# PENRHYN BACH, POPPIT, PEMBROKESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (NGR SN 14223 49040)





Prepared by DAT Archaeological Services For: Mrs Mary Mill





#### DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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> Hydref 2018 October 2018

# PENRHYN BACH, POPPIT, PEMBROKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (NGR SN 14223 49040)

Gan / By

#### **Hubert Wilson**

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#### PENRHYN BACH, POPPIT, PEMBROKESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

#### **SUMMARY**

DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Mrs Mary Mill, to undertake a watching brief during groundworks associated with building and renovation works at the property known as Penrhyn Bach, Poppit, Pembrokeshire; centred on SN 14223 49040 (Planning Application Number NP/17/0525/FUL).

Due to the proximity of cist graves (PRN 1058) of possible early medieval date, and a number of probable Bronze Age burnt mounds (PRNs 14229 and 34444), all recorded on the regional Historical Environment Record (HER), an archaeological condition was attached to planning permission for the site following advice from the Development Management team at Dyfed Archaeological Trust, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Planning Authority.

To fulfil this condition an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks that were likely to expose, damage or destroy archaeological remains.

The watching brief was undertaken over one day on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

Groundworks associated with the rebuilding of the existing extension between the house and cowshed and the rebuilding of the southern gable end wall were not monitored, as it was clear that Penrhyn Bach house and attached cowshed had been built on platforms created by terracing into the hillside. Therefore it was highly unlikely that any archaeological deposits of early medieval date would have survived this disturbance, or the later disturbance of the building of the 70s extension.

The monitored groundworks comprised the machine excavation of a c.30m trench for a French drain at the rear of Penrhyn Bach house, across undisturbed ground. The trench was excavated using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothed bucket. The trench revealed a uniform soil profile throughout the excavation. This consisted of 0.4m of sandy loam below which lay above the natural undisturbed horizon of windblown sand. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the excavation.

Although no significant archaeological remains were revealed within the development area, there is still potential that significant archaeological deposits could be present in its vicinity

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### **Project Proposals and Commission**

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Mrs Mary Mill, to provide an archaeological watching brief during groundworks at the development site on land to the rear of Penryn Bach, Poppit, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN 14223 49040, Figure 1). The proposed works comprised the replacement of an existing extension between Penrhyn Bach house and the former cowshed and the rebuilding of the southern gable end wall of the main house (Figure 2).
- 1.1.2 The extension which is being replaced was built around 1970 (information provided by the owner) and the new extension will sit over the footprint of the earlier building. Therefore the majority of the proposed development site will have already been disturbed. The main house lies to the south with the former cowshed to the north with the extension forming a link between the two.
- 1.1.3 The development area lies close to the site of a number of recorded cist graves (PRN 1058) of possible early medieval date listed on the regional Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER records the cemetery as having been discovered in three areas around Penrhyn Bach, but gives a single location around 15m to the west of the development. Also recorded on the HER are two probable prehistoric burnt mounds, one some 20m south of Penrhyn Bach farm (PRN 14229) and the second 120m to the northeast close to Penrhyn Castle (PRN 34444).
- 1.1.4 As a consequence an archaeological condition was placed on planning permission (NP/17/0525/FUL) following advice from the archaeological advisor's to the planning authority (Planning Services of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust), as there was a potential for archaeological remains of early medieval date to survive within the development area.
- 1.1.5 Following further discussions with the archaeological advisor it was confirmed that as the development had been disturbed through construction of an existing extension, rebuilding of gable end walls and drainage works, that an archaeological watching brief was appropriate mitigation to be implemented during groundworks.

#### 1.2 Scope of the Project

- 1.2.1 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) for a watching brief was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services prior to the commencement of the works, which was approved by the archaeological advisor to the planning authority prior to the commencement of the works. The project objectives were:
  - Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology by which DAT Archaeological Services will undertake the watching brief.
  - 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.
  - To produce an archive and report of any results.
- 1.2.2 The overall work was summarised as: "Archaeological attendance during ground works associated with building and renovation works at the property known as Penrhyn Bach, Poppit, Pembrokeshire, which are likely

to expose, damage or destroy archaeological remains. Appropriate investigation and recording of any such remains will be undertaken if revealed. A report and archive of the results of the works will be prepared."

#### 1.3 Report Outline

1.3.1 This report describes the location of the development works along with its archaeological background, and provides a summary and discussion of the archaeological watching brief and its results.

#### 1.4 Abbreviations

1.4.1 Sites recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Sites recorded on the National Monument Record (NMR) held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) are identified by their National Primary Record Number (NPRN). Scheduled Monument (SM). Altitude is expressed to Ordnance Datum (OD). References to cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources will be given in brackets throughout the text, with full details listed in the sources section at the rear of the report.

#### 1.5 Illustrations

1.5.1 Photographic images are to be found within 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.

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 - 10,000 BC	
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	Pre
Neolithic –	c.4400 - 2300 BC	hist
Bronze Age –	c.2300 - 700 BC	Prehistoric
Iron Age –	c.700 BC - AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 - AD 1086	_
Medieval Period –	1086 - 1536	Historic
Post-medieval Period <sup>1</sup> –	1536 - 1750	tori
Industrial Period –	1750 - 1899	n
Modern –	20 <sup>th</sup> century onwards	

**Table 1**: Archaeological and historical timeline for Wales

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 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

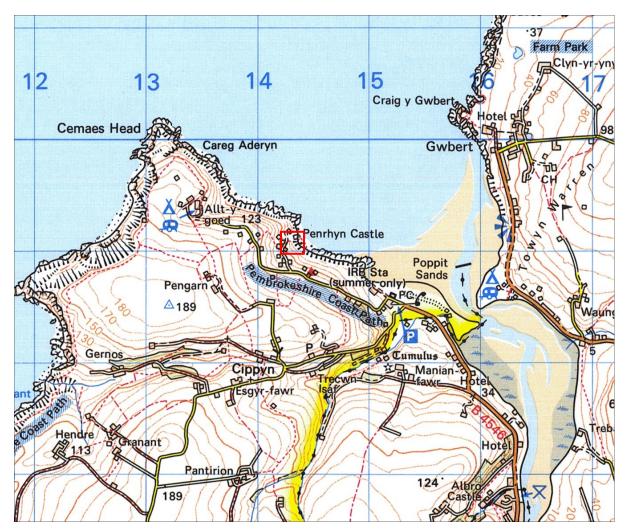
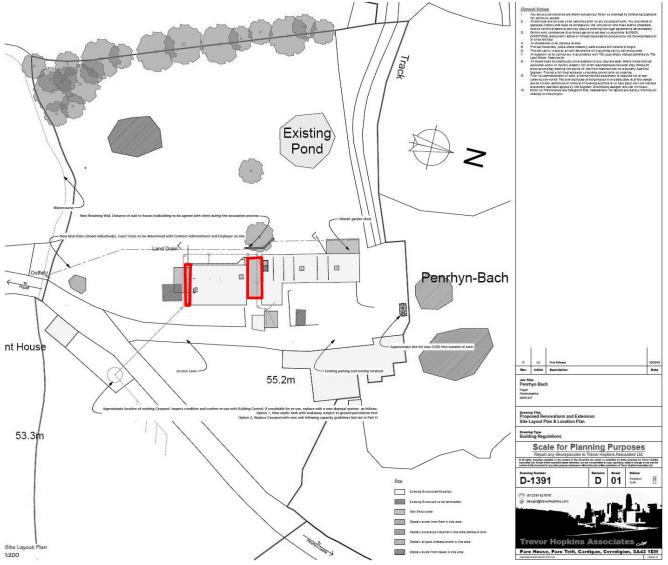
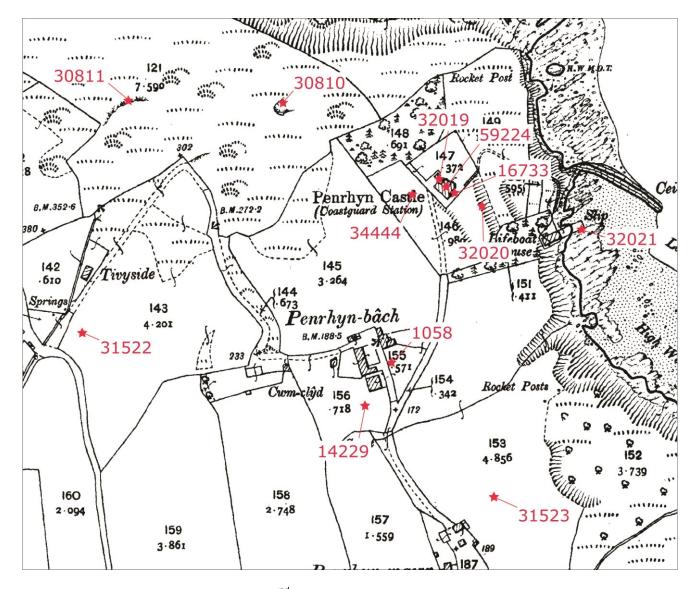


Figure 1: Location map showing Penrhyn Bach within the red boundary

Reproduced from the 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. 100020930



**Figure 2:** Basic location plan of development proposals for Penrhyn Bach, Poppit showing the extension and gable end wall to be rebuilt outlined in red (Plan supplied by Trevor Hopkins Associates)



**Figure 3:** Extract from the Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> 1:2,500 map published in 1906 showing archaeological and historical sites recorded on the Regional Environment within 250m of the centre of the proposed development; listed in Table 2.

Record within 250m of the development site. <b>PRN</b>	Site name	Туре	Summary	Period	NGR
1058	Penrhyn	Cemetery	Early medieval C site, low probability early medieval origins.  Undated burials including cists recorded in three locations in midlate 19 <sup>th</sup> century. Lack of evidence for a church or chapel suggests an early medieval, undeveloped cemetery.	Early Medieval	SN 14240 49050
14229	Penrhyn	Burnt Mound	Small area of burnt stones seen eroding in the side of a stream bank.	Prehistoric	SN 29400 12000
16733	Penrhyn Castle	Mansion	Substantial dwelling built by the Coastguard service in association with the harbour facility at nearby Cei Bach.	Post- Medieval	SN 14290 49170
30810	Penrhyn Castle	Quarry	On the 1888 Ordnance Survey map, this site is marked as a quarry with its extents. On the 1905 and 1964 maps this site is not noted as being a quarry but the extent of the working is marked.	Post- Medieval	SN 14170 49240
30811	Penrhyn Castle	Quarry	On the 1888 Ordnance Survey map, this site is marked as a quarry with its extents. On the 1905 and 1964 maps this site is not noted as being a quarry but the extent of the working is marked.	Post- Medieval	SN 14060 49246
31522	Cnwcau	Quarry	The site lies in a pasture field. It consists of a scoop to the north, possibly a field excavation and a partly infilled quarry to the south.	Post- Medieval	SN 14020 49080
31523	Penrhyn Mawr	Field boundary	Superficially this feature appears similar to a lynchet running across the top of a field. Local information suggests it is landslip. It lies in an area covered in boulder clay with much slippage.	Prehistoric; Post- Medieval	SN 14310 48950
32019	Penrhyn Castle	Coastguard Station	C. 1850 former coastguard station. Marked on 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition 6" OS maps.	Post- Medieval	SN 14280 49180
32020	Dwelling	Coastguard's Cottage	A former coastguard's cottage; stands west of coastguard station PRN 32019. A two storey cottage with a central entrance.	Post- Medieval	SN 14310 49160
32021	Cei Bach	Lifeboat Station	Lifeboat house built 1880's. Marked as such on 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition OS maps. The structure has double doors on the front, two wooden doors in the side and one on the gable end.	Post- Medieval	SN 14380 49140
34444	Penrhyn Castle	Burnt mound	Part of a burnt mound uncovered during house renovation trenching at Penrhyn Castle, at the Coastguard's house. Trench exposed a spread of burnt stone and black soil 3m x 0.3m.	Prehistoric	SN 14260 49170
59224	Penrhyn Castle, Cei Bach	Coastguard Station	Grade II listed coastguard station.	Post- Medieval	SN 14284 49175

**Table 2:** Archaeological and Historical Sites recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record within 250m of the centre of the proposed development; shown in Figure 3.

#### 2. THE SITE

#### 2.1 Location and Topography

- 2.1.1 The site is located on the eastern side of Cemaes Head; a headland at the northern limits of Pembrokeshire overlooking Poppit Sands and the Teifi estuary (centred on NGR SN 14223 49040; Figure 1). The village of St Dogmaels and the town of Cardigan are situated 3.5km and 4.5kms respectively southeast of the development site.
- 2.1.2 The local bedrock is Cwm Degwel Mudstone sedimentary bedrock formed in the Ordovician Period (based on information from the British Geological Survey). (http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html).

#### 2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

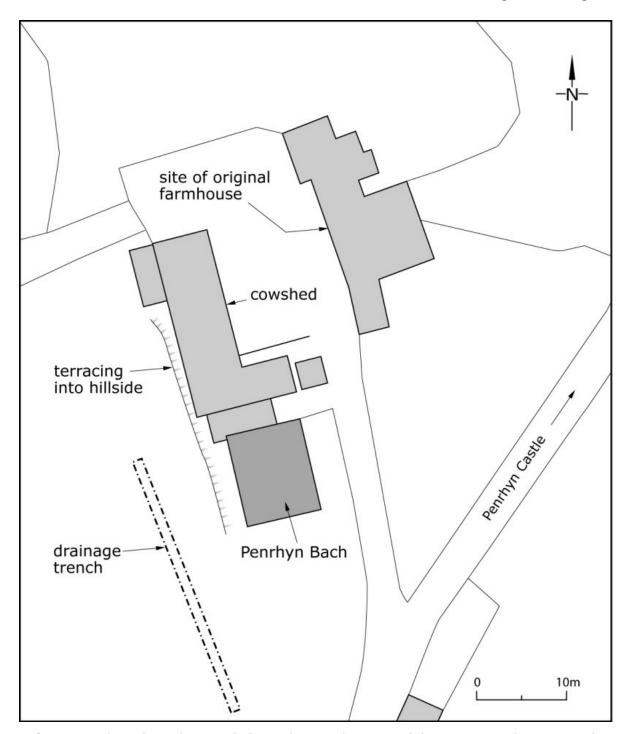
- 2.2.1 No archaeological sites are known to exist within the boundary of the proposed development area; however a search of the regional HER database revealed that a total of twelve sites of archaeological and historic interest are located within a *c.*250m radius centred on the development. These are listed in Table 2 below and shown in Figure 3.
- 2.2.2 The development area lies close to the site of recorded cist graves of possible early medieval date (PRN 1058). Cist or long cist graves are stone lined graves containing an extended inhumation (Photo 1). The graves typically comprise a basal slab or slabs, side and end slabs and finally a top or 'lintel' slab covering the grave. They typically date from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century and are generally taken to be indicative of Christian beliefs. There is a marked concentration of cist graves in north-west and south-west Wales, especially in Pembrokeshire. The HER records the cemetery as having been revealed in three areas around Penrhyn Bach, but gives a single location around 15m to the west of the proposed development. Research provided by the owner of Penrhyn Bach, Mary Mill, suggests that one of these cemeteries was revealed during the midnineteenth century when 'the field between Penrhyn Bach and Penrhyn Castle was ploughed up, many graves or stone coffins were found' (these would suggest stone lined cist graves). The location of these graves is thought to be some 90m to the north-northeast of Penrhyn Bach near the boundary with Penrhyn Castle; possibly revealed in 1835 when the new hedgebank was constructed dividing the field named Parc y Ceri (Mary Mill pers comm). This hedgebank division separated the land between Penrhyn Bach and the new house known as Penrhyn Castle (1835-36) (ibid). The second area of graves is believed to lie some 50m to the west near the site of the ruined cottage at Cwmclwyd, where 'similar graves were found at this place; when the horse gear was fixed near Penrhyn Bach barn to work a threshing machine, a grave was discovered. In this there was a skeleton.' (ibid). There is no known chapel or church site recorded on mapping in this area.
- 2.2.3 A burnt mound (PRN 14229) which is recorded somewhere along the bank of a nearby stream to the south of the development, was not investigated during the watching brief. A second burnt mound (PRN 34444) is located some 120m northeast of the development, close to Penrhyn Castle. Burnt mounds are typically features of Bronze Age date, often situated near water sources, and comprise mounds of heat affected stones, which would have been heated in a bonfire. These are very common throughout Pembrokeshire as well as other areas of Britain and Ireland. Various theories have been put forward for their use, including them being used for boiling large quantities water for cooking (by inserting the heated

stones into a trough containing water) or for creating steam for either saunas or industrial processes such as softening wood.



**Photo 1:** Photograph of a typical cist gave. This example is a child's burial from Porthclew, Pembrokeshire (© Dyfed Archaeological Trust)

- 2.2.4 Four of the sites are associated with coastguard activity in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. These include the coastguard's cottage (PRN 32020), the lifeboat station (PRN 32021), Penrhyn Castle (built by the Coastguard service in association with the harbour facility) and the coastguard station (PRN 59224) which is also a Grade II listed building (Ref No 13107).
- 2.2.5 Other post-medieval features include three former stone quarry sites (PRNs 30810, 30811 and 31522); doubtless used to provide stone for some of the structures in the surrounding arae.
- 2.2.6 The present farmhouse at Penrhyn Bach is a relatively recent structure and does not appear on the Ordnance Survey  $1^{\text{st}}$  edition 1889 map, but is shown on the  $2^{\text{nd}}$  edition 1906 map. According to the OS  $1^{\text{st}}$  edition, the original farmhouse lies to the north end of the complex (Figure 3).



**Figure 4:** Plan of Penrhyn Bach farm showing location of drainage trench monitored in the watching brief.

#### 3. WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 A watching brief was undertaken during initial groundworks at the site which had the potential to expose, damage or destroy underlying archaeological remains.
- 3.1.2 Once on site it was evident how extensive the terracing into the hillside for Penrhyn Bach house (Figure 4, Photo 2) and cowshed was, and that it was highly unlikely that any archaeological remains would have survived this past disturbance. Therefore it was judged unnecessary to monitor the groundworks involved during the replacement of the existing extension between Penrhyn Bach house and the cowshed, and the rebuilding of the south wall of Penrhyn Bach house.
- 3.1.3 The groundworks that were monitored comprised the excavation of a drainage trench over undisturbed ground approximately 9.0m to the west of Penrhyn Bach house (Figure 4). The excavation was undertaken by a  $360^{\circ}$  tracked excavator fitted with a toothed bucket. The trench was c.  $30.0m \log_{10} 0.65m$  wide and 1.0m deep.
- 3.1.4 All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.
- 3.1.5 Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual<sup>2</sup> used by DAT Archaeological Services.
- 3.1.6 The work followed the Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief as laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014) and adhered to their code of conduct (CIfA 2014).

#### 3.2 Timetabling of Fieldwork

3.2.1 The watching brief took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2018.

#### 3.3 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

- 3.3.1 All data recovered during the fieldwork will be collated into a site archive structured in accordance with specifications in *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2011), and the procedures recommended by the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.
- 3.3.2 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.
- 3.3.3 A report fully representative of the results of the fieldwork has been prepared.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> DAT Archaeological 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 location of the monitored drainage trench was near the bottom of a moderate, grassy slope (former lawn and garden), some 9.0m to the rear of Penrhyn Bach house (Photo 3; Figure 4).
- 4.2 The trench was approximately 30m long, 0.65m wide and 1.0m deep. It ran down a slight slope to a hedge bank at the southern edge of the property (Photos 4 and 5).
- 4.3 Apart from a slight increase in the depth of the garden soil for a metre at the north end of the trench (filling a slight depression), the trench section showed a consistent soil profile throughout the excavation (Photo 6).
- 4.4 This soil profile comprised between 0.35 to 0.4m of garden soil; friable, medium brown, sandy loam, containing no significant artefacts.
- 4.5 Below this sandy loam layer a deposit of orange-brown sand with occasional small lenses of clay was revealed. This appeared to be a wind-blown sand deposit. The base of this deposit was not reached. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in section or in plan.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 A watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with rebuilding works at Penrhyn Bach, Poppit, Pembrokeshire. The development site lies in an area with an identified potential for archaeological remains of early medieval date to be present. Thus a condition was placed on planning permission for the development requiring an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken during groundworks that could expose, damage or destroy archaeological deposits.
- 5.2 Once on site the terracing into the hillside for Penrhyn Bach house and cowshed was clearly evident and it appeared highly unlikely that any archaeological remains would have survived this disturbance, or any later disturbance caused by the building of the extension and associated works. Therefore it was judged unnecessary to monitor the groundworks involved during the replacement of the existing extension and the rebuilding of the south wall of the house.
- 5.3 The monitored groundworks comprised the machine excavation of a c.30m trench at the rear of Penrhyn Bach house, across undisturbed ground. The trench was excavated using a  $360^{\circ}$  tracked excavator fitted with a toothed bucket.
- 5.4 The majority of the trench section revealed a consistent soil profile which contained no evidence of archaeological deposits or structures.
- 5.5 Although no archaeological deposits were identified within the development site, it is still possible that significant archaeological remains could still lie within the vicinity of the development.

#### 6. PHOTOGRAPHS



**Photo 2:** View north across the site towards Penrhyn Bach house. Note past terracing into hillside to provide platform for building.



**Photo 3:** View north during excavation of drainage trench, showing proximity of Penrhyn Bach house.



Photo 4: View south during excavation of drainage trench



Photo 5: View south of almost completed drainage trench



Photo 6: Typical soil profile in west facing section of drainage trench (1m scale)

#### 7. SOURCES

#### 7.1 Map

Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:2,500 map published in 1906

#### 7.2 Database

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6AF

RCAHMW Coflein Database http://www.coflein.gov.uk/

Cof Cymru - National Historic Assets of Wales

http://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/recordsv1/cof-cymru/?lang=en

British Geological Survey information accessed via <a href="http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html">http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html</a>

#### **APPENDIX I**

#### **Project Archive**

ERN: 114791

16 x Digital photographs; Film Number 114791 (8 x JPEGs, 8 x TIFFs)

1x Photo catalogue

Survey data- 1 GS5 file

#### **Context Register**

Context	Description	Interpretation
01	Medium brown, sandy loam, containing no significant artefacts.	Garden soil
02	Orange-brown sand with occasional small lenses of clay was revealed. This appeared to be a wind-blown sand deposit.	Natural undisturbed horizon

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> Hydref 2018 October 2018

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#### Fran Murphy

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

Swydd / Position: Project Manager DAT Archaeological Services

Llofnod / Signature ...... Date: 18/10/2018

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

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