any important views towards the monument.

**8. Impacts on Setting Stage 4:** *If necessary, consider options to mitigate or improve the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.*

- 8.1 There would be no significant adverse impacts arising from the proposed development on the setting of the Gelli Burial Chamber.
- 8.2 No archaeological mitigations are thought necessary in relation to the proposed development.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The proposed development will be focused on the existing farmhouse at Gelli Fechan. They are mostly internal modifications, with a modest extension also proposed.
- 9.2 The assessment has considered potentially impacts on the setting and significance of a single designated historic asset, namely the scheduled Neolithic Gelli Burial Chamber (CM177).
- 9.3 This assessment has found that there would be no physical impact on the scheduled Gelli Burial Chamber and no significant adverse impact on the setting or significance of the monument.
- 9.4 No mitigation is thought necessary in relation to the proposed development.

### **10.1 Bibliography**

Grimes, W.F., 1940, "A Newly Discovered Carmarthenshire Megalith" in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Vol.95, p.80-83.

Cadw, 2011, *Conservation Principles*.

Cadw, 2017, *Managing Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*.

### **10.2 Map Sources**

Ordnance Survey map, 1819, 1 inch to 1 mile Llandovery Sheet

Ordnance Survey, 1887, First Edition 1:2500 Carmarthenshire Sheet X.NW

Ordnance Survey, 1906, First Edition 1:2500 Cardiganshire Sheet XLIII.NW

Ordnance Survey, 1953, First Edition 1:2500 Cardiganshire Sheet XLIII.NW

Parish Tithe Map of Llanfair ar y Bryn, 1841

Parish Tithe Apportionment of Llanfair ar y Bryn, 1841

### **10.3 Online Sources**

British Geological Survey

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?> accessed 22/03/2022

Côf Cymru - <https://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/recordsv1/cof-cymru/?lang=en> accessed throughout the project

Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute (<http://landis.org/soilscapes>) accessed 22/03/2022

### **10.4 Aerial Photographs**

Photographs available on Google Earth from 2006, 2009, 2017 & 2020



## **Appendix A: Photographs**





Plate 1: GFN2022\_001. A view from the Gelli Burial Chamber, looking towards Gelli Fechan farm buildings. The Tywi river flows at the base of the wooded slope in the background. Looking north.



Plate 2: GFN2022\_002. A view from the Gelli Burial Chamber, looking across the recently improved access track in the foreground. The Tywi river flows at the base of the wooded slope in the background. Looking northeast.





Plate 3: GFN2022\_003. A view from the Gelli Burial Chamber, looking across the recently improved access track in the foreground. The Tywi valley is seen continuing northeastwards in the distance. Looking east-northeast.



Plate 4: GFN2022\_004. A view from the Gelli Burial Chamber, looking across the recently improved access track in the foreground. The Tywi valley is seen continuing northeastwards to the left, with the valley slope rising to higher ground to the right. Looking east-southeast.





*Plate 5: GFN2022\_005. A view from the Gelli Burial Chamber, looking along the recently improved access track in the foreground, leading to the main road, beyond which the ground rises to higher ground. Looking southeast.*



*Plate 6: GFN2022\_006. A view from the Gelli Burial Chamber, looking across the pasture field to the south, with the Tywi valley seen continuing southwards in the distance. Looking south.*





*Plate 7: GFN2022\_007. A view from the Gelli Burial Chamber, looking across the pasture field to the south, showing the scarps which divide the lower river terrace to the right from higher terraces to the centre and left. Looking southwest.*



*Plate 8: GFN2022\_008. A view from the Gelli Burial Chamber, looking across the pasture field to the southwest, showing the lower river terrace. The Tywi river flows at the base of the wooded slope in the background. Looking west.*





Plate 9: GFN2022\_009. A view from the Gelli Burial Chamber, looking at the buildings of Gelli Fechan farm and its yard. Looking north.



Plate 10: GFN2022\_010. A view of the farmhouse at Gelli Fechan, with the Gelli Burial Chamber to its right, seen clearly at the edge of the scarp. Looking northeast.





Plate 11: GFN2022\_011. A view towards the Gelli Burial Chamber. Looking northeast.



Plate 12: GFN2022\_012. A view of cairn material exposed on the northern side of the Gelli Burial Chamber. This was exposed when Grimes described the monument in 1940. It is possible that excavation into the northern side of the cairn and scarp to create a level area for Gelli Fechan farmhouse before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Looking south-southeast.





*Plate 13: GFN2022\_013. A view towards the Gelli Burial Chamber, which is seen to the left of the farm track. The roof of Gelli Fechan farmhouse is seen behind the cairn. The proposed development would extend the building away from the cairn, which would bring a modest change in the view but would not change the setting of the monument. Looking north-northwest.*



*Plate 14: GFN2022\_014. A view towards the Gelli Burial Chamber, which is seen beyond the farm track. Gelli Fechan farmhouse is seen to the right of the cairn. The proposed development would extend the building to the right, away from the cairn, which would bring a modest change in the view but would not change the setting of the monument. Looking west.*





*Plate 15: GFN2022\_015. A view towards Gelli Fechan farmhouse, with the Gelli Burial Chamber on the top edge of the scarp to the left of the house. The proposed development would extend the building to the right, away from the cairn, which would bring a modest change in the view but would not change the setting of the cairn. Looking southwest.*



*Plate 16: GFN2022\_016. A view of the Gelli Burial Chamber, with the roof of Gelli Fechan farmhouse behind. Looking north.*





Plate 17: GFN2022\_017. A view of the cap stones on top of the Gelli Burial Chamber, with the infilled chamber or cist to the right. In 1940, W.F. Grimes defined the chamber or cist of the tomb as including the large, edge set slab at the centre of this image, which defined its southern edge. Later descriptions by DAT and the RCAHMW see this large slab as a capstone. Looking northwest.



Plate 18: GFN2022\_018. A view of the cap stones on top of the Gelli Burial Chamber, with the infilled chamber or cist to the right, defined by the tops of edge set slabs protruding through the grass cover. Looking southwest.





Plate 19: GFN2022\_019. A view of the infilled chamber or cist on the Gelli Burial Chamber. These stones define the north and west end of the cist in modern descriptions of the monument made by DAT and the RCAHMW. Looking northwest.



Plate 20: GFN2022\_020. A view of the infilled chamber or cist on the Gelli Burial Chamber. This view shows that the scarp below the chambered cairn had been cut into before the 20<sup>th</sup> century to create a more level area for the byre attached to the farmhouse. Looking north-northwest.





*Plate 21: GFN2022\_021. A view of the northeastern side of the mound where the chambered cairn is located, where it has been cut by the farm trackway. The exposed material appears to be natural soil, gravel and pebbles, not cairn material. This suggests that the cairn may not have extended as far as the trackway, but only further archaeological evaluation could establish the true extent of the monument. Looking southwest.*

**APPENDIX B**

**SETTING ASSESSMENT NOTES  
STAGE 2 & STAGE 3**

**GELLI BURIAL CHAMBER**

**SCHEDULED MONUMENT CM177**

<b>Gelli Burial Chamber</b> <b>Scheduled Monument CM177</b> <b>Stage 2: How do the present surroundings contribute to our understanding and appreciation of the historic asset today?</b>	
<b>• Thinking about when the historic asset was first built and developed:</b>	
<p><b>What were its physical, functional and visual relationships with other structures/ historic assets and natural features?</b></p> <p><b>What topographic or earlier features influenced its location?</b></p> <p><b>What was its relationship to the surrounding landscape/ streetscape?</b></p>	<p>The monument is situated at the top a scarp defining the edge of a natural river terrace to the southeast of the River Tywi. It overlooks a broad, triangular terrace which runs down to the river itself. It may have been deliberately positioned to overlook this large, flat terrace, alongside the river. W.F. Grimes, who described the site in 1940, suggested that the siting of the monument may have been designed to allow access into the chambered tomb upslope from the direction of the present house, but no archaeological evidence exists to prove this theory.</p> <p>The site is relatively low-lying in this mountainous area, at circa 135 metres OD. High ground rises on all sides which means that there are no long-range views from the monument in any direction. Short views along the Tywi valley to the east-northeast and south-southwest do not appear to be of particular significance. It is possible that the monument stood close to a communications route along the valley in prehistory however.</p> <p>The monument is thought to be a Neolithic burial chamber, possibly a chambered cairn. It has been described in the past as being "megalithic" and as a "chambered tomb" and is not thought to belong to the cairn and cist building tradition of the Bronze Age. There are few nearby monuments of a comparable date or function, though it should be noted that a putative Bronze Age standing stone at Tynwydd (PRN 13381), approximately 680 metres to the east-northeast of Gelli, has been interpreted as a possible surviving element of a largely destroyed Neolithic</p>



	<p>chambered tomb. If so, this would strengthen the theory that a Neolithic community was settled in this district and that they chose this sheltered valley for burial sites. The Tynewydd stone was never intervisible with the Gelli Burial Chamber. In recent years a Neolithic chambered cairn has been recorded 13km to the northwest at Cerrig Clochesti near Llanddewi Brefi (RCAHMW NPRN 529508). Although this latter monument stands at 395 metres OD, it is also placed at the edge of a scarp, overlooking a stream and has large capstones which have been dragged to one side to reveal stone-lined chambers below.</p>
<p><b>Was it constructed to take advantage of significant views or to be a part of a significant view? Although there may be a 360-degree view, some areas of the view may be more significant than others.</b></p>	<p>As stated previously, it appears likely that the immediate landscape was of importance to those who built and used the Gelli Burial Chamber, with the view of the triangular river terrace to the northwest possibly of some significance. It seems most likely that the shelter of the valley was more important than views from the monument.</p>
<p><b>Has its function or use changed?</b></p>	<p>The monument was abandoned and forgotten in prehistory. In more recent centuries it appears to have been partially quarried away when the Gelli Fechan farmhouse was added to the northwest and the trackway leading to the farmyard was built to the east. Both the house and trackway were in place by the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.</p>
<p><b>What changes have happened to the surrounding landscape/ streetscape?</b></p>	<p>There is no evidence to help interpret the character of the surrounding landscape during the Neolithic period. In recent centuries the surrounding uplands have been used as grazing lands whilst a post-medieval field system has been laid out across the valley floor and lower slopes, with a scattered settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads and cottages.</p>

<b>Have changes happened because of changes to the historic asset or to its historical setting?</b>	Both. The changes to the landscape in post-medieval times have seen Gelli Fechan farmhouse appear, with its access track and field system, which have had a physical impact on the monument and also changed its setting.

<p><b>Has the presence of the historic asset influenced changes to the landscape, for example, where a monument has been used as a marker in the layout of a field enclosure?</b></p> <p><b>Has the presence of the historic asset influenced the character of the surrounding landscape /streetscape?</b></p>	<p>The presence of the monument does not appear to have had any influence on the siting of Gelli Fechan farmhouse or its field system, but the trackway which accesses the farmyard runs past the eastern edge of the cairn mound. This trackway clearly curves around the monument. It seems that the presence of the mound caused the track buildings to skirt its edge rather than cutting the trackway into the mound itself. It seems that little of the mound was actually lost on the eastern side as a result and the section now exposed at the edge of the track at the eastern side of the monument appears to show natural soils, gravels and cobbles of glacial or alluvial origin, rather than cairn material.</p>
<p><b>Have historic and designed views to and from the historic asset changed?</b></p>	<p>The character of the Neolithic landscape here is not known. It is evident that views to and from the historic asset must have changed in post-medieval times, as the landscape developed to its present condition, but there is no information to evaluate the impact of such changes at a very localised level. The setting of the monument would appear to have been relatively stable since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Gelli Fechan farmhouse to the northwest, its access track to the east, both set within the post-medieval fieldscape.</p>

<b>• Thinking about the original layout of the historic asset and its relationship to its associated landscape:</b>	
<p><b>Were these relationships designed or accidental?</b></p> <p><b>How did these relationships change over time?</b></p>	<p>It must be presumed that the choice of site for the Gelli Burial Chamber was a deliberate, conscious decision. The reasons for such a decision cannot be fully understood, but the valley floor setting and view over a broad river terrace seem to be important.</p> <p>Over time, the landscape matured and developed until the present fieldscape was created in post-medieval times, when the farmhouse of Gelli Fechan was added to the northwest of the monument partly interrupting views over the river terrace.</p>
<p><b>How do these relationships appear in the current landscape; are they visual or buried features?</b></p>	<p>They are visual features, associated with the development of the landscape over time.</p>
<p><b>• Are there other significant factors, such as historical, artistic, literary, place name or scenic associations, intellectual relationships (e.g. a theory, plan or design), or other non-visual factors such as sounds or smells that can be vital to understand the historic asset and its setting?</b></p>	<p>No known historical or artistic associations are known. The monument was not reported until 1938 and W.F. Grimes produced the first plan of the site and its immediate surroundings in 1940 (<i>Archaeologia Cambrensis</i>, Vol. 95, p.81). There are no non-visual factors of relevance.</p>

<b>Stage 2 should also identify the viewpoints from which the impact of the proposed change or development should be assessed, taking into account, for example:</b>	
<b>● views to, from and across the historic asset that were designed and developed when the historic asset was first created – for example, in the case of a defensive or ritual structure</b>	There is no evidence to determine which views from or towards the monument were important when it was first created. It is thought possible that its scarp-edge position means that it was situated to overlook the broad river terrace to the northwest. It may have had short to medium range views along the adjacent parts of the Tywi Valley also. These views can still be gained, although the construction of Gelli Fechan farmhouse by the early 19 <sup>th</sup> century partly interrupts the view to the northwest over the river terrace and is a part of the historic setting of the monument.
<b>● views to, from and across the historic asset which are linked with a time in its history – for example, a historic artistic depiction of the site</b>	There are no known views linked with a time in history or a specific artistic view.
<b>● important modern views to, from and across the historic asset – for example, popular visitor viewing points.</b>	<p>The monument is situated on private land and has no public access. It is visible, but not highly visible, from the country road which passes some 60 metres to the south-southeast.</p> <p>Good views of the monument can only be gained from the private land. The key views include close views from the southern side of the monument. Good views are also gained from the southwest, from where the relationship of the cairn mound with the scarp edge is best appreciated.</p> <p>Views from the river terrace to the west are reasonable, as are views from the opposite side of the access trackway to the northeast, although the latter is interrupted by the line of the trackway.</p>

	<p>It should be noted that the farmhouse already blocks views of the monument from the river terrace to the northwest and north, whilst the monument is visible or partially visible from the river terrace from the west-southwest and more visible from the southwest. The proposed extension to the northwest gable would not change these views as the extension is not higher or wider than the present building.</p> <p>The modern views from the monument are limited by the high ground rising to the west and the east, although pleasant views are gained along the immediate sections of the Tywi Valley. The river terrace to the west is partially visible, though interrupted by the roof of Gelli Fechan farmhouse. These views do not appear to contribute to a better understanding of the monument, other than to emphasise its sheltered, valley bottom situation.</p>
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<b>Stage 3: Evaluate the potential impact of change or development.</b>			
<b>POSSIBLE IMPACT</b>	<b>COMMENT</b>	<b>IMPACT ON SETTING</b>	<b>IMPACT ON SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORIC ASSET</b>
<b>The visual impact of the proposed change or development relative to the scale and location of the historic asset and its setting</b>	The proposed changes to Gelli Fechan will have no physical impact on the monument. The changes will be mostly internal or cosmetic and not visible from the monument and will not impede views of the monument. The addition of an extension to the northwest gable of the house will not be visible from the monument and will not impact on views of the monument – it will lengthen the house, but not raise its height or width.	None	None
<b>Whether the proposed change or development would dominate the historic asset or detract from our ability to understand and appreciate it — for example, its functional or physical relationship with the surrounding landscape and associated structures and/ or buried remains</b>	The alterations will not chance any of the key views of the monument and would not dominate it as they are internal, cosmetic or modest in terms of scale. They would not interrupt any of the present views from or to the monument or change views from it.	None	None

<p><b>The presence, extent, character and scale of the existing built environment within the surroundings of the historic asset and how the proposed change or development compares with this</b></p>	<p>The farmhouse and outbuildings of Gelli Fechan have stood to the northwest of the monument for at least two centuries and are the only buildings close by. The proposed alterations and extension to the house would not significantly change their scale or appearance and once completed there would be little detectable difference compared with the present views to or from the monument.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>The lifespan of the proposed change or development and whether or not the impact might be reversible</b></p>	<p>The addition of the extension to the northwest gable would be permanent and all other alterations long term. They would ensure that Gelli Fechan, itself part of the historic landscape and the historic setting of the monument, remains occupied and present in the landscape.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>The extent of tree cover, whether it is deciduous or evergreen, and its likely longevity</b></p>	<p>There no trees in close proximity apart from some hedgerow trees to the margins of the fields around the monument and natural tree cover on some nearby valley slopes. The development will have no impact on these.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>



<b>The impact of artificial lighting – for example, on night-time views</b>	There is already artificial lighting at the farmhouse and farmyard area. The development would not change this situation.	None	None
<b>The capability of a landscape setting to absorb change or new development without the erosion of its key characteristics</b>	The nature of the proposed changes is modest in scale and will simply alter or add to an existing building. There are no implications for the wider landscape.	None	None
<b>The impact of the proposed change or development on non-visual elements of the setting &amp; character of the historic asset, such as sense of remoteness, evocation of the historical past, sense of place, cultural identity or spiritual responses</b>	The proposed change will ensure that Gelli Fechan is retained as an occupied dwelling, part of the historic fabric of the locality.	Positive	None
<b>The impact of non-visual elements of the proposed change or development, such as the removal or addition of noises &amp; smell</b>	No new smells or noises will be added in association with the proposed development.	None	None
<b>Cumulative effect of the proposed change or development.</b>	The proposals are modest in scale and add to an existing building. There is no concern of cumulative impact.	None	None

*Proposed extension at  
Gelli Fechan, Rhandirmwyn, Carmarthenshire SA20 0PF  
Impact on Setting (Historic Environment)  
Planning Application: PL/03166 (Carmarthenshire)*