

DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENT IN WALES – A FRAMEWORK FOR STUDY, A STRATEGY FOR PROTECTION

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Introduction

Background

The study of deserted rural settlement in Wales could easily be characterised as marginal, both in that the resource is often best preserved around the periphery of the more productive land, and also in that these sites have, until recently, fallen outside the main areas of academic study. Certainly architectural historians have examined the remaining upstanding structures, for example *H. Hughes* and *H. L. North (1908)* and more recently *Peter Smith (1988)* and *Eurwin William (1986)*; and some historians, notably *Colin Gresham (1973)* and *Jones-Pierce (1972)*, have considered the documentary evidence. Historical geographers like *Glanville Jones (1973)* and *Della Hooke (1997)* have tried to relate this work to the features on the ground, and there has been a small number of archaeological excavations - the work of *Aileen Fox (1939)* and, more recently, *Anthony Ward (1997)* springs to mind.

Much of this, however, has been pioneering work carried out by a few committed individuals. Their achievements are actually very impressive but given their limited resources it is, perhaps, inevitable that the results are sporadic and tend to reflect particular interests. The more general neglect is difficult to explain and this is not the place to seek reasons. It is nevertheless worth reflecting that rural settlements of the pre-historic and Roman periods have long attracted archaeological interest in Wales, and studies of medieval fortification and industrial innovation are similarly well established. By contrast, we seem to be remarkably ignorant about many aspects of everyday rural activity in Wales as little as 200 years ago, let alone 500 or 1000 years back. It seems that even the most basic methods of husbandry are still matters of speculation rather than record.

Requirement for work

The situation is changing in Wales, as elsewhere, and several key factors are now much more widely acknowledged. In archaeological terms, large scale industrialisation is a very recent phenomenon, and even today the surface area of Wales - like the rest of Europe - is predominantly rural, and agriculture of various sorts still accounts for the largest single land use by area. At the same time pressure on the countryside is increasing at an alarming rate and there is greater public concern for the preservation of the landscape. This brings with it a desire - indeed a need - to understand the development of the rural landscape and the features, both historic and natural, which it contains.

There have also been radical social changes. During the first half of the present century there was a large rural population employed either directly or indirectly in agriculture. Much farming practice was common knowledge, not just to the rural population but also to many town-dwellers who had relations in the countryside or who helped out on farms during the harvest. In recent decades the farming industry has changed and the techniques of modern husbandry are now known only to a few. Farming practices of the past are no longer seen as commonplace or mundane, but rather as part of a lost rural idyll, and while we may deplore the sentiment we can only welcome the upsurge in popular interest.

Finally there are recent political changes. Rural life has always reflected regional variations, and as constitutional reform in Britain proceeds, and as Wales develops a new sense of identity, it is perhaps natural that attention will focus on aspects of the more recent past which marked Wales apart from its powerful neighbour to the east. The study of rural settlement will undoubtedly play a part and we need to be very conscious of the political constructions which might be placed on this.

Although the situation may be changing, there still remains uncertainty (and indeed ignorance) about the deserted rural settlements in our countryside and this does have consequences. We know that agriculture and afforestation over the last 50 years have destroyed many sites and that this destruction continues today. Much, if not most, of this damage is not malicious, but if the archaeological world has shown little interest then we can hardly be surprised if farmers and foresters are indifferent to the structures on their land which represent the remains of deserted settlements. Given the pressures on owners and tenants, deserted rural settlements must appear an unwelcome impediment.

This paper summarises the work funded by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, and carried out by three of the four regional Welsh Archaeological Trusts, on deserted rural settlements since 1995. The generic term 'deserted rural settlements', referring to uninhabited building units in the countryside, characterised by a rectangular, four-walled structure (with or without a platform or other associated features and without a period qualifier) was agreed early on and adopted by Cadw, the Welsh Archaeological Trusts and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments (Wales).

The role of Cadw

It was recognised some time ago that deserted rural settlements were under-represented on the schedule of monuments which enjoy statutory protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979. Field survey over the last decade has suggested that these monuments are also seriously under-represented on the regional sites and monuments records held by the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts.

The initial problem facing those concerned with statutory protection was the identification and selection of sites in this category which would meet the strict criterion of 'national importance' necessary for scheduling. If we are uncertain about function, date, status *etc.* it becomes very difficult to justify scheduling, particularly if selection is *ad-hoc* and is not based on a consistent set of more detailed criteria specifically developed for the monument type in question.

This was Cadw's particular problem, but taking a broader view, together with the Trusts, it was realised that protection through scheduling could only ever apply to the very small proportion of these sites which would meet the strict criteria, and that there would inevitably be a huge number of sites which could not be covered by statutory protection. It was against this background that Cadw agreed, in 1995, to fund a pilot project by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust to consider the deserted rural settlement sites within north-west Wales, the area covered by their sites and monuments record.

Development of the project

The objective of the pilot study was fourfold: to demonstrate a need for detailed and comprehensive work on the site type, to work towards a definition of the monument type, to develop a methodology for examining the sites, and to develop criteria for the selection of monuments of national importance for scheduling. The

Trust also intended to look at the threats faced by such sites and to consider ways of improving protection and preservation for these sites as a whole, given that the majority of threats appeared to be coming from works which do not require planning permission and are therefore beyond the scope of Planning Guidance (Wales), which has established procedures for dealing with archaeology within the planning process.

The pilot study took place in 1995-6 and Cadw then invited applications from the other Welsh Archaeological Trusts for similar work to look at the deserted rural settlements of their respective areas. In retrospect, Cadw has some reservations about allowing the Trusts considerable latitude in the nature of the projects it was prepared to fund. It did so on the grounds that there were likely to be regional variations which might demand a different approach, and also because, in some areas, the number of sites was likely to be so great that any attempt to visit even just the known sites would take so long that the project would become unmanageable within the available resources.

As work has progressed, two of the Trusts (Gwynedd and Clwyd-Powys, which cover the north-west and central-eastern parts of Wales respectively) have adopted a similar methodology (described more fully below), and will soon have visited all the known or suspected deserted rural sites already registered on their sites and monuments records. Cambria Archaeology (which covers the south-west quadrant of Wales) followed a more selective strategy, visiting a sample of sites in selected areas of interest.

The Trusts also developed their own academic objectives. Again the Gwynedd and Clwyd-Powys Trusts focused their efforts on sites likely to be medieval and early post-medieval (*i.e.* in general excluding structures which could be shown to be most probably 18th century or later). Cambria Archaeology, on the other hand, has tended to concentrate its studies on sites known to have been occupied in the 19th century.

Framework for study

Rapid condition survey in north-west Wales

The principal overriding aim of the various projects undertaken by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust under the umbrella of 'deserted rural settlement' since 1995 has been to gather information in a systematic way (for the first time in Wales) on this class of monument in order to be able to make qualitative decisions about sites within the class as part of the planning process, countryside management and so on.

The approach adopted towards any archaeological survey and evaluation project, of course, depends primarily on the end use of that survey. Although almost a thousand sites (then around 10 % of the total number of sites on the sites and monuments record) were recorded on the SMR in Gwynedd by the mid 1990s as some form of rectangular settlement (usually described as 'platform houses' or 'long huts' and presumed to be medieval in date), only eight had been excavated (the results of which were all fairly inconclusive), and no systematic analysis had been carried out of the existing, albeit limited, archaeological evidence. The Trust was finding it increasingly difficult to make qualitative decisions regarding the treatment of such sites in planning, development and general management terms, and felt that reliable, up-to-date, comprehensive information was needed in order to facilitate such decision-making. The project was therefore set up with four specific aims in mind: to visit all known sites which might fall within the category 'deserted rural settlement' (an early decision was made to drop any period classifier) and record certain information about them in a systematic manner; to develop a methodology for examining such sites elsewhere and in the future; to develop criteria for selection of sites for scheduling; and, perhaps most importantly, to look at the current condition of the sites and any threats to them, and consider ways of improving the protection and preservation of the sites as a class. For this reason, the project became known as the 'condition survey'.

However, over the past four years, the project has evolved and broadened out, and, in addition to the basic condition survey, rapid area surveys, detailed site planning and also limited trial excavation have taken place.

Results of the condition survey

Since 1995, more than 1200 sites have been examined by the Gwynedd Trust, some 900 of which were already known and had been identified from the SMR (the rest being new discoveries): this work covered the old counties of Caernarfonshire, Meirionnydd, and Anglesey. In the Clwyd-Powys area, the historic counties of Radnorshire, Flintshire, Montgomeryshire and Breconshire have been examined to a greater or lesser degree.

The archaeological information which has subsequently been recorded includes details of the character and construction of the sites; their relationships to other, nearby, sites; an assessment of the suitability of the sites for consideration for scheduling; and the condition of the sites and the likely and potential threats.

The work has confirmed that deserted rural settlement sites with visible remains are mainly to be found in areas of moorland and rough pasture beyond the limits of recent agricultural improvements, *i.e.* in upland or marginal areas. However, examples, usually isolated in field corners, do exist in agriculturally-improved areas, such as Anglesey. As the settlement pattern of the area in periods before the 19th century consisted mainly of dispersed dwellings (there is no real tradition of nucleated villages and towns beyond a few, mainly planted, medieval towns), there are no deserted medieval village-type concentrations of earthworks, and the remains of settlements are more easily and readily destroyed by later activities. This has in effect left us with recognisable sites concentrated largely in marginal areas: aerial photography and geophysical survey have yet to pick up ploughed-out remains on lower, improved land.

Deserted rural settlement sites are sometimes defined by a platform, usually terraced into the slope at 90 degrees, less often along the contour, which may or may not contain the remains of a rectangular, stone building. Sometimes they are defined by the remains of the stone building alone. The buildings are typically between 6m and 15m long, by 4m to 9m wide; they may also be represented by the remains of wood and clay/earth walls, but these cannot presently be recognised in the landscape. In both forms (*i.e.* with and without a platform) they may appear singly or in groups of from two to half a dozen or more, which could be described as loosely nucleated. Buildings may be associated with an enclosure, itself usually ovoid or D-shaped in plan, comprising a dry-stone wall or a bank and often without an obvious entrance. Less often they have been recorded as being in association with recognisable remnant field systems.

Many of these sites have subsequently been re-used (rebuilt) as sheepfolds or shelters, or even as field barns or later dwellings, and indeed some of them are still in use as such. This has in some cases tended to obscure and even destroy certain of the archaeological detail and evidence. Some sites exist in definite relationships with other site-types, most notably hut groups, hillforts and now-isolated medieval churches, and this may be significant in establishing a chronology for such sites, as well as in elucidating their precise socio-economic function.

Deserted rural settlement sites comprise both above ground and below ground remains, the latter being mainly foundations, floor levels, components and the remains of earlier structures. The extent to which the components of the sites has survived varies according to both the kinds of material originally used for building and the effects of post-medieval land use. The interiors of such sites, when investigated, have to date produced little artefactual or structural evidence. Hearths are one of the few common factors, but actual artefacts from sites in Gwynedd (as elsewhere in Wales) are rare. None so far recorded has retained evidence for the type of roofing used, although sketches of peasant dwellings from the post-medieval period suggest roof supports were probably thin poles, with the roof covering probably of turf.

These sites undoubtedly played a variety of specific roles in the general agricultural, economic and social *milieu* of their time: they may have served as temporary summer accommodation for herdsmen and their families involved in transhumance, or as permanently-occupied farmsteads; they may have been high status sites, or peasant dwellings; they may have formed more permanent nucleated settlements, such as townships (*treffi*). The nature of the subsistence base with which they were associated is not properly understood, though it undoubtedly contained elements of pastoral and arable farming.

The work carried out in different parts of Wales has emphasised the huge regional variety of form of deserted rural settlement, and many writers on the subject (*e.g.* *Gresham 1954*) have warned of the dangers of a too-detailed classification on the appearance of surface evidence alone. Therefore it is neither possible nor desirable to attempt a detailed classification at this stage without undertaking a long-term, well-structured programme of trial excavation designed to answer a series of important questions. However, it has been possible for the Trusts and Cadw, with support from the Royal Commission, to agree on a number of general terms which can be used to describe individual settlement units. This has allowed general discussion about, and compari-

son of, sites at a national level, probably for the first time. However, the overall characterisation of settlement types and patterns, probably based on degrees of nucleation, must be one of the subjects to tackle next.

Results of rapid search survey

In 1997-8, the Gwynedd Trust also undertook two rapid area surveys in Caernarfonshire, where it had already carried out a condition survey, and where the field evidence suggested that wider fieldwork might have fruitful results. Fieldwalking in one of the areas, around Castell in the Conwy valley, an area which has been the subject of a considerable amount of documentary research in recent years (*e.g. Hughes 1940; Gresham 1965*), more than doubled the number of known sites (from seventeen to thirty-six), and in addition recorded a further fourteen possible sites.

Of particular interest here were two nucleated groups of sites which appeared to be associated with a large area of denuded field banks and rubble walls, irregular in pattern, which pre-dated the modern (or, at least, currently-used) dry-stone-walled fields in the area. Better-preserved, straighter, low stone-banked field walls (possibly 16th century) appeared to overlie these in places, giving a starting point for trying to establish a relative chronology for these sites. A number of probable *hafodau* (temporary dwelling sites associated with transhumance), all with associated enclosures, were located at high, desolate altitudes along the sides of the valley, typically on exposed, sloping ridges adjacent to streams. Interestingly, these sites showed evidence for different periods of use, as dry-stone *hafodau* were seen to overlie stone and earth platforms with low rubble or stone-faced walling. It is possible that the later dry-stone structures were *hafodau* associated with 16th-century or later farms that were established further down the valley. We should perhaps, associate *hafodau* not with exclusively upland areas, but see them as allowing for the seasonal exploitation of unenclosed marginal areas.

Della Hooke (1997) had previously stated that *Permanent settlement undoubtedly reached higher levels at several periods in the past but few of the observed long hut sites can be correlated with documentary evidence. Neither do they bear any relationship to later field-names or references to later known hafodydd.* This fieldwork appeared to show that many upland/marginal deserted rural settlement sites and their associated features, at least in this part of the Conwy valley, pre-date areas of identified 16th-century enclosure, and were perhaps already abandoned by that time.

Results of trial excavation

A third strand of the project has been the partial excavation of a number of sites, partly to establish the levels of threat posed to sites by different forces such as ploughing, dumping, vehicle erosion, stream erosion, cattle poaching and so on, and partly, obviously, to try to answer specific questions regarding the date, economy and use of the sites. Due to time and other constraints, only the upper levels of the sites could be examined in any detail.

The main context for the preservation of finds appears to be the living floor inside the structure, but other contexts (especially in midden dumps outside the structure, or the hood above sites) have revealed some material where they have been excavated. The potential for environmental evidence from sites has not yet been adequately assessed, although samples have been taken from areas adjacent to sites, rather than from sites themselves. All the excavated sites have proved very difficult to date, and only one of our excavations produced any dating evidence. That site, partway up the Llanberis pass in Snowdonia, produced charcoal from three contexts which has been dated: one sample from a buried land surface below the hood above the site and which might give a date for the construction of the bank produced a date of cal. AD 1260; another from below the slab floor inside the house, possibly relating to the first phase of use, produced a date of cal. AD 1655; while a third sample from a small pit stratigraphically earlier than a partition wall of the second phase of the house produced a date of cal. AD 1175. These results are particularly interesting as, in its latest phase, the site had been used as a shelter within living memory.

Deserted rural settlement in south-west Wales

Cambria Archaeology (formerly Dyfed Archaeological Trust) approached the problem of deserted rural settlement with the intention of using cartographic and historical sources to make as much sense as possible of the distribution and function of DRS sites, which form a major portion of the archaeological resource in the region (both in upland and lowland contexts). It shied away from the notion of studying medieval settlement, believing that the identification of post-mediaeval settlements would open avenues of research which could ultimately lead to a better understanding of the deserted rural settlement resource in its entirety.

The first three years of work focused on a total of 18 separate study areas in upland contexts in the three counties of south-west Wales - Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. A deliberate emphasis was placed on identifying and appreciating sites of 18th- and 19th-century date and drawing attention to the fact that many sites which had been assumed to be mediaeval *hafodau* could be demonstrated to have been occupied into the mid-18th or early 19th centuries (or even later) and to be associated with shepherding, peat cutting or even industrial pursuits (such as lead mining or lime burning). It was felt that an important chapter in the social and economic history of the Welsh nation was being overlooked by simply assuming that all deserted settlements in the region's uplands were medieval or ancient. Documentary sources and oral evidence exists to show this to be untrue and the need for Welsh archaeologists to remember the 500 years of settlement history since the end of the mediaeval period has been underlined by Cambria's approach.

The fieldwork element of the project has gradually helped to expose a clearer picture of the main types of deserted rural settlement found in the region and effort has been put into helping to standardise the terminology employed to describe settlements and their associated features. Briefly, the characteristic site types include, firstly, deserted post-medieval farmsteads (many of which may have medieval origins); secondly, numerous upland shepherding stations known as '*lluestau*' (mostly of unknown origin but certainly flourishing between the 17th and 19th centuries; sometimes the *lluest* is referred to as a *domus lactarius* in contemporary documents and it is likely that sheep were milked, rather than cattle, something which is also confirmed in modern oral testimony); and thirdly, the cottages of post-medieval agricultural labourers and industrial workers.

Whereas each of these site types can be identified from post-mediaeval documents or cartographic sources, the search for medieval or earlier settlement is problematical due to poor historical sources and a dearth of archaeological excavation on contender sites. In the regional uplands, the medieval *hafod* is known in name only and it remains impossible to identify with certainty any site associated with the transhumant *hafod a hendre* system embodied in medieval Welsh law and tradition. The existence of many *hafod* place-names on the mountains and their fringes is suggestive of the seasonal settlement and use of the upland pastures in this manner, but the correlation of the placename and archaeological remains rarely seems possible.

During the fourth year of the project, Cambria Archaeology selected three new study areas in lowland contexts. The historical record for lowland areas is markedly better in most of south-west Wales and this has opened up the possibility of considering the effect of demographic changes since the 16th century on settlement patterns and population density of select study areas and, in consequence, on their archaeological record. The fact that between the mid-16th and 18th centuries many areas saw a doubling of their population, and a further doubling between the 18th and mid-19th centuries, indicates that there was a considerable increase in the numbers of dwellings in most parishes during the post-mediaeval period. Fascinatingly, where records exist, it is also apparent that the principal farms in the 16th century largely survive as occupied settlements today. (This incidentally, is also true parts of Gwynedd where similar work has also been carried out, for example on the Llyn peninsula.) The bulk of the deserted settlement sites in the study areas appear to be the homes of the agricultural labourers or the rural peasantry; poorly constructed homes which often appeared to be of relatively recent date.

A strategy for protection

Scheduling

All eight criteria used in the selection of monuments of national importance apply to deserted rural settlement sites. The study by the Gwynedd Trust considered that the most relevant criteria are survival/condition, potential, documentation (either archaeological or historical) and fragility/vulnerability: group value, diversity, period and rarity are probably less relevant. With deserted rural settlement sites, where the diversity of types and forms (and probably chronology) of settlement, even at a regional level, is an important factor and must be preserved as an attribute in itself, the matter of professional judgement is, perhaps, of greatest importance.

Due attention must also be given to factors not taken into account by these criteria but which are considered relevant. Such factors may include, as well as regional diversity, morphological peculiarities, aspects of location and situation and the presence of unusual components. Where significant non-contemporary associations can be demonstrated, for example between rectangular structures and earlier hut groups, there may be grounds for considering the site as being of national importance. Only in certain areas will the conditions be right for the survival of environmental evidence. Special consideration may also need to be given to sites existing unusually in non-marginal contexts.

In summary, the most important factors in selecting sites for enhanced protection probably include absence of later disturbance (which might have removed archaeological deposits); clarity of outline in, and completeness of, the buildings themselves; the presence of associated features which can establish a wider landscape context; evidence for lengthy occupation; and the existence of relevant documentary material.

General management

It has been recognised that while scheduling may be appropriate to some sites in some circumstances, it is not always the most effective or desirable means of achieving protection. Protection now means much more than simply scheduling, and current concepts relating to this are management and sustainability.

By their very definition, we are dealing with sites in a rural context where the main threats to the resource lie outside the planning process, which now has relatively well-established procedures for dealing with archaeology. The management of the rural historic environment is directly linked with the rural economy and rural communities, and a more imaginative, flexible approach to conservation is therefore required. The approach the Gwynedd Trust, and others, is endeavouring to take, and this is not restricted to deserted rural settlement, is based on seeing the historic environment as presenting a series of opportunities, which can create management possibilities rather than impediments. The Trust is working to promote archaeology as part of an all-encompassing approach to rural issues whereby the historic environment takes its place alongside the natural environment, and is managed, conserved and appreciated as part of an holistic approach to the landscapes of Wales. Deserted rural settlement is an important part of the historic environment, but it is only a part.

The survey has shown that the vast majority of the sites lie on agricultural land which can be identified as belonging to a specific farmer, and it is quite clear that the principal means of securing future protection for many, if not most, archaeological sites in a rural context lies in talking about them to the people who own them. The survey has allowed close contact with farmers and other owners. Archaeologists have been able to draw attention to those odd walls and funny platforms and bumps in the corner of the field, and explain why they may be important. This is easily the most cost-effective means of management. The simple expedient of drawing attention to a feature will go a long way towards ensuring that that site will be looked after (or at least not destroyed through ignorance). The fact that someone has shown an interest and is seen to care stirs an interest in the farmer, and this is the first step. Good management starts with caring.

Archaeologists should endeavour to instil a sense of custodianship. As Graham Harvey wrote recently in *The killing of the countryside* *The farmer with a sense of custodianship for the land is unquestionably better for the environment than the farmer whose chief concern is to exploit the land for short-term gain* (Harvey 1996).

The point of sustainability is that it promotes change which meets the needs of the future whilst retaining the integrity of the historic environment. In order to achieve this, decisions have to be made about the relative importance of different elements of that environment. Traditionally, evaluation has been based on individual sites, with particular examples being selected for special protection (scheduling). However, it is the sum total of archaeological features and their complex inter-relationships, not individual sites, which give landscape its grain and underlying character and importance, and it is often the more ordinary features that create local distinctiveness. In order to ensure that decisions about the future of the historic environment are made on a secure basis, sound information needs to be gathered. Systematic and comprehensive site type survey, of the kind described in this paper, provides historic environment audits on which decisions of this kind can be made.

It is beyond the remit of this paper to list the details of all the countryside and landscape initiatives to which Cadw and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts, as archaeological advisors and managers, are now major contributors, but include the work of Unitary Authorities (unitary development plans, countryside strategies, wardening services, economic development strategies, biodiversity action plans, access and leisure strategies); Forestry Commission (Woodland Grant Schemes and Forest Design Strategies); Countryside Council for Wales (local distinctiveness initiatives, nature reserve management plans); the Environment Agency (local environment action plans, river catchment management plans); as well as a whole range of landscape conservation and enhancement projects and environmental educational programmes. Archaeology and the historic environment has a role to play in all of these, which is where the need for an imaginative and flexible approach comes in.

Even in these days of developer-funding much archaeological work is still funded by central government and that means, ultimately, the taxpayer. Accountability is critical and we need to demonstrate in a far more accessible way what it is we do with that money. We need the support of the wider population if we are to win our argument.

That does not mean we should simplify or trivialise our work: we must simply make a much greater effort to communicate to the wider non-archaeological world something of the excitement we feel for our subject. This is not only common sense if archaeology is to advance with popular support and public funds, it is also vital to the practical preservation of monuments in the field. How can we expect a farmer to care for an archaeological site if we make no effort to provide information on its significance directly to the very person who has responsibility for its day to day management?

Cadw is taking steps in that direction with its *Caring for ...* series of booklets aimed, not at archaeologists, but at those involved with planning, policy and management. One has been produced on coastal archaeology and it is intended that others on the slate industry and churches are produced during the coming year. A similar booklet on deserted rural settlement will follow. However, we should not limit ourselves to booklets: the farming press, local media, panel exhibitions at agricultural shows *etc.* all help spread the message that these sites are important and worth saving, and that individual landowners have a vital role to play.

Parallel with this is the intention to draw together some of the results of the work programme carried out by the Trusts into a larger publication. This is still under discussion and the initial study is not yet complete, but ultimately the presentation of our subject is what will ensure that we advance our knowledge and also that the resource survives for future study.

Finally, archaeologists in Wales are also now more directly involved in providing information to and advising farmers, and large corporate landowners such as industrial companies, water or electricity companies, the forestry industry and the National Trust. The initiative which has the greatest potential for enabling successful management (and protection) of the rural archaeological resource is probably the new all-Wales agri-environment scheme, known as Tir Gofal.

This was ratified in February, 1999, and will offer payments to farmers who carry out work on a whole farm basis, to conserve existing wildlife and habitats, create new habitats, protect landscapes including historic features and promote new access opportunities for people to enjoy the Welsh countryside. It is likely that around 600 agreements will be made with farmers in the first year, based on the budget allocated. The positive management of the historic environment is a major part of this new scheme, and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts are directly involved in supplying information and advice to project officers and landowners. The incorporation of detailed information, such as that supplied by our recent work, in these whole farm management schemes should ensure that sites and remains ranging in importance from local to national can all receive protection from potentially damaging farming practices or potentially harmful neglect.

With the advent of this scheme and others, it seems likely that, in the future, most deserted rural settlement sites will be conserved and managed through predominantly non-archaeological forms of landscape designation and management. We, as archaeologists, therefore need to engage with these others in creating a

vision and achieving a balance between conservation and economic development. If we are to achieve a sustainable future for archaeology, we require a shift from reactive and protectionist measures towards more creative, proactive management strategies. Above all, we must recognise that fostering awareness and interest amongst landowners and managers, and encouraging public support, are the most important long-term investments we can make.

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DORFWÜSTUNGEN IN WALES – STUDIENRAHMEN UND DENKMALPFLEGESTRATEGIE

L'HABITAT RURAL DÉSSERTÉ EN WALES – LA BASE D'ÉTUDE, UNE STRATÉGIE POUR LA PROTECTION

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