

**ST CYNLLO'S CHURCH,
LLANGYNLLO, CEREDIGION:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
(SN 35218 43940)**



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Wendy Campion Ceredigion County
Council



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RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2011/31
RHIF Y PROSIECT / PROJECT RECORD NO. 100748

Gorfennaf 2011
July 2011

ST CYNLLO'S CHURCH, LLANGYNLLO, CEREDIGION: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Gan / By

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SUMMARY

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned by Wendy Campion, Ceredigion County Council Access and Rights of Way Team Leader to undertake an archaeological watching brief during investigatory excavations within Sy Cynllo's churchyard to reveal a flight of steps forming part of public footpath 71/28.

The excavations confirmed the presence of the flight of steps which were found to have been infilled with modern debris much of which may relate to restoration work undertaken on the church building during 1996. The flight of steps is considered to date from the latter part of the 19th century and is likely to have been constructed when the present church building was built.

A number of 19th century decorative ironwork grave furniture fragments were recovered from the modern infilling, along with two dressed sandstone blocks, which were probable former window sills.

No human burials or archaeological remains of medieval or earlier date were revealed during the course of the watching brief, with only the modern infill material being excavated.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

1.1.1 A request was made by Wendy Campion, Ceredigion County Council Access and Rights of Way Team Leader, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during investigatory excavations, within the churchyard of St Cynllo's church, to reveal a flight of steps that lie on the route of public footpath 71/28 (NGR SN 35218 43940). The excavations were undertaken as part of Phase 1 of a programme of repair and maintenance works on the route of footpath 71/28.

1.2 Scope of the Project

1.2.1 The site of the flight of steps lies within the boundaries of St Cynllo's church yard which has the potential to date from the early medieval period and was also the site of a later medieval church. The potential for archaeological remains and human remains to be located in the area was considered to be high, as well as evidence for earlier structures associated with the churchyard.

1.2.2 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust prior to the commencement of the works, which was approved by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor . The WSI stated that the project objectives were:

- Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology by which Dyfed Archaeological Trust will address the planning condition placed on the proposed development;
- To monitor groundworks in order to identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits;
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed groundworks;
- To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the groundworks; and
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

1.2.3 The overall aim of the work was to undertake archaeological attendance during the proposed groundworks at the site that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy archaeological remains, and undertake appropriate investigation and recording of any such remains if revealed.

1.3 Report Outline

1.3.1 This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background, and provides a summary and discussion of the archaeological evaluation and its results.

1.4 Abbreviations

1.4.1 Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record¹ (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services – DAT-FS; Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI.

1.5 Illustrations

1.5.1 Photographic images are to be found at the back of the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale.

1.6 Timeline

1.6.1 The following timeline is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text (Table 1).

| Period | Approximate date | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Palaeolithic – | c.450,000 – 10,000 BC | Prehistoric |
| Mesolithic – | c. 10,000 – 4400 BC | |
| Neolithic – | c.4400 – 2300 BC | |
| Bronze Age – | c.2300 – 700 BC | |
| Iron Age – | c.700 BC – AD 43 | |
| Roman (Romano-British) Period – | AD 43 – c. AD 410 | Historic |
| Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period – | c. AD 410 – AD 1066 | |
| Medieval Period – | 1066 – 1536 | |
| Post-Medieval Period ² – | 1536 – 1750 | |
| Industrial Period – | 1750 – 1899 | |
| Modern – | 20th century onwards | |

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales

¹ Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo SA19 6AF.

² The post-medieval and industrial periods are combined as the post-medieval period on the Regional Historic Environment Record as held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust

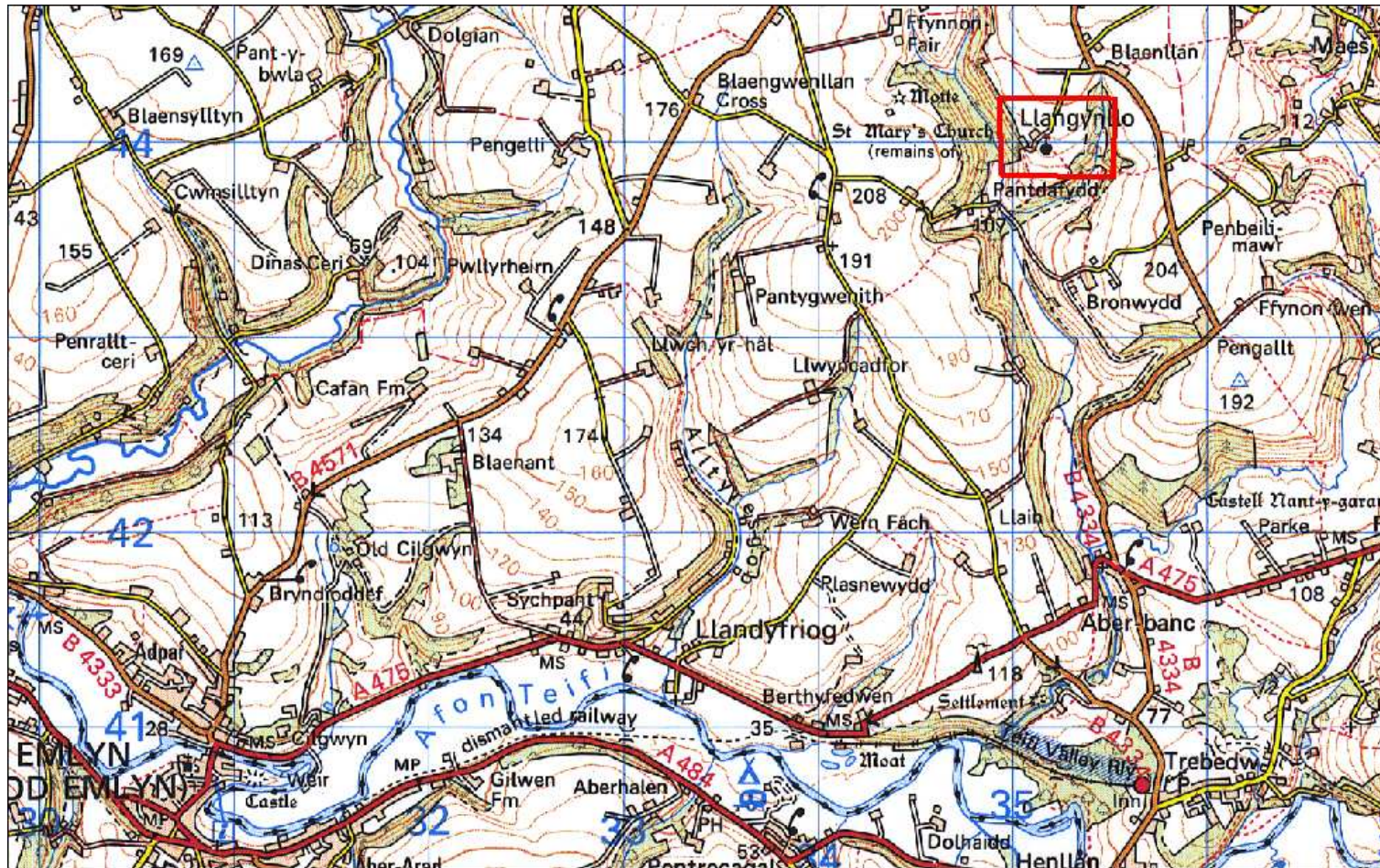


Figure 1: Site Location map of watching brief site from the Ordnance Survey

Reproduced from the 2003 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location

2.1.1 St Cynllo's Church (NGR SN 3521 4394) lies on an unclassified road to the south west of the B4334 road between Aberbanc and Penrhiw Pal. The church is located on a hill top and lies within a raised subcircular churchyard.

2.1.2 The churchyard is bounded on the north by Glebe Farm whilst to the west lies the Old Rectory. The east and south sides are bounded by fields which lie on the south side slope towards a small valley.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

2.2.1 The excavation area lies within close proximity to six known sites of archaeological interest recorded on the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Regional Historic Environment Record (Table 2).

| PRN | Site Name | Description | NGR |
|-------|---|---|----------------|
| 10424 | St Cynllo Dedication | Record deleted during Cadw Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites Project PRN 44753. Record now merged with PRN 50148. | SN 352 439 |
| 12665 | Llangynllo Parish Church; St Cynllo's | Medieval parish church, which was entirely re-built in 1870 (as post-medieval PRN 16053) in the same location, and on the foundations as its predecessor, which itself was a rebuilt church of 1810, but nothing was retained from the earlier fabric. | SN 3519 4394 |
| 16053 | St Cynllo's (see photo 1) | Post-medieval Building Built in 1867-70 by John Middleton of Cheltenham architect to replace an earlier 1810 church. listed building II* | SN 351874 3946 |
| 50148 | Llangynllo Parish Church; St Cynllo's | Medieval, Early Medieval Earthwork . Early medieval D site, ie. possible early medieval origins. Churchyard occupied by the medieval Llangynllo parish church PRN 12665, which was entirely (re-) built in 1810 and 1870 as post-medieval PRN 16053. It was not listed in the 'Taxatio' of 1291 | SN 3519 4394 |
| 57807 | Bronwydd Enclosure W of Llangynllo Church (see photo 2) | Post-medieval Grade II listed enclosure around vault ³ | SN 35152 43931 |
| 57808 | The Old Rectory | Post-medieval Grade II listed house rectory | SN 35113 43936 |

Table 2: Known archaeological interests in close proximity to the development site

2.2.2 The present St Cynllo's Church (PRN 16053; grade II* listed building) was constructed at a cost of £2200 between 1868 and 1870, to a design by architect John Middleton of Cheltenham. A large portion of the cost of the church building was paid for by the Lloyd and Tyler families of Bronwydd Mansion and Mount Gernos respectively (Whatmore 1998, 9).

2.2.3 It is known that at least two earlier churches have occupied the site. The predecessor to the present structure was built in 1810 and is recorded in 1833 as being a '*neat edifice*' consisting of a nave and chancel (Lewis, 1833). The 1810 church replaced a medieval structure that once stood on the site. The regional HER records that no fabric was retained from these earlier churches when the present building was constructed. However, there is some indication that the tower pre dates the present structure and may be a remnant of the medieval church⁴.

³ The vault was recently opened to inter the remains of Hyacinthe Hawkesworth, Lady Marcher of Cemaes.

⁴ www.churchplansonline.org.uk (listing for Llangynllo)

2.2.4 Little is known of the medieval church that occupied the site. A church was present on the site in 1291 when it is recorded in the *Taxatio* as '*Ecclesia de Lankenlan*' with an assessed value of £5 6s 8d. No details of a monastic or ecclesiastical patron are included with the assessed value suggesting the church was held by a private individual⁵. The church is not recorded in any of the surviving *Episcopal Acta* issued by the Bishops of St David's between the years 1085 and 1280 (Barrow, 1998).

2.2.5 The dedication of the church to St Cynllo, a saint of the 'Celtic' church as opposed to one of the pre Reformation Catholic saints may indicate that the church and its surrounding graveyard may have early medieval origins.

2.2.6 The excavation area lay on the south east boundary of the church yard and was marked by a partially blocked gateway in the church yard wall. Late 19th and early 20th century mapping of the area shows a northwest – southeast aligned pathway following the existing field boundary before connecting with a further pathway running southwest – northeast connecting the properties of Pantdafydd (NGR SN 3487 4369) and Cwm Bach (now abandoned) (NGR SN 3547 4388). From Cwm Bach the path heads northwards and terminates opposite the former Sunday school building (NGR SN 3543 4436). There is a local tradition that the path was used by the servants of Bronwydd Mansion to walk to the church to attend services.

⁵ <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/taxatio/db/taxatio/printbc.jsp?benkey=DA.CG.SA.05>

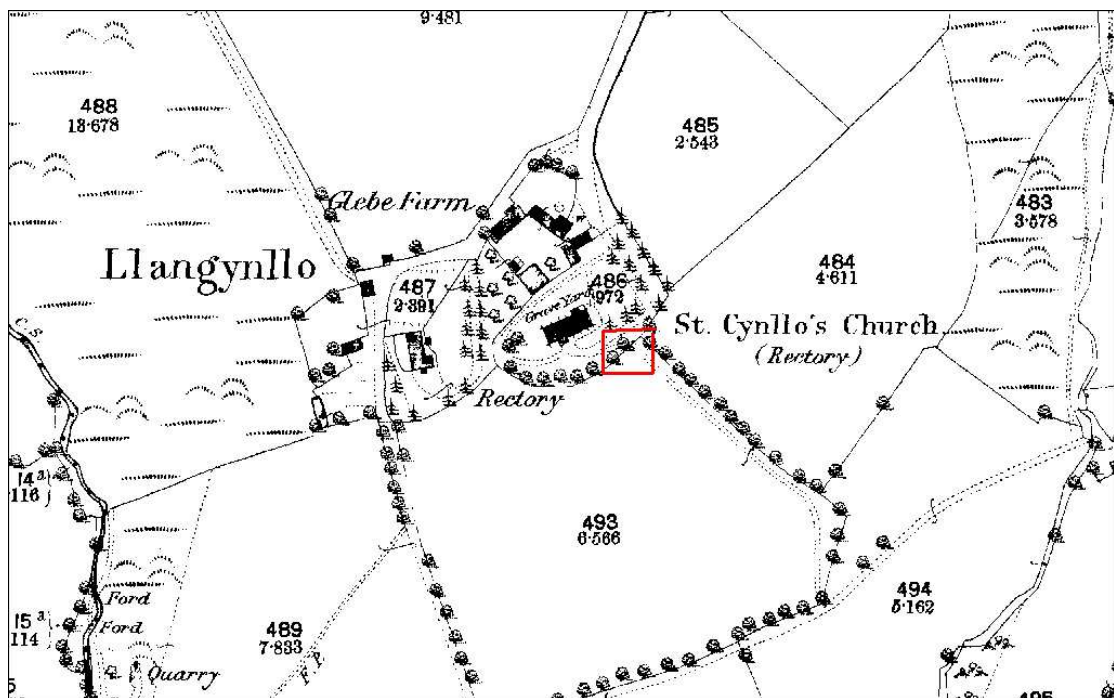


Figure 2: Extract of 1888 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey Map of the area, with red boundary marking the area of the watching brief

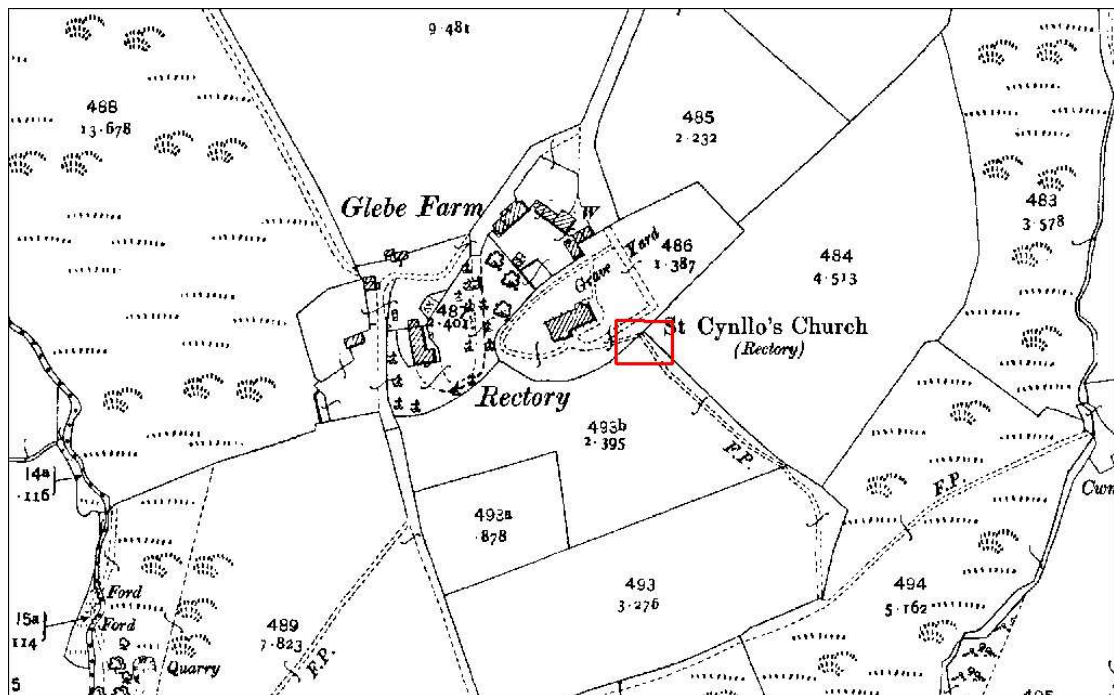


Figure 3: Extract of 1906 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey Map of the area, with red boundary marking the area of the watching brief

3. WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

The detailed methodology for the watching brief was laid out within the WSI. The relevant methodology can be summarised as follows.

3.1 Fieldwork

3.1.1 A 'watching brief' was undertaken during ground level reduction works at the site which had the potential to expose, damage or destroy underlying archaeological remains.

3.1.2 All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.

3.1.3 Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual⁶ used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services.

3.2 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

3.2.1 All data recovered during the fieldwork will be collated into a site archive structured in accordance with the specifications in *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2007), and the procedures recommended by the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

3.2.2 The results of the fieldwork have been assessed in local, regional and wider contexts.

3.2.3 A report fully representative of the results of the fieldwork has been prepared.

3.3 Timetabling of Fieldwork

3.2.7 The watching brief methodology involved monitoring of investigatory excavations within the church yard to determine the location of a flight of steps forming part of the footpath. The watching brief was undertaken on 29th and 30th June 2011.

⁶ Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services have adopted the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology. A copy will be available on-site for inspection if required.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The first site visit was undertaken on 29th June 2011 following communication from Wendy Campion of Ceredigion County Council who also attended the site with a representative from the Church in Wales and an ecologist. On arrival it was found that the excavation area was laid to grass and adjacent to a pair of gate piers which were obscured by overgrown vegetation (see photo 3).

4.2 The archaeologically monitored works involved the removal by hand of modern material that blocked the former stairway and entrance. The material included corrugated metal cladding, solidified cement bags, plastic and decaying wreaths (see photo 4). Excavation work continued by hand with the assistance of the attending ecologist who ensured that no slow worms were disturbed during the course of the works. The material removed from the excavation area was sorted with large stones being retained, and modern debris separated and removed from the site by the contractor undertaking the excavation work. Smaller stones and soil, which consisted of a friable mid brown clay silt containing abundant roofing slate fragments (100), was deposited to the west of the excavation site on an area devoid of vegetation. This was undertaken at the request of the attending ecologist to minimise any disturbance to the wildlife habitat.

4.4 A short section of 19th century cast iron grave furniture (see photo 5) was recovered from the excavation area along with some fragmentary red clay roofing tile. These tiles were produced by the Somerset Trading Co of Bridgewater (see photo 6) that are likely to date from the earlier part of the 20th century. Two dressed sandstone slabs were also recovered and are considered to be former window sills (see photo 7). As excavation continued, two 1.02m wide slate steps were revealed, at a depth of 1.42m below the present ground surface, along with a pair of 0.64m high dry stone and slate slab side walls (101).

4.5 A second site visit was undertaken on the 30th June 2011 to monitor the continuing excavation work. The further excavations revealed a further three slate steps and indicated that the dry stone side walls turned and followed a northwest to southeast alignment (see photos 8 – 9). Much of the infill of the structure consisted of modern debris and plastic which was recovered from the top of the steps, suggesting a relatively recent infilling of the structure. A number of wrought iron spiral shaped artefacts were recovered which were found to have originally formed part of the decorative railings surrounding a tomb immediately to the northwest of the Bronwydd vault at the west end of the church.

4. No human burials or archaeological features of medieval or earlier date were identified during the course of the archaeological watching brief.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The archaeological watching brief undertaken at St Cynllo's Church revealed no human burials or archaeological remains of medieval or earlier date.

5.3 The full extent of the step structure (101) is unknown, although it is considered to continue towards the southeast. No secure dating from the structure was recovered from the excavated area, although it is likely that it is contemporary with the late 19th century rebuilding of the church. It is considered that structure (101) was infilled relatively recently and the area around it landscaped at the same time. The presence of cement bags, plastic sheeting, roofing tile and slate may suggest that it was deposited following restoration work to the church in 1996, but it has not been possible to fully substantiate this.

5.4 The structure (101) appears to have been deliberately infilled with modern debris, although the reason for this is uncertain. The area surrounding the structure is also considered to have been landscaped at the same time as the steps were infilled.

5.4 The investigatory excavations are considered to have had a minimal impact on any buried archaeological remains within the area. The steps had been recently infilled, and the works undertaken at the site merely cleared this debris. No impact on the steps or side walls occurred during the works.

5.5 The excavations undertaken to clear the route of the footpath did not disturb any underlying archaeology. Infill probably deposited during the 1996 renovations is still present in the area surrounding the steps. Further works associated with the reopening of the footpath will involve the removal of more of this infill material, but will not disturb any underlying deposits.

5.6 The archaeological watching brief has confirmed that the proposed works will not impact upon any underlying archaeological deposits.

6. SOURCES

6.1 Map

Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 1st Edition Cardiganshire 1888

Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 2nd Edition Cardiganshire 1905

6.2 Published and Unpublished

Barrow J (ed) 1998 *St David's Episcopal Acta 1085 – 1280*. Cardiff.

Whatmore B 1998 *Eglwys y Plwyf Llangynllo Parish Church*.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: St Cynllo's Church (PRN 16053)



Photo 2: Bronwydd Enclosure (PRN 57807),
entrance to vault visible as ungrassed area



Photo 3: Pre-excavation view of investigatory area



Photo 4: General working shot showing modern cladding



Photo 5: 19th century grave furniture fragment



Photo 6: Detail of Somerset Trading Co Bridgewater mark on clay tile



Photo 7: Dressed sandstone former window sills



Photo 8: Overall view of steps and walls (101) facing south



Photo 9: Detail view of steps and walling (101) facing east



Photo 10: South east facing section showing modern make up above walling

APPENDIX I: CONTEXT AND SOIL DESCRIPTIONS

| Number | Description | Depth |
|---------------|---|-------|
| Layer 100 | Fill of structure 101 Friable mid brown clay silt containing abundant roofing slate, occasional small to medium stone, rare large stone. 19 th century iron grave furniture, architectural fragments and modern debris recovered. | 1.46m |
| Structure 101 | Steps and walling Flight of five slate steps with dry stone and slate slab walling. Full extent of structure unclear as it continued beyond area of excavation. | 0.64m |

Table 3: Context and Soil Descriptions

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RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2011/31
RHIF Y PROSIECT / PROJECT RECORD NO. 100748

Gorfennaf 2011
July 2011

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This report has been checked and approved by

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ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: HEAD OF FIELD SERVICES

Llofnod / Signature  Date 05/06/2011

*Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn*

*As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any
comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report*

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