

Our ref. AWI21_03

17th June 2021

Dear Louise,

Re. Ancient Woodland Inventory Enquiry, Frenni Fawr

Thank you for your enquiry and submitted report proposing that woodland at Frenni Fawr be included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, AWI. The ancient woodland panel has considered the information you provided and analysed historic mapping and photographs.

The conclusion of the panel is that the woodland at Frenni fawr does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the AWI for the following reasons:

The definition of ancient woodland is a woodland site that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600. Unfortunately, there is not a comprehensive record of woodland across Wales from that date. Therefore, the AWI uses the earliest high quality maps that provide complete coverage across Wales. These are the 1st county series ordnance survey maps dating from the late 1800s. The first AWI of the 1980s used reprints of the first edition 1" OS maps these maps in a manual process of identifying potential ancient woodlands. In 2011 FCW and CCW published a revision of the inventory that was developed using digitised versions of the OS 1st Edition county series maps. This allowed woodlands as small as 0.5ha to be identified and included and these maps more accurately identified the boundaries of woodlands than the 1" maps.

The criteria for inclusion in the AWI are that the woodland was present on the 1st edition county series maps, has not undergone significant periods of another land-use and is still woodland. If a site has an alternative land-use for two or more consecutive revisions of the historic map series (known as Epochs) then it is removed from the inventory.

Whilst the report by the Frenni Fawr Research Group cites historic references to oak woodland there is also a clear history of the site being used for pasture over several centuries.

- On the tithe map of 1844 the area in question is within 4 fields that are recorded as pasture or arable/pasture, see maps in appendix 1.
- The 1st series map of 1889 shows the area as Furze and rough pasture with occasional brushwood. The occurrence of trees is not sufficient to record the site as woodland in the 2011 AWI.
- Subsequent revisions of the county series show the site as rough pasture and furze with bushes until 1980 when it is shown as having broadleaved trees across the site. See appendix 2 for notes on the site in the various historical maps.

As the site is predominantly open for 4 consecutive Epochs it is likely that there are few, if any, remnant ancient woodland features present.

The presence of only a small number of ancient woodland indicator species suggests that the long period of use as pasture has resulted in the loss of ancient woodland flora. In 'Identifying Ancient woodland in Wales – the role of the Ancient woodland Inventory, historical maps and indicator species, CCW Science report No. 0819' Castle et al note that the opinion of several contributors was that 'vascular plants which are generally associated with, or restricted to, ancient woodland elsewhere in Britain, may be less faithful to ancient woodland in Wales, particularly in the west'. They found that *Vaccinium myrtillus* and *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* did not appear on ancient woodland indicator species lists for West Wales, *Viola riviniana* was not on any lists for Wales.

We note that there is a holding to the South of the site called Bryn Derw, Oak Hill, presumably named after the hill opposite. The holding is not present before 1907 but the use of this name suggests the presence of trees at some point.

Due to the history of non-wooded land-use evidenced by the tithe maps and OS county series this site does not meet the criteria for inclusion on the ancient woodland inventory. The current woodland appears to have established from the scattered trees or brushwood at some point in the twentieth century as indicated by Jon Hudson's study of tree size and age rings in his paper Frenni fawr - an Extreme Example of Grazed "Upland" Oak wood and should be regarded as secondary woodland. It does have biodiversity value as a rare example of upland oak woodland in Pembrokeshire and historically appears to have been Wood Pasture, an important habitat in its own right. We are currently considering how we might map historic Wood Pasture.

Thank you for raising this query with us. The inventory as published should be regarded as provisional and we welcome enquiries and information that will enable us to improve the dataset.

Yours sincerely

Chris Tucker

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Appendix 1

WelshTithe maps

Map of the parish of Penrith, including the chapelry of Castellan, in the County of Pembroke 1844



Field Names and Land use on area of Frenni fawr oak woodland site

- 304 Pasture
- 394 Pasture
- 396 Pasture
- 397 Arable pasture

Appendix 2

Landmark Epoch	Map Series/ Category Name	Scale/s	Publishing Date Range	Notes for Frenni Fawr
Epoch 1	County Series Survey	1:2,500	1854-1901	Furze, rough pasture with occasional brushwood
		1:10,560 ("6 inch to the mile")	1846-1899	Furze, rough pasture with occasional brushwood
Epoch 2	County Series 1st Revision	1:2,500	1893-1915	-
		1:10,560 ("6 inch to the mile")	1888-1914	-

Epoch 3	County Series 2nd Revision	1:2,500	1906-1939	Rough pasture, furze and bushes
		1:10,560 ("6 inch to the mile")	1903-1949	Rough pasture, furze and bushes
Epoch 4	County Series 3rd Revision	1:2,500	1924-1949	-
		1:10,560 ("6 inch to the mile")	1922-1969	Rough pasture, furze and bushes
Epoch A5	National Grid overhaul and re-survey (Edition A)	1:2,500	1943-1995	-
Epoch i5	National Grid Imperial "6 inches to the mile" First Editions	1:10,560	1948-1977	Rough pasture, furze and bushes
Epoch i6	National Grid Imperial "6 inches to the mile" 1st revision	1:10,560	1949-1981	Woodland (Open) with bushes
Epoch i7	National Grid Imperial "6 inches to the mile" 2nd revision	1:10,560	1959-1982	Broadleaved woodland (open)