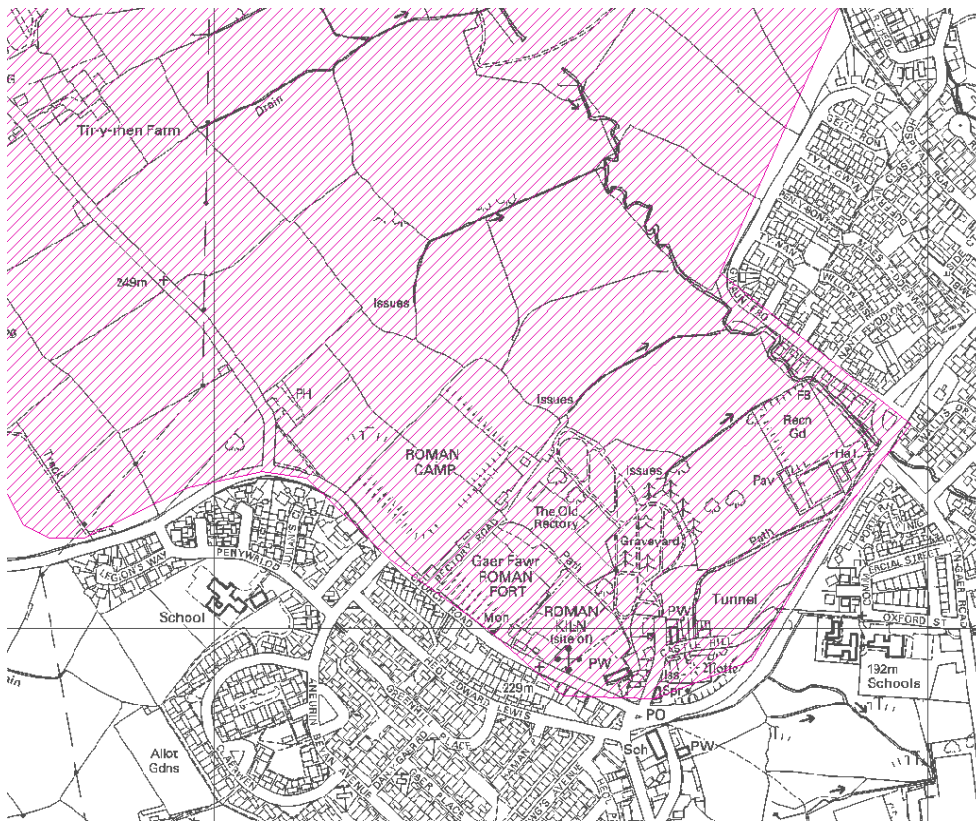


GELLIGAER COMMON HISTORIC LANDSCAPE OF SPECIAL INTEREST



Gelligaer Common
Reference number: HLW (MGI) 4
OS map: Landranger 161, 171
Unitary authority: Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil
<p>The Common and the area lying immediately to the south east which is included here, is about 8km long and 1km wide and extends from the pivotal ancient settlement of Gelligaer in the south east to the summits of Pen Garnbugail and Mynydd Fochriw in the north west.</p> <p>The ridgetop occupied by the Common rises gently from about 250m at Gelligaer to over 470m at the rounded summits of Pen Garnbugail and Mynydd Fochriw. However, on either side of the Common, and outside the area described here, the hillsides drop steeply into Cwm Bargoed on the west and into the valley of the Bargoed Rhymni on the east, tributaries to the major South Wales valleys of the Taf and Rhymni.</p> <p>The area varies considerably, from the moorland plateau of the Common in the north west, with isolated farms and improved, enclosed pasture on its western and eastern flanks, to the enclosed farmland of the south east and the pleasant rural village of Gelligaer, which is now adjacent to the primarily industrial urban landscape of the Rhymni valley.</p> <p>The landscape is diverse both in its form and in its archaeological and historical content, which displays a remarkable continuity of occupation. The landscape of the Common to the north west of Gelli-gaer contains a rich diversity of archaeological sites, demonstrating a long continuity of human occupation and activity. In the millennia before the Roman period, prehistoric activity is well-represented by Bronze Age burial and ritual sites, of which a notable concentration occurs on Pen Garnbugail, and by hut sites and settlements of the succeeding Iron Age.</p>
<p>Principal area designations</p> <p>The area includes: Capel Gwladys, Fforest Gwladys Roman earthwork, Gelli-gaer Roman site, platform houses on east side of Gelli-gaer Common, Twyn Castell Scheduled Ancient Monuments; Gelligaer Conservation Area.</p>
<p>Contents and Significance</p> <p>The area of Gelli-gaer Common represents a rich and increasingly rare upland landscape in South East Wales, having numerous distinct foci of settlement representing continuity of land use and activity from the prehistoric period to the recent past.</p> <p>The area includes:</p> <p>Bronze Age funerary and ritual monuments; Iron Age hut settlements; a Roman fort and associated features including a Roman road and military practice-camps; a medieval earthwork castle and a significant concentration of medieval platform houses which include some of the first examples of the type to be archaeologically excavated in Wales.</p>