

**BRICKYARD LANE, CARMARTHEN,
CARMARTHENSHIRE:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
(SN 4041 1872)**



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Morgan Sindall plc



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BRICKYARD LANE, CARMARTHEN, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Gan / By

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Project Commission	2
1.2 Scope of the Project	2
1.3 Report Outline	2
1.4 Abbreviations	3
1.5 Illustrations	3
1.6 Timeline	3
2. THE SITE	5
2.1 Location	5
2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background	5
3. WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY	8
4.1 Fieldwork	8
4.2 Post Fieldwork and Archiving	8
4.3 Timetabling of Fieldwork	8
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	9
5. CONCLUSIONS	10
6. SOURCES	11
APPENDIX I: SOIL DESCRIPTIONS	18

FIGURES

Figure 1:	Site location map based upon the Ordnance Survey	4
Figure 2:	Extract of 1888 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey Map of the area	7
Figure 3:	Extract of 1906 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey Map of the area	7

TABLES

Table 1:	Archaeological and historical timeline for Wales	3
Table 2:	Known sites of archaeological interest in close proximity to the development area	5
Table 3:	Soil Descriptions	18

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1:	Artists view of Brunel's Railway Bridge (private collection)	12
Photo 2:	Detail of demolition of Brunel's Bridge (private collection)	12
Photo 3:	Bascule Bridge of 1908-11 from north	13
Photo 4:	Bascule Bridge undergoing testing c.1911 (private collection)	13
Photo 5:	View of SS Merthyr the first ship to pass through the new Bascule Bridge (private collection)	14
Photo 6:	Surviving pier of Brunel's bridge	14
Photo 7:	East facing representative trench section	15
Photo 8:	Detail of peat deposit (101)	15
Photo 9:	Terracotta floor tile recovered from (100)	16
Photo 10:	Degraded heavy duty battery and electrical cabling	16
Photo 11:	Tracked excavator releasing itself after sinking	17
Photo 12:	General working shot	17

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SUMMARY

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned by Morgan Sindall Plc, on behalf of Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during foul water mains renewal works near the site of Rhydygors House near Carmarthen. This may potentially be the location of the lost medieval Rhydygors Castle.

The archaeological watching brief revealed no archaeological features or deposits relating to the former castle or any other period. Alluvial deposits overlying organic rich peat deposits were identified within the trenches.

A number of post medieval and modern finds were made during the course of the archaeological watching brief, including broken red brick, terracotta floor tile and a single hand made roofing nail. These are considered to represent demolition debris from the post-medieval Rhydygors House. A find of a more recent degraded heavy duty battery and electrical cabling was also made.

The foul water main renewal works are considered to have had a minimal impact on any buried archaeological remains within the area. However, the potential for medieval remains associated with Rhydygors Castle or archaeological remains from earlier periods to be present in the area remains high

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

1.1.1 A request was made by Morgan Sindall Plc on behalf of Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to provide an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the proposed water main renewal programme (roughly centred at NGR SN 4041 1872), located along the western side of the River Tywi next to Brickyard Lane, Carmarthen.

1.1.2 The linear development area is aligned roughly north to south from a point directly to the south of the railway bridge (at SN 4044 1920) to a point to the east of Queen Elizabeth High School (at SN 4039 1892), a roughly 300m stretch.

1.2 Scope of the Project

1.2.1 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust prior to the commencement of the works, which was approved by the Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority. 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 within the development area 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 in Table 1 below is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text.

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

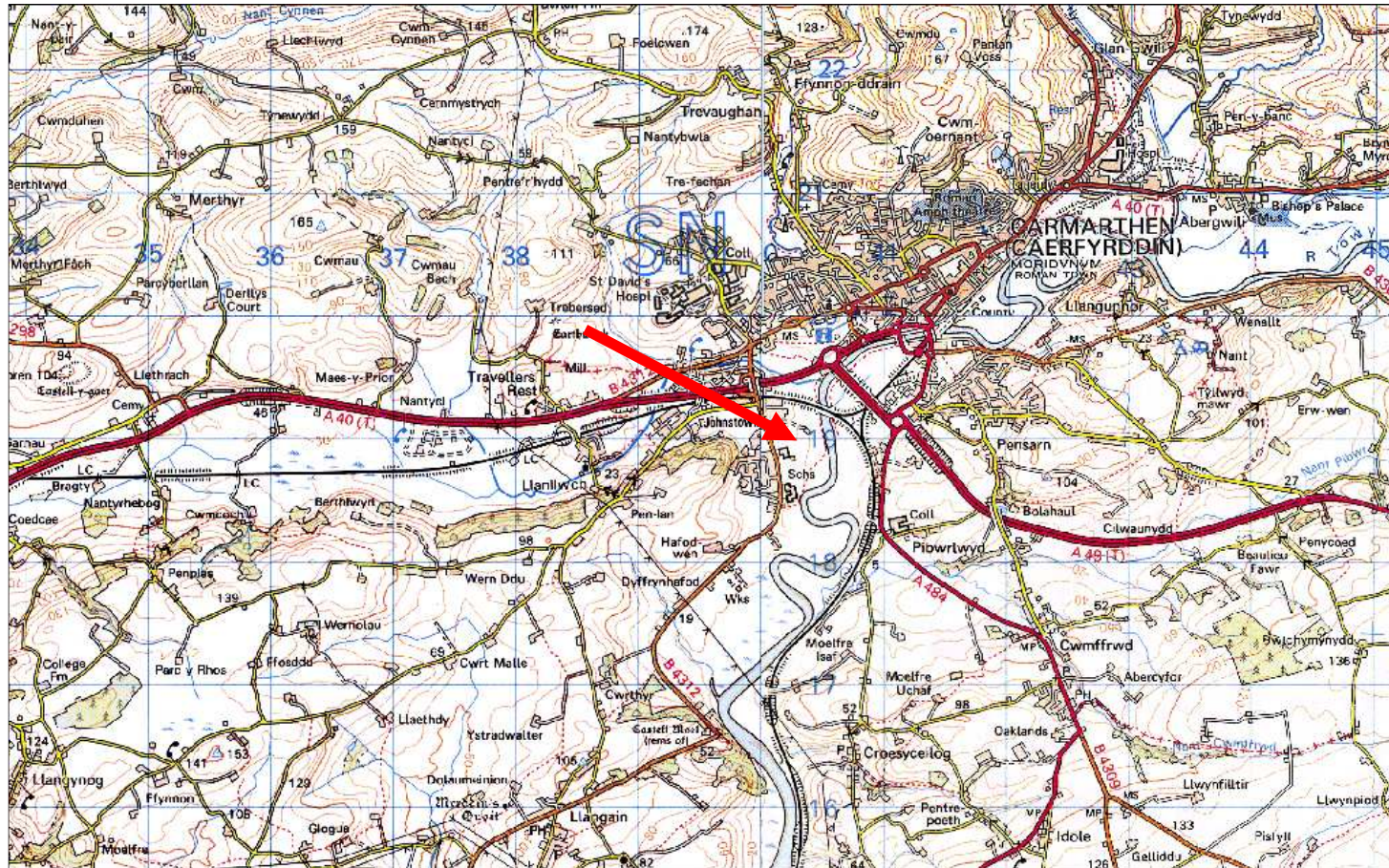


Figure 1: Site location map based upon the Ordnance Survey

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 The area of the water main renewal programme that was archaeologically monitored lies on the flood plain on the western side of the River Towy at NGR SN 4041 1872. Topographically the area is one of level ground that rises towards the west, beyond the area affected by the development.

2.1.2 To the west of the development area lie the grounds of the former Rhydygors House and a sewerage treatment works. To the north lies the main railway line between Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire. The boundaries on the east and south consist of open flood plain of the River Tywi.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

2.2.1 The route of the foul water main renewal development lies within close proximity to ten known sites of archaeological interest recorded on the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Regional Historic Environment Record (Table 2).

PRN	Site Name	Description	NGR
198	Rhyd-Y-Gors, Dwelling	Post-medieval or medieval building of which it has been stated that this now demolished dwelling was erected "towards the close of the Medieval period"	SN 4040 1905
7801	Rhyd-Y-Gors Dwelling	Post-medieval Building Demolished in 1970s	SN 4038 1906
30025	Clay Pit	Clay pit associated with post mediaeval brickworks on the River Towy	SN 4060 1928
30028	Flood Defences and trackway	Post mediaeval flood defence bank on the east bank of the Towy. The bank carries a path around the curve of the river from Bascule Bridge to the road leading from present day Station Approach	SN 4055 1931
30080	Jennyman's Pool - Landing Point/Anchorage	A post-medieval anchorage used by ships waiting for tides to reach Carmarthen	SN 403 185
30082	Bascule Bridge	Post-medieval Bridge	SN 4052 1925
35344	Flood Defence	Short length of Post Medieval flood bank	SN 4062 1902
35345	Bridge Pier	Wooden piers from Brunel's bridge, the predecessor of the Bascule bridge. Post Medieval	SN 4052 1925
61526	White Bridge (The Bascule Railway Bridge)	Grade II* listed post-medieval bascule bridge	SN 40514 19246
61743	White Bridge (The Bascule Railway Bridge)	Grade II* post-medieval listed Building	SN 40532 19239

Table 2: Known sites of archaeological interest in close proximity to the development area

2.2.2 None of these known sites would be directly affected by the proposed works, although due to their proximity there was considered to be a potential for archaeological remains to be present within the site area.

2.2.3 The earliest record relates to Rhyd-y-Gors Mansion (PRN 198; NGR SN 4040 1905) which was demolished in 1972, although parts of the outbuildings survive as a dwelling along with sections of a walled garden. Rhyd-Y-Gors is considered to have medieval origins and is originally believed to have been the residence of the Winter family who came to Carmarthen in the reign of William II (1056-1100) (Francis Jones 1997, 173). In 1093 the *Brut y Tywysogion* (Chronicle of the Welsh Princes) records that a castle was built at Rhydygors but

was abandoned by 1096. The castle was rebuilt in 1103 and was finally abandoned in 1106 in favour of a more strategic site overlooking the river at Carmarthen, where the remains of Carmarthen Castle lie (Lodwick & Lodwick, 1994, 37). The precise location of Rhydygors Castle is unknown, but given the presence of the site of Rhydygors House it may once have been positioned within the area of the water main renewal works.

2.2.4 The castle may either have been in the form of a ringwork, earthen banks surrounding a central fortified site, or a motte, a large earthen mound. No surviving earthworks have been identified, although a slight curve in the height contours in this area may indicate a remnant of a former earthwork. During the industrial and into the early modern period the area was known locally as the *Domenii* which suggests the presence of mounds in the area. It is unclear whether the name refers to the now levelled earthworks of the castle or whether it refers to the domestic rubbish heaps of the town of Carmarthen which were tipped along the river bank in the vicinity of the present B&Q store, which lies to the northeast of the area of archaeological interest.

2.2.5 In the later medieval period the land surrounding the development route was known as *Docket* and in 1339 formed part of the Lordship of Kidwelly (James, 1980, 42). It is also known that part of the Demense lands of Carmarthen and mill, both recorded as *Redcors*, lay to the northwest of the area (*ibid*).

2.2.6 In 1852 the South Wales Railway arrived in Carmarthen and was extended to Haverfordwest by 1854. The railway runs to the north of the development area and originally crossed the River Tywi on a two span hydraulically powered drawbridge, designed by Brunel that could be opened to allow shipping to access the Quay (see photos 1 & 2). Due to it being painted white the bridge became known locally as 'White Bridge', a name which remains in use today for the present bridge. Between 1908 and 1911 Brunel's bridge was replaced by the present rolling bascule bridge (see photos 3-5) and the railway slightly realigned to the north. Two of the three piers of Brunel's bridge survive on each side of the river bank (see photo 6). The present bridge was last opened in the 1950s to allow a private yacht to pass through.

2.2.7 Late 19th and early 20th century mapping of the area show that the route of the water main renewal development lay in undeveloped agricultural land during this period.

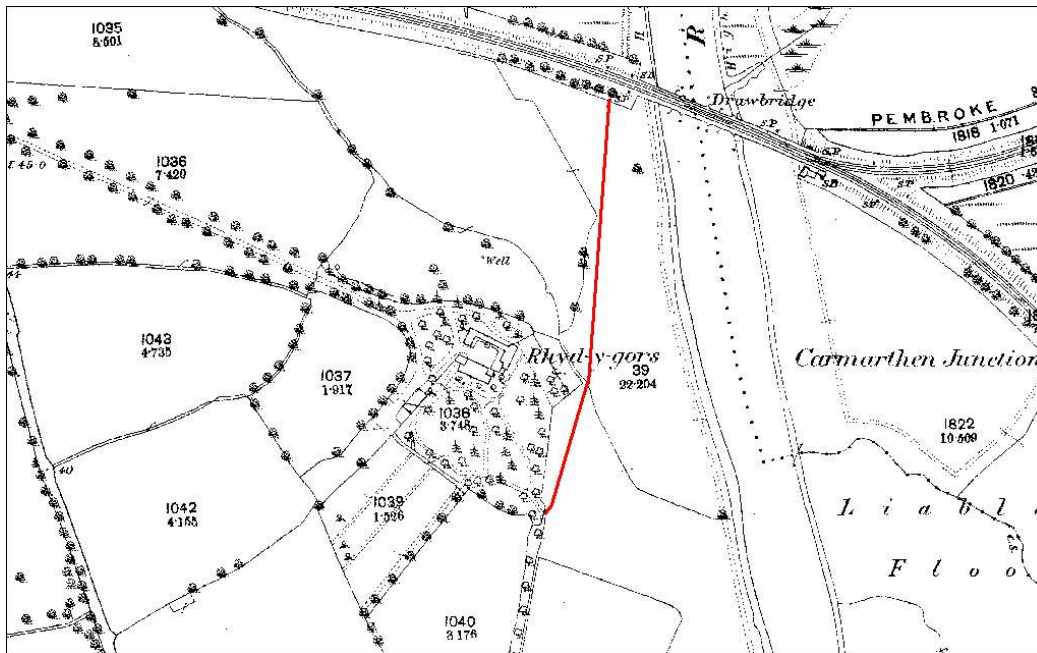


Figure 2: Extract of 1888 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey Map of the area, with the route of the water main renewal works shown in red

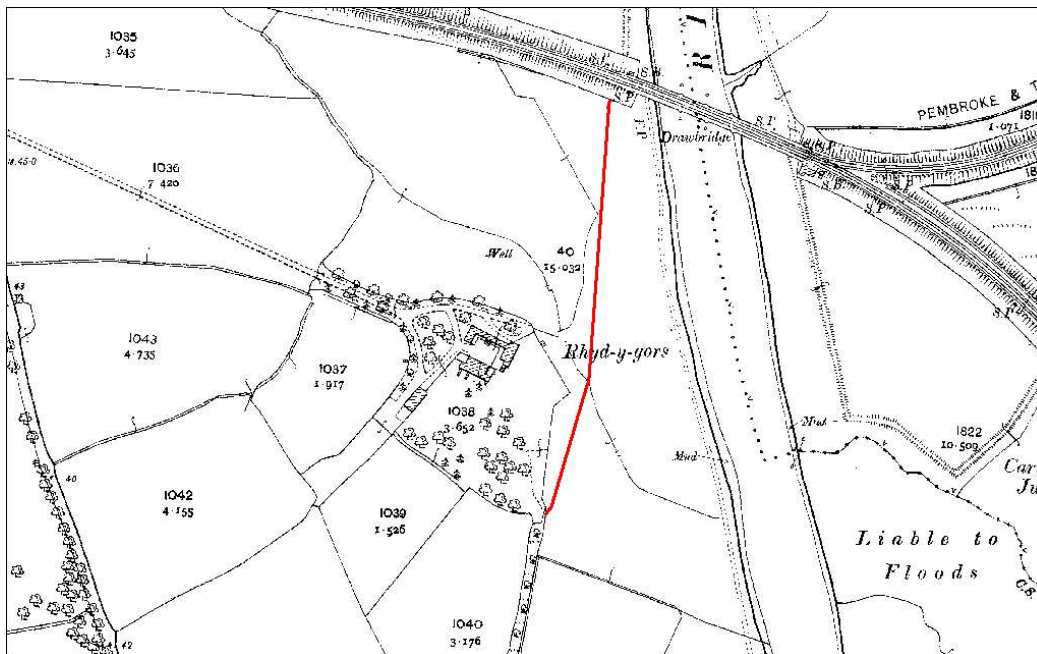


Figure 3: Extract of 1906 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey Map of the area, with the route of the water main renewal works shown in red

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 groundworks 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 Manual³ 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 excavations associated with the foul water mains renewal development. Site visits were made during the period 8th to 26th August 2011 as required.

³ 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 8th August 2011 following communication from Byron Hughes of Morgan Sindall Plc.

4.2 The excavations were undertaken to a depth of 2.5m. Archaeological monitoring revealed 2.1m thick alluvial deposits (100) overlying an organic rich peat horizon with a visible depth of 0.4m (101) (see photos 7 –8). The depth and unstable nature of the sides of the excavation area meant that it was not possible to access the excavated pipe trench on health and safety grounds and due to water ingress. It was therefore not possible to record further details of the deposits.

4.3 Additional site visits were undertaken during the period 9th to 26th August to monitor the excavation of further trenches. These visits were undertaken intermittently as progress of the excavations was very slow.

4.4 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed. The same sequence of alluvial deposits and peat were observed. Occasional finds of 18th and 19th century ceramic material including quantities of fragments of handmade red brick and a single terracotta floor tile (see photo 9) were recovered from the upper levels of the alluvial deposits. These probably originate from the demolition of Rhydygors Mansion in 1972.

4.5 Also revealed during the course of the excavation works was a large heavily degraded battery connected to electric cabling (see photo 10). This is material likely to have been recently dumped and is of no archaeological interest.

4.6 As work progressed conditions within the excavation area deteriorated with the tracked 360° excavator often sinking into the alluvium over the tops of the tracks to a depth of c. 0.8m – 1m, and having to haul itself out using its bucket. This resulted in it becoming impossible to ascertain the presence or absence of any archaeological remains that may have been present in the upper levels of the alluvium (see photo 11) due to the disturbance.

4.7 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed within the remaining undisturbed alluvium or within the underlying peat deposits.

4.8 It is considered unlikely that the site of Rhydygors Castle lies within the area affected by the foul water main renewal works as the route passes through low lying waterlogged ground. However, the land to the west of the pipeline rises forming a promontory. The site of Rhydygors Castle may lie on this promontory, being an area of less waterlogged and firmer ground. It was not possible to confirm or disprove this as it lies outside the area affected by the water main renewal development.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The archaeological watching brief undertaken during the groundworks associated with the water main renewal revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

5.2 The working methodology was such that as small stretches of the pipeline route were excavated, the new foul water drain was inserted and backfilled before the moving on to the next stretch. By undertaking intermittent archaeological monitoring visits, this ensured the archaeologist was only on-site when excavations that required archaeological monitoring were being undertaken.

5.2 The excavations demonstrated that alluvial deposits of the flood plain overlay peat deposits. These peat deposits have significant potential to contain preserved palaeo-environmental remains and possibly archaeological information and artefacts. Unfortunately given the unstable nature of the trench sides and water ingress it was not possible to view the peat deposit in any great detail. No archaeological remains were noted within the excavated material. The depth of the deposits within the trench, the method of excavation and the remit of the archaeological watching brief was such that it was impossible to ascertain the presence of palaeo-environmental remains.

5.3 The foul water main renewal works are considered to have had a minimal impact on any buried archaeological remains within the area. However, the potential for medieval remains associated with Rhydygors Castle or archaeological remains from earlier periods to be present in the area remains high.

6. SOURCES

6.1 Map

Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 1st Edition Carmarthenshire 1888

Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 2nd Edition Carmarthenshire 1905

6.2 Published and Unpublished

James, T., 1980, *Carmarthen: An Archaeological and Topographical Survey. Carmarthen. Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society.*

Lodwick, J. & Lodwick, V., 1994, *The Story of Carmarthen.* Carmarthen. St Peter's Press.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: Artists view of Brunel's Railway Bridge (private collection)



Photo 2: Detail of demolition of Brunel's bridge (private collection)



Photo 3: Bascule Bridge of 1908-11 from north

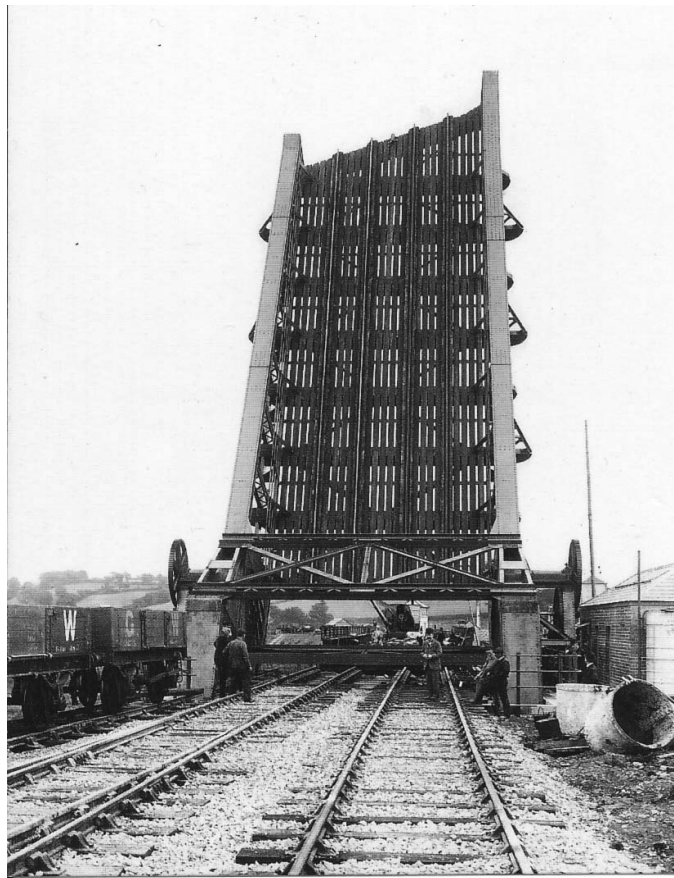


Photo 4: Bascule Bridge undergoing testing c.1911 (private collection)

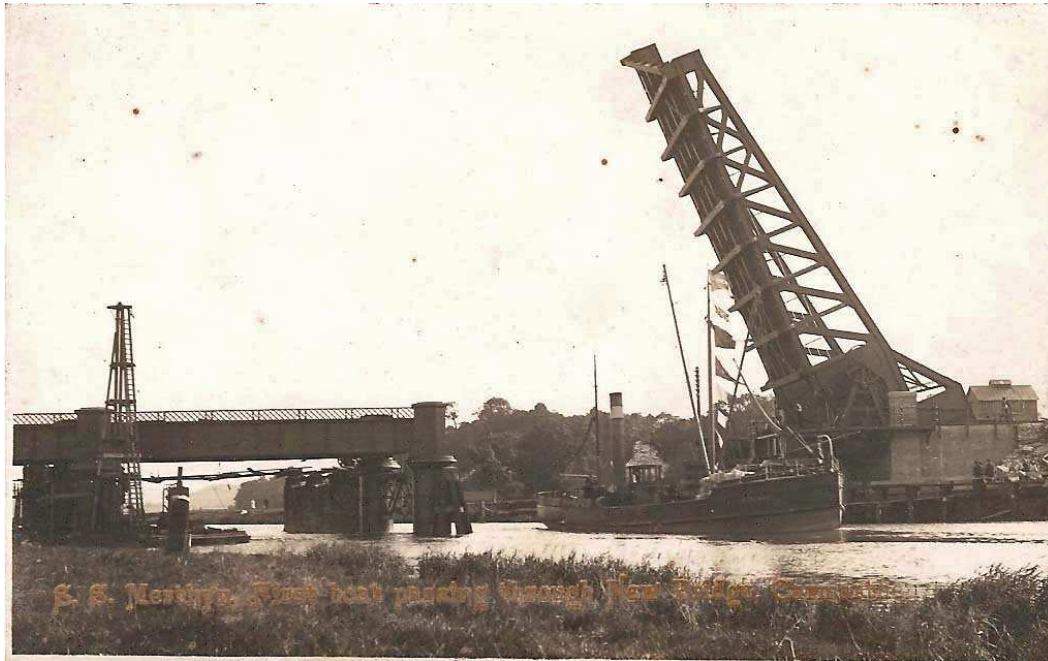


Photo 5: View of SS Merthyr the first ship to pass through the new Bascule Bridge (private collection)



Photo 6: Surviving pier of Brunel's bridge, with Bascule Bridge



Photo 7: East facing representative trench section



Photo 8: Detail of peat deposit (101)



Photo 9: Terracotta floor tile recovered from (100)



Photo 10: Degraded heavy duty battery and electrical cabling



Photo 11: Tracked excavator releasing itself after sinking

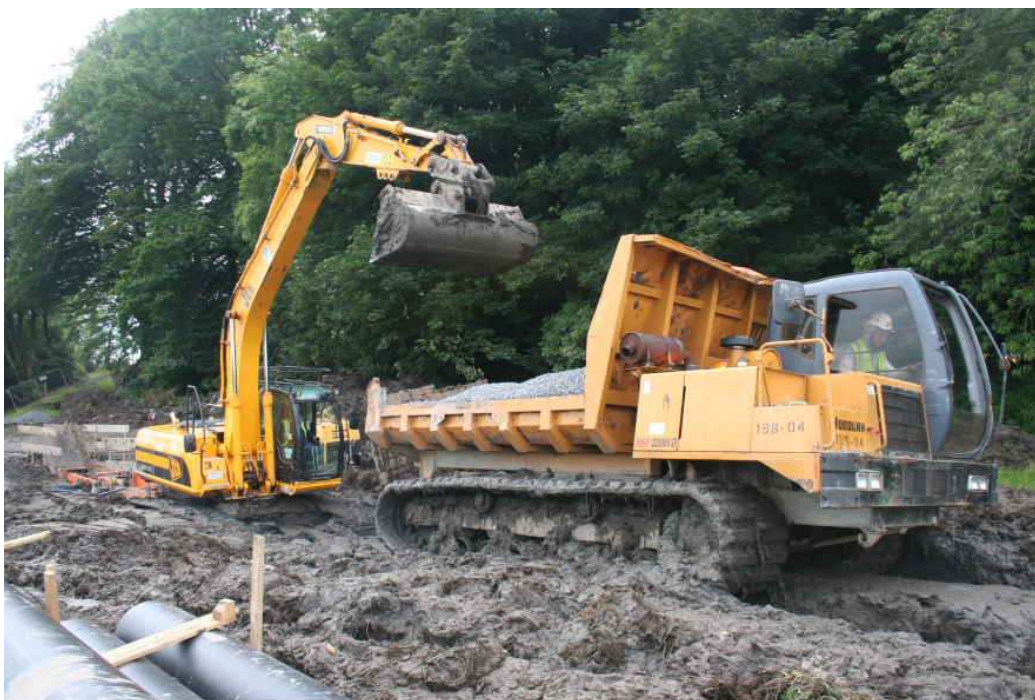


Photo 12: General working shot

APPENDIX I: SOIL DESCRIPTIONS

Number	Description	Depth
Layer 100	Alluvium Firm mid grey clay silt containing some red brick fragments	2.1m
Layer 101	Peat. Dark red brown peat containing rotted vegetation	0.40m

Table 3: Soil Descriptions

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Rhagfyr 2011
December 2011

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JAMES MEEK

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

Swydd / Position: HEAD OF FIELD SERVICES

Llofnod / Signature  Date

*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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