

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



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ST. CYNLLO'S CHURCH, LLANGYNLLO, CEREDIGION DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Gan / By

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**ST. CYNLLO'S CHURCH, LLANGYNLLO, CEREDIGION DRAINAGE
IMPROVEMENT WORKS:
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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during ground works associated with the installation of improved drainage at St Cynllo's Church, Llangynllo, Ceredigion. The requirement for an archaeological watching brief was placed on the works by the archaeological advisor to the Diocesan Advisory Committee. The works had the potential to expose or damage archaeological remains associated with the church. The church is thought to have Early Medieval origins.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned by Ceredigion County Council to undertake the programme of archaeological works during the installation of the drainage. A total of three site visits were made during the course of the groundworks.

The watching brief revealed one grave cut, a linear feature or pit along with evidence of a substantial ditch. Given the limited nature of the excavation area and the lack of any dateable material within the features it was impossible to provide a secure date for them. A spread of mortar was also revealed across an area surrounding the church. This is very likely to have been deposited following late 19th century rebuilding of the church. Also recovered from within this spread of mortar was a round headed window head of medieval date. This presumably relates to an earlier window in the church that was removed either before or during the 19th century rebuild. The style of the window would imply a 12th century date

Other features identified included a grave cut and another small feature of uncertain function. Neither feature had any dating material.

Towards the northern end of the drainage trench a large ditch was revealed. This measured around 3m in width. A possible buried soil layer and possible remnants of bank material were present on the southern side of the ditch. No dating evidence was recovered and interpretation of the feature is very tentative. The feature may represent an earlier boundary to the churchyard pre-dating the later 19th century renovations. The ditch could be associated with the medieval church which was later infilled when the churchyard was expanded. No clear evidence for any Early Medieval remains were recorded on the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

- 1.1.1 Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned by Ceredigion County Council to undertake a watching brief on groundworks associated with the installation of a new drainage system at St Cynllo's Church, Llangynllo, Ceredigion (NGR SN 3521 4394; Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 Due to the archaeological potential of the area, lying within the churchyard with the potential for structural remains associated with earlier phases of the church or associated activity, including burials, the archaeological advisor to the Diocesan Advisory Committee requested that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during groundworks.

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. 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.

1.3 Fieldwork Methodology

- 1.3.1 A 'watching brief' was undertaken during groundworks associated with the installation of a new drainage system which had the potential to expose, damage or destroy underlying archaeological remains.
- 1.3.2 All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.
- 1.3.3 Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual¹ used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services.

1.4 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

- 1.4.1 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.

¹ 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.

- 1.4.2 The results of the fieldwork have been assessed in local, regional and wider contexts. The report includes a desk-based research element to ensure that the site is placed within its wider archaeological context.
- 1.4.3 A report fully representative of the results of the fieldwork has been prepared.

1.5 Report Outline

- 1.5.1 This report provides a summary and discussion of the archaeological watching brief and its results. Some archaeological background to the church is included.

1.6 Abbreviations

- 1.6.1 Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record² (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

1.7 Illustrations

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

1.8 Timeline

- 1.8.1 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 1086	
Medieval Period –	1086 – 1536	
Post-Medieval Period ³ –	1536 – 1750	
Industrial Period –	1750 – 1899	
Modern –	20th century onwards	

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales

² Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo SA19 6AF.

³ 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

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location

2.1.1 St Cynllo's Church is located at SN 35218 43940, within the small farmstead of Llangynllo located c.5.4km to the northwest of Newcastle Emlyn (Figure 1). The church is sited at c.180m above sea level to the east of the Nant Gwylan on a hill top and lies within a raised subcircular churchyard.

2.1.1 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 slopes southwards towards a small valley

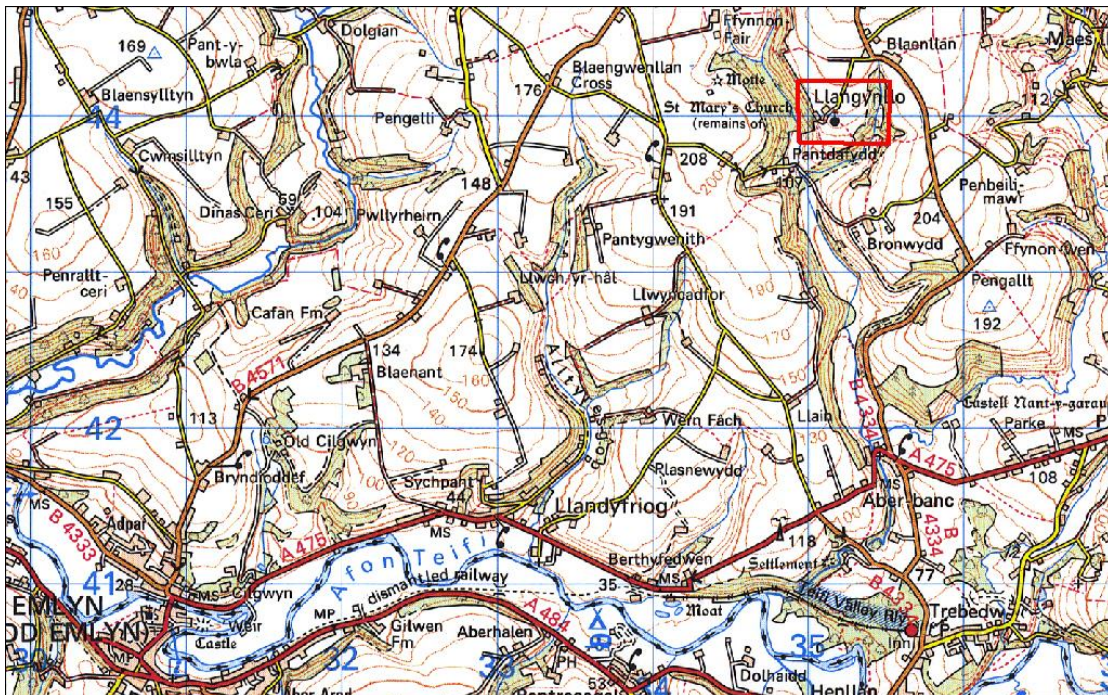


Figure 1: Site location map based upon the Ordnance Survey

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2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

2.2.1 The following extract is taken from Ludlow 'Ceredigion Churches' (Ludlow).

'St Cynllo, Llangynllo, is a 5-celled church, of medium size. It was entirely (re)built in 1870 to the designs of John Middleton FRIBA at a cost of £2000. The church was built in the same location, and on the foundations as its predecessor, which itself was a rebuilt church of 1810 (ibid.), but nothing was retained from the earlier fabric (Dyfed PRN 12665). The present vestry was added in 1897 to the design of E. V. Collier, of Carmarthen.'

The present church consists of a 2-bayed chancel, a 4-bayed nave, a 2-storey tower south of the nave, incorporating a porch, a single-bayed transeptal organ chamber (formerly vestry) north of the chancel west bay, all of 1870, and a lean-to vestry south of the nave west bay, from 1897. Construction is in limestone rubble throughout. The external pointing is largely from 1870. There is extensive external buttressing. Dressings are in oolite and from 1870; the 2-centred openings are neo-Gothic and some display complex tracery. The south tower has 2 storeys, with plain lancets, and has a disused semi-octagonal spiral stair turret to the upper storey. Internally, fine High Victorian character including polychrome banding, ornate chancel arch with carved angels, pulpit with marble ornament and diapered reredos. The roofs are red-tiled gables; the vestry has a lean-to roof and the tower has a timber broach spire with a slate covering.

The east end of the church appears to lie on a platform which may be primary. A shallow, earth cutting lies along the north wall, and a below-ground plinth, beneath which may lie a drain, runs around the church. A below-ground heating chamber lies beneath the organ chamber. There is an underfloor void beneath the suspended floors. An external vault/crypt lies against the west wall.

The church of 1810 is depicted in the tithe map of 1842 and was described in 1833 as a 'neat edifice...rebuilt at the sole expense of the late proprietor of the Bronwydd estate'. The tithe map is of unusual accuracy and appears to depict a church comprising chancel, nave, south porch (and tower?), and a component north of the nave west bays; it is not known how closely it followed the line of the pre-1810 church.

The church was Grade II listed in 1998.'*

2.2.2 The present St Cynllo's Church (PRN 16053; Grade II* listed building) was constructed 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.

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. 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. There is some indication that the tower pre dates the present structure and may be a remnant of the medieval church⁴.

2.2.4 Little is known of the medieval church that occupied the site. A church was present on the 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

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

monastic or ecclesiastical patron are included with the assessed value suggesting the patronage of 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

- 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 (Ratty 2011).
- 2.2.6 The Dyfed Archaeological Trust Regional Historic Environment Record records six sites within the vicinity of the drainage works (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 ⁶	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 drainage groundworks.

- 2.2.7 The 1842 Tithe Map for Llangynllo Parish shows the church, its graveyard and rectory (Figure 2). The accompanying Tithe Apportionment records fields to the immediately south, east and west of the church as 'Glebe' as is a farmstead to the north, these are recorded as in the ownership of Reverend Thomas Howell Davies.
- 2.2.8 The first and second edition Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 3 & 4) of the area show the church and its surroundings in more detail. One major change is visible between these editions, as they indicate that the churchyard was extended westwards in the period between 1888 and 1905.

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

⁶ The vault was recently opened to inter the remains of Hyacinthe Hawkesworth, Lady Marcher of Cemaes.

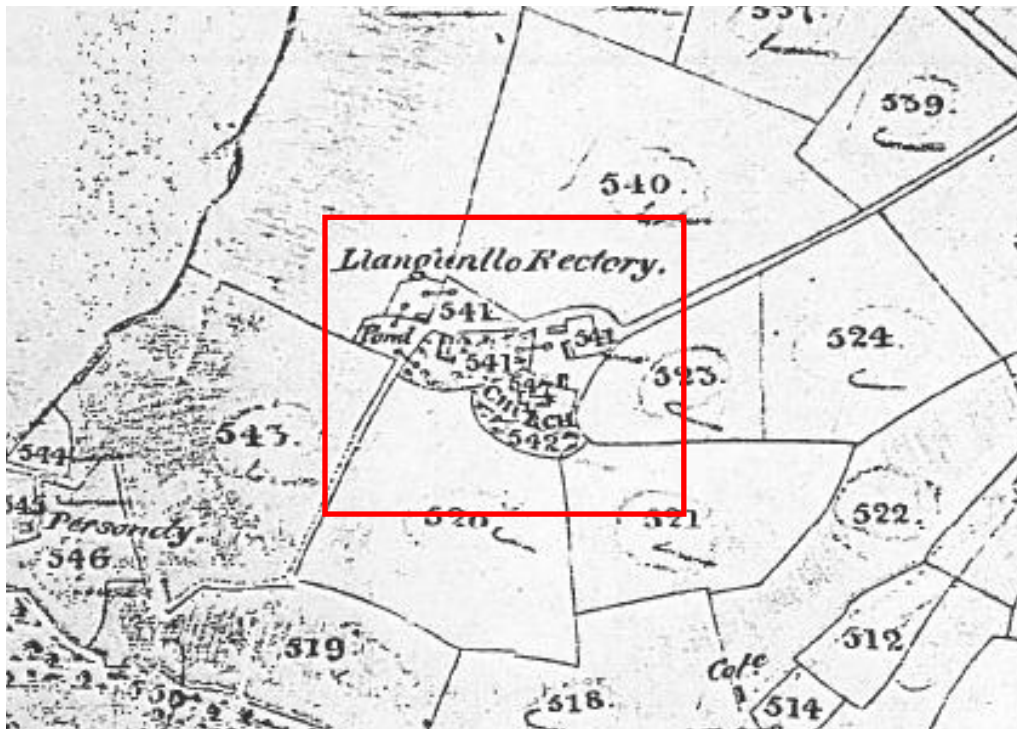


Figure 2: Extract from the 1842 Llangynllo Parish Tithe Map.

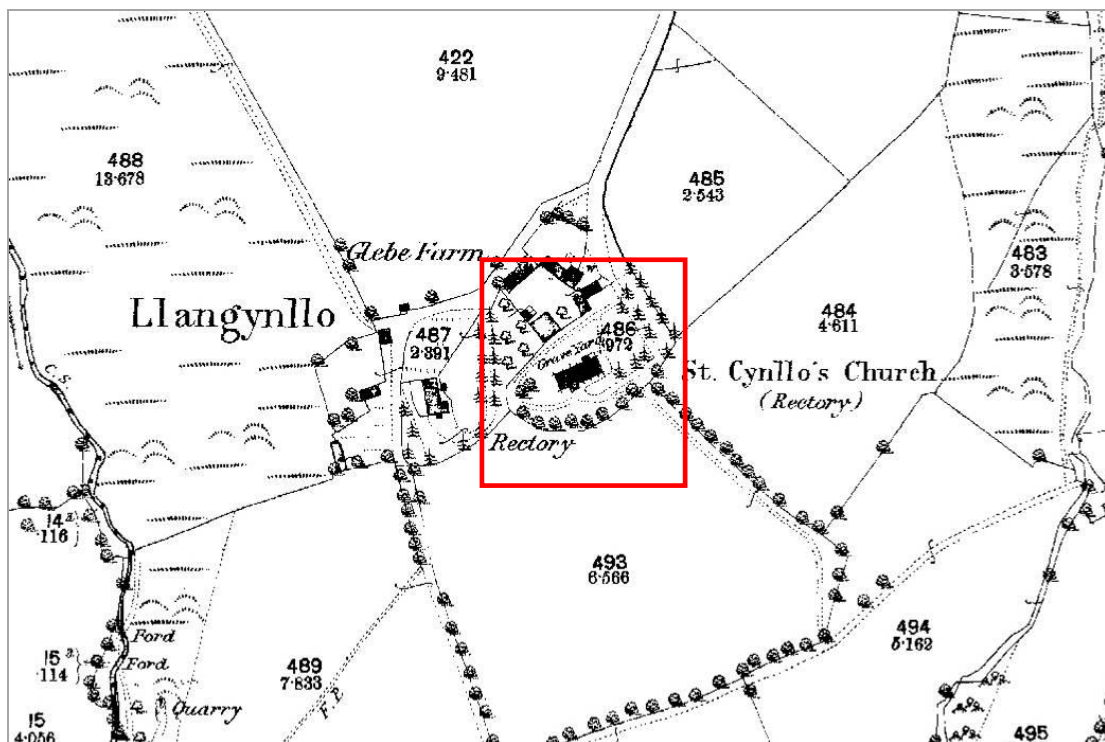


Figure 3: Extract from the 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey map of 1888.

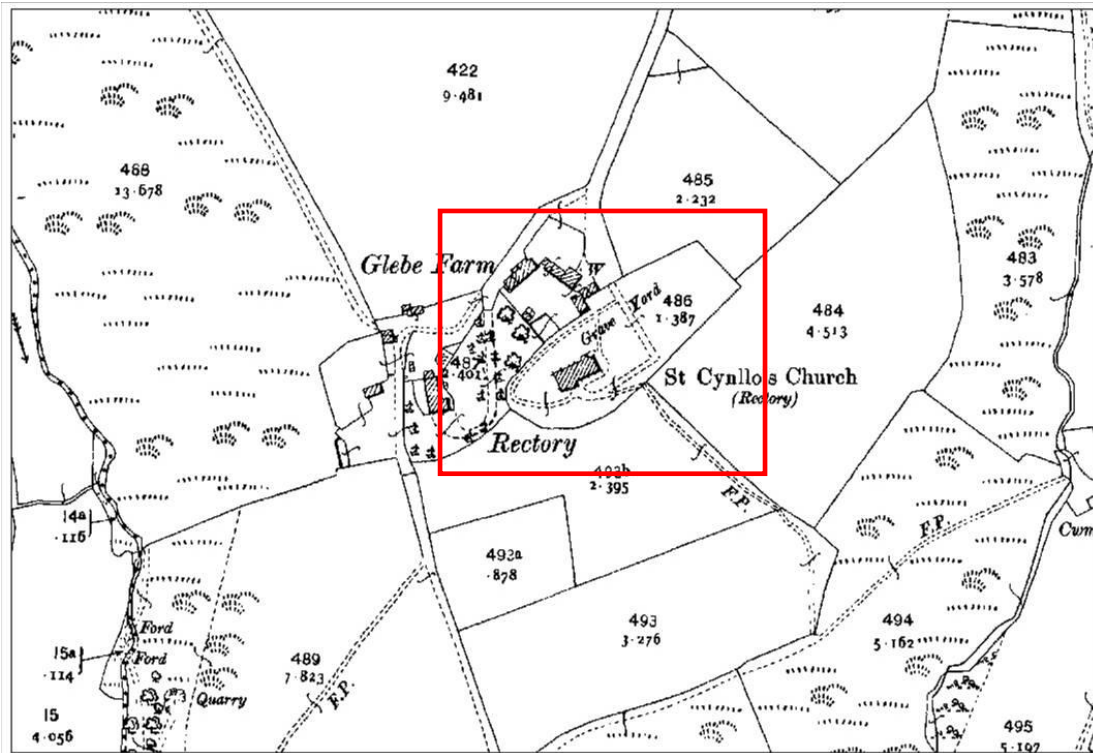


Figure 4: Extract from the 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey map of 1905

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (Figure 7 & Photos 1 to 11)

3.1 Timetabling of visits

- 3.1.1 Three site visits were made to monitor the groundworks associated with the installation of the new drainage system. The site visits were made on the 3rd, 5th and 6th of June 2013.

3.2 Excavations for Inspection Chamber

- 3.2.1 A pit measuring 2.5m in depth, 2.3m in length by 1.8m wide was excavated to accommodate an inspection chamber forming part of the new drainage system. The inspection chamber was located within the boundary of the churchyard and was excavated to the south of the path running through the churchyard. Due to the depth of the excavation access to the confines of the trench was limited to the first 1.2m after which no further access could be gained on health and safety grounds.
- 3.2.2 Observation of the sections of the inspection chamber pit indicated that the main deposit present comprised a dark brown silty clay (1001) which contained frequent fragments of mortar along with fragmentary clay fired roofing tile and discarded building stone. A single piece of probable human pelvis was seen from (1001). A natural soil consisting of consist of a light yellowish silty clay which contained inclusions of frequent small sub angular stone (1002) was encountered at a depth of 1.4m below present ground level. This suggests that this area of the churchyard had been potentially landscaped, and that the discarded building stone within (1001) probably represents debris associated with the rebuilding of the church between 1868-70.



Photo 1: Northwest view of excavated inspection chamber.



Photo 2: Semi circular chamfered window head recovered from (1001)

- 3.2.3 A single piece of dressed stonework was also recovered from (1001). This was a semi-circular chamfered window head (0.56m x 0.36m) (Photo 2).

3.3 Main Pipe Trench Excavation

- 3.3.1 The new drainage pipe trench was designed to connect to an existing drain located within the northern gateway of the churchyard. The excavation of the trench commenced within the southern area of the scheme next to the inspection chamber (see above). The trench measured a total length of 47m by 0.8m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.20m.
- 3.3.2 The current churchyard path consisted of a 0.04m thick layer of tarmacadam. Underlying the tarmacadam a 0.10m thick gravel formation layer was revealed (1004).
- 3.3.3 During initial machining at the southern end of the trench a spread of fine lime mortar (1005) was revealed, which was a maximum of 0.38m in depth. This spread continued beyond both sides of the trench. The mortar spread continued for 4.7m northwards and lay immediately below gravel layer (1004) (photo 3).



Photo 3: Mortar spread (1005) within west facing section of pipe trench.

- 3.3.4 Lime mortar layer (1005) overlay a dark brown silty clay layer (1006), 0.22m in depth at its thickest part, tapering to the north. This was a made ground layer containing frequent inclusions of small flecks of mortar and building demolition. Disarticulated human remains were present within this layer, recorded at around 11m from the southern end of the trench. One vertebrae was identifiable along with part of a fibula, as well as other unidentified fragments (Photo 4).



Photo 4: Disarticulated human remains revealed in pipe trench.



Photo 5: North view along pipe trench showing natural subsoil (1002)/(1007)

- 3.3.5 At 7.4m from the southern end of the trench the natural subsoil (1002)/(1007) was revealed at the base of the trench, 0.60m below the ground surface (Photo 5). This comprised a light orangey brown silty clay containing frequent inclusions of small sub angular stone. The natural was the same as that seen within the inspection chamber area.
- 3.3.7 A grave cut [1008] (Photo 6 and Figure 5) was revealed around 14m from the southern end of the trench, which projected beyond both edges of the trench (Photo 6). Articulated human bones were just visible at the base of the west side of the trench and were not disturbed by the excavation works (Photo 6), the burial presumably lying just below the trench base. The grave cut through layers (1002) and (1006) but was overlain by the gravel layer (1004). The visible area of the grave measured 0.82m in width x 0.60m in depth. The grave fill consisted of a mid to dark brown silty clay (1009) containing frequent inclusions of small sub angular stone.

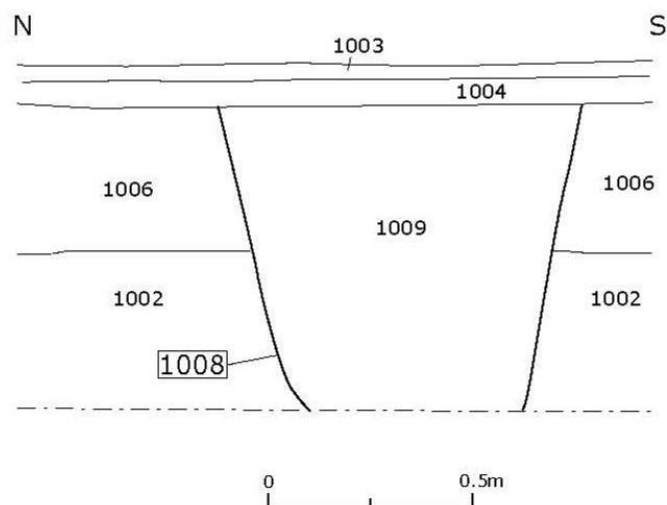


Figure 5: West facing section of grave cut [1008]



Photo 6: West facing section containing grave cut [1008]

- 3.3.8 A small feature measuring 0.30m at its widest point, tapering to 0.06m at its base, with a depth of 0.20m was revealed within the west facing section 19m from the south end of the trench (Photo 7). A single fill (1011) was identified within the feature cut [1010] which comprised a dark brown silty clay containing frequent small sub angular stones. The cut [1010] appeared truncated through the natural soils and may have been overlaid partially by (1006).



Photo 7: East facing view of small feature [1010]

- 3.3.9 Towards the northern end of the trench a group of archaeological features and deposits were revealed: a large ditch [1013]; possible remains of a bank (1014) located on the southern side of the ditch; and a possible underlying buried soil layer (1012). All three features were visible within both sides of the trench.
- 3.3.10 On the eastern side of the trench, ditch [1013] measured 3.62m in width with a depth of 1.20m, whilst on the western side it had a smaller width of 3m. The eastern side of the exposed ditch was recorded in detail as it showed the clearest indication of the stratigraphic sequence. The ditch [1013] was cut through two layers on the southern side seen nowhere else in the trench. The first was a possible buried soil layer (1012), and the second may have been part of a former bank on its southern side (1014). Layer (1014) consisted of a light to mid brown silty clay which contained frequent small sub angular stones. It had a maximum depth of 0.2m. The underlying soil layer (1012) had a maximum depth of 0.18m and comprised a dark grey silty clay with frequent flecks of charcoal. This continued from the southern side of ditch [1013] for a length of 1.7m.
- 3.3.11 Ditch [1013] (Photos 8-10) contained two separate fills, (1015) and (1016). The primary (lowest) fill (1015) consisted of a 0.4m deep dark brown silty clay which contained occasional small sub angular stones. A small patch of degrading clay was also seen within the ditch which could be the remnants of daub. The upper ditch fill (1016) consisted of a 0.8m deep light brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of small sub angular stones.
- 3.3.12 A recut of this ditch, or a later feature, cut [1017], was also recorded in the section (Figure 6). This feature measured 1.18m in length and 0.4m in depth. It cut into fill (1016) on the south edge of the main ditch [1013]. The fill of this ditch recut or later feature comprised a light brown silty clay (1018) with fewer inclusions.



Photo 8: South side of ditch [1013] with dark soil layer (1012) and layer (1014) above



Photo 9: North view along pipe trench during recording of ditches [1013] and [1017]. Fill (1018) can be seen as the far less stony area within the section



Photo 10: West facing section of possible bank material layer (1014) overlying dark soil layer (1012)

Context	Description	Depth/ Thickness
1001	Made up ground deposit found in inspection chamber pit	1.4m
1002	Natural soil horizon	
1003	Tarmacadam layer on church path	0.04m
1004	Gravel formation layer	0.10m
1005	Mortar deposit encountered at southern end of pipe trench	0.38m
1006	Made up ground deposit	0.22m
1007	Subsoil deposit	0.04m
1008	Cut for grave	0.74m
1009	Fill of grave [1008]	0.74m
1010	Cut for pit/gully	0.17m
1011	Fill of [1010]	0.17m
1012	Buried soil deposit	0.18m
1013	Cut of large ditch	1.20m
1014	Bank material	0.20m
1015	Primary fill of ditch [1013]	0.40m
1016	Secondary fill of ditch [1013]	0.80m
1017	Cut of secondary ditch/pit	0.40m
1018	Fill of [1017]	0.40m

Table 3: Contexts recorded during the watching brief

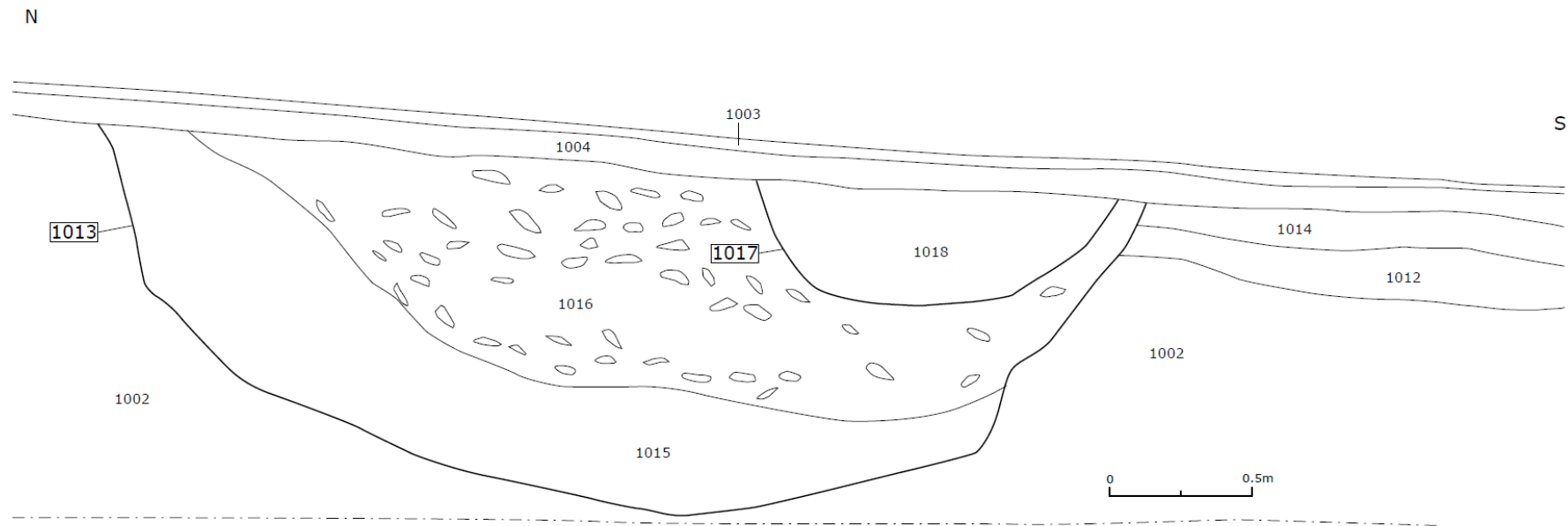


Figure 6: West facing section of ditches [1013] and [1017].

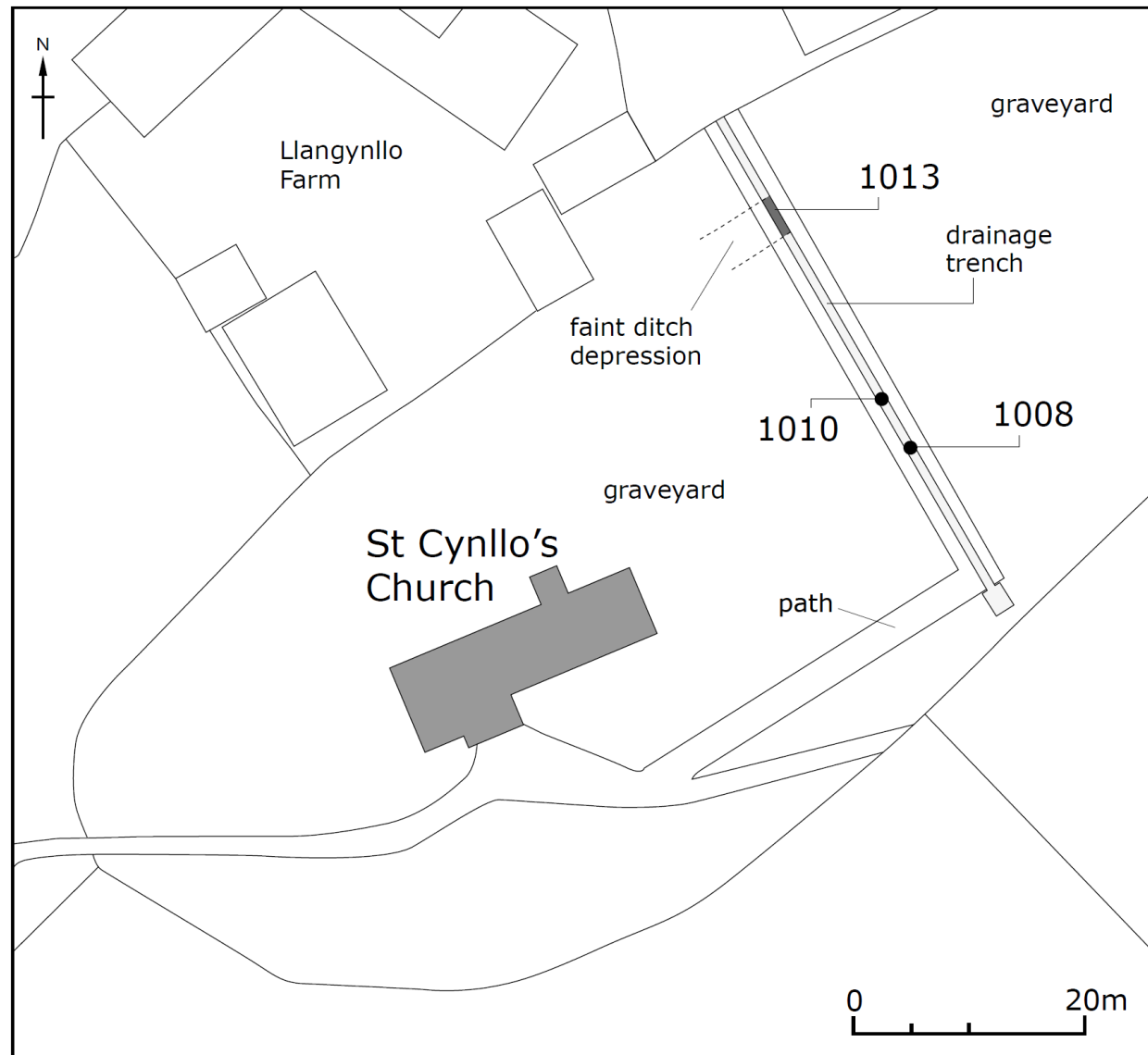


Figure 7: Site plan showing locations of all features revealed.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The archaeological watching brief within the churchyard of St Cynllo's has revealed a number of interesting archaeological remains. These include a single grave, a small feature, a large ditch with a possible associated bank, a second ditch and 19th century rebuilding debris.
- 4.1.2 A sandstone window head which was discovered during the excavation of the inspection chamber pit. From its shape and style it is likely that it dates to the 12th century or earlier. As stone buildings would have only been present Such windows would have and would have belonged to a church building which would pre-date the present standing building. Due to the condition of the sandstone showing little or no erosion caused by weathering it is possible that the block may have been used as an internal feature within the fabric of an earlier church (Richard Suggett, pers. comm.). It is likely that this window was removed during 19th century rebuilding of the church.
- 4.1.3 The mortar spread recorded around the church within the excavated areas is likely to be associated with the 1868-70 church rebuilding. It would appear to represent waste or unused lime mortar used as levelling after the rebuild.
- 4.1.4 An undated grave cut was recorded in the main drainage trench. It is expected that many more grave cuts would have been present within the trench, but were not identified within the confines of the excavated area.
- 4.1.5 A small pit or linear feature was also recorded in the main trench. Its date and function is not known. It is conceivable that this represented the very end of a grave cut running to the east.
- 4.1.6 Perhaps the most interesting features revealed in the drainage trench are the large ditch and the re-cut or later ditch seen near its northern end. The larger and earlier ditch was widest on its eastern side and it is considered that this may indicate the ditch turned slightly southwards. No dating evidence was recovered from the fills of the ditch, nor from the later re-cut. The size of the ditch and its location would suggest it is a fairly early feature, pre-dating any 19th century rebuild of the church as later grave cuts were present in the area to either side of the feature. On the southern side of the ditch two layers could be seen which pre-dated the earlier ditch. The lower layer was dark and had the appearance of a former topsoil layer, perhaps the original ground surface through which the ditch was excavated. The upper layer was more akin to a redeposited natural and the excavator suggested that it could have been material from a former bank on the inside of the ditch. It is difficult to try and interpret the ditch and possible bank with any certainty as only a very small section of it was visible within the drainage trench. It could represent an earlier boundary around the church later filled perhaps to allow expansion of the churchyard (as was also done at the turn of the 20th century). Charcoal was present within the possible buried soil layer which may be suitable for obtaining a radiocarbon date, although obtaining a date should be done with caution as the interpretation of the layer, seen only in the confines of the drainage trench, is uncertain.
- 4.1.7 A linear undulation was noted through the churchyard to the immediate west of the ditch and may indicate a continuation of the feature westward. The depression could also indicate the line of a former pathway marked on late 19th and early 20th century maps (Photo 11; Figures 9 and 10). The pathway could also be associated with the later re-cut of the ditch.



Photo 11: Potential continuation of ditch [1013] to left of gravestones in foreground, seen as depression in ground surface.

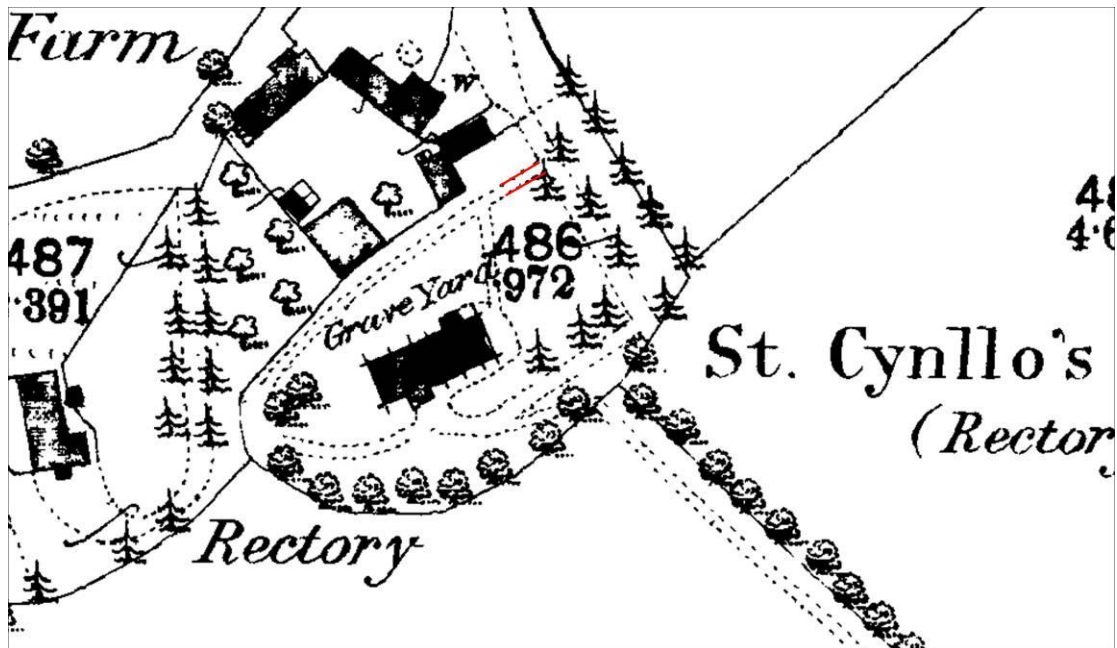


Figure 8: Extract of 1888 1:2500 scale OS map showing layout of churchyard paths and depression in red

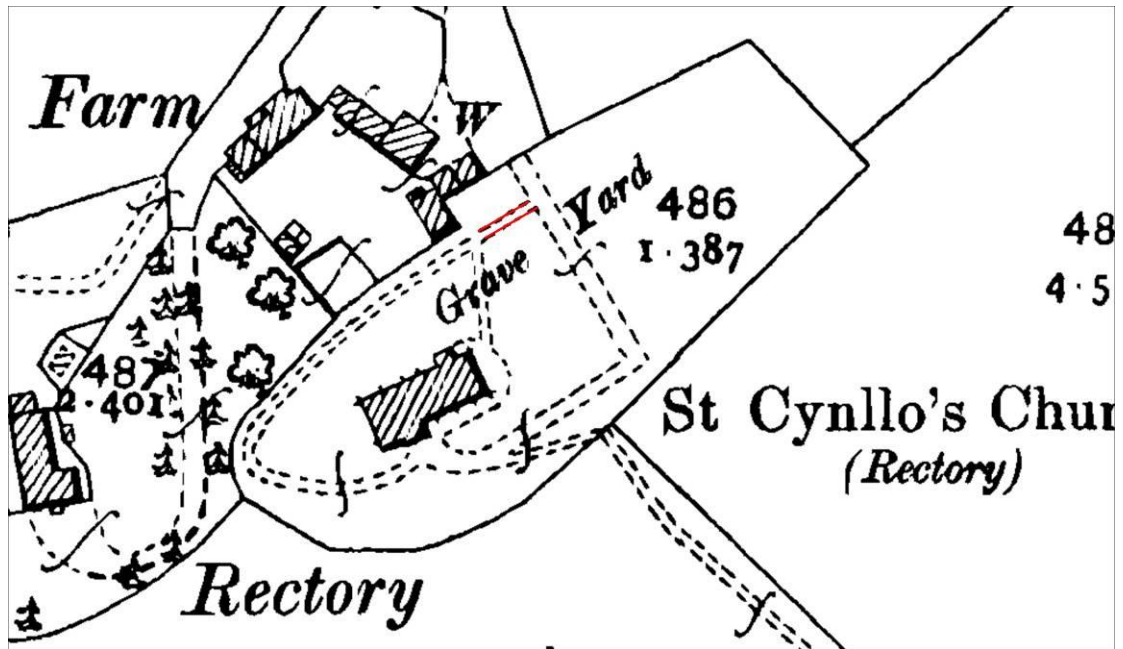


Figure 9: Extract of 1905 1:2500 scale OS map showing location of churchyard paths and depression in red

5. SOURCES

Database

Regional Historic Environment Record held at the Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

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Plan of the rectory of Llangynllo. Provided by Nigel Pugh Church Warden of St Gynllo's church

Parish tithe of Llangynllo 1842

Ordnance Survey 1890 1:2500 Pembrokeshire Sheet XII.14

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Personal Communication

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ST CYNLLO'S CHURCH, CEREDIGION: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2013/63
RHIF Y DIGWILLIAD / EVENT RECORD NO. 105808

Tachwedd 2013
November 2013

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by

ANDREW SHOBBROOK AND SIMON RATTY

Swydd / Position: Archaeologists

Llofnod / Signature

Date

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by

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.*

